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Dipping into ink

Gregg Blasdel's drawings at OHT Gallery offer up complex patterns built from repeated pathways in ink. What a wonderful medium in which to work with such obsession: Ink is so fluid, it's hard to tame, and it pushes against the rigidity of Blasdel's forms.

The older drawings, made with dark ink, work better than the newest drawing here, in which Blasdel experiments with white ink. One of the older ones, "Unknown Math" (1992) features a capsule shape drawn in dark brown lines; it's rather like a stadium seen from above, with each line representing a row of seats. There's just a white slit in the middle, and Blasdel inks another layer of patterning over the first one, this time with arcs rising from the bottom corners, fanning and converging like the ripples in a pond when you drop in two stones at once. The patterns work together to imbue the drawing with a sense of volume, but the ink gives it airiness. It's a lovely piece.

His "Ghost of Myself" (2002) is a more complicated structure,

Greg Blasdel: Drawings and Steve Novick: Sculpture

At: OHT Gallery, 450 Harrison Ave.,
through June 22

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drawn with slate blue and white ink, but the white ink obscures rather than engages with the underlying pattern, and it's hard to see what's going on.

Also at OHT, Steve Novick offers up more of his faux industrial objects, crafted from aluminum, brass, and rubber. "Drone (Double Cone)" made of shiny brass, has one cone poking its tip into the base of another, mounted on the wall horizontally. Novick has always created pieces that suggest some kind of utility. These works don't do that, and that frees the viewer to enjoy them as odd and provocative forms, without trying to figure out what they do. That's a step forward for the artist: his pieces feel clearer and stronger.