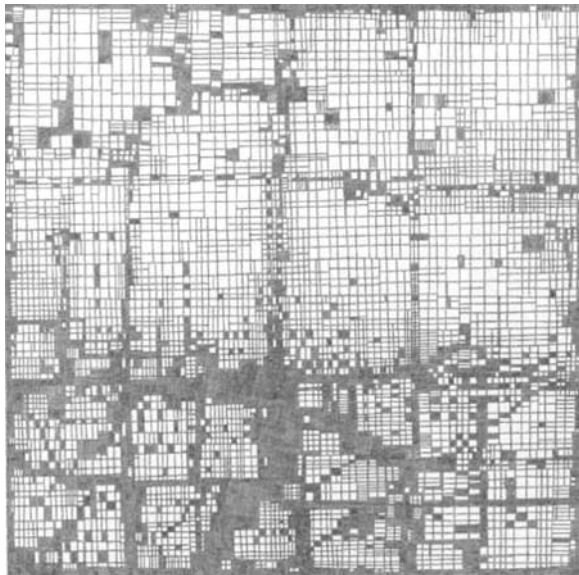


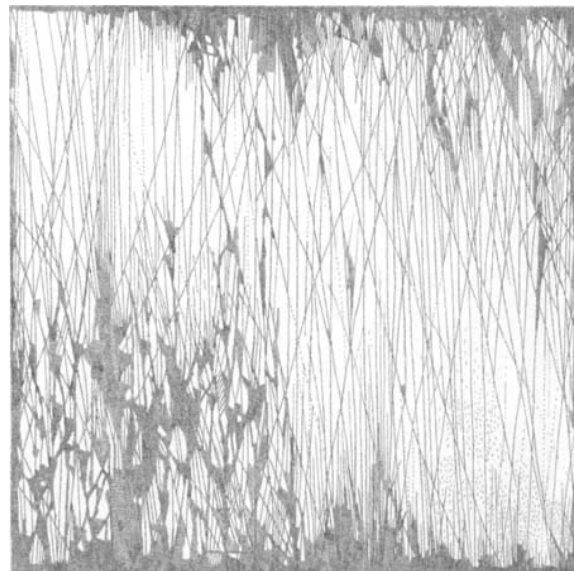
JACOB EL HANANI + WILLIAM BETTS
at Holly Johnson Gallery
by Todd Camplin

Holly Johnson Gallery has paired Jacob El Hanani in the front gallery with William Betts in the back gallery space. These two artists are both minimal and maximal, with large and small surprises.

Jacob El Hanani's 18 x 18 inch drawings don't overwhelm you with scale, but allow you to move in close and focus in on each little detailed mark he makes. Lines from grids and patterns flow across the paper like waves of water. With a show titled "Linear Landscape," I can assume El Hanani has looked to topographical maps, but I was surprised to find out that he was influenced by micrography or the act of writing very small.



Jacob El Hanani 2010 - UrbanLandscape 18x18



Jacob El Hanani 2011 Leaves 18x18

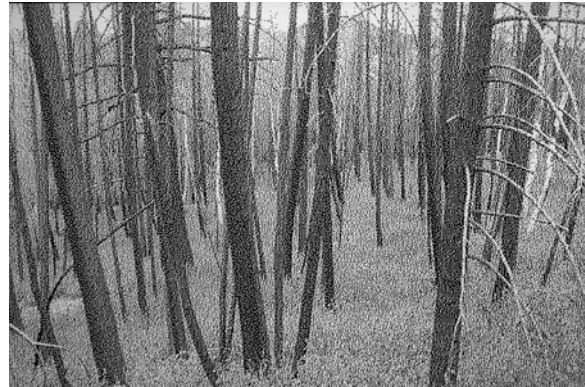
I instantly related to El Hanani's need to use all available space on a sheet of paper. Teachers in primary school gave me a hard time for bending my sentences over the margins and down the right side of the page. I also see a web of lines similar to microscopic surfaces of patterned structures. I have to admire the steady hand and movement of lines on the paper. The sheer time and effort put into these drawings make these art works larger than they appear. I easily got lost in the spaces between the lines.

When I first approached William Betts' paintings, I noticed an image of a forest or room interior presented on a highly reflective surface. I could certainly see myself, but minute white paint

drops break the image up enough to lose this fact. I was literally drawn into the painting through a reflection of the mirror. I was part of each of Betts ever changing works. I liked this nice surprise and I looked at each work in a new light. I allowed myself to walk around each painting and imagine a number of stories to go along with each work. I think the tight machine precision of the dots create a blurred effect that played with my head a bit. And with the silvery mirror background, Betts' paintings have the look of giant black and white photographs.



William Betts 2012 Aspens 48x71



William Betts 2011- Pines 48x71

You must experience this show in person – it is so worth it. The images on-line do not do the work justice. See William Bett's work up at Holly Johnson Gallery to May 5th, and you have a little more time to see Jacob El Hanani's drawings, up until June 16th. Jacob El Hanani is an artist after my own heart and the more I learn about his work the more I love it.