

AUSTRALIAN

ART

collector

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# Undiscovered

Uncovering Australia's rising art stars

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**Tony Tuckson**  
by John McPhee

**Kathleen Petyarre**  
Retrospective

**MCA's Elizabeth  
Ann Macgregor**  
talks collecting

Deborah Clark on  
**Solander's  
Joy Warren**



**PLUS** • Rex Butler: Aboriginal art meets its maker • Terry Ingram on the GST  
• Ashley Crawford on Melbourne's Medicis • Johnny Warangkula Tjupurrula Obituary  
• Bruce James on Katie Cox • Geoffrey Maslen previews the Autumn-Winter auctions and much more

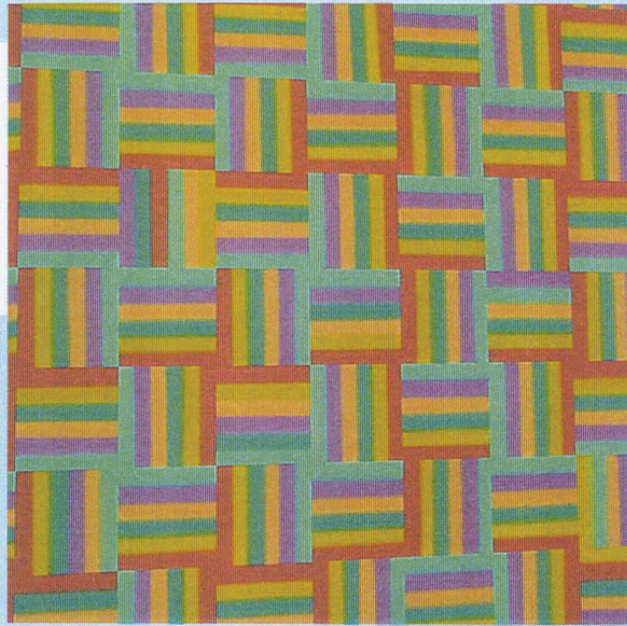
EDWARD COLLESS:

## Neil Haddon

In 1990 after finishing his course at a Surrey (UK) art and design school, Neil Haddon took a brief holiday job in Spain teaching English to Basque children. Six years later he was still in Spain and teaching English, but settled in Barcelona showing regularly at a gallery that was rapidly gaining a national reputation. Haddon found Barcelona to be, as we might assume, a wild and exciting place to live. But he admits there was a problem. "At the time, installation work and

**Born** 1967  
**Price** on application  
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Neil Haddon, *Foil No. 1*, 2001. Flat household acrylic on canvas, 165 x 165 cm. COURTESY: THE ARTIST



### It was an 'endgame' strategy: an exhausting and melancholic refusal to give up the ghost of painting.

video were the hot things in town. Painting in general, let alone abstract painting like mine," he discloses, "was not a fashionable activity. My painting became self-conscious about its lack of confidence in its own subject matter and purpose!" Haddon was working in a very reductive, minimal idiom, painting monochrome, grey grids and then vengefully pouring turps over them so as to almost erase the work. It was an 'endgame' strategy: an exhausting and melancholic refusal to give up the ghost of painting.

Exhaustion, however, can become a means of defiance. Repeat a word, for instance, often enough and not only do you erase its

meaning but also turn that word into a manic chant. The repetition becomes a mad logic, defaming reason and taste. Manic repetition also accents the tiniest mistakes as liberating variations in routine. Haddon's breakthrough into the lush candy-coloured parquet patterns and resonant, vibrating and sliding grids that he now produces came from recognising these sorts of



Dani Marti, from left, *Linda*, 2000, 170 x 170 x 22 cm; *Roy (Blue Boy)*, 2000 156 x 100 cm; and *George*, 214 x 214 cm. All produced in 2000 in poly and nylon on wood frame. COURTESY: THE ARTIST

ANDREW FROST:

## Dani Marti

It's not often that you walk into a bar and see a good artwork hanging on the wall. It's usually miss rather than hit for artworks brought in to spruce up an expensive eatery. But in the upstairs bar of the upscale Cicada, in Sydney's Potts Point, there's an amazing object that looks like a white monochrome. Although the work has the size and impact of a big spot-lit painting, the piece is actually a weaving stretched across a sturdy frame. Constructed

**... finely considered experiments in abstraction, which reference minimalism as they explode the very qualities of the construction to observable levels.**

from tightly woven but chunky white nautical ropes, the work is highly tactile yet pristine. The urge to touch it is discouraged by the sheer precision of its construction. With tiny flecks of black and blue stitching running through the ropes, your eyes dance over the piece taking in the detail of the three-dimensional surface.

The artist is Dani Marti. Born in 1963 in Barcelona and resident in Australia since 1988, Marti participated in a group show in late 1999 at the now defunct,

**Born** 1963, Barcelona  
**Price range** \$2,000-\$5,000  
**Contact** the artist on 02 9280 2542

artist-run space, Gallery 19. His works were made from the commonly seen, brilliant orange, roadside netting that is used in street and highway

construction. Each square in the grid was intersected by 1cm-wide plastic piping. In an otherwise lacklustre show, the piece was an absolute stand out.

Marti's gathering reputation as an artist to watch was cemented by a successful solo outing at Rubyayre Gallery in 2000, an exhibition which showcased pieces that were both minimalist and maximalist expressions of elegant formalism. Although a 'chunky' approach to fibre would be familiar to anyone who was unfortunate enough to live the 'craft boom' of the 1970s, his works are finely considered experiments in abstraction, owing little to the eye-watering experiments of 30 years ago. While referencing minimalism they explode the very qualities of the construction to observable levels. His pieces are conceptual objects that call into question the very nature of the materials that are used. It is as if he has taken a microscope to a canvas and blown it up to macrocosmic scales creating reflexive and arrestingly attractive objects.

Although not attached to a commercial gallery, Marti's work has attracted admirers among architects and interior designers. He has completed a number of highly placed commissions such as the work in Cicada and a forthcoming piece for a financial institution. A full slate of exhibitions are set to attract further notice. In the next few months Marti is taking on an amazing calendar of shows that includes Sydney venues such as First Draft, Artspace, Gallery 4A, Room 35, Casula Powerhouse and, in Melbourne, Span Gallery. Although Marti's work already sells as high as \$5,000, his prices are set to rise even further after this gruelling schedule. Now is the time to seek out his work.