

No Single Thing

PhD Exhibition, Katie Lee

26th February—1 March 2019

This body of work has emerged from two somewhat contradictory concerns. On one hand, I have been interested in how artworks often seem to become static ‘objects on display’ when they are in gallery spaces, rather than maintaining any sense of process or potentiality, and sought methods of practice to resist this. I have considered ways that might trigger a shift in our habitual mode of thinking in order to produce an outward movement from the interior space of the gallery (set) to something that is in flux and might possibly change (reset).

However, that we often perceive the world in a fixed way has implications politically and socially. Because a mode of thinking that seeks certainty and assumes stability, influences the forms that we make, the spaces that we create and the methods we use to order and author the world around us. The form, ordering and patterning that this mode of thinking produces— is the second preoccupation in my work.

This cross-section of ideas is presented here as a vocabulary of forms and habits that we use to teach, count, order and understand the world around us, along with the explicit human gestures and processes required to enable such systems.

Throughout this PhD I have researched physical, social and philosophical factors that influence our perception and considered why a dominant mode of thinking in the West seems to perceive the world around us as static and unchanging, rather than emergent and dynamic. Rather than maintaining a divide between opposing perspectives, my concluding thoughts are hopeful that we may instead continue to flip between more than one mode of thinking, allowing for a constant oscillation to occur between the stable and the dynamic. Holding on to *no single thing*.

Practice Notes:

Bilateral stimulation is a rhythmic oscillation of stimulus applied to the left and then right side of the body. The stimuli can be audible (ticking), visual (moving one's eyes) or tactile (tapping). Some psychologists use bilateral stimulation to reduce anxiety in patients, because one of its purported results is said to be a distancing effect. That is, through experiencing bilateral stimulation in one of the above ways, something that may have been clearly and singularly focused in our mind, somehow begins to appear more distant and further away.

The Foucault pendulum is named after Léon Foucault (1819-1868) and reveals the rotation of the earth. By suspending a pendulum from a fixed point and indexing its plane (for example by using a grid below) Foucault's experiment in 1851 showed the world for the first time how a pendulum in motion will remain in a single plane with the north or south pole, while the earth beneath it rotates. This discovery was hugely controversial because it put to rest centuries of debate about whether the earth was still or in movement. Plato and Aristotle in particular had firmly maintained that the earth was stationary and around it the heavens moved. These ideas were taken up and then defended vigorously by the Church who taught that this Earth-centric conception of the universe was part of God's perfect design. During the Inquisition, any idea to the contrary was punishable by death. Although many scientists and thinkers before Foucault believed that the earth rotated, none could find a way to (or dare to) prove it empirically. Therefore, Foucault's experiment in 1851 was considered the first time that the rotation of the Earth was proved unequivocally.

Arabella Frahn-Starkie is an emerging artist focusing on dance and the body as a choreographic tool. She attended the Victorian College of the Arts, where she received a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Contemporary Dance) in 2016. Arabella is driven to use the body in her work, as she believes that at the junction of the artwork, audience and artist, is a sentient and volatile body. In creating her own work, she often collaborates with artists from music, film and visual arts backgrounds, letting the processes inherent to these neighbouring forms influence her own making. She enjoys appropriating tropes— the use of space, timeframe, materials, tools and modes of viewing characteristic to these forms.

In addition to myself and Arabella Frahn-Starkie there are eight other performers that make up the work *In Vigil* and this exhibition would not have been possible without their generous participation. Each of these performers are artists who have an interest in time based and spatial practice. Thank you to Nick Archer, Beth Arnold, Melanie Irwin, Robert Downie, Brigit Griffiths, Nia Johnson, Kari McInnery McRae, Simone Nelson, Camille Thomas.

Thanks:

There are countless people to thank in the realisation of this project, specifically and more generally across my four years of study. In relation to this project I wish to acknowledge the significant contribution of Cate Consandine, Arabella Frahn-Starkie, Mark Friedlander, Tessa Laird, Kari McInnery-McRae, Brigit Ryan and the staff at The Margaret Lawrence Gallery. More generally I include Andrew Sainsbury, my family and dear friends, and the wonderful artists in the LAST collective who all support me and which means that I never work alone.