McGowan Fine Art/Concord
Amaparo Hufschmid: Transitions

The transitions noted in the title of this show of woodcuts and monotypes are from the black-and-white linearity of the traditional woodcuts, for which Hufschmid is known, to colorful textural effects in the more personal and painterly medium of monotype. With the new techniques come new sensibilities.

The show is divided into two series, one of increasingly abstract and painterly renderings of the female body, the other a set of variations on a wooded landscape. In the landscape series the artist first presents a black-and-white woodcut of bare trees that occupy a plane at an undefined distance from the picture surface. In the variations, this image is sometimes cropped to change the size or overlaid in multiple pulls to increase the length or density of the line of trees. Various colored inks, sometimes with natural wood grain textures, indicate sun, sky, land, or water. Sometimes a translucent mist enshrouds the entire image. Although the concept, and especially the forest silhouette, are familiar enough to be a bit off-putting, several of these woodcuts succeed in creating a mood through tone. Variation VI, for example, nicely overlays the trees on a wood-grained sky to establish a dark and mysterious atmosphere.

Expressive black-and-white woodcut (Torso) in which forceful lines define volume and texture. The Torso Series monotypes that follow abstract the body into arcs and circles, imparting volume through both texture and modeling; the result is something elemental. The best of these works, their rich surfaces enhanced with energetic drips and splotches, capture a sense of living flesh, pulsing and breathing. In such a context, the circles (breasts and abdomen), defined with painterly circumferences and centers, may be read as mandalas, expressing the force of life. It will be interesting to see where these transitions take the artist in the future.

—Robert R. Craven