

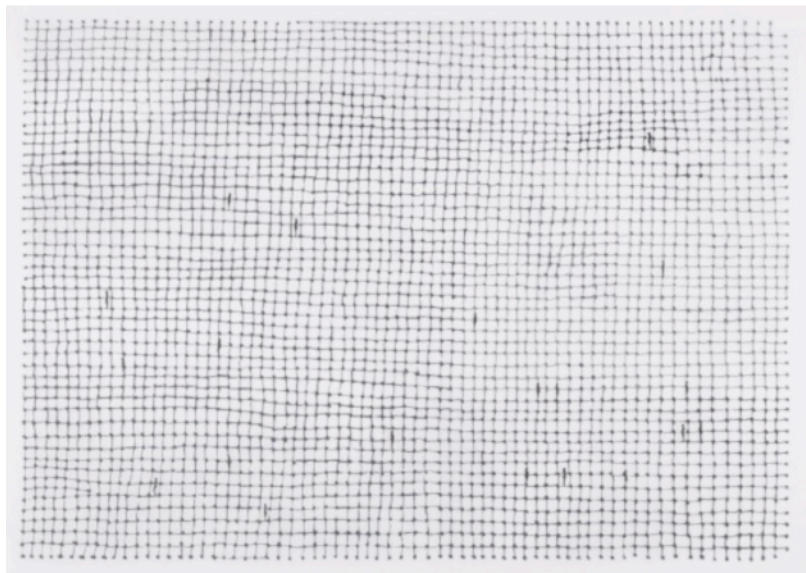


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# VULGO

## “Land” by Anita Groener at the Rubicon Gallery, reviewed by Deirdre Conroy

<http://vulgo.ie/reviews/land-by-anita-groener-at-the-rubicon-gallery-reviewed-by-deirdre-conroy/>



Anita Groener’s recent work at the Rubicon Gallery is spare and pure.

Groener, who was born and studied in the Netherlands, has lived most of her artist’s life in Ireland. She has taken the complex work of Hieronymus Bosch’ *The Ship of Fools* (or *he Satire of the Debauched Revellers*) and *The Conjurer*, deconstructed their allegorical context, removing the faces of the revellers, appropriating their identities and creating an entirely new narrative. It is interesting that she chose images remembered from her student art history books, utilising the source of learning, engaging with replication and manipulation to produce a new meaning for the matured artist.

In *Witness*, her arrangement of the reveling faces, now a series of dots within their own circular motif, underlines the arbitrariness of meaning. The 15<sup>th</sup>-century hedonistic figures adrift from reason, have become part of a 21<sup>st</sup> century work; this transposition from one medium to another imposes a dialogue with history, interrogating the nature of human interaction with vice and folly and examining a 500-year old work in the context of where we are today. While the Late Gothic Mannerism of Bosch’s work is concerned with grotesquely representing human flaws and life on earth as an unending repetition of original sin, Groener abstracts that apocalyptic theme and rearranges it in her distinctive manner, translating it into a new language.

In other works she uses her mark on paper to convey systems of control, in *Missing*, *Lost* and *Matrix*, the dot or the line are not simply geometric ciphers. Interconnected lines become grids, grids contain tiny figures, the subtext of restraint, containment, entrapment is ever-present in the trope.

In 2010 Groener had a residency at the Joseph and Anni Albers Foundation in Connecticut. Her re-discovery of the work of Anni Albers during this time inspired her exploration of geometric pattern and the grid. Albers who was 95 when she died in 1994 is renowned as a textile designer and weaver, predominantly polychromatic geometric compositions; hers was the first ever show by a textile designer at MoMA in 1949. Groener found that Albers’ drawings were executed using the grid method and has interpreted that discipline as her own commentary on control and access, freedom to express and withholding of choice. Albers did not have access to painting classes in the Bauhaus and chose to concentrate and excel at weaving.

Where once the line between home and displacement was clear; history and the present were defined, Groener’s thoughtful and provocative images demonstrate a blurring of time and territorial boundaries in LAND.

The show continues until 19 November at the Rubicon Gallery, 10 St Stephen’s Green

