

HANKEL Lillian (Aus)

Plantworks – visual presentation

In my current work, I combine commercial dress-making textiles that carry floral designs with actual pressed plants, in pieces that look like paintings. Viewers often mistakenly assume that various elements in the pieces have been painted or drawn by the artist. The fashion fabrics, misidentified as paintings, reference our cultural assumptions about certain boundaries, about what is “fine art” and what constitutes popular culture, fashion design or textile “crafts.” The pressed plants, when considered in the context of the factory-made textiles, refer to our cultural construction of the idea of “nature,” our habitual appropriation of flora and our desire to inhabit *tamed* nature. Furthermore, this work alludes to the role of all forms of “art” in the historical and ongoing process of cultural alienation from *wild* nature.



Continuously Resting” 2002; detail

The factory-made textiles recall the industrialisation of our lives, and in particular of the production of our fabrics – of that with which we clothe our bodies. Industrialisation has effected a distancing of ourselves from nature and the manual, direct methods of production are now left to the realm of “art and craft.” Our bodies

are alluded to through these (specifically, dress-making) textiles; our bodies remain stubbornly “natural” and we continue in our attempts to foil nature’s processes, that cause us such suffering, thereby increasingly moving toward complete artificiality.

Lillian Hankel is represented in Western Australia by Perth Galleries, where she will present a solo show following “the space between” conference, opening on the 23rd of April. Lillian is currently based in Melbourne where she is represented by Dianne Tanzer Gallery. In the 80s, the artist attended the Alberta College of Art and the Banff Centre School of Fine Arts in Canada and the Brooklyn Museum Art School in New York. She holds a Masters degree in visual art from Curtin University in Perth. Her work is held in private and public collections in Australia and abroad. Lillian’s work has consistently incorporated various botanical elements and addressed Western culture’s relationship to “nature.”
