

## RAY HAMILTON



Pictured: Ray Hamilton: untitled, 1989, ballpoint pen on paper, 13 by 20 inches. Courtesy Kerry Schuss, New York.

Self-taught artist Ray Hamilton (1919–1996) has been a darling of the downtown New York art world since Artists Space exhibited his drawings in 1991. Kerry Schuss has represented Hamilton since the mid-'90s, but the present show of his work is the first at the gallery. It features twenty-five drawings produced between 1989 and 1992.

Hamilton's materials are unpretentious: ballpoint pens, graphite, and colored pencils mark up what looks like standard copy-machine paper. In the untitled works, Hamilton faithfully reproduces everyday objects that seem to have been within arm's reach—coins, a window, his keys, a lamp, cereal boxes—portraying them on white grounds. Several pictures feature sketches of animals that he remembers from his childhood in the rural South. Some of my favorite works show tracings of his own hands and feet. Almost every piece includes Hamilton's signature, lists of numbers, or random words scrawled vertically across the page like concrete poems. For the prolific Hamilton, inspiration was found not in a flash of lightning, but everywhere, in everything.