

# Heads in the cloud: 'Spatial Disclosures' considers shared consciousness

Artists Nan Tull and Nona Hershey join forces at SOPRAFINAGallery.

By Cate McQuaid Globe Correspondent, Updated March 14, 2023, 1:55 p.m.



Nona Hershey, "Sensors 12 (Pyrocumulus)," 2022. The watercolor, graphite powder, and gouache collage is part of the "Spatial Disclosures" exhibit at SOPRAFINAGallery. JULIA FEATHERINGILL

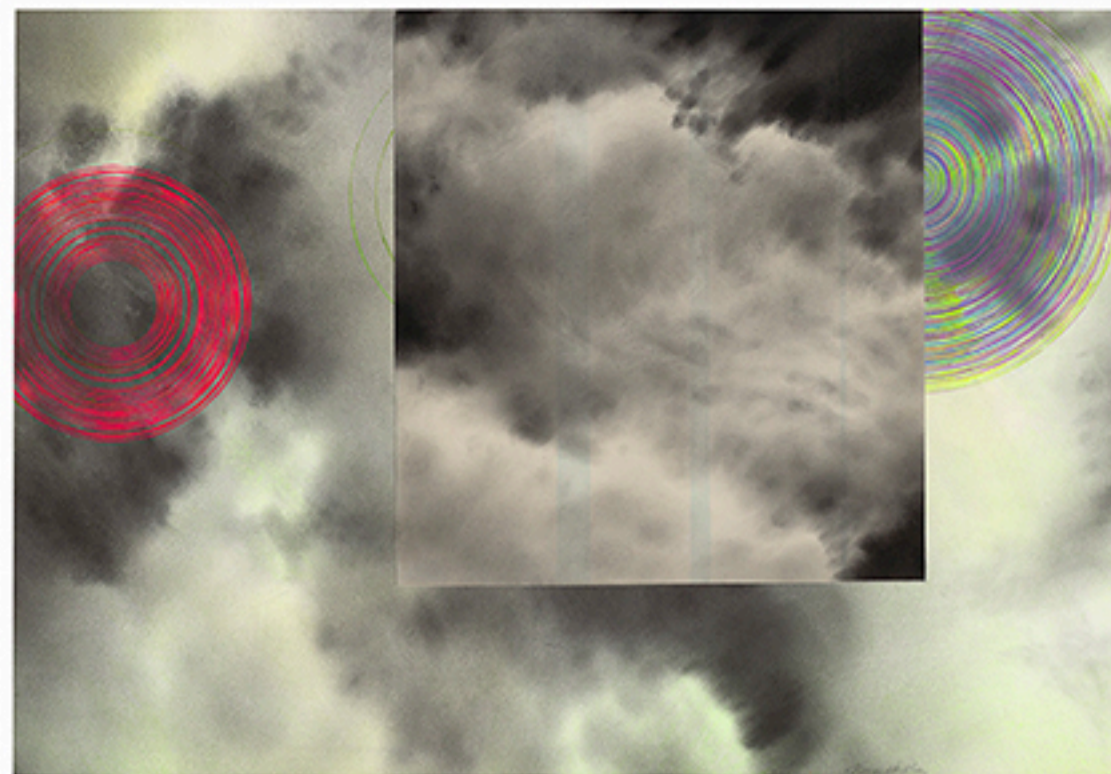
How have tablets, phones, and computers altered our shared consciousness? Nona Hershey's mixed-media drawings of clouds consider the static. "Although we can't see the signals that all of our devices emit," she writes in her artist's statement, "their energy is palpable, changing our perception of time and place."

"Spatial Disclosures" at SOPRAFINAGallery, featuring Hershey's drawings and Nan Tull's sensual encaustic paintings (made with pigment-infused wax), is a sprightly two-stepping show. Hershey's works leap and buzz. Tull's are anchored in the earth and the body.

For British landscape painter [John Constable](#), clouds were "[an organ of sentiment](#)," literary scholar Mary Jacobus notes in her book "[Romantic Things: A Tree, a Rock, a Cloud](#)." [Gerhard Richter](#)'s cloudscapes of the late 1960s and early '70s, explored the binary of realism and abstraction, a picture of how the mind perceives.

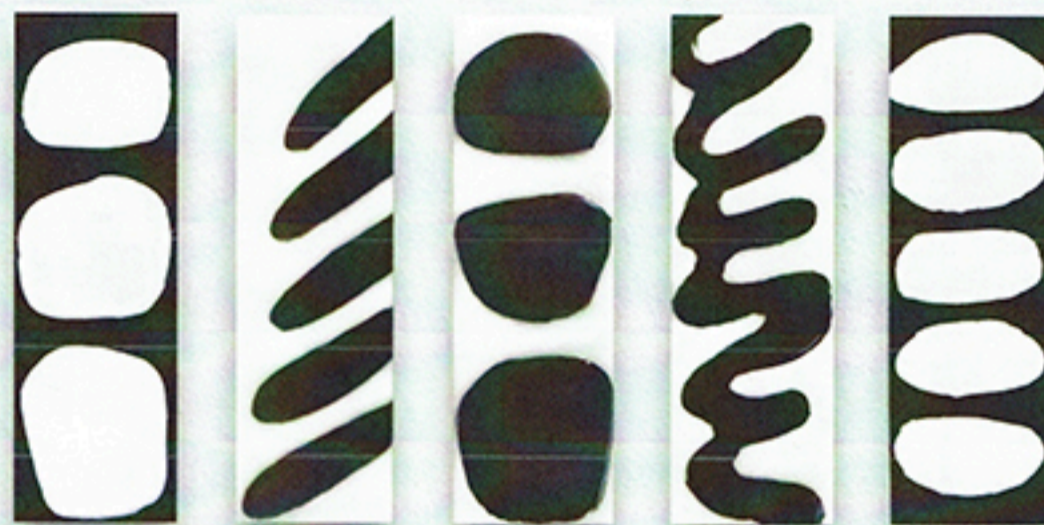
Hershey's clouds embody a different duality. They're at once serene and frenetic.

In "Sensors 11," the clouds, in breaths of graphite powder, seem to shift and refract through vertical planes, as if we're viewing them through several lenses. Hard-edged grids of color peek through. The eye ping-pongs back and forth through space — a smaller grid suggests great distance, but others twist and tumble through the clouds like toys underfoot in a playroom. It's dreamy until you step on a Lego.



Nona Hershey, "Disquiet 6," 2021. Watercolor, graphite powder, and gouache collage. JULIA FEATHERINGILL

Hershey uses collage, the medium of disjuncture, in "Disquiet 6," slicing a section out of one drawing and putting another in its place. Yet the images strangely match. In the outer drawing, concentric circles in lurid tones might be hot spots radiating energy. The inner drawing cuts off one of them, but shadowy ripples pulsate in that inner sky. There's no escaping the hot spots. They echo everywhere.



Nan Tull, "Boneyard Series," 2023. Encaustic on wood panel. JACKLYN BOYLAND

Tull's blocky encaustics have none of that ethereality. In a texture luscious as fondant, "Boneyard Series" makes abstractions of bony shapes — skulls, spines. Their fluid lines and archetypal simplicity recall [Matisse's plant cutouts](#). It's hard to tell whether white went on first or whether black did, so spatially foreground and background appear to toggle. What seemed like a simple figure/ground relationship is more mysterious.

This show sends us into unnerving territory, upending viewers' expectations of space and examining the foggy boundaries of self. But the works' beauty restores us to our senses, which may be the only way home.

**SPATIAL DISCLOSURES: Work by Nona Hershey and Nan Tull**

At SOPRAFINAGALLERY, 450 Harrison Ave., through March 31. 617-728-0770, [www.soprafina.com](http://www.soprafina.com)