



Britt Salt's wire mesh constructions are the perfect vehicle for her to explore shape and form, pattern and movement and concepts of interior and exterior. She spoke to Penny Craswell at 'Monoform', her recent solo exhibition in Sydney's Harrison Galleries.

- 1 Structural Flux (detail), 2007, aluminium, 120 x 40 x 40cm
- 2 Form Fold III, 2006, aluminium, enamel, 85 x 60 x 60cm
- 3 Warp IV, 2007, aluminium, enamel, 29 x 20 x 15cm

Utilising almost exclusively one material – wire mesh – Britt Salt creates sculptures and installation works that range from small sheets set up in a row, to large rolls of heavy metal, to seemingly weightless intricate objects that appear to float mid air. Because of her choice of material, Salt spends much of her time bending, folding and generally manipulating wire mesh material – a bit like fly screen – which she sources from industrial suppliers.

When I ask why she has chosen this material, she meanders in her answer, telling me that it was whilst studying in the textile department of art school that she realised fabric could not hold the shapes she wanted – but metal could. She also speaks fondly of the moiré shapes in the material – those patterns that appear in mesh and move as you walk by. “As a child I loved holograms,” she says.

Whatever the reasons for choosing this material: it works. By bending, folding and painting the mesh, Salt creates a myriad of shapes and textures – wall, floor and suspended objects as well as smaller and site-specific works. The different weights of the material, how much of it is used and the way it is handled all affect the work dramatically. “I don’t usually have a design in mind,” says Salt. “I might make a series of folds in the material or I might roll the material. It’s amazing how different this is to work with,” she adds, pointing to a heavy work on the floor and comparing

it to a suspended work. “They’re completely different objects.”

Through careful manipulation of a single sheet of mesh, Salt creates intricate shapes and patterns in her finished sculptures. This complexity (via repetition and transparency) created from simplicity (a simple material), is what informs Salt’s work. She is particularly interested in interior and exterior – how, through folding the material upon itself, the interior becomes exterior and vice versa, as well as how transparency can bring the exterior in. In a recent essay she writes: “Mine is a practice of balance. I explore notions of form and space through the investigation of materiality and transparency, interior and exterior, positive and negative space.”

Perhaps this is what makes Salt’s work so striking. Viewing the objects from different angles, watching the patterns move as you walk by and the effect of the transparency all affect the viewer, making the objects complex and engaging. Salt says: “All of the work changes when you look at it. I’m interested in looking at relationships between surfaces and how they create objects.”

Penny Craswell is Assistant Editor of InDesign.
 Britt Salt is represented by Harrison Galleries (Sydney), Helen Gory Galerie (Melbourne) and Perth Galleries (Perth).