

NEW WORK - KEIKO AMENOMORI-SCHMEISSER

In June this year Gallery East in Fremantle Western Australia showed the work of two Canberra based artists: Keiko Amenomori-Schmeisser, who was born in Japan and studied Textile Design in Germany, and Jörg Schmeisser, who is German-born and recently taught for six years at the Kyoto City University of Arts, Japan. It was the first time that both showed their work together in Australia. The bold and highly textured pieces by Keiko were installed next to Jörg's detailed etchings of close-by and faraway places. It created a harmonious tension in the beautiful gallery space, a stone's throw away from the Indian Ocean.

Keiko's work has its roots as much in Japanese tradition as in contemporary art and design. She takes visual notes, making nature studies to store her impressions of landscapes and places. This raw material is developed through drawing, stitching, dyeing and painting into abstract compositions and at times surprising forms. The light, soft pieces of linen and cotton are transformed into substantial objects, assertive, arresting and radiating warmth and strength at the same time.

In his opening remarks, Paul Barron, award-winning Western Australian film producer, noted "Keiko says that to stitch in Shibori is to draw on the cloth. Each piece is hand-stitched, drawn, folded, shaped. The cloth is not just material to be sculpted, or a platform for an image. It is transformed by the hands of the artist. Each crease or ripple in the material is a unique moment in time, a remembrance. The power of the beauty of her work is partly in the dramatic, startling use of colour and form. But equally it is in the small individual shapes that were created one by one by the hands of the artist following a classic technique, but also advancing and adapting it to a modern world... The cloth has been transformed into its own story."

Front cover: 'Light on the Border', Shibori dye and paint on silk; 30x30cm.
This page: below: 'Small Island', Shibori, dye and paint on silk; 30x30cm;
bottom right: 'Above the Water', Shibori, dye, discharge and paint on silk,
30x30cm; above right: 'Moving Forward', triptych, Shibori, dye and paint on
linen and cotton, 160x58cm. All works 2009. Photography by Steve Keough.

