



REVOLUTIONS Elizabeth Delfs

"I am an interdisciplinary artist and my practice sits between garment and the built environment and my work explores the rendering of space through objects that vacillate between habitations and figurative sculpture articulated by the reciprocal transference of qualities from the body (organic) and the built environment (inorganic). It questions notions of gender, beauty and the relationship between dress and building, two aspects of design which find their point of origin with the body. Applied to the body, the objects envelope and distort the silhouette, and installed create an unfamiliar sensuality by erupting from surfaces recalling corporeal and architectonic topography."

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REVOLUTIONS: YOU CAN GO YOUR OWN WAY

At the crux of a revolution is a desire to change, to rethink how it is that we are governed to live. It doesn't necessarily have to be a significant movement that completely overthrows the established powers, but perhaps a subtle shift in one's thinking, or even how we choose to engage with the space around us. I begin to wonder this as I contemplate Delfs' new body of work which is slowly rotating, one revolution at a time.

Space as a concept is central to many disparate areas of study with diverse meanings, from physical architectural spaces to mathematical space to behavioural notions in relation to private and public spaces. Within these areas of study lie a common understanding of space as an extension of the world around us, the distances and relationships between the people and things that exist among it. Throughout Delfs' interdisciplinary practice, a language has developed that sits comfortably within a number of these fields: architecture, design and the visual arts. Within these practices exists a commonality to develop a synthesis between concept, material investigation, design and structure. Within her work, Delfs blurs these boundaries, questioning our understanding of the spaces within our built environment, and how we engage with them.

In Revolutions, Delfs attempts to diffuse the boundaries between exterior/interior, object/surface by questioning the locale of the viewer to the work within the space in which it is installed. While viewing the works, the feeling is one of being completely enveloped; wearing the space as we would a garment, wrapped in, as Delfs describes "undulating folds, progressions of single repeating forms implying continuous expansion protracted stillness, with a delicate sense of equipoise." What emphasizes this immersive illusion is the non-orientable nature of each sculptures' topography which echoes the mathematical properties of the Möbius band; forcing the viewer to question and explore the ideal viewing point. Yet perhaps there isn't one.

Delfs' earlier work had been designed with the body in mind, and resulted in documentation on the body and was displayed as photographic stills in exhibitions. This work was concerned with the body as the intersection between architecture and fashion. The work in Revolutions has sidestepped the direct reference of being situated on the body, appearing more as anthropomorphic, organic architectures. Their shapes are loosely based on elements of the body such as the curvature of the spine supporting the core of the body during movement, or the skeletal structure of the rib cage protecting the lungs. These works exist as both a sturdy structure, protecting against the elements with the malleability of textiles adapting to the wearers' - or inhabitants' - movements and varying circumstances.

Delfs' world is created through a binary language of opposites such as; strong/soft, permanence/impermanence, gendered/genderless, nature/culture. It is also one in which the inhabitant of these organic infrastructures can decide how it is they choose to engage with them. Potentially worn as a garment or lived in - which in this circumstance is simply a matter of how you look at it.

As the work gently rotates on its axis, the outer layers of tulle softly curve the edge creating what looks like an exoskeleton, gradually folding in on itself. The effects of the texture of the work seem to change all the time, completely subject to the situation and vantage point it is seen from - light seeping from the front door being diffused through the many layers of tulle, and the overlap of warp and weft creating a subtle movement through moiré patterning revealing complex shapes that shift between two and three dimensions. The effect of this movement distorts the interior and exterior of the works, as well as what exists beyond that. The hard lines of the corners of the walls seem to soften; the right angles of the room seem more obtuse. The tension within each piece is subtle as they are installed to allow for a natural drape, and are manipulated to hang defying gravity. Soft flares of colour erupt from the edges creating an emphasis on the design of the pieces while also producing a visual interruption between the floating surface and the space within.

The figurative sculptures are at once gestural and performative, awaiting activation from the viewer. As Clare Peake writes of the work; "Their collapsible, flexible nature resists gravity as the forms try to animate themselves in their search for these bodies."¹ What that body is or could be is merely suggested, though considering previous works it maybe the musical body of a dancer, or the gait of a model on a runway, or the blossoming architecture of built forms.

The relationship between these works and the body is symbiotic - like a foreign body that envelops its host. In exchange for the benefits it provides, the body activates it and brings to it a new life. It is a sideways glance at how we could engage with the built environment, adding a new perspective to how we construct the spaces and places we live in, as well as the structure of it. Here, Delfs has assembled a practice that positions her somewhere between artist, designer and architect, all practices that bare heavy influence on the way we live and in doing so Delfs creates her own spaces: they are revolutions, reactive and responsive to both their environment, be it the body - both architectural and figurative - and to their maker manipulated by revolutions, literal and metaphorical.

Marc Springhetti
March 2010

¹ Clare Peake, Spectacular Skeletons, Artist in Profile:
Elizabeth Delfs, Tête-à-Tête Issue 4 2009

ABBREVIATED CV

Elizabeth Delfs

Academic Qualifications

2006 Bachelor of Arts, Fashion and Textile Design, Curtin University of Technology, WA

Solo Exhibitions

2010 Revolutions, Free Range Gallery, Perth WA
2009 Collapsibles, Alda's Gallery and Project Space, Perth, WA
2008 Body, Provocation, in collaboration with Robyn Beeche, Guildford Lane Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
2007 The Space Between, HASSELL, Melbourne, VIC
2006 The Overlap and The Intersect, with Britt Salt, Fremantle Arts Centre, Fremantle, WA

Selected Group Exhibitions

2010 Beyond Garment, West Australian Museum, WA
2009 Prelude, The Arcane Bookshop, Perth Fashion Festival, WA
2009 Melville Art Award, Melville Civic Centre, Melville, WA
2008 Skin to Skin, Perth International Arts Festival, Fremantle Arts Centre, Fremantle WA
2007 economy, with Ric Spencer and Britt Salt, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, Northbridge, WA
2005 Talente, International Trade Fairgrounds, Munich, Germany EU
2005 MATTEReality, Moores Building Contemporary Art Gallery, Fremantle, WA
2005 5th Biennial International Juried Wearable Expressions Exhibition, California USA
2005 Off the Wall, Curtin Graduation Exhibition, The Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, WA

Grants and Awards

2009 Development Grant, Young People and the Arts, Department of Culture and the Arts WA
2008 Distribution, Young People and the Arts, Department of Culture and the Arts
2008 Winner, Sculpture Category, Melville Art Award
2007 Quick Response Grant, Young People and the Arts, ArtsWA
2005 Travel Grant, Faculty of Built Environment, Art and Design Department, Curtin University
2005 International Art Flight Grant, ArtsWA

Residencies

09/10 Moores Building Contemporary Art Gallery, Fremantle, WA

Bibliography

Peake, Clare, Spectacular Skeletons, Tete A Tete, Issue 4, 2009
Unreich, Rochelle, A New Chapter, Inside Out, Mar/Apr 09
Vickers, Kate, Rising Stars, Insite: Scoop Home and Design Series, Autumn 2009
Spencer, Ric, Body, Provocation: Sudden Provocation Eliciting Response, Catalogue, 2008
Spencer, Ric, Up Close and Personal, The West Australian, February 2008
Christmass, Pip, Fashion Game Unzipped, The West Australian, February 2008
McKnight, Lia, Skin to Skin: A Dialogue Between Art and Fashion, Catalogue, 2008
Wheat, Cassandra, Monument, 2007
Crafti, Stephen, Indesign, 2007
De Rose, Jennifer, Fly Away, Interior Design 2007
Nicholls, Andrew, Elizabeth Delfs and Britt Salt: The Overlap and The Intersect, Catalogue, 2006
Travers, Sophia, Young Talente Time, Craft Australia, 2005

Collections and Commissions

Private collections Perth, Melbourne and Sydney
Housing Foundation, Percent for Art, Public Art, Northbridge, WA

Related Professional Experience

2010 Judge, Plasticity Fantasticity International Student Design Idea Competition, Landscape Architecture Department, RMIT University
09/- Exhibitions Manager, Alda's Gallery and Project Space, Perth WA
2009 Judge, Young Originals Art Award, Central TAFE, WA
08/- Grant Panelist, Young People and the Arts, Department of Culture and the Arts, WA
2009 Gallery Assistant, Perth Galleries + Sotheby's, Fremantle, WA
08/09 Internship, Studio Assistant, Studio Jean Shin, Brooklyn, NY
08/09 Internship, Research Assistant, Sharon Loudon Studio, Long Island City, NY
2008 Guest Speak, HUB Furniture Design Melbourne, VIC
2008 Guest Lecturer, Department of Art, Edith Cowan University, WA
07/08 Sessional Tutor, Department of Art, Curtin University of Technology, WA
2007 Featured on Sunday Arts, ABC TV, May 07

REVOLUTIONS

Elizabeth Delfs

Opening Thursday March 4 from 6 to 8
Exhibition runs 5 to 16 March 2010
Open Tues/Wed/Thur/Sat 1 to 6

Free Range Gallery
399 Wellington Street Perth

LIST OF WORKS

Revolution I 2010
120 x 80 x 80cm
Tulle, spray paint, spunbonded synthetic
\$1500

Revolution II 2010
100 x 90 x 90cm
Tulle, spray paint, spunbonded synthetic
\$1400

Revolution III 2010
140 x 70 x 70cm
Tulle, spray paint, spunbonded synthetic
\$1500

Revolution IV 2010
140 x 80 x 80cm
Tulle, spray paint, spunbonded synthetic
\$1500

Revolution V 2010
190 x 80 x 80cm
Tulle, spray paint, spunbonded synthetic
\$1800

All dimensions vary
All photography by Eva Fernandez

THANKS

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free range incorporated
399 Wellington Street | Perth | 6000

