

## Eric Holzman *Drawings, 1990-2007*

New York Studio School March 29–May 12, 2007

Eric Holzman has a fondness for aged surfaces, which he creates as substrate for his modestly scaled drawings of landscapes, portraits and still-lives. *Drawings 1990-2007*, a recent exhibition at the New York Studio School, surveys the variety of touch he achieves with watercolor, egg tempera, charcoal and graphite. Faint, intricate and almost imperceptible, these drawings cohere atop their prepared grounds in airy and open atmospheres.

Although the drawings are executed spontaneously from life, the surfaces are heavily worked and textured, evoking Italian Renaissance studies in their present-day condition. While appearing to be deteriorated, discolored and worn, the surfaces are deliberately distressed by blotting them with painted paper—not unlike the Surrealist technique of *décollage*—producing other-

worldly splotches, splatters and abstract patterns. Upon these prepared sheets, Holzman renders everyday scenes, often in series—Italianate skylines, lone trees in Yonkers, family portraits—that measure time in intervals. His signature swirling, nebulous forms become clouds and ocean foam in *Seascape, Paradise Island I* and *Seascape, Paradise Island II* (both 2003), and, in other drawings, denote dissolving leaves and masses of foliage. In *Clouds, Umbria I–IV* (all 1994) a soft, meandering line sits on the surface as it embeds itself into the hazy ground, capturing motion through successive images. The umber and ultramarine marks on the sepia-toned paper recall a Leonardo da Vinci sketch, weathered with age and infused with acid burn.

One might then wonder how much Holzman's work is beholden to the past. His love for the look of five-hun-



Eric Holzman, "Clouds, Umbria IV" (1994). Watercolor and egg tempera on prepared paper. 5" x 11".

dred-year-old drawings raises questions about whether his admiration is for the works of art or for their accrued material condition. The atmospheric surfaces of his drawings risk resembling a patina over which the drawings are incongruently overlaid. However, Holzman's work is primarily about the slow unfolding of touch over time, how the melding of surface and image seem to suspend and stand outside of time. Ultimately, it is the delicacy of touch that evades nostalgia and sentimentality, transporting the work from one's mind into one's field of vision.

—Greg Lindquist