



Categorized | **Reviews, Top Stories**



Charles Ginnever & Amy Kaufman @ SJICA

Posted on 13 January 2013.

Rashomon, a series of 15 identical sculptures by the minimalist Charles Ginnever, presents a basic phenomenological question: What do we know and how do we know it?

Arrayed on the floor and looking like origami made of rusted steel, the pieces form a spiky field of triangles and irregular geometric shapes. Ginnever designed them to stand in 15 different positions, and though only one of the exponential possibilities is on view, the visual cacophony issued by the profusion of forms makes you think that each object is unique — even when you know that it is not. Trapped in a contradiction between fact and perception, you may find yourself nodding in

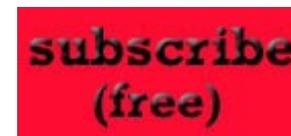


Charles Ginnever: "Rashomon". Photo: Lee Fatheree

**SAN FRANCISCO ART INSTITUTE
GRADUATE PROGRAMS**

**PRIORITY APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR
SUMMER & FALL 2013 ENTRY: JANUARY 15**
Apply online today at www.sfai.edu/graduate

Sandra Osborne



agreement with Ad Reinhardt who once said, “The eye is a menace to clear sight.”

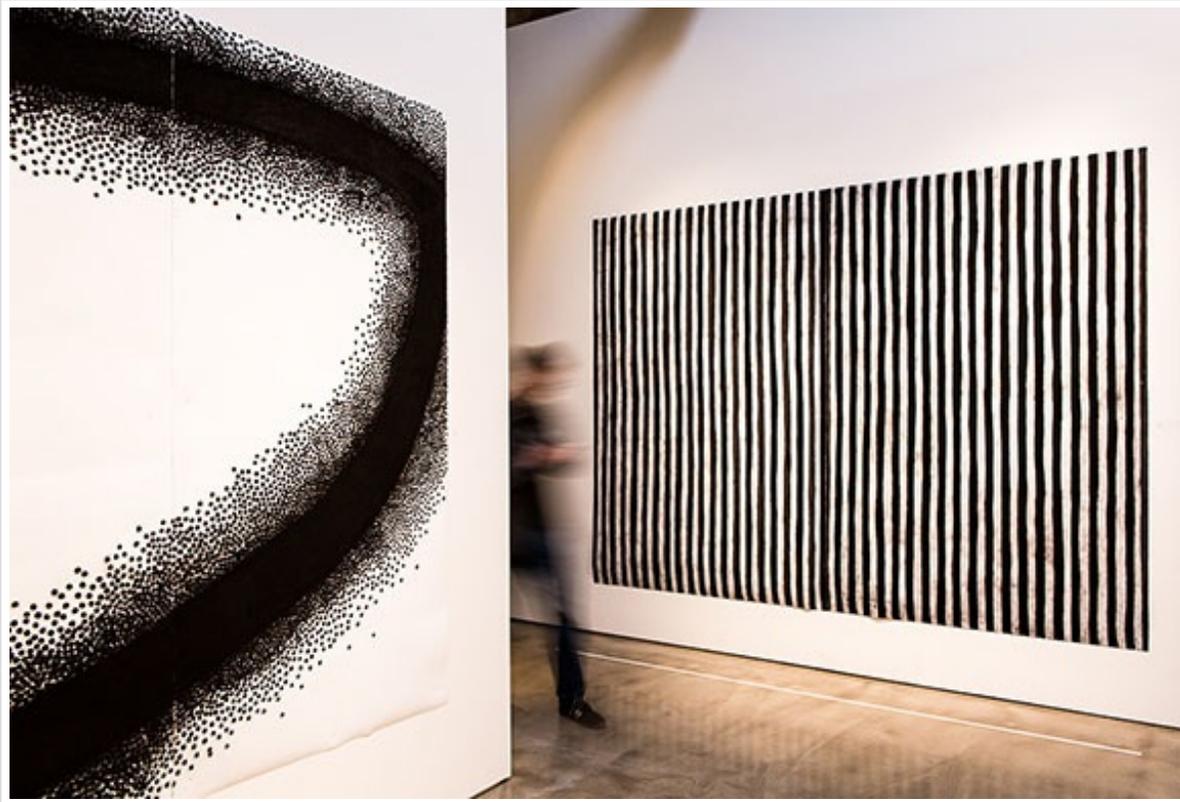
Call it the “Ginnever effect”. To counteract it, you’d need the mind of Leonardo da Vinci or the computational power of an MRI device. Named after Akira Kurosawa’s movie about differing accounts of a murder, *Rashomon* embodies, as well as anything in the artist’s 50-year career, his ideas about perceptual fallibility, most of which have been realized at monumental scale in the manner of his immediate peers: Richard Serra, John Chamberlain, Mark di Suvero and Ronald Bladen.

When he began the series in 1993, the now 82-year-old sculptor, envisioned the pieces as 15 feet tall. To date, only three have been fabricated at that scale; so what we see here are models. The display is bookended at both ends, by still other models housed in vitrines, as well as drawings, one of which shows how to create an origami-style replica. Nearby, on the wall, is a paper print made by Landfall Press that duplicates the rust-colored patina of those you see on the floor. Granted, it takes little time for the artist’s intentions to register, but once you sense how easy it is to misperceive something so seemingly simple, you’ll walk away humbled. Had I arrived when the exhibition opened last November, I’d have included it in my roundup of the **top shows of 2012**. I’d have also included Amy Kaufman, whose exquisite post-minimalist charcoal drawings occupy the adjacent half of the gallery.



Openings - See all photos





Amy Kaufman: L to R: "Ceinture", 2009, 84 x 127.5", 3 panels; "True and False", 90 x 120", 2 panels. Both charcoal on paper.

With Kaufman as with Ginnever nothing is quite what it seems. Landscape may be her jumping off point, but the drawings, rendered in black and white, are resolutely abstract. The best give off an Op-ish feel owing to fuzzy lines, which cause the pictures (or at least portions of them) to vibrate at different frequencies. The effects, depending on your internal gyroscope, range from a pleasant buzz to mild queasiness. Kaufman understands the power of repetition, and she employs it in many ways: in parallel geometric lines; in loopy markings that bring to mind the gestural oil stick drawings of Richard Serra and the cursive scrawls of Christopher Wool; and in yawning voids teeming with microscopic life that recall the large-scale works of Darren Waterston.

Seabox, an aptly titled installation that wraps around three walls of the Cardinale Project Room, consists of quavering horizontal lines that depict wave action. Were it laid out linearly, the effect would be calming; sectioned and angled, it becomes disorienting as the locus of kinetic action shifts from the drawing to you, forcing you to rotate in a semicircle to take it all in. In *Sash*, cantilevered vertical lines that resemble the

CODEX
INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR

**Artist Books,
Fine Press &
Fine Art Editions**

FEB 10 - 13 CRANEWAY PAVILION

TERCERA GALLERY ONLINE	Inter section incubator Services for Artists
TOOMEY TOURELL	SEAGER GRAY GALLERY mill valley

collapsible gate of an antique elevator, appear static until you look closely, at which point the lines start to shake.



Kaufman: "Wallflower", 2009, charcoal on paper, 126 x 116", 3 panels

And so it goes throughout the exhibit. The best example is the one you see immediately upon entering Kaufman's portion of the exhibit. It's called *Wallflower*, and it's built of petal shapes that increase in size moving out from the center. After a few seconds the center starts to spin. The edges fuzz, while the paper itself appears to undulate, as if wafted by wind. You'll check your senses with a little two-step, moving forward and backward, side-to-side.

A similar breeze blew through the SJICA about a year ago. That show, which *did* made my **best-of 2012** list, was called *One Thing Leads to Another*, and in it, a group of local artists explored process, repetition and serialism – notions that have ruffled the art world for since the beginning of the 20th century. This show feels like the perfect sequel if not a prequel to what could be an ongoing exploration of these seemingly inexhaustible themes.

–DAVID M. ROTH

Charles Ginnever: "Rashomon" through February 16, 2013 and Amy Kaufman: "b + w" through February 9, 2013 @ San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art .

Amy Kaufman photos: David Pace.



About David Roth

[View all posts by David Roth →](#)

[← 2012: Year in Review](#)

Leave a Reply

Name (required)

Mail (will not be published) (required)

Website

