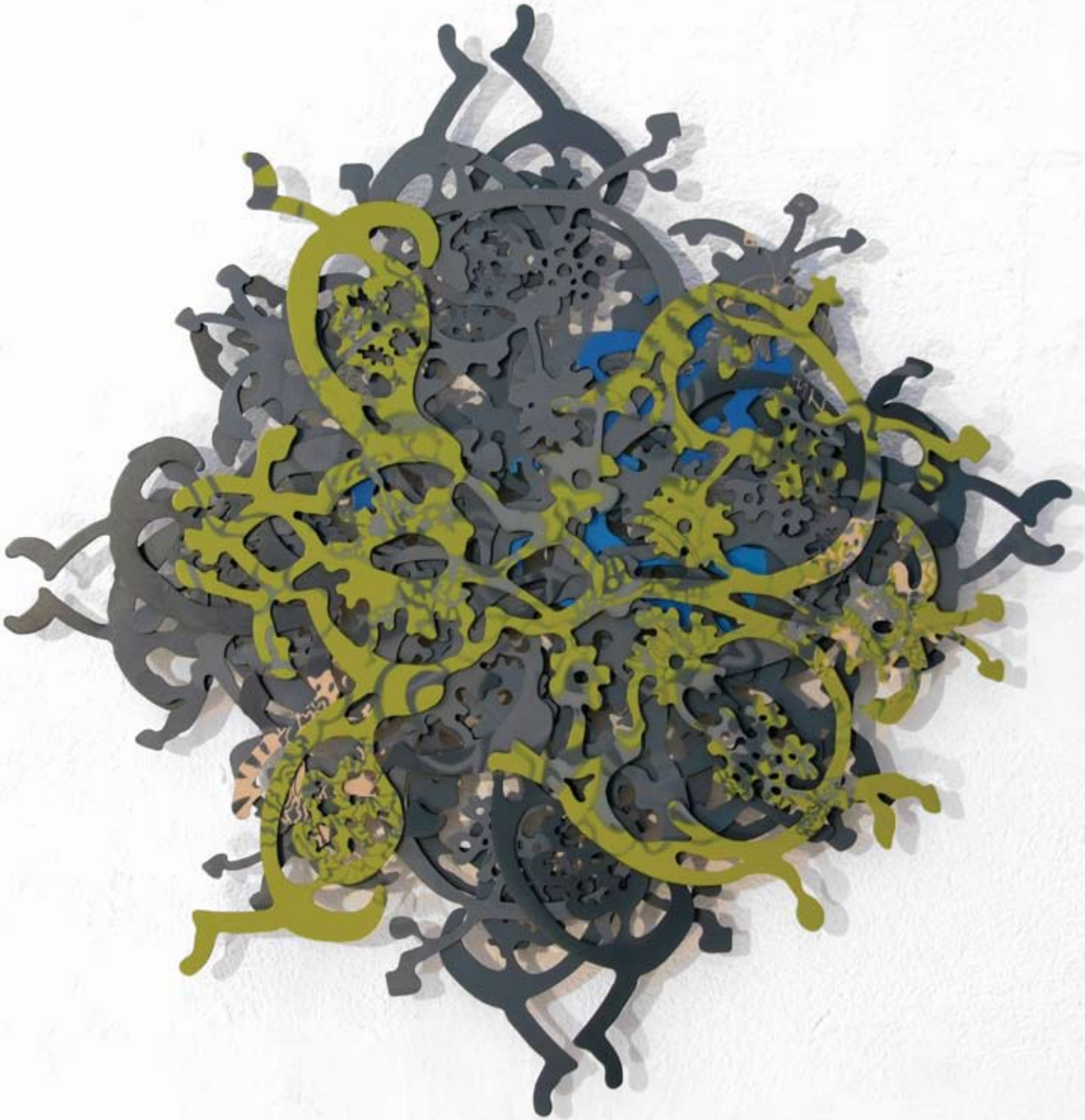

Pam Gaunt



Pam Gaunt

selected works 2005 – 2008

In Conversation...

Annette Seeman

Pam Gaunt's work has become increasingly known for the deliberate use of ornament and of the decorative, as concept, method and image in her studio practice. She draws on this perceptively acute knowledge to develop deceptively simple works that reinvent traditional patterns, particularly when architecturally articulated by Gaunt's installations they epitomize the highest levels of intellectual curiosity and imaginative freedom.

Her recent work might be considered to be evocative of Victorian sensibilities: eccentricity, ingenuity and complexity enabling the creation of objects and spaces that exist between revealing and concealing '*the irrational, emotional and sexual forces that are fundamental to the human condition*' [1].

More recently, artists such as Del Kathryn Barton, Louise Paramour, Simon Periton, Louise Hopkins, Yinka Shonibare, Kara Walker and Lari Pittman have all employed the 'decorative' or 'ornament' in their practice and for the purposes of this essay I use these terms interchangeably.

It is important to recognise that Gaunt has been exploring this particular genre or conversation with practice for over a decade. She values interpretation over reproduction and her approach provides a much needed alternative to the continuing dominance of Modernist practices.

She has not however, completely rejected modernist sentiment, but has successfully created an intellectual and material space to 'play' somewhere between the formal and the informal.

The Cut *Roses* (2006) series demonstrate this particular quality; in the words of John Stringer '[*the] work is defined by a presiding sense of deliberate discipline. Despite their intricacy and complexity, her pieces are clean, precise, orderly, neat and tidy, and have a degree of deliberate refinement, restraint and sophistication that appeal to the rational aspects of the intellect*' [2].

***A Florid Conversation*, 2006**
Size variable. Automotive paint and collaged paper on aluminium *finstock,* glue.
Photography: Robert Frith, Acorn Photo Agency

Detail *A Florid Conversation*, 2006
Photography: Robert Frith, Acorn Photo Agency

I would add to Stringers' placement of Gaunt's sensibilities that under their surface is an interplay between shadow like forms that hide and float uneasily in the work. This is Gaunt's strength; skilfully demonstrating understanding of the role of the decorative as it has been relegated in and out of contemporary art theory and practice. She manifests her practice as materially mischievous, the structures appearing fragile, the connections tentative yet visually intricate and robust.

Gaunt often chooses an historical motif as in the *Shelfless – Life* (2006) or the everyday as in *Errant Abstractions* (2008), recasting appropriation as an inquisitive, imaginative means of reconnoitring with history, culture, the everyday and visual significance.

She says "*I do attempt to make work that appears familiar yet (it) reinvents or contradicts itself in order to disrupt the 'fluency' in readings'*[3].

An installation that stands alone is *A Florid Conversation* (2006): more representational than other works it delights the intellectual and visual in equal measure. Perhaps more than other recent work, the sense of beauty, endearment and narrative combine to produce what might be described visually and intellectually as 'a florid conversation'. This work and the more recent Errant *Florid Drawings* (2008) are Gaunt at her materially mischievous best.

The emphasis in this practice is one of 'play', with the elements arranged to allow for multiple readings yet recognising the requirement to "*believe their success is tied to the simple/complex binary*" [4] that exists between the decorative and the minimal.

In discussing what motivated Gaunt to select the motifs for *Errant Abstractions…an exhibition about frippery, bibelot and aesthetic fluff* shown at Galerie Dusseldorf in August 2008 she suggests, "*The motifs in the Dingbat series, was an attempt to work with a contemporary decorative lexicon. The quirkiness of dingbats, web dings and wingdings appealed to my sense of humour, especially when I began to draw with them and organise them thematically into the chosen 'alphabet' shapes.*[5]

The motifs in the Partners in Crime series were chosen for their asymmetrical, ambiguous and figurative qualities. As you can imagine, the choice available was vast, so I really just ended up choosing 12 motifs that appealed to me for their indeterminateness and they became an 'alphabet' for the whole exhibition' [6].

What is intriguing about this most recent work is the potential for visual pleasure to be gained through repetition. Densities of visual and material sensation accumulate through an intensity of overproduction and are then fractured into growing shadows of beauty, pleasure and even monstrosity. The works are reminiscent of Indonesian puppet theatre Wayang Kulit. Wayang means shadow or ghost, Kulit means hide or skin. 'The 'dalang' or puppeteer must know all the figures, this can be more than a hundred, their nature and symbolic importance, and have such dexterity as to give each its proper tone and pitch at times creating the illusion of conversation.

I can imagine Gaunt constructing a type of theatre with these works, there is a sense of their readiness for action, the works floating just off the wall in a manner that suggests that they, like a genie in a bottle, might conflate to a small jewel like ornament to be treasured, or enlarge and grow, becoming a monstrosity of entangled threads like something out of the dark forests of childhood nightmares.

The deliberate way in which Gaunt is able to negotiate between these spaces of scale and emotion is a testament to her refinement with what I have termed above as material mischief.

For Gaunt the act of play within her practice underpins a decisive act of subversion. She says about Modernism and play '*Art was serious for the tenants of the canon (of Modernism), and the frivolity associated with play was a potentially disruptive element and even a cause for anxiety in a purist aesthetic regime'*[7]. Not withstanding this awareness her work is never less than serious, never more than playful. Through engaging with architectural spaces and '*the moments when the unexpected becomes something more than the expected, something you couldn't predict*'[8]. Gaunt recognises the potential of that moment when the giddy complexity of layers and reworking old motifs, piling motif upon motif in a layered maze of references is always a new beginning. Might Gaunt be working to clarify and condense ideas that will be explored in future installations perhaps offering a new way to understanding wider concerns about the nature of culture, hierarchies and power? The recent works certainly offer a suggestion of what might come in her future conversations between idea, motif and architecture.

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Notes:

1. Gaunt, P, *Pam Gaunt Selected Works 1997 – 2004* 'The Ornamental Playground' published by Artist, Perth 2004 p23
2. Stringer, John in *Back to the Wall* in Pam Gaunt Selected Works 1997 – 2004 catalogue essay published by Artist, Perth 2004 p3
3. ibid p 23
4. From conversations with the artist October 2008.
5. From conversations with the artist October 2008
6. Gaunt op. cit, p.23
7. From conversations with the artist October 2008
8. Feldman E, Melissa and Schaffner, Ingrid Secret *Victorians Contemporary Artists and 19th-Century Vision* Hayward Gallery London Touring Exhibition published Hayward Gallery Publishing, London 1998

Meubles and Tableaux:

Richard Read

Reflections on Pamela Gaunt's *Aberrant Abstractions*

It took the artist herself to tell me. About the last thing I would have noticed myself (though it's there in the hand-out) is that twelve ornamental patterns of European, Asian and Middle Eastern origin form the basic units of Pamela Gaunt's four-sectioned show, comprising 1) the black and white *Dingbat Series* of inkjet prints near the door; 2) the *Partners in Crime Series* of acrylic laser cuts at the far end and the coloured sections in the middle of the gallery comprising 3) *Errant Florid Drawings* in industrially routed MDF and 4) the suspended garden of *Errant Abstractions*, also in MDF, through which one walks in the centre of the gallery. The central coloured sections 3 and 4 seem parts of the same section because the *Florid Drawings* seem to have slipped off the wall and morphed into the mobile *Abstractions* gently spinning and casting multiple shadows from the ceiling lights onto the floor.

Here are some divergent first impressions to the show, the two first being mine. Perhaps it was jet lag that made me think that walking beside the clusters of Aberrant Drawings suspended from the ceiling was like flying one's own fuselage through clouds. Instead of shoe marks, then, the rubber scuff marks at all angles on the floor became the residue of countless runway landings.

Stop there. If they were clouds they would all have been at the same altitude, or at least in different horizontal bands. These were in wave formation. So now I was Howard Holt, tramping back up from the deep bedecked in seaweed. Now these floating stencils of slowly twirling MDF were flotsam and jetsam, no, teeming octopuses or shards of detached coral, rising and falling with the waves, while the *Florid Drawings* on the walls became sea horses tilting backwards and forwards. But no, the pieces from both sections are all floral and not far off from Monet's water lilies in colour and distribution, except that the lake at Giverny has been sent into convulsions, so the water lilies are in three not two dimensions lurching up and down in the centre of the gallery. (It transpired that the debt was actually to Matisse's cutouts from the *Paradise and Bird* and *Swimming Pool* series.)

Alerted to the twelve basic modules, another viewer, an architect, flashed upon quite different associations from his own experience, but I saw what he meant. He wondered why the clusters didn't climb nearer to the ceiling, as buildings might, and was reminded by the *Aberrant Drawings* of conurbation strips alongside the Los Angeles Highway generated out of basic modules by computer programs. When he said that, I saw them that way too, or rather they stopped being sea horses and reminded me instead of saxophones and eventually of those reticulated fold-up bicycles urban commuters take on trains. I was over on the technological end of the spectrum of these industrially fashioned floral patterns.

To the artist herself they were discarded bouquets, which I should have gathered from the *Errant Abstractions* subtitle: '…….an exhibition about frippery, bibelot and aesthetic fluff.' Perhaps also from one of *Dingbat series* that suddenly seemed quite angry. A chaste floral

emblem suddenly resolved itself into the pattern of an inflatable doll, arms and legs stiffly akimbo, mouth and sex agape, as the computer symbols that composed its shape roared across it in an orgy of masculine technology: money, houses, motorbikes, trucks. But this is no victim feminism because the gender suddenly switches. Blown up to the scale at which their dingbat components interpolate frisky counter-readings to the larger patterns, these staidly traditional floral patterns suddenly exude polymorphous sexual passion in keynotes that define the high end of a cooler emotional spectrum throughout the show.

Four radically incompatible responses, then. Are we contemplating a failure of communication, in which the intentions of the artist and the responses of the viewers pass like ships in the night except in so far as we all 'read from the same page' – of the more enduring catalogue essay? Without ascribing to Gombrich's theory of the 'essential copy', the 'feel' of seriously trying to interpret a work of art has about it much of his manner of discarding one schema after another until the 'fit' is closer. Poussin wrote that

> you should know that there are two kinds of looking at objects. One is simply seeing them and the other is considering them attentively. Simply to see is nothing but naturally receiving in the eye the form and resemblance of the thing seen. But to see an object in considering it, is beyond the simple and natural perception of the form of the eye, one looks with a particular determination to ascertain the means of best knowing this same object. Thus one could say that the simple aspect is a natural operation, and that which I call the 'Prospect' is an office of reason.[1]

But it is still from one's own deeply subjective, usually recent, experience that one reasons one's way over a work of art, discarding one interpretative schema after another.

Arguably a 'good' work of art channels diverse experience into a structure that changes without coercing you, and sets off trains of thought that acquire a structure of their own. To me Pamela Gaunt's work is a clear but capacious apparatus for free thinking about the relationship between painting and interior decoration as polarities of several abiding clusters of meaning. At a meta-level they alert us to the possibility that painting and decoration have often tended to make different sorts of claims on those who enter their presence, have sought to change viewers in different, often contrary ways, particularly as we move inside a housed collection from somewhere else.

In a spare and cogent essay, Marco Marcon explored the philosophical implications of Gaunt's work by capitalizing upon the physical substratum of 'ornament' in Derrida's conceptual metaphor of the 'parergon'.

> Derrida sees Kant's treatment of the parergon – or, which is the same thing…of the ornament – as an attempt to address a fundamental philosophical problem: the distinction between the "inside" and the "outside"…between the "proper" work of art and the surrounding environment…
>
> At a theoretical level, the physical marginality of the parergon/ornament is a reflection of its ambiguous or 'undecidable' (to use a term dear to Derrida) positioning on the border which delimits what is inside of the true and proper realm of the pure judgment of taste from what lies outside it.

Ornament is debased in so far as it is identified with sensuous matter on the boundary with intellectual form.

> But a deconstructive analysis could in fact show that the supposedly debased supplement is required because the centres lack something. And in the case of Kantian aesthetics this 'something' that the supplementary ornament reveals is the lack of the body in the aesthetic of the beautiful. The lack, which is created by the expulsion of the supplement, perpetually haunts the stability of traditional, or non-deconstructive, philosophical theories and provides the main entryway for those who want to carry-out [sic] a deconstructive reading of their legacy.

At the end of his essay, Marcon advocates Gaunt's work for subverting 'the bombastic posturing of those modernist "heroes" who are always a little too eager to occupy and conquer the visual field with their boisterous works.'[2] Presumably he means the modernist heroes of the higher arts, architecture, sculpture and painting. Adolph Loos is the usual culprit here, though his colourful denunciations of ornament as crime are really based on economic rather than aesthetic or philosophical grounds and is belied by his own practice, for in substituting lavish decorative materials for applied ornament behind his austerely reticent façades, he is objecting not to ornament *per se* but only to the cluttered and applied kind arising from nineteenth-century *horror vaccui,*[3] the kind that Edith Wharton in *The Decoration of Houses* (1898) had denounced some time before in favour of the simple, classical design principles that Loos took in a new direction.

I admire Marcon's essay, but the disadvantage of a purely theoretical approach to Gaunt's work seems twofold. Paradoxically, it subverts the subversive qualities claimed for that work by making them conform to a dominant, albeit subversive, critical paradigm. The work is an excuse for retracing the prestigious intellectual maneouvre. Secondly, and paradoxically, it tends to strip the myriad forms of decoration of their historically specific and often contending social functions and so reduce them to the unnuanced, catch-all, timeless concept of 'Decoration' with a capital P for Perergon. We miss how decorations change and remould the *social* bodies that supplementary ornament is revealed to lack. This misses the radical hybridity of the work. In pressing in what follows on those twelve basic ornamental units from which the exotic mutations of the show branch out, I want to pass like Alice through the looking glass into some half forgotten conflicts between the various Fine Arts and interior decoration. The procedure may seem quaint, for what has the old stuff got to do with contemporary art? The answer is that anachronism – those twelve basic patterns and the dingbats

out of which many are composed – is another intrinsic theme of the exhibition, monadically revealing itself at different distances and stylistic levels of the forms, and so revealing what another modernist hero, Walter Benjamin, called in 1929 'the revolutionary energies which appear in the "outmoded", that is: the obsolete, neglected and slightly dilapidated remains of a just-out-of-date material culture.'[4] I regard mild anachronism as bait for fiercer anachronisms of older material cultures so utterly forgotten that they strike out at us with the Shock of the New.

But first to confrontations between media. Because they are composed of flat, detachable units, sometimes on paper, Pam Gaunt's installation pieces break a cardinal rule of relief ornament that James Ward stipulates in his once canonical *The Principles of Ornament* (1892): 'no carved decoration should be fastened on to a ceiling or panel, but should be worked out of the material itself . . .'[5] Their conceptual purchase on meta-meaning arises from this infringement. They are strictly hybrid, for if they do not count as decoration, no more so do they as paintings or wall hangings, for they resolutely move into the centre of the gallery where, defying gravity, they escape the category of sculpture too. In doing so they fight the famous condition of the White Cube art gallery as 'a ritual place of meeting' that 'censors out the world of social variation, promoting a sense of the sole reality of its own point of view and, consequently, its endurance or eternal rightness',[6] though in another sense the 'frippery' harks back to a feminine aristocratic sensibility undercut by mass-produced retro keepsakes and clothing logos, so that to hybridity of materials is added hybridity of manufacturing processes. Most of all these installation pieces undermine the static viewing conditions of galleries in which each exhibit is addressed as a discrete world unto itself. This is a modern if not modernist assumption that we easily project onto the viewing conditions of the remoter past, as Theodor Hetzer did in 1912 when contemplating Giotto's frescos at Padua as if he were walking round an art gallery:

> Every picture, both in its format and its spirituality, is entirely self-contained. In the Arena chapel we walk from picture to picture, but there is nothing hurrying in our pace, nothing connecting or deviating in our gaze. We must arrest ourselves in front of each picture and turn toward it; while we look at the one, we do not deviate to its neighbours.[7]

So high have the expectations of dense metaphorical meaning in autonomous gallery pictures and sculptures become, that we forget 'what would once have been taken as their most obvious attractions – their techniques or their powers of illusion.'[8] We also forget that 'that public art museums destroyed the original contexts of the art works they possessed, and thereby forced connoisseurs and visitors to focus more on aesthetic and technical qualities than on subject matter.'[9]

In recalling my opening anecdotes about works of art changing the experience we bring to them from outside the gallery, let us consider the inside-outside binary not from the perspective of the form/content dyad, but as it applies to the different kinds of claims that paintings and interior designs have made on spectators coming in from outside the privileged place of display. We will consider these claims as they apply to paintings, interior decorations and frames.

1: Paintings

G. M. Sargeaunt was the first to notice that descriptions of paintings by the English Romantic art critic William Hazlitt in *Sketches of the Principal Picture Galleries of England* (1824) are preceded by equally vivid descriptions of the approach through natural surroundings to each gallery.[10] The approach to Hampton Court, for example, 'through Bushy-Park is delightful, inspiriting at this time of year; and the gardens about it, with their close-clipped holly hedges and arbors of evergreen, look an artificial summer all the year round.'[11] The gardens represent a transitional stage between reality and the paintings he had come to visit. Peter George Patmore, who accompanied Hazlitt on some of his visits to country houses and plagiarized the *Sketches* in his *British Galleries of Art* (1824), describes the approach to Dulwich Gallery, then gives the kind of explanation which Hazlitt felt was unnecessary:

> The reader must not think that I am heedlessly calling upon him to attend to these objects of external nature, instead of leading him at once to those of which we are more immediately in search. I have purposely asked him to fix the former on his memory, and to yield himself for a moment to *their* influence exclusively, in order that, by a pleasing and not abrupt contrast, he may be the better prepared to appreciate the blush, the bloom, the burning glow of beauty that will fall upon his sense from the rich summer of Art that greets him on his entry to this exquisite Gallery.[12]

Hazlitt accumulates a stock of sensory memories that he releases upon the pictures designed to reawaken them inside the galleries he has traveled to.

From this perspective the role of painting is to return us in imagination to the realm outside the gallery. In the eighteenth century, Jonathan Richardson made paintings take their viewers still further outdoors on vicarious adventures. In *The Theory of Painting* (1715), he conceived of them taking on the role of windows on the world that we now rather associate with the armchair appreciation of DVDs and television:

> By the help of this art we have the pleasure of seeing a vast variety of things and actions, of traveling by land or water, of knowing the humours of low life without mixing with it, of viewing tempests, battles, inundations' and in short, of all real, or imagined appearance in heaven, earth, or hell; and this as we sit at our ease, and cast our eye round a room: we may ramble with delight from one idea to another, or fix upon any as we please.[13]

Though Gaunt commemorates this kind of adventure in the scenic vignettes of her childhood curtain series *Shelf-less Life*, her architectural

Detail ***Shelfless Life***, 2005
64 x 220 x 22 cm. Cut-out (mothers) curtains, textile medium, painted and collaged brackets
Photography: Robert Frith, Acorn Photo Agency

interiorization of external realities often takes a different, more holographic form. One illusion in her work is to bring nature indoors by conspicuously releasing it from the frame of pictorial representation. Just as unframed flying ducks have more immediate presence on the wall than paintings do, the aptly titled *Material Whimsies* of 1999 appropriates a section of gallery wall as if it was a painting but leaves one corner strategically incomplete. This ensures that, against the ghostly foil of an imaginary picture frame, applied fabric fragments enact an intensely naturalistic effect of *swarming*, whether of butterflies or other insects one knows not. Another work of 2003 brings abstracted leaf shapes from the rooftop garden of a private residence and translates them into a configuration that 'mirrors the way leaves naturally cluster and dissipate.' The way the photograph is taken turns the staircase and the landing into the equivalent three sides of a skewed picture frame, which is again a foil for their turbulence. *MARGINALIA #5* was a wall piece that traduced pictures into rectangular lengths of textile picked out by applied fragments on the wall and diagonally set so they wrap around corners and flap onto the floor. With *Vile-nil* it was a matter of placement, has the diagonally set rectangle of wallpaper fragments risen from or slipped onto the floor, and has it done so as a modernist grid or a decorative textile? The directions and identities chiasmically change each other as they slip. All these works depend upon the hovering implication of framed paintings as negative space.[14] The advance in the current exhibition is the abandonment of rectangles in favour of the altogether more ambitious implication of a wave formation that consumes the gallery space. Yet if paintings and these installations can return us to nature, interior decoration traditionally abstracts us and puts us at a civilizing distance from it. As James Ward puts it, the decorator gives us 'those beauties from nature that have captivated him, and been transfused into ornament by the alembic of his mind.' So, in a different way, does Gaunt.[15]

2: Interior Decoration

Let us now consider how decoration interiorizes the external realm. Early American Protestant town planning is founded on a progressive ordering and internalization of nature. Take these excerpts from the anonymous treatise *An Essay on Ordering Towns* published in New England in the 1630s:

> This treatise described the way a township is to be laid out in a series of concentric circles. At the center is the Meetinghouse, which the author comments, is 'the centor of the wholl circumferance.' Around this houses are arranged, 'orderly paced to enjoye the comfortable [sic] communion.' Outside these is a ring of common fields, with space for larger estates still further out. Beyond these estates are common 'swamps and rubbish waest grounds . . . which harbor wolves and … noisome beasts and serpents.' Finally one reaches the wilderness which may be areas owned by the town but not yet occupied . . . The ordering of their towns then reflected both their social networks and their central religious convictions about the earth.
>
> This schema also reflects a common seventeenth-century attitude towards nature, which, like human nature, was wild and undisciplined, and needed to be broken.

Artificial meant useful: decoration patterned lives. The structures of grounds, meetinghouses and domestic interiors reflected the continuum of land from waste to improvement, that is, from wilderness to "culture."[16] Geometrical formulae on furniture, walls and ceilings imposed order on chaotic nature in a manner that reflected the overall plan of the community.[17]

Interior decoration integrated by a single designer began in eighteenth-century England with William Kent, Robert Adams and William Chambers and was carried over into French Rococo later in the century. In these environments Protestant ordering of the civilized soul gave way to 'total works of art' where distance from the brute realities of nature and society at large was measured by playful frivolity. 'What makes the rococo almost unique is the combination of clarity and fluidity in the parts, and apparent chaos in the composition as a whole.'[18] This did not deprive Rococo interiors of the religious potentiality of their Protestant counterparts, however.

Visitors to the Cappuccini chapels beneath Santa Maria della Consolazione in Rome will know that its decorations are composed of bones from more than 4,000 skeletons brought down from the Quirinal from 1628 to 1870. The disarticulation of individual skeletons into promiscuously batched types of bone ensured an effect of almost impersonal freedom. Hundreds of skulls are piled up together and pinned back by wire netting into an architecture of alcoves in which only the occasional grinner beneath a cowl with a scythe in its hands remains intact to personify the abstract figure of Death. A clock made of real arm and finger-bones signifies the inexorable passage of time while everything else answers to the *momento mori* motto:

> Where you are now so once were we,
> Where we are now you soon shall be.

Perhaps this spectacle of so many human remains should seem macabre, but this is not how it comes across. On the contrary, the disposition of the most curvilinear bones – ribs, radiae and ulnae – into a flow of opposed c-scrolls that swerve around the formal borders of the walls emulate the most carefree Rococo drawing rooms. Here if anywhere a decorative interior modifies the visitor's sense of self. Why should the builders of a mass grave have aspired to such an elegantly whimsical effect? Because for this ardent Catholic community the prospect of the life-everlasting was so real that death was naught but a joke, a mild velleity, polite enough for everyone to share. Many of Gaunt's more aberrant convoluted intricacies have a Rococo source. Without any suggestion of religious persuasion, perhaps the frippery of her brittle bouquets and coral flowers is qualified by something of a 'Dem Bones' effect at the cooler end of the emotional spectrum.[19]

The American, British and French developments in interior decoration were made possible by the English acceptance of the invitation to take up polite architecture as Italians were already living it in Renaissance palaces. Erasmus's reflections on the causes of 'sweating-sickness' to Cardinal Wolsey's physician illuminates the status quo of an archaic pre-Humanist past. The floors of English houses are, he writes,

> generally spread with clay, and then with rushes from some marsh, which are renewed from time to time but so as to leave a basic layer, sometimes for twenty years, under which fester spittle, vomit, dogs' urine and men's too, dregs of beer and cast-off bits of fish, and other unspeakable kinds of filth. As the weather changes, this exhales a sort of miasma, which in my opinion is far from conducive to bodily health. [20]

Partly for hygienic reasons monastic institutions had already articulated distinct spaces for the different domestic activities of praying, eating, sleeping, washing and excreting, while in Renaissance Paris, as Dominique Laporte evokes in his malodorously titled *History of Shit* (2002), legislation stipulating household responsibility for waste inaugurated processes of architectural individuation that eventuated in such novelties as raised beds in separated bedrooms.

Moving still further back in history, there were no permanent constructions in Britain before the Norman invasion. Cob or turf walls reinforced by wooden poles were the predominant materials. Long houses, the domicile that characterized most of Britain and large parts of the Continent, divided the human habitations from cattle only by a single wall. Humans defecated with the cattle in central channels that manured the surrounding pastures. Only with the Great Rebuilding in the mid sixteenth-century were open hearths replaced by chimneypieces and separate rooms in upper stories installed.[21] Yet I am going backwards to resist the impression that decoration evolves as civilization was supposed to. The humblest communities of the past and present world are decorated with as much complexity and imagination as the wealthiest.[22]

The medieval scene fires the imagination of anyone interested in mobile conceptions of decoration. My title word 'meubles' was chosen to suggest the buried sense of portable furnishings within the modern sense of 'mobiles' familiarized by Alexander Calder. Nicholas Mander defines its original sense in his eye-opening essay on 'Painted Cloths: History, Craftsmen and Techniques':

> Painted clothes were used domestically, functionally as insulation to keep out draughts and to hide walls – and probably, like early wallpapers, ceilings also – of timber and plaster, as well as decoratively, adding instant warmth and colour to bare surfaces. Because they were cheaper, lighter and more portable than wood, the earlier cloths were used for temporary and ephemeral decorations, as furniture in an architectural context. Unlike wall-paintings, they were moveable (mobile, mobili, Möbel, meubles), adaptable in a world where landowners and ecclesiastics were constantly moving from one manor or religious house to another, where churches would be decorated seasonally for the feasts, festivals and colours of the liturgical cycle. In the medieval world, always hieratic, where court ceremonial was structured by elaborate rules of precedence, where each rank, degree, or estate, was marked by the privileged use of certain possessions, furniture and fabric, the most costly textiles would be reserved for such dignitaries, while lower down the social scale, and in apartments or areas reserved for men of lesser rank, coverings of painted cloth and canvas would have been the rule. Textiles and cloths were easily taken down and stored, but bare walls could be quickly transformed for the occasion by their use, with specific armorials and devices; for we know that textiles, like jewelry and plate, possessed a special importance in the material equipment of the medieval household.[23]

Today we think of paintings (from the French *tableaux* or tables - my second title word) as portable, but this was then the priority of textile furnishings that later on made only the same house livable. Inventories always carefully distinguished mobiles from tableaux.

The eventual ascent of paintings over furnishings in the hierarchies of taste was by no means without reversal. After the Golden Age of painting in seventeenth-century Holland, for example, 'artistic innovators in other mediums (porcelain, wallpaper, prints) captured the eighteenth-century market for interior decoration that painters had so completely dominated in the seventeenth century.'[24] Since pictorial frames were a crucial mediator in the contrary territorial claims of paintings and interior decoration it is apt to bring this whistle-stop historical excursus to a close with considerations that may illuminate the peculiarity of Gaunt's *Aberrant Abstractions* that their pictorial images (if such they are) are composed entirely of fragmentary painted frames. In so doing we rebound on our opening theme of troubled boundaries of what is internal and external to the artwork.

3: Frames

The frames of medieval ecclesiastic altarpieces were essentially architectural in reflecting the cross section of the nave. In truth this only reflected a situation in which entire cities were frames within frames demarcating civic and religious zones of social power. In his great work on fourteenth-century Florentine ritual, Richard Trexler argued that

> The Renaissance frame contained more than rich materials and craftsmanship, the child learned. It was often studded with discrete objects like jewels - not only valuable commercially but possessing a characterological value - and coats of arms, which were valuable because of the social honor of the families they represented. The spatially mediating frame thus also mediated material and moral values between devotees and enclosed images. In Leonardo's terms, the honor due to the *virtu* of the objects was the frame. The more honorable the

Errant Abstractions, Galerie Düsseldorf, 2008
Stencilled and painted industrially routed MDF, glue, etch primer & automotive paint.
Photography: Tony Nathan

> materials, the more valuable the object was to the patron; for the more honorable the patron whose arms stood on the frame, the more valuable the object to those who viewed it.[25]

Ecclesiastical frames gave rise to religious images in the home. With 'the rise of devotional piety and the diffusion of inexpensive panel paintings throughout the marketplace, Italians could take pictures home with them and into their private lives.' There they developed secular content and functions through a new consumer mentality that 'represented not just the objectification of cultural values but the rationalization of possessiveness in an expanding world of goods.'[26] As circular double-sided birth trays (*dische de parte*), they served in bedrooms as erotic talismans to stimulate mothers' imaginations to conceive and visually imprint offspring. As double-sided portraits stored in bags their function was to signify the legal presence of the person they represented. 'Sign (crest) and image (portrait) were like legal documents in the inheritance of family rights. Crest symbolized rights to inheritance, and portrait acted as a different kind of "evidence".'[27]

The important innovation of painting on stretched canvas (derived from painted drapery) as an alternative to panel greatly spurred the rising aesthetic status of painting in Renaissance courts, despite the decline in value of materials.[28] According to Vasari, canvas painting gained currency because its lighter weight allowed pictures to be transported between courts more quickly and efficiently than heavy panels. The employment of painters with enough virtuosity in this medium to quickly satisfy their courtly patrons' need for topical propaganda of the highest standard contributed to the emergence of states that used their distinctive art and culture to represent themselves effectively to each other.[29]

> The rising status of canvas painting affected the status of its frame.
>
> As the social and cultural status of the artist increased in the late Middle Ages and early renaissance, the picture itself became so charged with the personal stamp of the artist that he concerned himself less and less with the secondary area of the frame, or what in Italian was called the 'rognamenta.' Increasingly by the mid-fifteenth-century in Italy, construction of the frame was assigned to a lesser or decorative artist.

But this provided the picture-framers with an unexpected opportunity. In his fascinating essay on 'The Frame and the Development of the Portable Easel Picture' from which I am already quoting, Richard R. Brettel explains:

> These new frame makers were anxious, in the end, to rob pictures of their power, to put them 'in their place,' so to speak, in the larger and more literal schemes of architecture and the decorative arts. Hence frames increasingly controlled their pictures, surrounding them with previous penumbra of decorations that were related more to the rooms that held them, to furniture nearby, or to the coat of arms of their owners, than to the pictures themselves. The earliest portable or 'disengaged' frames have their origins in architecture and the decorative arts, and many of those cost their first owners as much or more than the pictures they surround. Paradoxically, painting became less and less physically precious during the Renaissance: canvas replaced panel, vegetable dyes replaced more expensive powdered mineral colours, and paint replaced gold as the suitable background even for religious paintings. Yet, as the powers of the individual artist became more important than the intrinsic value of the materials he used, frames not only retained, but also extended their sheer material splendor.[30]

In Tudor England, as in Holland and Italy, 'portrait paintings were still collected as primarily functional objects to emphasize dynastic links and alliances, as architectural props in decorative schemes, not for their aesthetic value.' In seventeenth-century Holland the best paintings were less expensive than other luxury goods such a jewelry or sliver plate or porcelain. Mostly anonymous in execution, they were valued for emotional and (again) dynastic rather than aesthetic or economic reasons, as a matter of 'art for *life's* sake' rather than art for art's sake.[31] Yet although paintings were 'primarily an expression of rank and class',[32] within their frames they were subject to decorative patterning. Thus in eighteenth-century England portraits were *zoned* in certain areas of a country house according to the familiarity of the people they represented. William Salmon specified in 1678 that royal and noble portraits should be hung in the dining room, 'other draughts of the life, of Persons of Honour, intimate or special friends, and acquaintance' be placed in the withdrawing room and portraits of wives and children in the bedroom.[33]

While interior decorations of the Roman era particularly had sometimes demonstrated the highest intellectual sophistication in mediating between several levels of illusion,[34] there are times when paintings, so meaningful today, were primarily appreciated as decorative patterns with slender intrinsic merit in themselves.

> By the latter part of the sixteenth century, artists in northern Europe were depicting spacious rooms in private residences with pictures stacked cheek by jowl and floor to celling, completely covering the walls. And for public exhibitions, like the ones organized by the French Royal Academy in Paris from 1663 on, the same type of display was adopted.. . . . As in the private reception rooms this first Salon resembled, art was treated as decoration, its placement guided by the eighteenth century's obsession with balance and symmetry.[35]

In seventeenth-century Dutch houses the same convention of 'skying' paintings was occasioned by the structural consideration of 'the narrow strip of wall between the ceiling and the wall'. Dutch doll's houses and paintings of domestic interiors suggest that paintings were arranged with 'an almost obsessive concern with symmetry' in 'vertical and

horizontal alignments of paintings with each other, with architectural features such as doors and fireplaces, and with furnishings.'[36]

In 'an eighteenth-century amateur's cabinet,' likewise, 'pictures might be organized on either side of a suggested central vertical axis, fore example, to produced a harmoniously arranged wall, rather than to show the individual paintings to their best advantage.[37] True, such 'gentlemanly hangs', whether in England, Italy, or France, were designed to exercise judgement and good taste that determined membership of an educated elite, but this was accomplished in an essentially decorative manner by grouping pictures in 'contrasting examples from opposing schools …the better to show of their particular qualities of drawing, color and composition'.[38] It was also an opportunity for powerful collectors to reframe paintings within 'standardized or closely related frames as indicators of possession…Frames gave an external unity to the diversity of the paintings within them.'[39]

The gentlemanly hang was the organizational basis of the first public galleries, such as the Louvre, but in the nineteenth century they ceded to geographical and chronological arrangements that interpellated visitors not as aristocrats but as rational citizens of progressive states whose degree of civilization was measured against that of other states, a system that prevails in major public galleries today. A projected new gallery complex here in Western Australia was billed as 'a splendid opportunity to tell the story of W.A.'

The decorative sensibility of the gentlemanly hang was lost to state galleries it passed instead to the nineteenth-century departmental store where its élitism was associated with feminized, individualistic interiority:

> Interior décor, which had been an exercise in historicism (i.e. period rooms) was transformed in the later nineteenth century into a species of self-expression, with each object, work of art, and choice of color or fabric being a reflection of the individual. As individuals found themselves increasingly forced to operate in a public sphere whose [democratic, classless] values were more and more antipathetic, they could, at least, create their own interior spaces, either psychologically or psychically. Commercial interests were quick to merchandise this trend by offering a variety of home furnishing in the new department stores.[40]

This is the corollary in post-Revolutionary France to *homo clausus*, the middle-class public body image, 'which was preoccupied above all else with the maintenance of the unbroken physical outline, permitting no outsider a glimpse into the untidy conflicts within.'[41] It is also at the centre of the Loosian schism, discussed at the outset, between lush interior and reticent façade. Such lavishly decorated inner sanctums placed a heavy burden on individual paintings that were now expected to transcend the everyday reality of these already exoticized settings. It was in these circumstances, amidst the plethora of mass-produced frames enclosing photographs and lithographs as well as pictures that painters began to reclaim the picture frame as part of their own creation. 'Whistler refused to allow anyone to design his frames, and he created simple, unadorned rectangles, dully gilded so as not to break with the greyed palettes of the pictures within.' The Impressionists and Post-Impressionists followed him until the point was reached when, 'for the modern artist, the frame once again became part of the picture,'[42] though Mondrian, I have heard, when asked what happened if a painting does not fit in with a neo-plastic environment, replied that you could turn them to the wall. for the side of interior design once more, suggested that one way of accommodating paintings to a neo-plastic room might be to turn their faces to the wall. This was hardly, though, a capitulation to design, but a subtle derangement of those serried and symmetrical ranks of the salon hang and an enlargement of the frame to encapsulate the studio:

> He hung his colored-paper squares… in erratic rows, groupings that seemed carefully unplanned, sometimes in little constellations… He kept them away from each other, but not so far that they forgot each other. Each square remained mostly a single perception that said blue, red, yellow, white. An occasional gestalt offered itself. It is easy to see that this studio was a proto-gallery.[43]

Competing with the gallery wall and enveloping the spectator in a sea of colour, vast, unframed American Abstract Expressionist canvases broke free of what was considered the tyranny of the European frame. From the Europe of Tapies in Spain, the Support-Surface group in Paris and Arte Povera in Italy, the reply was to take frames and stretchers down from the walls to become equal partners with spectators both within and beyond the gallery space.

Pamela Gaunt is firmly within the tradition of sculptured painting and exploded frames that perpetuated these tendencies in works by Frank Stella and Juan Davila. While espousing principles of spatial transgression and imbalance, however, her show by no means repudiates the traditional ornamental attributes of stability, repetition, contrast, symmetry, radiation, repose, variety, subordination, unity and series. The escape from the status quo is rather through implosions of time than ruptures of space. I have said that *Errant Abstractions* are entirely composed of fragments of frames. Themselves unframed except for fringes of shadow, frames constitute both their image and their substance. Likewise, the mirrored or semi-mirrored *Partners in Crime Series*, on the far wall, constitute their own frames as they miniaturize the spectator within a spectral reflection of the entire exhibition. They are a *multum in parvo*.

Leibniz spoke of the monad. The universe contained in the grain of sand on a beach that belongs to a universe that is itself a grain of sand on another beach. The same unpackings can happen with time. The image of the eighteenth-century candelabra in the *Dingbat Series* near the door is composed of 1990s dingbats composed of 1940s motorcycles. To return to an initial question: how might these monadic

shifts of temporal style change the experience we bring into the gallery? Personally they have prompted me to bring a series of texts on the social function of superseded paintings and decorative schemes into uncustomary relations with each other, but it seems to me that these mobiles eddy in whatever strange winds of history are brought to them. Earlier I adverted to Walter Benjamin's account of the anachronistic image in the Arcades project. The anachronistic image is a dialectical image: 'for while the relation of the present to the past is a purely temporal, continuous one, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: is not progression but image, suddenly emergent. – Only dialectical images are genuine images (that is, not archaic)'. In his 'On the Concept of History' (1940) Benjamin's 'dialectical image' is eclipsed by the 'monad', which is 'no metaphorical constellation of fixed stars: it is more like a momentous conjunction.' Anachronism in Gaunt's work is monadic in this way. Its purpose is 'not to release the significance of the past, but to signal a "Messianic cessation…. of happening… a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past'.[44] The doubling-up effects of the Alhambra, where 'abstract outlines have the local effect of arresting the wandering arabesques, but on the large scale they build up repeating star and lozenge shape configurations of colour and line which have a criss-crossing movement of their own',[45] are certainly part of the release here. In admitting more of the past than we might expect, as these works age they will enlarge the chance of momentous conjunctions with yet unanticipated conditions of reception.

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Notes:

1. My translation of Poussin paraphrased by Pierre Georgel and Anne-Marie Lecocq, *La Peinture dans la Peinture* (Paris: Adam Biro, 1987), p. 134.
2. Marco Marcon, 'Excessive Beauty: Ornamentation, Supplementarity and Modernism', in *pam gaunt: selected works, 1989-1996* (Perth: Curtin Printing Services, 1996), pp. 40-41.
3. See David Brett, *Rethinking Decoration: Pleasure & Ideology in the Visual Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 196 and James Trilling, *Ornament: a Modern Perspective* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2003), p. 131-133.
4. Walter Benjamin, 'Surrealism: the Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia' (1929), quoted in A. Auerbach, 'Imagine no Metaphors: the dialectical image of Walter Benjamin', *Image [&] Narrative* [e-journal], 18 (2007). Available: http://www.imageandnarrative.be/thinking_pictures/auerbach.htm
5. James Ward, *The Principles of Ornament* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1892), p. 61.
6. Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: the Ideology of the Gallery Space*, introd. Thomas McEvilly (Santa Monica and San Francisco: The Lapis Press, 1976, 1986), p. 9.
7. Quoted in Thomas Puttfarken, *the Discovery of Pictorial composition: Theories of Visual Order in Painting 1400-180* (New haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 10.
8. James Elkins, *Why are Our Pictures Puzzles? On the Modern Origins of Pictorial Complexity* (New York and London, 1999), p. 39.
9. Geneviève Lacambre in Gary Tinterow and Geneviève Lacambre, with Deborah L. Roldán . . . et al., *Manet/Velázquez: The French taste for Spanish painting* (New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 68
10. G. M. Sargeaunt, 'Hazlitt as a Critic of Painting', *The Classical Spirit* (Cloanthus Press, London, 1936), pp. 208-09.
11. *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P. P. Howe, 12 vols (London: Dent, 1930-34), vol. 10, p. 42.
12. Peter George Patmore, *British Galleries of Art* (London, 1824), pp. 168-169.
13. In *The Works of Jonathan Richardson* (London: B. White and Son, 1792), p. 7.
14. See *pam gaunt, selected works* 1997 – 2004 (Perth, 2004), pp. 22, 31 and 6; and *pam gaunt: selected works, 1989-1996* (Perth, 1997), p. 36.
15. James Ward, *The Principles of Ornament*, p. 5.
16. Ibid. p. 222.
17. William A. Dryness, *Reformed Theology and Visual culture: The Protestant Imagination from Calvin to Edwards* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 214, 222 and 223.
18. James Trilling, *Ornament,* pp. 33-34.
19. These thoughts are drawn from and developed further in my 'Representing Trauma: the Case for Troubling Images' in *Remember Me: Socially Constructing Life after Death*, ed. Margaret Mitchell (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2006), pp. 217-242, where the chapel receives fuller consideration.
20. Quoted in John E. Crowley, *The Invention of Comfort: Sensibilities & Design in Early Modern Britain & Early America* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), p. 49.
21. Ibid., pp. 19, 24 and 53.
22. For a fascinating account of the role of unmodified nature in the religious decoration of societies outside Europe, see Cecilia Klein, 'Objects Are Nice, But…..', *Art Bulletin*, 76: 3 (1994), pp. 401-404.
23. Nicholas Mander, 'Painted Cloths: History, Craftsmen and Techniques', *Textile History*, 28: 2 (1997), p. 119.
24. Jan de Vries, 'Art History' in *Art in history, History in Art: Studies in Seventeenth-century Dutch Culture*, ed. David Freedberg and Jan de Vries (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1991), p. 270.
25. Richard C. Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 92.
26. Richard A. Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy, 1300-1600* (Baltimore and London: the John Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. 142 and 247.
27. Hans Belting, *Bild-Anthropologie: Entwurfe fur eine Bildwissenschaft* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2001), pp. 5 and 12.
28. Richard R. Brettell, 'The Frame and the Development of the Portable Easel Picture', in Richard R. Brettell and Steven Starling, *The Art of the Edge: European Frames 1300—1900* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1986), p. 12: "canvas replaced panel, vegetable dyes replaced more expensive powdered mineral colours, and paint replaced gold as the suitable background even for religious paintings'.
29. Martin Warnke, *The Court Artist: on the Ancestry of the Modern Artist* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 209-211.
30. Richard R. Brettell, 'The Frame and the Development of the Portable Easel Picture', p. 12.
31. Pp. 166, 171 and 172.
32. Nicholas Mander, 'Painted Cloths: History, Craftsmen and Techniques', *Textile History*, 28 (2) (1997), p. 125.
33. William Salmon, *Polygraphice* (London, 1678), p. 160. My thanks to Kate Retford for supplying this information.
34. See Norman Bryson on Roman 'Xenia' in *Looking at the Overlooked: Four Essays on Landscape Painting* (London: Reaktion, 2001), pp. 17-55.
35. Victoria Newhouse, *Art and the Power of Placement* (New York: The Montacelli Press, 2005), p. 19
36. Klaske Muzelaar and Derek Phillips, Picturing Men and Women in the Dutch Golden Age: Paintings and People in Historical Perspective (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 45 and 44.
37. Alexandra Bonfante-Warren, *The Louvre* (Hugh Lauter Leven Associates, Inc., 2000), p. 26.
38. Carol Duncan, 'From the Princely Gallery to the Public Art Museum: the Louvre Museum and the National Gallery, London', *Grasping the World: the Idea of the Museum*, ed. Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago (Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), p. 255.
39. Brettell, 'The Frame and the Development of the Portable Easel Picture', p. 39.
40. Patricia Mainardi, *The End of the Salon: Art and the State in the Early Third Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1993), p.110-111.
41. Dorinda Outram, *The Body and the French Revolution: sex, class and political culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 67.
42. Brettell, 'The Frame and the Development of the Portable Easel Picture', p. 14.
43. Brian O'Doherty, *Studio and Cube: On the relationship between where art is made and where art is displayed* (New York: The Temple BHoyne Buel Center, 2007), pp. 35-36.
44. Auerbach, 'Imagine no Metaphors', n. p.
45. David Brett, *Rethinking Decoration*, p. 139.

The Motif Alphabet

Errant Abstractions: an exhibition about frippery, bibelot and aesthetic fluff.

Twelve anthropomorphic decorative motifs from European, Middle Eastern and Asian origins form the 'alphabet' for the works in ***Errant Abstractions***. Transformed through several processes of hand drawing, digitisation and industrial cutting, the works are re-assembled into contemporary translations of these ubiquitous forms.

Photography: Tony Nathan

Images sources for *The Motif Alphabet* with hand drawn translations:

1. Motif from Christopher Dresser textile design, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York collection: Whiteway M. ed., *Christopher Dresser 1834-1904, A Design Revolution,* (London: V & A Publications, 2004) 201.

2. Motif from *Jainamaz* (Muslim prayer dhurrie), Deccan, c 1910, T. C. Goel/ Samurai Collection, in Chaldecott N., *Dhurries – History, Technique, Pattern, Identification,* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2003) 140.

3. Motif from Christopher Dresser wall & ceiling paper design for Wilson & Fenimores, US Patent and Trademark Office: Whiteway M. ed., *Christopher Dresser 1834-1904, A Design Revolution,* (London: V & A Publications, 2004) 119.

4. Motif from Christopher Dresser design, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York collection: Whiteway M. ed., *Christopher Dresser 1834-1904, A Design Revolution,* (London: V & A Publications, 2004) 201.

5. Motif from late 19th century dhurrie, Agra, India, (original design Persian or Turkish), private collection, in Chaldecott N., *Dhurries – History, Technique, Pattern, Identification,* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2003) 108.

6. Motif from 16th Century Renaissance velvet in: Dupont-Auberville M., *Classic Textile Designs,* (originally published in 1877, this edition, London: Studio Editions, 1996) plate 24.

7. Motif from embroidered Uzbek Lakai saddle cover, private collection, in Harvey J., *Traditional Textiles of Central Asia*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1996) p 23.

8. Motif from c 1900 Mughal dhurrie woven in Bikaner jail, India, (Eastern Turkestan - Khotan influenced), T.C.Goel/Samurai collection, in: Chaldecott N., *Dhurries – History, Technique, Pattern, Identification,* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2003) 79.

9. Motif from 1910 dhurrie with Tree of Life imagery, woven in Bikaner central jail, Rajasthan, (Persian influenced), T.C.Goel/Samurai collection, in: Chaldecott N., *Dhurries – History, Technique, Pattern, Identification,* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2003) 72.

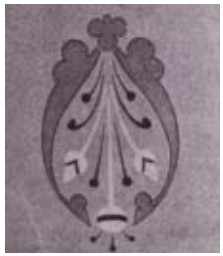
10. Motif from c 1800 Mughal silk dhurrie (Turkey/East Turkestan influenced), woven in Bikaner central jail, Rajasthan, Sotheby's collection in: Chaldecott N., *Dhurries – History, Technique, Pattern, Identification,* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2003) 78.

11. Motif from embroidered Turkmen *okbash* (felt bag covering for tent-roof struts), no date noted, private collection, in: Harvey J., *Traditional Textiles of Central Asia*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1996) p 77.

12. Motif from embroidered central Asian prayer cloth (*Djoinamoz)* from the Sahr-i-Sabz district, private collection, in: Harvey J., *Traditional Textiles of Central Asia*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1996) p 149.


1.


2.




3.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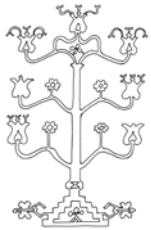
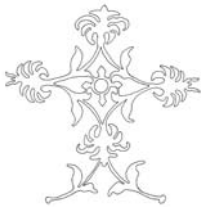


9.

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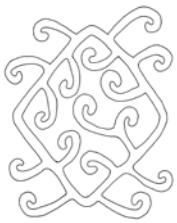


11.

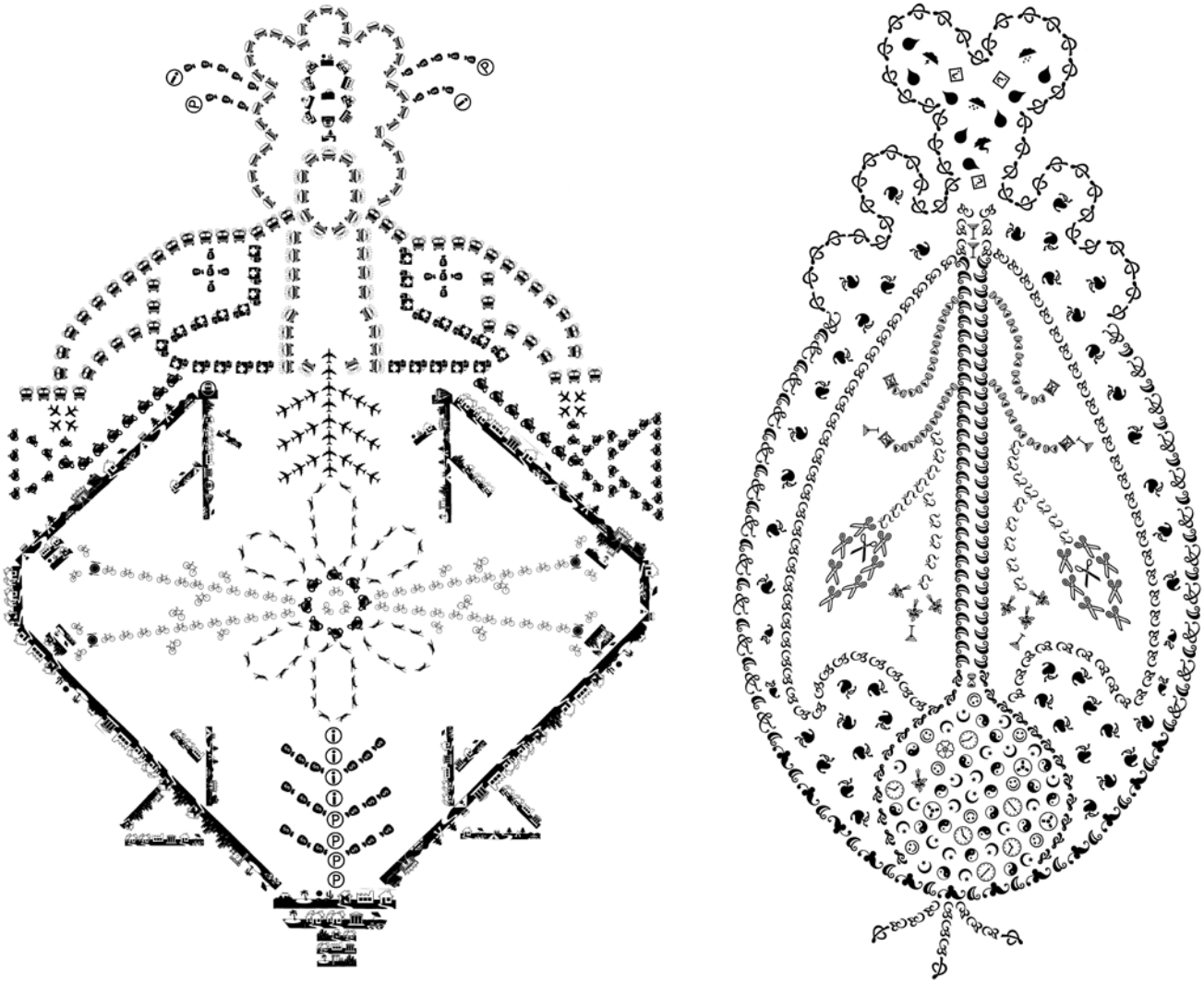

12.

Errant Abstractions – an exhibition about frippery, bibelot and aesthetic fluff.
Solo exhibition, Galerie Düsseldorf, 2008
Photography: Tony Nathan

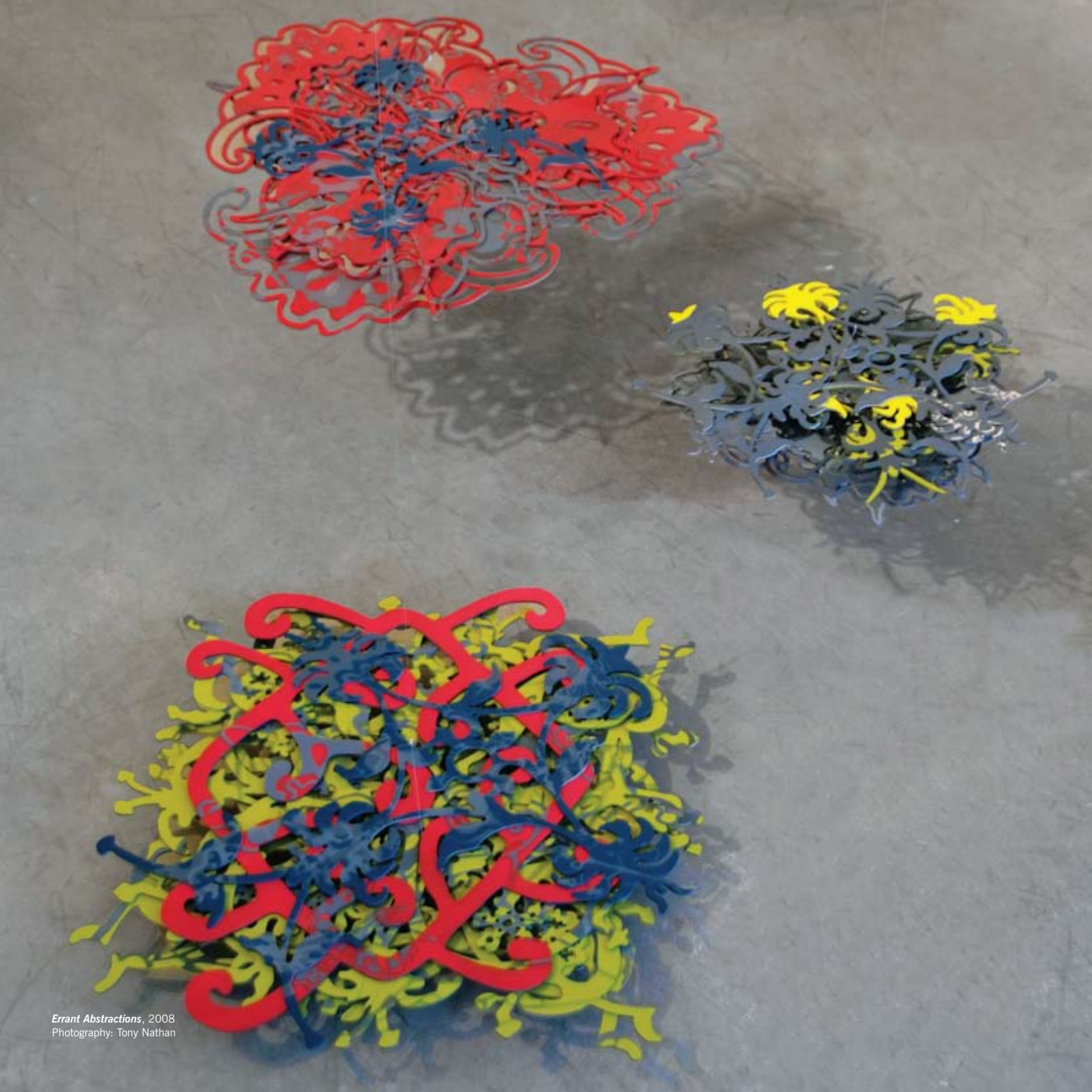
Partners in Crime series from the exhibition: ***Errant Abstractions,*** 2008
Laser cut stainless steel and mirror acrylic
Photography: Douglas Sheerer

Detail *Partners in Crime* series from the exhibition: ***Errant Abstraction*s,** 2008
Laser cut stainless steel
Photography: Tony Nathan

Errant Abstractions – The Dingbat Series, Galerie Düsseldorf, 2008.
Photographed collaged drawings inkjet printed on archival rag paper, RHS mounted on laser cut aluminium.
Photography: Tony Nathan



Errant Abstractions – Detail from the *Dingbat* series, 2008
Collaged drawings using Wingdings/Webdings/Dingbats on Canson paper.
Photography: Tony Nathan



Errant Abstractions, 2008
Photography: Tony Nathan

Detail ***Errant Abstractions***, 2008
Photography: Tony Nathan

Detail *Cut Roses #3,* 2006
Stencilled and painted industrially routed MDF, glue & automotive paint.
Photography: Tony Nathan

Abridged Biography

Pamela Gaunt lives and works in Western Australia

Education

B.A. (Art) Western Australian Institute of Technology, 1982

Graduate Diploma in Art and Design. Curtin University of Technology, 1989.

M.A. (Art History and Theory), School of Art History Theory, COFA, UNSW, 2005.

Current Employment

Senior Lecturer, Department of Art, Faculty of Design and Art, Curtin University

Selected Solo Exhibitions

1994	*One Size Fits Most,* The Story So Far Gallery, Perth
1996	*Marginalia*, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts
1998	*Patterning The Edge*, Craft Victoria, Melbourne
1998	*Nothing To Wear,* Distelfink Gallery, Melbourne
1999	*Moth-Eaten*, Object Gallery, Sydney
1999	*New Works*, Galerie Düsseldorf, Perth
2003	*Floribunda*, Galerie Düsseldorf, Perth
2008	*Errant Abstractions: an exhibition about frippery, bibelot and aesthetic fluff,* Galerie Düsseldorf, Perth

Selected Group Exhibitions

2008	*Linden 1968,* Linden Contemporary Art Space, Melbourne.
2007	*[ex]Changing Traditions,* Kyoto Art Centre, Japan
2006	*Melbourne Art Fair,* with Galerie Düsseldorf
2005	*Signpost to a New Place,* Harrogate, England
2004	*Shelflife,* Festival of Perth, Galerie Düsseldorf, Perth.
2003	*Tali Ikat, Fiber Connections*, Taman Budaya Yogyakarta, Indonesia
2003	*Connection Visual 11*, – Western Australian Contemporary Fine Art in China – Shanghai and Hangzhou.
2002-03	*Contemporary International Textiles*, Ormeau Baths Gallery, Belfast
2001	*Chinese Whispers*, The Study Gallery, England.
2001	*Lace: New Perspectives*, Craftwest Gallery, Perth.
2001	*Second Look*, Prospect Gallery Textiles Biennial, Prospect Gallery Adelaide

2001 *Divergence*, Art Gallery Chiang Mai University and The Grand Hall, Siam Discovery Centre, Bangkok, Thailand.

2000 *Australian Minature Textiles*, Gallery Gallery, Kyoto, Japan.

2000 *12th International Biennale Minature Textiles*, Szombathely Museum, Hungary.

2000 *In Our Hands*, Nagoya, Japan.

1999 *Material Narratives*, Jam Factory, Adelaide.

1997 *5th International Textiles Biennial*, Museum of Kyoto, Japan.

1997 *Galerie Dussedorf – 21 Years On*, Galerie Dusseldorf, Perth.

1996 *Derivations*, The Dowse Art Museum, New Zealand

1995 *Sampler Art*, Mobilia Gallery, Mass. USA

1995 *Symbol And Narrative*, travelling show to India, Nepal and Thailand

1994 *In Our Hands*, Nagoya, Japan.

1994 *10th International Biennale Minature Textiles*, Szombathely Museum, Hungary.

Represented In The Following Collections:

Museum Fur Kunsthandwerk, Frankfurt am Main, Germany;

Art Gallery of Western Australia;

Jewish Museum of Australia;

City of Perth Art Collection;

Crafts Board of the Australia Council;

Curtin University of Technology;

Ararat Regional Gallery, Victoria;

Sir James and Lady Cruthers Collection;

Several private collections.

Selected Commissions

2008 Artwork for Perth College Girls School extension – Donaldson & Warn architects.

2008 Artwork for Christchurch Grammer School, principles residence – Donaldson & Warn architects.

2007 Artwork for A.K Reserve Site Works – DHW – Ministry for Sport.

2005 Artwork for DHW, *Homeswest* West Perth, in collaboration with Marco Marcon, – Donaldson & Warn architects.

2005 *Homeswest Subi Centro Art Commission,* for Sharp and Van Ryan Architects.

2003-4 Artwork for the WA Ecology Centre, Bold Park, Perth with Donaldson & Warn Architects for Botanical Gardens and Parks Authority.

2002 Private commission for Lynne Hughes and Dr Graham Raad

1995 Perth City Council, banner for Local Government Week

1994/5 Co-supervision with Annette Seeman, SAFTI Military Institute Banner Commission, Singapore, in conjunction with MGT Architects

Published Material

2004 *Pam Gaunt, Selected Works, 1997-2004,* monograph texts by Stringer J., and Gaunt P.

2004 "The (E)Merging of the Decorative in Contemporary Art", *The Space-Between* post- conference publication.

1997 *Pam Gaunt – Selected Works, 1989-1997*, monograph texts by Bell R. and Marcon M.

Bibliography

2003 *The Gaps Between – International Textile Biannual* exhibition publication, Ormeau Baths Gallery, Belfast.

1999 *Art Textiles of The World, Australia*, Telos, England

1992 *A Sense of Place – A national overview of contemporary Australian embroidery* RodgersJ., Angus & Robertson, Australia.

1994 *Contemporary Embroidery*, Ann Morrell, Cassell, London.

Professional Research Awards, Grants

2008 Department of Culture and the Arts, Arts Development Grant

2005 Australia Council, Visual Art & Strategy Grant

2001 ArtsWA Creative Development Fellowship

2002 Curtin University Seeding Grant with Annette Seeman

1998 Vice Chancellor's Excel Award for Teaching

1997 Australia Council Milan Studio Residency, Italy.

1996 Project Grant, VA/CB of the Australia Council

1995 Creative Development Grant, the W.A. Dept. for the Arts

1993 + 1994 Curtin New Researchers Grant Scheme with Annette Seeman.

Front & Back Cover Image:
Detail, ***Florid Drawings #1 & #5,*** 2008
Size variable
Stencilled and painted industrially routed MDF, glue, etch primer & automotive paint.
Deconstructed and re-assembled
Photography: Tony Nathan

Inside Front Cover:
Errant #27 from ***Errant Abstractions***, 2008
30 x 30 cm
Stencilled and painted industrially routed MDF, glue & automotive paint.
Photography: Tony Nathan

Inside Back Cover:
Detail, ***Florid Drawing #1*** from ***Errant Abstractions***, 2008

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