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Review: Woodcuts and more by Israeli artist Orit Hofshi at Shulamit



Divergence, 2012, Spoon printed woodcut on hand made paper, carved pine wood panels and Ink, 75.5 x 185.8 in

BY LEAH OLLMAN | JUNE 21, 2013 3:30 PM PT

Israeli artist Orit Hofshi, in her first substantial L.A. show, at Shulamit, extends herself ambitiously in multiple directions, but what proves most memorable about her work is its most irreducible element, the mark of her hand. Hofshi is primarily a printmaker, working in woodcut. Her deftly carved strokes resonate beautifully with the rugged texture of the landscapes she depicts--rocky places, partially glimpsed, sometimes with a lone figure gazing or sketching, sometimes bearing signs of habitation or construction.

Replication, repetition and variation--the underpinnings of print media--are engaged overtly in several works. In "Wave," Hofshi wraps five versions of the same image in a continuous loop around a freestanding wall. The woodgrain of the panel reads vaguely as reflective water beneath landforms and rippled sky. There's fruitful friction between representation and trace, and a bit of dynamic slippage between the joined prints.

Though the individual components of an installation incorporating suspended prints, shallow basins of reflective oil and a discrete viewing platform hold interest, the parts fail to cohere. Far more subtle, and successful is "Divergence," which juxtaposes a carved and inked woodblock (not printed from) with four slightly varying prints. The use of the woodblock as autonomous object and not just as template speaks to process and a kind of rhythmic circularity echoed in the vigorously carved and printed lines.