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"Performing the Grid"

BEN MALTZ GALLERY AT THE OTIS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN
9045 Lincoln Boulevard
January 23–May 15

There's nothing more satisfying than a grid, at least for those daunted by the blank page of unfettered creative freedom. But perhaps the latter is an illusion, and no attempt at creativity exists without constraint. The sixteen artists in "Performing the Grid," for instance, take full pleasure in being line-bound.

Most of the works here encourage proximity not only to the object displayed but to the practice behind it as well. For example, Charles Gaines's triptych portrait *Faces: Men and Women*, #14 "Charles Hanzieck," 1978, draws viewers toward Gaines's tiny handwritten numbers in hundreds of pixel-like squares. Xylor Jane's manic accounting of time—in which the artist assiduously charts days, years, moons, and millennia—manifests itself in a series of eleven drawings, each wild and beautiful. And straight from the artist's notebook is Kelly Nipper's *Floyd on the Floor: Performance Notes*, 2007: six framed pages including scrawled texts on dance theorist Rudolf Laban's principles of "Space Harmony"—Laban is also in the show—next to collaged cutouts of geometric patterns and crystalline gems.



Emily Roysdon, *Sense and Sense*, 2010, two channel video, color, sound, 15 mins 25 seconds.

Emily Roysdon's compelling video diptych, *Sense and Sense*, 2010, features an aerial shot of artist MPA's attempt to walk while lying on her side. Taking place on the ground of a Stockholm public square known for political protests, Roysdon captures a clash between bodies and the way space is engineered to contain them, which is decidedly different in tone from the harmony evoked by other pieces in the exhibition. In all these divergent works—and there are more notables to be named—the grid becomes a measure of time, movement, and labor as well as a source of pleasure and generation. Fueled by the slow and steady ticking of practice and research, these pieces are the fruit of sustained experimentation, and spending time with them feels equally productive.

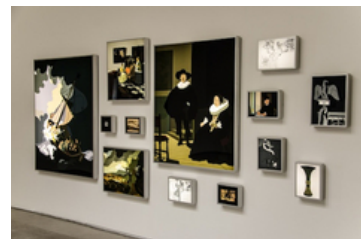
— Samara Davis

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Kota Ezawa

CHRISTOPHER GRIMES GALLERY
916 Colorado Avenue
January 9–March 5

On March 18, 1990, two men dressed as cops famously boosted thirteen artworks from Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Partly because Gardner's will allows no changes to the displays, partly in hopes that the stripped canvases will return, empty frames remain on view. Such an abstraction holds evident interest for Kota Ezawa, who, for his exhibition "Gardner Museum Revisited," employed his signature reductive technique, similar to rotoscoping, for a salon-style hang of light-box replicas of the missing works. Here, the seasick dynamism of sight lines still crisscrosses *The Storm on the Sea of Galilee* (all works 2015), after Rembrandt's only known ocean scene, of the same title; gone, though, are the brushstrokes and built-up layers of pigment. *A Lady and Gentleman in Black*, also after Rembrandt, is a study in staid fabric, and in *Program for an Artistic Soiree I and II*, even the sprightly pencil lines of Degas are rounded down to textureless fields of black and gray.



View of "Kota Ezawa: Gardner Museum Revisited," 2016.

This partial revival is possible insofar as the Gardner works continue to syndicate; Ezawa's glowing transparencies are based not on observing the actual pieces but on tracing forensic photographs distributed by the FBI. Thus the two 3-D pieces that were stolen—a Shang dynasty vase, circa 1200 BCE, and a nineteenth-century eagle finial—are just as flat in Ezawa's hands as the paint daubs in a Manet café scene. Taken from view, the Gardner group has entered a postauratic state, where recursion has no originals to face. The artist's redux follows the logic of technological reproducibility to the point where the least possible

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