

Site:Lab - Blandford Nature Center Event

Title: *Figure/Ground*
Artist: David Fischer
Size: 10.5-ft x 8-ft (HxW) (est.)
Materials: Painted wood and recovered metal



Discussion

In early stages of visual development, human perception is dominated by out-of-focus swaths of “ground” that are interrupted by occasional, vividly moving figures, which pass through the field of view. Within the brain, front-back neural pathways are built when objects deemed important are identified from the massive ground of visual input to form durable connections. Our first visual touchstones are items that the brain interprets as both standing out from the ground and relating to something greater.

The piece *Figure /Ground* seeks to awaken this lower visual foundation that is common to all, and then confound that instinct by subverting key elements of this process. In this installation, the ability to detect figures within a generalized, nature-based ground is inverted. The monochromatic, white frame becomes the “ground” that encapsulates what would be an otherwise chaotic natural scene. In turn, the tangled brush that fills the frame becomes the “figure,” detected within the newly defined ground. The work also plays with expectations of depth spacing, as the white “ground” is actually closer to the viewer than “figure” it delineates from the natural scene in the distance.

Figure / Ground

Visual memory from *Figure /Ground* may come into play when viewing the artist's 2011 Art Prize entry. More information at – <http://www.artprize.org/artists/public-profile/4095>

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