Central Periphery – Abstraction from Northern Europe
RMIT Gallery, April 17 – 23 May 2009

Central Periphery brings together the work of six Northern European artists in a gentle recurring conversation that explores ideas of landscape, points of view and spaces through minimal abstraction, alternative drawing and installation.

Curated by Scottish artist Alan Johnston, his drawings will be shown alongside works from Franz Graf from Austria, Karin Sander and Martina Klein from Germany and Ragna Róbersdóttir and Kristján Guðmundsson from Iceland.

RMIT Gallery Director Suzanne Davies said “Johnston has selected artists whose work takes us away from a one dimensional view of the world defined by map makers into an abstract realm. The works are textural and technical, a bridge between the wonders of the natural world, the psychological and the impact of man and contemporary materials along a path linking cultural peripheries and centres.”

Icelandic artist Ragna Róbersdóttir is known for travelling the world with cases of rocks, pebbles and volcanic glass to create in situ. She masks an area on a gallery wall, covering it in paste before hurling the rough delicate lava stone. Her actions create dramatic yet delicate abstractions that evoke the explosive power of Iceland’s Hekla lava fields.

German artist Karin Sander’s ‘mail outs’ remind us how we are connected by systems. She will mail her standard store-bought canvases to RMIT Gallery without protective wrapping. They will arrive, stamped, and bar coded bearing all the handling marks of the international postal system which cumulatively become a texture of the work.

Alan Johnston’s drawings are refined and elusive – they only materialise when you notice them; echoing and elaborating the architectural space in which they are installed. He has a fascination with the space and its ambivalence. His drawings bring to space a sense of touch related to a living geometry.

Franz Graf’s installations are about the sensory and the psychological, and are rich in symbols, sub texts, and the graphic world of printing. He challenges our psyche with black motifs that expand and contract, disperse and fragment into evocative forms redelant of fin-de-siecle decoration.
Kristján Guðmundsson works in the tension that exists between something and nothing. This Icelandic conceptualist uses wood, alloys and plastics to create alternative drawings that explore colour, perforation and texture, insulating random geometric pattern.

Martina Klein's minimal paintings are as much about form as colour. Juxtaposing one coloured canvas with another she mounts the paintings at right angles, creating a simple yet arresting shape that becomes a barrier or an angle for reflection.

The six artists share a passion for abstraction. Some have shown together in Europe however Central Periphery at RMIT Gallery will bring them all to Australia for the first time.

Alan Johnston and Ragna Robersdottir will be in Melbourne for the exhibition and available for interviews and public talks.

For more information, interviews, images, regarding the exhibition or the individual artists please contact Vanessa Gerrans at RMIT Gallery Tel: 03 99252686; vanessa.gerrans@rmit.edu.au

www.rmit.edu.au/gallery
Tel: 03 99251717