



## **Cue: Laughter**

There is something intimate about the exchange between thought and laughter. Psychologically profound and universally shared, humour is intrinsic to our intersubjective awareness of human activity. Humour as a conceptual critique mobilises insightful deliberations that ultimately serve to enrich the understanding of art and in turn, life itself<sup>1</sup>.

*Snapshot - Take 2* showcases the work of seven emerging Australian artists (including two collaborative projects) whose works inhabit disparate worlds. The artists were selected from a callout by the Outer Space programming committee. The exhibition has become a consolidation of their individual practices, bound by their shared exploration of humour. At a time in history when the world is upside down, these artists lean into the comedic to offer audiences much-needed remission from adversity.

Straight off the M3 Highway, *The Limits to Satisfaction* utilises mechanisms of the comedic to draw closer our existential contemplations. Ursula Larin's souped-up black Hyundai Elantra trunk, emblazoned with 'Never Content' licence plate, is a bold and unapologetic monument of discontent. The litany of gold-star decals embellishing the lid appear as empty accomplishments for an insatiable suburban legend. Yet, the work is contrasted by the positive affirmation card inset at the rear of the sculpture reading 'I am fulfilled by all that I do'. This ironic paradox offers a door to the audience of introspective awareness and playful quandary - perhaps leading us to a sunny-kind of nihilism.

Tim Meakins' *1 TONNE* 3D-rendered print and inflatable sculpture have a humorous playfulness that challenge our perceptions of weight. The sweetly sinister presence of the tonne metric personifies pressure as a heavy, insurmountable existence, yet the buoyancy of the sculptural material ironically contrasts preconceived assumptions, creating a contemplative paradox for the audience. Meakin's work entices us to consider whether we are weighing our happiness, or are consumed by the weight of our happiness. In our contemporary society, where the looming presence of anxiety-engendering pressures weigh heavily, the work offers a light-hearted reprieve.

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<sup>1</sup> Diack, H. (2012). The Gravity of Levity: Humour as Conceptual Critique. *RACAR: Revue d'art Canadienne / Canadian Art Review*, 37(1), 75–86. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42630859>

Charlie Donaldson's *Listening devices* presents a fictional archive of objects from the Bjelke-Petersen era (1968 - 1987). At first glance, the items appear familiar and banal, however, upon closer examination the calculated incisions reveal the hidden microphones contained within. In the absence of accompanying audio recordings, the eerie silence leaves space for speculation about the alleged acts of surveillance undertaken by the Special Branch of the Queensland Police at the time. Donaldson's astute selection of iconic objects offer a subtle satirical and politically-nuanced commentary on crime and corruption. The meticulous fabrication of these monitoring devices, challenges our representations of truth and demands the audience to consider the potential disparities in power systems and constructed narratives.

Emily Galicek and Kieran Bryant's collaborative paintings *Simpsons Water Mix 1* and *Simpsons Water Mix 2*, and floor-based sculpture *Rags on Sticks* focus on moments of slipperiness in both physical and conceptual ways that link their individual practice. The dynamic visual fluidity of the works portrays a nostalgic fantasy sequence of Simpsons reruns, through an abstracted collage of iconography from the cult-classic sitcom. The translation of digital methodologies to the physical space has given rise to a nuanced intertextuality which is playfully self-reflective. The pastiche of comedic tropes from popular culture utilised in this work, resonate with the viewer and constructs an accessible dialogue to engage with contemporary art.

Inspired by automata and fortune-based machines, Tara Pattenden and David Spooner's *Makeout Monster* is an interactive arcade game that captures the imagination of the viewer. Through the coupling of players, this game-of-chance generates wild and bizarre monster babies with assigned traits that personify their unique offspring. Emulating the retro style of a penny-arcade machine, the intense colour saturation and wild graphics immediately lure participants to the work. The canny psychological dynamic between the small player input and gratifying output, creates an addictive anticipation that holds the attention of the viewer. These unexpected consequences challenge the audience's compassion for the grotesque and questions perceptions of the weird.

From laughter to frivolity, satire to political commentary, *Snapshot - Take 2* interrogates humour as a compelling facet of human relationships. Each artwork tests the limits of the known, traversing both personal and social strictures to emphasise the emancipatory, therapeutic and reconciliatory qualities of humour.

- Georgia Hayward