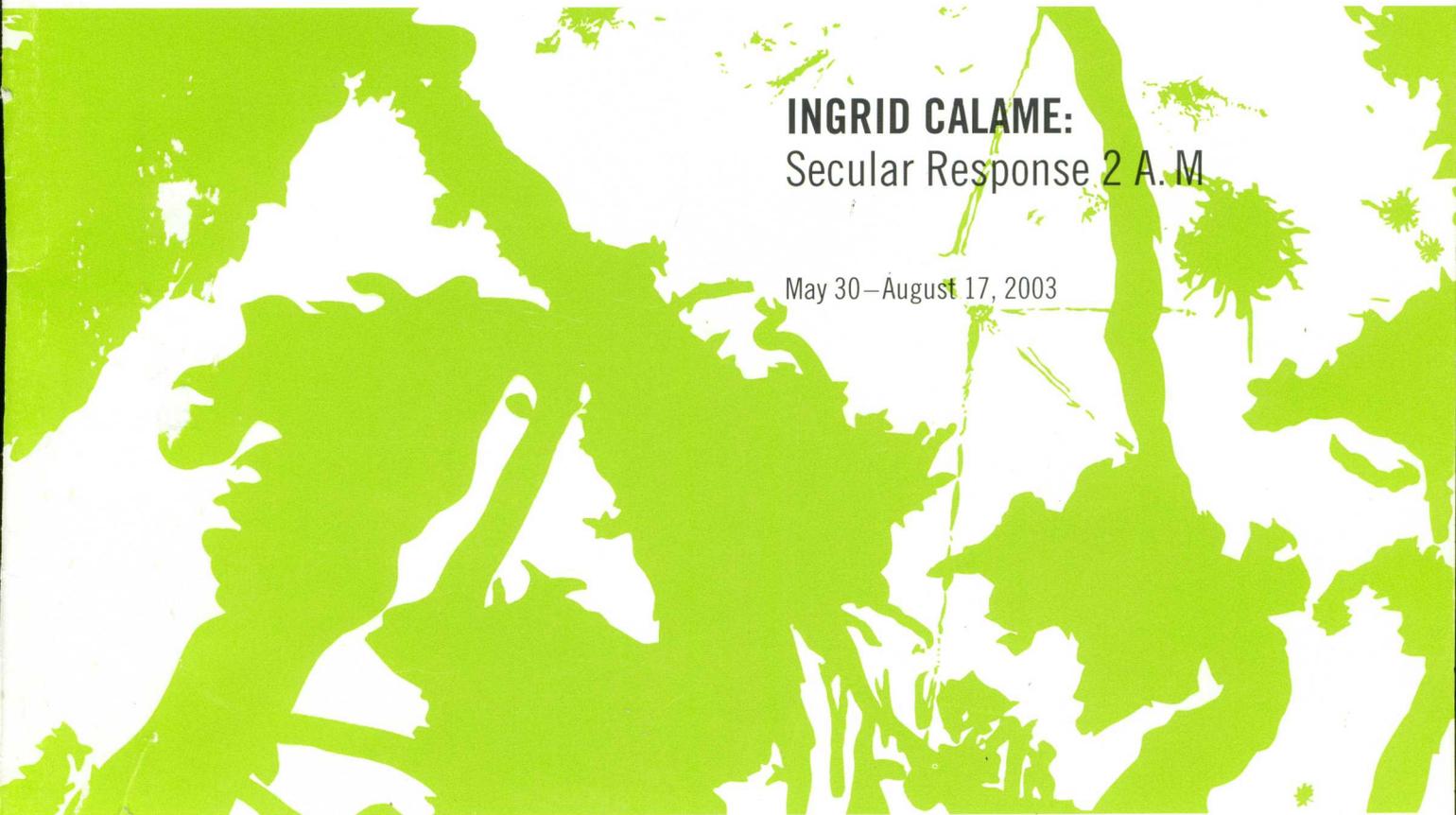


MOCA



**INGRID CALAME:**  
Secular Response 2 A.M.

May 30–August 17, 2003

Ingrid Calame: Secular Response 2 A. M  
Organized by Senior Curator Margo A. Crutchfield  
Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland

Site-specific variations of Secular Response 2 A. M on view at:

**Rose Art Museum**

Brandeis University  
Waltham, Massachusetts  
September 10–December 7, 2003

**James Cohan Gallery New York**

533 West 26<sup>th</sup> St.  
New York, New York  
October 2003

Ingrid Calame: Secular Response 2 A. M  
is sponsored in Cleveland by:

**Robert W. Baird & Company Inc.**

The exhibitions featured in

**The Global Arena: Money, Power and Politics**

are also sponsored by the Kulas Foundation.

With additional support from the

**Friends of the Summer Exhibition:**

Lindy and Richard Barnett

David Bergholz

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Bidwell

Timothy J. Callahan

James Casebere

Rosalie and Morton Cohen

Mr. and Mrs. George Dunn

Richard and Tamar Francis

Barbara and Peter Galvin

Mr. and Mrs. William D. Ginn

Robert Kaye

Donna and Stewart Kohl

Jonathan D. Lewis

Dr. Jack and Linda Lissauer

Robert and Nanci Markey

Elaine and Beno Michel

John Mino

Harriet J. Roaman

Steve and Ellen Ross

Mark Schwartz and Dr. Bettina Katz

Diane Upright

© 2003

All rights reserved

Museum of Contemporary Art  
Cleveland  
8501 Carnegie Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44106  
www.MOCAcleveland.org

Photography of Secular Response 2 A. M  
Shelby Roberts

Installation Photography  
Phillip Hanson

Graphic Design  
Kelly Cunningham

## A VIEW FINDER

John Wagner

“Color for me is a trigger for thoughts and memories, one color leads to another—like writing a rambling poem. In this way, by wedding systems with my subjectivity, I make a painting which I cannot preconceive of as a whole, that is too ‘big’ for me to see.” – Ingrid Calame



Many things come to mind as I think about *Secular Response*: road movies; Richard Serra’s thrown lead “Splash” pieces; Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle; Ellsworth Kelly’s Angle paintings. Let me choose an even larger one through which to view it – the Grand Canyon.

The sheer size of the Grand Canyon makes it too big to see all at once. Upon visitation we drive along the edge, pulling over at lookouts, taking photographs. We may also zoom in through the lens of a pair of the bulky, vintage binoculars that are mounted at many of the rim-side lookouts. Or we can hike down into the canyon by foot or by mule, or whitewater raft down the Colorado River that cuts through the bottom. We take the Canyon in over time, building an image of it, a sense memory.

There are other matters too, the lengthy time of the Canyon’s formation, its continuing evolution, the specific geology of the Canyon and its relation to the North American continent and the earth as a whole. And the historical, sociological and ethnographic terms? Could we take all that in? Let alone depict it or ‘picture’ it?

*Secular Response 2* attempts to represent this breadth and scope and, dare I say, intention. It is too large to be exhibited and is not intended to be. It functions as a container or repository of information. How does Ingrid make the contents available for the viewer?

She pits her work against a holistic, instantaneous legibility. Ingrid places meaning in the organization of the data gleaned from the stains traced on streets and sidewalks in various cities. The meaning is held vessel-like, in between: (a) the events of the original spill and splash; (b) the tracing of the stains; (c) the organization of the traced stains into what she terms “constellations” and the recording of that event; (d) and finally, onto the picture plane derived from the space of the gallery.

Sections of the drawing are later selected to be made visible (to be “poured out” although obviously there is no liquid here!). The dimensions of the exhibition space are overlaid onto the drawing. Like the view through the binoculars this also ‘deselects’ the views outside its line of sight. The selected portion is painted in enamel on Mylar in the precise manner of the sign painter.

Ingrid’s procedures divide the image into what we can see and what we cannot see. The division of the drawing by its intersection with the dimensions of the space of the gallery further obscures what has so precisely been documented in the tracings. Secular Response 2 resists representation. All possible views and aspects cannot be fully represented. The sheer quantity of data in the traced stains becomes eclipsed. What of the experience itself and the narrative of its making? There is the matter, too, of the relationship between Secular Response 1, 2, and 3. By creating a fictionalized whole, and then showing us pieces of it we are left to attempt to complete the whole, to continue its pattern, to formulate a phantom of the rest. We are left with the trace of the whole. Back to the beginning again. Ingrid says it best herself:

“The stains are evidence of a parade of public activities, and they are a visual incident in the incomprehensibly large field of the world (I imagine the surface of the world as one continuous whole surface of sidewalks and grass and streets and mountains, etc.) which I could not possibly document in its entirety in one-to-one scale.”

Micro/Macro. Microscopic. Telescopic. Kaleidoscopic. The whole becomes the part, over and over, like nestled Russian dolls, both containing and contained. Repeated enough, it points to the infinite. •



## SECULAR RESPONSE 2 A. M

Margo A. Crutchfield

In an unusual, even radical, approach to painting, Ingrid Calame takes the contours of stains as a source for her dynamic, vividly colored compositions. This unorthodox process, with which she started working in 1994, begins with the labor-intensive process of directly tracing—on hands and knees—the silhouettes of stains found on the surface of streets, sidewalks or floors. Calame then documents the details of each stain—its size, the date it was found, its place of origin—then places these forms into overlapping arrangements or invented “constellations” as she describes them.<sup>1</sup> These arrangements of found shapes – the traced stains of oil, coffee, food, other liquids and residue – are traced once again to create a pencil drawing which Calame then meticulously replicates on a 1:1 scale onto aluminum panels, or in the case of her larger paintings, onto expansive sheets of translucent Mylar®. Rendered in bold colors with high gloss enamel sign paint, Calame transforms and reinterprets these traces into what appear to be abstract or biomorphic shapes. With their gleaming surfaces and carefully demarcated, hard-edged contours, these hyper-vivid translations of stains at once refer to, but are nonetheless distanced and removed from, their source.

Calame's fascination with stains, initially a formal one, stemmed from her interest in the shapes of drips and puddles of paint on her studio floor. As her interest expanded beyond markings on the studio floor to stains in public spaces the implications became more complex. “Stains index events,” Calame has commented.<sup>2</sup> Evidence of chance happenings, stains can be the result of everyday accidents or the result of disastrous occurrences, even crimes. Many arouse uncomfortable or repulsive associations. “Ultimately everything (organic) disintegrates,” says Calame, and becomes some form of residue

or fluid.<sup>3</sup> Liquids evaporate and of the stains that remain, some become a record, others eventually fade, then vanish. Inferred in stains therefore is a reference, however oblique, to the impermanence of life and our own mortality. Additionally, in representing unplanned for and unexpected events that take place at another point in time, stains stand for events about which the viewer, for the most part, has little or no knowledge. Ultimately we can only intuit or imagine what happened. In giving concrete form to events and activities that have since evaporated but still left their mark, Calame's bold compositions can be said to capture traces of not only the "residue" of our urban culture, but of untold narratives as well.

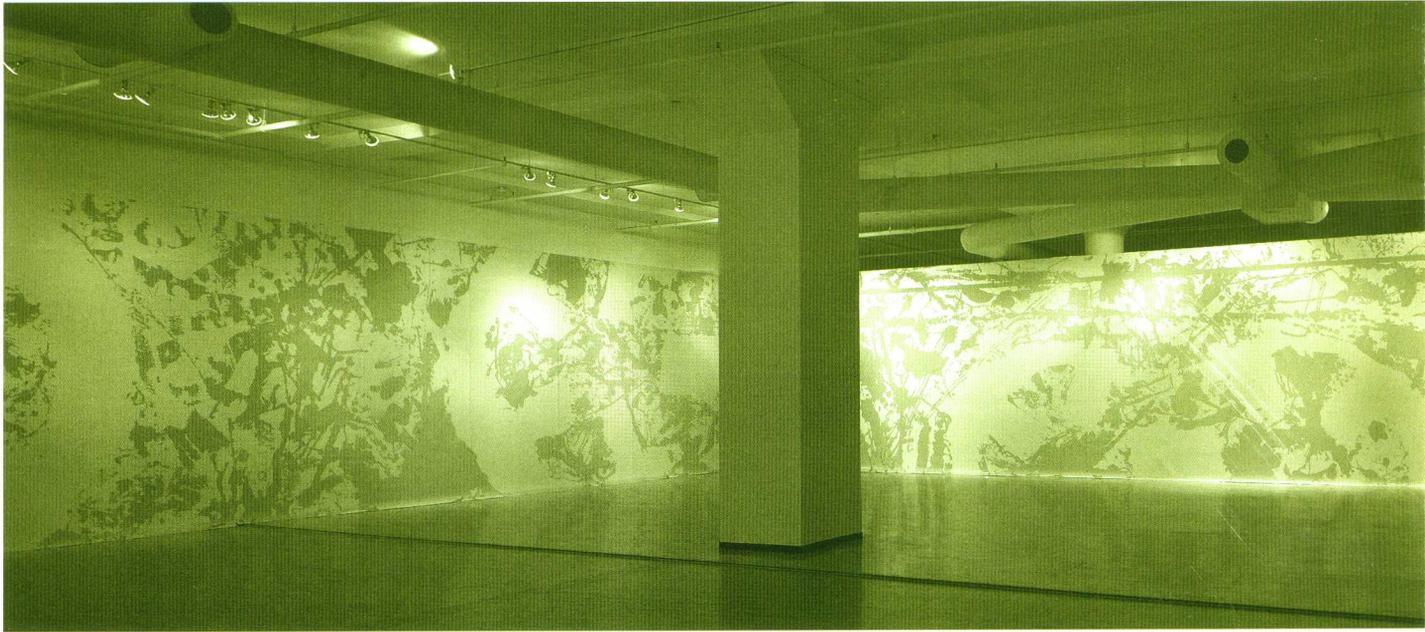
For the exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, Calame has developed a new work based on excerpts of a 15,000 square foot pencil drawing she made on the trading floor of the New York Stock Exchange in 2001. Titled *Secular Response 2 A.M* this immense site-specific painting installation measures 12 feet high and spans almost 150 feet along three walls of the Museum's central gallery. The work is painted with high gloss enamel paint on translucent Mylar, in a single color – a supercharged, synthetic, chartreuse green.

The installation's sheer scale, intense color and the visceral impact of what appear to be dynamic organic forms or shifting oceans and landmasses, is breathtaking, if not daunting. Jean Arp's biomorphic forms come immediately to mind, as does the epic grandeur of postwar Modernist Abstraction. The mural scale and all over composition of *Secular Response 2 A.M*, as well as its stains, drips and pours, recall the Abstract Expressionists, Jackson Pollock in particular, or such Color Field painters as Helen Frankenthaler. *Secular Response 2 A.M* also shares affinities with Clyfford Still's dynamic canvases with their intense streaks of color and what can be construed as primordial imagery or rugged geologic formations.

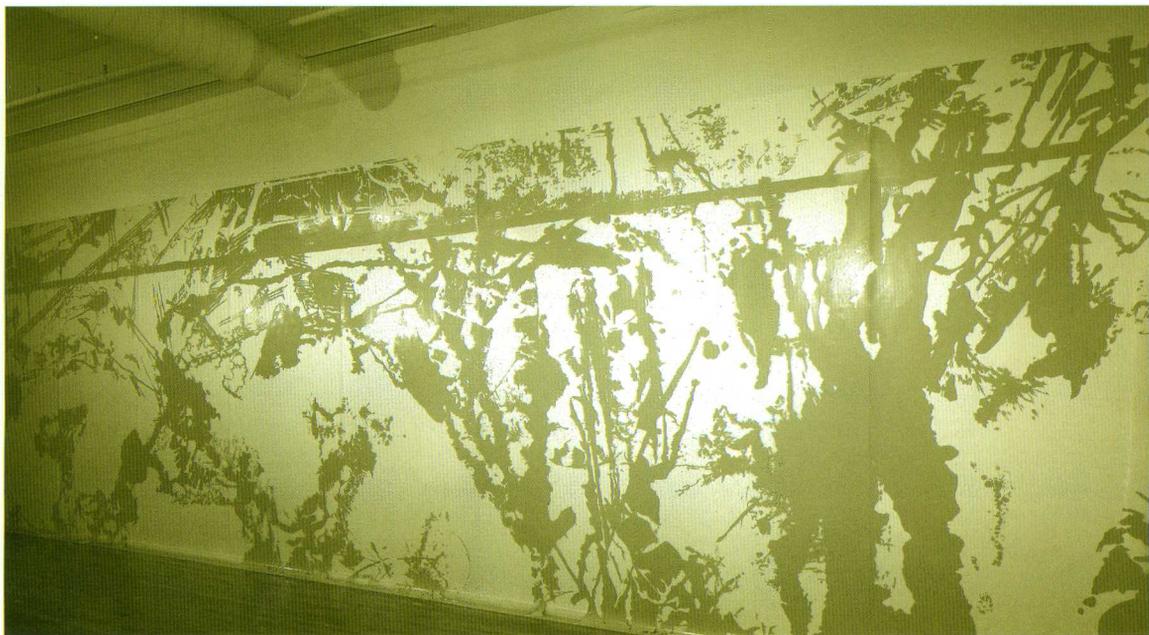
While Calame's monumental installation might initially appear to be a 21<sup>st</sup> century heir to the rich legacy of Modernist Abstraction, the similarities end there. Calame's work may have borrowed from, built upon, questioned, redefined and recharged aspects of postwar abstraction, but her work is not about the heroic gesture, intense subjective emotion, the sublime or spontaneity as the Abstract Expressionists defined them.

Contrary to expectations, Calame's source of inspiration and imagery is not entirely subjective, as her sources are located outside the self in the real world, but result from a "documentary" process, albeit "filtered through her own subjectivity."<sup>4</sup> Painting for Calame is based on the fundamental human gesture of drawing and tracing, which for her become mechanisms for information gathering, recording and systematically capturing data. Through placement and vivid coloration, Calame radically reinterprets this information then transposes it into her paintings. The flat shallow surface, synthetic color, hard sheen, and "techno-organic" imagery of *Secular Response 2 A.M* looks industrial or digitally generated but is based on tracing, and is meticulously hand painted. Given the panoramic expanse of the work, its level of intricacy and detail is remarkable.

Filtered through a Postmodernist sensibility, Calame's work may pay homage to the great heritage of Modernist Abstraction but the splashes, spills, and impressions of sudden explosions are not the result of spontaneous gestures but of meticulous duplication, and the "recorded spontaneity" of actions that have long since vanished.<sup>5</sup> In some respects, Calame's work seems more aligned with conceptual work such as Process Art and Fluxus than with Modernist Abstraction. The issues of scale and information displacement bring Robert Smithson to mind as well.<sup>6</sup>



*Secular Response 2 A. M.*, Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland





For *Secular Response 2 A.M.*, Calame took stain tracings from streets and sidewalks of Los Angeles and New York City's financial district, displaced them onto the trading floor of the New York Stock Exchange, and arranged them in "constellations" filling all the pedestrian space. This composition was then traced once again to produce the 15,000 square foot drawing from which the installation was created. By importing stain images from the street, and inserting or "choreographing" them into "constellations" on the trading floor, Calame invokes an analogy – a "parade of events" that fuses or links a multitude of imagined actions and events from the pedestrian world outside with the interior of this charged site.<sup>7</sup> While the visually seductive and vibrant imagery of *Secular Response 2 A.M.* is certainly far removed from its source in gritty stains, its genesis in stains transposed onto the New York Stock Exchange site – and what that symbolically represents – informs and significantly impacts one's experience of the piece.

In the spring of 2001, Calame gained access to the New York Stock Exchange trading floor, in itself an amazing feat that required convincing New York Stock Exchange officials at the highest level of the value of creating this work of art using such an unusual process.<sup>8</sup> Only after unremitting efforts throughout the course of six months were permissions cleared and negotiations finalized. In May of 2001, over the course of two weekends Calame worked with twenty-five assistants in

alternating shifts day and night on the New York Stock Exchange floor. Each section of the resulting 15,000 square foot drawing was carefully marked and coded in relationship to its location on the floor, then referenced in a diagrammatic map. (see fig. 1) To create *Secular Response 2 A.M.* Calame used a two-dimensional "viewfinder" placed over this diagram (see fig. 2), to select the excerpts to be used for the MOCA Cleveland gallery walls. Over the course of six weeks in early 2003, Calame and her assistant Eri Koppers unrolled the immense drawing. Each panel of Mylar was cleaned, re-rolled, and grouped according to its location on the trading floor. Sixty rolls that formed part of the area to be excerpted by the walls of MOCA Cleveland were put aside, the other one hundred forty rolls were put back into storage.

During the following months, Calame and Koppers put the drawing together on the studio floor like a gigantic puzzle, overlaid the sections with Mylar and working directly on the floor, meticulously painted the silhouette of the stain constellations visible below. Wearing masks for protection from the paint's toxic fumes, Calame and her assistants painted the twenty-nine Mylar panels, each twelve feet high by five feet wide, with not one but two coats of enamel paint to produce this enormous painting.

So the question remains: Why the New York Stock Exchange floors and why undertake such an



Installing *Secular Response 2 A. M* at MOCA Cleveland

Olympian task? For Calame, the process, however arduous, and choice of site are part of a conceptual framework she has established to visualize and communicate systems of information.<sup>9</sup> Economics, for the artist, is one of three systems of knowledge through which to understand and come to terms with the impermanence of life. As one of the world's major economic forces, the New York Stock Exchange is of primary interest to her. This fascination, rooted as much in what she does not know about the New York Stock Exchange as in what she does, revolves around one central fact: "It's the epicenter of Global Capitalism," the locus of immense power and energy.<sup>10</sup> As the world's most important marketplace, the New York Stock Exchange and the transactions that happen there wield tremendous power over people and societies everywhere – in this country and around the world. This was even more salient in 2000 at the height of the Internet and telecommunications mania when fortunes rose rampantly only to be followed by the precipitous crash of the technology bubble. The stock market was and continues today to be constantly in the news, on the radio, and part of everyday life. It is an inescapable fact of life, one that cannot be ignored.

Delineating, displacing and recontextualizing the topography of urban streets and sidewalks within the framework of the New York Stock Exchange floors is Calame's response to this key aspect of

our world. Calame's work parallels that of a number of artists today who explore the increasingly complex and interconnected landscape of contemporary life. The German artist Franz Ackermann investigates contemporary urban spaces in his dynamic paintings by portraying "mental maps" of his travels. The Ethiopian born New York artist Julie Mehretu's densely layered renderings of imploding architectural spaces convey a dynamic but fractured infrastructure of contemporary life. In *Secular Response 2 A. M*, Calame references and vividly reinterprets one of the most powerful and central nerve centers in the contemporary landscape.

In documenting and transforming residual human activity in the form of stains from city streets reconfigured onto the footprint of the "epicenter of global capitalism," Calame renders a visual imprint of our urban culture. It is, however, an imprint of unabashed visual delight. Ultimately, it is this conflation of compelling sensual appeal and the implied or imagined memory of real, gritty events and actions, underscored by referencing key issues of money and power in the global arena that lends *Secular Response 2 A. M* its own extraordinary power. •

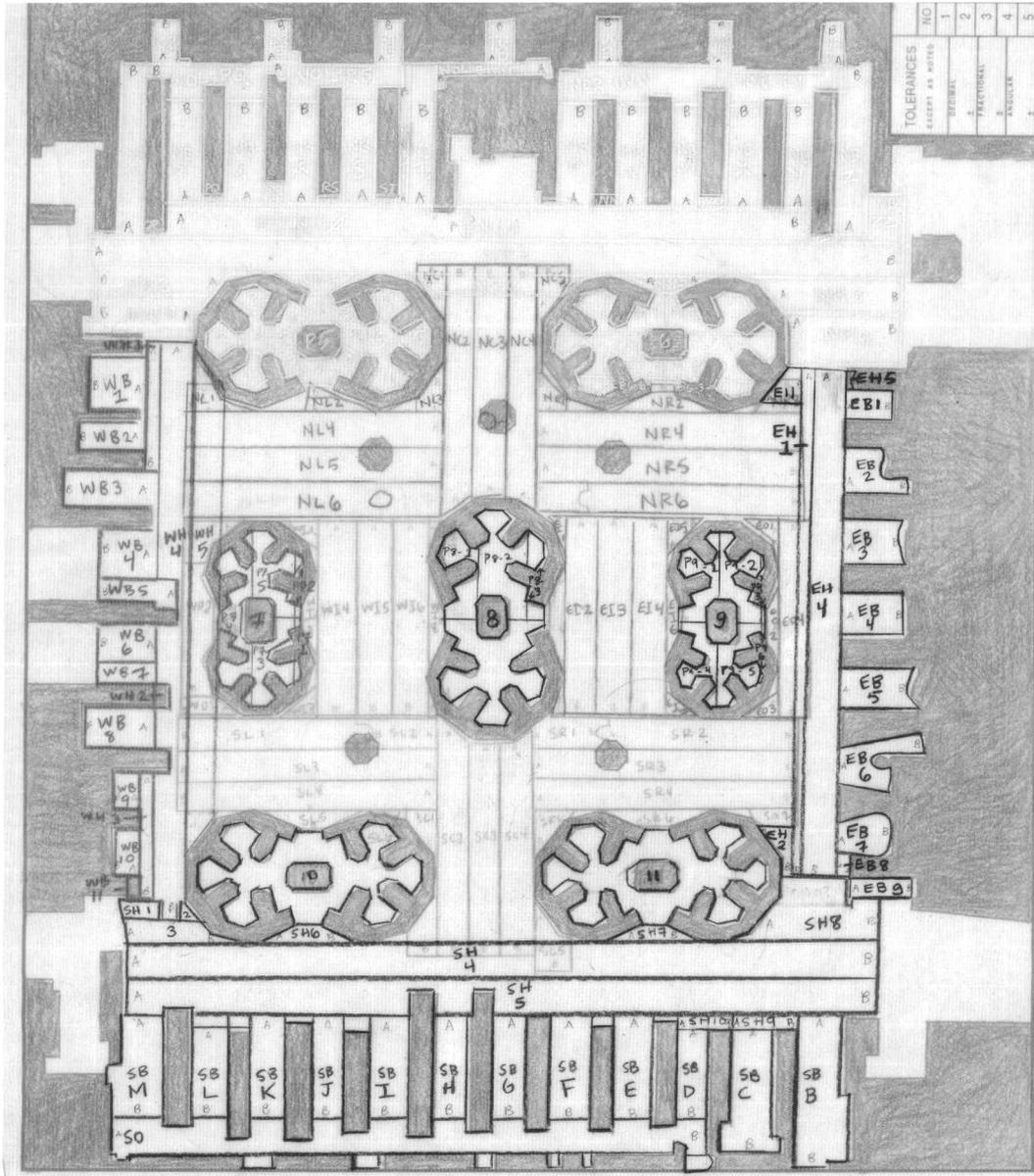


Fig. 1  
 Ingrid Calame  
 Diagrammatic map representing the 15,000 square foot drawing  
 (in sections) made on the New York Stock Exchange floors.

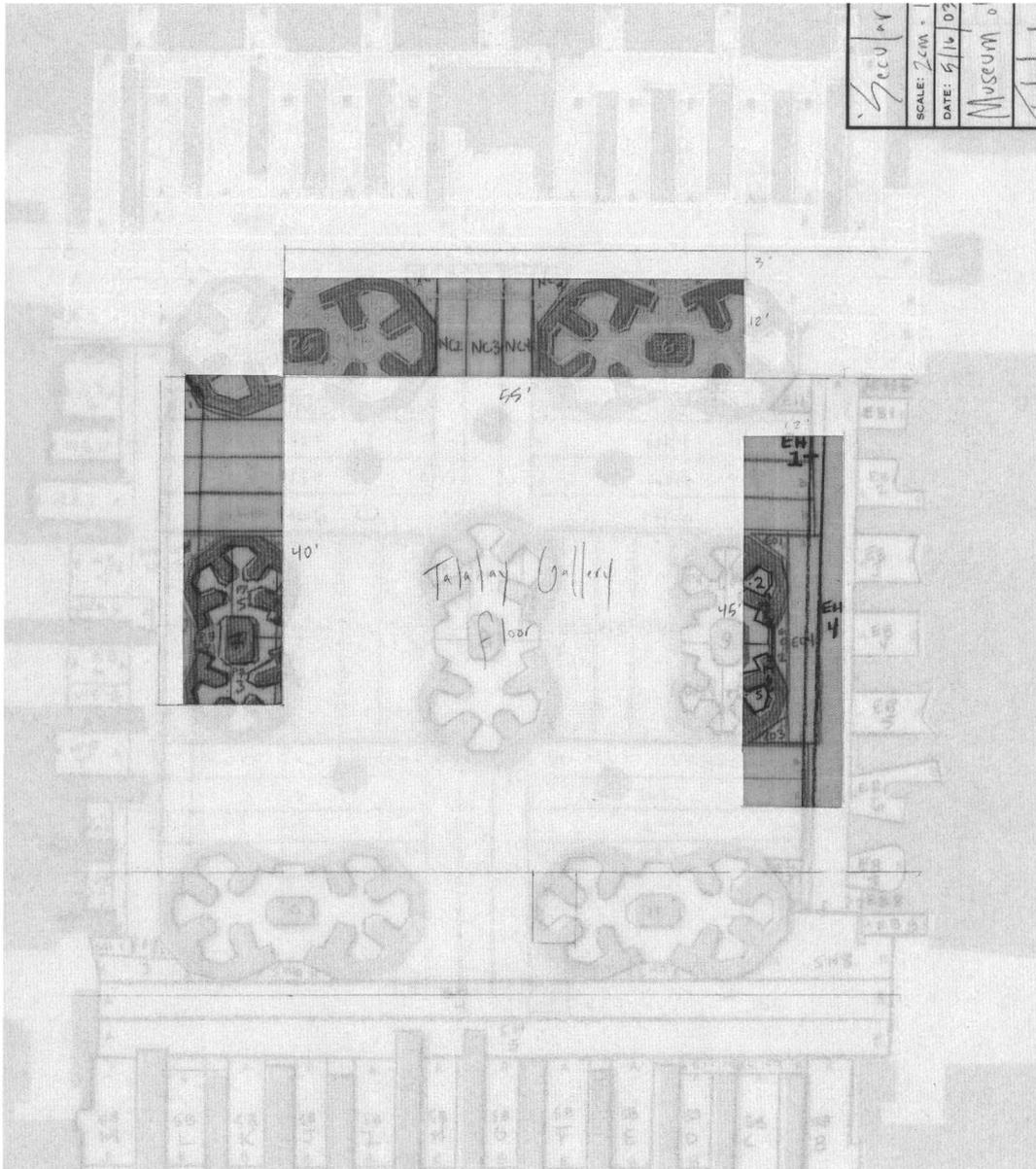


Fig. 2  
 Ingrid Calame  
 Diagram representing excerpts of the New York Stock Exchange floor drawing  
 identified with a "viewfinder" used to create *Secular Response 2A. M* at MOCA Cleveland.



Ingrid Calame installing *Secular Response 2 A. M* at MOCA Cleveland

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Dana Friss-Hanson, *Painting Once Removed* (Houston: Contemporary Art Museum, 1998), 50.

<sup>2</sup> Calame in conversation with the author, December 2002.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Calame in conversation with the author, April 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Calame in conversation with the author, March 2003.

<sup>6</sup> Many of Smithson's well known projects such as his nonsites, mirror displacements and earthworks transpose materials and images from one site onto another. See Ann Reynolds, "Mapping Dislocations" in *Robert Smithson, Mapping Dislocations* (New York: James Cohan Gallery, 2001).

<sup>7</sup> Calame in conversation with the author, May 2003.

<sup>8</sup> Correspondence, emails, memos and contracts related to this effort were voluminous, amounting to numerous large binders.

<sup>9</sup> For Calame, there are three systems of knowledge with which to negotiate meaning and come to terms with the impermanence of life: religion, economics and science. Each one of these has provided the basis for a sequence of wall works. Out of the first system (religion) came *Secular Response 1* which included four mural projects in 2000 (Deitch Projects in New York, Galerie Peter Kilchmann in Zurich, UCLA Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, and the Aspen Art Museum), all created with tracings placed on the aisles of the Ardsley United Methodist Church in Ardsely, New York. The second system (economics) resulted in the New York Stock Exchange project and the *Secular Response 2 A. M* installation at MOCA Cleveland, and upcoming variations at the Rose Art Museum and James Cohan Gallery. A third body of work, *Secular Response 3*, yet to be created, will focus on science as a cognitive system and will entail tracing constellations of stains on the floors of an observatory.

<sup>10</sup> Calame in conversation with the author, Fall 2002.

## BIOGRAPHY

Ingrid Calame lives and works in Los Angeles

Calame received a B.F.A. from the State University of New York at Purchase (1987), attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Skowhegan, Maine (1995) and received an M.F.A. in Art and Film from the California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, California (1996).

Since first exhibiting in 1995, Ingrid Calame has shown her work in the United States, Germany, Denmark, Italy, Switzerland and Japan. She has participated extensively in group exhibitions most notably *Painting Pictures: Painting and Media in the Digital Age*, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Wolfsburg, Germany in 2003; *We Love Painting: Contemporary American Art from the Misumi Collection*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; *Officina America*, Galleria d'Arte Moderna – Instituzione del Comune di Bologna, Bologna,

Italy; *Whitney Biennial 2000*, Whitney Museum of American Art; *COLA 2000*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, 2000; *Color me Blind!*, Wurtembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart, Germany, 1999; *Color Volume*, Kunsthallen Brandts Klaedefabrik, Odense, Denmark, 1999; *Postmark: An Abstract Effect*, SITE Santa Fe, New Mexico, 1999; and *Abstract Painting Once Removed*, Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, 1998. Calame's recent solo exhibitions include Karyn Lovegrove Gallery, Los Angeles in 2002; Galerie Rolf Ricke, Cologne, Germany and Il Capricorno, Venice in 2001. Calame's work was presented in solo exhibitions in 2000 at Deitch Projects in New York City and at Galerie Peter Kilchmann in Zurich. She is currently represented in the United States by Karyn Lovegrove Gallery, Los Angeles and James Cohan Gallery, New York.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to Karyn Lovegrove for her assistance in the initial planning stages of the exhibition in Cleveland.

To Libby McNeece and Linda Casale, sincere thanks and appreciation for graciously hosting the artist during her residency in Cleveland.

For his expertise, knowledge, efficiency and commitment, the artist commends Ray Juare, MOCA Cleveland's Exhibition Manager and Designer.

For installing *Secular Response 2 A. M.* at MOCA Cleveland, many thanks to:

Jason Byers  
Amy Casey  
Kate Lucas  
Kurt Hallsman  
Ray Juare  
Paul Sydorenko  
Jason Yoh

For studio production of *Secular Response 2 A. M.* in Los Angeles:

The artist extends special thanks to:

John Wagner,  
production manager.

Eri Koppers for her consistent and focused help on all drawing and painting fronts.

Shelby Roberts for a world of creativity, support and love.

For painting *Secular Response 2 A. M.*:

Allison Cortson  
Andrew Falkowski  
Jill Newman  
Melissa Thorne

For the New York Stock Exchange project in New York Ingrid Calame extends special thanks to:

Richard Grasso, Chairman and CEO of the New York Stock Exchange.

The Members of the New York Stock Exchange.

Steven Wheeler, Archivist for the New York Stock Exchange.

Jeffrey Deitch.

For drawing on the New York Stock Exchange:

Sarah Adams  
Jordan Anderson  
Gabriela Bunader  
Stephen Carter  
Jennifer Denike  
Terence Hammonds  
Chris Jahncke  
Patricia Johnson  
Jose Landoni

Sam Lewitt  
Jay Lizo  
Rudy Lopez  
Constanze Mirré  
Noah Peffer  
Lynne Pidel  
Alejandra Seeber  
John Trendler  
John Wagner

Michelle Lopez for housing.

For street stain tracing:

Paolo Aroa  
Tom Burke  
Louis Cameron  
Lucio Castro  
Marisa Commisso  
Nuno de Campos  
Dameon Lester  
Chris Loomis  
Simon Obarzanek  
Jason Tomme

Triangle Workshop for studio space in New York.

May 30–August 17, 2003

**The Global Arena: Money, Power and Politics**

Three one-person exhibitions presented simultaneously  
that address a common theme:

**Ingrid Calame: Secular Response 2 A. M**

**Mark Lombardi: Global Networks**

**Julian LaVerdiere: Firmament: Upon Which Time Has No Mark By Definition**

Also on view in the video gallery:

**Hiraki Sawa: Dwelling**

MOCA

MUSEUM OF  
CONTEMPORARY ART  
CLEVELAND

8501 Carnegie Avenue  
Cleveland, Ohio 44106

p 216.421.8671  
f 216.421.0737

[www.MOCAcleveland.org](http://www.MOCAcleveland.org)