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EDUCATION

2008 Bachelor of Arts (Visual Arts & Photomedia), Edith Cowan University.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2005 Empathy, Little Creatures Brewery, Fremantle.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS (SELECTED)

2009 Discordant Natures, Spectrum Project Space, Northbridge.

2009 Fair Trade Exhibition, Kurb Gallery, Northbridge

2008 Waving Not Drowning, Perth Centre for Photography, Northbridge

2008 8.08, Spectrum Project Space, Northbridge.

2008 Bangladesh 2008, Spectrum Project Space, Northbridge.

2007 The Blue Exhibition, The Kurb Gallery, Northbridge.

2006 The Red Exhibition, The Kurb Gallery, Northbridge.

2006 Gomboc Sculpture Survey, Gomboc Gallery and Sculpture Park, Middle Swan.

2005 Northbridge Windows Exhibition, ArtRage Festival, Northbridge.

Give, The Projection Lounge, Northbridge.

BIBLIOGRAPHY/PUBLICATIONS (SELECTED)

2009 Art Monthly Australia, N. Schwarz, September 2009

2009 The West Australian – 18th July 2009

2009 Southern Gazette – 7th July 2009

2008 Southern Gazette – 24th June 2008

2008 Xpress Magazine, issue 1113

2008 Sunday Times STM – 4th May 2008

2008 AMR Mail – 27th April, 2008

AWARDS

2009 Young Artist with Artitude Award

2008 National Association of Visual Arts Ignition Prize

2007 Co-op National Student Art 2007 Annual Design Competition

REPRESENTATION

Perth Galleries + Sotheby's, North Fremantle, WA



221 Beaufort Street, Northbridge | Gallery hours 2-6pm, Wed-Sun

Discordant Natures



Annie Hsiao-Wen Wang

11th - 27th September 2009
Spectrum Project Space

Heavy limbs, heavenly eye

Annie Hsiao-Wen Wang has constructed a work that moves between heaven and earth here. The inverted torso at first seems to suggest partial burial, but on closer examination, we see that the inversion directs the vagina skyward, suggesting an inflorescence or aerial birth. The pull of gravity that greets us when we exit the womb is challenged here by an opening that implies an ascendant principle. The terrestrial realm is manifested nearby by the presence of two hands appearing as if from within the earth itself. As much as the inverted vagina suggests an ascendant energy, the presence of these two hands nearby reminds us of the inevitability of the fall. I see the camera zooming in on the whitened knuckles of countless heroes or villains as they cling to the edge of a skyscraper or cliff face, the tension palpable whether they can hold on or fall to their death.

The second component of *Prayer* occupies the space above us. These multi-coloured flags inscribed with hand written and densely packed text also contain an inherent contradiction. On the one hand they are reminiscent of Buddhist prayer flags, strung along lines to catch passing breezes, activating and dispersing the devotional text. Again, closer scrutiny reveals an inversion: they are not flags at all but shaped to suggest scanty female underwear and the text passages are taken from Germaine Greer's seminal feminist text, *The Female Eunuch*. This preparedness to ascribe unexpected and almost contradictory attributes to her work recalls the observation Roland Barthes made when discussing Georges Bataille's erotic novel, *Story of the Eye*:

For Bataille it is a question of exploring the tremulous quality of a number of objects (a modern notion of which Sade knew nothing) in such a way as to interchange from one to another the functions of obscenity and those of substance (the consistency of the soft boiled egg, the bloodshot, pearly colouring of the raw balls, the glassy quality of the eye).¹

But what are we praying for? As a woman from an Asian cultural background, Annie Hsiao-Wen Wang seems to be alluding to a correction in gender roles here. Perhaps it is an evocation of a more transcendent sexuality, certainly one that transcends the time when bras were burnt and *The Female Eunuch* appeared on the western cultural landscape. Or maybe this work is simply alerting us to the transitory nature of our sexual selves and the inevitability of what goes up, must come down.

Gregory Pryor
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School of Communications and Arts
Edith Cowan University

¹ Barthes, R (1963) *The metaphor of the eye* (J. Underwood, Trans.) in Bataille, G. (1928/J. Neugroschal, Trans. 1979) *Story of the eye*, London, Penguin



Prayer

Installation. Life-size oncrete cast, cotton, string, polyester