

Devries, Lindsey Herkommer. "The Great Kansas Sea," *KMUW Wichita*, Feb 2016.

# The Great Kansas Sea

By LINDSEY HERKOMMER DEVRIES



*HELL* (triptych)

CREDIT COURTESY OF ROBYN O'NEIL

Think of a mechanical pencil and the cylinder of graphite peeking out of end—just a half-millimeter thick. Now, imagine a long, white sheet of paper, unfurled in front of you. Where do you make the first mark? It's daunting to think about drawing this way, but this is what artist Robyn O'Neil is known for.

O'Neil makes large drawings, primarily with a .5mm mechanical pencil. Her largest drawing is her 14 ft. long triptych *HELL* that contains 35,000 collage elements and 65,000 of her iconic sweat suit-clad figures. O'Neil was included in the 2004 Whitney Biennial and her work is collected by museums nation-wide, including the Ulrich Museum.

You can see O'Neils' grey-scale drawings come to life in the animated short *We, The Masses* - a collaborative project based on her graphite drawings and winner of the Spirit Award at the Brooklyn Film Festival in 2012.

Her art is unsettling and pensive, but O'Neil herself is far from morose.



You can get to know her through her podcast, [Me Reading Stuff](#), where she shares her passion for poetry.

She is here in Wichita for a Harvester Arts two-week residency.

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O'Neil will create a collaborative drawing, and will ask Wichitans to make grey-scale drawings of water. These will be pieced together to create a Kansas ocean. The more people who participate, the bigger our ocean will be.

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Project Description from Robyn O'Neil: THE GREAT KANSAS SEA  
250 million years ago, much of Kansas was covered by The Permian Sea. We're bringing it back.

Join us as we create *The Great Kansas Sea*, a large-scale collaborative drawing. Imagined lands, the psychological effects of being underwater, and the meditative nature of ocean waves are all a part of the motivation behind this project. We also simply want to create a beautiful seascape utilizing the individual hands of hundreds of people - artists, kids, grocery-store employees, political science majors, ANYONE & EVERYONE can do this!

What do you need to do? Simply use any kind of drawings paper, anything better than computer paper will be fine. Keep it under 18" x 24". Most people are using 8" x 10" sheets. Using pencil, pen, ink, watercolor (anything black or grey - no color please), simply draw or paint water. Waves. Ocean. Cover the entire page. Your water can be wild or calm. It can be cartoony or romantic. Just draw water the way you like to see it. No creatures or fish or people; just water. So we can give you proper credit, please write your name legibly on the back of the drawing with an arrow indicating which way is up.

Drop off location and times:

Harvester Arts  
215 N Washington Ave  
Wichita, KS 67202

Monday, February 22, 2:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, February 23, 2:00 - 6:00 p.m.

The opening of your work will be Friday, February 26 at Harvester Arts from 7:00 - 10:00 p.m.