

Sam Ainsley

Academic Puzzles and Pale Answers

1992

Canvas, acrylic, cotton binding, wooden embroidery hoop, light-sensitive emulsion, diameter 186 cm

Donated by the artist, 1995

The title of this work comes from a poem written by the American poet, Barbara Novak. It is a self-portrait in which the artist wears an embroidered Mexican jacket, similar to those worn by the Mexican painter, Frida Kahlo. Sam Ainsley writes that 'the architectural image at the top is a reference to the "Academy" and the sense of surveillance I feel in relation to operating within that structure'. According to Ainsley, the public realm is often seen as masculine and the domestic space as feminine, and this is the concept she is challenging in her work.