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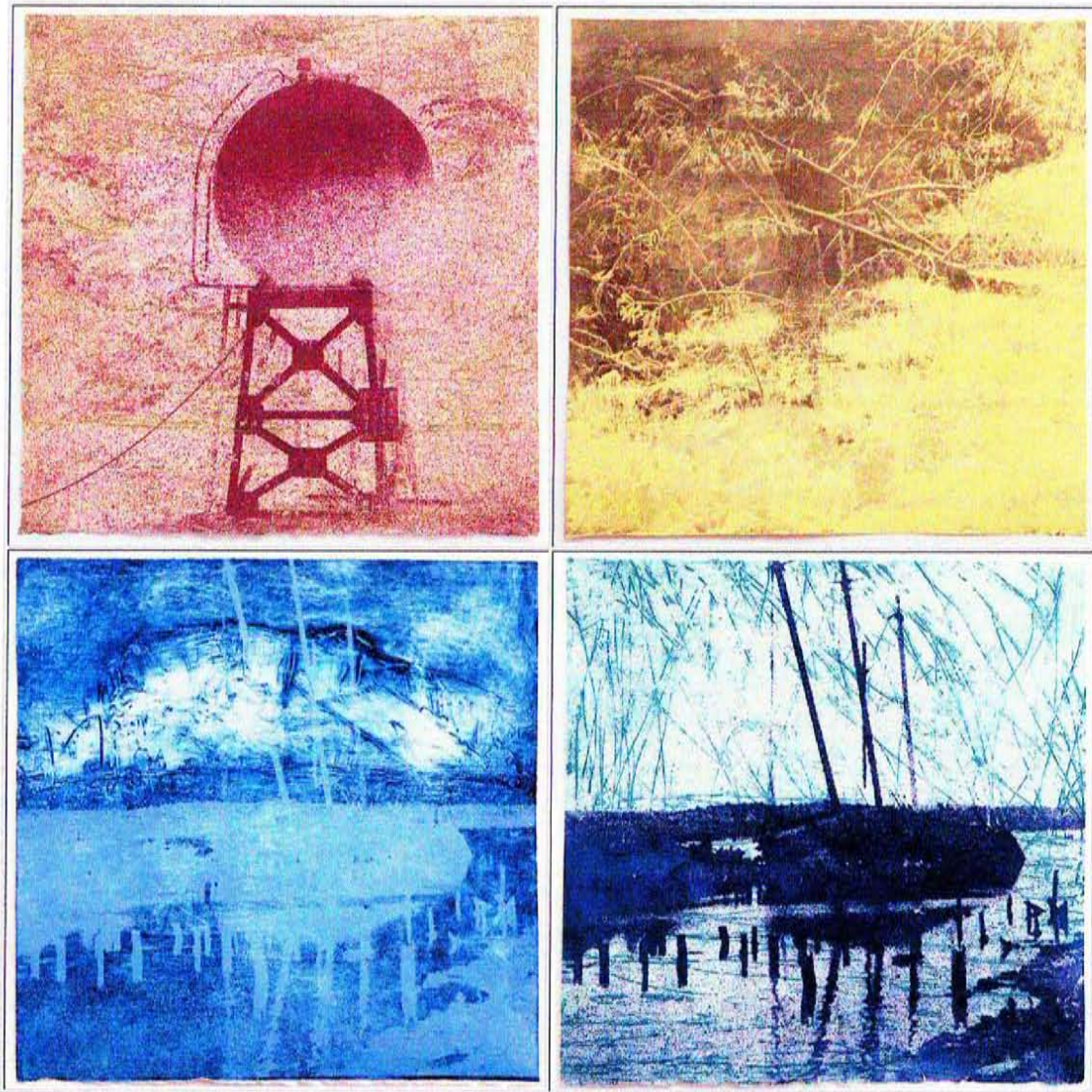
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## **One Thing Leads to Another @ ICA**

**Posted on 17 January 2012**



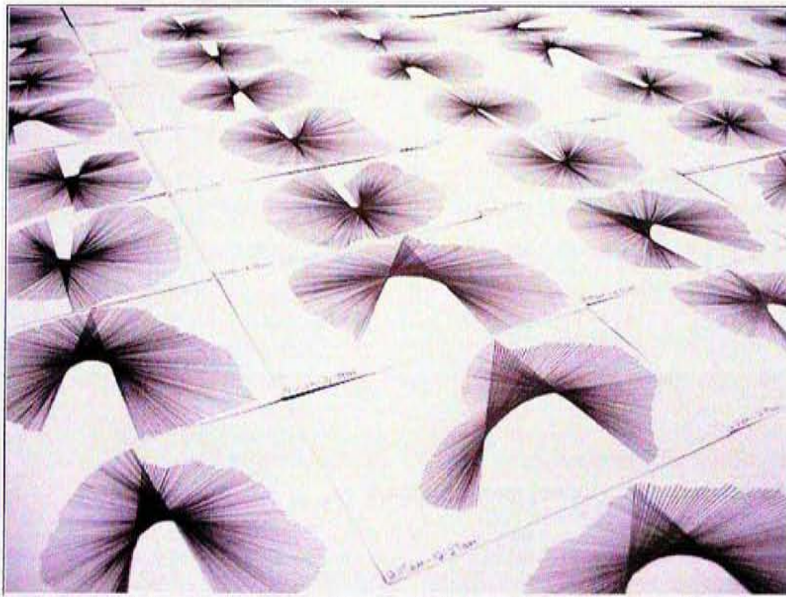


Christel Dillbohner (detail), "Polar Journeys", monoprints, each 15 x 15"

Jasper Johns' famous quip, "Do something, do something to that, and then do something to that" wasn't just a personal credo; it was a valid observation about how large chunks of 20<sup>th</sup> century art – from Dada and Fluxus to Pop and Minimalism – were made by following self-invented rules and rituals. They are the basis of *One Thing Leads to Another*, a show of 13 artists who devise unique, repetitive methods to create works on paper that address themes of nature, spirituality, memory, chance, endurance and the absurd.

While some works in this conceptually driven show feel like simple process experiments (and, in one instance, a precisely controlled science project), it's displays of genuine material invention that register the strongest. Chief among the latter is *Polar Journeys*, Christel Dillbohner's series of 28 monoprints, made while she was an artist-in-residence at the ICA Print Center. It shows how repetition, when applied with diligence, craft and imagination, can yield work that goes beyond anything you might associate with a rote mechanical exercise. Dillbohner prints three different photographic images (of a sailboat, a mountain, and a tower-mounted industrial tank) on five different paper stocks with two printmaking techniques. The result is a giant dreamscape. The images alternate between representation and abstraction, romancing antiquity with surface textures that recall early 19<sup>th</sup> century photo processes.





Robin Kandel (detail) "The 24-Hour Drawing Project"

They appear remarkably consistent, defying the expectation that the lines get sloppier as the artist gets sleepier.

Fanny Retsek, who directs the ICA's printmaking facility, foregoes mechanical reproduction in *Troops on the Ground*. It's a dyptich that looks like scarified skin, the result of burning the paper more than 20,000 times with a soldering iron; each tiny incision represents an American soldier sent to Iraq during the "Surge" of 2007. It's not a memorial, exactly, but it feels like one. Robin Kandel's *The 24-hour Drawing Project* is also something of an endurance test. Her self-issued challenge was to rotate a ruler in a circular pattern and draw a pencil line every sixteenth of an inch. The leaf shapes she drew on

Op, a movement that peaked in the mid-'60s, relied heavily on serial methods, is well represented here. Amy Ellingson, well known for injecting fresh life into Op through hand-worked computer designs, asks us to detect subtle changes in a group of arch-shaped motifs that repeat throughout a cycle of drawings called *50 Variations*. In it, she trades her color-saturated palette for a silvery monochrome, a subtraction that makes this series particularly enigmatic. Anthony Ryan goes all-out for color by weaving together in tight grids, strips of thinly cut paper culled from cast-off product packages. The colors are identical to the test patterns seen on printers' proofs, and with them Ryan delivers a full-on sensory assault. His interlocking patterns plunge us into a frenetic search for visual stability that the pictures deny, mirroring the neural agitation that comes from too much time spent staring at electronic devices. Linn Myers, with virtually no color, sows another kind visual confusion, one with spiritual overtones. Her drawings consist of mandala-like shapes which, when passed through a press, take on even greater complexity; they resemble organic-looking versions of Victor Vasarely's spherical grid paintings. Theodora Varnay Jones, a minimalist with a history of serial expression, steps out of character by giving herself the task of transforming a crumpled sheet of paper. She does it by superimposing line drawings over a shadowy photo of the object. The effect is almost holographic.