

Kristen Oppenheim

Greengrassi (Upmarket)

Kristen Oppenheim's first solo show in this country, 'The Eyes I Remember', is one of those introverted installations that seems too caught up in its own esoteric beauty to provoke a reaction. However, it builds and shifts into something far more angsty; anyone who grew up believing that it is rude to whisper will find it a shock to the system. A speaker in each corner of the room delivers a text spoken in a breathy Laurie Anderson-style voice. 'The eyes I remember only see by moving,' it begins almost inaudibly, before being taken up by another speaker until all four intone the mantra. 'I can shut the door, turn on more lights and be surrounded by precise reflections,' it continues in a creative-writing school way; but the text is the least interesting aspect. Random occurrences and clipped vowel sounds repeat and layer, like speaking in tongues, before falling again into a palpable silence.

There are photographs of hands held aloft and a rather beautiful, blown-glass crown that has been relegated to the office; though enchanting, it also seems to detract from Oppenheim's main concern. On her CD 'Scat', she overlays words and distorts metre; it is brief, exigent and the most powerful thing here – in thrall to '70s experimental work, such as Philip Glass's opera 'Einstein on the Beach', but entrancing nonetheless. *Martin Coomer*