

South Africa-born, New York-based artist Vivienne Koorland, who recently exhibited at the Freud Museum, had two works on the show. *House Sutra: From Cape Town to Kathmandu* (2006) presents a schematic image of a house filled with white lines in a childlike scrawl. The house floats against a tar-black background suggesting spatial insecurity and disorientation. The fragmented effect is emphasized by the canvas's stitched-together surface, on top of which are glued pieces of colored canvas evoking flowers or falling snowflakes. The doorless, windowless house is drawn from a book of war documents that include Polish children's accounts and drawings of their forcible removal to Tehran. Painted along the bottom edge are the words "From Cape Town to Kathmandu," drawing, as Tamar Garb has noted, the world of migration and movement into the fragile dream-space of home.<sup>7</sup>

In *O Bear Me away on Your Snowy Wings* (2006), two smaller side canvases flank the large central one like wings, their stitching pattern evoking feathers and the triptych suggesting a large white bird. On the simplified surface the letters of a schoolgirlish writing appear. Koorland has said: "writing and words really entered my paintings when I gave up representing the figure. After that, writing became anthropomorphized for me"<sup>8</sup> and: "It's a script painting—that is, one of my painted citations and it taps into the illustrious tradition of paintings of whiteness, nothingness and monochrome."<sup>9</sup> William Kentridge, writing about Koorland's work, has observed: "A word or a name is an ostensibly harmless shell, but it contains a compressed emotion, a force of memory ... a series of layering actions: layers of canvas, of ground, of paint sitting on the surface much as

a bruise sits on the surface of fruit or flesh and marks the damage and history inside."<sup>10</sup>

Koorland's images are intensely beautiful to look at, for some of the reasons Kentridge intimates. As in Gregory's works (at least the ones in this show), no human forms appear. In relation to questions of beauty and ugliness, they imply something not dissimilar to Gregory: that beneath, inside, shrouded by, or layered across a beautiful object is something ugly—damaged, painful, violent: the pain of others, or one's own pain. For Koorland, there is pain in beauty. Her own migration has involved loss and longing as well as the chance for something new to open up. The childish writing suggests a lost self, a primal emotion, an innocence now distorted by complex adult experience, and a history of political violence and the abuse of children is also hinted at.