

The New York Times

Friday, July 20, 2012

ART IN REVIEW

Agnes Lux & Ray Hamilton

By ROBERTA SMITH

Agnes Lux & Ray Hamilton

Kerry Schuss
34 Orchard Street,
Lower East Side
Through July 28

After championing outsider and contemporary art from the relative isolation of TriBeCa for 10 years, Kerry Schuss has added his particular vision to the increasing hubbub of the Lower East Side. For his third show at the new gallery, he encapsulates his sensibility with a side-by-side, mutually illuminating presentation of large graphite drawings by Agnes Lux, a young German artist now based in New York, and smaller works in ballpoint, china marker and pencil by Ray Hamilton, a self-taught artist who



KERRY SCHUSS, NEW YORK



COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND
KERRY SCHUSS, NEW YORK

was born in South Carolina in 1919 and died in Brooklyn in 1996.

Ms. Lux, who might be called a neo-process artist, is showing three terrific big drawings composed of index cards (there's a fourth in "Everyday Abstract — Abstract Everyday" at the James Cohan Gallery in Chelsea) that put their own spin on 1970s mail art. Using the graphite, she emphatically draws loosely geometric shapes on the cards, which are carefully numbered for assembling into larger sheets. Before that happens, however, she mails the cards to herself, adding a random patina of wear and tear, and also losing a few that are re-

Left, "#L-V" (2012), graphite on postcards, by Agnes Lux, and below left, "Untitled" (1992), by Ray Hamilton, both at Kerry Schuss gallery.

placed with plain cards, another bit of randomness. The smaller irregular areas of graphite and white merge into larger ones while the grid formed by the actual cards maintains order. The balance of parts to the whole is engaging and slightly cinematic: like an animated abstract film seen all at once.

The Hamilton works date from the end of the artist's life when a debilitating stroke forced him to use his nondominant hand. His solution was to take small objects like bananas, apples, pens and boxes of Oreos, outline them repeatedly on paper and then fill in the rough-edged silhouettes with solid colors that might match their subjects (red apples, for example). The results can bring to mind Andy Warhol's early commercial illustrations and slot-machine images but are more abstract.

In their shared emphasis on modest accumulation, everyday life and roughly worked surfaces and their different approaches to color and scale, these contrasting bodies of work have much to say to each other and us about drawing and its capacity for renewal.

ROBERTA SMITH