

*How to remember a home* by artist Emma Willemse  
Suspended installation, salvaged parquet floor blocks, gut.  
Size variable

'How to' – exhibition  
Grande Provence Gallery  
September 2011

### **Artist statement**

In the ironically titled "How to remember a home" I employ my interest and research on the phenomenon of displacement as background to comment on the way displacement has been handled as a knowledge field. I investigate the failure of existing theoretical models to explain why resettlement is often not successful. In addition, my intention is to raise questions about social engineering practices which assume that traumatic experiences such as displacement, which entails the loss of home, memory and identity, can be theorised or known by using pre-conceived and super-imposed formulaic models.

In the installation inverted parquet floor blocks are used as a medium to create a suspended installation in the gallery space. The blocks were salvaged from a house, once my home, while the house was being demolished. An enlarged print of my own thumb (as a reference to identity) has been cut from the blocks and the fragments are suspended in layers from the roof of the gallery.

The formal qualities of the resulting artwork evoke references to geological strata and geographical contours, a map-like structure serving as a metaphor for a search and exploration into the constructs of displacement. The irony lies in the complexity and variability of the installation: can traumatic experiences be fixed into formulas and can we ever prescribe how to deal these experiences?

Emma Willemse