



“CORRUGATED” (EXHIBITION INSTALLATION VIEW),
2009, Ann Weber

PHOTO: COURTESY BOISE ART MUSEUM

BOISE

Ann Weber: “Corrugated” at the Boise Art Museum

Contemporary sculpture is flush with work that erases the boundaries between fine art and craft, merging the two sensibilities to transcend traditional categories and bring a new humanism to the art form. California sculptor Ann Weber is tapped into this zeitgeist, creating organic forms out of non-organic materials, i.e., found corrugated cardboard, staples and polyurethane or shellac finishes. The results are idiosyncratic and sometimes surprisingly beautiful, offering a distinctive view of natural and sculptural form. Weber’s show at the Boise Art Museum through November entitled “Corrugated,” offers a decade of freestanding and wall-mounted sculpture and reliefs, revealing an oeuvre alternating between a calm, natural elegance and a quirky playfulness. This split personality is at least in part attributable to her extensive background in ceramics. After fifteen years of making functional pottery, Weber completed an MFA in ceramic sculpture at the California College of Arts and Crafts. Her switch to cardboard was motivated by the difficulties she encountered making oversized works in clay. Lightweight, flexible cardboard has allowed Weber to pursue her aesthetic flights of fancy on a monumental scale. At the same time, her sculpture has retained an emphasis on rounded forms common to pottery which tends to limit her formal repertoire. Despite this abstract orientation, Weber’s floor pieces in particular are unmistakably figurative, sometimes in a totemic sense, but more often in their anthropomorphic disposition.

Weber’s sculpture is animated by its off-balance, eccentric forms and combinations that give her work a strange charisma. Her process has a folk-art quality, weaving strips of cardboard into basket-like forms, securing the seams with staples. The results can be quite sophisticated. The three-piece floor sculpture, *Night Blooming* (2008) consists of tightly woven, richly finished, genderized radish and garlic shapes huddled together in blind courtship. Her installation of towering, somewhat teetering forms in BAM’s Sculpture Court recall Martin Puryear’s improbably tall, deceptively folksy wood sculptures. Yet Weber’s installation, looking like an enormous alien chess set, has a Disney-esque flavor in the way she infuses inanimate objects with personality and social standing: the regal, aloof king and queen in *Almost 16* and *Almost 15½*; the 8-piece grouping of courtiers in *Wonderland*; and *Curiouser and Curiouser*’s roly-poly children and minder. Her 26-piece wall installation, *Talking with Tuttle*, is an odd ensemble of vaguely familiar artifacts and organisms not unlike Richard Tuttle’s assemblages, underscoring a mutual fascination with the unconventional and the indefinite.

—CHRISTOPHER SCHNOOR