

## Garrison's pencil covers lots of ground

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Limn Gallery offers the widest view we have had yet of the work of San Franciscan Sid Garrison, and it comes as good news.

Garrison works exclusively in colored pencil on paper, but those who suspect him of repeating himself will find no evidence of it here. The pieces on view vary dizzyingly in palette and complexity.

The best of them have in common a look of contrivance without composition. How much planning, if any, lies behind a given piece, and how much time it took, we cannot tell, though Garrison titles each drawing by the date of its completion. Nor can we guess where spontaneity shows itself. A decision to leave a passage empty may betray it as readily as a burst of stippling or tangle of contours. Garrison's technique never clearly reveals its speed. He makes the speed of execution harder to estimate by bur-nishing or otherwise treating his surfaces so that a buzz of fine striations cuts through them.

My favorites, such as "January 24, 2007," appear to have been worked from all four edges, making their orientation seem arbitrary.

Only occasionally do allusions crop up in Garrison's work, by chance or not. An informed viewer will think here of Cezanne and early Cubist landscape, there of Jack Youngerman, Arshile Gorky or Clyfford Still.

But Garrison apparently does not seek to borrow authority from these offhand affinities. His use of colored pencil puts him in narrow, if not select, company among noted artists.

His pictures similarly dance close to a range of representational associations, to microphotography, maps and, in a few cases, the scarred surfaces of outdoor walls from which postings have peeled.

Like Garrison's drawings or not, any visitor can see clearly a mark of his growing accomplishment: His work really looks like no one else's, and yet it changes continually.

As a complement to Garrison's exhibition, Limn presents a group show of drawings by artists working in unusual media, ranging from thread and staples to grains of rice and burned perforations.

Sid Garrison: Pencil Drawings. Drawings of Another Kind: Drawings in unusual media by eight contemporary artists. Through May 27. Limn Gallery, 292 Townsend St., San Francisco. (415) 977-1300, [www.limn.com](http://www.limn.com).