

# OKTP

## AMY KAUFMAN

01.01.2009

**T**his is Amy Kaufman's second visit to Paulson Press. She maintains the luminous quality of her paintings in the prints – the lines almost hover. While the work appears to employ an economy of means, she uses a lot of markings and erasure to achieve the right amount of visual impact. The form may appear minimal, but the fullness of getting there remains.

– *Kenneth Caldwell*

**KC:** In this new work I don't see the lines or grids that I know.

**AK:** I've been drawing these rings and sticks recently. The sticks actually go way

back, although they used to be turned the other way and were more representational. Sometimes they resembled stripes. During the spring, you see gardeners leaving piles of pruned branches on the sidewalk, I love those.

**KC:** And where are the rings coming from? They remind me of halos.

**AK:** That's the title of one of the prints! I started doing those a while ago. I just felt like moving my arm in a big motion on the paper, first they were like scribbles and then they turned into rings.

**KC:** Your work has a luminous quality. How do you achieve that in painting, and

then, of course, how do you achieve it in printing, which is such a different process?

**AK:** In the paintings, it comes from the layers. I often use colors that are translucent. The way the edges meet also probably contributes to that quality. It transfers into the prints, maybe even more sometimes, because the ink seems to be more translucent, especially when it is mixed with extender.

**KC:** In the ring prints, it almost looks like pencil.

**AK:** I was drawing with pencil on a sheet of paper on top of the soft ground. But then I added drypoint afterwards, to make it mushier.

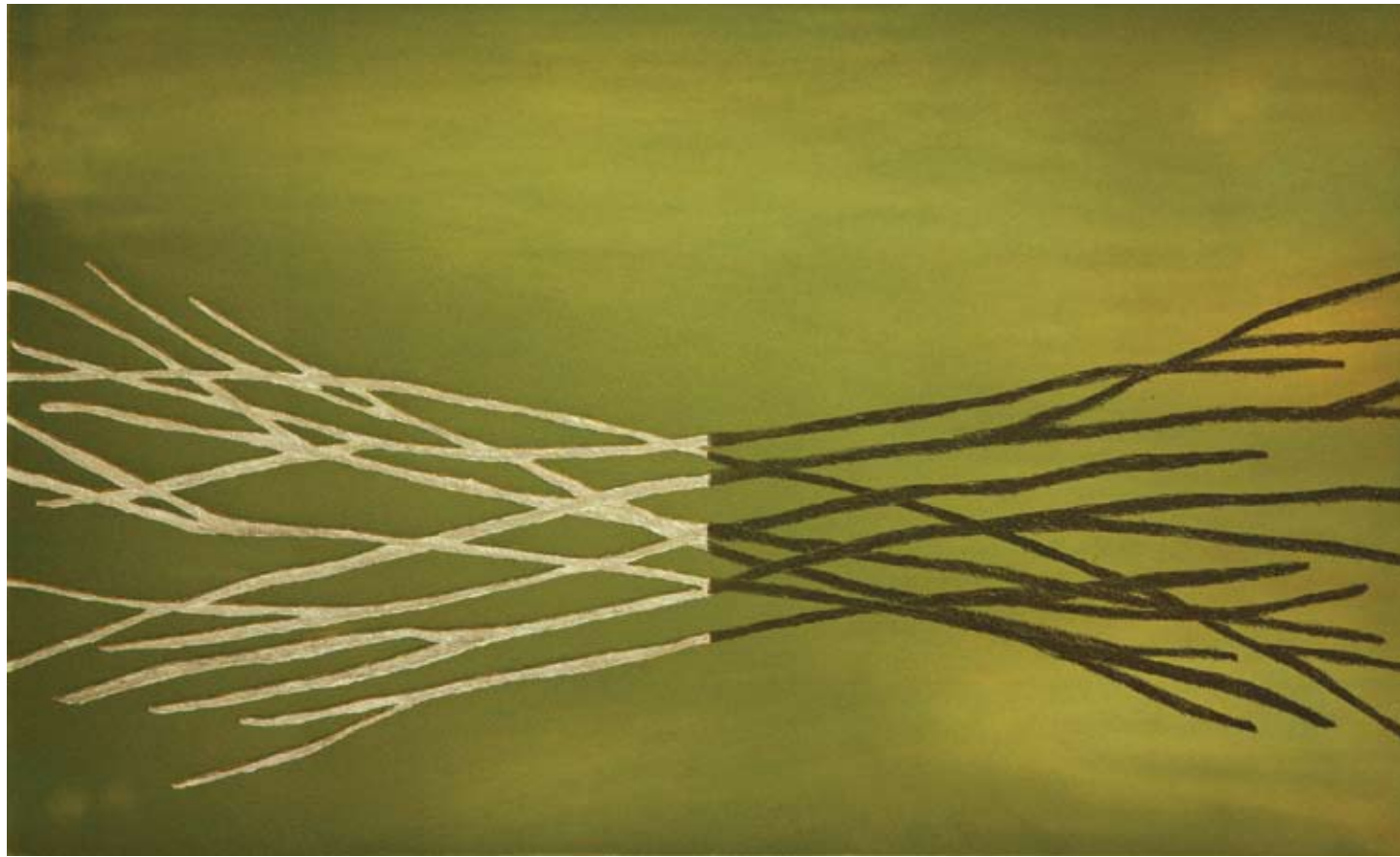
**KC:** In these pieces, you've moved away from vivid colors.

**AK:** When I first started doing the rings, I was using Conté crayons, which come in a range of reds. I wasn't trying to do exactly the same thing here, but they are similar colors. I draw a lot in black and white, so the inclination to have a limited palette is always there.



**Halo, 2008**

Color softground, aquatint, and spitbite aquatint etching. 18" x 20½"; Edition of 30



**Jackstraws (State 2), 2008**  
Color hardground, aquatint and drypoint etching. 23<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" x 31<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" ; Edition of 30

**KC:** Generally, your imagery doesn't change quickly. You work a certain idea for a while, whether it's the stripes or the squares or the rings. Some artists are changing all the time and others work more incrementally. Do you have any thoughts about that, about sticking to one kind of imagery or varying? Or does it feel like one long meditation?

**AK:** I think it's just that something still appeals to me. I'm still doing stripes, and maybe they'll appeal to me forever so that I want to keep painting or drawing them. Sometimes I'm surprised when I come back to imagery I've used before, albeit in a variation, but don't realize it at first. And sometimes I feel like I am working all over the place but later recognize a theme or flavor.

**KC:** In the ring pieces, there seems such a sense of movement. I wondered if there was any relationship to dance?

**AK:** No. But there is an energy there that I recognize.

**KC:** Do you strive towards what I see as an economy of means, or is it an accident?

**AK:** I wouldn't say that it is a conscious goal. I want the drawing or print to sit well with me, that's where it needs to be. If it feels too cluttered, I might pare it down, but usually I start with an idea that already has that economy of means.

**KC:** Before coming here, did you prepare a lot of sketches? I've seen other artists come armed with a lot of material.

**AK:** For the two big rings, I did come with a couple of sketches. Partly because I was nervous about how much time I'd have, and because I often erase, which wouldn't be as easy to do in the prints. For *Jackstraws (State 2)* I just drew right

into the hard ground, and for the little one, *Halo*, I did one sketch that I chucked and then did a second one that I used.

**KC:** With *Jackstraws (State 2)*, it almost looks like cut-outs, on the left. You get the sense of two surfaces. Was that intentional? At first I can't tell if the white is subtracted or added.

**AK:** That has little to do with me. It was more my desire to have the print be sort of half black and half white. Michelle, the printer figured out how to get there in a very different way from what I would have done in a drawing.

**KC:** I was thinking back to childhood, when I would keep drawing and drawing and then I would go, oh, I wrecked it. It's like, you've revisited that moment so it's never wrecked. It's always pulled back.

**AK:** There is that line between pulling back and overworking. I do often erase to get a drawing where I want it; then the marks left from the erasing become part of the drawing. I also view it as a challenge, that if I am working on something that is looking awful, that I push it so that it gets to where I want it to be, instead of just trashing it.

**KC:** Is the pushing to get to the balance?

**AK:** The balance is getting the painting or drawing or print to work so that I'm pleased with the result.

**KC:** Is it like pruning perhaps?

**AK:** Well, some pruning, but I would also need wood glue to stick some branches back on. ✂



(above)  
**Candy Corn, 2008**  
Color softground, spitbite aquatint and aquatint etching. 38" x 30"; Edition of 30

(right)  
Amy Kaufman working at Paulson Press.





**Red Herring, 2008**

Color softground, aquatint and spitbite aquatint etching. 38" x 30"; Edition of 30

DESIGN: MICHAEL OSBORNE DESIGN

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