

VISUAL ARTS

Ric Spencer



Putting us on the spot

Also mapping the landscape is Nien Schwarz's *Earth Matters*, at Turner Galleries. The paintings had me thinking of Damien Hirst's spot works, but on closer inspection the spots are pieces of map or natural earth colours which spray out into hued compositions.

The paintings at the front are an extension of Schwarz's past work. She has taken her composed collections and presented them as tiled abstractions. Self-reflecting, the topographical here becomes orchestrated as shifts in earth tones — painting as geology.

The back half of the gallery is more immediately recognisable as Schwarz's work. Collections of drill cores are organised tonally on shelves while a number of pillows, forming a circle, hold earthen objects — almost as if giving the earth a well-earned rest.

Pastel in palette, *Earth Matters* is soft on the eye and relaxing to walk round but beneath the easy breathing lurks the politics of landscape and our ethical association to it.

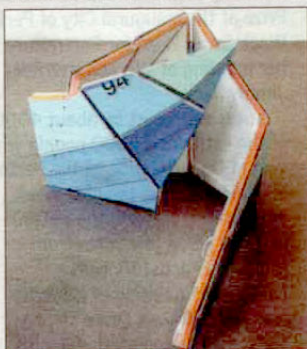
In the foyer, Amanda Verschuren presents a series of compact and folding sculptures as her first solo exhibition.

Units 3, 8, 57 and 94 defy their frame of existence to present a number of works in one. These objects are part door, part wall, part architectural, part design and engage the space and the viewer in their propensity for change.

Because they interact with the gallery architecture, these works would benefit hugely from a bigger space.

An answer perhaps to housing issues, these are thoughtful and evocative works that open up questions of global mobility and compartmental living.

Nien Schwarz's *Earth Matters* and Amanda Verschuren are at Turner Galleries, Northbridge, until October 12.



Amanda Verschuren's Unit 94.