

ruth thomas-edmond 87.

Born Wellington 1977

MFA Elam 2005

Lives in Auckland

Ruth Thomas-Edmond paints, draws and sculpts. In 2001 she was painting what she describes as 'abstract landscapes' on a large scale. She has retained an interest in fluid, broad-brush painting but, with a complete change of approach, made an impact in 2007 with small-scale sculpture and finely detailed ink drawings. In 2003 she did a series of drawings, the *Mechanism* series, that resembled sequences of dots and dashes joined together in lines. These were converted into an animated video. In 2004 she produced a series of Abstract Expressionist works on paper that involved the overlapping of two amorphous forms. These led into the *Image Map* series, done in enamel on plastic-coated paper with a scraping technique. These graphic works resembled grained or layered material, and pointed the way to important work done in 2007.

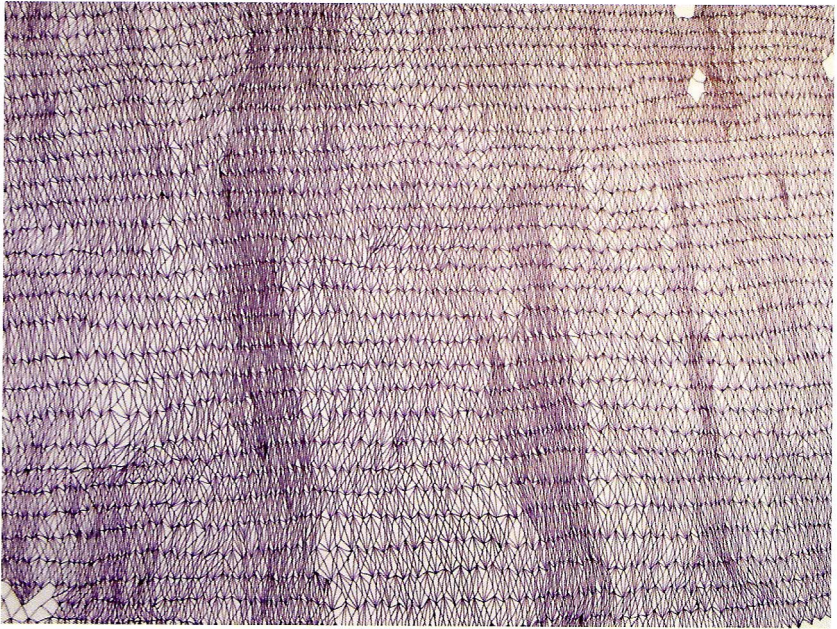
The *Network* drawings of 2005–6 resembled fragments of fishing nets or ancient textiles. Thomas-Edmond described her working method at this time as 'to form a mesh or mass out of the repetition of an insignificant cell. Over the duration of making a drawing the small errors of my handiwork become magnified.' Her *The Sunset and the Dirt* drawings of 2006–7, in peach and orange tones, were based on the effect of mountain ranges seen from a great height. These works, ambiguous in scale, suggested the treatment of crags in classical Chinese landscape painting.

In 2007 Thomas-Edmond exhibited her *Heap* series, a group of works of originality and authority, incorporating many of the artist's earlier investigations. She made a number of small table sculptures out of rectangles of variable size, cut from corrugated cardboard. The pieces were glued together so as to form what looked like untidy vertical stacks of boards or shingles, frozen at the moment



Heap series, 2007. Cardboard, PVA glue and acrylic paint, 280 x 300 x 250 mm.





just before collapse. Painted on one side in garish colour and left raw on the other, the works could be viewed as landforms or as provocatively artificial. These works provided models for a number of fine ink drawings in which the layers of cardboard linked back to the strata in the *Image Maps* and the edges of the corrugated board made up a mesh, recalling the *Network* series. These drawings, like the sculptures, can be seen as metaphors for life's accumulating

events, and also as stylised studies of eroded mountains, where strata tilt up abruptly and shear off in giant slabs. In turn, that idea linked to the ranges simulated in the artist's *The Sunset and the Dirt* series.

While continuing with the cardboard sculptures and drawing, in 2007–8 Thomas-Edmond returned to painting in her earlier fluid, semi-abstract style. Some of these works evoke the sculptures.

Above: *Big purple* (detail), 2006. Ink pen on conservation board, 850 x 1000 mm.

Right: *Big Blue*, 2006. Ink pen on conservation board, 850 x 1000 mm.

