

By [Sheila Regan](#) Thu., Mar. 8 2012 at 8:00 AM

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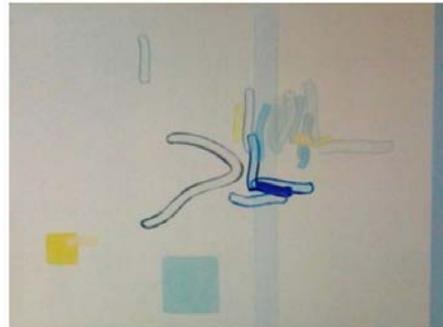
Last fall, Sharon Louden wowed viewers at the Weisman with *Merge*, her incredible installation inspired by Frank Gehry's design of the museum. The artist used strips of aluminum to create what appears to be an other-worldly living organism. Last week, Burnet Gallery opened an exhibition of Louden's work, called "Movement & Gesture," which includes three smaller versions of *Merge*, as well as numerous paintings, drawings, and single-channel video animations.



*Merge Composition 2011*, by Sharon Louden

There are three sculptural works in the the show that, like *Merge*, are made with aluminum strips, screws, and glue. The pieces are smaller and more contained, so they aren't as viscerally exciting as *Merge*, which sprawls out as if it's a moss or some other organic material. Still, they are enticing pieces on their own, drawing the viewer in with their movement and reflection.

Most of the exhibition consists of Louden's paintings and drawings, which in their whimsical freedom of shape and line have a similar feel to the *Merge* compositions. In her work -- which sometimes resembles finger paintings, and at other times doodles on paper -- shows a playfulness, where squat rectangular lines seem to have personalities of their own.



*Eventing, 2011* by Sharon Louden

In her *Eventing* series, Louden's outlined rectangles seem to squirm about -- as if in a petri dish -- in search of other rectangles. The works illustrate the very moment of inspiration when an artist chooses which way to take a gesture, almost letting the art tell the artist what it wants to do.

There's also two single-channel digital animations, called *Hugs* and *Them*. Both were made in 2005. The screensaver-like meditations follow a narrative of moving lines and changing color that is quite mesmerizing. The lines and shapes seem to have little personalities, and adroitly struggle for survival. Louden also utilizes an uncanny mastery of rhythm in the animations, so that an element of surprise makes for dramatic changes in color and movement.



*Eventing, 2011* by Sharon Louden

The title for the show, "Movement & Gesture," couldn't be more apt. In all of the work -- whether it's digital animation, painting, or a sculptural assemblage of strips of metal -- Louden expresses the most primary of impulses, revealing the vulnerability and wide-eyed hope in the birth of creativity. So while this exhibition isn't as intense or massive as her installation at the Weisman, it gives you a peek at how that work may have come about.