

# CLAIRE SEIDL, ETCHED MONOTYPES

Joe Walentini - 2009

VanDeb Editions

## CLAIRE SEIDL

This exhibition comprises 34 monotype prints in which Claire Seidl utilized 4 plates in a wide variety of combinations to produce singular works of art. Although the medium is etching, the approach embodies a sensibility firmly rooted in painting.

There are two major components to this work. The first is an implied sense of the grid created by primarily linear horizontal and vertical forms. Their arrangement and placement is relatively even handed but far from being rigidly locked down. The manner in which the grid is engaged in these pieces is similar to how this occurs in nature (think: trees, rivers and horizon lines). From such a perspective the subject matter establishes the strong connection to nature without a direct narrative for, or depiction of it. When given full focus the grid usually presents an imposing visual force. Here, as in nature, any overriding sense of imposed order is undermined and counter-balanced by the subtle anarchy of the forms. In other words the order serves to reinforce the composition but is not permitted to dictate it.

The second component is the variety of contrasts between how the forms are rendered and the way in which the same images are reconstituted to produce new images. In much of this work an exquisite balance is achieved between a drawing and painterly sensibility. In some pieces, one or the other dominates but in

all cases the two engage in a graceful visual dance. The drawing is represented in linear, etched lines and the painterly aspect is found within the softer forms, often as transparent overlays. As a result the forms lie exposed and accessible on the surface - everything is available at once. But, look again and a quality of deep atmospheric space is established. You see each distinctly, but also, simultaneously combined and this creates an implied motion among the forms - a sublime quality of 'visual rhythm'. Some common ground is found here with Pollock but also something else - an elegant calmness that is at once intimate and inviting.



**SURE ENOUGH**

As far as traditional printmaking is concerned this work stands just outside the craft of creating editioned prints. Seidl has approached the medium as the painter she is by exploring a range of possibilities through adjusting color, contrast and form within each print. In this is found another parallel to nature: how changes in light throughout the day affects and alters the same scene. The limited number of plates used provides a basis for stabilizing the variety of the forms. Yet each piece is distinguished by the treatment of the various elements and combinations of the images. Nature does the same thing - reconstitutes, combines, shifts and otherwise alters the physical world in unlimited variations with a finite number of elements.