

ANDREW NICHOLLS admires the work of a sculptor whose floating metal constructions encourage mathematical and musical analogies.

BRITT SALT: DRAWING IN THREE DIMENSIONS

The practice of West Australian-born Britt Salt sits ambiguously somewhere between sculpture and drawing. Indeed, she has described her works as 'things' rather than examples of a single discipline. Though still in the early stages of her career, Salt's 'things' have gained national attention for their elegance and conceptual sophistication.

Salt's work explores the ways in which we experience space, and she is particularly fascinated by the nomenclature employed by mathematicians and physicists to rationalise our perception of it. "I think I use that kind of mathematical language more as a basis for questioning the way materials appear to transform visually, without actually changing their inherent physical properties," she states. She employs various visual tricks to evoke movement and changing mass, and many of her objects are inspired by 'impossible' forms, such as Klein Bottles, that can be envisioned by mathematic formulae but not actually exist in three dimensions. Another ongoing influence is architecture, a discipline that colours her material palette as much as her conceptual framework. Her finely rendered drawings in ink and etched aluminium have a drafting-like quality, while her objects employ a range of industrial materials (wire, flyscreen and aluminium mesh) in the creation of enigmatic sculptural forms that confuse interior and exterior, positive and negative. Line is of fundamental importance — her small wire objects act as three-dimensional sketches, warping and writhing in space as the viewer moves around them, while her drawings incorporate wire to extend the line out of the confines of the picture plane. Her most impressive sculptures are huge floating forms that seem to knot in on themselves or expand outwards as you encounter them, hovering in the gallery space like visitants. They exploit the transparency and shimmering moiré effect generated by overlapping aluminium mesh, giving them an even more otherworldly effect when viewed in person. In writing about Salt's work early in her career I compared her practice to that of Lygia Clark; not only based on their shared fascination with the Möbius strip, but also the way they both utilise the simplest aesthetic language to evoke complex (and at times disturbing) phenomenological experience. Though not intended for handling like many of Clark's, Salt's works do respond to the viewer's presence and are generally installed so as to react to changing air currents as viewers move through the exhibition space. Salt is currently based in London working from ACME studios in Bethnal Green, a disused brush factory whose surfeit of natural light has prompted her to incorporate reflective surfaces into her latest works, in order to mirror the light in the gallery and fleeting movements of her audience. These works will form her upcoming exhibition at Perth Galleries, *ma*, the exhibition title again drawing on mathematical language, the word describing 'an experiential space or interval'. □

EXHIBITION WA

ma

Perth Galleries

Fremantle

22 October–14 November 2010



Top: Britt Salt. *Monoform Manifold*, installation shot at Helen Gory Galerie Melbourne, 2008. Photograph Jeremy Dillon.

Above: Britt Salt. *Klein Knot 0.02*, 2009, aluminium, 28 x 26 x 21cm. Photograph Jeremy

helen
gory
galerie

25 St Edmonds Road
Prahran VIC 3181, Australia
Tel +61 3 9525 2808
Fax +61 3 9525 2633
gallery@helengory.com
www.helengory.com
Open from Tuesday to
Saturday, 11am – 6pm.