

EMMA VAN LEEST

WAYFARING

21 February - 10 March 2007

John Buckley Gallery
8 Albert St
Richmond, 3121
T + 61 3 9 428 8554
F + 61 3 9 428 8939
www.johnbuckley.com.au



Emma van Leest

Contravened 2006

Synthetic paper, paper, glue, foam core
15 x 21 cm

Press release

The Scissor Sisters are in town! And although artist, Emma van Leest, won't be up there on stage with Mr Shears and co., she'll be exhibiting some pretty fancy paper cutting of her own in her first solo show at John Buckley Gallery which opens on February 21st.

Emma's intricate and visually complex works – which, at first sight dazzle and mesmerise by virtue of their extraordinary technical skill, draw the viewer into the artist's complex, imaginative universe: a rich amalgam of images which are borrowed from a host of disparate sources – orientalism, the lives of saints, folk art, Hindu literature and the fairytale world of the Brothers Grimm.

On completing her honours year in Fine Arts at Melbourne's RMIT, Emma eventually travelled to Indonesia to study Balinese and Javanese folk art. In Bantul, central Java, she studied the ancient art of shadow puppetry with Sagio, a master puppeteer:

"It was amazing to work with someone who was able to enter into a realm of spirituality and folk lore. The Balinese have a unique approach to religion and daily life - a virtual world of Gods, morals and worship that is incorporated into daily life and domestic routines."

- Emma van Leest

Later, as the recipient of an Australia Council Emerging Artist's Travel Grant, she visited China to study traditional Chinese paper cutting techniques, but became much more engaged, both visually and conceptually, with the imagery of ancient gardens, houses, funerary objects and tombs which she encountered there. In particular, she was fascinated with miniature dioramas of people and landscapes and the spatial considerations involved with their construction.

Such encounters, together with Emma's original childhood experience of creating dreamlike fantasy worlds, have resulted in a remarkable body of work which she has been showing in a number of artist-run spaces over the past two years and which she now brings together in her first solo show.

Emma van Leest's work is currently included in the Price Waterhouse Coopers collection as well as various private collections in Australia, the United States, Indonesia and New Zealand.

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2007



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Top:

Emma van Leest
Absentee 2006
Synthetic paper, paper, glue,
foam core
15 x 21 cm

Right:

Emma van Leest
Bequest 2006
Synthetic paper, paper, glue,
foam core
21 x 15 cm

