

***To Fix the Object in Memory***

*After Vija Celmins*

1. OCEAN

The subject being present in the drawing as object  
 swells Each drawing distinct, seas larger, full of wrinkles  
 break become dark space, a body of  
 graphite, pressed, polished except at the edge where the pencil cedes “between  
 intimacy and distance” (the light and dark of the waves) memory does other things  
 “meaning and expression” those years of graphite meticulous sharpened  
 and the expanse of ocean back and forth (I am conscious of each line)  
 (The drawing stays in my memory) long lines (I could sink into the drawing)  
 “... I pushed the limits of the pencil” “redescribed” the force of the image  
 of time filled, the vast expanse a space where it is all mapped out bright gray waves  
 that certain presence and the gray vague wetness before you

To see the ecstatic waves/waves/whitecaps repeated  
 Works on paper shivering in cool graphite space See  
 “... an alive experience”  
 the way wind scoured the surface briny, deep, brackish tides  
 brought to the frame on the paper active water—choppy, dimpled, swelling, twitchy  
 what is real?

(From the shore to the photograph, to the colors, the darkness that I swim in)

## 2. HOW MANY OCEANS?

“The ocean image is one that is a part of me”      A desire to reach the implication of      this moment  
the painting’s surface      the relationship to a different      existence      A wavy line filling  
what was there and was not there      paying attention to details      from photographs of the Pacific Ocean  
The essence of gesture removed      The personality held back      (In the viewing  
thought and silence happening to me at the same time)      that moment  
waves treated repeatedly through human action and intervention  
miraculous meeting between one kind of line and another

Entering a space of calm      the lines      “made, invented” “feathered with darkness”  
—utilized a grid to avoid getting lost in the rise and drop of the way mind takes in  
an uproar  
where the water painted      “begins to have this strange quality ....”      Dark-green waves, coming closer,  
never quite hitting the rocks      (I wanted to stay in that space of expansion and amplitude)

Because each has a different tone, slant, a different      (I crossed many oceans)  
and childhood coming full circle      (coats worn on sandy beaches)  
physical flatness hardened by repetition      (you could say that of thought)  
though small in the warm sun      In the painting  
human consciousness in relation to waves going back & forth      a feeling of depth, in the framed structure  
Imagination/the real      happening at the same time      the way waves come and go as our thoughts ascend/descend

### 3. PLANES, OBJECTS, ETC.

“Can you spot the imitation?”

The object/place that lasts and fades

War planes, smoking guns, car crashes, explosions

photographs of the Second World War

at the same time

“sort of dealt with the memories of war”

Where have we landed?

(forces beyond my control shook my body)

childhood the double-reality, back and forth

distance and intimacy

distance creates opportunity to view more slowly

(those memories of an earlier period)

“It was a time of great stress because there was so much noise”

Seen from above

that place I used to know

(I see the memories, histories of

explosions

fires

airplanes)

full of chaos and darkness

(no instructions about this darkness)

fires

and

the word worry came near, neared

“War things”

Different approaches to perspective

To view more slowly

Painted the worn paper, the photograph, the stone

with rigorous description

Continuous space and the making process

to “document another surface and sort of translate it”

(our sensitivity to it)

even if abstracted

the surface of the moon

that other reality

4. NIGHT SKY

A single plane in a vast night sky

You may see something in nature's surfaces

not a horizon or central point of reference but being there remembering

the present in the pictorial A layer of alkyd, sanded

How galaxies developed The endless ways that one can see the world, the attention of the mind

to Being and Being

(I begin to see) shadows wanting

to draw out the stars another obsession skies

scraped out on paper

(Mesmerized I found

in "fictions about painting" a vast proposition) The number of repetitions

—one thing or another came through —the position of the painting here of a Night Sky, and halation of

space (not have it pass me by—the night) (I had to slow down)

At the edge of the surface (invites me in and pushes me out)

Being (in and out) presented

The physical presence of paint with smooth gradients

"run back to see if you remember it correctly"