

YOUR INVITATION TO
ATTEND THE OPENING ON
WEDNESDAY
5 SEPTEMBER 2012
6-8PM

MARGARET SEYMOUR
5 – 29 SEPTEMBER 2012
ARTERREAL GALLERY



Image details:

(Left) *Disappear*, 2012

Steel, electronic screen,
interactive video, surveillance camera.

650 x 400 x 300cm

N.F.S.

(Right) *Shiver*, 2012

Steel, electronic screens, interactive video.

110 x 55 x 55cm

P.O.A

Artereal Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition by Margaret Seymour as part of the gallery's Project Space programme.

Seymour's practice is an investigation into vision devices, ways of seeing, or most centrally to her work, how ways of seeing are moderated by technology. The artist's video installation/sculptures instigate a cyborgic crossover, presenting the viewer with questions of artificial record, techno-reliance and the consequent technophobias engrained in the process of forfeiting the role of observer to automation.

In the two works presented by Seymour, *Shiver* (2012) and *Disappear* (2012), the artist uses the body as the object of observation, the human form as the subject of mechanic vision. In both these works we encounter imagery as an outcome of technological intervention, where what we see has been derived autonomously of human sensors, and is instead built on artificial ocular systems.

In *Shiver*, imagery of a female body is shown on two screens built into a chair, the lower torso forming the seat and the upper torso the backrest. The body is disrupted by a second image appearing from the background-imagery of an MRI of the artist's own body. The two physical planes shift back and forth, transitioning between interior and exterior. In *Disappear*, the focus is moved to an observation of a transient space capturing the movements of a succession of passers by. The filming is treated to a temporal delay, resulting in only the slowest moving or most

stationary parts of the pictures resonating in the image. This blurring, or ghosted appearance presents a problematic objective, mainly, that the seemingly impartial placement of the recording machine, the object charged with documentation, presents only a partial account. As the resulting aesthetic is both seductive and mesmeric, we are tempted to neglect that it is in many ways an unreliable witness. The fragments of record that engage the viewers attention also provoke a questioning of what may be missing, or what, however (im or un)important has escaped our ability to *see*.

There is an undercurrent of anxiety that can be derived from Seymour's works that is rooted in the substitution of vision control. While we may be given to believe what *we* see, and to a certain extent *others*, technology is often reserved as performing the role of a tool. In Seymour's works the viewer is presented with vision machines that are more than aids or apparatus, but rather the chief informant, or to progress further along the spectrum, the *authority* on what we are given to see. This is a cyborgenic shift in the way visual information is presented, and Seymour's bodily references highlight both the 'real' or 'organism-like' attributes of technology while simultaneously suggesting at the limitations or frailty of the human body. One has only to have seen a small selection of sci-fi films in order to understand the collectively entrenched fear of the take over of the machine, or in the very least, the ability to mutinise the human psyche. Brett Leonard's *The Lawnmower Man* (1992) or Kathryn Bigelow's *Strange Days* (1995) offer examples of sensory

invasion and substitution respectively (Margaret Seymour cites Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927) saying "... both women and technology are represented as a threat to life. Embodied in the false Maria, who when captured and burnt at the stake reveals her robot form, the film's message is that technology may be seductive but it is also out-of-control.")

The disquiet of cohabiting with a device that assumes our physical attributes but is designed or remedied of our weaknesses resonates with equal nervousness and awe. It is in this space that either progress is made or war is waged- one helping us to see as we have not seen before, the other loosening our grip on the authority of what our own eyes tell us is true.

Margaret Seymour is a Lecturer in Sculpture Performance and Installation at The University of Sydney. She has exhibited in Sydney, Western Australia and has undertaken a residency with a subsequent presentation of work at the Banff Art Centre, Canada. In 2011 Seymour was the winner of the Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize.

Information and prices correct at time of publication.
Subject to change without notice.

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