

Australian Centre for Contemporary Art Dallas Brooks Drive South Yarra Victoria Australia 3141
Tel+613 9654 6422 Fax+613 9650 3438 acca@connect.net.au www.artnow.org.au Tues-Fri 11-5 Sat/Sun 12-5

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Untitled Rooms
Carolyn Eskdale
21 July to 26 August 2001
Opening 20 July 6-8pm

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Carolyn Eskdale **Untitled Rooms**

'Perhaps the immobility of the things that surround us is forced upon them by our conviction that they are themselves and not anything else, by the immobility of our conception of them.' Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, Volume One.

In Carolyn Eskdale's show *Untitled Rooms* at ACCA, familiar architectural elements are divorced from their usual contexts and imaginatively recombined and thereby highlighted. Freestanding or nestled into corners, these pieces embody pure form rather than function. The white shapes inhabit a large area and yet they retain the impression of cramped, enclosed space. They are 'like' boxes, fireplaces, portals, corridors, pillars but non-functional. They are the essential forms of these domestic features, composed of alternative materials.

The frames are made of aluminium box section, while the portals are composed of plaster and the covering material is interfacing. This filmy white material is used extensively as a veiling device, softening the firm metal frames lying beneath. Predominantly used to line other fabrics, this semi-transparent cloth suggests an internal view rarely seen or considered; as if we are looking onto the inside of something but from the outside, as if these things were turned inside out. Indeed, the interior of every space tends to reveal another interior.

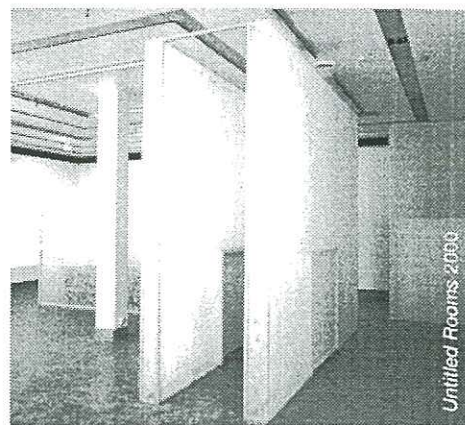
In one 'conduit' piece, a white enclosed cube constructed from interfacing material and aluminium houses a rectangular box running between two plaster covered openings resembling fireplaces. Featuring a shadowy passageway, this work reveals Eskdale's abiding fascination with liminal zones. In another 'corridor' work composed of two semi-transparent walls with indented hearth forms facing each other, Eskdale creates a passageway which leads nowhere, except back into the same room. A similar formation inhabits a corner, creating a miniature room of its own. In this little enclave, the size of the components is smaller but the forms are the same, suggesting the variable scale of these architectural and spatial concerns which may also alter the viewer's perspective.

Dominating this configuration of arcane objects is a grid-like construction of metal frames covered in flocked felt on the inside and draped with dense interfacing fabric on the outside. This material, usually used as furniture stuffing (once again the inside turned out), has been laboriously scraped by hand to give it added texture. Flecked with pieces of shredded fabric and fluffy in appearance, this grey surface positively vibrates with prolonged viewing. Almost the size of a room, the interior of this piece is able to be explored, but the experience may not be comfortable, despite the homely fabrics employed. Inside and up close, this work is hauntingly claustrophobic, like a padded cell.

Given her preoccupation with interior spaces, both corporeal and architectural, it is not surprising that Eskdale is attentive to various features of the venues her work inhabits. Influenced by the particularities of different galleries, she often incorporates certain features of previous spaces into new shows. This time she has installed a pillar in the middle of the gallery which originated from a previous exhibition, a memory or remnant of a former time and space, as if the work itself brought this memory with it.

Eskdale's works are then both prosaic objects and outward manifestations of inner weather. Within many of these forms are spaces to be traversed or moved through but they are sealed up, frustrating congress. These signs of barred entry may be read as visual metaphors for blocked or submerged feelings or psychic states. While Eskdale's constructions may resemble real objects, they have more in common with the fragmented, shadowy realm of the unconscious rather than daily life.

B.L. Magner



Recent Exhibitions

- 1999 *untitled room*, Temple Studio, Melbourne
- 1997 *Drawings*, Temple Studio, Melbourne
- untitled room*, Pendulum, Sydney
- 1996 *untitled room*, Temple Studio, Melbourne
- 1995 *Drawings*, Ether Ohnetitel, Melbourne
- the untitled room*, Building 40 Project, RMIT University, Melbourne
- 1994 *Reconstructed Furniture*, Temple Studio, Melbourne

Recent Group Exhibitions

- 2001 *A Studio in Paris - Australian Artists at the Cité 1967-2000*, S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney
- 2000 *Oblique Shadows*, Sculpture Square, Singapore
- Hard Candy*, Project Space Rebecca, London, UK
- Last Show*, Temple Studio, Melbourne
- 1999 *Moët & Chandon Fellowship Exhibition*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide (touring)
- Look Again: Contemporary Prints and drawings from the collection*, National Gallery of Victoria
- The Kedumba Drawing Award Exhibition*, Kedumba Gallery, Leura, NSW
- 1999 *National Works on Paper*, Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, Mornington
- 1998 *Eye Dreaming*, Percy Grainger Museum, Melbourne University, Melbourne
- Claustrophobia*, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK
- All this and Heaven Too*, Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide
- 1997 *Moët & Chandon Fellowship Exhibition*, Brisbane (touring)
- 1996 *Location Location Location*, Linden Gallery, Melbourne
- Rapport*, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore
- Monash University Gallery, Melbourne; Canberra School of Art Gallery, Canberra; The Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane
- Mrs Birds House*, private residence South Yarra, Melbourne
- Secret Archive*, Platform 2, Degraives St, Melbourne
- 1995 *Decadence*, 200 Gertrude Street, Melbourne
- A Gathering of Shades - Recent Images of Death in Melbourne*, Temple Studio, Melbourne
- Cut Outs*, Stop 22, Melbourne

Selected Publications

- Sian Jay and Richard Stringer, 'Oblique Shadows, Asian Influences in Australian Sculpture', catalogue essay 2000
- Sian Jay, 'Oblique Shadows, Asian Influences in Australian Sculpture', *The Straits Times*, November 22, 2000
- Claire Doherty, 'Parachute Postponed; Birmingham', *Artlink*, Vol 18 #4 Dec 1998, p.48
- Claire Doherty, 'We're not in Kansas anymore', *Claustrophobia*, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK, 1998
- Brenda Ludeman, 'Assembling the Familial Archive', *All this and Heaven Too*, Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, 1998
- Brenda Ludeman, 'The Fabric of Fiction', *Globe* <http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/visarts/globe/ghome.html> 1997
- Bruce James, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 April 1997
- Robert Rooney, *The Australian*, 4 October 1996
- Rod McLeish, 'Interview with Carolyn Eskdale', *Temple Studio Publication* #16, August 1996
- Natalie King, 'Rapport', Singapore Art Museum, June 1996
- Natalie King, 'Building 40 Project', *Art and Australia*, 1996
- Chris McAuliffe, 'Pull up a Chair', *World Art*, Vol 1 #2, 1994
- Linda Williams, 'The Aberrant Object', *Art +Text* #48, 1994
- Susan McCulloch, 'Objects of Desire', *The Herald Sun*, May 4, 1994 p.64
- Barbara Creed, 'The Aberrant Object Women: Dada and Surrealism', *Art Monthly*, May 1994, p.10
- Ross Moore, 'Decking out identities - performing gender', *Art Monthly*, June 1994
- Penny Webb, 'Carolyn Eskdale - Reconstructed Furniture', *Agenda*, #36, May 1994

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Curator Stuart Koop
Gallery Co-ordinator Vikki McInnes

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