

home of the

Subscribe to the weekend Chronicle

Search



SFGate



Web Search by **YAHOO!** Businesses | Advanced

Sign

Movies Music & Nightlife Performance Art Events Books TV & Radio Horoscope Comics Games Things To Do

Sign up today! SCORE SAVINGS OF UP TO 50%! woo-hoo! sfgatedailydeals



Galleries - Kenneth Baker

Archive | E-mail |

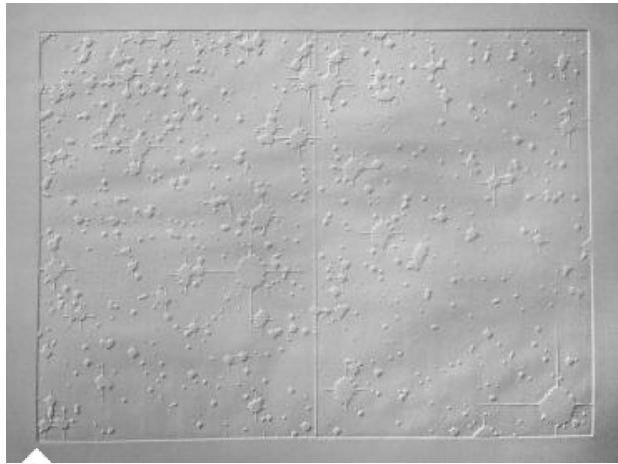
John Cage prints at Crown Point Press

Kenneth Baker

Saturday, March 3, 2012

PRINT E-MAIL SHARE COMMENTS

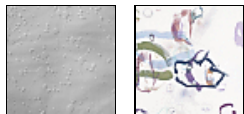
FONT . SIZE: - +



Luca Antonucci's "The New Nothing 6" (2012), photo-polymer embossment on cotton paper.

marina cain

IMAGES



View Larger Images

GALLERIES

Todd Hido shoots cinematic hints of furtive escape 02.25.12

Brad Brown likes his works to look unresolved 02.11.12

Katherine Westerhout - the time of passing history 02.04.12

More Galleries »

Between 1978 and his death in 1992, John Cage came to the Bay Area about once a year to make prints at Crown Point Press, first in its Oakland shop and later after its move to San Francisco.

Now Crown Point celebrates the centennial of Cage's birth year with a selection of the work he produced there, some from a series of unique pieces, some in editions.

As a composer, Cage strove to free the aesthetics of sound, and the listener, from invisible bonds of taste that had long defined "music." He wanted not to write tasteless music but to unleash his material and its performers from constraints imposed by tradition and, less overtly, by a composer's, performer's or listener's ego.

When it came to making visual art, he relied on decisions and procedures analogous to those he used in writing music.

"I gave up making choices," Cage said of his creative activity in 1988. "In their place I put the asking of

questions. The answers come from the mechanism, not the wisdom, of the 'I Ching,' the most ancient of all books: tossing three coins six times yielding numbers between one

Galleries

1-3 of 2



Limelight listing - Anderson Cooper...



Spacious top-floor condo near Golden...



All-r active and re

advertisement | your ad here

MOST READ MOST E-MAILED MOST C

1. Facebook 'friend' offer exposes ma wife
2. Families' exodus leaves S.F. whiter diverse
3. Scientists say America is too dumb democracy to thrive
4. 2 children found living in abandone bus
5. Harold Camping, rapture prophet: wrong'
6. Steven Tyler: 'I'm what makes Aei great'
7. Possible gunman gets away from C drugstore

Toda. 's Deal

6 Days in Puerto Vallarta at the Baganvilias \$399



SALE 10d PRIC \$3

and 64," corresponding to the hexagrams of the Chinese oracle system.

In a work such as "75 Stones" (1989), the positions and ink colors in which he printed the brush-traced small rocks he had brought with him were determined by chance operations.

Other works such as the examples from the series "Changes and Disappearances" (1979-82) involved elaborate chance-guided procedures that entailed many weeks of derivation and execution. A "score" here that plots the constructive process gives an inkling of the effort it took.

"People often ask me if I'm faithful to the answers or if I change them because I want to," Cage said of the results he got by putting questions to the "I Ching." "I don't change them because I want to. When I find myself in the position of someone who *ould* change something - at that point I don't change it. I change myself. It's for that reason that I have said that instead of self-expression, I'm involved in self-alteration."

"I watched Cage at work many times over many years," said Kathan Brown, Crown Point's founder, "and I can testify that he was telling ... the truth. I saw him occasionally modify an approach to make it more practical to a situation, and usually he would accept an honestly made mistake, but I never saw him reject a chance-derived outcome once he had settled on a sequence of chance operations and set it in motion."

The idea of trying to work with the primal elements of earth, air, water and fire did not yield satisfactory results, but Cage discovered along the way a means of "smoking" paper that would give a unique cast even to editioned works - such as "75 Stones" - printed on it.

The beauty of works such as "75 Stones" derives from the quality of surrender that suffuses them, surrender of control and pride in it, of attachment to a "look" or an imagined effect on a viewer.

Knowing nothing of printmaking and almost nothing of drawing when he first arrived at Crown Point, Cage achieved his own sort of fluency with the means it made available. It involved thinking and working relationships as much as materials and techniques, a truth implicit in the works' striking unpredictability and unforced character.

Cain Sch. Ite unveils "The New Nothing": I thought of Cage when I saw Luca Antonucci's show at Cain Schulte, memorably titled "The New Nothing."

Cage's 1959 "Lecture on Nothing" - the old nothing, I suppose - remains a touchstone for artists thinking about how to empty their work of themselves. It has just reappeared in a 50th anniversary edition of Cage's classic first book, "Silence" (Wesleyan University Press; 276 pages; \$30).

In composing his "Atlas Eclipticalis" (1962) and "Etudes Australes" (1974), Cage placed musical staves on acetate over star charts, letting sectors of sky supply "notes" and building in a little joke - deflating or rehabilitative, or both - about "the music of the spheres."

Antonucci has used photographs of distant stars and galaxies taken by the Hubble Space Telescope as a source for his elegant, blind-embossed graphics. Blasts of light from unimaginably far away arrive in Antonucci's work as starbursts of white-on-white low relief, their "composition" dictated by cropping, and by the order of the universe as "seen" by a camera adrift in it.



FROM OUR HOMEPAGE



Hunt on for missing man

San Bruno man had told people he pla camp and rock climb near Mori Point (Pacifica.

[Comments & Replies \(0\)](#)



Fave local sports figures 2

Oakland-grown Jason Kidd is among r beloved sports people.

[Comments & Replies \(0\)](#)

Most hated local sports figures



Top-floor living in S.F.

This condo unit is light, spacious, right favorite park. Asking: \$895K. Walk-Th

[Comments & Replies \(0\)](#)

Top Homes



SAN FRANCISCO

1 BR / 0.0 BA \$749,000.00



Antonucci complements the pleasing authoritativeness of his star cluster sheets with even more indeterminate pieces: large paper sheets given formless surface articulation by his having slept on them.

The peculiar combination of wryness and rigor in Antonucci's work marks a significant gallery debut.

John Cage: Prints. Through March 31. Crown Point Press, 20 Hawthorne St., S.F. (415) 974-6273. www.crownpoint.com.

Luca Antonucci: The New Nothing: Works on paper. Through March 10. Cain Schulte Contemporary Art, 251 Post St., S.F. (415) 543-1550. www.cainschulte.com.

Kenneth Baker is The San Francisco Chronicle's art critic.
kennethbaker@sfchronicle.com

This article appeared on page . - 1 of the San Francisco Chronicle

PRINT E-MAIL SHARE

0

19 share

We Recommend

- What happens in Dolores Park ...
- 'Project X' review: Ferris Bueller's day on ecstasy
- Old poem encouraging forgiveness still resonates with readers
- 'GCB' review: It's not 'Desperate' enough
- Early Golden Gate Bridge sketches' flight of fancy
- HOROSCOPE for Sunday, 03/04/2012

From Around the Web

- Kissing Angelina Jolie Was 'Awkward, Sweaty, And Not Very Nice' (Zimbio)
- Rowling Freezes Time for the Future (Femguide)
- 20 Artery-Cleansing Foods You Should be Eating (Shape Magazine)
- 6 legendary musicians who filed for bankruptcy (Bankrate.com)
- Harry Potter's Butterbeer (Taste for Adventure)

[What's this?]



Subscribe to the San Francisco Chronicle and receive access to the Chronicle for iPad App and a gift:

- Sunday + a \$15 gift card
- Fri-Sun + a \$15 gift card
- Mon-Sun + a \$25 gift card

Select an offer



Doomsday prophet: Oops, we goofed



Photos: Famed chase re-created



'Disco Inferno' singer dies (video)



Photos: Desigual's undie party in S.F.



All-time sexiest men of pop music



REAL ESTATE



San Anselmo Craftsman indoor-outdoor living

This three-story Craftsman features large windows, skylight access to the hillside backyard from every level.

Homes crafted from unlikely materials
What not to do when selling
Lady Gaga buying in Sonoma?

Search R

CARS



Beauties at Geneva Auto

Click through the gallery for photos of the 2012 Geneva Auto Show held in Switzerland.

will.i.am gives Chrysler 'street cred'
A Bentley SUV?: It may become real
Ford's big pickup packs sports-car speed

Si



VERY RARE 8" X 10" MARILYN MONROE



ROOFING LEAK IN CONSTRUCTION



LAB AKC pups, yearlings pre. OFA, hips & elbows



Inexpensive Great Callaway Diablo F Irons...

Browse ads | Page 1

Ads by Yahoo!

DISH. - Official Site
 Promo Price Starting at \$19.99/mo. Don't Wait. Switch to DISH@!
 (www.DISH.com)

Watch Live Online TV
 Do Not Join a Satellite TV to PC Site Until You Read This Page
 (www.sgfilter.com)

Compare Satellite TV
 Find The Best Satellite TV Package For You, Free Channels And Install
 (SatelliteTV-Deal.com)

Company Info: [Contact Us](#) [Hearst Corp.](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Terms and Conditions](#) [Work for Us](#) [Chronicle in Education](#) [Events & Promotions](#) [Submissions](#)

Advertising Services: [Advertise with us](#) [Place a Classified](#) [About Our Ads](#) [Public Notices](#) [Local Businesses: Business Directory](#)

Reader Services: [Home Delivery](#) [Subscribers](#) [iPad](#) [E-Edition](#) [Mobile](#) [RSS Feeds](#) [Newsletters](#) [Feedback](#) [Buy Photos](#) [FAQ](#) [Corrections](#) [Get Us](#)

Local Services: [Air Conditioning Contractors](#) [Car Dealerships](#) [Cleaning Services](#) [Family Doctors](#) [Furniture Stores](#) [Injury Attorneys](#) [Local Restaurants](#) [New Real Estate Agents](#) [Real Estate Attorneys](#)

© 2012 Hearst Communications Inc.

HEARST *newspapers*