

**Sinta Werner**

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**by Sally O' Reilly**

Sinta Werner's installations are not so much site-specific as site-reflexive. If there is an element that is 'specific', however, it is the point at which the viewer stands to make sense of what otherwise appears to be the architectural embodiment of seasickness. Like the anamorphic skull in Holbein's *The Ambassadors*, Werner's structural interruptions snap into a logically comprehensible form when she has us where she wants us; the rest of the time the three-dimensional representation of space is more likely to generate feelings of disorientation, irritation, even vertigo, not least of all because what is mathematical and precise creates something that is illogical and mysterious.

Werner's architectonic installations dissolve together the genres of image, sculpture and architecture. Developed from the single-point perspective of traditional illusory painting and Alberti's model of the visual pyramid, their subversion of the *a priori* of picture making recalls the painterly concerns of cubism and the instability of post-modernism in the latter half of the 20th-century, when authority and belief gave way to an acknowledgement of the contingent construction of meaning. And yet many of these effects are achieved through methods not dissimilar to those of long-established stage crafts, such as foreshortening and mimetic trompe l'oeil.

Mirroring, too, is a fundamental process that Werner wields to create complex physiological and psychological effects. *Disjunction* (2007), for instance, produces the sensation of approaching a mirror in which the self does not appear. Through this uncanny disappearance we are likely to reflect on the performative nature of our behaviour within the real exhibition space, as it compels us to step to the side or peer round a corner to check what is 'really going on'. But for Werner it also refers to Foucault's idea of heterotopias, where the mirror is a metaphor for the reality and illusionism of utopias, as well as the nature of places, such as gardens or museums, where objects from many times and places are brought artificially together. Notionally, it could be argued that Werner brings no alien object into the gallery, but merely represents what is already there. But that this illusion of absence produces such disturbing results foregrounds the sophisticated processes of assimilation we continually perform to overcome the fragmentation and decenteredness of everyday life.