



Estelle Ihász  
*New Work* Ocular Lab 11–26 November 2006.

List of works  
*Translated Forms (black) #1 & #2* 2006 45 x 45cm type C photograms  
*Umami* 2006 100 x 100cm adhesive vinyl

## Location as Idea

The ultimate surround for an image of a city is the surface of that city itself. Estelle Ihász's poetic symbols of urbanity function as signifiers of its own context.

Just as the viewer may realise, it is within the constructed surround that both the artwork and he or she are located. Both are imperfect entities that exist within a singular time and place. Both vie for a status of some sort within the multifarious activities of the almighty urban surround.

Highly detailed art practices occur when importance in media is deferred in favour of a universal idea. Materials used then function democratically towards the greater meaning of the artist's own set of concepts. Within Ihász's practice, photographic information is transformed then represented as either generic objects or abstract images. Upon making, space becomes form for the artist. Upon seeing, form becomes experience for the viewer.

In referencing Walter Benjamin's important text of 1936 titled *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Martin Lister states that, "photography...could reach mass urban audiences", and that it "...represents a new way of organising perceptions within the dramatically changed environments of early twentieth century cities."<sup>1</sup>

It appears that Ihász is aware of the communicative potential within urban imagery, and is using post-photographic processes to affect a heightened level of scrutiny.

Obviously Ihász is not interested in exact locations. The potency of her work lies within its architectural abbreviation. Universal images have universal effect, and whilst Ihász's imagery is instantly familiar, it is also at the same time fugitive in its specific recognition. There is time to be spent within this interesting dichotomy.

Ihász's declaration is that meaning is not contingent upon the finding of fact. The success in her work lies in the disappearance of its own object nature. Declaring itself (somewhat heroically) as an indexical device, a notion of something, and an ambiguous sign, the artist's work becomes a primer for thought and consideration about the city, and the surface of which it is embedded within.

<sup>1</sup> Lister, M, in Wells, L. (ed) *Photography ; a critical introduction* London; New York; Routledge (1997) ch.6 pp.266

© Justin Andrews, November 2006

First published in *New Work*, exhibition catalogue, Ocular Lab, VIC, 2006.