

# PACE

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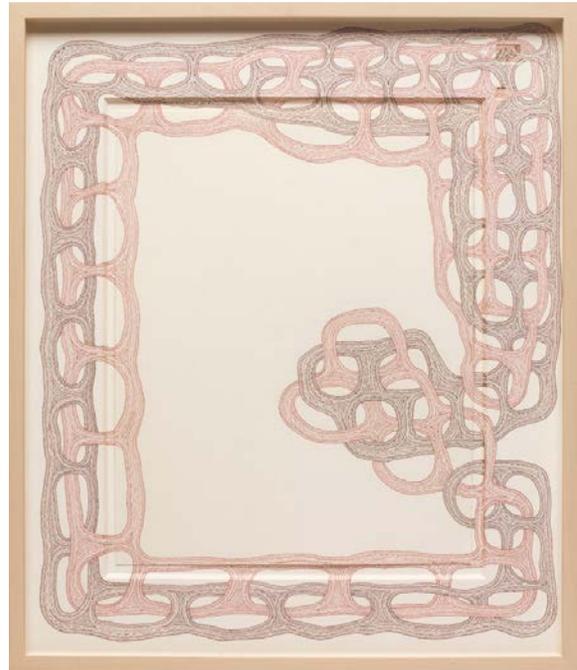
## James Siena

*Drawing*

537 West 24th Street, New York  
January 12 – February 11, 2017

Opening Reception:  
Thursday, January 12, 6–8 p.m.

New York—Pace Gallery is pleased to announce *James Siena: Drawing*, featuring three new series: Manifolds, Wanderers and Nihilisms. These works on paper offer distinct but interconnected approaches that extend Siena's practices as a painter, sculptor and draftsman. *Drawing* will be on view from January 12 through February 11, 2017 at 537 West 24th Street. An opening reception for the artist will be held on Thursday, January 12 from 6 to 8 p.m. Pace will publish an online catalogue to accompany the exhibition, with a new essay written by artist and critic Joe Fyfe.



The Manifolds drawings alternately merge and weave together abstract, spatially complex forms. Siena draws the Manifolds with ink, watercolor and graphite, as well as with an Electrographic pencil, which uses an artificial graphite originally developed by IBM for computerized test scoring and offers the artist a highly reflective medium similar to ink. These works play off his interest in topology, a branch of mathematics concerned with complex surfaces and the transformation of spatial forms.

Siena was also inspired by the art of Frank Stella, noting: "It was as a teenager that I first saw the lithographs of Frank Stella that he did at Gemini in 1970–72. I was deeply moved by how the artist deployed his forms, displacing them to one side of the sheet. In 2007, I made an etching at ULAE in homage to Stella's brilliant gesture, and, in these new works, the Wanderers and Manifolds, displacement occurs as well, to varying degrees. I see these works as interrogating space at various levels; presentational, architectural and pictorial. But if I hadn't seen those Stellas over forty years ago, these works wouldn't have happened."

Siena's Wanderers challenge the boundaries of the page with intricate non-repetitive structures that migrate onto the mat and frame. They extend Siena's drawing into a place between pictorial space and the outside world. They are in part inspired by essayist José Ortega y Gasset's observation that "Instead of attracting attention to itself, the frame limits itself to concentrating attention and making it spill out onto the picture."

The Nihilisms contain texts that Siena develops through automatic writing, free association and reflection in contemporary scientific thought. Although not calligraphic in a conventional sense, he draws the words in this series as much as writes them, in some cases surrounding them with intricately hatched textures to create a kind of abstract illuminated manuscript.

**James Siena** (b. 1957, Oceanside, California) is known for his production of complex, rule-based linear abstractions. His work is often driven by self-imposed, predetermined sets of rules, or “visual algorithms,” which result in intensely compressed, freehand geometric patterns. Although predominantly recognized for his vibrantly colored paintings and drawings, Siena works across a diverse range of media. Engaging in lithography, etching, woodcut, engraving and sculpture, he articulates an ongoing investigation of technology and artifice, craft and process.

Siena’s work is featured in over 110 solo and group exhibitions, most recently with his large-scale drawing series *Pockets of Wheat*, on display at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 2016. Siena’s work is held in museum collections throughout the United States, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, among others. Among his numerous awards and honors, Siena’s achievements were recognized by Cornell University during his enrollment as a student and again later in his career, with the Cornell Eissner Artist of the Year Award, conferred by the Cornell Council for the Arts (2009).

Pace has represented James Siena since 2004. This is the fifth solo exhibition of his work at the gallery.

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*Rulebreaker*, 2016, ink on paper and museum board, 16-11/16" x 10-3/4" (42.4 cm x 27.3 cm). Photograph by Kerry Ryan McFate, © James Siena, courtesy Pace Gallery

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**For press inquiries, please contact:** Jennifer Joy, SUTTON, +1 212 202 3402 or [jen@suttonpr.com](mailto:jen@suttonpr.com).

**For sales inquiries, please contact:** Pace Gallery, +1 212 421 3292 or [info@pacegallery.com](mailto:info@pacegallery.com).

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