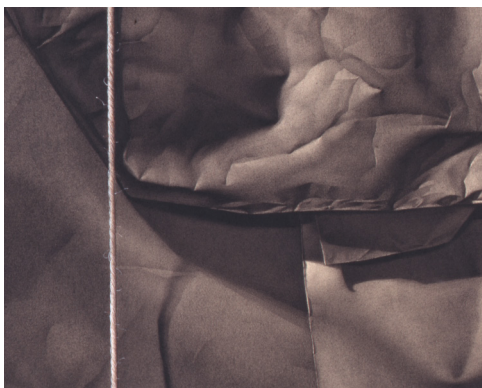


APRIL 2013

Paper and Twine in Shades of Gray

Claudio Bravo | *Package*



VISIT THE BMA
and enjoy regularly
changing exhibitions
of works on paper
in the *On Paper*
gallery in the
Contemporary Wing.

Claudio Bravo (Chilean, 1936-2011). Detail, *Package*. 1969. Pastel and stumping. 39½ x 27⅝ inches. The Baltimore Museum of Art: Thomas E. Benesch Memorial Collection, BMA 1970.4.19 © The Estate of Claudio Bravo, courtesy Marlborough Gallery, New York

There's nothing flashy about a package wrapped in plain paper and tied with twine. Most of us wouldn't give it a second glance. But such a package caught the eye of artist Claudio Bravo when his sister returned from a shopping trip and laid her parcels on the table. As an acclaimed portrait painter, Bravo was accustomed to studying how light fell on people's faces and how shadows collected in the deep folds of their clothing. But on this day, he was fascinated by the subtle shifts of light and shadow on a few commonplace parcels tied with string. Soon "packages" became one of his favorite subjects.

We can imagine Bravo studying this paper wrapping, carefully considering the structure of every fold, crease, seam, and wrinkle. No detail was too small or insignificant to capture his attention, not even the minute fibers of the twine that holds the package together. Pulling against the parcel's upper edge, the taut string stretches downward in two straight lines that cast soft wavy shadows on the rounded bulges of the paper below.

How did Bravo draw this remarkable picture? He needed only the simplest materials and tools. With sticks of pastel he laid down tones or values of gray—lighter tones to bring some parts of the paper forward and darker tones to push other parts back. Then using a soft tool called a stump, he blended the gray tones, creating a surface that looks almost like a landscape with soft rolling hills, deep hollows, and a few pointed peaks. Could there be an empty picture frame inside Bravo's mysterious package? Might there be a painting? We'll never know.

CHALLENGE FOR STUDENTS

Find five brightly lit areas in *Package*. Are they as white as a sheet of paper? Or are they drawn in shades of gray? Which is the lightest spot? Where does the twine seem to touch the paper? Where does it lie above the paper? How can you tell?

Make a drawing of a package using a stumping tool (or your fingertip) to blend the tones. For tips on blending tools and techniques, see bit.ly/zK1AVY.

Write a story about what might be inside Bravo's mysterious package.

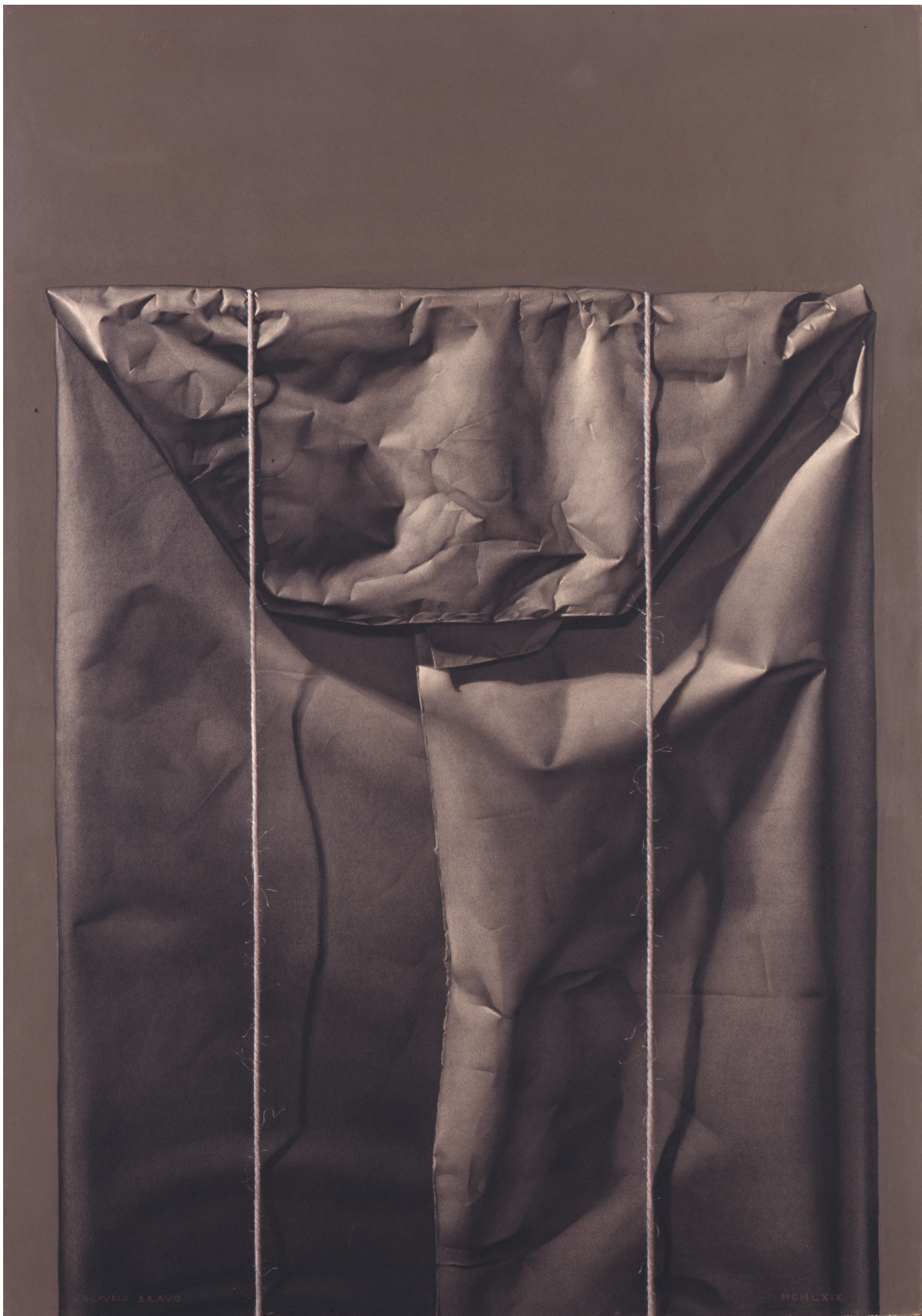
To see more images of Bravo's packages, google "Claudio Bravo packages."

PRINT THE IMAGE ON PAGE 2 FOR YOUR STUDENTS.



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Claudio Bravo. *Package*.

1969. Pastel and stumping. 39½ x 27⅝ inches. The Baltimore Museum of Art: Thomas E. Benesch Memorial Collection, BMA 1970.4.19 © The Estate of Claudio Bravo, courtesy Marlborough Gallery, New York