

New Editions 2014

Nancy Friedemann

Untitled (2014)

Four-color woodcut on Sekishu paper, 30 x 55 inches. Edition of 10. Printed and published by Constellation Studios, Lincoln, NE. \$4,500.



Nancy Friedemann, *Untitled* (2014).

In the 16th century, Andalusian nuns brought lace and embroidery techniques to Colombia, where the imported vocabulary of Hispano-Moresque motifs was expanded by native flora and fauna, resulting in a distinctive art of mantillas and shawls with the delicacy and resilience of gossamer. This hand art has fostered continuity from generation to generation, offering reassurance that life persists. Colombian painter Nancy Friedemann's enamel-on-mylar lace "drawings" share the reverence for handmade textiles that marks the work of contemporary artists such as Miriam Schapiro, but have their roots in the specific traditions of Colombia.

This large and complicated woodcut—more than four feet long—is, remarkably, her first work in the medium. (She had made one, much simpler, lithograph at Tamarind in 2006.) In a sea of black, fragile white lines delineate an intricate botanic network—roses, eucalyptus, a spider web—that stretches across the upper image; on the right, a branch supports a pair of parrots; but below this vision of

decorous nature a handful of lines suggest endless water, out of which peeks the roof of a house, the wheels of drowned cars, and a flailing hand.

The juxtaposition of delicate beauty and destruction suggests resilience in the face of loss, but whether the inundation is a personal sorrow or a shared disaster like the deadly 1985 Nevado del Ruiz mudslides is left open to interpretation.

Friedemann's woodcut is one of the first publications of Constellation Studios, the new Nebraska-based printshop founded by the well-known woodcut artist Karen Kunc [see *Art in Print*, Vol. 2, No. 2]. Kunc understands paper and she understands ink. For this print, artist and printer selected Sekishu, one of the oldest Japanese *washi* papers. While apparently fragile it is amazingly strong, and it drapes over your hands like lace when you take it from the drawer. Printed in two shades of black, with floral areas hand-rubbed by the artist with transparent yellow ochre and burnt red, the image has the bruised patina of old silk, enhancing the sense of a treasured heirloom. ■ —Penelope Smith