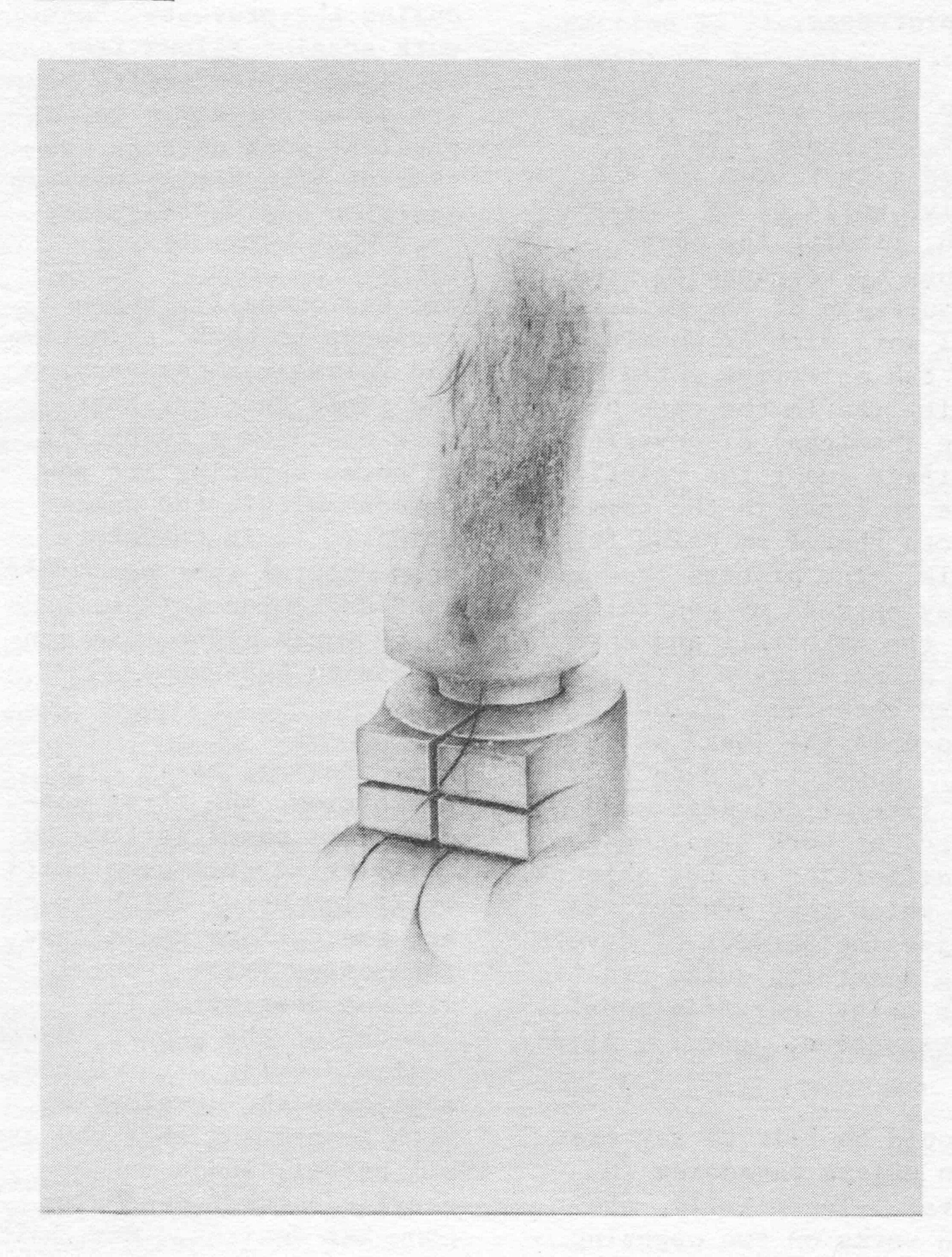
Untitled, 1976



These most recent drawings by Jay DeFeo represent one more step in her continued search for completeness. And, though they differ from her earlier work in the specific nature of their image—tripods, water goggles, shoe—trees and jewelry fragments—they are the direct heirs both technically and philosophically, of her firmly established vocabulary of forms and processes.

DeFeo recently stated that "Over the years I have worked either from the subjective world of my imagination, finding the image through my response to, and manipulation of the materials I work with or working from the objective world of reality (as in the case of these drawings) discovering the image among the relationships of forms in the common objects that I am using for models. The process becomes a play between my control over the materials and an open or permissive attitude toward technique, allowing it to mold the image as it will. Hopefully, even the most literal drawings among the recent work transcend the definition of the objects from which they are derived. T enjoy the paradox of developing something quite organic while using inorganic models." (Conversation, June 23, 1978).

DeFeo enjoys paradoxes in general. Technically, she often works on two opposing images at the same time—black and white, dark and light, moon and sun. During the six year period from 1959 to 1964 when she was preoccupied with the development of the single major painting The Rose, she also

completed a little known opposing work <u>Jewel</u> which now languishes in her basement.

The primary ingredient in her work method is time. Even such small works as these take about a month's time to complete which allows her psyche to run the primitive/classical emotional gamut several times during the process. Each work session allows free rein to the dominating temperment of the day. Her physical work methods consist of alternating between addition and subtraction.

Art historically, DeFeo responds to both "primitive" and "classical" expression and feels that her best work embodies a synthesis of these opposing art attitudes within the same object. It is therefore only natural that she would have developed work methods which would allow this synthesis to happen.

When drawing, as in this exhibition, she first prepares the paper surface by applying several even coats of Krylon spray which toughens the surface and allows for easier image removal without destroying the "tooth" of the paper. DeFeo begins drawing with charcoal, continues the development with pencil and then may use oil pastel, India ink or acrylic lacquer depending upon her desires. Her choices of media are held to the full grey value range from black to white and the full surface range from mat to glossy. The absorptive and reflective surface variables provide a remarkable lively feeling of color.

Erasure or pigment removal is done by using the solvent developed to thin typewriter white correction fluid. Its strength allows her to "wash" back to the pristine white of the original surface, an event which might happen several times during the creation of a single drawing. DeFeo rarely has to discard a work since the process allows for continuous re-evaluation and correction. The work is completed when every mark is felt to be properly in place.

It should be noted that her method of drawing is almost identical to her process for painting except for differences in choice of support surface, scale and sweep of execution.

Even though there are both large and small drawings in this exhibition, DeFeo does not feel that increased scale should necessarily imply increased importance since there is very little difference in the time and effort expended on each work. Scale selection is most commonly based upon what paper is available and how much room is available in her well equipped but cramped studio. She does not think of her drawings as studies for larger works but rather as complete statements with a life of their own. Some years ago she developed a strong interest in black and white photography and when she feels the need for preparatory studies she uses this medium--not to work from but rather to sharpen her perception of the object which she is approaching as subject.

31, 1929 in Hanover, New Hampshire. She graduated from San Jose High School in 1946 and went directly to the University of California, Berkeley where she received a Master's degree in art in 1951. Among her fellow students and close friends were Sam Francis and Fred Martin. In 1951-52 DeFeo travelled widely through Europe and finally settled in Florence for six months of intensive painting. She returned to the Bay Area in 1953 and had her first small exhibitions which were well received. DeFeo taught, worked odd jobs and developed her art until 1959 when she had her first major exhibition at the Dilexi Gallery. That same year she was included, along with her then husband Wally Hedrick, in the prestigious "Sixteen Americans" exhibition selected for The Museum of Modern Art, New York by Dorothy Miller. From 1959 until 1964 she devoted her full energy to developing one major painting The Rose. She taught at the San Francisco Art Institute from 1962-70, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art from 1970-78 and is currently teaching at Sonoma State College. She was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts individual artist grant in 1973. Jay DeFeo is represented by the Paule Anglim Gallery, San Francisco.

Jay DeFeo was born on March

Henry T. Hopkins, Guest Curator; Director, The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

Works in MATRIX:

14 untitled drawings, mixed media on paper, various sizes ranging from 14" x 11" to 30" x 40", 1976-1978.

All works lent by Paule Anglim Gallery, San Francisco.

Selected one-person exhibitions:
Dilexi Gallery, S.F. '58;
Ferus Gallery, L.A. '60;
Pasadena Museum of Art, CA '67; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art '68; San Francisco Art Institute '68; Wenger Gallery, S.F. '74; College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland '75.

Selected group exhibitions: Ferus Gallery, L.A. '57; Ferus Gallery, L.A. '58; Sixteen Americans, Museum of Modern Art, NYC '59; Ferus Gallery, L.A. '59; Ferus Gallery, L.A. '60; Ferus Gallery L.A. '61; Ferus Gallery L.A. '63; Oakland Museum of Art, Oakland '70; Poets of the Cities, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art '75; Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art '75; Hansen Fuller Gallery, S.F. '75: The Last Time I Saw Ferus, Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, CA '76; Perceptions of the Spirit, University Art Museum, Berkeley, CA '78. Selected bibliography about DeFeo:

Miller, Dorothy. Sixteen Americans (New York: Museum of Modern Art '59).

Miller, Dorothy and J. Baur and D. Seckler. "New Talent USA: Painting," Art in America, vol 49, no. 1 (Spring '61) pp. 30-31.

Monte, James. Late 50's at the Ferus (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art '68).

Albright, Thomas. "Just One Single Rose - A Glorious Anachronism," San Francisco Chronicle (April 11 '68).

Bengston, Billy Al.

"Late 50's at the Ferus,"

Artforum, vol. 7, no. 5

(Jan. '69) p. 34.

Albright, Thomas. "Massive Restoration on 'White Rose'," San Francisco Chronicle (July 7 '73) p. 1.

Ivory, Jane. "Jay DeFeo,"

Artweek, vol. 5, no. 31

(Sept. '74) p. 1.

Albright, Thomas. "Paintings that Reach Far Beneath the Surface," San Francisco Chronicle (Sept. 7 '74).

Shere, Charles. "DeFeo's Paintings Show Commitment,"
Oakland Tribune (Sept. 19
174).

Plagens, Peter. Sunshine Muse (New York: Praeger '74).

Dunham, Judith. "Cabbage Rose," Artweek, vol. 6, no. 32 (Sept. '75) p. 16.

Hopkins, Henry. Painting and Sculpture in California:
The Modern Era (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art '77).

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