

## BARBARA KRAKOW GALLERY

### ALLAN MCCOLLUM *THE SMALL WORLD DRAWINGS*

**MARCH 18, 2000 - APRIL 26, 2000**



Barbara Krakow Gallery is proud to announce our latest exhibition with Allan McCollum: "The Small World Drawings"

The principle of "intrinsic interest" is often brought up when artists are taught the principle of "weight" in creating a balanced composition. The example I remember from my high school art teacher was how a painting that depicts Niagara Falls on the right side of the canvas can be "balanced" with a tiny human figure on the left side of the canvas. This is because the human figure carries more "intrinsic interest" to the human eye (humans, it seems, are more interested in humans than in waterfalls). Therefore, since only humans look at paintings, a tiny human figure and a huge waterfall can carry the same "weight" in a painting's composition. This idea has remained with me since that time, and, for my



exhibit at Barbara Krakow Gallery, I would like to explore this precept. I recognize that all commercial art galleries appreciate artists who create artwork that is interesting to their regular clients. Artists, in turn, like to please their galleries. In this way, art can often be “shaped” by a particular gallery’s community of clients, through a kind of natural evolutionary process. This could be one of the reasons that, over time, artists in one particular gallery will tend to make similar work.

As I create my first solo exhibition in Boston, I am hoping people here will be pleased by my work. In his famous book “How to Win Friends and Influence People,” Dale Carnegie teaches us the importance of remembering people’s names by reminding us that “...the average man is more interested in his own name than in all the other names on earth put together.” I’ve asked Barbara Krakow to provide me with her Boston area mailing list, and I’ve used the first names of these people to depict this particular community of individuals. I have assumed that, as with any true community, many of these clients maintain relationships with many of the other clients. For instance, one of the gallery’s clients may be another client’s stockbroker, psychoanalyst, lover, parent, friend, or enemy. In some cases, one client may have multiple relationships with another client: one client might at the same time be another client’s dentist and ex-boyfriend, for example. To honor Barbara Krakow Gallery’s Boston clients, I am creating drawings to represent each individual and the complexity of their community. There are over 30,000 possible pairings; I am depicting 1000 of these pairings with 1000 drawings.

Allan McCollum  
March 2000

A website with information about Allan McCollum’s work is at:  
<http://allanmccollum.net>



## REVIEW: ALLAN MCCOLLUM, *THE SMALL WORLD DRAWINGS*

### Allan McCollum *The Small World Drawings*

By Cate McQuaid  
BOSTON GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

At: Barbara Krakow Gallery  
through April 26



Allan McCollum, *The Small World Drawings*, 2000. Pencil on rag paper.

Allan McCollum cites Dale Carnegie's book "How to Win Friends and Influence people" as an inspiration for his installation at the Barbara Krakow gallery. "The average man is more interested in his own name than in all the other names on earth put together," wrote Carnegie. So McCollum addresses his audience — Krakow's clientele and potential buyers of his art — by name.

The installation, "The Small World Drawings" features walls of names — 1,040 pairs of them, to be exact. Krakow handed over her mailing list to the artist and he plotted the list against itself and then with the others on the

list. Each drawing consists of two first names with a plus sign between them.

The installation ratchets up the tension between individual and community, and between inclusion and exclusion. A visitor to the exhibition immediately scans the wall for his or her name, which may appear many times. The random pairings make for fictive connection. For Krakow, who knows everyone on the wall, those connections may prompt laughter, discomfort, or an impulse to matchmaking.

For someone not so plugged in to Krakow's clientele, the names and associations are more

random. You might feel like the new kid at school, not sure who anybody is or who is friends with whom. Not seeing your own name up there, you might feel excluded. Imagine thinking yourself on Krakow's list, then not finding your name on her wall.

Addressing his audience so personally, McCollum shines a glaring light on our egotism and fragile sense of identity. The installation itself is visually mundane — a grid of names few would have the patience to read through. But its psychological content has a charge that will knock you off your balance.