



Clairvoyants, 2006, pencil on paper, 2" x 3"

In the drawings recently on view at Jonathan LeVine Gallery in New York, Philadelphia-based artist Randall Sellers combined a broad range of subconscious expressions, while introducing a highly self-aware reflection on the current state of society. Measuring a mere three to seven inches high, his miniature architectural and natural environments serve as a platform upon which cryptic narratives transpire.

Sellers approaches a sheet of paper with no more than a 0.3mm mechanical pencil and a pair of reading glasses. Rather than utilizing various source materials, he allows his thoughts and elaborate imagination guide his hand intuitively throughout an organic, yet meticulous process of drawing. Despite this unmediated method, he has cited several pivotal sources of inspiration that are particularly evident in works such as *Dire Tide* and *Clairvoyants*—namely his early childhood fascination with the topography of cities, as well as an attraction to sci-fi and futuristic imagery. As a counterbalance to the recurring recognizable city landmarks and the ultramodern, quasi-Jetson's family structures, Sellers also intersperses various elements of classical architecture that he absorbed during a semester spent in Rome. The effects of these conflicting influences are readily apparent in many of the drawings, while a determined political undertone links each of the components within them. Sellers has admitted that his drawings develop initially out of aesthetic considerations, while the narratives materialize as he progresses, thus allowing his current personal and political concerns to take form.

The most striking features of these intricate drawings are the minuscule details that comprise them. Even with the aid of the magnifying glass that the gallery provides, the viewers remain unable to experience the works in their entirety. Yet it is through this particular format that Sellers creates an intimate connection between himself and his audience. By positioning it at a distant perspective, he expresses his dual role as both alienator and (self-professed) alienated—situating the viewer in the stance of the other, who witnesses and experiences life from the sidelines of the collective order.

From their personal, yet removed standpoint, the viewers are given few clues that may reveal the narrative that Sellers had in mind while creating the work. Elements such as the period clothing in *Mapreaders* and the works' titles (*Checkpoint*) function as triggers—in turn providing insight into his convoluted thought process. His anonymous figures and structures, however, ultimately lend themselves to the spectators' own associative interpretations. This new series of drawings appears to project a sense of urgency and conviction that calls for a more intentional and critical interpretation. This decisive tone is mostly apparent in drawings such as *Clairvoyants* and *Mapreaders*, in which the human presence is no longer merely implied or consigned to the architecture, but rather dominates the cityscapes. The increasingly overt narratives contain a complex and layered structure, consisting of an acute symbolic and political nature. Thus, by relaying his highly subjective anxieties, unease, and discontent, Sellers prompts the viewers to examine their own position within the current social construct.

Written By Yalle Amir
Images courtesy of Johnathan LeVine Gallery

Randall Sellers
Johnathan LeVine Gallery