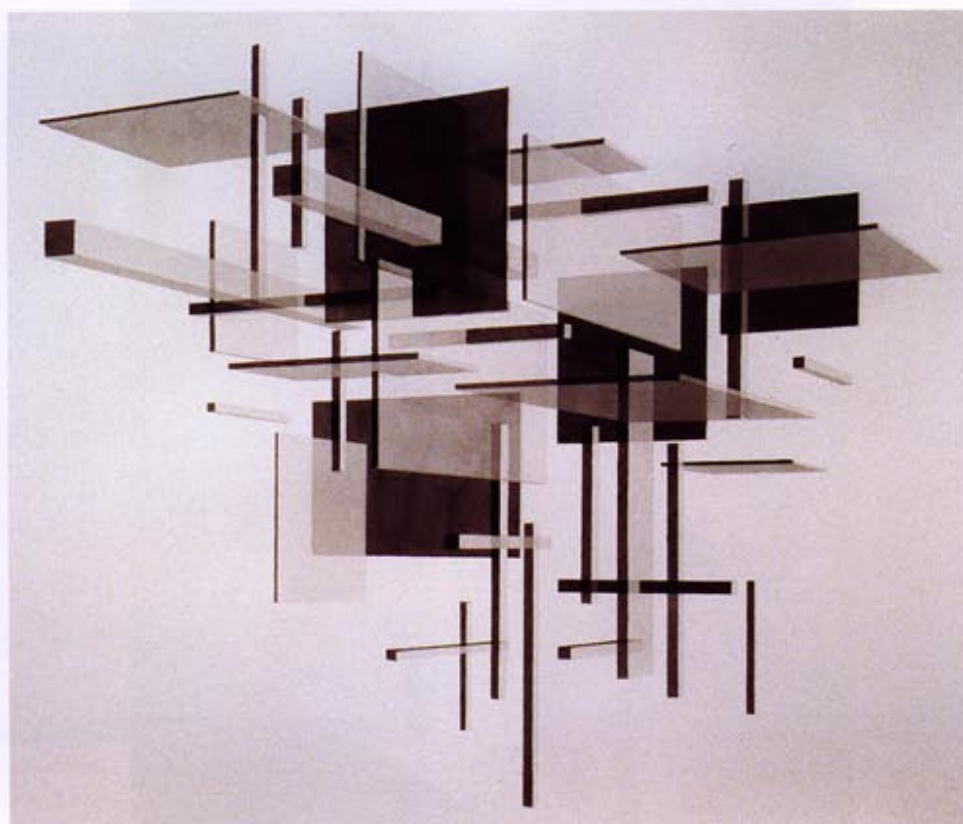


Sanné Mestrom



Sanné Mestrom, *Corner Relief*, 2004. Watercolour on paper, 160 x 120cm. COURTESY: THE ARTIST.

For centuries artists have battled with an age-old conundrum: the depiction of space. As untold numbers of drawings and paintings make clear, creating an artificial space on one dimension is far more than a matter of perspective or the right positioning of shadows. Space, despite the cliché, in a very real way, remains the final frontier.

In recent decades new tools have arisen to assist the stricken draughtsman; computer rendering and modelling solves innumerable problems, but it creates just as many as it goes along.

For **Sanné Mestrom**, for all of its hazards, this is the realm of exploration; and in the process she has created a body of work, thus far, that is both intellectually rigorous and visually beguiling; work of strange luminosity hovering somewhere between mathematical alchemy and spiritual quest.

Mestrom's grail is to enable the viewer to "become aware of their processes of perception in order to reveal the ways that we perceive 'truths', rather than what we perceive to be true."

This is no mean feat in a cynical, science-ridden age. But for Mestrom, everything is up for grabs. In her words, the work explores a system of viewing which challenges perspectival conventions and perceptual ideologies of the world.

"It no longer seems appropriate to use one-point perspective systems from the fifteenth century to represent a post-modern view of reality," she states bluntly.

"As notions of what the 'real' might actually be are becoming more fractured and diverse, we need to find new methods to represent our understandings of the 'real', or rather, our multiple and fluid realities."

But Mestrom's reaction against traditional thought is balanced by a graceful acceptance of an age-old medium. Despite the more than apparent use of new media techniques and the influence of computer generated art on her work, Mestrom is a watercolourist, gently dabbing subtly different tones of water-based paint to achieve her other-worldly illustrations.

While Mestrom has racked up nine solo shows since 2000, they have been held largely at Melbourne's almost cultish inner-city independent spaces such as Conical, CLUBSProject and the newly opened Spacement. She received her honours degree in painting at RMIT before moving onto researching her PhD with the heady title *The Power of Place and the Politics of Perception*.

Mestrom, it seems, is both the poet and the academic, a mad scientist playing with optics while rendering gentle panels of beguiling trickery.

- Ashley Crawford