

24 SEPTEMBER - 2 NOVEMBER 2005

paintings nuala gregory





Paint as paint

Out of reach of the wipers, raindrops blow back up the windscreen, forming aerial maps. The water appears as water on another scale, a complex estuary. This delta evolves on fast forward, is slowly erased as the rivulets shed their contents with increasing efficiency, finding paths that allow the rain to bead and fly away, up past the top of the screen and off the car.

The field banks up towards the skyline, a vivid spring green until the shadow of the shelterbelt rules between it and the horizon. Closer to the verge aloe flowers, bending under their own weight make a complex of pink arcs towards the road. An association recurs to me: the Katherine Mansfield story I read as a text at university, the odd coldness of the bearded lecturer highlighting the sexual symbolism to the morning lecture theatre.

Gorse in bloom flashes past in a gully.

A pylon comes into view, dark against the sky.



Paint as a metaphor
for all liquids or for
any coloured thing

Against the overcast sky, acid green buds highlight the sprays of branches and twigs. Lit from behind they appear as veins or the system of nerves, as a pair of lungs in a medical diagram. All along the highway every country garden is flagged with a Chinese toon tree, newly unfurled pink leaves poking up over fences or dark macrocarpa belts.

I lie on the bed, surprised by how loud the chatter of the other guests in the hall sounds, staring at the unfamiliar curtains, looking to see where the pattern repeats.

On the television the hurricane looks like a brain scan. The garish green wedge of the mainland is interrupted by a grainy swirl over the gulf, white fringes curling around a core warning-light red.

A young Korean woman draws a sample of a lipstick onto the back of her hand, her hair lit by the glow of the large white Perspex perfume display. Her handbag is the same Louis Vuitton model that the African hawkers were selling copies of in Venice this year during the Biennale, bright yellow and pink insignia on shiny white.

Across the lawn from the carpark, a splash of buttercups looms under the spread of the walnut, the tree trunk dark against the sky.



Drawing

There is a roof, a small room, and on the wall are framed paintings. The compositions reveal themselves as variations on a theme, not stated but clearly implied. I see the paint as nothing but paint, carefully arranged and trained to bloom; but also as a metaphor first for the behaviour of other liquids, as it soaks and falls, and the pigment it bears swirls and clusters on the paper; and so the paint also stands in for any coloured thing, or things with colours like these. The repetition, the schematic joins, underscore the processing of what is being given to view.

This is the first in a series of three linked exhibitions in which eminent

NZ arts writers provide a text to accompany my painted works. Each writer is invited to respond to the paintings from the standpoint of a distinct discipline, whether art history, philosophy of art or arts criticism.

In the present case, Jon Bywater has responded "image for image", translating or transposing patterns of paint into patterns of language. He does not look for hidden meanings, but instead attunes to the feeling of the artworks and releases that feeling in a play of word, memory and intuited-intuitive image.



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13 Reeves Road, PO Box 51 222 Pakuranga, Manukau City, Aotearoa New Zealand.
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