

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

A wry gallery debut from Antonucci

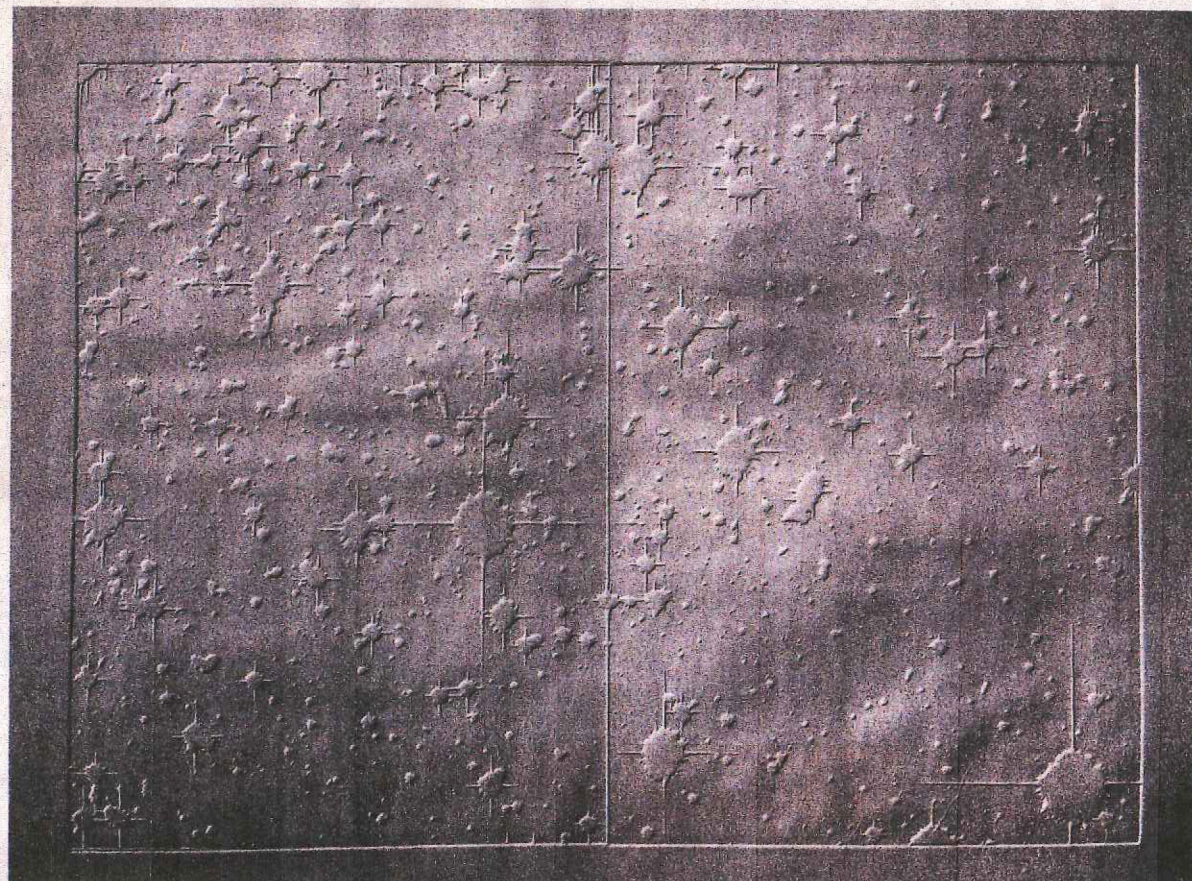
Baker from page E1

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 *would* 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



Marina Cain

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

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 Schulte 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.

Antonucci complements the pleasing authorlessness 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.

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