

SUPERPOSITION: Equilibrium & Engagement

Haegue Yang

Lethal Love, 2008
at Museum of Contemporary Art Australia

21st Biennale

of Sydney



Lethal Love, 2008 (detail)
aluminum venetian blinds, powder-coated aluminum hanging structure, steel wire rope, free-standing
mirror wall, moving spotlights, scent emitters (*Wildflower*, *Gunpowder*)
232 x 911 x 587 cm
Installation view (2008) of *Lethal Love* at Cubitt, London.
Courtesy of the artist
Photograph: Andy Keate

Known for working with Venetian blinds, Haegue Yang's work often makes use of mundane, utilitarian objects – cables, artificial plants, wooden pallets, light bulbs, lampshades, frames – taking them out of everyday use and combining them to make large sculptural works and installations. The blinds often provide a means of partitioning space without enforcing separation or division, creating the possibility of a play of light and shadow as they direct us through a maze or other physical environment. Using titles that include words and phrases that direct our interpretation of the work, she is able to incorporate cultural and historical references while asking viewers to immerse themselves in the feeling evoked by her framing of space.

Lethal Love, one of several works that Haegue Yang is exhibiting at the Museum of Contemporary Art, is its own self-contained environment with moving spotlights that bleed through the slats of the blinds to create distorted shadows, while scents with such evocative names as *Wildflower* and *Gunpowder* are released in the space.

An important part of this work, smell can create powerful associations, evoke memories and draw out our reactions to add another layer of meaning to our experience. Similarly, using familiar and domestic items conjures associations that are then made strange by their transformation in the art museum context.



Questions for Discussion

1. What is installation? How does the title *Lethal Love* guide our interpretation of this work?
2. How would you describe the space created by the artist?
3. What do the sculptures remind you of? Even without referring to the figure in a representational way, how do they somehow imply the body in space?

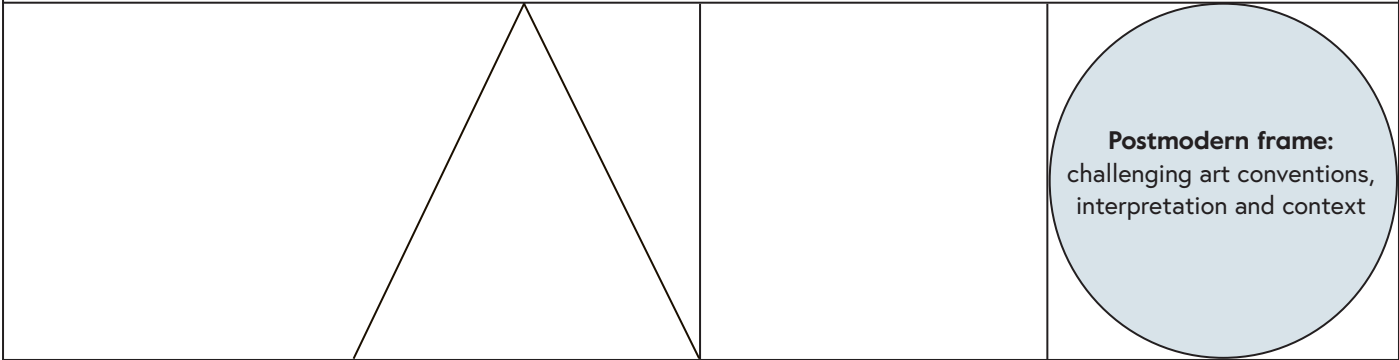
Reference Points

Interventions, constructions and installation work transformed art practice in the 1960s and 1970s, working with space as much as with defined art objects to create immersive environments and viewer experiences. Since then, artists have used architecture, everyday objects, sculpture, sound and technology to make large-scale work or situations to be inhabited by audiences. Some of these artists include, listed alongside the year of their participation in a Biennale of Sydney exhibition: Do Ho Suh (1992), Olafur Eliasson (1998, 2008), Fiona Hall (1982, 2000, 2010), Ann Veronica Janssens (1998, 2012), Cildo Meireles (1984, 1990), Annette Messager (1979, 1984, 1990), Nam June Paik (1982, 1990), Yoko Ono (2000, 2008), Taro Shinoda (2016), Robert Smithson (1976, 2008) and Rachel Whiteread (1992).

Practices and Processes

Responding to this project does not utilise any of the discipline-based practices you might be familiar with, such as drawing or sculpture or photography. Instead, it asks you to think about and work with space, and people moving through an environment. Rather than investigate material processes to make a body of work, this process asks you to use the space you are in to develop a collaborative project. Document each stage of the process.

1. Use your furniture to reshape a space: for example, use lots of chairs and desks in a classroom to create a maze, or work with sports equipment on a basketball court or playing field.
2. Introduce other ingredients: Yang uses scent, but you could also work with light.
3. Create a performance: with your group, choreograph a way to move through the maze – work with synchronised movement and repetition.
4. Record your performance: if you are using a camera phone, remember to use landscape format so that you can easily present it on screen or project it.



Postmodern frame:
challenging art conventions,
interpretation and context