

Simon Gevers: Light Works

by judith mcgrath

Many artists confess they're on a journey as they push their artistic skills to the edge of various well traveled roads. For those who are outward bound, it proves to be either a short trip or a long haul before they arrive at a comfortable place where they can rest on their laurels.

Then there are those artists who, after doing the long hard yards through political comment and emotional angst, turn a corner and travel the inner path. It would appear this is precisely what Simon Gevers has done. The works he presents in this exhibition suggest the artist has found a way to sculpt light and illuminate the journey within.

Gevers is a well respected artist in Western Australia. He studied at UWA and Curtin

Simon Gevers, Polyurethane Foam and Perspex, 32 x 32 x 12 cm



Simon Gevers, *Limefield* 2006, Egg Tempera on Board, 85 x 85 x 3.5 cm. Courtesy Galerie Düsseldorf

University and has regularly exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions since 1989. His work is always well received, well documented, and he is represented in many major public, private and corporate collections in Australia.

In previous exhibitions, Gevers presented non-figurative paintings with layers of transparent colours that seemed to subtly shimmer when light reflected off brush marks and textural surfaces. "What I was pursuing with my painting was a feeling of light coming from behind, coming through the layers of paint." He pursues his goal further in this exhibition, albeit along a very different track. Here the artist presents a collection of foam carvings in clear Perspex illuminated from behind so they emit a warm glow. Seen through the foam, the light is defused and our movement in relation to the exhibit creates changes in its effect. The result is mesmerizing as the object holds our attention, and meditative as we respond to the simplicity of the material.

These new works take the artist closer to his goal of capturing light. He sees them as a natural progression of his art as he continues the quest to have light emanate from his work; to make 'light' one of the components of art, independent of colour and texture. Gevers reveals that he employs a very simple process and confesses how "it is no big theoretical drama for me, rather I'm pursuing a form of simplicity, a form of beauty and purity, to find these things or to find an expression toward these things, in my artwork."

Employing low-tech tools such as bent kitchen knives and abrasive paper, Gevers hand carves circular shapes of different size and depth, into uniform 320 mm square by 100 mm deep blocks of white polyurethane foam. With no preliminary plan, the artist commences digging into the foam block and smoothing the hollowed out shapes in response to the changes that occur. He encases each finished block in Perspex. The rough textural component of the foam is muted by the smooth Perspex shell while the light does not reflect off the surface, instead it glows through the work to be affected by the different depths of the carved out shapes. Somehow, the soft glow of the light, compressed texture of the foam, and smooth surface of the Perspex seem to radiate a sense of strength and warmth, not



Simon Gevers, *Sting* 2006, Egg Tempera on Board, 85 x 85 x 3.5cm. Courtesy Galerie Düsseldorf

unlike marble, giving these simple structures a sense of monumentality.

The artist says of his works; "They are the product of a search for simplicity, a search that involves a continual refinement. The more I pursue that line, the more refined I get, hence the increased simplicity and quietness of these works." Yes they are simple and quiet and as such akin to a mantra, as they allow the viewer to relax and open an inner door.

Simon Gevers: Light Works
is at **Galerie Dusseldorf**
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