

Jo. Scicluna The Calm Before

April 18 – May 9 2009

Enclosure

The syrupy inhale for quiet I see the moment running while sleeping while grinding

This video installation explores the themes of artifice, pain and endurance.

Expanding on Scicluna's recent video practice, the figure in the landscape becomes a motif through which to investigate 'maladaptive' behaviour. This psychological term describes a form of abnormal psychology that arises as a defence mechanism to alleviate or reduce anxiety. It is an acquired behaviour that becomes non-productive or dysfunctional over time. The work aims to present a direct relationship between this psychological space and its symmetrical, 'picturesque' equivalent, where the video installation becomes a symbolic translation of the condition.

Here, the relationship between the figure and the landscape is as direct as it is vulnerable and delicate. The figure's chosen place for respite and spiritual sanctuary is, at best, precarious and yet, she makes every (poised) effort to adapt to, and endure this hostile place whilst maintaining her composure.

The Calm Before is part of an ongoing series of video works that address the conflation of the psychology of place and that driving the self. This series explores the constructed environment's impact on our collective sense of time and rhythm and the subjects' self imposed exposure to pleasure, beauty, pain and fear within these varying contexts.

In this body of video works, the superimposition of simple, irregular sounds have also been used to create moments of prolonged silence or spontaneous superimposition: points at which sounds meet or are sparse, or suggest different meanings through the arrhythmic tempo that emerges.

The Calm Before aims to use video to animate and prolong still photography's decisive moment by only alluding to a degree of permanence in the image. This treatment, coupled with both subtle and overt forms of repetition, is used to perpetuate the psychological themes driving this project. In this instance the spatio-temporal interplay of the visual and aural elements will aim to charge or imbue the installation space with a palpable 'viscosity'.

Jo. Scicluna works in photography, video and installation and has exhibited in Melbourne, interstate and internationally. Recent career highlights include *Strangeland*: a collaborative touring exhibition shown at the Horsham Regional Art Gallery in 2009 and Kings Artist Run Initiative in 2007, and *'what is'*: touring video survey of Australian video art, curated by Kim Donaldson and shown at the Directors' Lounge Video Festival, Berlin, sub urban Video Lounge, Rotterdam, and FABS Gallery, Warsaw, in 2008.