Strong perspective and architectural references have been elements in my work since the major spatial installation at PICABOANS in 1994. *The Invisible Line* 2006 is an installation of painted and drawn constructions that further explore this negotiation of physical and metaphysical space.

My strongest memories are growing up in Rome, a city where for centuries the landscape has been an extension of architectural spaces and where the architecture defines and shapes the whole sense of a space. The ‘invisible lines’ that underpin its structure and placement depart from or converge to various points to construct or separate the spaces, and together form one complete whole.
In 2001 I am travelling on the train across the Nullarbor from Perth to Melbourne. It is three days to the next major city. Time and space take on another dimension. Looking out of the window at high speed the vast landscape dictates my thoughts. We stop in Cook Town, a one house place, and I am lost in a space with no boundaries. Desperately looking for a point of reference I trace the strong perspective line of the train. It leads me towards the horizon, the unreachable destination. For days both horizons draw me into their ‘invisible line’. Finally civilization appears and the horizontal line changes, the perspective shifts, and with it my perception of space and direction.

‘The Invisible Line’ extends the idea of the building of a cultural and personal identity through reference to landscape, architecture and illusory spaces. Through the process of searching the past while looking at the landscape and cityscape for creative association I interpret the present world. In this instance the experience was heightened by a journey, a passage of time and my response to the physical and social space of ‘a square’ and in particular Federation Square, Melbourne.

This exhibition and publication have been generously assisted through a Mid Career Fellowship from ArtsWA and the Western Australian Government. The professional support of Katherine Wilkinson, the insightful essay by Janice Baker and the opportunity to present the works at the Catherine Asquith Gallery Melbourne have been invaluable to my realisation of this project.

RINA FRANZ, PERTH, JUNE 2006
Rina Franz's 2006 exhibition *The Invisible Line* references Melbourne's Federation Square, situated diagonally across Flinders Street from the Catherine Asquith Gallery. Her art gives expression to a meeting of cultures, not through nostalgia but by incorporating dislocation as part of a dynamic and constantly transforming idea of home. Federation Square has been described as 'independent identities that come together to form a larger whole... coherence and difference'. An exciting and resolved design, in Federation Square the classical rules of composition are broken across its various buildings and pavements. Its de-constructivist tendencies disallow a balanced, hierarchical relationship between forms.

Franz draws this architectural achievement into her installation, which is similarly characterised by fractured linear perspective as well as the dismantling of pictorial motifs. In her paintings classical pillars merge into the Australian landscape, walls burn, and exquisite drapery lies folded below a magnificent Western Australian Kimberley sky.

Rina Franz was born in Rome where the family's city apartment was situated above the Via Appia Nuova. An artistic and observant child, she had a close relationship with her father, who was trained as a sculptor and worked as a textile designer. Together they visited galleries and museums; she remembers the reverie, being drawn into murals and fresco, as if she were present within them. When she was 13, Franz and her family experienced a great sense of loss when her father became ill and died.
The family moved from their home, but the streets and places familiar to Franz from her childhood remained powerful memories.

After leaving school Franz studied architecture and visual arts at ‘La Sapienza’ Universita Degli Studi di Roma. In her fourth year of study she worked for Alitalia, which led to travel in Australia, marriage and migration. Franz found herself in the sparsely populated foothills at the edge of Perth’s flat coastal plain, living in a culturally and physically unfamiliar landscape, with English as a second language. Her Neo-expressionistic drawings from this time describe a place of despair with spaces acting as a metaphor for barriers imposed by memory and loss.

The interiors that we encounter in her paintings and drawings of the late 1980s appear unsettling psychological spaces like those of Anselm Kiefer’s paintings that close-in and bind the dark memories they define. Franz returned to study in Western Australia. In 1991 for a Master of Arts (Visual Arts) at Curtin University, her dissertation researched the significance of nostalgia.

She was particularly interested in the way that nostalgia encourages simplistic ideas about cultural unity. In her art she sought to present the experience of living across cultures beyond nostalgic re-presentations of the past.
Her installation *Between/Within* (1992) presented at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA) formed a part of this project. Franz has never shied away from large-scale work that utilises the architecture of a site. At one end of the PICA gallery a stage remained from the previous life of the building as a school. On this stage Franz placed a parcel, the contents unrevealed. This was tied by a rope that stretched out into the large expanse to end in a noose, filled with torn pages from her diary. This evoked a powerful sense of being in a place of memory. At the far end of the room, echoing the stage, was a large drawing of a stage-set with drapes partly masking rows of classical pillars and trees. Hands clutched ropes in the act of dragging the facade down.

From perspectives operating in the drawings around the room the viewer's gaze was enticed back toward windows above the real stage. The gaze shifted outside, to evoke a space beyond the interior place of memory and into the external world. Meanwhile, within the pictorial space of the drawings the past was symbolised by icons of the Western art tradition—linear perspective, classical architecture, folded drapery, and cultivated landscape.

There was a constant push and pull, back and forth, between the past and the present. Drawings around the walls of the gallery recalled Franz's central drawing of the stage but in various stages of de-construction; the picture increasingly diminished in size, fragments of the scene were folded, and planes in the original picture distorted.
Erwin Panofsky writes of the Renaissance ‘triumph’ of perspective, ‘of the distancing and objectifying sense of the real...of a consolidation and systematization of the external world, an extension of the domain of the self’. In the wake of Modernist and contemporary art movements, Franz’s art infiltrates the intense authority of three-dimensional perspective as a way of imaging the world. She interrupts the pictorial devices that formalise man’s control over nature.

In developing the notion that spatial systems do not have to cohere to a pre-determined, hierarchical vision of the world, Franz works with architectural as well as pictorial walls. The tradition of mural painting varies widely and stretches from cave art to contemporary wall drawing. Franz’s wall drawings use the aesthetics of traditional mural art, the optical effects enacted in using the wall as a ground, and the architecture of a site to create unfamiliar spaces as an encounter with difference.

For Franz the embodiment of seeing through an impenetrable space is encompassed by fresco, a form of painting all around her as a child; decorating chapels, private houses, public spaces and displayed in museums. She recalls the outline of an ancient fresco on a wall adjacent to her family home in Rome. For a time, Franz experimented with buon fresco, a durable form of fresco. It is a painstaking operation involving the
traditional technique of application of pigments ground
in water or limewater to a fresh plaster wall. Unlike most
other methods of painting, rather than the paint adhering
to the ground, the pigments are an integral part of it.
The painting is not 'separated' from the wall; they are
one and the same. Gradually the colours that have been
absorbed emerge on the surface. Perth is extremely dry
and the sand is coarse and Franz's frescos dried fast
and sometimes cracked, a feature that formed part of
the final work. As well as informing her art practice,
this experimentation with affresco exemplifies her
fascination with the wall.

Franz's exhibition *The Invisible Line* has two distinct
components; a series of landscape paintings and a
narrow 'corridor' that Franz has constructed in the gallery
by suspending a transparent screen parallel to a wall.
Across the surface 'walls' of the corridor, drawings form
a double matrix. There is a sense that the 'picture' should
align, however, the viewer cannot connect the lines.
It is as if the space in-between, or the empty gap,
has intervened. Looking from Rina's 2006 exhibition
across the road to Federation Square, we notice that
Franz has observed and responded to the façades that
wrap the buildings, which are a repetition of differently
aligned triangles and materials that appear unstructured.
The square as a site of interaction between different peoples resonates with Franz. In Italian towns and cities the streets, no matter how winding and convoluted, will eventually lead to a central piazza. Federation Square connects with this idea as a space that seeks to encompass the past into the future.

Its pavement is made of over 467,000 individual cobbles sourced from ancient stone outcrops in the Kimberley. Artist Paul Carter has configured the multicoloured cobbles into patterns, and words and phrases are carved into the stones to operate as layers of memories of the site. The title of the work Nearamnew is a pidgin Aboriginal word from ‘narr-m’ which means ‘the place where Melbourne now stands’.6

In Convergence (2006) Franz relays a sense of the spectacular weather patterns of the Kimberley. An immense and low-lying cloudbank swirls above the land toward a huge red Turner-esque sun. The physical world and Franz’s pictorial motifs are in dynamic balance. A white cloth, its folds detailed and precise, is poised elegantly over a smooth rock ledge, a vast and imposing physical feature. The fragmented, dramatic sense of open space is also apparent in Front (2006) where a wall burns fiercely, the sky lit with red flames.

These paintings are the expression of a new space. Integral to each is a constructed form, recalling geographical, cultural and built stratifications. Each contains a miniature of the painting, a segment of the whole. This fragment can be detached, like a suitcase or a Tardis time machine that can be moved anywhere, anytime. This type of fragmentation suggests Gilles Deleuze’s rhizomes that ‘connect any point to any other point… always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, with multiple entryways and exits, and…lines of flight’.6

In 1997 Franz spent time at Savannah Downs Station outside Derby in the Kimberley, an experience that contributed to her ‘nomadic’ and open concept of home. Franz was struck by the vastness and silence of the country and the recognition that nature not architecture defined her presence. Coming from Rome, her usual view of the world was to look down from above busy streets, not to feel encompassed by natural phenomena.
Rather than a spatial order defined in terms of man's control over nature, in the Kimberley the sky appears to touch the ground, and open out in every direction. Franz created an installation in the desert based on a simple agricultural method using a minimum of water and plastic. Across a fallow field she created a flat, linear work from rubber irrigation pipes that she lined in grids across the hay and painted bright primary colours. The work was a kilometre square, and from above, the field looked like a gigantic Mondrian painting, a celebration of the space it highlighted. To her delight, birds were attracted by the bright colours and flocked to the field.

Franz's use of mural painting to tease our assumption of space is exemplified by her 1994 PICABOANS site specific project. As part of this project twelve artists worked on installations within the butchery of an abandoned Boans warehouse in East Perth, a site removed from the usual associations with art. The warehouse was a casualty of one of Perth's building booms, which saw the gentrification of the working class suburb. Uniting the illusory and real spaces of art and architecture, Franz transformed two steel and concrete cool rooms into murals. Away from her installation, Franz bolted a single red steel pillar to the floor of a vacant room. She drew the shadow of this column across a laneway that was the entrance to the butchery. The shadow was noticed, and then forgotten as viewers interacted with the various installations inside the butchery.
Franz's column, however, was a portent. Eventually viewers came across her work located in the cool rooms. Entering the first cooler room Franz had pillars welded to different heights and widths and bolted to the concrete floor to create a sense of diminishing perspective. She drew pillars on each wall so that pictorially the walls operated as a series of corridors contigious with the 'real' room. This was a disconcerting experience with the pictorial space manifest in the 'real' space and the sense of inside and outside dismantled. She continued the same one-point perspective into the second, adjoining cool room with murals of cypresses.

The smell of meat hung in the air, and fat and grease stained the steel walls. The incongruity of encountering landscapes reminiscent of Renaissance Italian painting within the pungent dungeon of a derelict butchery was both startling and profound.

We do not generally reflect upon the space around things; we regard space as the setting for objects, including our self, as a force that somehow connects things and defines distance. In Franz's murals, objects seemed awry in space, distance was confused and the viewer felt a part of this difference. The common response to Franz's installation was a simultaneous sense of déjà vu, alienation and awe. Traditionally, such experiences have been given spiritual explanations 'when a picture is to be understood as being visible neither through nor on the wall, the only possible reference left is by way of the characteristic properties of the vision'.

The 'vision' encountered in Rina's work was that of occupying a new kind of space, one that was unfamiliar, in-between, and that engaged the viewer to consider a different idea of space.
It is characteristic of Franz’s art to direct the gaze to and from the fictive space of a picture and ‘real’ space. In her multi-panelled landscape series for the touring exhibition *La Spazio/The Space* (1995), Franz’s ubiquitous wall defines distance in an otherwise vast desert plain. A perfectly smooth artefact, like the unfathomable monolith in Stanley Kubrick’s *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Franz’s wall appears alien and enchanted. In her series of paintings *Formed and Reformed...Response Series No 1 and No 5* (1995), the wall has equally prominent status with struts that seem to hold back a mighty force. The wall is greatly foreshortened, giving it exaggerated and imposing dimensions.

The scene is transformed when the wall ‘becomes’ a three-dimensional pilaster and the painting has ‘broken’ through real space. The contrast between the ‘magic’ realism of the landscape and monochrome pilasters is vivid. Three-dimensional perspective, our window on the world, is reduced to a flat surface. Yet the pilasters allow the work to stand as a three-dimensional object, and ironically, remove dependence of being suspended from wires. The work’s status as a concrete object in the world is emphasised at the same time that the illusion of the wall is lost.

In her cloud series *Point of Origin* (2002) Franz also makes visible the inherently flat nature of painting. She ‘exposes’ the compositional grids that describe the mechanics of the three-dimensional picture we view. These grids seem self-referential; they align with themselves as they recede towards an imaginary vanishing point. Franz is constantly engaged with ideas of art, while the material object and its ability to affect the viewer are also fundamental to her practice. Her series of cloud paintings are breathtaking. We are drawn into the pictorial space with a sense that we could be anywhere, clouds know no boundaries or borders. We view the skies from amongst the clouds—we soar the upper atmosphere, float above low-lying cumulus, and skim below clouds across the surface of the ocean.
In 1999 the City of Perth commissioned a project in Forrest Chase, a plaza located in central Perth between a busy road, pedestrian mall, shops, and central Post Office. Like Federation Square, its role as a meeting place and a thoroughfare appealed to Franz. For her project she traced Caravaggio's painting *The Crucifixion of Saint Peter* (1600) across the pavement. She positioned the picture to complement the paving stones of the plaza which were configured to form a classical arch. For Franz these recalled Roman paving stones. She traced the invisible lines within Caravaggio's painting into her drawings on paper, following its perspectival trajectories across the pavement. Rubbings of the pavement stones beneath the paper acted as a trace of time and space, and a ground for her meticulous drawing. Each day she set up her drawings and worked, gradually moving further across the arch always aligning her drawings faithfully to Caravaggio's compositional grid. The City of Perth encircled the work each day with pieces of low, white picket fencing, adding an unexpected layer of meaning about demarcating and defining space with frames and walls.
Franz's exhibition *The Invisible Line* extends her artistic commitment to present the experience of living across cultural traditions as one of constant transformation and change. In her art, through a movement back and forth between traditions, there is a sense that distances are arbitrary whether this is between Perth and Melbourne, the Kimberley and Rome, or between streets. It is invisible connections and crossovers that matter. Franz's notion of home is not just one place, but a space that is perpetually shifting.

As Deleuze and Guattari describe, 'It is not a question of this or that place on earth, or of a given moment in history, still less of this or that category of thought. It is a question of a model that is perpetually in construction or collapsing, and of a process that is perpetually prolonging itself, breaking of and starting up again.' It is in the ever-shifting geography of the present, in the invisible lines of fracture and unity that powerfully resonate in her art, that Franz extends to us her dynamic experience of home.

**NOTES**

2. Federation Square opened in October 2002; a complex of cultural buildings designed by Lab architecture studio, Principals are architects Peter Davidson and Donald Bates.
8. Curated by Margaret Roberts as an artist in residence project at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts during July/August 1994.
CURRICULUM VITAE

Academic qualifications:
1991 Master of Arts (Visual Arts) Curtin University of Technology, Perth, WA
1988 BA in Visual Arts (Painting Major) Edith Cowan University Perth, WA
1985 Diploma in Art Studies (Painting) Perth Technical College Perth, WA

Solo exhibitions:
2006 The Invisible Line, Catherine Asquith Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
2002 Point of Origin. Linden Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
1992 Between/Within. Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, Perth, WA
1992 Internors. Fremantle Arts Centre, WA

Selected group exhibitions:

Links 2, Centrai TAFE Art Gallery, Perth, WA
2004 Clouded Over: Representation of Clouds in Art, Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, University of WA, Perth
2003 Bunbury Biennale, Bunbury Art Gallery, WA
2002 Connection Visual II. Touring Exhibition College of Fine Art Gallery, Shanghai and West Lake State Gallery, Hangzhou, China

2002-2003 Kedumba Drawing Award, Kedumba Gallery, Wentworth Falls, NSW
2002-2001 Transit Narratives, International Travelling Exhibition, Australia and Treviso, Italy
2001 Midland Redevelopment Authority Exhibition, Midland Workshops, WA
2001-2000 Multi Story City, Council House, Perth, WA
2000 Ai Margini, John Curtin Gallery, Curtin University, Perth, WA
1999 Images of the City, Council House, Perth, WA
Re-Birth, WA Women Celebrating a Century of Change. Moores Building Fremantle, WA

1998 Galerie Dusseldorf – 21 Years On, Galerie Dusseldorf, Perth, WA
Points of View, Inside Perspective, Perth College, WA
1997-1996 Mandorla Art Award, Moores Building, Fremantle, WA
1996 Fondazione Antonio Ratti Exhibition, San Francesco, Como, Italy

Memory Place Identity, Fremantle Art Centre, WA
1995 Lo Spazio/The Space, PICA, Touring Exhibition. Art on the Move
Drawing Out, University of WA Touring Exhibition, Art on the Move
1994 A Rose is a Rose is a Rose, Galerie Dusseldorf, Perth, WA
Installation PICABOANS, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, WA Icons to Irony, Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital, Perth, WA

Professional experience:
2006-1993 Lecturer (painting/drawing). School of Art Design & Media TAFE, Perth, WA
2003-2000 Tutor, University of Western Australia, Perth
2000 Art Co-ordinator. John Curtin Gallery Curtin University, Perth, WA
Guest Lecturer, Edith Cowan University, Perth, WA

Awards & grants:
2006 Mid-career Fellowship ArtsWA
2003 Murrinwara Art Award (Highly Com.) City of Armadale, WA
2002 New Work Grant, ArtsWA
1999 Art Award 99 (Com) City of Perth, WA
1997 Northbridge Live/Light Award, City of Perth, WA
1995 Project Grant, Australia Council for the Arts
1995 Sir Charles Gardner Art Award, Sir Charles Gardner Hospital, Perth, WA
1994 Dante Alighieri Art Award, Dante Alighieri Society, WA

1992 Creative Development Grant, ArtsWA
1991 Project Grant, ArtsWA
1990 Post Newspapers Prize, Tresillian Art Award, Perth, WA

Projects:
2004 Curatorial presentation, ACCA, Melbourne, VIC
2001 Midland Redevelopment Authority, Midland, WA
1999 City of Perth, Forrest Chase project, WA
1998 New York Drawing Marathon, Festival/Adelaide CSA, SA
1997 The Kimberley International Artists Workshop, Birdwood Downs Station, WA
1996 Fondazione Antonio Ratti Seminar Workshop, Como, Italy
1996 Artist on the Move, Touring Workshop, WA

Represented:
Art Gallery of Western Australia
Asthma Foundation Perth, WA
Australian Capital Equity Pty Ltd. Perth, WA
Edith Cowan University Collection Perth, WA
Evans and Tate Estate, Perth, WA
Italian Consulate, Perth, WA
Central Metropolitan College of TAFE, Perth, WA
Sir Charles Gardner Hospital, Perth, WA
Numerous national & international private collections

Selected publications:
"Picture in the clouds". Guardian Express, WA, 19/10/2004
Art talk, Video Production, WestOne 2003, Perth WA
Art Review, West Australian, Big Weekend, 20/11/2000
Art & Australia, Vol. 33, 1996
Radio interview with Julie Copland ABC Radio National, Lo Spazio/The Space, 1995
Drawing Out. Exhibition catalogue essay, Judith Doorman, University of WA. 1995
Varied Perspective on Italian Experience, West Australian, Big Weekend, 19/8/1995