



THE LUMINOUS TRACE

Drawing and Writing in Metalpoint

Thea Burns

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Cover illustrations: (front and back cover): Susan Schwalb (b. 1944), *Strata #227* (1998), silver/aluminium/copperpoint on commercial clay-coated paper, 22.9 × 22.9 cm, artist's collection. (Photo: courtesy of the artist); (*back cover*) Raphael (1483–1520), *Studies for a Madonna and Child* (1509–1511), silverpoint on pink prepared paper, 14.3 × 11 cm, London, British Museum, 1866,0714.79. (© Trustees of the British Museum).

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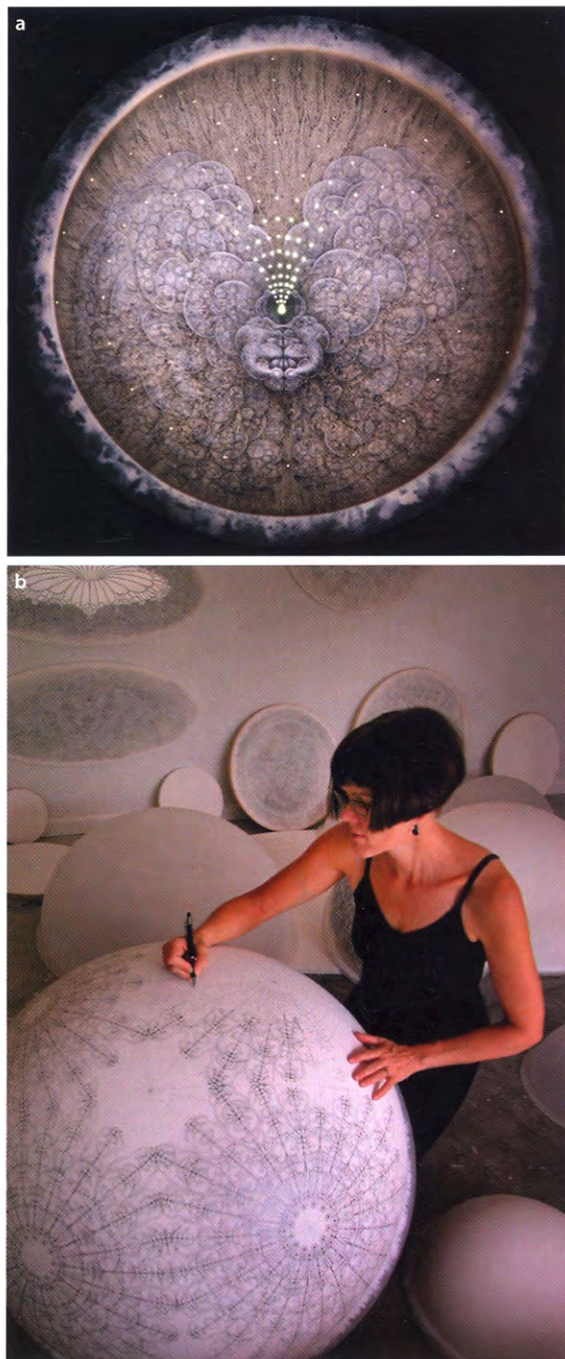


Figure 79 (a) Carol Prusa, *Breath* (2008), silverpoint, graphite, titanium white pigment with acrylic binder on acrylic hemisphere with fibre optics, 30.5 × 30.5 × 15.3 cm, artist's collection. (Photo: courtesy of Carol Prusa). (b) Carol Prusa at work. (Photo: courtesy of Carol Prusa)



The origins of metalpoint drawing (silverpoint, goldpoint, etc.) are widely thought to lie in classical antiquity. *The Luminous Trace* investigates the artefactual and literary evidence for the use of metalpoint from earliest times up to its revival, particularly in the United States, in the later 20th and early 21st century, reviewing the history and historiography of metalpoint and its use for drawing and writing. Metalpoint drawings are the central objects of this study and their physical features are the prime consideration, juxtaposed with the written evidence that may suggest why artefacts look as they do.

Thea Burns is an independent writer and researcher based in Kingston, Ontario. She formerly served as Helen H. Glaser Senior Paper Conservator for Special Collections in the Harvard College Library and Associate Professor in the Art Conservation Program, Queen's University.

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