

**Press release**

**Jessica Rankin | *Lacunae***

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Preview: Friday April 26, 6-9 p.m.

Sometimes a landscape seems to be less a setting for the life of its inhabitants than a curtain behind which their struggles, achievements and accidents take place. For those who, with the inhabitants, are behind the curtains, landmarks are no longer geographic but also biographical and personal.\*

The oeuvre of Jessica Rankin (born 1971) assumes shape in front of the viewer's eyes like a network of memories, associations and diagrams. It stretches out on the paper like a landscape. Her work moves between the personal and the geographic spheres. In formal terms it takes its orientation from the stellar constellations, but following its own language and structure.

Although it is her "embroideries" that have made her famous, works which demanded a persistent, painstaking approach, carlier | gebauer is now showing some of her new drawings on paper. Now, Rankin is using a different medium, working with crayons, paper and watercolors. At first glance, letters and language are only to be found in the title. On the subject of sewing Rankin has said that this involves a constant, repetitive movement, returning like a word that lingers on your mind. In a similar way her work revolves around a center and, at the same time, moves on its own periphery.

On a superficial level Rankin's works on paper use the celestial map of the stars as the basic structure for her paintings. Their titles lend what look at first glance like abstract landscapes their own personalized stories. They take their orientation from the sky at night on certain dates which are of major importance to the artist. *Memory of Sky: Dec 12, 2012*, *Memory of Sea: Dec 12, 2012* and *Nighttrained: April 23, 2000* are some of her work-immanent titles. The date suggests a framework in fact for the picture's structure; the picture itself serves as a testimonial. Their interaction with memories or descriptive, made-up words such as *Nighttrained* stand in complete contrast with the dates, highlighting the emotional, personal level in her work. Lawrence Chua describes her work as embodying a 'tension between personal time and domesticated space, between historical time and geopolitical space'. Language is of equal importance to space, to personal and historical, temporally defined space. Language is seen as a communication element resulting from its form alone. Initially, her first diptychs are characterized by darkish, circular structures. The strokes of her pen hook into a homogenous shape like her embroideries. In later items of the work cycle, layers of paper are laid over the drawings, adding something almost transparent to the existing shapes. Her small-format works indicate a different shape - they are no longer part of a homogenous mass but move dynamically out from the center.

Rankin's work transforms itself into words that have been removed from their original context, allowing associations to become concrete poetry. Like a delicate spider's web, her works on paper are linked to a less tangible context. They appear to be based on a concrete construction, one that has not been revealed to their recipient. The result is countless gaps or lacunae in terms of specific meaning - something that only becomes apparent in their interplay with personal observation.

\*John Berger, A Fortunate Man (Writers and Readers, London, 1976), p.15.