

*Richard Tuttle: Loose Leaf Notebook Drawings*

For Richard Tuttle, “one of the jobs of the artist is criticism.” Consistently (and, for some viewers, infuriatingly) he destabilizes received notions of the nature of artwork; undermines the critical pretensions that determine its meaning and value; and elaborates, deconstructs, expands on, and blurs fixed definitions of painting, sculpture, and drawing. His work operates in the margins between high and low, treasure and detritus, order and chaos, and matter and space, and it invites the spectator to suspend expectations and focus attention on the object itself, its material construction, and its presence in its surroundings.

On view in this gallery are Tuttle’s *Loose Leaf Notebook Drawings*, an extensive series of suites of watercolors that he embarked on in the early 1980s. Each drawing consists of a few fleeting strokes of gouache that appear suspended against the fixed vertical lines of an upended sheet of low-grade loose-leaf paper. The gouache has bled and formed pools, causing the delicate paper to buckle; indeed, chance has intervened to challenge the artist’s hand, subvert the two-dimensionality of the drawings, and underscore their status as autonomous objects in space. With just a few strokes of his brush, Tuttle shows that what is seemingly simple is actually complex.

The Honolulu Museum of Art has 60 suites of *Loose Leaf Drawings* in its permanent collection, gifts from Dorothy and Herbert Vogel as part of their campaign to disperse their extensive and important collection of Modernist art to museums nationwide. Tuttle himself curated the distribution of the drawings, meticulously putting together each suite, sequencing them with resonance, and advising museums (including this one) on their framing and display.