

# GRACE KINGSTON

Portfolio 2013

# Artist Statement

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I am an Australian-born conceptual artist based in Sydney. I primarily work within the realm of painting and multi-media installation, including soft sculpture, photography and painting. Thematically my work is based around notions of the flesh and abstractions of the body, specifically where of online and tangential bodies meet.

I maintain that online and modified bodies are both stages for rhetorical display and are therefore best understood as loci before they are flesh. My work contextualises within a set of art historical boundaries and references the authorial process common to the construction of an online identity and the composition of the 'body'. Both bodies – ethereal and corporeal - are fictions and therefore they proceed from an act of sustained and creative authorship.

# iMoss Series

Arteles Residency, Hämeenkyrö, Finland > 2012

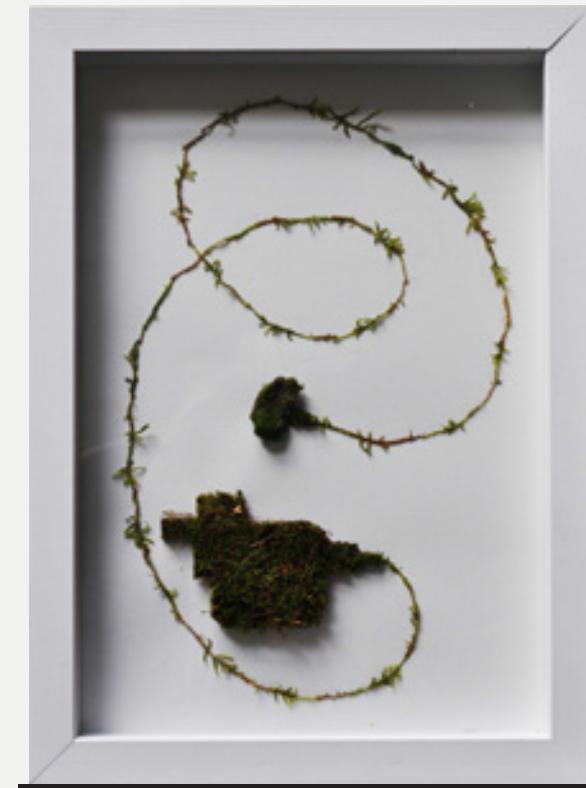
An experimental series continuing my investigation into technology and 'living' environments completed during my residency at Arteles in September



'iMoss Phone', 2012  
Sphagnum moss, rag, paper, box frame.



'iMoss Headphones', 2012  
Sphagnum moss, rag, paper, box frame.



'iMoss Charger', 2012  
Sphagnum moss, rag, paper, box frame.

# Moss Series

Arteles Residency, Hämeenkyrö, Finland > 2012





'@' Moss Stencils, 2012

“ If a tweet falls in a forest  
and no one is around to hear it,  
does it make a sound?

Moss Stencils is a series of work completed during a studio residency I held at Arteles Creative Centre in Hämeenkyrö Finland in September 2012. The work came as a response to the lush forests surrounding the residency in addition to continuing my fascination with virtual spaces in an embodied and figurative state in order to make “real” the self that exists only in signified space.

By carving phrases and symbols of our virtual life into the wilderness, the pieces acted as a kind of anti-street-art. While the work was in a public environment, it stands in stark contrast the urban setting that characterises the street-art genera. This work was also a removal of material in the environment, rather than an addition. The rural setting of the pieces sought to parody the semi-rhetorical nature of social networking sites.

“ The Arteles residency has been the ideal setting for me to expand on my practice. After recently completing the long-term project of my MFA in Sydney, I was ready to spend some concentrated time on pure experimentation. I was inspired by the varied practices of the other residents, the huge facilities and the forest surrounding the Creative Centre. I had the time to go in a lot of different directions as well as completing a sustained body of experimental pieces with natural materials.

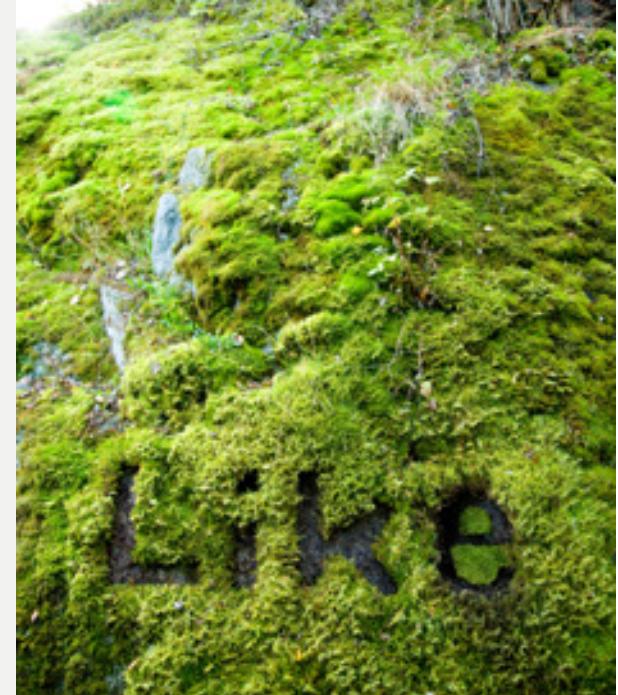
Specifically, I aimed to consider how technology is heavily intertwined with our lives, even in non- urban settings. To do this I reversed the dynamic of street art - a permanent mark seen by many in the city - to ‘Moss Stencils’, icons of social networking and technology etched into a rural environment. These marks are transient, and seen by few. Familiar symbols and phrases such as ‘Like’ makes a playful juxtaposition within a non-built setting, and perhaps reminds the viewer how much of the world around us is mediated by our devices.”

# Featured on ‘New Work Friday’ for The Art Life Blog

# Part of the Arteles Catalogue, 2012, September residents



'#?' Moss Stencils, 2012



'Like' Moss Stencils, 2012



'Twitter Bird' Moss Stencils, 2012



'Re-Tweet' Moss Stencils, 2012

# Like Exhibition

319 Scholes, Brooklyn, New York > 2013



**“ I will create my own blanket of ‘moss’. Created out of tweet, status and Instagram sized snippets of pre-virtual media (Newspapers and Magazines) I will weave with string a carpet of news, hopes, dreams and opinions into a fabric that mimics the sphagnum moss featured in the photographic series done in Finland.**



This body of work continues my fascination with translating the virtual world back into the real environment, and pays homage to the millions of contributions made to online social networking platforms daily.

# Featured in article by Tyron Butson  
'Carving a New Niche for Herself', 2013

# MOST

## Marrickville Open Studio Trail

Skunkworks Gallery & Sashimi Studios > 2013

# Exhibited as part of Art Month Sydney



# Domestication series

Arteles Residency, Hämeenkyrö, Finland > 2012

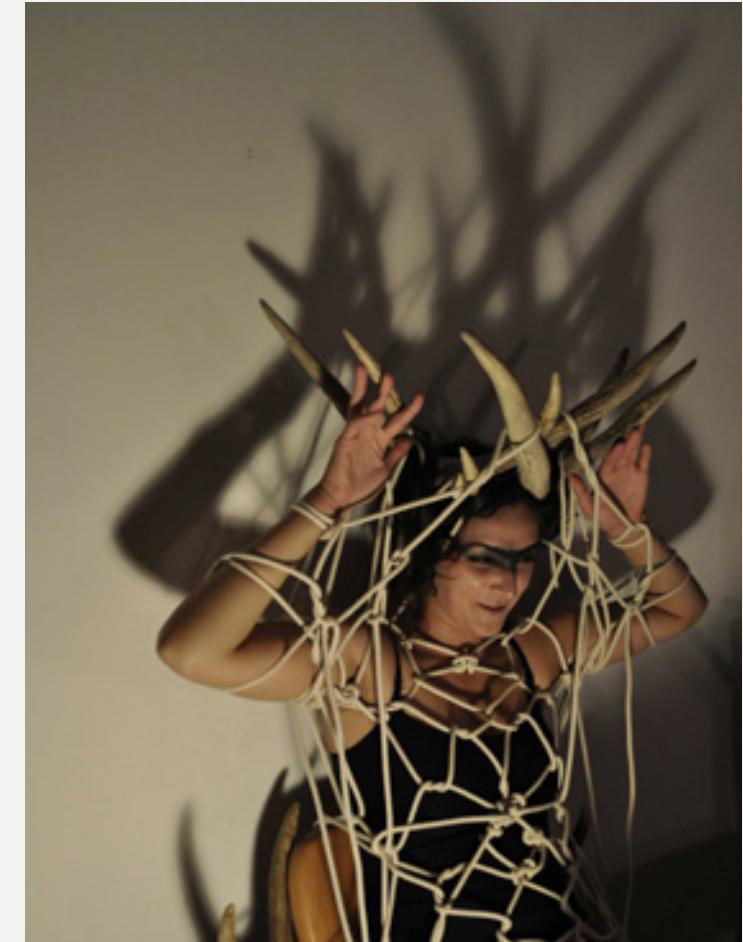




'Domestication', 2012. Rope, horns, Grace Needelman



'Domestication', 2012. Rope, horns, Grace Needlman



'Domestication', 2012. Rope, horns, Grace Needlman

# Grace + series

Pop-up Gallery, 28 King Street, Australia > 2012

# Finalist at the 61st Blake Prize, 2012



Grace + is my fictional online Social Networking Site (SNS) made real. SNS can now be seen as a substitution for the traditional community role of the church, whereby people gather there daily to 'worship', gossip, share major life events and publically comment on the goings on in their community.

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**Grace +attempts to bring the social network back into the real world. Visiting the Grace + pop up gallery visitors can meet the artist, mix with her friends, share likes and dislikes and perhaps even take photos, leave comments, or hook up. Kingston's parodic take on the social network is humorous and revealing. Like.**

# Andrew Frost, 'Sydney Morning Herald', 2012.



'Grace +' MFA Exhibition. Artists own pop-up gallery at 28 King St, 2012.



“ This created environment is reminiscent of an identity that is culturally shaped and socially ordered

Grace+ is a social ‘habitat’, translating social networking from its online form, back into the real. The installation featured artworks and domestic furniture/objects so interconnected by rope that there may not be any more room for you to fit within it. The exhibition created an environment that symbolised constructed postmodern identity building.

The installation was manicured, with every item carefully placed for display. This need for constant editing and omitting out the ‘real’ occurs as the boundaries between our public and private life continue to blur. The need for performance becomes more necessary as we are encouraged to share more of ourselves.

“As densely networked, highly malleable, and ultimately virtual spaces, social networking sites elude traditional means of exploration. Grace Kingston’s artistic practice seeks to address this void, materialising our virtual spaces in an embodied and figurative state in order to make “real” the self that exists only in signified space. In a strangely apt paradox, by materialising our online lives Kingston’s installations emphasise the very absence of the bodily in the virtual spaces we now occupy.

A network of ropes cage and bind bodies that are absences more than presences, connected with a taxonomy of objects that seem so inseparable from the bodily shape that they distend and distort it until it is no longer the familiar humancentric form. Truly “a lack to fill a shape”, such sculptures make real a new process of signification, and consequently a new kind of subjectivity that is arising in contemporary culture. Rather than absence and presence determining the shape of a subject, it is the patterns of connectivity that delineate the space in which “I am”.

# Natasha Wolf

The installation was exhibited as a pop-up in an empty shop. In doing so, the work aimed to situate itself within the context of the conceptual discussion – an every-day location. In doing so, the work was able to interact with the every-day viewer, as well as temporarily define the entire space into the image of its own identity. In this way, Grace+ can also be viewed as a Happening, requiring the participation of the audience to be realised.

Reviewed in the Sydney Morning Herald, 'The Age' and online at 'Art Life'.



Grace + Pop-up Exhibition opening. © Briannamayphotography

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# Installation at NIEA Residency

NIEA Residency @ The Rocks, Sydney > 2012

# Exhibited as part of Art Month Sydney





'Dan' Performed installation, 2012



'Noah' Performed installation, 2012



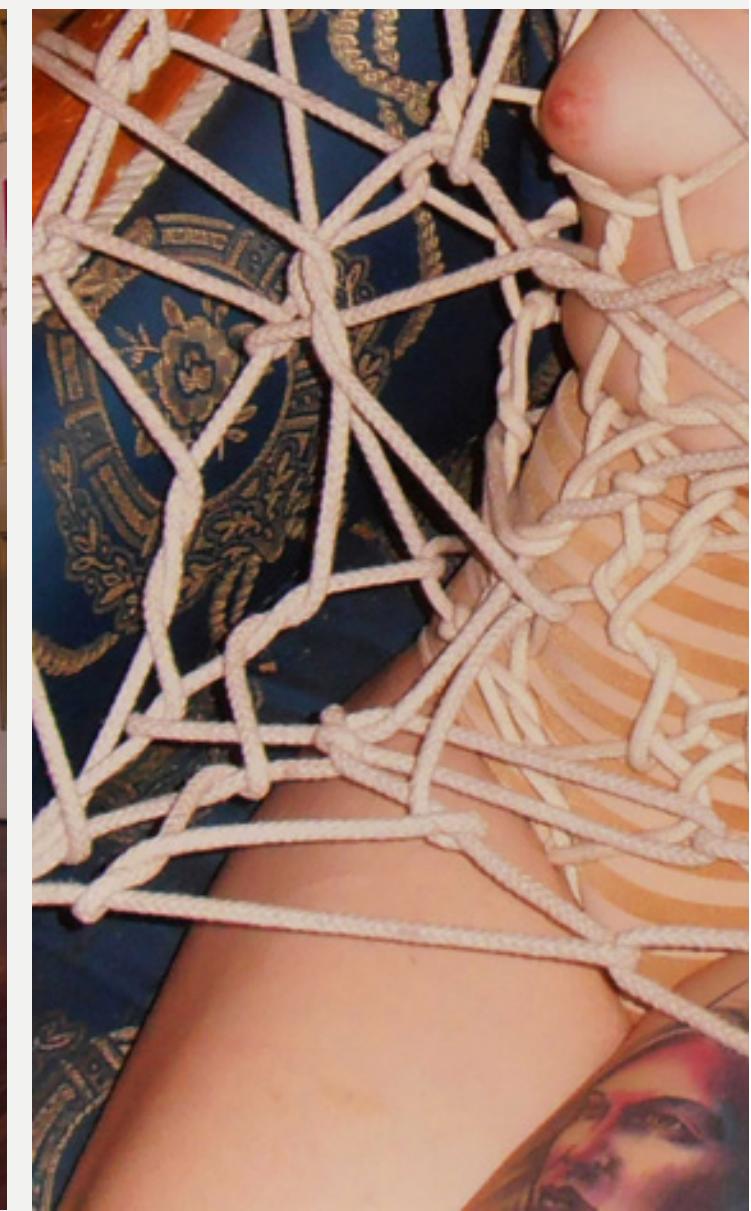
'Tamara' Performed installation, 2012

+1 was an experimental exhibition that refined my ideas surrounding the networked body within an environment in preparation for the Grace+ installation. It was my first venture into networking a physical environment, that ultimately eclipsed the presence of a body in the later works.”

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We are voluntarily soaked in the ‘google gaze’. Therefore the significance of online interactions is now parallel to those that take place in ‘the real world’

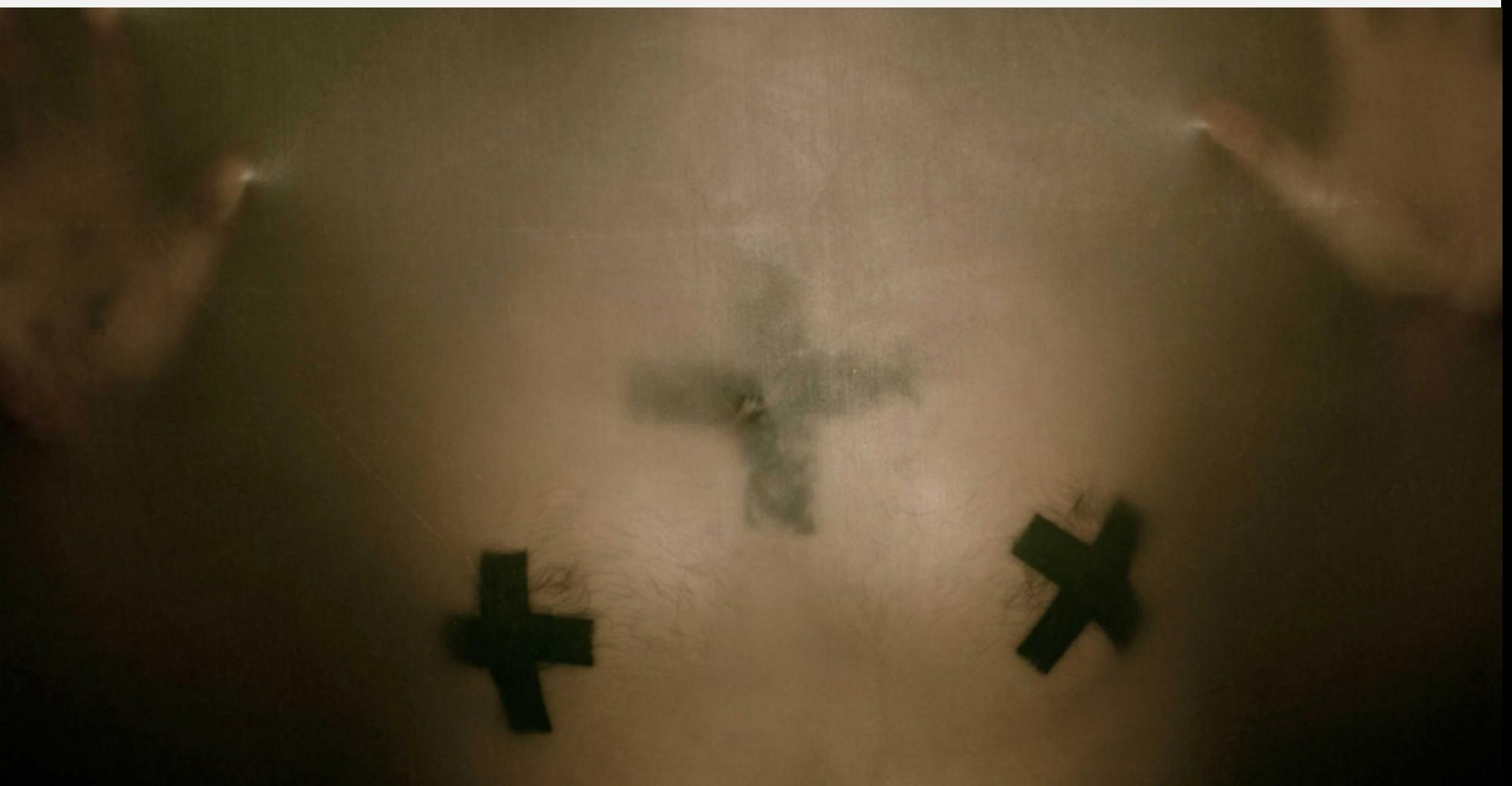
- Stephan Dobson from Grace+ Catalogue



# Transcendent Flesh Sequential Selves

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Final Honours work, COFA > 2009







“ The crux of inspiration for this collection of work is the limits of the flesh – stretching, pulling, perforating, tenderising and constricting - and how, through these acts, we aim to reach a state of transcendence.

This work forms part of my honors thesis, ‘Transcendent Flesh; Sequential Selves’, predicated on the limits of flesh and the exploration of its synthetic extensions. Latex, rubber and inorganic material are used as a metaphor for the artificial body. Whereas my thesis paper is based around the medium of Twitter; this concept stems from the idea that online persona(s) are an extension of the embodied identity and can therefore be considered a new form of costume.

I have used materials and taken inspiration largely from the places that aid in the experiences I seek to reference; sex and fetish shops as well as piercing and body modification parlors. Latex as the primary medium is used to represent simulated flesh, the artificial additions to the body.

# Reviewed by Louise Bourke, The Inner City Weekender (print), ‘Striking Artwork’ February 10, 2012



'Transcendent Flesh – Sequential Selves' @ Newtown Art Seat. Public Artwork, King St, Newtown, 2012

The artwork is wrapped around the cylinder of the Art Seat, a dramatic 2.8 metre structure, and lit at night by LED strip lighting. This is the second artwork to feature in this dynamic space. Mayor of Marrickville, Morris Hanna, said the striking artwork was sure to get people talking, “the Art Seat is an ideal space for young, emerging artists to exhibit works that cross traditional artistic boundaries”



Another theme throughout this collection of work is that of the hammer and the anvil, a metaphor originally used in ‘Venus in Furs’

“You must be hammer or anvil” it is absolutely appropriate to the relation between man and woman... Woman’s power lies in man’s passion, and she knows how to use it, if man doesn’t understand himself. He has only one choice: to be the tyrant over or the slave of woman. As soon as he gives in, his neck is under the yoke, and the lash will soon fall upon him.”

From this I have developed a number of soft sculptures of hardware tools, sex toys and BDSM equipment with fleshy latex and jelly wax, some direct impressions and some sewn translations. The flaccid nature of these mediums subverts the original meaning of the phrase, and intends to be a discussion of the grey area of power relationships that are discovered through Sadomasochistic sexual exploration.

# Bloody Machine performance

Embodied Exhibition, Sydney > 2011

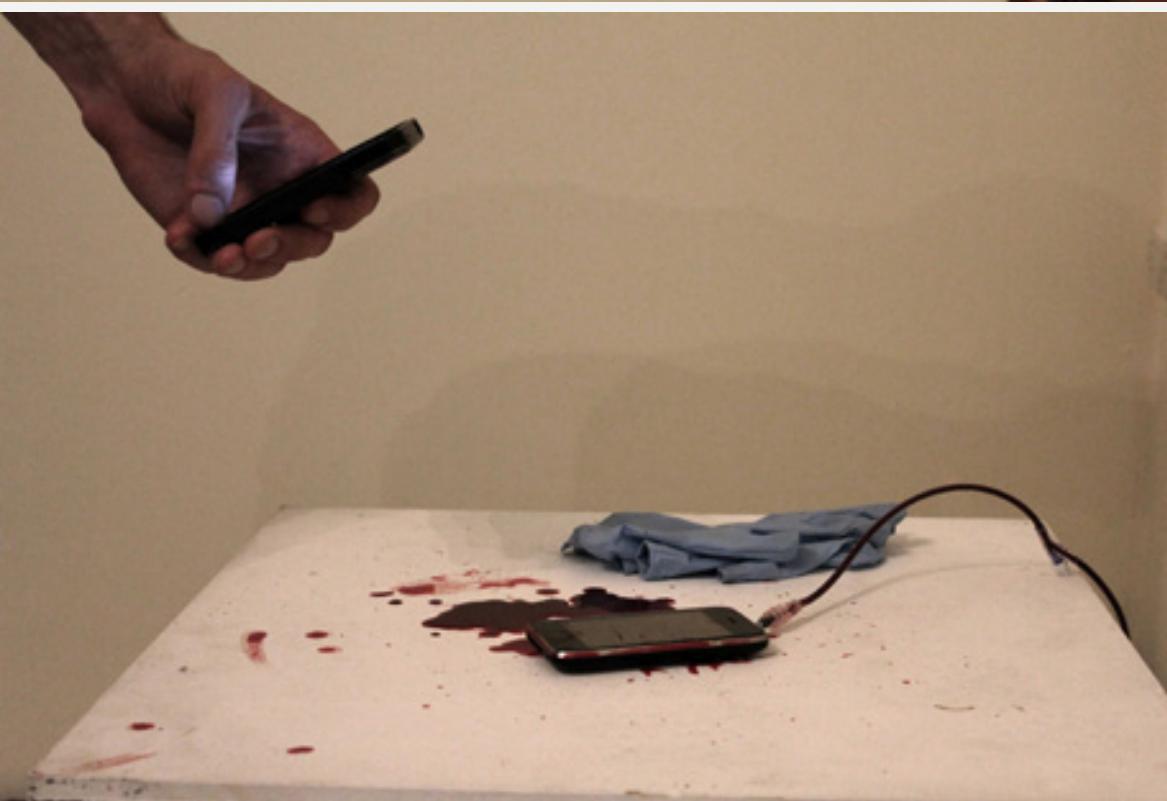




Bloody Machine is an endurance performance piece, which seeks to appropriate retro imaginings of the future of computers with people, and juxtapose it with the reality of contemporary technology.

Early discourse around Cyborgs and cybernetics, such as those featured in Neuromancer and Snow Crash, had a tendency to focus on the literal aesthetic of computers ‘plugged’ into people. Or featured the idea of a personality ‘downloaded’ into the machine, leaving the organic body useless. However the reality has been much less extreme but just as dependent. The body is still left ‘untapped’ in relation to the machine, yet copies of the data that relate to us as individuals are stored on a number of our personal machines (laptops, phones etc) as well as those kept by government and corporate agencies.

I set up a lead from a vein in my arm, and later from a bag, and ‘plug it into’ an iPhone. As I bleed the device sustains damage to its hardware and I weaken from blood-loss, thus creating a race to see who will pass-out/shut-down first.



As a result of this performance I was awarded the COFA travelling scholarship, so that I could present the documentation of the performance and an accompanying paper at the 'Scandal in Culture – Taboo, Trend, Transgression' Conference in Wroclaw, Poland in November 2011

This later resulted in my first International journal publication 'Bodies in Flux' in the first volume of the conference findings:

VOLUME 1: SCANDAL IN EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN CULTURE  
edited by: Bożena Płonka-Syroka, Magdalena Dąbrowska, Joanna Nadolna, Małgorzata Skibińska. Warsaw 2013 (Wydawnictwo DiG)