

Art

Sprawling, soaring "Naked Paper" exhibition lives up to its apt title.

Lightness, air, sense of floating

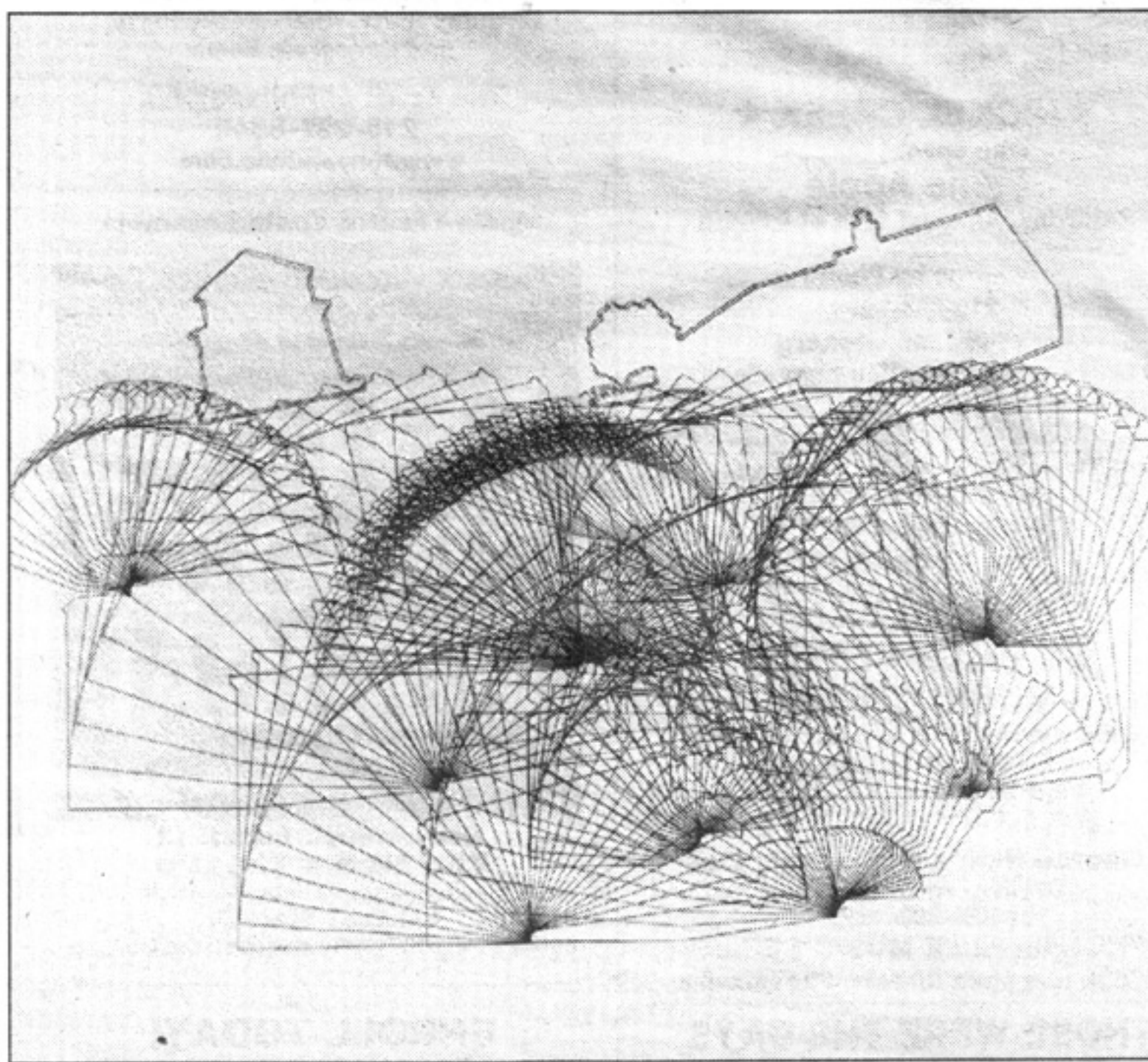
By Edith Newhall
FOR THE INQUIRER

Having recently seen a group show of the work of about 100 artists packed chockablock into a small gallery in New York's Chelsea district, Tower Gallery's sprawling "Naked Paper," which has corralled the efforts of a mere 22, came as something of a relief. This cool, high-ceilinged space can handle a mini-Whitney Biennial in the dog days of summer.

My first impression, and the one that stayed with me throughout this show, was of the lightness, air and sense of floating that much of this work — all of it unframed — expresses, either through its materials, its display, or both. The show's title couldn't be more apt.

I was so busy examining the lace and curling lines of Stephanie Beck's two walnut ink drawings, and wondering what the small, isolated smudgy spot in the middle of the paper was, that when I realized what she had actually drawn (and I won't ruin the fun), I laughed at myself. Talk about not seeing the forest for the trees.

It also took me a surprisingly long time to focus on the most ambitious work in the show, because it was so light and airy and all but floating, suspended in the middle of the gallery (creature of



Keary Rosen's "My Moby Dick" (2007), in graphite on paper, is among pieces by 22 artists on display at Tower Gallery, through Aug. 24.

habit that I am, I was following what was hanging on or from the walls, as all the other pieces are).

Tasja Keetman's *Corporealis*, comprising 14 panels of handmade paper printed with photographs of old medical illustrations and writing is an exhibition in and of itself. Displayed in pairs from suspension cables,

and illuminated from within by hanging lights, Keetman's lambent, mesmerizing work should have its own room someday.

Light seems to be flooding from Corey Antis' *Projector*, which looks like an abstraction based on the front of a movie projector, while the skin of the young woman in Randall Sellers'

Exeunt Omnes defines translucence.

As for more floating, there are two scroll-format drawings that hang from the wall, one very long piece by Kip Deeds, *Scroll*, that proceeds across the floor and tells a quasi-followable narrative that seems to begin with art school, which leads to Paris and New York, as art school is known to have done. Alexis Granwell's handsome abstract white-paint prints cascading down a black-paper scroll is more in tune with the Chinese scroll-painting tradition.

The airiest contributions to this exhibition are Hunter Stabler's meticulously rendered cut-outs; Jina Valentine's delicate, ominous nocturnal suburban-scape, *Go North/Go South*, an ink-jet print on abaca (a paper made of fiber from the leafstalk of a banana tree); Keary Rosen's pencil drawings of the outlines of figures; Norm Paris' etchings of athletes in motion; and Matt Neff's gossamer *Sugar Chandelier* — clearly inspired by Vik Muniz and others who use non-art materials to perfection, but nevertheless enchanting.

Tower Gallery, 969 N. Second St., 12 to 6 p.m. Wednesdays through Fridays, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays. 215-253-9874 or www.thetowergallery.com. Through Aug. 24.



Robert Goodman's painting "Egg" (2007), at Gallery Siano, to Aug. 11.

Summery summary

At some point in the near future, I'm sure Gallery Siano will begin to hew to a particular aesthetic, as it has already taken tentative steps toward doing. For the time being, though, there is its summer show, "Survey," a bright, good-natured three-ring circus that wants to be appreciated by everyone.

There's plenty to like in this show of mostly paintings. Of the painters working in various modes of abstraction — and who number 18 among the show's 27 artists — Jon Manteau is a scene-stealer with his *Template* of housepaint applied every which way to a large rectangle of plywood. Robert Goodman is no wallflower either, slashing circular strokes of vivid colors around an ovoid of yellow. On the gentler side, Donna Usher's paintings of floating, candy-colored, bubble-

like shapes stem from images envisioned while meditating.

Siano also seems to have a predilection for hard-edged geometric work, the most interesting examples of which include Douglas Witmer's modestly scaled paintings of floating bars of color on grayish fields, and Alex Paik's partly obscured alphabet letters on matte pastel backgrounds.

Among the more representational paintings that stand out are Miriam Singer's composition of streets and houses in a loose grid that can be read as an aerial view, a filmic series of views, or diaristic notations of travel through a city, and Rebecca Saylor Sack's winsome gestural, semi-abstracted landscape.

Gallery Siano, 309 Arch St., 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays. 215-629-2940 or www.galleriesiano.com. Through Aug. 11.