



GINA HEYER | THRESHOLD

GINA HEYER – THRESHOLD was produced by iArt Gallery to accompany an exhibition of the same name.

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GINA HEYER | THRESHOLD
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"Painting is easy when you don't know how and very difficult when you do." ¹



Doorways (2007 – 2009); oil on board, 262 x 304mm

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Conversations (2007 – 2009); oil on board, 410 x 390mm

In a culture overloaded with printed and digital imagery, with artistic bling, with art that is desperately trying to be clever, and art that is often confused (and therefore confusing), it is profoundly difficult for a painter to proceed with a true sense of artistic purpose.

A painting is not merely a picture. It starts out as a piece of raw empty canvas, board or paper. As a painter you start with nothing. Every small incremental step away from this nothingness requires painstaking thought and action. Nothing can be taken as a given. Every grain of pigment is applied with artistic intent. Every square centimetre of pictorial space succeeds or fails as a result of the sum of its relationships to every other square centimetre that makes up a painting. If successful, the infinitely complex layers of process, pigment, varying degrees of opacity and transparency combine to create a space that is at once three-dimensional and two-dimensional. It is within the layered archaeology of these diaphanous yet material strata and sub-strata of paint that artistic intent and intelligence are manifested. Painting today is no easier than it has been for the past 60 000 years or more. In the contemporary artworld painting is arguably more challenging than ever before.

Like Nietzsche's tightrope walker in *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, Gina Hoyer's work balances on an impossible-to-define edge. Her

paintings shift between representing universally recognisable places and the uncanny deconstruction thereof. The use of elaborate perspective theories, photography and digital technology are an integral part of her process. Like Degas, Vermeer and many of her predecessors, these visual technologies become creative catalysts deeply embedded in the constantly evolving art of painting. Heyer's rigorous use of classical and logical perspective is deliberately offset by the surreal subversion of such logic. We see little human presence in these uninhabited chambers and corridors, and yet these places resonate with intense pathos and humility. Photographic fidelity is constantly disrupted by irrational space, light and colour, rendered so convincingly that we are unable to distinguish between the two worlds. The familiarity of these spaces render them almost archetypal as if we've all known such places, and yet the deconstruction of architectural and constructional logic, sometimes subtly and sometimes obviously, makes these places unreasonable and uninhabitable – the kind of spaces we can only imagine or experience in dreams. And yet the attention to detail, texture, reflection, colour, light, shadow and spatial aesthetics leaves us completely convinced as to the intense reality of these spaces.

As a young artist, working in a challenging and controversial artworld, Gina Heyer has managed to transform seemingly ordinary subject matter. Working within the strict limitation of the traditional medium of oil painting, employing conservative pictorial conventions, and avoiding any conceptual mannerisms, she has created a vision that is extraordinary, quietly powerful and artistically significant.

Vivian van der Merwe
Stellenbosch, December 2009

1. Edgar Degas (Quoted on a T-shirt sold by the Museum of Modern Art, New York)





Paintings show us a single moment, even though they remain fixed for centuries. The ephemeral instant and unending duration are forced very close together, and that is one of painting's special strengths – one of the properties that sets it apart from other forms of art. The instant, the very definition of change, is pressed flat like a dried leaf in a collector's book and made to remain in place indefinitely.

James Elkins, 2001



Fragment (2008 – 2009); oil on board, 258 x 304mm
Corner (2009); oil on board, 267 x 305mm

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Passages (2007 – 2009); oil on board, 910 X 305mm



Room 1 (2008 – 2009); oil on board, 582 x 302mm



Room 2 (2008 – 2009); oil on board, 590 x 307mm

FOLLOWING PAGES

Chair Profile (2007 – 2009); oil on board, 400 X 310mm

Two Chairs (2007 – 2009); oil on board, 385 x 310mm







Hospital 1 & 2 (2008 – 2009); oil on board, 422 x 442mm



Hospital 3 & 4 (2009); oil on board, 422 x 442mm







Currents 1 & 2 (2009 – 2010); oil on board, 380 x 440mm

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Untitled (2008 – 2009); oil on board, 1217 x 358mm



Gina Heyer was born on 15 August 1983 in Empangeni, South Africa. Currently living, working and studying in Stellenbosch, South Africa, Heyer is currently completing her Masters degree in Fine Art at Stellenbosch University.

Threshold is Heyer's first solo exhibition and comprises work completed for her Masters degree.

The artist would like to thank iArt Gallery, Vivian van der Merwe, Richard van Ryneveld, Ben Harper and family and friends for their continued support.

A dark, minimalist hallway with a glass elevator and a staircase. The lighting is warm and focused, creating a dramatic atmosphere. The walls are dark, and the floor is polished. A glass elevator is visible in the center, and a staircase with a metal railing is on the right. The overall aesthetic is modern and sophisticated.

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