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*A Life of Their
Own*
curated by
Richard Cork

Lismore Castle Arts
26 April –
30 September 2008

Kate Atkin,
Matt Calderwood,
Roger Hiorns,
Rosalind Nashashibi
& Lucy Skaer,
Eva Rothschild,
Conrad Shawcross,
Daniel Silver and
Kate Terry

Kate Terry is likewise concerned with altering our perceptions by throwing lines through space. In her work, though, they are not projected onto walls. She uses coloured threads, and makes them travel through a given interior in ethereal veils which challenge visual understanding at every turn. Spurning the possibility of using wire—a material she regards as far too heroic—Terry likes the everyday and do-it-yourself quality of her favoured material. She also delights in responding to the given character of an architectural space and how people use it. Her work is site-specific rather than dreamed up in the studio. And the pins she attaches to the surfaces of a room are just as important as the threads.

Terry's essentially hand-made art is very demanding to execute. A strong element of risk threatens at all times to undermine her hopes for a work-in-progress, and she never knows whether it will succeed until the whole laborious, intricate enterprise is brought to a conclusion. But she has learned how to cope with such a demanding activity. Her father was an army engineer in Canada, and Terry is driven by the urge to make her work as spare and error-free as possible.

Not that she demands a pre-existing state of perfection in the diverse rooms where her art is produced. When Terry tackled an old project space in Bethnal Green last year, for her first London solo show, she quickly realised that its ceiling was on the verge of falling apart. She likes rawness and impurity, however. The idea of making visitors look up, and notice the ceiling's predicament as they made their way through her intricate installation, appealed to her at once. After all, a year earlier Terry had used a thousand threads in her largest work to date: a piece spanning the entire width of a church in Dilston Grove. So although she has no interest in any religious connotations, the soaring space of an ecclesiastical interior acted as a stimulus.

Rejecting any thought of formulae, Terry is never able to decide on colours until the last minute. But she prefers paler hues to darker ones. The more her work approaches a state of invisibility, the better she likes it. Walking round her installations, where taut line subtly approaches the condition of sculpture, we feel that it is both there and not there. It makes the space neither full nor empty, and its undoubted fragility is matched by a rigorous spirit of resilience.

