

Helen Mirra was born in 1970 in Rochester, New York. She received an MFA degree from the University of Illinois at Chicago, 1996, and a BA from Bennington College, 1991. Her recent and upcoming solo shows include: Stephen Friedman Gallery, London (2003); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Donald Young Gallery, Chicago; and Galleria Francesca Kaufmann, Milan (all 2002); The Renaissance Society, Chicago and Art 33 Basel Art Statements with Meyer Riegger Galerie (2001); Meyer Riegger Galerie, Karlsruhe, Germany and Gasser & Grunert, New York (2000). Recent and upcoming group shows include: **Land, Land**, Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland; **Zusammenhänge herstellen**, Kunstverein, Hamburg, Germany; **Sudden Glory**, CCAC Institute, San Francisco; and **Waiting for the Ice Age**, Galerie Georg Kargl, Vienna, all 2002; Tirana Biennial, Albania; **untitled 654321**, Kunsthallen Brandts Klædefabrik, Odense, Denmark; **Making the Making**, Apex Art, New York, all 2001; and **Age of Influence**, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 2000. Recent awards include: Driehaus Individual Artist Award (2001) and Louis Comfort Tiffany Award (1999). She is Senior Lecturer at The University of Chicago, and is represented by Meyer Riegger Galerie.

The horizon recurs again and again throughout Mirra's works. It separates earth, sea, and sky, acting as a border relative to our body and our mind.

It has been said that gravity is a mystery of the body invented to hide the shortcomings of the mind, and it is perhaps for this reason that the horizon plays such an important role for Mirra. Her handmade works often exhibit a radical horizontality crafting a humble flatness. An imperfect weave (regardless of the material) is visible. This yields a strong sense of tactility and surrounds us with a methodical approach of labor, steadiness, and what can only be described as effort. The works are not metaphors of anything, they are literalist, being exactly what they are: a geometry built by hand, imperfect and determined to set the line. The diligence of this practice, continuing on regardless of our inability to match the promises of theory, unites a continuum that includes Sergi Eisenstein, Buster Keaton, and Buckminster Fuller. In **Treeline**, the sky and the diffuse limbs of trees split the photographs roughly in half holding the viewer firmly between earth and sky. The human intervention—the photographic line—must bob, weave and angle off its desired straight axis to accurately capture nature's existing line. **Railroad Ties (runner)**, with its basis in the wooden ties for rail lines that stretch across the ground (sleepers in common parlance), is more blatant in its relation with the earth, hugging the ground as guardedly as possible, moving onward rather than up. The task Mirra sets for herself is to map the world in accord with natural force, disregarding the common human reaction to fight against nature. Gravity wins in the end.