



View of "Janice Kerbel," 2012.

CHICAGO

## Janice Kerbel

THE ARTS CLUB OF CHICAGO

201 East Ontario Street

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The work in Janice Kerbel's first solo exhibition in the United States dances nimbly around the proverbial void. Take, for instance, *Cue*, 2012, a suite of thirty-six screenprints, divided into three "acts" through which a drama of abstract shapes in gray scale unfolds. The graphic work is derived from Kerbel's play *Kill the Workers!*, 2011, which is the subject of illustrations in the exhibition catalogue. *Cue* is, by way of this displacement, something of a latter-day Kandinsky work, in which floating trapezoids and circles vie for compositional and narrative dominance: an accumulation of symbols suggestive of an elusive story line that is absent for the viewer.

In her much touted work *Ballgame (Innings 1-2)*, 2009, there emits from a lone stereo speaker a monotone male voice. The recording consists of a play-by-play of a mathematically derived account of a hypothetical baseball game in which the players' names, at-bats, errors, and so on

are all determined by the average occurrences of these over the twentieth century. What at first gives the impression of a live feed to a real baseball game is actually a meticulously constructed sound piece. Ballgame is in essence a doubling of signs, averaging averages to instantiate the referent as a thing unto itself.

The material presented in this spare but concise exhibition is always somewhere else; one could argue that there is, in fact, “nothing there.” In other words, the artist is heavily invested in semiotics, creating works that point us to other locations and other times. This isn’t to suggest the works are indexical, exactly, but diagrammatic, with the artist evoking not what has been but rather what may have been.

— Zachary Cahill