

JOHN ADELMAN + ANNA BOGATIN

at Holly Johnson Gallery
by Todd Camplin

Holly Johnson Gallery has split the body and mind with her offering of John Adelman and Anna Bogatin. Adelman shows his heady deconstruction of words and objects, while Bogatin taps into waves of emotions through her meditative mark making. Though to counter that, Adelman's methodical counting has a meditative effect, while Bogatin's painting connects to the conceptual works by Lawrence Weiner of taking a walk and recording an action. And for me, the split is also temporal. Adelman's current show is one I have seen a few times, but this weekend I anticipate seeing Bogatin's first solo show at Holly Johnson, though the opening was last weekend. I have seen Bogatin's work in person at other times when I encountered them at the gallery, which only heightens my expectations.

When talking to Anna Bogatin, I asked her about the influence of Aboriginal art in her work. She feels connected to their spiritual connection to the earth and elements. The idea of the walkabout or right of passage resonates with Bogatin. After all, her method of making work felt more like a journey of discovery.

I connect her work to the conceptualist, because her work also records a journey like Weiner's. However, Bogatin's journey is not a physical walk in the countryside, but the peaceful meditative state which is recorded in marks not words. She is reflecting the natural world of organic and gentle processes. Bogatin explains that she is looking for the balance of forces in nature through these works.

There is probably no other artist I have written more about than John Adelman, but there is always more to unpack about his work. Personally, I discover more about his work all the time. Talking to him yesterday, I learned that he has ambitions to deconstruct even more ambitious things in the world. This show further deconstructs the dictionary. Word after word is stripped of meaning as they are piled on to one another in a graveyard of letters. Remember, Adelman started his work from white surfaces, yet some of the works are so covered with words you would swear that the paper was blue or black. I also asked Adelman about the reception his work received in Europe over the past few years. It sounded like it had similar reception of confusion, yet a positive attraction to his work. Sounds like a good place to leave the viewer.

Around 2005 or 06, Bogatin moved toward this minimalist image, because too many people saw her early work as having to do with narrative structures. Bogatin was aiming more for a feeling or sensation
not clouded by a story.

Bogatin's journey paintings must be attempting to be without beginning or end, but I can't quite determine this thought without truly experiencing the work, so I hope you will make plans like me to see this show, which will last till March 22. John Adelman's show finishes out on February 15th.