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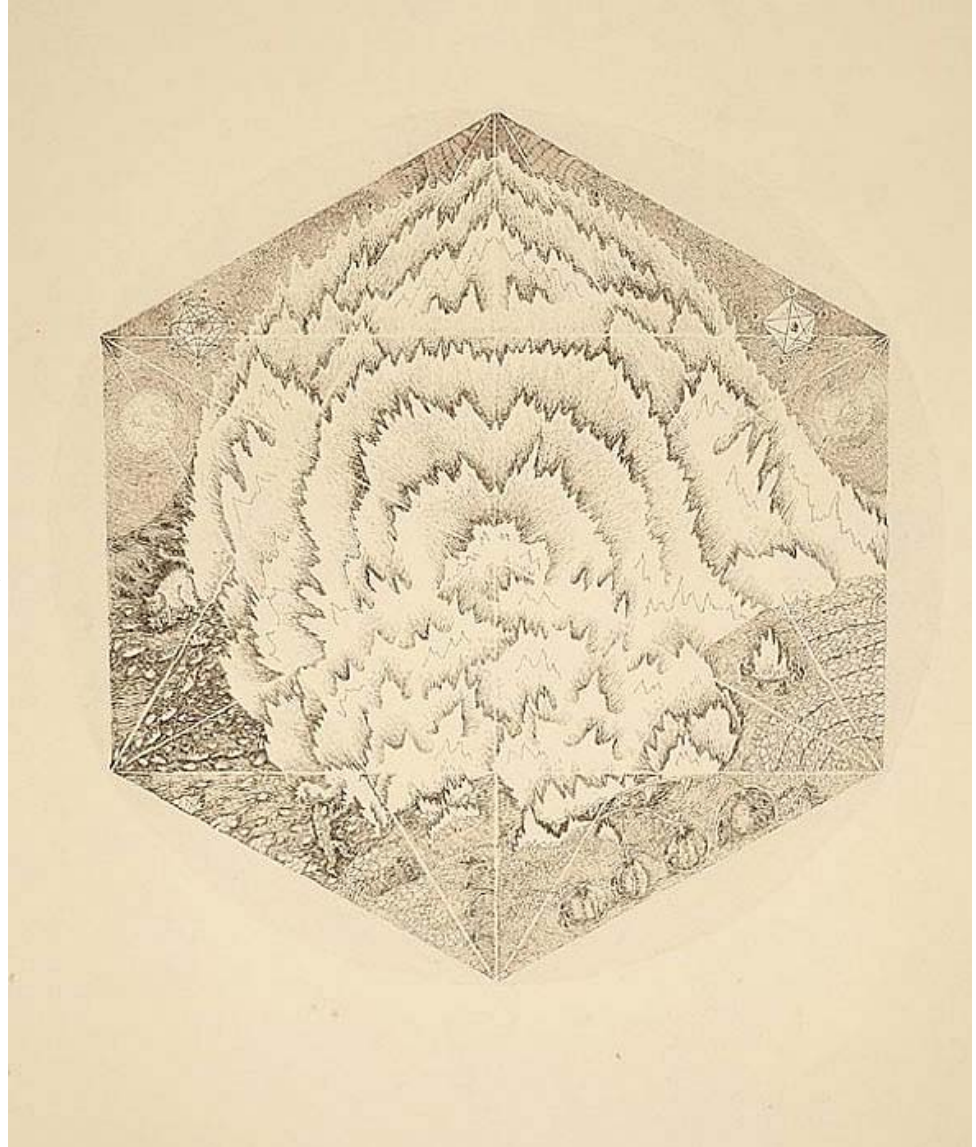


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Bri Lauterbach, *Everybody's Trying To Get Warm*, 2010, Ink, Gouache, Elderberry.



Bri Lauterbach's Meticulous Documentation of an Urban Garden

Wonder Fair:
Art Gallery, Shoppe & Studio
 803-1/2 Massachusetts Street
 785-856-3247
Lawrence
Properties of a Guild
New works by Bri Lauterbach
October 29-November 21, 2010

By BLAIR SCHULMAN

If Lewis Carroll's Alice took a different turn down the rabbit hole, she might have ended up in an alternative Wonderland with Bri Lauterbach waiting to take her hand. *Properties of a Guild* is a group of eerily delightful pen and pencil drawings on view at Wonder Fair Gallery in Lawrence, Kansas. They have the earmarks of a garden party; however, rats are lurking here, commandeering everyone's tea time. "Time marches on its stomach," as the Mad Hatter would say.

Lauterbach shares in the renovation of a house on Troost Avenue in midtown Kansas City that includes a large garden where she grows vegetables that inevitably fall prey to life in the inner city. A labor of love, it is cathartic for her as well as consuming and she is always planning. "Living where I do and how I do and having a garden make me think about it constantly..."

Are There As Many Buttholes As Houses (2010, Pen, Coffee, Gouache) is most like the world this artist dreams about. An orderly, pristine and symmetrical garden in the center of a compound comprised of sweet cottages. *To Be Used On* (2010, Pen, Coffee) is the reality of toiling in this space using seemingly primitive tools.

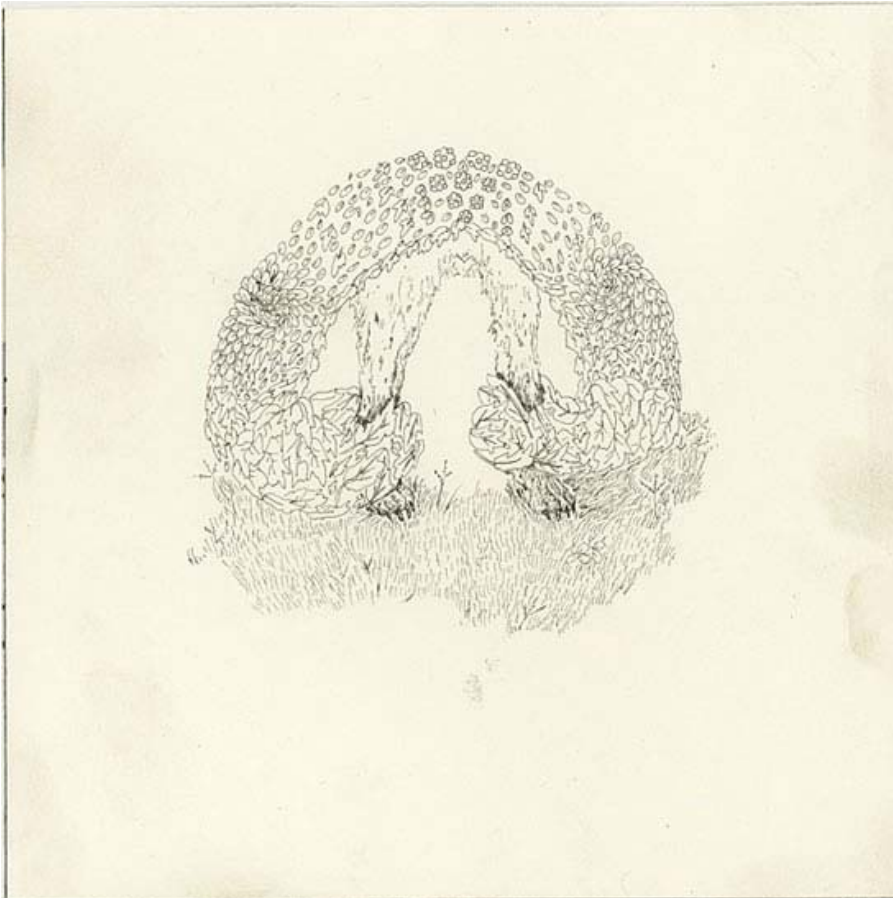
Mainly small in size, the drawings are tight and intricate, resembling Victorian tracery with splashes of coffee, wine, elderberry and even magma, coloring them with a sepia-toned element of dilapidation. It requires a close eye, and occasionally a magnifying glass, to identify the details. The eye strain, however, is worth the time it takes to see Lauterbach's meticulous patterning.

Rough wood frames with aluminum backing are homes to these paper sketches and serve for natural and logical, documentation of the elements of the drawings. Framing them in anything more elaborate or modern seems inappropriate. Like chapters of a book, each drawing is a keyhole into an ongoing mission to make home and art function well.

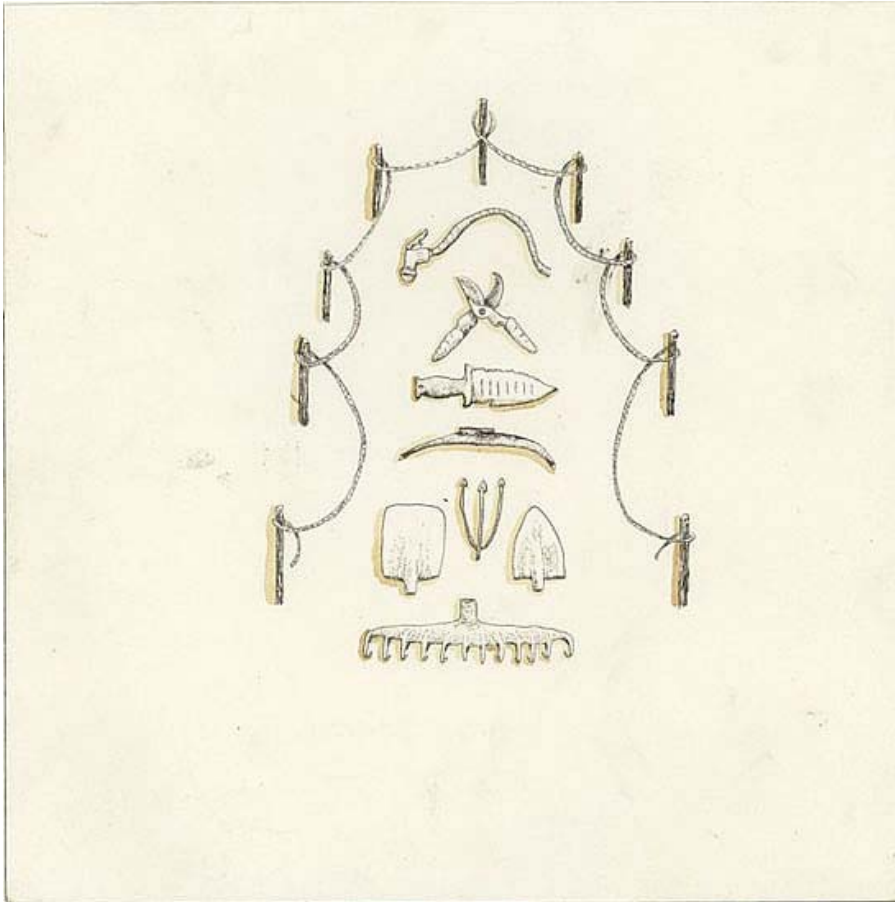
Bri Feet (2010, Pen) shows the artist at one with her garden. *Everybody's Trying To Get Warm* (2010, Pen, Gouache, Elderberry), is particularly telling. A bonfire burns but is never consumed, conveying this almost-Sisyphian task.

Drawing in the garden is a portable, "lo-fi" way of making art for Lauterbach, according to a recent podcast (with Wonder Fair cohort Jason Barr – iTunes – A.D.D. by BARRR). She uses it as a chance to think, "not what I need to do, but what I wish it would be..." The ultimate perfection of her space is not so much interrupted by the vermin, as vermin are instead incorporated into the overall pattern.

Rat King (2010, Pen) appears as a filigree. From a distance, it projects a kaleidoscopic element that is somewhat trippy, but easy to look at. Standing closer, one sees rats intertwined by their tails completing the motif. For all its honest



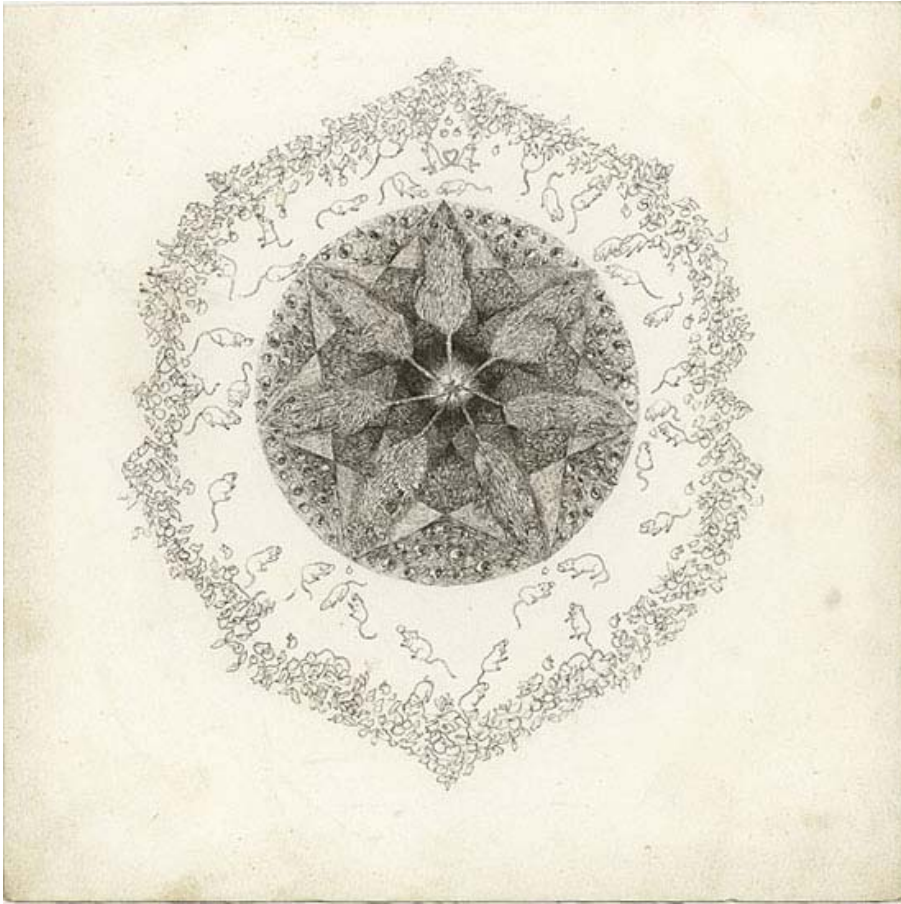
Bri Lauterbach, *Bri Feet*, 2010, Ink.



Bri Lauterbach, *To Be Used On*, 2010, Ink, Coffee.

complications of what the artist struggles with in her home and art, this is the most moving piece in the show. A graduate of the Kansas City Art Institute, Lauterbach concentrated in printmaking, eventually gravitating towards etching. The imprints of tiny lines on paper are clearly a labor of love, as shown in her intimately detailed drawings.

Founded in 2007, Wonder Fair Gallery sits in the heart of downtown Lawrence. Management at Wonder Fair includes Eric Dobbins, Jason Barr, Lee Piechocki, and Kelly Clark who take a logical approach to their location. It serves as a custodial space to youth, community and local art collectives. In a temperamental market, this gallery invites everyone inside as an approachable home base to view and purchase art. It marks a trend towards more urban-oriented spaces that keep their feet on the ground rather than noses in the air.



Bri Lauterbach, *Rat King*, 2010, Ink.

**Bri Lauterbach, *Are There As Many
Buttholes As Houses*, 2010, Ink, Coffee,
Gouache).**

