

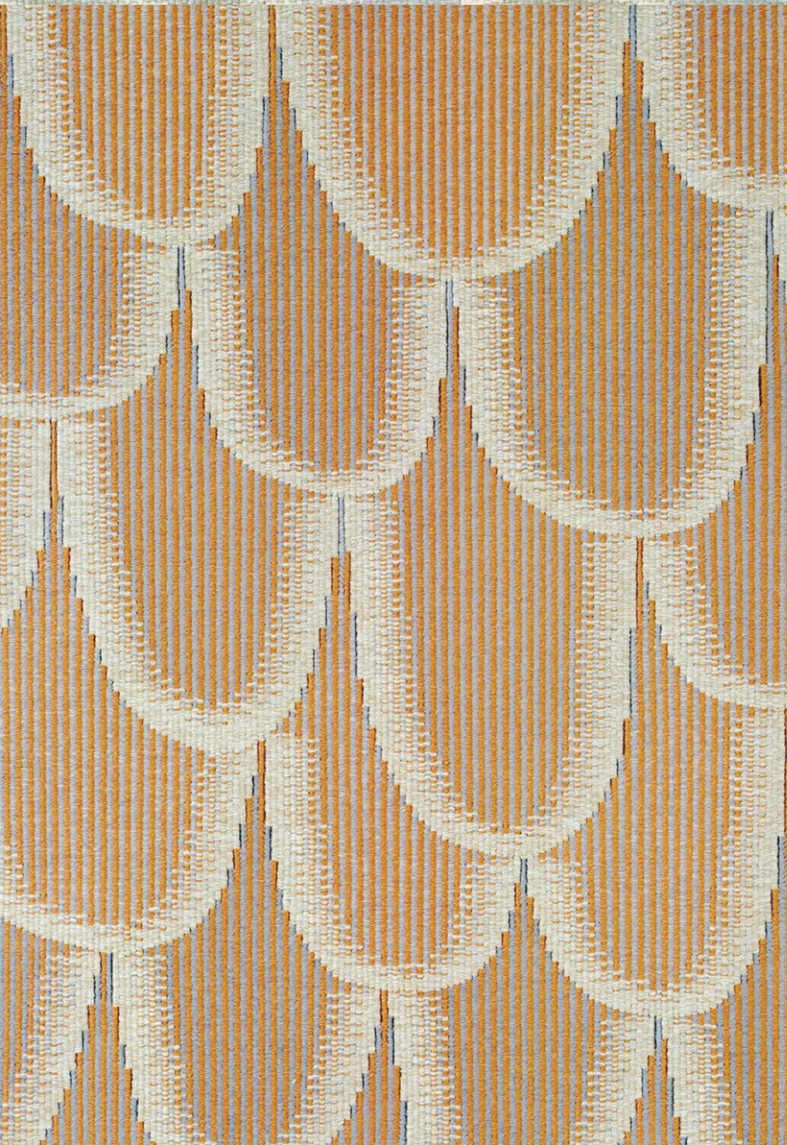


1 While many artists today work across a number of related mediums, Tim Gresham's practice involves two distinct and contrasting mediums – photography and tapestry. Neither medium is employed to develop studies for the other but instead demonstrate a reciprocal adaptation. Working with the peculiarities of both mediums these works resemble each other whilst maintaining their difference. With common characteristics such as subject matter, pattern and formalism, the tapestries and photographs present notable contrasts between the two technologies used.

The built environment of the city provides numerous architectural perspectives that Gresham frames into formalist photographs or abstract forms on the loom. The observed patterns of architectural structures and city landscapes and the concept of pattern are both significant to Gresham's work. Evident in the natural world, patterns are a universal concept developed and applied across a number of human practices from mathematics to linguistics to art. In art practices such as the visual arts, dance and music, patterns are used to maintain rhythm, produce optical effects or provide structure in composition such as the use of a refrain in song or poetry. Within Gresham's work pattern is employed to optical effect and to provide structure and rhythm.

Reminiscent of patterning in other works of art from seventeenth-century Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer's chequered floors to Op Art painting from the 1960s, Gresham's work often produces an optical effect creating an aesthetic experience and playing with perspective. In the tapestries this effect is created through juxtaposition of colour and diffusion of line, producing a visually vibrating effect. In his latest tapestry work Gresham has exchanged his previously bright palette for a subtle one of varying tones, reminiscent of natural colours from Australian flora. The patterning has also become more fluid as the artist now draws the design as the tapestry develops. The warp provides a uniform structure upon which the work is created. This structure creates a rhythm in the regularity of the weave and results in a rhythmic motion performed in the weaving process itself.

Front Cover: Liquid Module III 2008, 60cm x 60cm, Tapestry.  
Back Cover: Liquid Module III 2008, 60cm x 60cm, Tapestry Detail.  
Left: Liquid Module V 2009, 60cm x 60cm, Tapestry Detail.



3 The subtle, naturalistic colours and fluid style of the tapestries contrast with the black and white, geometry of the photographs. Rather than utilising the camera's deep focus, Gresham's telephoto lens compresses the perspective and tightly frames the photographs within a shallow plane. Pattern is articulated in architectural forms or pools of water through the use of black and white, with the light and shadow falling uniformly across the surfaces. While pattern evident in architectural forms evokes concepts of strength and balance within Gresham's work, these forms are distorted by the artists' perspective and natural light. They become asymmetrical compositions, contrasting the texture and patterns of water and concrete, steel and glass. Like the tapestries, the photographs are tightly framed suggesting an infinite pattern extending beyond the picture plane.

Gresham's two practices interact fluently. On the one hand he utilises the ancient technology of weaving, attributed to the Greek goddess Athena and symbolised by Homer in *The Odyssey*. In this practice he does not weave heroic stories from history but creates forms that articulate light and texture in pattern and colour, representing an experience of the contemporary, urban environment. This practice is time consuming, indicative of the hand-made. On the other, Gresham utilises contemporary technology through photography – a practice of mechanical reproduction with a relatively short history and rapid advances. His photographs reflect the time-sensitive quality of photography, capturing fluctuating light and shadow. While both practices present obvious contrasts, Gresham develops his ideas of pattern and optical effect and universal concepts of time and rhythm, in distinct yet corresponding compositions. His comparative practice reveals the possibilities of adaptation as a creative process.

Rebecca Chew is Deputy Director at Centre for Contemporary Photography.

Left: Liquid Module IV 2008, 60cm x 60cm, Tapestry Detail.  
This page left to right: Frequency IX 2009, 60cm x 60cm, Photograph, Edition 5.  
Frequency VII 2009, 60cm x 60cm, Photograph, Edition 5.  
Frequency VI 2009, 60cm x 60cm, Photograph, Edition 5.