

Kristy GORMAN

Born Tapanui, 1969

Currently based in Christchurch where she is the 2001 Olivia Spencer Bower Fellow, Kristy Gorman is graduate in Fine Arts of The University of Canterbury. She last showed at The Suter Gallery in 1996 in the exhibition *Pins and Needles*. In that same year she was also Artist-in-Residence at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth.

Gorman's paintings are remarkably quiet and seem to invite long, lingering looks during which time hitherto unseen elements and relationships between elements present themselves. The careful balancing of tone and content in the works (whether hung singly or in braces) draw one into the works. Rather than reveal different compositional features, though, or press for particular visual conclusions to be reached, the paintings seem to hover before the viewer, both inviting and almost imperceptibly resisting the gaze that is laid on them.

Some recent works have pursued this aspect further yet. The artist has entwined some of her objects with fine cotton thread spaced evenly across the painted surface. While this makes for visual and tactile intrigue when viewed frontally, the ridges formed by the thread also obscure the surface, for when seen sidelong those ridges coalesce into a flat, surprisingly dense bloc that screen the surface from view. This has the affect of reinforcing the physicality of the works and of making them more dynamic than they might at first appear.

A similar achievement is had in the paired or braced paintings by the differing depth of the boards' profiles. Again Gorman's strategy involves a careful and conscious deception. Front on, the surfaces of the painting, although in two parts, look uniform, the two painted zones appear to abut. The security of such an apprehension is challenged when one notices that the shadow cast on the wall by the object is at two lengths; the physical light of the gallery environment provides the hint that the flat surface is actually stepped. Again, that this is slowly, unexpectedly revealed rather than stridently declared, presses home the importance of the encounter in Gorman's work — or the encounters because such physical conditions are only to be witnessed as the result of a series of co-joined looks.

- Jonathon Bywater: *Pins and Needles: Eight Christchurch Artists* (Nelson: Suter Gallery, 1996)
- Claire Regnault: *Shadow Work* (New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 1996)
- Anna Smith: *Glimpse* (Christchurch: Jonathon Smart Gallery, 2000)

Kristy Gorman is represented by Anna Bibby Gallery, Auckland, and Jonathon Smart Gallery, Christchurch.

