

Review of *parallels* exhibited at Dolphin Gallery written by Alice Thorson, "Anne Lindberg: *Parallels Shows the Nature of Things*," Kansas City Star, December 19, 2006

Kansas City's Anne Lindberg has outdone herself in her new show at Dolphin.

The main event is a 35-foot-long wall installation -- Lindberg thinks of it as a drawing -- composed of 1,600 24-inch lengths of wire that arc out from the gallery wall. Varying in density, this amorphous configuration evokes a cascade of water, a flock of birds or a billowing cloud. Lindberg has encased the end of each wire in a short piece of dowel rod, which she has smoothed and rounded to resemble cattails or punks. The weighted ends endow the whole with a suspended, hovering presence, like a field of tall grass caressed by winds. Adding to the feeling of animation are the shadows that the individual elements cast on the wall and the artist's attentiveness to the differing tonal values of the wood ends. Everything about this expanse feels momentary, temporary. Change is imminent, but it is change without threat.

Lindberg taps a powerful archetype here. As if unleashed from preconscious memory, the sensations one feels when experiencing this work are familiar. The infant Moses in his basket in the bullrushes might have seen a vista like this. It evokes a protective, benign nature in contrast to the many contemporary evocations of a wild, unpredictable nature fueled by global warming.

Throughout her 15-year career in Kansas City, natural phenomena have always been important touchstones for this Cranbrook Academy of Art alum. Previous works have used motifs of seed pods, grasses, clouds and migrating birds. But with this show, the artist leaves behind all vestiges of literalism. Gone are all traces of the representational imagery found in her earlier works. She's also abandoned the found objects -- furniture, pillows and masses of thread -- seen in her summer 2005 one-person show at Belger and reprised in the Kemper's "Decelerate" show earlier this year.

Yet the poetic paring back at Dolphin does not come as a bolt out of the blue. In the last four years, Lindberg has been building toward this moment, employing this same lexicon of wood and wire in a permanent commission for the stairway at Kemper East, in a temporary installation at the Daum Museum in Sedalia, Mo., and in several smaller works shown at Dolphin.

Four large new drawings hang on the long wall across from the sculpture. Executed in graphite, each features hundreds of parallel lines that travel across the paper, ending just short of the edges. In three of them the lines run vertically; in one they are horizontal. Despite the affinities with minimalism -- abetted by their serial mode of display -- Lindberg's drawings bear a very un-minimalist relationship to the body. The width and tone of each line varies, in part because of the artist's use of 16 sizes of lead, and in part because of the varied pressure she exerts as she draws.

Close inspection drives home the intensity of this process and the intimacy that results from Lindberg's prolonged immersion in the repetitive act of drawing line after straight line. But in addition to serving as a repository of a physical act, each line registers changing thoughts and emotions, yielding a finished work that amounts to a kind of existential document.