

Joanna Lamb

From Jenny Watson's early suburban houses, through to the recent works of such artists as Callum Morton, Darren Wardle and Raafat Ishak the architectural and the suburban seems to be an ongoing theme with which artists investigate contemporary urban existence.

Joanna Lamb's recent *Flatland* series falls very much into this investigation. These works of suburban environments are based on complex environments, says the artist. "But via a series of choices made in regard to the formal structure of the paintings the image becomes a lot cleaner and more sparse.

"By removing a lot of detail they lose their specificity of place and become evocative rather than faithful representations," she says. "The physical act of painting is very important as is the play of colour."

Exhibiting in Perth for the last decade, Lamb was recently included in *Parallel Lives: Australian Art Today* at the TarraWarra Museum of Art Biennial alongside such artists as Jon Cattapan, Nadine Christensen, Dale Frank, Brent Harris, Raafat Ishak and Stieg Persson. According to panellist Robert Nelson, Lamb's paintings are:

"curious and disciplined work [which] stood up well at [the] Tarrawarra Biennale."

"Raafat Ishak and Joanna Lamb have some refined interpretations of architecture..." Nelson wrote in *The Age*. "Lamb takes a suburban house and runs it through different colours in four amusing images. They aren't really portraits of a house so much as celebrations of digital imaging, where you change colours by a mouse-click."

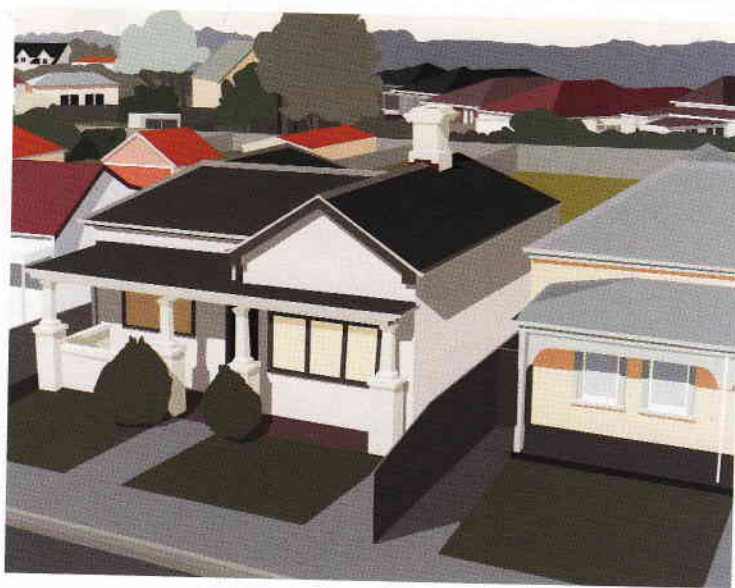
Flatland was the name of a classic 19th Century novella by Edwin Abbott that was, in its investigation of dimensionality, a satire of the social hierarchy of Victorian society. It's not hard to read Lamb's work as a satire of contemporary times.

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Born: 1972

Dealers: Johnston Gallery, Perth; Sullivan+Strumpf Fine Art, Sydney

Price range: \$3,000-\$6,000



Top: Joanna Lamb, *Flatland airport figure*, 2006. Acrylic on canvas, 88 x 112cm.
PHOTO: NICHOLAS WHITE.

Bottom: Joanna Lamb, *Flatland houses figure*, 2006. Acrylic on canvas, 109 x 139cm.
PHOTO: NICHOLAS WHITE.

COURTESY: JOHNSTON GALLERY, PERTH.