

## **Profile: Fran Marno**

Fran Marno lives and works in Auckland, New Zealand. She has been teaching painting and contemporary theory at Elam School of Fine Arts, Auckland University since 1999.

She has exhibited in group shows both nationally and internationally. She has had several solo exhibitions at the Judith Anderson Gallery, now the Edmiston Duke Gallery in Auckland.

She completed a Bachelor of Visual Arts degree at Auckland Society of Arts in 1994 and graduated with a BA from the University of Auckland in 1995. She was the recipient of a Masters Honours scholarship and completed her Master of Fine Arts degree at the University of Auckland in 1999. After exhibiting in a number of group shows in Auckland, she enrolled for the Doctor of Fine Arts degree in 2000. She was awarded a Doctoral Honours Scholarship. Her research area for the degree involved the studio discipline of painting and focused on the female face as a site for exploring aspects of queer theory and feminist art practice.

Marno positions her paintings within the discourses of portraiture to enable the exploration of the older woman's face as a site of power, authority, complexity and desire.. She asks how the older lesbian, represented by the artist and her model, can negotiate spaces of invisibility and silence within our culture. She pays special attention to the process of looking and being looked at in each series of work. Also, she addresses the way in which what she calls 'the lesbian look/gaze' moves beyond the frame and expands beyond fixed notions of identity and naming.

In her art practice Marno constantly considers questions of difference and marginality. She considers what happens to the painted female face if it does not conform to paradigms of beauty and acceptability as defined by the tradition of portraiture. She tests the boundaries with her faces that at times appear abject, even monstrous in terms of conventional norms. She wants to negotiate a way for women to have control over their self-representation.