

Uneasy bodies of work

WORDS JACQUI BAHR



ABOVE PRAYER BY ANNIE HSIAO-WEN WANG
BELOW ARTWORK BY JANET CARTER



THE PLUG Discordant Natures opens tomorrow at 6pm and shows until September 27, at Spectrum Project Space, 221 Beaufort Street, Northbridge (open Wed-Sun, 2-6pm).

When viewers set foot in the dimly lit front room of Spectrum gallery, they will be confronted by a spotlit concrete cast of a woman's torso, upside down and cut off at the lower abdominal and mid-thigh. Her fingers grasp at the concrete floor to the front of her torso as she tries to struggle free. Overhead, colourful prayer flags made out of G-strings are hung across the room, inscribed with excerpts from Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch*.

The work is part of a joint exhibition called *Discordant Natures*. The two Perth-based emerging artists behind it, Annie Hsiao-Wen Wang and Janet Carter, aim to explore our sense of discomfort and unease in dealing with our bodies.

Hsiao-Wen Wang says her sculpture and installation work examine how the sexual liberation realised in the 1970s has gone to the other extreme and women have once again fallen into the role of sexual objects.

"Ironically, almost 50 years after the feminist movement, we turn on the TV now to see video clips of big-busted women dancing seductively around one man, and the heroes of our youths are famous for being scantily clad and oozing with sexuality on stage," she says.

"How far have we really come and how far have we regressed? And how much do we lie to ourselves about our real power?"

Somewhere in between sexual repression and overt sexual expression, surely there can be a middle path? The heaviness of our overly sexualised culture seems to weigh like a millstone on our true liberation."

Carter has used the inner tubes of tyres as her medium, constraining and binding them in ways that force them to resist their constraints.

"I'm aiming to engage with the ways in which our contemporary bodies are disciplined, constrained and commodified and to investigate the ways in which feminist and queer theory offer opportunities to subvert those notions," she says. **W**

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