

space

31 July - 18 August 2012

Essay by Phe Luxford

*Formerly the painter depicted objects which were to be seen on earth. Now the real nature of visible things is revealed in terms of the universe, what is visible is but a fragment of the whole. – Paul Klee*1*

Paul Klee's commitment to abstract paintings demonstrates the desire of early 20th century artists to visually express their emotional rather than literal responses to the world around them. Line, colour and form became an abbreviated, symbolic language through which 'the rhythm of a man's walk, breath, heartbeat...the cosmic rhythms of day and night, of year succeeding year, of the moon in relation to the earth'*2 could now be implied.

The impulse to represent the metaphysical possibilities of an environment, beyond the fixed or neatly understood, led French born artist **Christophe Stibio** to immerse himself in the vast and silent landscapes of the Australian desert. Through a painstaking process the artist pieces together small torn and cut sections of paper to map out a new topography of space, laced with personal longing. The resulting abstract forms and colours suggest a distorted, distant realm that shimmers with endless, complex spatial problems. As memories become embedded within the fragmented shadows of colour, geographic truth collapses. The landscape becomes one of the mind rather than any physical reality.

Collapsing, expanding and fragmenting a given site to affect a set of physical responses in the viewer has been exploited by artists since the invention of perspective. Creating unstable visual grounds forces a rupture between the known and the assumed. The illusionistic quality of much of **Richard Blackwell's** work 'activates the mind to consider the transformation of the object from the physical to the virtual and back again.'*3 Responding to architectonic forms and urban design principles Blackwell combines the disciplines of drawing and sculpture to suggest warped perspectives, complex vanishing points and linear convergences found within the built environment. Line is used to maximum effect, suggestively bending and folding spatial perspective in much the same way as the impossible designs of M. C. Escher. Oscillating between the physical and the represented, Blackwell's virtual spaces exploit notions of accessible and impenetrable space, creating a kind of playful optical banter with the viewer.

Also working with the quality of line to suggest illusionary depth, **Agneta Ekholm's** seductive paint surfaces operate in the margins between tactile fact and immaterial possibilities. The trace of the artist's hand, moving in slow and fluid order, lays down translucent ribbons of colour. As the luminosity of individual colours shift and slide against one another, light and dark begin to create new, internal space within the canvas. Like looking through the frozen sheet of an icy river, movement within gently carves its own trajectory out of the stillness.

Central to **Charlie Sheard's** dynamic abstract works is the tactile reality of paint itself. The spaces depicted are those of the canvas, the physical impact of materials on that surface and the relationship between the body and the pictorial frame. These works allow paint to move under the force of gravity, to drip and pool in response to the tilt of the canvas, or in keeping with the dynamic motion of the hand. Layers dry at different rates and colours seep within a maelstrom of paint and canvas. Representing a desire to activate and experiment with the sensation of movement and colour, these works are also maps of the mind, each element reflecting the thoughts and emotions of the artist, be they outbursts of excitement or the explosion of new thought.

The space between image and object is blurred in the sculptural paintings of **Terri Brooks**. In many ways a *flâneur*, Brooks absorbs the physical qualities of the built environment, delighting in the accidental textures and material surfaces of concrete, building materials or bitumen roads. She is not a landscape painter, but works to reflect the truth and beauty of the utilitarian surfaces around her. Her canvases offer a sort of spatial dislocation or inverse trompe-l'œil of reality, as isolated sections of the everyday are reborn within the gallery setting. Like the ruins of antiquity her remnants are 'palpable, not pictorial...their presence shifts with vitality and springs forth into awareness'.*4 As replicas of the factual world, in all its decay and innate ordinariness, these paintings subvert the idiom of preciousness and make the certain uncertain.

A lived, momentary experience of space is articulated in **Dion Horstmans'** highly strategic sculptures. Fascinated with delineations of open space and implied movement, these works operate on both physical and implied levels. Stretching out to cover multiple points in space, their iron frameworks elicit ideas of architectural elevations, flight trajectories and the temporal pull of line and distance. From the implied movement housed within the static form comes a secondary dimension, as light plays amongst the armatures and voids. Imbued with a sense of freedom and action the resulting shadows shift ideas of projection into action. Tinged with a futurist aesthetic these minimalist sculptures playfully bring the dimensions of time and space into unison. Working with the fall of light to produce a kinetic reflexivity, Horstmans' sculptures recall the style and function of a sundial. Time and space at last operating within one form.

Sitting partway between the definitive and the meditative, **Jo Davenport's** practice depicts both the physical truth of a landscape and the suggestive, subjective experience such spaces can evoke. A sense of immediacy drives the fluid and gestural quality of her mark making. As natural forms morph with a painterly, almost expressionistic concern for colour and composition, her drips and spills translate the observed qualities of rivers in flow, the sway of foliage in wind and the changing colours of light. Space and the experience of it becomes a multi-layered, translucent experience, devoid of definitive boundaries.

CHRISTOPHE STIBIO

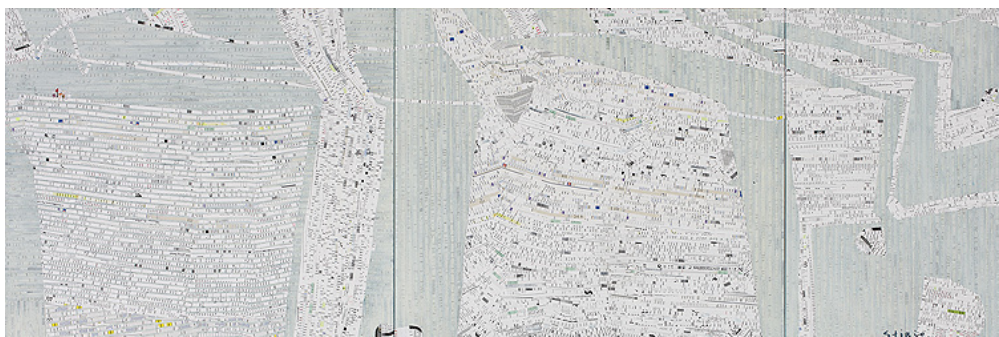
"space that would leave a mark of curious connectedness to the rest of your direct environment" CHRISTOPHE STIBIO 2012



Bundeena Coastal Fire Trail 2011
natural pigments on paper & cut paper strips mounted on cotton duck
65 x 165cm (framed)



insitu on 3.7m wall



Coastal Fire Trail Watamolla 2011
natural pigments on paper & cut paper strips mounted on cotton duck
60 x 180cm (framed)



RICHARD BLACKWELL

"What most interests me are those points of deception in the work where the illusion meets the physical world and reveals the folly." RICHARD BLACKWELL 2012



Aluminium 2012
inkjet print on acrylic
150 x 70cm



in situ on 3.7m wall



Installation image



Flash 2012
inkjet print on acrylic
139 x 112cm



in situ on 3.7m wall



Foiled 2012
inkjet print on acrylic
127 x 79cm



in situ on 3.7m wall

Agneta Ekholm

"...the multiple flat layers combine and entwine to create a sense of depth and movement surrounded by still ground" AGNETA EKHOLM 2012



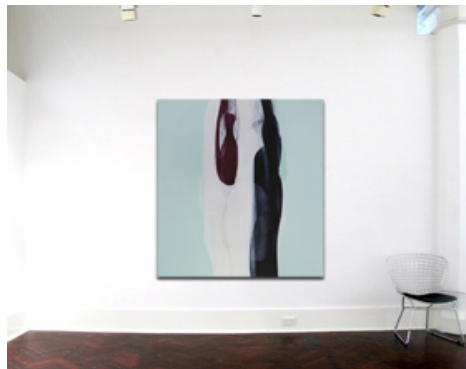
Disappearing into Silence 2012
acrylic on canvas
82 x 112cm



insitu on 3.7m wall



The Space Between 2012
acrylic on canvas
180 x 150cm



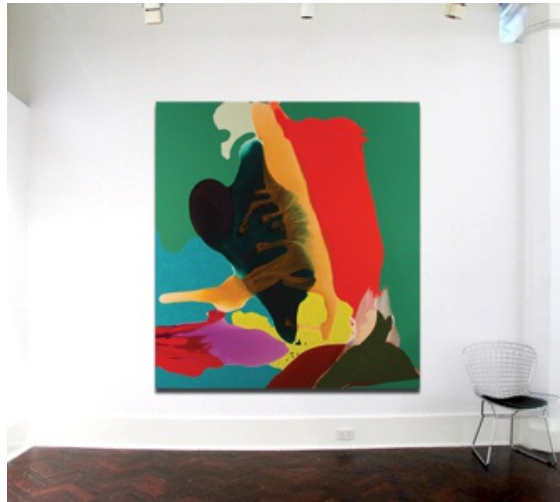
insitu on 3.7m wall

Charlie Sheard

" Each painting is a unique expression of being in the world at the time of making" CHARLIE SHEARD 2012



Abstraction, Space #1 2012
mixed media on linen
214 x 198cm



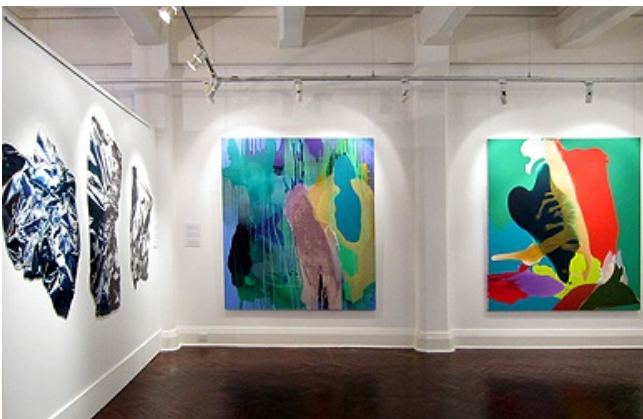
insitu on 3.7m wall



Abstraction, Space #3 2012
mixed media on linen
214 x 198cm



insitu on 3.7m wall



Installation image

Terri Brooks

"veils of reflection and memory" TERRI BROOKS 2012



Bitumen Rose, 2012
Oil on Papier-mâché
2 x 30 x 30 x 5cm



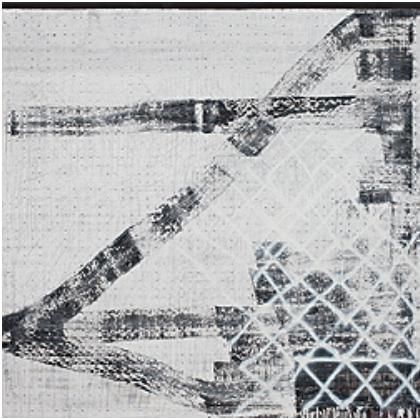
Zebra, 2012
Oil, enamel,
pigment and PVA
on canvas,
42 x 32cm



Be Careful, 2012
Oil, enamel,
pigment and PVA
on canvas,
42x 32cm



Installation image



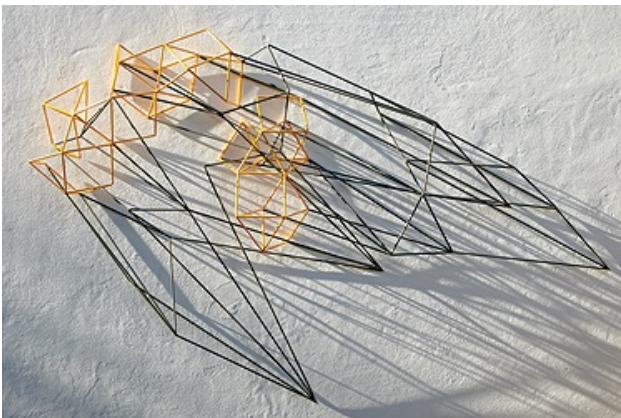
ZigZag, 2012
Oil, enamel and pencil on canvas,
153 x 153cm



insitu on 3.7m wall

Dion Horstmans

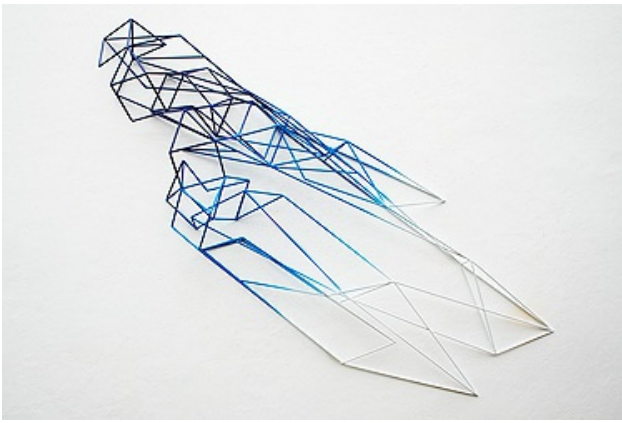
"I am fascinated by the moving spaces created by the light & shadow play" DION HORSTMANS 2012



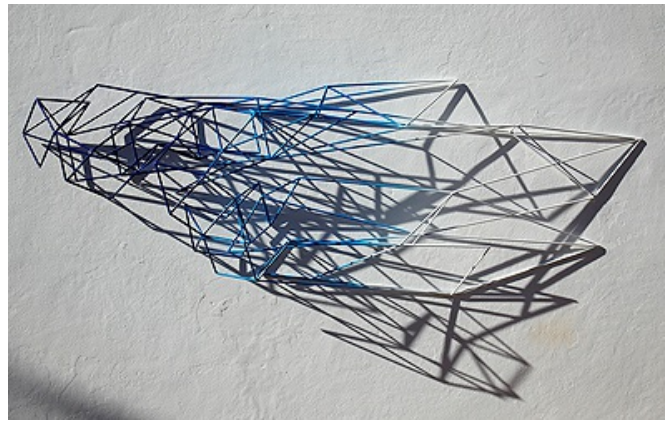
Moonfire Fragments #2 2012
Powdercoated steel
200 x 105 x 12cm



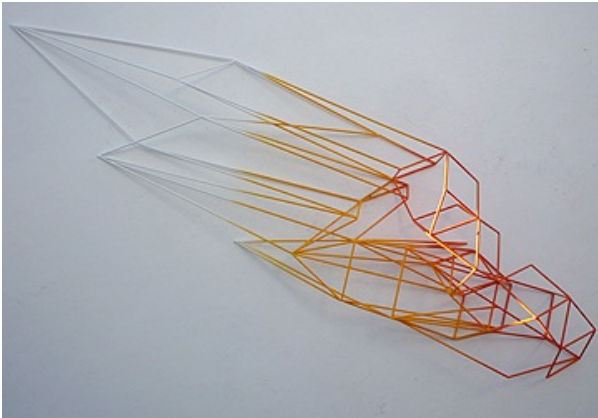
Installation image



Moonfire Re-Entry #2 2012
Powdercoated steel
215 x 65 x 28cm



Moonfire Re-Entry #2 2012- alternate angle with shadows



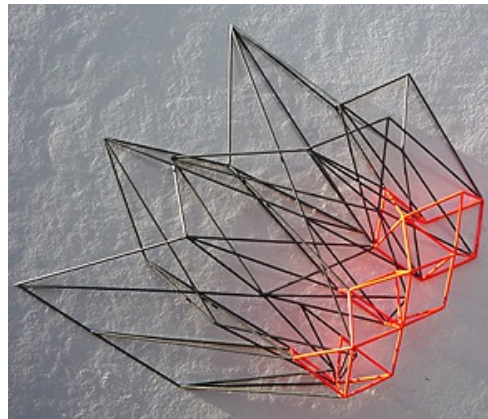
Moonfire Re-Entry #5 2012
Powdercoated steel
approx 180 x 75 x 28cm



Moonfire Re-Entry #4 2012
Powdercoated steel
approx 180 x 75 x 25cm



Moonfire Fireball #3, 2012
Powdercoated steel
approx 120 x 100 x 15cm



Moonfire Fireball #2, 2012
Powdercoated steel
approx 120 x 100 x 15cm

Jo Davenport

"...what is seen, what is remembered, and what is imagined, to present a depiction of the transitory space in-between."
JO DAVENPORT 2012



Beneath the Surface, 2012
Diptych
oil on Belgian linen & mixed media on voile
183 x 168cm & 183 x 45cm



insitu on 3.7m wall

FOOTNOTES:

*1 Klee, P., *Creative Credo* [Schöpferische Konfession], 1920

*2 Haftmann W., *The Mind and Work of Paul Klee*, Faber and Faber, 1967, p.92

*3 Walter, T., 'Richard Blackwell', *Australian Art Review*, Sept 2011, p.52

*4 Ginsberg, R., *The Aesthetics of Ruins*, Rodopi Amsterdam, 2004, p.158