



# THE SPACE BETWEEN Clara Crockett and Alan Crockett

*In the space between there exists a world of possibilities-  
anything can happen.*

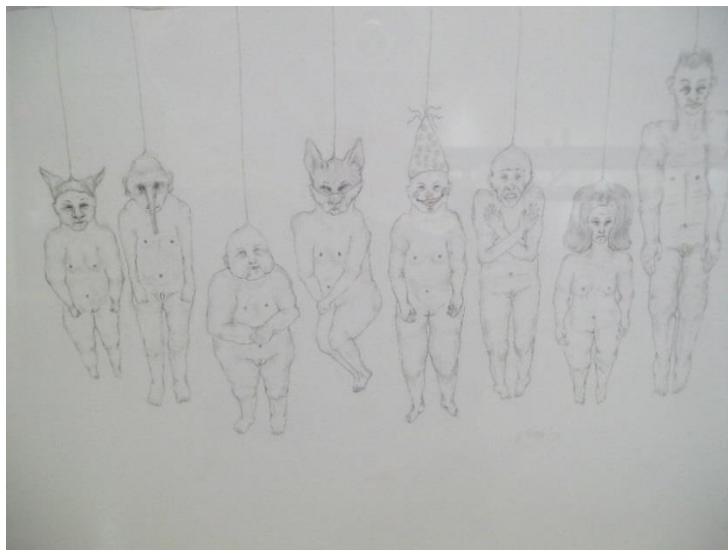
When two people co-exist, living and working side by side, there exists between them a space. This space, much like the interval between objects oriented in close proximity, contains a spark, a charge, where a world of possibility awaits. Some call it spatial tension, where an invisible force attracts objects that are so close, yet not quite touching; objects that not only relate and communicate, but also beckon to each other- they belong together.

For fifty years Clara and Alan Crockett have lived and worked together, each with their own voice, aesthetic, and sensibility. They reared a family, bought and sold homes, traveled, shared successes and disappointments, cooked meals, slept, woke, and laughed. Creatively. Soulfully. With respect and dignity.



Each have a body of work that celebrates the joy of life, the joy creating. We see large, explosive canvases and small, intimate worlds. As disparate as these works may first appear, they, in fact, not only relate and speak to each other, but they also beckon to each other- yes, they belong together.

**Clara Crockett's** early work in performance is echoed throughout her visual art. From puppets to drawings, collages, and small figures, the stage is ever-present with actors (some human some animal) enacting stories for us to witness. In her early work, Clara Crockett explored puppetry in



combination with movement. She constructed puppets to fit her hands and body. "I became part of them and they became part of me." The 1988 piece, "Breast Plate with Dual Head," was worn by Crockett as she performed in "Rites of a Sacrificial Dummy." The piece fit over her chest, with the second head placed over her left shoulder. Strings connected to the head were attached to her wrists, causing the head to move

as she moved. This reflects her philosophy of puppetry:

"What is the nature of being? What happens when something starts to become something that we think of as not alive, but through our movement it comes alive?"

The characters in Clara Crockett stories each have an equal voice, no matter what their physical make up, mask, or perceived affliction. Each player has a place on stage, an important role, and is acting in concert with the other cast members in the unfolding of the drama. "Something is going on and one doesn't have more power than the other."

*Pupa*, 2012

Unlike many drawings, Crockett's drawn figures seem real and plausible, they are executed with a clarity with which you know they have just taken a breath. Movement and motion of the figures is real, intentional and palpable.

*The Puppet Show: Second Cast, 2011*

***"In working in the miniature, every single thing is important. Every line on the paper counts."***

These drawings are small scale, and because of that, all of the elements become keenly important because they are all seen at once- the negative space, the angles of limbs in relation to one another, every line and gesture, each face and strand of hair. The small scale contributes to the intimate quality of Clara Crockett's drawings. The viewer needs to get right up to the drawings to really see what is going on, and once we are there we are involved- we are close enough to feel a shift from voyeur to participant. We are waiting for



our lines in the script. We identify with the character flaws we may see, the imperfections, with their fears and games. These are visual stories, not written stories, they are about the moment before... or the moment after.

***"The space is magical and everything is important."***

**Alan Crockett's** canvases are inspired by newspaper funnies, both the palette and madcap nature. They also embrace the challenges of abstract painting. "Funnies and abstraction are reconciled to create new relations between gesture and image, illusion and abstraction. They are playful, colorful, full of psychic





spills, halts, breaks and image scuffles resulting in a constant exchange and circulation of elements, none of which is absolutely definable.”

*Twinkling*, 2015, oil on canvas

The lines in Alan Crockett’s paintings are playful and capricious as they pierce, vector, echo forms, and interrupt- uniting the processes of painting and drawing. The mark making, erasures, and remarking illustrate time, delineates space and add an incredible amount of movement to the canvas. Like the funnies that inspire him, lines are used to infuse the picture plane with motion.

The seeds of Alan Crockett’s current body of work can be clearly seen in his earlier works. In *Over Exposure*, 1979, (right) his palette is established- pinks, reds, salmons fading into hues of crimson juxtaposed to teals, sky blues, and browns- blends of tertiary colors punctuated by crisp primary marks traveling across the canvas- dividing space, shifting



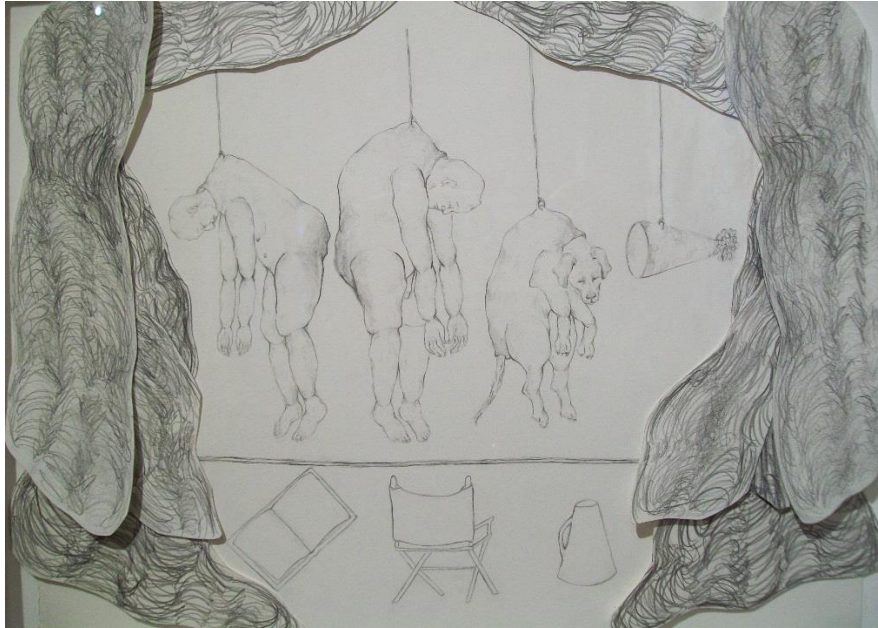
planes, altering perspectives. The earlier canvases offer more concrete images within the canvas. Faces, hands, and hats emerge. They become stepping stones to a journey through the canvas, employing lines and edges to connect.



*The Clown*, painted in 1987, is probably the closest to Clara Crockett’s in specific imagery. Figures are suspended or perhaps floating in a vessel, one leaning over the other’s back, heads cocked to the side, grasping an ear horn (or bugle?). They are clearly up to something, characters midstream in a story. We view them from under some ceiling or overhang, creating a theater-like

presentation. To the right of the canvas is a division containing what seems to be a brain.

The Crocketts each have mastered the method in which to add movement to their work, Alan in his canvases and Clara in her drawings. The Crocketts share a notion of ambiguity in their works; anything can happen. Life- and art- is what we bring to it, and it is ripe with possibilities. There are many more stories to unfold and be told. The puppets are waiting to come to life.



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**Edward Jones**

