

Cluster

Richard Giblett and Andrew Hazewinkel

In their joint exhibition *Cluster*, Richard Giblett and Andrew Hazewinkel offer architectural fields that unfold from the body. Repetition, reflection, puncture and projection are employed to render surfaces that articulate and dissolve, acting both to describe and belie form.

Giblett's panoramic socio-scape in cut plywood *Subcity (While you were sleeping)* 2005 is an expansive table-top diorama, illuminated from beneath with an unearthly green light. Examining the corporate grid of this Lilliputian landscape we distinguish factories, monuments and prisons, amongst a built community of less readable function. Giblett presents us with a vision of both utopian and dystopian potential. We shift between believing we have distinguished the blueprint of the familiar and doubt as to what it is we see before us. Experiencing an omniscient perspective may offer us a kind of master-plan adrenalin, but the motivations of man and ants are ultimately inscrutable when seen from such a sublime elevation.

In the work *Gathering* 2005, Hazewinkel lays out a field of freestanding sculptural forms which function also as screens for the reception of their own image in space. Whilst their outer extreme is like the rounded-off edge of a door, the inner mass of each piece dissolves, adopting the sinuous silhouettes such as those of Brancusi, Arp or Matisse's late papercuts. Each form is at once simple and complex, similar yet unique. By projecting the image of these sculptural forms back onto their own surface Hazewinkel creates a circular sense of reflection and ricochet. We become unable to distinguish between that which is materially before us and the frozen record of what we see projected back again.

Working in different materials and scales, with diverse points of reference, Giblett and Hazewinkel nevertheless share an interest in how we might read agency in collected form, they offer us visions which are at once teeming and silent, fluid and still. They reconstruct the familiar to create sites of open speculation, landscapes of wonder undercut with a foreboding sense of threat or unease.

Giblett's absorbing sculptural tableaux *Subcity (While you were sleeping)* offers us fields of cubed towers — distinct edifices and generic forms repeated. Looking closely, we discover monuments and industrial installations, tightly packed slums and mysterious open frame structures. These structures gather towards an open depression, a rounded puncture in the surface of the work, a glowing green pool of light, into which the built fabric of the city seems to send down a grided network of roots. Alternatively, we might imagine a well from which the city itself emanates and draws its energy. Beneath the roads and concrete foundations of the cities of our daily experience is a vast network of sustaining services and communications systems — electrical cabling, water and sewer services, copper wire and broadband conduit. The built edifices of the city are operated by these embedded systems. The surface of Giblett's cityscape hints at this complexity of sustaining infrastructure by taking on the appearance of the motherboard of a computer, in slipping between macro and micro in scale, what lies beneath, the function and design of the city, is suddenly extruded to describe the surface. In the same way, single features operate at multiple scales simultaneously and a careful eye might discern 1:1 replicas of the tools used to make the work which at first seemed to be just another building — a set-square and mitre box are joined, playfully, by a Rubik's cube.

The minutely worked plywood of this table-top vista is also punctured by an oil rig and the monumental form of a giant sphere, these structures seem to both draw from, and hover above, the green glowing abyss. We cannot read whether they are the sources or the subjects of this power. The massive sphere quotes the plans of Claude Nicolas Ledoux for a 'Shelter for the Rural Guards' as well as Étienne-Louis Boullée's project for a cenotaph for Sir Isaac Newton. The sphere functions as both a romantic homage to the pursuit of knowledge, as well as being potentially a more ominous construction of the city/state/nation, we can imagine this mysterious orb housing a surveillance centre, or bearing an Orwellian title such as: 'The Ministry of Truth'. Giblett presents us with multiple simultaneous conundrums, keeping us looking, and guessing, engineering a tension between understanding and confusion. Whilst we recognise a cityscape before us, what we see is also an abstraction in which details and metaphors collapse together, and whilst the artwork is physically static it operates dynamically in generating meaning.

The minute detailing of the built surface of the earth offers a contrast to Giblett's description of a glowing green underworld. Giblett emphasises that which is beneath the earth, that which fuels the city — oil or uranium — this unholy green glow may describe the nocturnal half-life of the city, or a more malevolent vision of a mechanism for living spinning out of control, sucking energy from the earth, a dystopia. *While you were sleeping* ... seems to precipitate an ominous announcement: What might have happened, we wonder? The city continued its business? The wheels of industry continued to turn? This is a city-industry without human presence.

Sleep takes us on our own journey into the nether regions, as if under an anaesthetic we sink beneath consciousness. Unconscious, our dreams can slip between wonder and nightmare, just as Giblett's *Subcity (While you were sleeping)* offers a mix of delight and threat. In dreams and nightmares we can become profoundly disoriented, we find ourselves in parallel worlds governed by a strange selection of the natural laws of our own experience. *Subcity (While you were sleeping)* presents us with a series of disorienting

inversions, is the subcity referred to in the title the indescribable glowing green space beneath? Or is the landscape we see the subcity itself, has the underside been turned to face us? In looking down into an endlessly glowing green are we in fact looking out into a celestial space, are we already the inhabitants of the subcity?

Hazewinkel's *Gathering* 2005 offers a shadowy collection of figures which seem to have been captured slipping between states of solid form and entities of flesh — an assembly of shape-shifters. Whilst sharing an identical external form, the internal dimension of each sculpture is unique. That which is cut away, or absent, defines the individual in this crowd of standing figures. It is in examining this interior dimension that we are closest to the artist's hand and body, the expressive residue in the work, the line between absence and presence, exists in the trace of the jigsaw slicing through MDF board. Hazewinkel draws with the jigsaw. The silhouette marked out by this line is of a human scale; however what we see is not the reflection of an individual, but an abstraction. This sculptural line cuts in, curling sinuously, gathering bulbous form and mass as well as speed, travelling upwards, outwards and down again — all the time balancing negative and positive space — tracing an edge that will determine sculptural form.

Each component piece of *Gathering* exists in both two and three dimensions. Laid flat, each 'door' has very little thickness, less than a centimetre. In their scale, each door echoes memories of thresholds we have negotiated. Standing, with one 'leg' forward and one back, each element occupies space confidently, striding to claim volume.

These sheets of painted surface are animated by the dynamic qualities they share with the human form, the way in which they step forward, their scale and the puncture of their surface as if human movement has dissolved a passage through each 'door'. Hazewinkel's sculptural forms also have the quality of a crowd, with leaders, stragglers, followers and wings. Like a crowd they can be read as both separate individuals and yet also as one entity, acting with joint agency. They do not wander but are purposeful; they bear towards us intently, but frozen in the activity of movement. They are as still as if they have been captured looking on the face of the Gorgon, they stride no more, like Lot's wife transformed into a pillar of salt, they now bear witness, petrified in the perpetual passage of time.

Hazewinkel has transformed the gleaming white surface of these sculptural entities into screens. They bear the projected image of their own form in space so truthfully that solid surfaces appear to dissolve into the rendering of an edge in space. As screens, they glow softly, they are not so much solid as translucent, and they hold and caress the light that meets their surfaces. They act as conspirators in the fragmentation of their own form. And so what we see is not the definitive articulation of form in space, but the elaboration of a conundrum — the search for truth and solidity — rather than a calming reassurance of the known rules of mass and perspective.

In the manner of René Magritte, Hazewinkel punctures a solid rendering of reality, taking pieces from the jigsaw to reveal the deceit that is the surface. Pictorial space and constructed space merge, art renders illusion, and then turns back upon itself to make us aware that reality is purely a construction of our imagination, a matter of perception and perspective, just as Plato proposes our perception of the world as being like the experience of shadows on the wall of a cave, our construction of reality is based upon our reading of the set of clues before us.

Hazewinkel begins by constructing simple sculptural entities, of formal beauty. They stand and stride with inscrutable and slightly threatening agency. Their surfaces receive multiple images of their own form in space, dissolving their own solidity and establishing a space of hypothetical possibility. He establishes a circular ricochet or echo, each repeat takes us further from any confident assertion as to where we believe the truth may lie, or which form might be the original. Light and shadow conspire to camouflage any truth of surface. Each possible version of what is real or true lasts only as long as the clues we are given are consistent, when these clues point to multiple realities our capacity to make sense of the world breaks down. In presenting us with layered versions of the same view Hazewinkel questions the workings of sight, memory, knowledge and experience. We experience a sense of *déjà vu*, and yet to stop and untangle what it is that we have already seen throws us into confusion. We must question not only the sequence of memory in time, but somehow the interior nature of memory within the grey-matter of our own physiognomy. What we see realised in space before us, becomes an extrapolation of the interior space within.

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