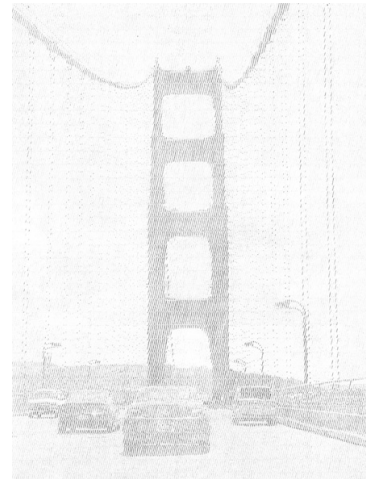


**For Immediate Release**  
September 22, 2009  
Updated: Oct. 1



**SFMOMA COMMISSIONS SUITE OF DRAWINGS BY BRITISH ARTIST  
EWAN GIBBS FOR HIS FIRST SOLO MUSEUM EXHIBITION**

From January 16 to June 27, 2010, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) will present *Ewan Gibbs: San Francisco*. Made up of works commissioned for the museum's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the exhibition premieres 18 of Gibbs's urban portraits—drawn by hand—that depict views of the city familiar to visitors and residents alike. Using his signature visual language of marks derived from knitting patterns, Gibbs produces drawings that challenge the recognizability of their subject matter by reducing the image to something more pixilated, abstract, and nearly absent. Throughout the anniversary season, SFMOMA will present a series of exhibitions, including a number of special commissions and acquisitions, under the heading *75 Years of Looking Forward* illustrating the story of the artists, collectors, cultural mavericks, and San Francisco leaders who founded, built, and have animated the museum.



Ewan Gibbs, *San Francisco*, 2009; commissioned by SFMOMA, courtesy the artist and Timothy Taylor Gallery, London; © Ewan Gibbs

*Ewan Gibbs: San Francisco* is the artist's first solo museum exhibition. The work has been commissioned by SFMOMA and curated by Henry Urbach, SFMOMA Helen Hilton Raiser Curator of Architecture and Design. The drawings are based on snapshots the artist took while visiting San Francisco last year and feature well-known landmarks such as the Golden Gate Bridge, Alcatraz, and Coit Tower seen within their urban context.

Urbach states, "Gibbs's delicate and dense drawings present iconic, postcardlike images of cityscapes we all know. But rendered through his singular technique of using marks that are almost not there, they hover between photography and drawing, between the documented and the half remembered. His work brings us towards the artist's own absorption in translating an image into something ineffable."

Approximately 11 by 8 inches each, the pencil drawings are entirely composed of knitting pattern symbols—minuscule slashes or circles—on paper marked with a faint grid. Working from a photograph, Gibbs translates the image into delicate, discrete pencil strokes. The result is an image that is almost recognizable from a distance, yet significantly more abstract—almost invisible—at close range. Gibbs's way of working appears, on the surface, to be a kind of neo-pointillism or Impressionism, while, in fact, his interests and the work's visual effects owe more to the legacy of Minimalism and Conceptualism.

*more*

“When I first came across the knitting charts at a London flea market,” Gibbs explains, referring to his discovery more than 15 years ago, “they made perfect sense to me as a functional language and a practical means of depicting an image. Each code represents a different color or type of stitch. I also love the fact that the patterns are based on a grid, which has served artists for hundreds of years as a way of breaking down an image. By using the grid I discovered I could work my way along, row by row, in much the same way a computer printer works. This, in turn, solved one of the biggest anxieties that I and perhaps most artists have: knowing when a work is finished.”

Gibbs, who was the featured artist in the 2009 Armory Show in New York, initially became known for his drawings of hotel room interiors, which were inspired by pictures found in travel brochures. Since then he has completed numerous series of drawings based on hotel facades, baseball, urban street scenes, and major landmarks in New York, London, and Paris.

Born in 1973, Gibbs graduated from Goldsmiths College of Art in 1996 and currently lives and works outside of London. He has exhibited internationally, with recent solo exhibitions at Richard Gray Gallery, Chicago (2010); Baldwin Gallery, Aspen (2009); Timothy Taylor Gallery, London (2008); Lora Reynolds Gallery, Austin (2008); and Paul Morris Gallery, New York (2007). Group exhibitions include: The Armory Show (2009); *Attention to Detail* (curated by Chuck Close), The FLAG Art Foundation, New York (2008); *Agnes Martin, Vija Celmins, and Ewan Gibbs*, Timothy Taylor Gallery, London (2006); *Originality and Repetition: The Grid in Contemporary Works on Paper*, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (2005); and *Surfacing: Contemporary Drawing*, ICA, London (1998). His work is in the collections of major institutions including SFMOMA; MoMA, New York; the Tate Gallery, London; and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

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**Museum hours:** Open daily (except Wednesdays): 11 a.m. to 5:45 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:45 p.m. Summer hours (Memorial Day to Labor Day): open at 10 a.m. Closed Wednesdays and the following public holidays: New Year’s Day, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas. The museum is open the Wednesday between Christmas and New Year’s Day.

**Koret Visitor Education Center:** Open daily (except Wednesdays): 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; open late Thursdays, until 8:30 p.m. Summer hours: open at 10 a.m.

**Admission prices:** adults: \$15; seniors and students: \$9; SFMOMA members and children 12 and under: free. Admission is free the first Tuesday of each month and half-price on Thursdays after 6 p.m.

SFMOMA is easily accessible by Muni, BART, Golden Gate Transit, SamTrans, and Caltrain. Hourly, daily, and monthly parking is available at the SFMOMA Garage at 147 Minna Street. For parking information, call 415.348.0971.

**Visit our website at [sfmoma.org](http://sfmoma.org) or call 415.357.4000 for more information.**

SFMOMA is supported by a broad array of contributors committed to helping advance its mission. Major annual support is provided by Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, the Koret Foundation, and the Evelyn and

Walter Haas Jr. Fund. First Tuesdays are always free, thanks to AT&T. Thursday Nights at SFMOMA are sponsored by Banana Republic. KidstART free admission for children 12 and under is made possible by Charles Schwab & Co. Inc.

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