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A Piecemeal Pursuit

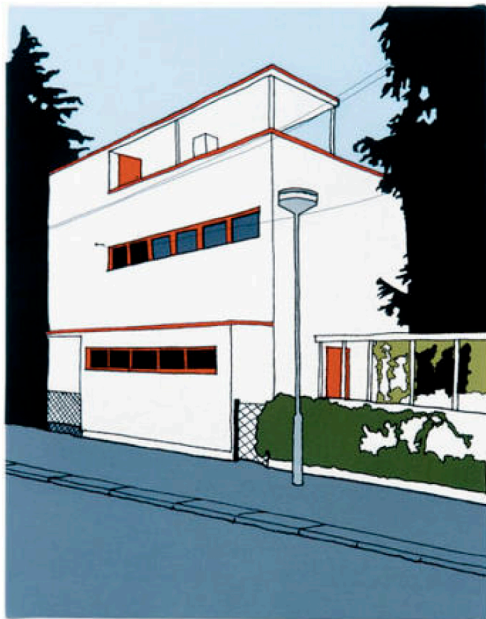
Rowena Dring renders large-scale landscapes one stitch at a time.

By Jade Chang

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"I had an idea one night about swapping paint for handcraft," Rowena Dring says. It was 1998, Dring was a student at Goldsmiths University, and London art circles were declaring the death of painting. The 35-year-old artist drew on her sewing background to create large-scale fabric appliqués that look like paint-by-number landscapes. "It was very liberating to find this way of working," Dring says. "It defined a space for me. Because it's so big, it could go beyond craft, and it was a political move to frame it as a painting."

Working from photographs taken during her travels, Dring creates patterns on a computer that she then cuts out of fabric and stitches together on a standard industrial sewing machine. The Amsterdam-based artist's first series explored different notions of home with intricately stitched images of Baba, a Modernist community from the 1930s conceived by Prague artisans, and English country cottages. Her latest show at QED Gallery, in Los Angeles, is titled *A Place Apart*, after a line in a William Butler Yeats play. The ambitious canvases blend Pop Art references with reimaginings of landscapes previously described by literary figures such as Yeats, August Strindberg, and D.H. Lawrence. Next up is a series on the American West, where Dring spent three weeks this spring traveling through the desert and hunting for ghost towns.



ideal home (3), 2000, depicts Baba, in Prague.
Rowena Dring/courtesy Elizabeth Dee Gallery

