

## Acknowledgements

Katarina Frank is a guest of RMIT University through the School of Art International Artist in Residence Program (AIR). RMIT School of Art acknowledges and welcomes Katarina as a professional artist within the School community.

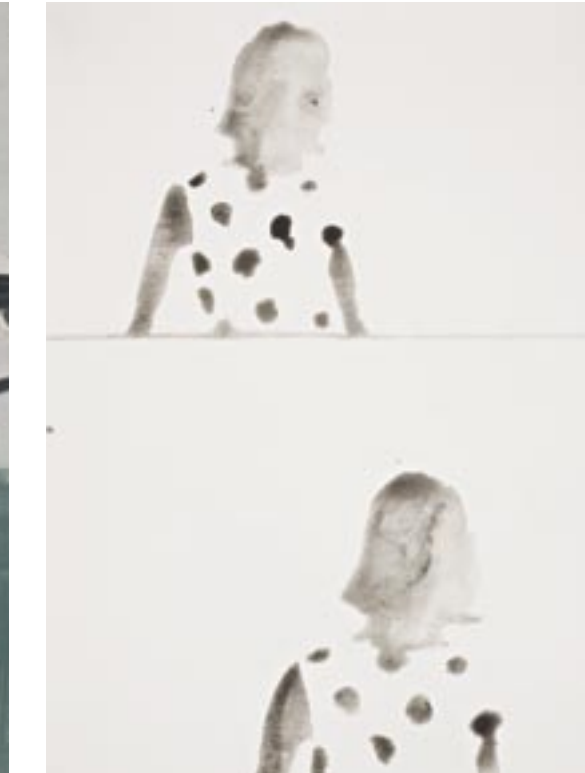
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For further information regarding the RMIT University School of Art AIR Program go to [www.rmit.edu.au/art/airp](http://www.rmit.edu.au/art/airp)

## PROJECT SPACE

BUILDING 94: 23-27 CARDIGAN STREET, CARLTON

Managed by the RMIT School of Art  
**CURATOR/COORDINATOR** Stephen Gallagher  
**ADMINISTRATOR/WEB DESIGN** Andrew Tetzlaff **GRAPHIC DESIGN** Gracia Haby & Louise Jennison  
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**TELEPHONE** +61 3 9925 4971 **GALLERY OPENING HOURS** Monday – Friday 10.00am to 5.00pm



## PROJECT SPACE



**Katarina Frank** [Sweden/UK]

FRIDAY 23 OCTOBER TO FRIDAY 13 NOVEMBER 2009  
**OPENING** THURSDAY 22 OCTOBER 5-7PM  
**FLOOR TALK** THURSDAY 29 OCTOBER 12-1PM

The city lost in snow

*That morning the silence woke him. ... He couldn't figure out what time it was ... He opened the window: the city was gone, it had been replaced by a white sheet of paper. Narrowing his eyes, he could make out, in the whiteness, some almost-erased lines, which correspond to those of the familiar view ... lost under all the snow that had settled ... during the night.*<sup>1</sup>

Italo Calvino

An open space ... when I open the windows to my apartment I look towards a vast, open and sprawling industrial view, full of light and changing before my eyes. There are fixed and still forms, but light, change and movement is my most palpable thought.

At times there's so much happening that it's difficult to take in, however I am aware that looking at this view is as much about nothing happening. It just goes on, a nether-zone where light and moving objects are always on the verge of changing.

In looking at a view, or gazing, there's nothing really to grasp. It's a relief to look, to let one's mind wander, and not really seek anything beyond simple markers. Moments like this are generally fleeting, where nothing certain is ever defined apart from the sense of a relaxed awareness of not having to hold to anything. In moments such as this, one is aware of one's self as transitory or drifting, coupled with a slight underlying attentiveness to the primary impulse we all have to occasionally identify and to locate

within the view. At times in Katarina Frank's studio, looking at her work I have recognized this same impulse, one of wandering and thinking about possibilities through the work, but finding them not unlike daydreaming.

What we notice and what we don't notice.

Frank works with an array of references from modernism, pattern and repetition in textiles, painting, printed reproduction, commercial and amateur photography, design, urban environments, the modernist utopia, the Scandinavian landscape, personal memories and evocations ... sifting through this in a seemingly random attempt to unconsciously locate and to find clarity.

Though she works in a range of mediums Frank focuses more intently on painting, collage, and drawing, filtered through a photographic source. Her works all center on a controlled abstractness, defined through a fascination with structures and with organized two-dimensional formal relations. She often works with a grid structure seemingly informed by the levelheaded modernism of Scandinavian culture, and her collages often involve the direct application of fabric textile patterns providing a visual rigor to the work, a sense of firmness and a system that underlies her use of dispersed and disparate elements of imagery. While representative of modernist design and perhaps social 'order', Frank's fabric structures equally provide a sense of intimate domesticity, a world that is familiar, comfortably ordered and structured, a world of acquaintance. She explores the mediums of collage, painting and drawing for intimacy, for their direct



spontaneous qualities, and for evidence of being handmade and personal. In approaching painting Frank is drawn to the sense of doubt and ambivalence currently perceived within the medium.<sup>2</sup> Her method is one of layered complexity and process, where she is attracted to the slowness and materiality of the medium, aware of the strange phenomenon in painting where it finally reveals itself over time and where one may eventually feel the density of time through the painted surface. However despite this she works to determine a sense of under-worked immediacy. Her paintings contain traces of 'accidents and blurs' that parallel the process of gazing, of being lost and seeking out; of allowing something to reveal itself openly, or simply remaining an echo, part of the accumulative, sifting process.

Frank's imagery implies a reflective state of looking, where quiet events are seemingly formed to identify vague recollections, re-connections or representations, filtering the accidental nature of our everyday experiences. In sieving through her fragmentary imagery Frank invokes an amorphous period in time open for interpretation, where the imagery seems outside of meaning and devoid of context, lost in terms of its explicit significance, seemingly existing as recordings of obscure and strange occurrences. Frank's works may be about nothing beyond the act of looking, simply about taking in the view, or they may be 'containers' that have been disinvested of meaning and developed as tools for a re-interpretation and reassessment of the world.

And in adopting this reflective position, in reconfiguring disparate images that are little different from found objects, Frank allows us to consider the pleasure of looking, a relaxed

and gentle occupation; looking and all that it embodies through gazing, searching, viewing, seemingly without the burden of deconstructing for exact meaning. These works are about the primacy of the visual experience without the requirement to locate or pinpoint, providing an open space. But there is no consolation in this work, and this is disconcerting. We can gaze and we can be lost but after a time there is something unsettling in this experience. We live in interesting times full of moments and events ripened for interpretation, but this work operates as a form of silent inquiry that is not ostensibly inflected by opinion. Frank looks to events that may have been halcyon or memorable to uncover something forgotten, left over, outside, and beyond the confines of interpretation. Surprisingly the open and expanded view defined by Frank may in the end, be one of accumulation, layers of visual debris, bits and pieces, odds and ends, where sifting is a way of thinking and feeling one's way through the glare of reality.

### Peter Westwood

Peter Westwood is an artist, writer and curator based in Melbourne.

1. Italo Calvino, WINTER: The city lost in the snow; Marcovaldo or The seasons in the city, translated from the Italian by William Weaver, Mandarin Paperbacks, London, 1993; pp 16

2. The leitmotifs of Gerhard Richter's work have focused on faith versus skepticism, hope versus pessimism and engagement versus neutrality. Robert Storr, Gerhard Richter: Doubt and belief in painting, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2003; pp16



Inside Pages, Left to Right  
*East and West*, 2009  
Collage, pencil and watercolour  
28 x 38 cm

*No 3* from series *On the Verge*, 2009  
Oil on mdf  
27 x 38 cm

*Peggy*, 2009  
Collage and pencil  
21 x 30 cm

Outside Pages, Left to Right  
*String of*, 2008  
Watercolour  
28 x 40 cm

*Clouds in my Coffee*, 2009  
Collage  
28 x 40 cm

*Pile*, 2009  
Collage  
21 x 30 cm

*No 2* from series *On the Verge*, 2009  
Oil on mdf  
27 x 38 cm

*Early Summer*, 2009  
Watercolour  
30 x 42 cm

