MATRIX is supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Federal agency.
The works in this exhibition span the various media in which Edda Renouf has worked to date. Paintings, drawings, and prints in various techniques are represented. The latter, a portfolio entitled \textit{Clusters}, consists of eight works and in a sense it forms the core and provides the overall theme in imagery and title for the exhibition as a whole.

The three paintings in the exhibition share Renouf's technique of removing threads from the canvas. Most painters go to elaborate lengths to neutralize the material on which they paint. Old master processes include sizing or gessoing the surface to make it as smooth as possible. Although \textit{a la prima} painting has been done for decades, the image is imposed on the surface by the artist who has come to the unprepared surface with a predefined image.

Renouf, to the contrary, starts with a bare piece of linen and, holding it to the light, analyzes the warp and woof of the weave to see what structure, movement, or rhythm wants to be released. There are possible patterns and densities in her mind, but only when the potential of the specific piece of linen has been considered does the process of creating those images begin.

That process is a relatively simple one. With scissors and a needle, threads are pulled and cut in varying lengths to create the pattern. The residual nodule depends on the length of the end of the thread. Once the image has been created, the canvas is sized and covered with a series of thin acrylic washes until the desired density of color is achieved. The surface is then sanded and smoothed prior to the application of additional glazes in another color. The second color tends to build up more heavily in the valleys of the surface, less so on the tops of the nodules, thereby creating highlights and luminosity.

Because of the rectilinearity of the weaving process one would expect all of the resulting image to be highly grid-like. It is perhaps this expectation that has caused viewers and critics to associate Renouf's work with that of Agnes Martin. While this is true to a certain extent, the process of removing threads weakens the structure of the linen and subtle curves and undulations are introduced. Rather than imposing a grid upon the grid of the canvas, Renouf is assisting patterns and relationships to be revealed and manipulating those relationships in the process.

This deep concern with the integrity of the material of the object has been referred to as "an almost mystical involvement with the physical materials of art" (Bret Waller). This involvement, and the sense of mysticism, is even more dramatic in Renouf's drawings than in her paintings.

Again, her technique is relatively simple to explain. She applies pastel chalk to a sheet of white or natural colored paper. The placement on the page varies but the richness or saturation of the chalk is thick and sometimes applied in two colors. This field of chalk is then manipulated; in the objects on view here three have been incised with a sharp needle, one has been erased.

The drawings have titles relating to music or sounds. Music is important to Renouf, as are the sounds of the
city, countryside, or wherever she may be working. The drawings from the Percussion Drawing series, with their tension of upper chalk band contrasting with the blank paper below, the two connected by biting angular incisions, seem to shriek like the New York environment which inspired them. The Hidden Sounds drawings, on the other hand, have a sonorous harmonic density which can be related to the overtones of modern repetitive music.

The print portfolio, Clusters, includes examples of the sharp, incisive imagery as well as the more overall, tonal images. In each instance the technique is appropriate to the effect desired; engraving produces the sharp, aquatint the soft, with variations and combinations as well. Clusters is the third portfolio Renouf has produced to date, Traces and Marks having preceded it; a fourth, Overtones, will be published later this year.

Renouf has been associated with minimalist art. At the outset this is understandable due to the monochromatic nature of her paintings and the sparse elements used to create her imagery. A case could be made for the contrary view, however, for the richness and deep saturation of the earth tone sienna which she uses and the techniques employed in graphic work as well as painting show an ability to create a subtle wholeness in which the minute detail as well as the totality are limitless.

Renouf was born in Mexico, has lived and studied in Europe, and now lives in New York. She is represented in this country by the Blum-Helman Gallery.

Works in MATRIX:


Hidden Sounds 4, 1977, Incised lines on pastel chalk, Arches paper, 21" x 18 1/2". Lent by Dorothy and Herbert Vogel, New York City.

Hidden Sounds 13, 1977, Incised lines on pastel chalk, Arches paper, 21" x 18 1/2". Lent by the Blum-Helman Gallery.

Hidden Sounds 3, 1977, Erased marks and pastel chalk, Arches paper, 21" x 18 1/2". Lent by the Blum-Helman Gallery.

Percussion Drawing 16, 1977, Incised lines on pastel chalk, Arches paper, 22" x 22". Lent by the Blum-Helman Gallery.

Clusters, a portfolio of eight prints, printed by Doris Simmelink at Crown Point Press, Oakland, Published by Parasol Press, Ltd., New York, in an edition of 25 with 10 artists proofs on Rives BFK, July 1976. Sheet size: 8 11/16" x 9 1/16" Plate size: 7 1/8" x 7 1/8":

1. soft ground etching
2. hard ground etching and aquatint
3. aquatint
4. engraving
5. hard ground etching and aquatint
6. hard ground etching
7. dry point and aquatint
8. soft ground etching and aquatint
Lent by the artist.
Selected one-woman exhibitions:
Yvon Lambert, Paris '72;
Francoise Lambert, Milan '73, '76; Konrad Fischer, Düsseldorf '74, MTL Gallery, Brussels '74, '77; Marilena Bonomo, Bari '75; Rolf Preisig, Basel '76; Julian Pretto, NYC '76; Daniel Weinberg, San Francisco '77; Kathryn Markel Gallery, NYC '77.

Selected group exhibitions:
Museum of Modern Art, NYC, Recent Acquisitions '72; Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris, Eight Paris Biennale '73; Kunstmuseum, Düsseldorf, Prospekt '73; Temporary space, Rome, Contemporanea '73; Kunstmuseum, Münster, Geplante Malerei '74; Arts Council of Great Britain (traveling exhibition), Prints Show: Parasol Press '75; Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection '75; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, ARC 2, Paris, Tendances Actuelle de la Nouvelle Peinture Americain '75; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Prints Show: Parasol Press '76; P.S. 1, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, Long Island City, Painting '77; Museum of Modern Art, NYC, Extraordinary Women '77; Museum of Modern Art, NYC, American Drawn and Matched '77; Lowe Gallery, Syracuse, Critic's Choice: A Loan Exhibition of Contemporary Painting from the New York Gallery Season, 1976-77 '77; University of Michigan Museum of Art, Detroit, Works from the Collection of Dorothy and Herbert Vogel '77.

Selected bibliography by Renouf:

Selected bibliography about Renouf:
Betz, Margaret. "New Editions", Art News vol.76 no. 7 (September '77), p. 104.
Anon., "Prints and Photographs Published: Edda Renouf", The Print Collector's Newsletter vol. VIII no. 2 (May-June '77), p. 44.

NOTE: The artist will give a MATRIX Evening Lecture on Tuesday, January 10, 1978 at 8 p.m. Admission is free.