

Bolinas Museum, 48 Wharf Road, Bolinas, CA 94924

www.bolinasmuseum.org | Ph. 415-868-0330

Gallery Hours: Friday 1-5 pm, Saturday-Sunday 12-5 pm, and by appointment.

[Exhibition Link](#)

COASTAL MARIN ARTISTS GALLERY

OONA RATCLIFFE: LIFE LINES

ON VIEW: FEBRUARY 4 - APRIL 2, 2023

OPENING RECEPTION, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4

3 PM TALKS / 4 - 5 PM RECEPTION

Curated by Louisa Gloger

Oona Ratcliffe is drawn to the natural world. Since she was a small child, she has felt this pull. She holds memories of time spent in the garden collecting her mother's flowers, working with her hands, recording the beauty of a rose petal, attempting to capture that vibrant color. In this body of work Ratcliffe returns to this foundational relationship of seeing and recording the natural world. Through contemplation of the varied and seemingly infinite structure of plant life, and in an awe inspired by nature and the ephemerality of looking, she creates with her pen, ink and paper a literal life line. There is much metaphoric meaning in this exhibition title. The life of a mother, the life of an artist, life in response to illness, in response to time. Through these drawings Ratcliffe moved through the tumult of life during the covid lockdowns in New York in a one room space with three children, processed a move to Bolinas, a return to a childhood home and a verdant landscape. Through these drawings she engaged again with her mother's and others' gardens, recording the freshness, luminosity, delicacy, and transparency particularly of the cut stems and petals, which could almost be experienced like a vision, a transcendental moment. She examined the root masses, the flying tangles and dark mysterious clusters, overlaps, juxtapositions, leaves, stems, in between spaces, the feminine mossy undergrowth. The act of drawing was an effort to capture something ephemeral in personal time, the energy of which was passing. To be able to distill some of that through the hand, the direct line, was an attempt to access and record the spiritual transience of the hovering between the present now and beyond.

In Ratcliffe's small oil paintings she captures the saturation of the natural world. Abstraction in floods of verdant color - a contrast to the live wire black ink pulsing through her drawings - these small oil paintings connect through color and composition to the large-scale abstractions Ratcliffe has made over the last two decades. In meditative acts of observation and contemplation Ratcliffe carved out time to reflect and created this body of work where she explores shape, form and the space between abstraction and representation. Ratcliffe's drawings and paintings then are a map of botanical and natural form and also a topographical record of her life as an artist and that foundational pull to see and capture the sublime.

Ratcliffe gathered her direct observations of plants mainly from her mother's Bolinas garden, the gardens of close friends, and through a generous collaboration with Mary Nesbit's California Orchids. Ratcliffe earned a BA at UC Santa Cruz and an MFA at Hunter College in New York.



OONA RATCLIFFE, *drawing 368 G*, 2022, ink on paper, 11 x 14 inches, courtesy of the artist, photo by Kyoko Hamada.



OONA RATCLIFFE, 9 Paintings, *Untitled*, 2022, oil on panel, courtesy of the artist.