

KATE DERUM

**Afternoon Gestures – Tapestry Anecdotes**

Warrnambool Art Gallery

November 21 – December 19, 1999

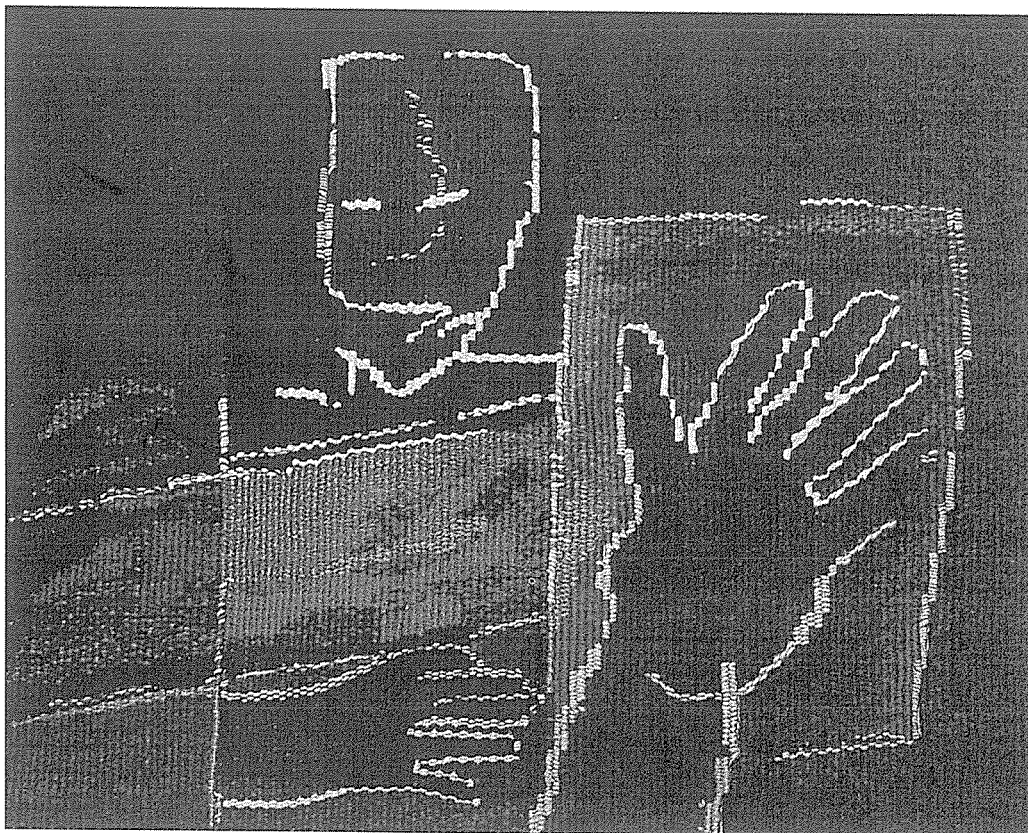
A humorous play on words, *Afternoon Gestures*, the title of Kate Derum's recent exhibition of small tapestries, reflects some of the major elements in her work. Gesture, figuration and time rhythms unite this selection of woven images spanning the past six years of her career.

Through a long and questioning interest in how we communicate with each other, body language and the subconscious meanings associated with our automatic impulses to gesture and move, Derum has with great deftness captured in her woven images a sense of these banal yet somehow extraordinary moments. Based on observation and her own lucid, rapid recordings of such moments in her drawings, she preserves the fluidity and brevity of these gestures in a medium which is both time consuming and open to long deliberations over aesthetic decisions. But, Derum does not deliberate. Well versed in an intuitive method of working, at a moment's notice she is

able to inspire the birth of a line or mark that retains the freshness of life as it is being lived. It is a learned and well practiced skill that allows such confidence to exude from work which appears simultaneously naïve and self-assured.

Intimate in their size and composition these works unanimously focus on the figure. Inscribed in white thread as silhouettes seated in a background that is rich and dark and full of unanswered questions. It is as if they are seated in their own subconscious; in a space which contains all answers yet often refuses to give our introspective self the fulfillment sought by our questions. However, it appears as though only a moment is captured, a single breath in time is revealed.

Heads, hands, the body in motion, all become vehicles for Derum to explore our body as tools in communication. Exaggerating the size and shape of limbs and torsos, she subverts the rational perspective of our complex human condition, acknowledging the emotional and private corners of our lives. Charged with the energy of her free and liberated mark making, Derum's images grow out of and interact with an intense and electric colour palette.



*Body Language* Kate Derum 1995 46 x 48cm wool, cotton, linen