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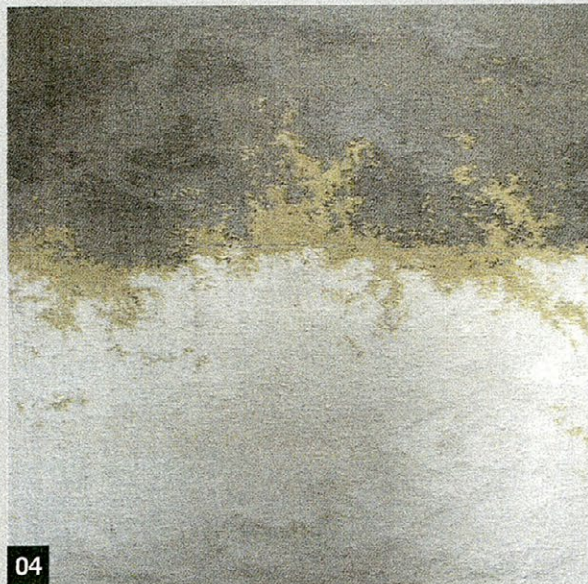
Joop Haring, Ron Zylstra

### Interface: An Exhibition of International Contemporary Art Textiles

The Scottish Gallery, Edinburgh 12 September - 5 October 2005. The Gallery, Ruthin Craft Centre 19 November - 8 January

Curated by jeweller Susan Cross this eclectic and international exhibition displays an attention to detail and scale not often in evidence at textile exhibitions. Without exception, each work benefits from scrutiny at a distance usually reserved for jewellery. Each artist takes the single thread as a component deserving as much attention as the finished whole. But in spite of this focus on the minutiae of material, the sentiments tackled are vast: what Martina Margetts in her catalogue essay describes as "core evidence derived from human encounters with the natural world". Marian Bijlenga (The Netherlands), Sara Brennan (Scotland), Polly Binns (England), Chiyoko Tanaka (Japan) and Katri Haahti (Finland) provide a mix of familiar and unfamiliar work. In every case, details no larger than a pinhead or single thread determine the scale on which these textile investigations occur.

Binns' delicate woven grid "Ground Trace" includes sketched graphite lines and suture-like points of thread, punctured by small nail-heads that hold nine squares of fabric a breath's distance away from the wall. In "Sea Scan" the ends of knotted thread take on a more organic and slightly less clinical association, but here also the eye is drawn to the single thread as it kinks and wrinkles on the fabric surface. Tanaka's three-section work "Gridded Fabric - Three Squares. Blue Threads and Blue #684" demonstrates a similar regard for the drawn line and single thread. Two woven panels frame the centre space, unwoven apart from one diagonal weft moving from bottom left to top right to continue weaving the third panel.



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Trumps

The warp hangs free, sagging just slightly from the slack not taken up by the weft like the wavering graphite lines of an Agnes Martin painting. Close inspection reveals that a delicate drawn line crosses on the opposite diagonal to balance the lone weft.

Bijlenga's installations of curiously fuzzy dollops of texture are accentuated by their spiky halos of thread, which float from layers of machine embroidery. Some groupings feel more cohesive than others, such as "Shadow Dots II" where each little two-dimensional vessel seems to be craning its neck like an obedient flower towards an invisible light source. But it is Haahti's cancerous pincushions that steal the show with their repetition and multiplication of tiny discs of silk and thread tied to the ends of pinheads.

A cluster of three coloured works in an adjoining room accompanies eight black and white sculptures of varying diameters. Haahti's work so strongly invites touch that it seems virtually impossible to resist. Much like a cactus, there is a tension between an intellectual response to the work's fragility and an emotional desire to confirm the texture of the work with one's own hands. Brennan feels a little like the odd one out here, but with time even her large tapestry "Broken Yellow Line" reveals a delicate horizon line punctuated by a single thread, a gesture very much attuned to the scale of investigation addressed by the rest of the work in the exhibition.

Amanda Game, Director of the Scottish Gallery, explains that the aim of this exhibition, the first in a series curated by practitioners, is "to allow the maker's eye to become a more active part of the curatorial vision." Unquestionably, this exhibition sets a formidable standard for those to come. ●●● **Jessica Hemmings**

**03 Mariana Bijlenga, Shadow Dots II, 50 x 50cm**

**04 Sara Brennan Broken Yellow Line, 96 x 112 cm**