

NIEN SCHWARZ *earth matters* & AMANDA VERSCHUREN

12 SEPTEMBER - 11 OCTOBER 2008
opening 6 - 8pm Friday 12 September

Turner Galleries is very pleased to present an exhibition of new works by Nien Schwarz.

Born in the Netherlands, raised in Canada, and settled in Australia since 1994, Nien Schwarz has had a life-long passion for geography and earth sciences. Accompanying geological mapping expeditions she cooked her way across the Canadian arctic between 1981-1992. Since 1994 she has assisted with Australian based geological field expeditions. For fifteen years her arts practice has explored our collective dependence on natural resources – particularly minerals, water, and agricultural products - and the global quest to meet rising demand.

In this latest exhibition, *earth matters*, Nien has used the inside circumference of a roll of flagging tape as a measuring device for the size of the circular shapes and marks she creates, and it doubles as a metaphor for lenses, drill bits, mine shafts, bores, and wells.

The choice of materials is considered carefully in relation to the context of the works. Most of the wall pieces are painted or prepared on doors, which for Nien allude to thresholds between domestic desires and the outside world. Her paints are of the earth; being pure unmixed colours collected directly from drill rigs, mines, and bores across Australia. The stylised six-petal flower motifs are made using topographic maps printed in the 1970s. Each petal pinpoints the name of a waterhole, well, bore, livestock yard, or mine. It is interesting to note which of these placenames have been carried forth to contemporary GIS software programs and databases such as Google Earth and Geonames. The place names for excavated sites profoundly reflect colonial dreams, European cultural, geographic displacement and tensions associated with indigenous and non-indigenous land ownership issues.

Nien has exhibited internationally and her artworks can be found in the collections of Curtin University, Edith Cowan University, the Chamber of Mines, Minerals & Energy plus many private collections in Australia and overseas.

Also on display in the gallery, in our front entry room, is a selection of new sculptural work by Amanda Verschuren. Although Nien and Amanda have produced bodies of work that are very different from the other, both artists obtained Bachelor of Science Degrees before embarking on art careers. This scientific evaluation and material investigation is evident in both artists' work.

Amanda's work, like Nien's, is very pertinent to contemporary Western Australian life. Whereas Nien's work is related to the resource boom, Amanda's is partially inspired by the result of this boom - the housing industry explosion and consumer infatuation with buying and building. In her artist statement she wrote, "As an artist I am interested in using the visual language of architecture to examine the nature of housing and accommodation. My current work focuses on the wall as a structure that delineates, defines and often protects an area. Using sections of external wall-like structures, I have created modified 'shells' of suburban dwellings, hinged together in such a way as to wrap or enclose the imagined occupant. These 'individualized' units can be thought of as adaptable architecture, the use of exposed dowels suggesting interchangeability."

Amanda Verschuren graduated from The WA School of Art, Design & Media in 2006. She was selected to participate in the prestigious graduate exhibition, Hatched, in 2007 at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Art.

Please do not hesitate to contact staff on 08 9227 1077 or email info@turnergalleries.com.au should you require more information or images from the exhibition. Exhibition works will be available to view on line: www.turnergalleries.com.au and both artists are available for interviews.