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EAST BAY EXPRESS

OAKLAND, BERKELEY, AND EAST BAY NEWS, EVENTS, RESTAURANTS, MUSIC, & ARTS




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★ Pareidolia

Jan. 16–Feb. 22 2014

Artist Donald Fortescue is interested in the human tendency to see a shape in the clouds, a man in the moon, or Jesus on burnt toast — a psychological phenomenon referred to as “pareidolia.” This is also the title of Fortescue’s solo exhibition, currently on view at Vessel Gallery (471 25th St, Oakland), which features prints, sculpture, and installations that highlight the preconscious human process of recognizing form through correspondence with patterns found in both nature and culture. With impeccable execution, the California College of the Arts professor of art and design presents several amorphous pieces inspired by nature, each of which work as Rorschach tests. Although every piece is mesmerizing, the exhibition’s obvious gem is “On the level, #2,” an installation consisting of 68 hanging hand-coopered spindles shaped beautifully out of recycled redwood. Arranged into a symmetrical triangular composition, the collection dissolves into a forest of various visual elements when viewed from different angles and distances. With the light sneaking around it from the glass doors behind, it resembles a massive, wooden chandelier that swings ever so slightly, suggesting latent magnetic energy amid the pieces that form the whole.

— Sarah Burke

 **Vessel Gallery**
471 25th St.
Oakland–Downtown