

9 October 2018

Lili Reynaud-Dewar: *Teeth Gums Machines Future Society* / Alicia Frankovich: *Exoplanets*

A future beyond existing binaries is at the heart of the work of French artist Lili Reynaud-Dewar and New Zealand artist Alicia Frankovich.

With Melbourne Festival, Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA) will present the Australian premiere of Reynaud-Dewar's *Teeth Gums Machines Future Society* alongside *Exoplanets*, a new MUMA commission by Alicia Frankovich from 6 October - 15 December 2018.

"Lili Reynaud-Dewar and Alicia Frankovich present powerful speculations of a post-humanist future. Deeply attuned to a need to move beyond the binaries of the past, these artists are brought together for the first time at MUMA in two exhibitions of recent work that are both declarative and potent," says MUMA's Senior Curator, Hannah Mathews.

Memphis, Tennessee provides the setting for Reynaud-Dewar's, *Teeth Gums Machines Future Society* (2016). Set against a techno-futurist horizon, the exhibition is made up of a film and expanded installation of sculptural objects and text-based works.

Teeth Gums Machines Future Society explores the city's rich history of civil rights and labor struggles, its musical legacy, Donna Haraway's 1985 iconic *A Cyborg Manifesto*, and teeth grills, mouth jewellery that rose to prominence in the '80s and took off in the hip-hop and rap community in the South in the mid-2000s.

For the film Reynaud-Dewar gathered a group of four local stand-up comedians and gave each a set of custom-made gold and silver teeth grills to wear to prompt a conversation on race, rights, rap, the body, cyborgs and comedy. Their riffing takes place in a black box theatre as well as alongside a performance of Donna Haraway's *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1985) in Memphis' famous Levitt Shell amphitheatre.

In the film, the camera crops tightly around the performers' mouths, highlighting their gold- and silver-plated, custom-made grills. Reynaud-Dewar tackles issues related to the appropriation and transmission of grills as a cultural status symbol. On the one hand, they have been used as an example of ballin' and flossin', namely making a show of wealth and success; and on the other, as a means of hiding the decaying teeth of those often excluded from dental health.

Reynaud-Dewar draws a connection between the cybernetic quality of the grill and Haraway's seminal techno-feminist manifesto, which argues for the cyborg as a figure transcending gender, race, and class distinctions and holding emancipatory social potential.

Reynaud-Dewar chose Memphis for its history as the centre of the slave trade and the Civil Rights Movement, which culminated in the 1968 sanitation strike by a majority of African American workers and the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr that same year. It is also the legendary home of American blues, the final resting place of Elvis Presley, and now a dynamic hub for rap culture.

Special live performance on Saturday 6 October, 3pm

MUMA will premiere a live performance by Reynaud-Dewar. The performance will take place during the exhibition opening with four protagonists (the artist, a comedian, a cyborg and noise artist) extending their roles in the film into the gallery space.

Reynaud-Dewar will also present an artist talk as part of MUMA's Boiler Room series at the State Library of Victoria on Monday 8 October at 6pm.

Teeth Gums Machines Future Society was originally commissioned by the Kunstverein in Hamburg, Museion in Bolzano, and de Vleeshal in Middelburg. This iteration has been supported by Institut Francais and Melbourne Festival. The project at MUMA is accompanied by a book published by Hatje Cantz and supported by the four institutions.

Lili Reynaud-Dewar (b. 1975, France) is a writer and artist whose projects interweave sculpture, video, sound and performance. She studied public law and ballet before turning her attention to art practice and criticism. In 2009 Reynaud-Dewar cofounded Pétunia magazine and in 2015 published a collection of her writings in an anthology titled *My epidemic (texts about my work and the work of other artists)*. Her work has been exhibited internationally, including the Berlin Biennial (2008), the Paris Triennial (2012), the Lyon Biennial (2013) and the Venice Biennale (2015). In 2013, she was awarded the Prix Fondation d'entreprise Ricard.

Alicia Frankovich: Exoplanets

One of the leading artists of her generation, New Zealand-born artist Alicia Frankovich 'explores the interactions of humans with other animate and inanimate elements', says Eva Birkenstock, from the press text for the exhibition, *Alicia Frankovich – Outside Before, Beyond* at Kunstverein für die Rheinlande and Westfalen, Düsseldorf, Spring 2017, see: <https://www.kunstverein-duesseldorf.de/en/exhibitions/archive/from-2012.html> Her works are defined by a sculptural quality, whether they be focused on the body, nature or technology, and consider an equivalency between these materials that is framed by fluidity and cyclic temporalities.

Exoplanets is Frankovich's new MUMA commission and will be presented alongside *Outside Before Beyond*, a temporal exhibition experience from her recent major solo show at the Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf. Together these works include new sculptures, videos, animations and theatrical props (spotlights and theatre curtains) that present mutually overlapping chronologies and narratives within a set of interlinking gallery spaces.

Here Frankovich 'explores the possibility of annulling fixed points of time and hierarchies of experience with works that constantly reconfigure themselves,' irrespective of the audience's presence. Birkenstock continues, 'these moments of transition are equally implicit in each component: an animation shows a sequence of figurative metamorphoses, light shifts from day to night.'

Frankovich's new commission continues MUMA's commitment to supporting artists to make new and ambitious works. **Exoplanets** reflects her recent interest in micro-chimerism (the existence of the DNA of others within our own bodies) and microscopic imaging.

Utilising lab imaging to speculate on the micro and macro worlds that exist within and beyond the body, **Exoplanets** adopts the female karyotype as a starting point to reflect on the known and the unknown, inviting the viewer inside vastly scaled worlds where post-human subjects emerge and disperse.

Alicia Frankovich will present an artist talk as part of MADA's Art Forum lecture series on Wednesday 3 October, 1pm. This talk is open to the public.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a publication co-published by Koenig Books, MUMA, Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, with the support of Creative New Zealand.

Alicia Frankovich (New Zealand, 1980) lives and works in Berlin and Canberra. She obtained a BVA in sculpture at AUT in Auckland in 2002 and graduated from Monash University with an MFA in 2016. Frankovich is known for her performances, sculptures, videos and more recent enquiry into exhibition situations that physically and temporally engage viewers within exhibition formats.

In 2012 she was short-listed for the Walters Prize, New Zealand's premier arts prize and in 2018 was short-listed for the Kunstpreis der Böttcherstraße in Bremen, one of Germany's oldest and most important art prizes for young artists. Frankovich has undertaken various residencies at the ISCP, New York; Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin; AIR, Antwerp; Firestation, Dublin; and Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne. In 2007, she undertook the Advanced Course in Visual Arts at Fondazione Antonio Ratti with Joan Jonas in Lake Como, Italy.

Alicia Frankovich is a current recipient of the Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship at The Australian National University.

Both exhibitions have been curated by MUMA Senior Curator, Hannah Mathews.

Lili Reynaud-Dewar and Alicia Frankovich are both available for interview.

Lili Reynaud-Dewar: *Teeth Gums Machines Future Society* / Alicia Frankovich: *Exoplanets* from 6 October - 15 December 2018 at MUMA, Monash University Museum, Ground Floor, Building F, Monash University, Caulfield Campus, 900 Dandenong Road, Caulfield East. Entry Free. Tuesday-Friday, 10am – 5pm; Saturday 12-5pm monash.edu/muma/

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