

DEEP TIME REAL TIME

Alicia Frankovich

Four degrees warmer, 2024

Modified LED temperature display, 35.8 x 84.8 x 15.8 cm

All works courtesy of the artist, 1301SW (Narrm/Melbourne, Gadigal/Sydney) and Starkwhite Tāmaki (Makaurau/Auckland and Tahuna/Queenstown)

T-E-S-L-A- cryo

T-E-S-L-A- cryo crash

T-E-S-L-A- cryo crash dummy II, 2025

deployed Tesla air bag, epoxy glass resin

dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist, 1301SW (Narrm/Melbourne and Gadigal/Sydney) and Starkwhite Tāmaki (Makaurau/Auckland and Tahuna/Queenstown)

T-E-S-L-A cryo

T-E-S-L-A cryo crash

T-E-S-L-A cryo crash dummy I, 2025

deployed Tesla air bag, epoxy glass resin

dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist, 1301SW (Narrm, Melbourne and Gadigal/Sydney) and Starkwhite Tāmaki (Makaurau/Auckland and Tahuna/Queenstown)

T-E-S-L-A- cryo

T-E-S-L-A- cryo crash

T-E-S-L-A- cryo crash dummy III, 2025

deployed Tesla air bag, epoxy glass resin

dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist, 1301SW (Narrm/Melbourne and Gadigal/Sydney) and Starkwhite Tāmaki (Makaurau/Auckland and Tahuna/Queenstown)

Visual description by Jon Tjhia, Access Lab & Library:

As the glass doors of the Design Hub Gallery slide open, I walk into a low-lit rectangular room. It's shaped a bit like a large stick of butter, but around 30-40m long. Standing just inside the doors, I can feel the air has changed: it's cooler and crisper.

In the distance, high on the far wall, in the upper right corner, the luminous red numbers of a large LED clock glower over the exhibition, housed within a matte grey frame that protrudes a little into the room. There's space for a standard four characters on its black screen. The display alternates every couple of seconds between the time – right now it says 14:37 – and the temperature, which right now says 23 degrees C, in calculator style square numbers and letters.

This clock reminds me very strongly of the clock at Brunswick Baths, about five kilometres away, which you can see from the pool as you swim, but also from the bike path outside the baths. Above the clock are six air vents. Their shapes resemble old-fashioned diving helmets, or the overhead air conditioning vents on planes.

My gaze falls from the clock to two objects I can see mounted on the wall beneath it. Though tenderly illuminated by a soft, warm glow cast from lights above, there is a sterile isolation about them. Each object narrowly evades an encroaching vignette, but despite this, parts of their ballooning curved bodies catch the occasional peaking light of reflection.

The first object is medical mint green, and sleeping bag shaped. It's glossy – glassy – with an uneven elongated shape, like a giant jelly baby. It reminds me of a single-use drink pouch – it even appears to have a clear, curved straw protruding from the top of it. I can see some mounting tabs along one side, a couple of little dark squares, and a thin strip of bright pink or orange. Is it filled with some kind of soft material – air or liquid or some kind of goo, padding? Has it been vacuum-sealed, revealing uneven ridges, filled areas and bubbles and pockets?

Upwards and to the left, my eye lands upon another seemingly inflated object, also vitreous, almost circular. It's a 1960s pale pink and shaped a bit like a plush toilet seat or whoopee cushion, with a keyhole outline in the middle. As I try to match it with a familiar shape, my mind scrolls past a shower cap or a parrot's face, looking out with no eyes. I notice how its shadow is a smoother version of its outline.

I walk down the length of the room, past a steel armature, until I'm about four metres from the end wall. I look up at the clock in the corner, which is still oscillating between the temperature and the time. It now says 14:51. I notice the blinking of the colons in the middle is uneven. It says 23 degrees. It does not feel like 23 degrees here on my skin; somewhere it must be three degrees warmer.

The six air conditioning vents above the clock are imposing, like a bench of judges or a Greek chorus looking down on this exhibition. The phrase 'watching the clock' drops into my head. From below the clock, I can see that its face seems detachable. There's a little gap around it as well as a couple of little holes in the bottom which might be sensors or mounting points.

My eye drops down to the objects: first, the pink one. Up close, it seems like an airbag.

It looks somewhat inviting, gelatinous, like a clamshell pillow. Its pinched, circular edge fans out from the bottom side, which is less curved. And in the middle, the keyhole shape remains true: handle-like, a long curved triangle pointing down, incompletely outlined by three thin red lines. Underneath the surface, there's some kind of white material. Unfortunately, its shape most reminds me of a puppy or a pig's head. It's a little wider at the top and a little narrower at the bottom, and it is unevenly winged with ears to the sides.

Now that I'm close to the artworks, I can see there's a third one to my left – a pair of vitreous sacs that evoke faded green-grey lungs. Their colour is murky and inconsistent like acid-washed denim, and they're mounted flat on the wall like reluctant angel wings. They look like they've been covered in a wet lacquer. There's a blue double stitch line tracing the perimeter of each.

The left lung has a hole in it that's surrounded by circular stitching. It's a rough hole, like something's been blasted out: ping pong ball-sized, with three rough rings of black and red stitching around it, and a more square stitched shape around that. I can see inside that hole and through to its inner walls. There are a couple of random-seeming stitches running along the side, or around other holes in the inner part of that lung. There are a couple of

little stamps too, marked in faded blue ink, with some loose thread embedded and a grey barcode. You can see the numbers 078114152. A lot of barcode markings, but all incomplete.

Looking at the right-hand side lung, there's another barcode, 'PA66' underlined, 'VMQ', a little arrow, more numbers, similar stitching, lacquering. There's a strong sense of 'industrialness' here, which doesn't match the somewhat lenient shape. Similarly, it has various holes and kind of patching points. The cut looks sort of uneven and undulating.

There's a fairly bright blue roughly torn shape embedded in this one. It doesn't look especially deliberate, but nonetheless it's been lacquered or glassed in. Both lungs are mounted against the white wall, but because they're uneven pillowy shapes, their lower edges give way to heavy shadows.

The final, sleeping bag shaped object is a beautiful 60s seafoam green. This sculpture looks like it's the size of a standing person, about 5 ft 10, though elevated above on the wall. What seemed like a straw coming out the top, from a distance, is now revealed to be a translucent stitched strap with a metal buckle on the end. This object resembles a deformed lilo, or a giant strip of chewed gum. Its insides remain mysterious; there is tension between softness and rigidity. Its irregular shapes suggest kidneys. There are sections of its surface where it looks like water – glass – has pooled in dips and depressions. There's a series of five or six buckle tabs, where it looks like you could hoist or hitch this structure up on its right hand side. And there's an uneven thumb shape sticking out of that side. Half-hidden in the tip, a couple of roughly tucked ends of plastic poke out like unkempt fingernails.

Finally, like a terrible drawing of a beauty queen's sash, there's a double-painted pink line tracing the sculpture's right hand side ridge. It's the only consistently inflated part.