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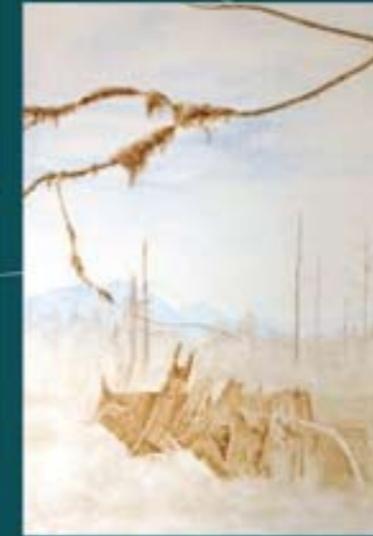
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COVER IMAGE

Le Radeau de la Méduse (The Raft of the Medusa)
1818–1819 Théodore Géricault,
Musée du Louvre, Paris



Foreword	04
Leah Fraser Interviewed by Lisa Lerkenfeldt	05
Scott Morrison Interviewed by Tom Melick	09
Jordana Maisie Interviewed by Timothy J Maybury	15
Tania Safi Interviewed by Jess Ison	21
Dion Lee Interviewed by Jasmine O'Loughlin-Glover	25
Costume Dramas Interviewed by Jasmine O'Loughlin-Glover	33
What's On	37

We stand in the hallway of a friend's apartment looking at a postcard, we remember an old book that's crisp pages frame views of Kosciusko, we stand on a hill, on the phone and tell people on other sides of the world what we see – the horizon stretches on, nestled in the panorama, our viewpoint. Between the view, the viewer and those that see or hear of what the viewer saw there's a synthesis formed – one of identity, time and place, changing to suit.

As a word, landscape came to us from the Dutch *landschap* in the 16th Century. At the time the young Dutch Republic, recently seperated from Spain, was enjoying the naturalistic depiction of their countryside – the windmills, rivers, forests, and cloudy skies over sweeping planes, dotted by the odd steeple or ruin or general farmy-life. These early landscapes served two purposes: to celebrate an idea of their world (and who they were to live in that land) and to take them away from the growing urban sprawl that many in the Netherlands found themselves living in.

This issue of Das Superpaper focuses on the Scape as a notion of both landscape and escape: cultural production that takes the viewer to a new vantage point. Perhaps the 'escape' element is like watching the burning town in the rear-view mirror, or, perhaps it's the constant construction, breaking down and reconfiguring of the ideas evident in what lies around us to make them relevant to where we're going.

– Nick Garner



Leah Fraser

INTERVIEW
Lisa Lerkenfeldt

Leah Fraser's process is one of nocturnal free-hand – a visual aggregation of life's contours and primitive human needs, resulting in hauntingly familiar imagery.

Can you talk me through one of your favourite pieces?

It's called birds buzzing around my ears. It's a girl with flower legs. Flowers kind of growing out of her legs, crouching in a field with some kind of vines growing behind her, but she seems to be being attacked, or bothered by these birds behind her. She seems concerned by not actively doing anything about it. She's collecting something somehow. I feel like she's harvesting.

What theories inform your synthesis – be they particular schools of art or spiritual doctrines?

I don't know if I align with any particular movement. I think if anything, it is more naive art. I don't even think mine is particularly naïve. I like the concepts behind that way of working and making art for yourself and not for any kind of political reasons. It's creating a new world.

I found this. It's Maslow's pyramid of Earth Wisdom – the hierocracy of needs – which states the basic needs are: air, water, food, sleep and sex. Was it your intention to address the key human needs through a stripping back to primitive vistas?

I guess I just draw from my life. I like natural things, I like nature and I like air, water and floating things.

Are your subjects dreamed, imagined, or are they interpretations of tangible friendships or relationships?

The best example to use are the little heads in the corner, I did them over quite along period of time and just either got people to sit for me or did little pictures of people I'd seen and liked the look of. It's almost like a diary of, probably like a year. The little bearded man, he is this man that Charlie and I saw in the Blue Mountains, at a café run by a cult where all the men have beards and the women have really long hair and wear these smock dresses. I just became obsessed with beards for ages.

It comes from experiences but not in the most direct way. It's not like this happened to me so I'll paint it. It's like the way that in your dreams, you pick up certain things from the day and it doesn't necessarily come out in the correct order but it's just your brain filtering images and things that have happened; smells, sights. I don't think I've ever seen a flower like that one [points to painted bloom], but it's somewhere in my consciousness and that's how it comes out. So do my biographical and autobiographical pieces. It's not depicted in a literal way.

What is the underlying 'truth' in your work?

I think for me it's the process as well as the moment of doing it. And that's part of it. I make a lot of works quickly and discard them, discard and make and more and discard. It's the creation level that is very emotional for me.

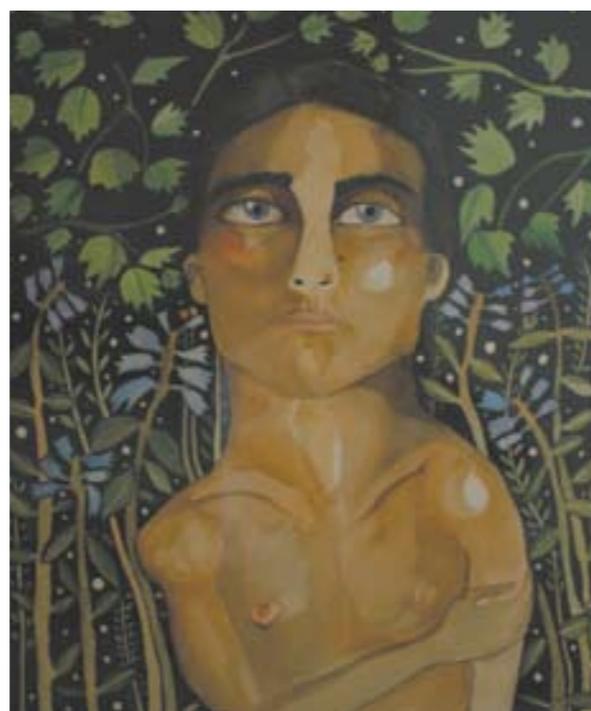
Is your process entropic or systematic?

I just make it up. With the ink things I seriously start in the middle and work out. With the big ones I know in my mind what I want to do, and I'll sometimes do little drawings, but I don't work from a sketch, I don't try and create a scene, I just sort of let it happen. Say with the two women, I knew I wanted to do something big and I wanted to have these floating women in the air somehow.

If I need a model for bodies, sometimes I do things in the mirror. I abstract things so much and they're all very out of proportion and they have big hands and weird creepy limbs, but to some degree they're all me. In a little way, there's a lot of me in all of them.

It's apt your creatures are nocturnal and you work by night. Do any inanities appear in process late at night?

I just work better at night. I seem to concentrate better and just come up with things more easily. I can sit all day trying to do that 9-5 thing. A part's not working until like 4pm and then I work until 2am in the morning. It just comes whenever the hell it wants to. The thing is you have to sit there. If you don't allow it to come it won't.



Do you find purity in the process of using liquid mediums of watercolour and ink?

Yeah. I really enjoy liquid mediums. I really love using ink and watercolour and think I have much more control with it because it's really fluid. It's really quick and also once you've put it down, that's it, it's done.

In *The Painted Word*, Tom Wolfe describes 'literary paintings' as realistic, painted visuals to which viewers bring their own set of sentiments and mental baggage in deciphering their meaning. I know your works are tent holes into transcendence, but what do you aim to induce in the viewer's experience?

I guess I want to be able to present a little part of a little story and maybe they can create the story from that. Maybe their response is emotional but I think even though all of the faces are really blank, there is some level of emotion there and something is happening or something has just happened.

Your recent exhibition at Black & Blue Gallery, *Fear and Might*, featured a suspended installation of ceramic birds in flight. What draws you to installation?

I love creating another little world – an entity. Just having it in 3D is so powerful. It's so visually stimulating and you can really feel so much going on there in the movement and the hanging. I just really enjoy working with shape. It's almost the same as drawing.

'Mountain Fold Music Journal' also launched amidst *Fear and Might*. Songs played during the show, which introduced another dimension to the space – sound. Does the inclusion of an acoustic level interest you?

At my last exhibition I had some friends play music. They were just playing beautiful folksy guitar sort of stuff. I think it's really important in terms of when you're thinking of creating a space - like when you're at home you put music on, you put incense on, you put candles on. You build the whole room in all the different senses to make it beautiful on every level.

Is there music to make art to?

I really like listening to music that tells stories. Like Bob Dylan and Joan Baez, a lot of folk sort of stuff – when I'm painting it puts me in another space.

Has someone largely influenced you recently?

I just went to (Yayoi) Kusama's show. That was amazing. Just seeing the progression of her life in her work is unbelievable. It's incredible the passion and obsession that is in there. It is her life. You can feel that.

I think she was very feminist, but in a weird way. I don't think she ever declared herself as feminist. But also the little phallic stuffed things and the way she just makes them all really soft and floppy and like sticks them in a boat, or in a room with polka dots. She makes them really silly - these phallic symbols. She has a great sense of humour.

[*Laughter. Cancer, a cat, arrives on the scene and sits before us. It's so fat that he appears to be Marlow's pyramid reincarnated.] Ummmmm.

Through your vistas I see limbs entwined in idyllic lands, utopian ideas and I know in the past you took to moonlit fields in India to look and listen. Would you call yourself a romantic?

Oooooooh yes. I am the biggest romantic. I'm really attracted to fairytales and magical things and I think that's very much present in the work. There are so many creatures and little wolves and animal people and I think that comes from a massive wealth of reading, which comes out on a page.

Are there strong literary references for you?

Fairytales - and it comes out in the weirdest ways. I couldn't give you that many solid examples. I really used to love Gabriel Garcia Marquez just because he had that way of thinking where reality is not necessarily the truth. It's called Magical Realism.

Where you exposed to art at a young age?

Yeah. We always had a lot of books around. My parents travelled a lot and we had a lot of art from Africa and weird sculptures. But I exposed myself to it in a lot of ways.

Why Sydney?

I studied here [COFA]. I have a lot of contacts here. It's good for me and I know a lot of people and that's given me lots of opportunities already. I think I'll be ready to take the next step in terms of moving somewhere else by next year.

I would say your studio is left-bank bohemia. How would you describe it?

It's like a little den. A little den of crochet and books with lots of flowers. I'm a Libran and I'm very aesthetic and my house has to be a certain way.

And next?

I'm doing the set for Paisley Palace [a local cosmic gathering of psych sound]. There's going to be lots of living stars - stars with faces watching the performance. And a show at Utopian Slumps called Fever Dreams.



Scott Morrison – *The Good Hypnotist?*

INTERVIEW
Tom Melick

Like a good hypnotist knows, a person must be calm, relaxed, and invested in the process in order to be persuaded by suggestions, directions and insinuations. Scott Morrison's video work attempts to use the moving image as a means of persuasion, where the agency of the viewer is not lost, but encouraged and re-directed via the experience of looking. Similarly – to follow our therapy metaphors – we might apply the lesson of psychoanalysis to the image here, in that 'human life is never just life', just like an 'image is never just an image'. Morrison's work is characterized by this approach, where images are reticent and revealing, sticky as well as slippery.

We should alert you that Scott and I are on a literal blind date/interview, having never met up for a conversation despite living in the same city – which should give you an indication of either our reliance on email (turning face-to-face meetings into interface-to-interface screenings) or – and I think this is probably more likely – my questionable organisational skills in 'meeting the deadline'. Yet! In my defence there are various discussion points that emerge from this anonymous dialogue that are actually pertinent to Scott's work, that is if my interpretations of his work hold here. Following this then (and we are in the interview now), how would you describe your work to a possible lover on a blind date?

I would describe my work as an ode to space(s), a desire to re-create moments that are inconsequential to our everyday lives. In doing such, I aim to present moments that are universally familiar, but new in their presentation. I'm interested in how the natural world can be captured, examined and re-imagined as a new experience. I ideally want to create works that allow for a viewer to find their own narrative and emotive response to the images and sounds they experience. When I work within a gallery space, I design them ideally as an individual experience, I want the viewer to spend their own time and make their own conclusions, as opposed to any immediate direction from my end. I liken my works to instrumental music, there may be no words or narrative within each video, but they have an order and compositional process that determines their structure and flow. So to my possible lover, I'd rather you tell me what you feel, as opposed to me telling you... I know my reasoning and responses towards the work; I'm more interested in yours.

- |• *Ballad for Velizy (Lost Ballad)*
- |• *Oceanechoes*
- //• *Push+shove*





Well I picked up on an interest (or can I say obsession?) with movement, which finds its historical roots at the very beginning of cinema (what theorists like Tom Gunning have labelled *cinema of attractions* in the early 1980s). This established a new way of approaching early cinema and its perceived marriage to the act of storytelling. Rather than diegetic saturation or plot-based film, Gunning argues that it was the *event* of the cinema, the magic of movement, and the heterogeneous 'attractions' that candidly presented themselves to the spectator, and dominated early film.¹

What emerged from watching your work, such as *oceanechoes* (2007), which pulls the eye back and forth as we see a wheat field in detail and at rapid speed, was this occupation with countering what might be conceived as something rather banal (how exciting can a wheat field be?), with the ability of the camera (and the artist) to push banality into something quite startling. So I think my question is about this approach to the moving image, is there an intentional return to this history? A return or comment on the excitement engendered by the motionless spectator viewing motion?

I think that in approaching my practice, I have invested a great deal of time in the location in which I capture material. They are often places that resonate with me personally, be it as a place to re-gather my thoughts, get away from things, or particular locations that remind me of current trains of thought. I think obsession is an apt word towards my making of works, I'll record for extensive periods of time, in order to gather a collective of responses to my internal thoughts. Nothing is planned apart from a specific locale. Once this has ceased, I'll spend hours upon hours investigating and experimenting with these collected sources within my edit studio. The works begin to shape organically, the piece *oceanechoes* is derived from a 12 second shot - that shot came from about 9 hours of material that was from that location, I had to find the right moment that responded and resonated with me.

I'm never explicitly focusing on the banal per se, more so trying to find and expand moments that allow your internal rhythms to find a harmony with the work as you experience it. I do find, however, that by re-imagining somewhat known experiences (a field of grass for example) it offers an immediate platform or window in which the viewer can engage with the work. When something is perceived as acting outside of its natural order, its significance can start to become something else entirely. I'm interested in the energy of movement, and in a way how this movement, this energy, can be something that can transcend its function or form. I don't see a return to the history you mention so much, although when the topic of inspiration arises, I often find I'm looking back more so than I am looking at contemporary practice.

I find that aspect fascinating; that film not only offers us the ability to expand moments but also to alter those moments in such a way as to make, as you say, something else entirely. It's like David Byrne's idea that scratching your head in front of a few thousand people isn't the same as scratching it in front of your family. Also, I couldn't help think of something like the music of Phillip Glass, where the repetition of a few notes changes the way we hear those notes. It's not the music that necessarily evolves; it's our ear that alters the composition. But we need time for this to happen. I must admit that I needed this time for another of your works, *a field for your thoughts* (2008/09). Here the camera is fixed from above looking down, as we see a field of grass (or is it wheat?) being blown in different directions from an indecisive wind – there is a strange metaphor for collectivity here. As time goes on the image becomes a little like one of those magic eye puzzles where a picture emerges from an abstract pattern, only with this work you start to lose grasp of your eyes and the baggage they carry with them – what emerges is more abstraction. I think there are a few questions in one here...

Are you interested in the hypnotic image? And what do you think about the time the viewer has to invest in the image (of course the popular criticism of video art in general is that it is an enervating and draining experience). Why ask the audience to be patient? Is the hypnotic image a way of seducing that cantankerous viewer who doesn't have time for what they might sarcastically label 'visual poetics'?

I'm very interested in the hypnotic image. This is often achieved through the use of repetition within my works.

You mention Phillip Glass, this is perhaps an obvious reference towards my works but a key one. The minimalist school of thought towards composition has been a major influence on my work. Steve Reich in particular is a constant source for me. I like the balance of repetition and evolution of what we are seeing and hearing. *A field for your thoughts* (2008/09) is very indicative of this approach. The piece is a constant repeat of the same shot, but it is layer upon layer at different intervals - I really wanted to develop a piece that had its place, but over the course of time evolved into something very abstract. I wanted it to be something but nothing at the same time. I think that the synergistic properties of seeing and hearing are a big part of that abstraction. The visual development takes a long time in that work, so the audio spectrum is the main force of change in the work. I like your reference to magic eye puzzles, in a way that's how I'd like the work to be treated, the more time you give the work, the more you might find something or notice something new.

Regarding the audience, it's a hard game to play representing our ideas in something that has linear time. Sure the pieces start and they finish, but I'm really trying to make works that have no defined start or end point. I try to give my works presence within the gallery space, and in noticing and engaging with that presence, your own time and willingness to engage will give you something in return. I guess seduction might be a good word for it. I don't want you to be moved by me, I want us to move together.

This idea of an image being 'something and nothing' might actually hit upon a fundamental aspect of film (and I'm thinking of Roland Barthes' proposition that the photograph is a 'message without a code'), in that in order to make an image we literally have to divide up reality into units and fragments that are both attached and unattached to the original location, place, object and so on. In line with this idea also is the theory that attributes to the image (whether moving or still) a level violence – an image literally *takes* from the world.

In most of your films, especially *Ballad for Velizy (lost ballad)* (2008), the environment becomes quite sinister. Here the camera drifts in a field (as though searching for something), moving in and out of focus while the light changes, and as we enter what seems like dusk, we hear what might be described as an orchestra infatuated with tuning their instruments. It seems that this work is close to the horror film genre. And yet, like most of your work, we are left with only the environment devoid of any human figure or presence – a post-human world. Is this a world you want to represent?

Well, the morning that I captured the material for *Ballad for Velizy* was quite surreal. I had been out filming before the sun rose, and the *oceanechoes* piece had been completed. In a way I was trying to re-capture whatever it was that made *oceanechoes* have both energy and clarity. I was approaching a similar location with a mindset and approach that was trying to replicate a situation or sensibility that I had manufactured within the editing process. I was left with a series of shots that existed in their entirety, the short cutting process wouldn't work, and the images existed and were seductive in their original format. I still needed to own these images, I needed to define my place or at least my own relationship to these images that I didn't quite understand, but felt connected to.

Stan Brakhage describes the camera as the mind's eye, and often how this mind's eye can be the protagonist or guide for whom an audience can better understand the artist's concerns. I love this approach. I wanted to pursue the micro-space in which *oceanechoes* was formed; it acts like a segue between the *echoes* piece and another of my works, *we fell out of this world together* (2007). I was interested in texture for this piece, in both the seen and the heard.

I didn't want to be violent with the images, but I wanted them to fuse together and drift from shot to shot, a dream-like feel for the audience as the piece floats about the locale. The audio had to be dense, and the images hazy. I was trying to keep the reality of the place, but shift it slightly, as if the camera were waking from a dream.

Maybe I was trying to drive my obsession with grass from my mind, drive it out by filming it at 5 in the morning. I'm sorry you saw horror, I think I found a drama, or a romance being defined and formed right there in front of me. Not so much with the place, but with the act of movement and sensation of being the only person in a very vast surround. It was my space it seemed, my moment where the sun rose in that field and it sung to me. It was really quite sublime.

And what about regret? Is it useful in art (and life)?

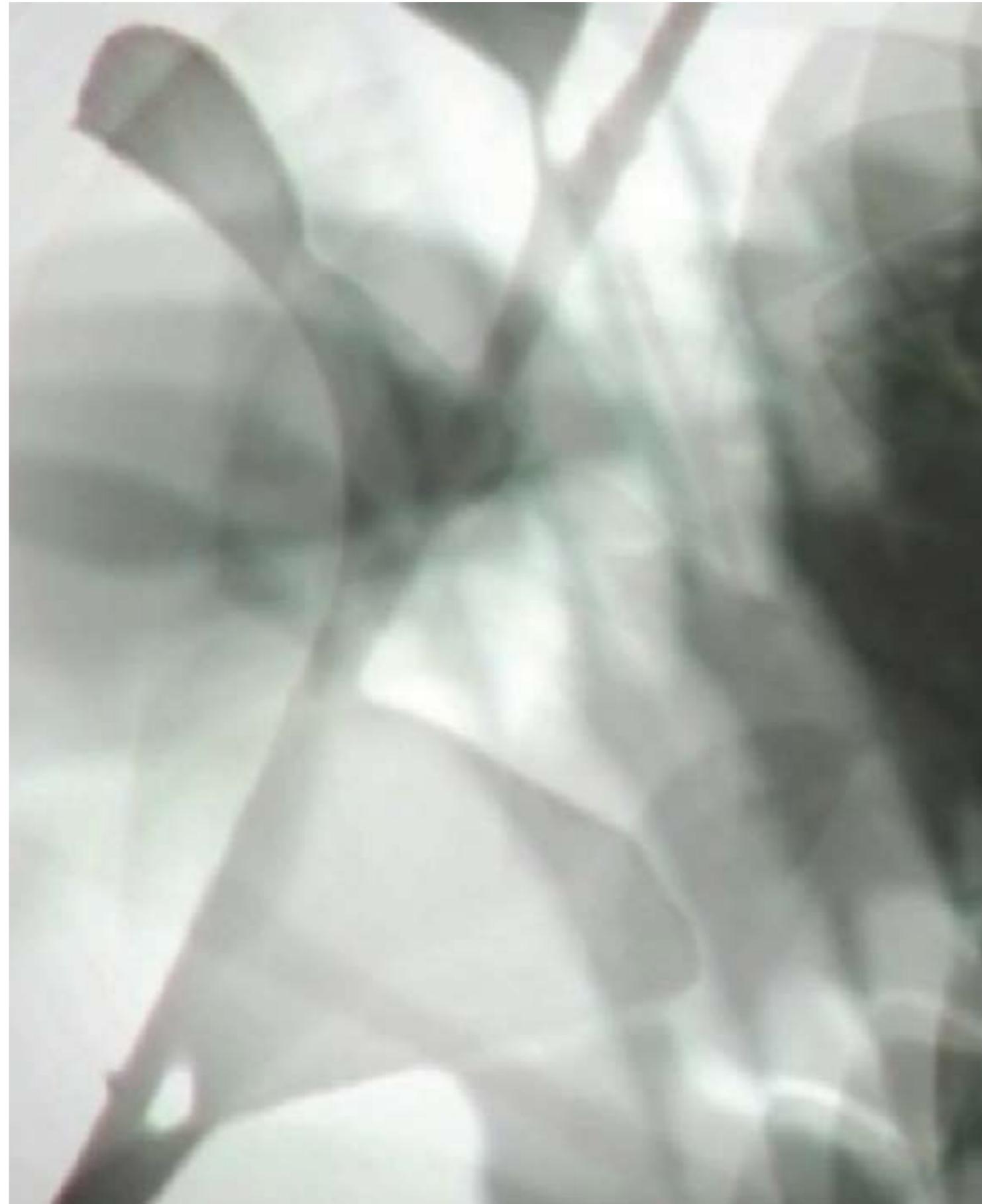
Regret is a funny thing, I used to hold onto it pretty hard, and it informed my approach to making work significantly. But as we get a little older and wiser it becomes more and more irrelevant I think. We can't change the things we've done or could've done better, we can only use these moments to better inform and educate things to come.

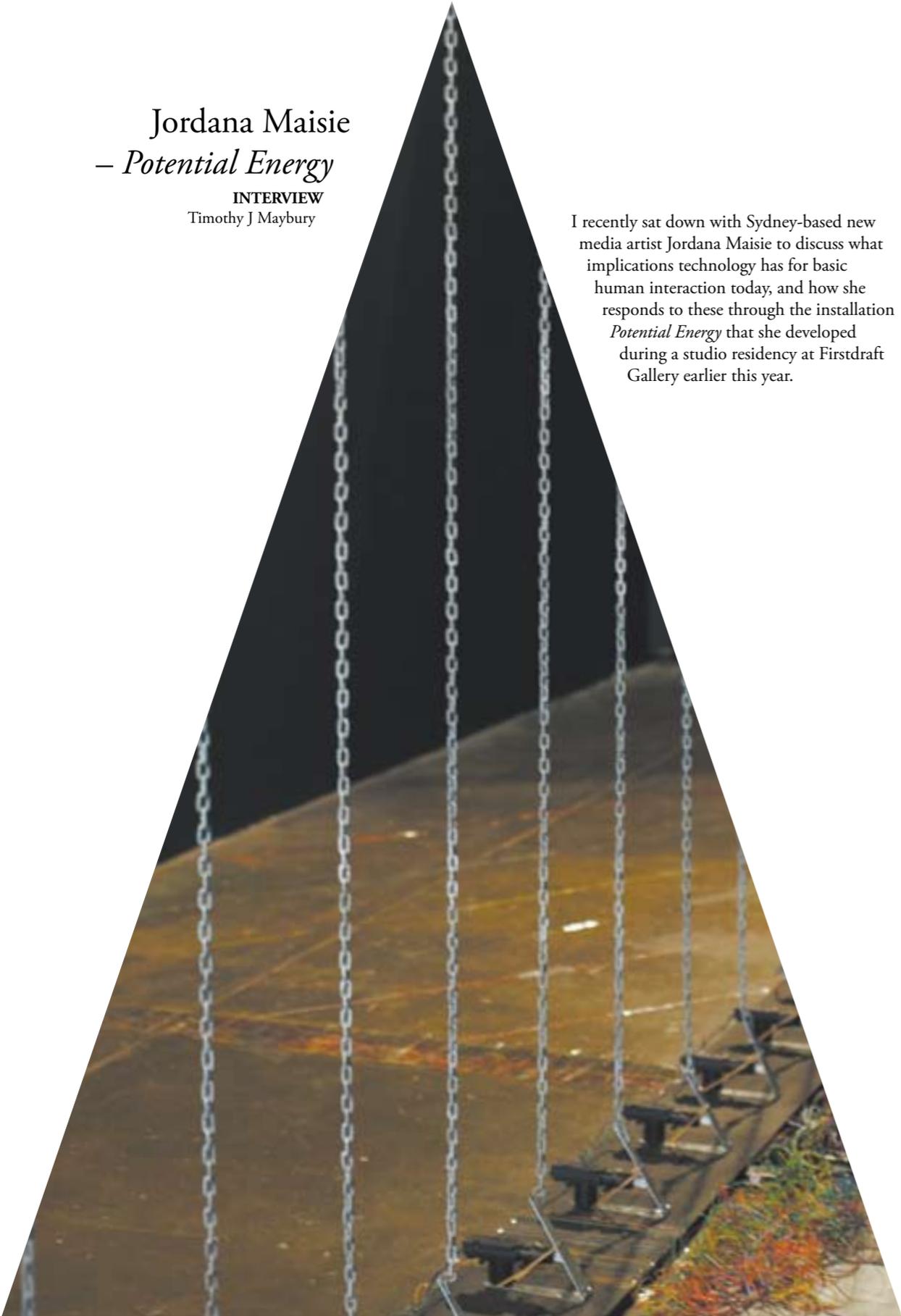
We fell out of this together was a piece that really helped me realise this. I realised as the work was near completion that it really connected with a relationship breakdown I went through. It was the first and only real process like that I've ever encountered and processed. But I found I wasn't regretting the past, more coming to grips with what was, and what was to be. What could've been was no longer an issue. I think treating regret as perspective is far more useful. The work is still very close to my heart and I hope the girl understands the work, its ebbing and flowing until finally it's letting go of the images it tries so hard in the offset to contain. I think that by creating that work I processed my regret into something positive and useful. So in a way yes, regret is useful in art, although I treat it more as something that informs me personally and creatively as opposed to something to hold onto and focus upon. I guess in a way the art process has assisted with the personal process.

So regret in life finds its worth in art, which in turn assists with life. It seems we have reached a tentative conclusion perhaps? I think the email-date ends here? Although I feel obliged – in line with regret and after having read Karl Marx's last words, in which he supposedly stated 'last words are for fools who haven't said enough' – to ask if there is a particular question you would like to ask that will remain unanswered here?

I think in keeping with the words of Karl, and indeed my own approach to work, the resolutions and conclusions are your own. So we'll leave it there. It's been a treat; I've enjoyed myself immensely. Thanks.

¹ This fascination with 'theatrical display' finds its pertinence in early experiments with film by Auguste and Louis Lumière, Thomas Edison's The Edison Company, and Georges Méliès. See Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, its Spectator and the Avant-Garde" in Thomas Elsaesser, *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*, BFI, London, 1990.





Jordana Maisie
– *Potential Energy*

INTERVIEW
Timothy J Maybury

I recently sat down with Sydney-based new media artist Jordana Maisie to discuss what implications technology has for basic human interaction today, and how she responds to these through the installation *Potential Energy* that she developed during a studio residency at Firstdraft Gallery earlier this year.

Tim: At the moment I'm working as a research assistant on a project at UNSW called *Dynamic Media*, which is looking at innovative social and artistic developments since 1990 relating to media interfaces that operate via continuous exchanges between the representations they generate, and the physical actions of their participants. In a nutshell, the project is about understanding new perspectives and experiences that are formed through human-computer interaction, or HCI, usually involving actual physical interface with technology. In particular I've been looking at the work of international research centres, such as the Creativity and Cognition Studios (CCS) based here in Sydney at UTS, that operate at the nexus between art and science and are committed to fostering the enhancement and progression of human creativity through interaction with new media and digital technology. Are you familiar with the work of some of these centres?

Jordana: Yes I'm familiar with CCS and the process they go through for selecting artists to develop works to be displayed at Beta_Space, their interactive exhibition facility at the Powerhouse Museum. They asked me to put on a show there this year, but the timing was wrong, as I'm about to leave for Berlin to undertake a six to eight month mentorship.

I'm not surprised by this because to me the type of artwork you create is fairly aligned with the sort of thing places like that are interested in. Your work seems all about emphasizing relationships between the body, physical space and technology. Could you talk a bit about how you became interested in technology in your practice?

In my earlier art school days I originally studied photography. Even though COFA has a serious digital focus, I spent time on exchange at the Glasgow School of Art where I was influenced by their traditional approach to photography. Photography there was so, so different, it was all old school, fine art, analogue style, which is what I was doing anyway at the time. It made me realize how much further ahead certain Australian art schools were in terms of their digital focus in comparison to European schools that remain rooted in the traditions of the past and had not yet adopted a whole hearted approach to digital mediums. As such I was really anti-digital for a long time – I avoided tools like Photoshop and digital printing. It was only when I started working in the commercial photographic industry that I inevitably became more savvy with digital media. It was around the end of my BFA that I started to create screen-based video installations.

What were your immediate and lasting impressions of adopting new media forms in your art?

At first I found the ability to access real time really exciting, and from there my interest in new media continued to develop. My excitement quickly transformed into an acute awareness of the ways in which digital technologies have a seemingly subtle, though serious, impact on us in our everyday lives.

My thoughts were: "this is actually serious, and significantly and drastically changing the way we experience and interact with one another."

In many of your artist's statements you describe your work as a kind of strategy for 're-embodiment'. What is your perception of our contemporary, technologically infused culture, in which networking and subsequent ways of day-to-day communicating and relating to each other are often experienced within the decidedly abstract world of cyberspace?

My reaction to this increasingly common condition of human experience has always been one of concern. I've always felt agitated by it. It irritates me that, for example, because I'm not on Facebook whenever there's a birthday party I either miss it or I get a phone call that's always preceded with a sentence that is: "I'm calling because you're not on Facebook, and I just wanted to tell you..."

What do you see as the perils and hazards of this kind of disembodied communication?

I don't worry so much for the older generations who were raised in a time when virtual interaction wasn't the only way. My concern is much more for the current younger generation, the children who grow up within these forums and formats. I see them as encouraging a hyper-multiplicity that in turn presents an extra hurdle in terms of defining one's identity, and I think this is quite devastating.

Online you can present yourself as anyone you want to be, and when that person might not be exactly who you are, this can create confusion and falsities that I don't perceive as healthy. I think this condition opens the gate much more for alienation as well as providing an extra surface upon which negatives, such as segregation and bullying, can be played out. I see it as having the potential to breed a lot of negativity.

You evoke a feeling of loss when you speak about our world that has become less tactile, like you are lamenting a past gone by. Do these visions interest you foremost in an artistic sense, or is this a perspective based purely upon your experience as a human and member of society?

I think the two are pretty closely intertwined, I don't know if they can be separated anymore. When I started making interactive work I had been in a long distance relationship for two and a half years, and this experience greatly enhanced my awareness of the importance of physicality within human contact. This realization certainly redirected my interests towards interaction and spatial installation – I became far more inclined towards transforming spaces through use of light and placement of three-dimensional objects. I became focused, in quite an obsessive way, with the idea of physicality as a kind of nutrition for the soul, for want of a better phrase. It kind of hit me that I'd never really considered just how important touching someone is, not necessarily in a sexual way, more like just physical proximity and sensation.

Earlier there was the mention of disembodied contact as being the 'only' way. You seem to express and display an actively reactionary stance against the definitely unavoidable influence of digital media in peoples' lives, yet you are gaining recognition for embracing technology in your practice. Do you see potential for futures that might not be so bleak, so negative? Do you believe that the assistance of technology can be employed to help people reconnect with their basic human needs in terms of physicality?

As you say, what we are discussing is a presence that is unavoidable, and not without its benefits as well. Instead of resisting the changes our generation has experienced – I think it can be agreed that this tactic is fairly futile – I've adopted the strategy of trying to understand and master technologies so that they can be used in a way that doesn't shift our experiences of the world so drastically.

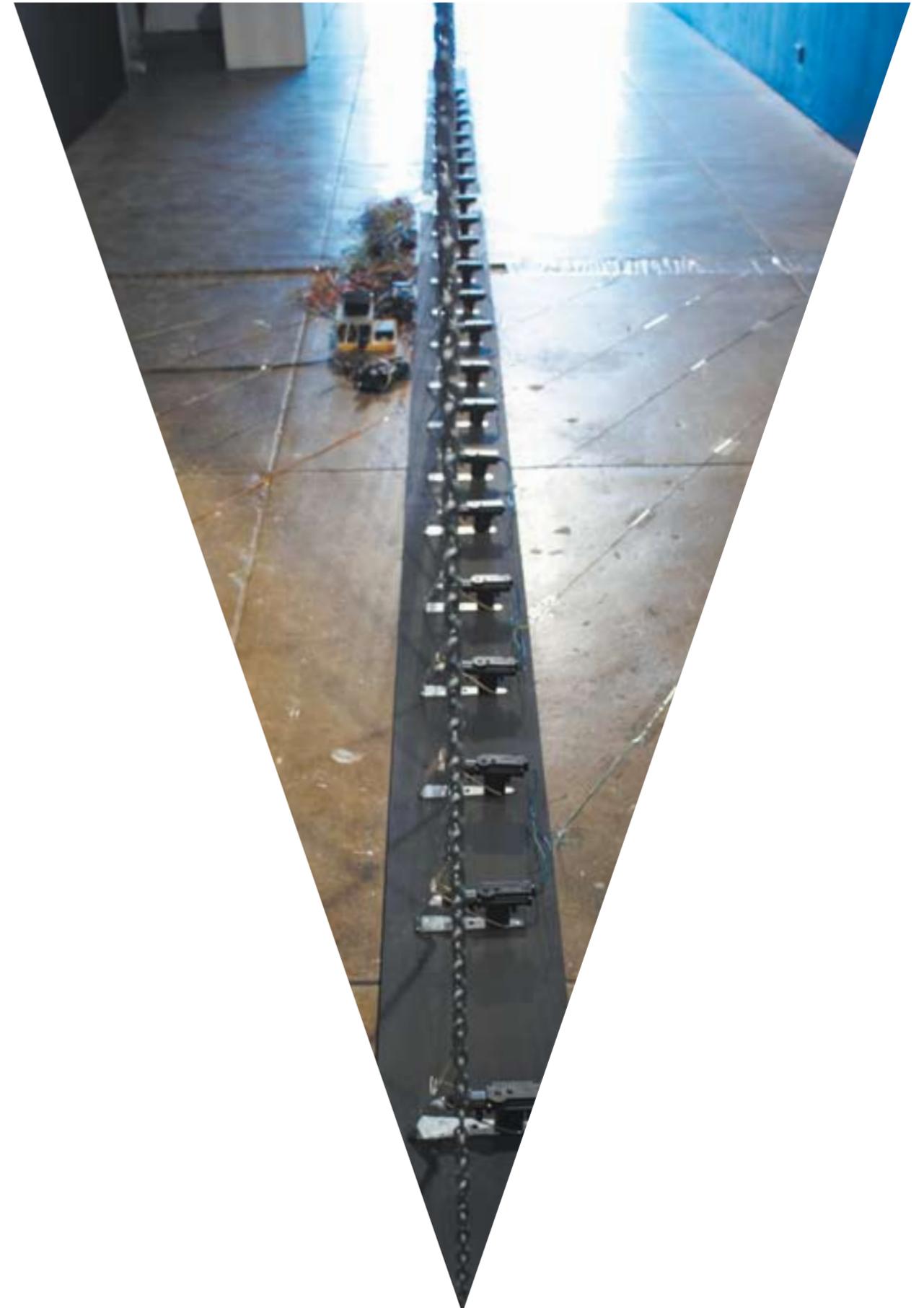
The way I see it is that if technology can be used in ways that do encourage re-embodiment rather than disembodiment, then that's the path I wish to help pave. I'm not saying I'm trying to resist it, but rather I'm trying more to shape it, to mould it.

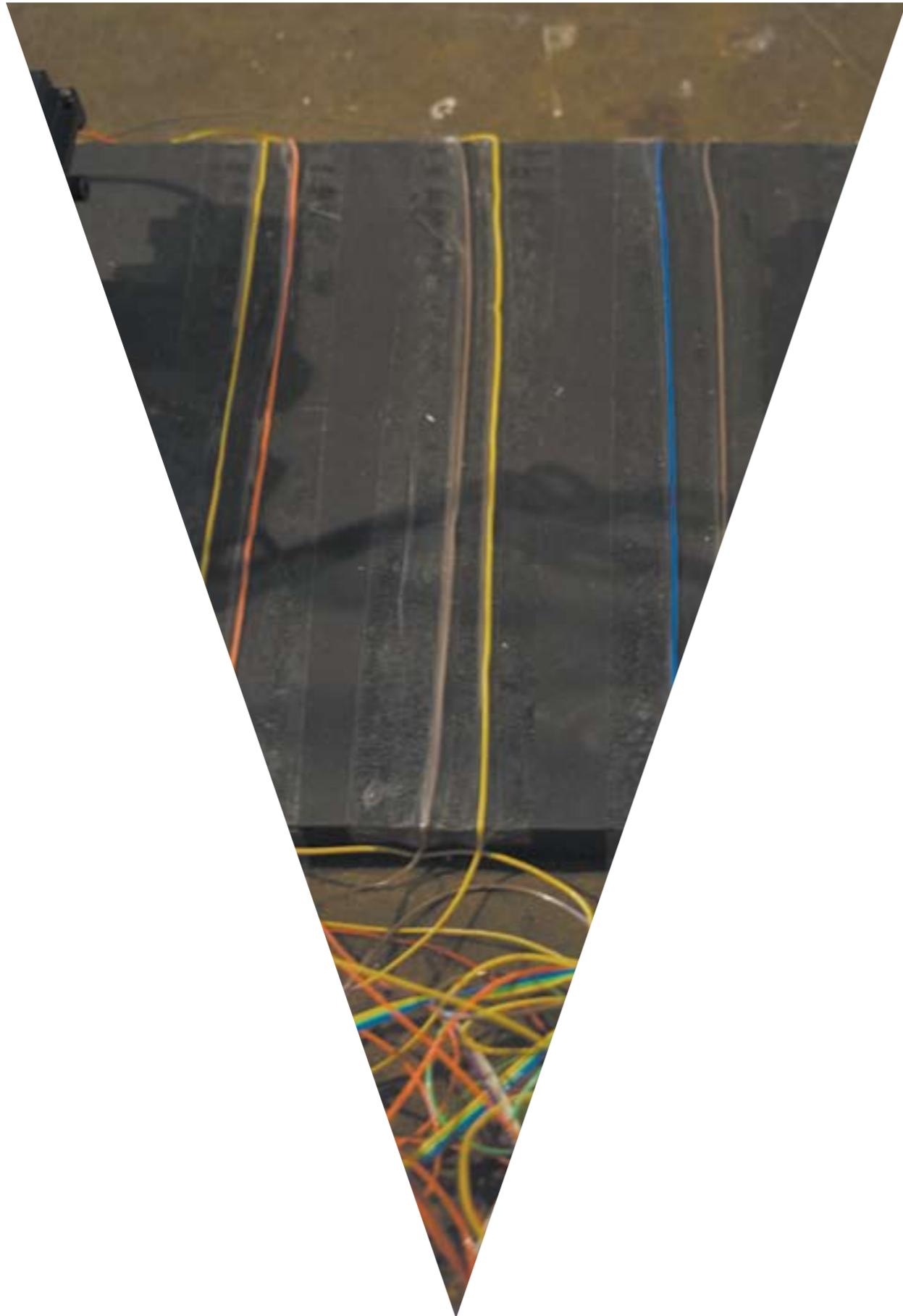
I can see how your latest work, *Potential Energy*, that was recently exhibited at Firstdraft is very clearly rooted within the ideas you're talking about today, as it actively encourages people to enter and engage with the work, the space, and of course each other, physically. Visually however, I perceive the work to be quite brutal – to me it implies imprisonment. The vertical chains have a very strong, dominant, almost cold and reinforcing presence about them, and they instantly divide the room into two halves. Could you explain why you chose to present the work in this way and why you chose to utilise the materials you did?

For me *Potential Energy* was really about creating something that has an immediate effect. Not on a novel level, but in a way that would speak to members of a broader community, get them to ask 'why', and encourage them to think about their physical being on some level. I have to say that I used chains because to me they are a symbol of linking, I was drawn to the link component, and I was looking for a material that represented a certain organic fluidity when it was moving, while also possessing a bit of weight to it.

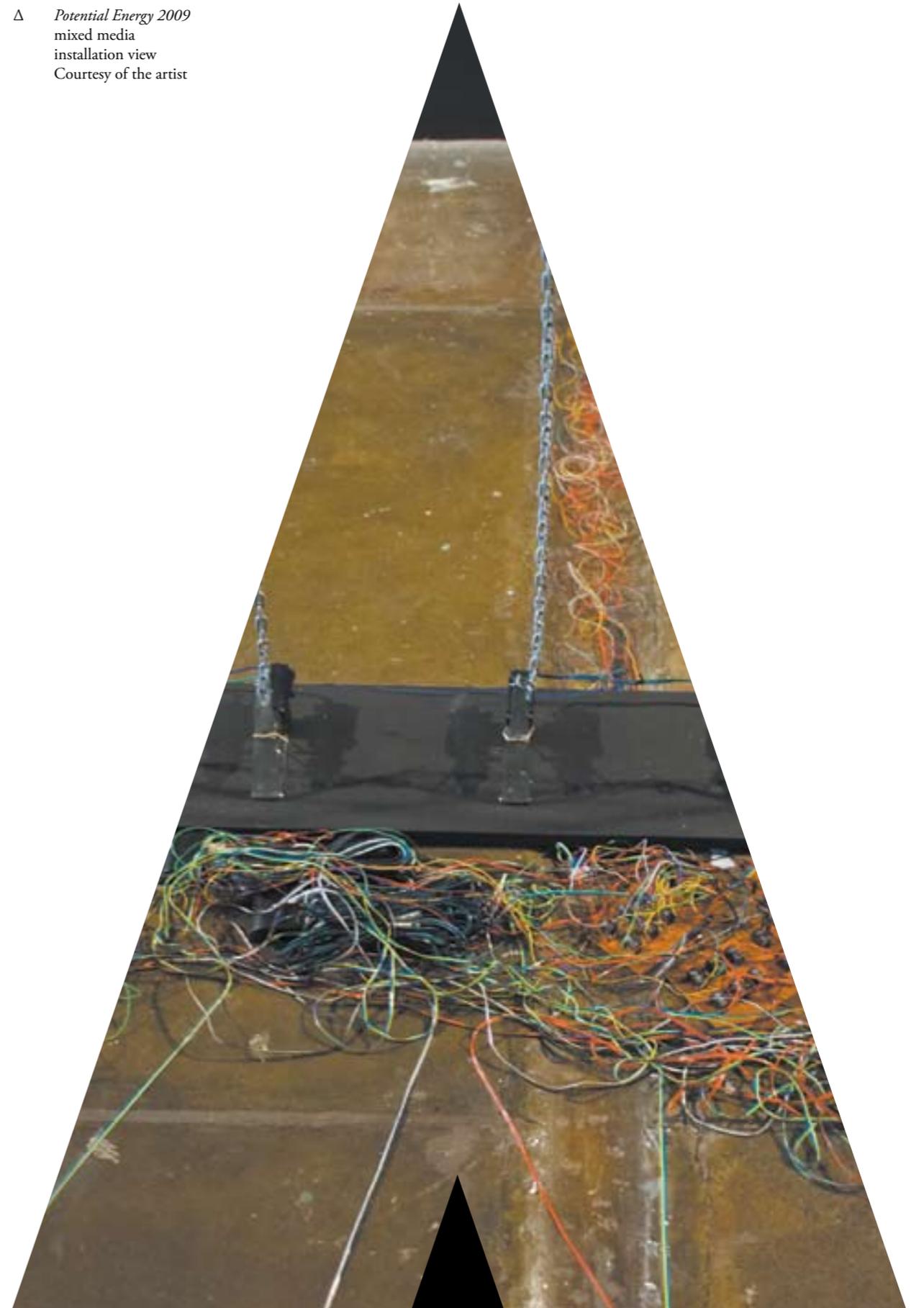
You are right; an alternate reading of the work could address its organic qualities. It's interesting that you speak of the links in the chain as symbolising organic substance, because there are also the cables and wires on the ground beneath the audience's feet that appear quite like veins as well. The work could almost be quite off-putting to people who become squeamish at the sight of blood and the insides of organisms and the like. I remember walking across the floor and being very aware of my feet treading on these 'veins' and feeling somewhat uncomfortable, yet intrigued by it, because my initial thought was that my contact with these wires was what was activating the unpredictable movement of the chains. It wasn't until I walked around to the other side that I noticed the sensors you had installed and suddenly understood how the artwork operated. The more I think about the work in hindsight now, the more I can imagine it as a representation of the body – as bones, tissue, muscle, veins etc.

That's interesting; I haven't heard anyone say that yet... I did receive an email from someone asking whether the choice to leave the wires exposed was deliberate or specifically strategic. My response was yes, because on a stripped back level the work is purely about connectedness: connectedness to each other and to our environment. In this sense to hide cabling would be counter productive, because for me it is important to expose physical relations, as they are representative of how bonds are formed.





Δ *Potential Energy 2009*
mixed media
installation view
Courtesy of the artist



- | *Park*
- |• *High Jinks*
- /• *Fairytale*



Tania Safi

INTERVIEW

Jess Ison

Zombie mums, apes and bleeding limbs – Tania Safi is not one to shy away from the grotesque. Her works capture the sublime, the beautifully terrifying aspects of life. She is currently a film student, trying to get by on candle-making and the odd exhibition. I recently spoke with her about blood, cities, and her hometown.



What's with all the blood?

Well, I really like blood. It's got a great colour and I love that people hate it. But, at the same time it's confusing that there aren't more people who love blood. Blood is amazing. It can mean death, but it can also mean a sort of rejuvenation or violent exposure. Most of the pictures use blood in an explosive sense. It's coming out of several orifices. Whether it's their mouth or oesophagus. It's like a graphic eruption.

Everyone's got blood.

But not everyone's got blood pouring from their oesophagus. Surely you can see why it disgusts people?

If I am supposed to see why it disgusts them, you should understand why it doesn't disgust me. I don't understand why it's okay to be disgusted over what's inside, when its not to romanticise it. It keeps you alive, and it looks great when it's out of the body, even in death. It's simple.

But is it grotesque?

No. It's sexy. It's rich. It has a life of its own. It's amazing that it is composed of millions of other things. We don't give it enough credit. We're grotesque.

You seem to draw cityscapes a lot. Like your graffiti in Enmore. Do you like the city?

I think that humans are really funny; building the biggest and tallest means significance. In reality cities are vulnerable places. So much could happen in an area full of so many people. And most people who are in the city are there to work in order to keep the big businesses rolling. It's more like produce and factories than anything beautiful or admirable.

Well, what about the animals you have towering over these cities?

I connect more with animals than humans. But, I think there is an issue making the distinction between an animal and a human. However, in this instance it's appropriate because animals are so much better than us. I don't think that they would go out of their way to take revenge on us for how we've disgraced this earth but it's more that they are stronger than us. I can see that post-apocalypse, the buildings will stand there pointlessly, much like they do now, and plants will overgrow and animals will take over; like a playground.

You said animals are better than humans. What do you mean?

Animals aren't excessive. They do what they need to, and they do it right. If they don't, they die. Humans get way too many chances. In my eyes, it doesn't make us superior or more intelligent. We just can't handle realities. Animals deal with things in a way that we could only dream of. We cannot face certain things so we have medications and machines to keep us going.

Is death what we can't handle?

Partly, but we've all got other issues. Just look at the world. Money means war. Animals never had that. They still eat and have fun. No one gets hurt unless you are prey.

Is that why you want show us blood, to show us what we can't handle?

Not particularly. I don't want to show anyone anything. But when I am using it I'm thinking about the history of humanity and animals. Sometimes I've had a shit day and I feel like splitting blood onto someone's face. It would be great to see what someone would do if you spat blood in their face. Is it the ultimate insult? It's almost worse than vomit.

I guess in the modern world, with all our paranoia, it could be people's greatest fear?

We're scared of everything. But everyone bleeds. Even pram-pushing mothers.

Just like your piece DaFam.

Yeah. I just think it looks really beautiful, looking at this simple painting. It is so vacant and bland. But then you have this shock red coming out of her mouth. I like the look of things exploding. How it rises then falls.

It seems lots of your works are on random materials? What do you use?

Whatever I have around the house. It's never white. I hate white.

You are a filmmaker as well, what films have you made?

I'm learning. I just made a documentary about Newtown. The film before that was about a girl who lived in a wax palace. I like wax. I make candles for a living.

Tell me about the documentary

I interviewed about 20 people from Newtown. Some were shop owners, others were students, or friends. Newtown's changed a lot over the past couple of years. I just wanted to document how people were reacting to that change.

How has it changed?

The boutiques. The babies. The bakeries. So much has changed. So much has been taken away. People have moved in and destroyed its culture. They don't even realise or care. Croissants are more important. With them brings racism and homophobia. They're rich enough to live here so slowly the cool cats are moving to outer suburbs. It's like an invasion to me. The only people who don't mind it are the people who make money off them.

Invasion? Strong word. Can you elaborate?

Everyone who has ever genuinely loved Newtown has done so because they are a bit of an outsider in some regard. Because of that it has created one of the strongest communities with a great art and music scene. Slowly I see less and less of that and more Croc shoes, Fitness First bags and Gloria Jeans take away cups. It's invasive to even have to look at that.

You're also making a comic as well, what is it about?

I recently lived in Lebanon for a few months. I lived in Tripoli and the mountains, it's a great place to create. A few really interesting events took place and I had a lot of spare time, so I started chronicling my experiences. There is so much to say so it's taking a while.

Where have you exhibited your work?

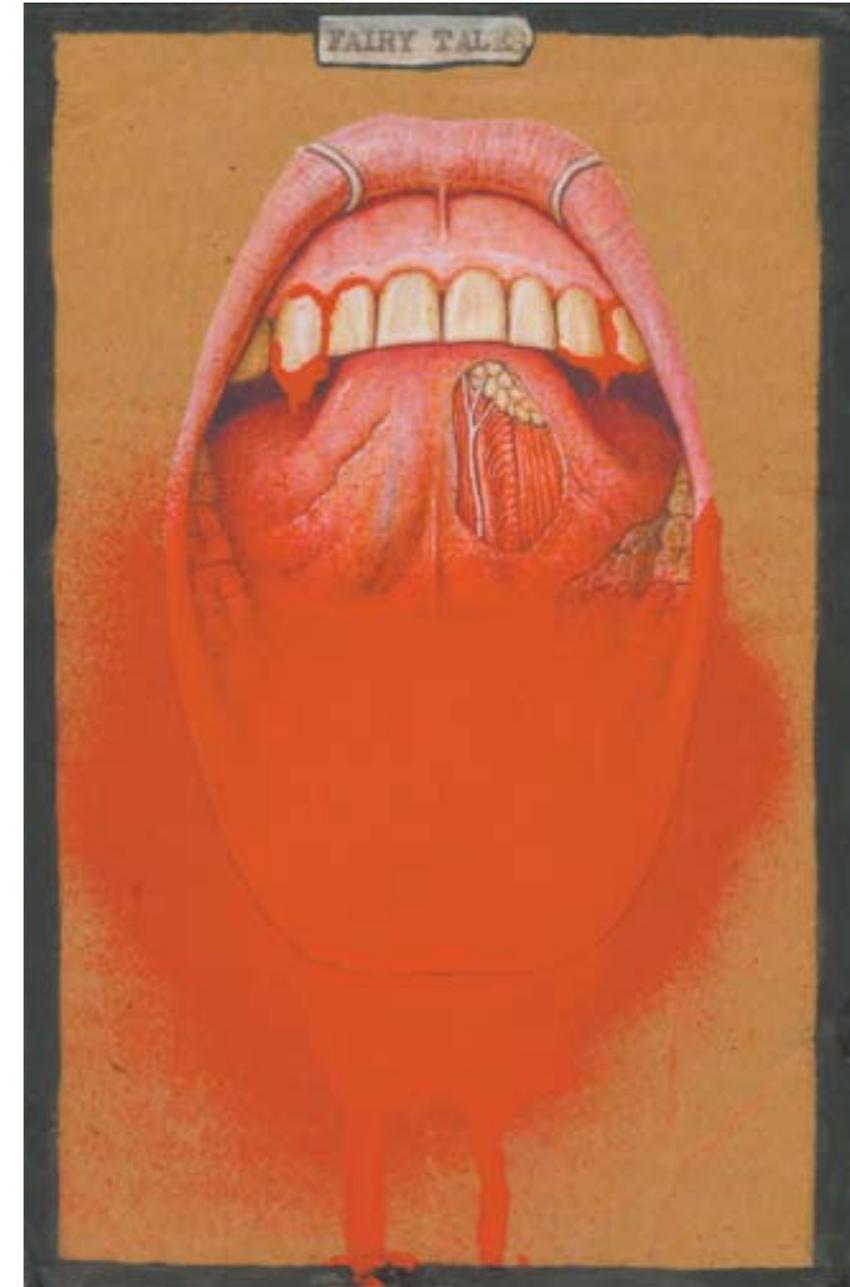
The last one was at the Wayside art exhibition in Kings Cross. It went well. It's interesting having your art on display. I usually don't like taking up too much space. To be honest, I don't ever draw or paint thinking someone is going to look at this. It's kind of like writing a love letter and pinning it to a wall. It's fun watching people look at them. People make me laugh.

Do you like watching them squirm?

Are they that bad? When I did a series of blood paintings, I sold four out of six. Obviously other people are feeling it. Maybe you're just squeamish.

I think I am. But I am also intrigued, a little.

That's a good start. Now start embracing it or else.





Dion Lee

INTERVIEW

Jasmine O'Loughlin-Glover

PHOTOGRAPHY

Bowen Arico

ART DIRECTION

Dion Lee

Jasmine O'Loughlin-Glover

Dion Lee is one of the newest, and most exciting, forces in Australian fashion today. His creations – characterised by sharp, painstakingly intricate tailoring, and strong references to the industrial landscape – by virtue of their complexity, command the sort of attention and thought not often given to 'fashion'.

I wanted to give Lee the chance to speak for himself – both verbally and visually – about his recent Spring/Summer 09/10 collection...

Dion, we created these images of your work, deliberately without models, for the purpose of capturing the sculptural element to your clothes, as well as the parallels between it and the work of the sculptor, John Chamberlain. You have cited Chamberlain as a major inspiration for this collection – can you tell us why you found his work so inspiring?

I love the feel of his sculptures. I think I am often drawn to a kind of synthetic decay.

I was looking at a lot of disposable references for the collection and his sculptures felt very relevant to me. I wanted (the collection) to feel broken and discarded, but in a very clean and deliberate way. The use of jewellery in the pieces contrasts this by adding an element of value to the clothes. Jewelry is something that people never throw away, they look after and value it.

Chamberlain's crushed car sculptures have been described as, "the dismantled and reshaped auto body". Your garments, with their cutouts, directional panelling, and sculptural exaggerations, 'dismantle' and 'reshape' a body of another kind. Was this a deliberate parallel?

I didn't really want the references to be too literal. What I took from looking at his work was this feeling of multiple objects being twisted and locked together. A lot of the construction is achieved through multiple pieces woven together, that can't be separated.

The detail that has gone into these pieces is immense – from the tailored construction and careful cutouts, through to the jewellery elements which weave throughout them. Tell me a bit about the process of designing and constructing such intricate garments.

The process is always different for each piece. It generally starts with a construction idea, and then there is a lot of experimenting and trying to see what works.

With this collection it was very drawn out and it took a long time to get it working without looking forced. What was pushing me was the idea of using the jewellery element in the construction of the pieces. Meaning, the pieces were held together at the seams by these woven chain harnesses that joined each panel and also allowed the pieces to open with movement. I did achieve this in a few pieces, however, it was not as easy as I had first imagined. It could have gone a lot further.

You've also named Bauhaus principles as a heavy influence in the construction of these forms. Can you elaborate on this?

Openness, transparency, and the relationship between air, light and movement, were important principles for Bauhaus designers. I really wanted all of these ideas to also translate to tailoring that had a bit of freedom. For me, tailoring that has been cut open, allowing air and light to move through the garment and around the body, also makes it more relevant to Australia.

The form of the jewellery, these cylindrical rod formations, also came from a Bauhaus jeweller, Naum Slutzky.

One of the most intriguing elements, to me, in all of these pieces, is the use of glass. What was it like working with this material, and integrating it into wearables?

I liked that the glass was fragile in this context and kind of forces people to take care with the clothes.

In terms of working with it, I found it a challenge because it is less malleable, and so offers less freedom in terms of how you can use it. I was able to get around this with the use of chains – chains allow for movement, which can't be achieved with the glass because it is solid. The chains allow the glass tubes to move within the garment, softening it and reducing tension on the glass.

I worked with a glass blower, who specialises in crafting pharmaceutical apparatus, to construct the glass jewellery.

I like the idea of that dialogue between medicinal apparatus and jewellery – both of which are intended for the body, but in completely different ways.

Yeah, I suppose it is a nice link. I'm still not sure that the (glass blower) really understood what I was trying to achieve though. I ended up using straws to communicate my ideas for the glass harnesses to him.

"How very technical! On this thread, however, I'd like to ask you about the strong presence of the 'industrial' in your work - from your use of 'industrial blue' and 'cement grey' hues, to your decision to show the collection at RAFW in an inner-city, underground car park. What is it about these artificial points of reference that fascinates you?"

I think I just like the feel of man-made, artificial environments. There is also something about the human body that is very displaced in this context.

www.dionlee.com





Costume Dramas

INTERVIEW

Jasmine O'Loughlin-Glover

PHOTOGRAPHY

Robert Rosen



Art isn't always to be found on the walls of galleries. Some people like to wear it on their sleeves (so to speak).

This month, Das Superpaper talks to Mary Shackman – best known for her bright, bespoke textile designs, and geometric, optical field oil paintings – about the fine art of perfecting the sailor look, and the aesthetic brilliance of making landscapes out of pixels.



Hi Mary. Tell us a bit about what inspired this look.

This was an outfit that I wore to a party at a club in town, where the theme was 'Marseille' - the south of France, on the harbour. So I had a Greek sailor's hat on, and the t-shirt was by a student who used to go to East Sydney Tech's fashion school, called Benjamin Match. Because of the French theme I thought the red, white and blue and was good, so that was the concept behind the outfit. The pearls relate to that Chanel thing, where she always seemed to use a lot of pearls, as well as her looks with the hat and the bob and everything.

How funny, I was just about to say, it strikes me as a very French maritime kind of look - something like how a blonde Chanel might look if she were going sailing. Speaking of foreign lands and sailing adventures, the theme of this issue is 'Scapes'. We've been thinking a lot about this idea, how it can relate to the notion of landscapes, as well as escapes. So I wanted to ask you whether you find that your dress sense is influenced from afar, or if you find those influences right here, around you, in Australia?

Well, I think it's just looking at things, seeing different people and the way they dress. Actually I recently found this great site, the Sartorialist, which is just fantastic because it shows you people in the street, who've just put stuff together; rather than on a catwalk, which is incredibly planned and I suppose there's more of a central theme they've got to adhere to there. So I think I get more ideas from the ordinary.

I think we're only limited in inspiration here by our access to things, but then, it makes people more creative and they try to do things to their clothes, you know, to change them. For instance, I have a Nicola Finetti top made from georgette, and I hand painted some georgette to go with it and had a bottom attached to it, so it becomes a dress.

Mary, I can't talk about your sartorial style without acknowledging your lengthy background as a textile designer. You're known for your bold, colourful textile prints – which really are like artworks on garments. With a prevailing penchant these days for sombre tones – think the highly influential, dark tones of the Comme des Garçons and Ann Demeulemeesters of the fashion world – what do you think is the role of colour and print in fashion?

I think the role of these is to add something to a garment that makes it look different and unique. Even the designers you've mentioned, while I know they do rarely do prints, they do occasionally use them, and they're usually incredibly clever.

When we were doing it (fashion textile printing), the t-shirt was the big thing, and it was virtually an artwork on the t-shirt. But now, because people are using computers more, they've become more structured designs, whereas with ours, I always painted the original artwork.

Also I think it's a very Australian thing – bright prints. Even though the English do use colour and print very well, I think.

Do you think the Australian landscape influences our love of colour and print?

I know people always say it does. If you go out to the centre (of Australia), everything's sort of brown, but with splashes of colour, depending on the season – so you have all those wonderful, natural ochres, reddy-browns, and then there might be a flash of a bird flying over, or if there's been rain flowers will come out, so a bit of colour will pop out. But people always do say there's a brightness to the landscape here, especially in winter time when it seems to get brighter in Sydney because the humidity goes, whereas otherwise there's a cloudy sort of effect.

My paintings are very bright too – I have tried to do paler ones, but my palette really is about bright primary colours that haven't been muddied down with blacks or browns. So I think it's probably true.

Much of your recent work, which is now oil on canvas, features representations of landscapes, broken down into vibrant, colourful geometries. Is this a purely aesthetic transformation of a landscape into an optical field of colour blocks, or does it mean something more to you?

With my recent paintings of the buildings it's all about breaking down pictures of buildings into hard lines and squares, which is the way I see them. Buildings are just in that sort of grid of straight lines. Breaking them down into these grids and blocks of colour, I'm not really trying to have a lot of depth in the paintings, but trying to keep them quite flat. I also use unmixed colours, so the idea is about the effect on your eyes when you stand back from the painting - and the colours mix.



Grace Cossington-Smith, one of our greatest female artists, often worked in a similar manner - breaking visual panoramas down into shards of colour. She said part of the reason she used this technique, was in an effort to convey the shifting, glittering effect of light when seen in real time. Would you say that there is a similar element of trying to capture the fractured nature of real experience, in your work?

Yes, that's also what I try to convey, especially in my beach scenes – capturing that light when it's so hot and the sun's at its full strength and it's bouncing, and the colours are glittering, and there's so much movement from the buildings and the water shimmering.

Even the figures in the paintings are just squares, so it's like those pixelated images of people where they're moving and it's all changing the whole time.

Finally, to come back to your personal style, does your work as an artist and textile designer, have a bearing on how you dress? How do these elements of your life relate and intertwine?

Well, I suppose it's really the colours that I wear – you know, clothes with bright colours, and of course the hand painted fabric in some of my garments, which does reflect my paintings and my work. I guess it all connects – I've always worn unusual clothes, never wanting to adhere to a strict look all the time. As a painter, working alone, I don't have to adhere to a strict dress code, so I'm very lucky that I can be creative in my clothing, which relates to the work I do everyday.

**Mary Shackman is represented by Sarah Roney Gallery
www.maryshackman.com**

What's On

- | | | | |
|------------------|--|-----------------|---|
| 20 May – 12 Jul | Hidden: Rookwood Sculpture Walk
www.rookwoodcemetery.com.au | 19 Jun – 27 Jun | Kesselskramer Exports:
12 Years of Posters
& Other Communication
CARRIAGEWORKS
245 Wilson Street, Eveleigh NSW |
| 27 May – 28 Jun | On An Island: National Art School
COCKATOO ISLAND,
SYDNEY HARBOUR
www.nas.edu.au | 25 Jun – 18 Jul | Julie Rrap: Escape Artist: Castaway
Anne Zahalka: Playing the game!
ROSLYN OXLEY9 GALLERY
8 Soudan Lane, Paddington NSW |
| 27 May – 18 Jul | Chris Fox
GALLERY BARRY KELDOULIS
285 Young Street, Waterloo NSW | 25 Jun – 26 Jul | Marco Fusinato: Double Infinitives
ANNA SCHWARTZ GALLERY
185 Fliners Lane, Melbourne VIC |
| 29 May – 27 Jun | Constanze Zikos
TOLARNO GALLERIES
Level 4, 289 Flinders Lane,
Melbourne VIC | 30 Jun – 19 Jul | Marc de Jong
SULLIVAN+STRUMPF FINE ART
44 Gurner Street, Paddington NSW |
| 02 Jun – 21 Jun | Alasdair Macintyre
SULLIVAN+STRUMPF FINE ART
44 Gurner Street, Paddington NSW | 01 Jul – 18 Jul | Agatha Gothe-Snape, Camille Serisier,
Michaela Gleave, Sean Rafferty,
Penelope Benton
FIRSTDRAFT
116-118 Chalmers Street,
Surry Hills NSW |
| 02 Jun – 27 Jun | Katherine Hall: Mine
MOSSONSEN GALLERIES
41 Derby Street, Collingwood VIC | 01 Jul – 29 Jul | Erehwons: Jan Guy
HORUS AND DELORIS
CONTEMPORART ART SPACE
102 Pyrmont Street, Pyrmont NSW |
| 09 Jun – 05 Jul | Paul Higgs
STELLA DOWNER FINE ART
2 Danks Street, Waterloo NSW | 02 Jul – 01 Aug | Adam Cullen
TOLARNO GALLERIES
Level 4, 289 Flinders Lane,
Melbourne VIC |
| 11 Jun – 28 Jun | Neil Haddon: Stranded
Angus Wood: The Light on the
Hill Leaves Darkness in the Valley
MOP
2/39 Abercrombie Street,
Chippendale NSW | 6 Jul – 01 Aug | Poor Boy
SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY
22 Hickson Road, Walsh Bay NSW |
| 12 Jun – 11 Jul | Pieter Hugo: Nollywood
Penelope Cain: Infestation
AUSTRALIAN CENTRE
FOR PHOTOGRAPHY
257 Oxford Street, Paddington NSW | 15 Jul – 25 Jul | State of Design – Melbourne
www.stateofdesign.com.au |
| 13 Jun to 09 Jul | Christopher Horder: The Random Walk
LIVERPOOL STREET GALLERY
243a Liverpool Street, East Sydney NSW | 17 Jul – 22 Aug | Edward Burtynsky: Australian Minescapes
AUSTRALIAN CENTRE
FOR PHOTOGRAPHY
257 Oxford Street, Paddington NSW |
| 13 Jun – 25 Jul | Khaled Sabsabi: Intergration,
Addimilation and a fair go for all
GALLERY 4A
181-187 Hay Street, Sydney NSW | 22 Jul – 15 Nov | Ern Malley: The Hoax and Beyond
HEIDE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
7 Templestowe Road, Bulleen VIC |
| 17 Jun – 03 Jul | Love, Thieves and Fear Make Ghosts:
old tales and new forms of Japanese ghosts
JAPAN FOUNDATION GALLERY
Shop 23, Level 1, Chifley, Sydney NSW | 23 Jul – 29 Aug | Daniel Templeman
GALLERY BARRY KELDOULIS
285 Young Street, Waterloo NSW |



satellite espresso bar

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tuesday – sunday