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Quiet Terror

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Quiet Terror

Abstract

Quiet terror: Eastland explores edge of unknown

The tension between what we know and the unpredictable, tempestuous nature of reality forms the basis of a compelling installation by UOW's Elizabeth Eastland.

Quiet Terror: Studio, Lab and Experiment on the Edge of the Unknown is the product of 18 months of work by Ms Eastland, who is UOW's Director of Innovation and Commercial Research as well as artist in residence at the University's Australian Institute of Intelligent Materials. The works form part of her PhD being undertaken at the Sydney College of the Arts, Sydney University.

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Quiet terror: Eastland explores edge of unknown

December 6, 2012

Quiet terror: Eastland explores edge of unknown

The tension between what we know and the unpredictable, tempestuous nature of reality forms the basis of a compelling installation by UOW's Elizabeth Eastland.

Quiet Terror: Studio, Lab and Experiment on the Edge of the Unknown is the product of 18 months of work by Ms Eastland, who is UOW's Director of Innovation and Commercial Research as well as artist in residence at the University's Australian Institute of Intelligent Materials. The works form part of her PhD being undertaken at the Sydney College of the Arts, Sydney University.

The video works investigate contemporary manifestation of the sublime, particularly the existential terror of the sublime when contemplating the unknown as it relates to fields of knowledge.

Ms Eastland's works centre around four female scientists doing breakthrough research as well as one of Newton's rarest manuscripts on Alchemy.

Ms Eastland said she approached her filmmaking with a non a priori (no storyboard) form, allowing the films to take their shape with each step of the filmmaking experience informing the next.

Post Doctoral Fellow at UOW's Intelligent Polymer Research Institute Elise Stewart is the subject of one of the installation's works. Her research examines the interactions between cells and organic conducting materials for biocompatible electrodes.

"What struck me was watching how dexterous she was in the lab," Elizabeth said.

"No matter how careful she is, the results are never certain when it comes to biological experimentation. I am very interested in the accidental nature of discovery and creation in both science and art."

PhD candidate Dorna Esrafilzadeh from UOW's Intelligent Polymer Research Institute also features in the installation. Her research into the fabrication of novel conducting bio-fibres for bionics applications requires similar dexterity and concentration to that of Stewart's.

"Her research fabricated a characteristic of a fibre that had not been discovered before. It was accidental and Dorna had to redo her experiment 500 times," Ms Eastland explained.

Also featured in Quiet Terror are Associate Professor Bronwyn O'Brien of the School of Medical and Molecular Sciences, University of Technology Sydney and Theoretical Physicist Fotini Markopoulou from the Albert Einstein Institute, Max Planck Institute for Gravitational Physics, Berlin.

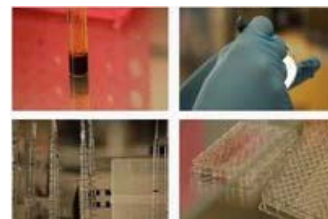
Professor O'Brien has dedicated her life to finding a cure for diabetes. A breakthrough in her research came over coffee with colleagues researching liver flukes and auto immune responses.

After discovering the linkages in their research, O'Brien and her colleagues banded together and eventually isolated a molecule in the liver fluke which re-educated the immune system, preventing the autoimmune response that causes type 1 diabetes.

Ms Eastland said they call the worm juice 'Flukazade' in reference to the liver fluke and the serendipitous nature of the discovery.

Fotini Markopoulou's work has for 20 years focused quantum gravity, the body of research, which attempts to unite quantum theory and general relativity.

Ms Eastland explained that Markopoulou's approach to quantum gravity argues for a



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fundamental reassessment of space in the early universe.

"Her thinking is radical and transformational. I filmed her in Berlin where she draws most of her diagrams on walls and doors in her home. There was a fantastic moment when she was drawing and you could see the stormy Berlin sky in the background. It was a great juxtaposition of theory and the tempestuous nature of reality," she said.

Ms Eastland said the installation linked contemporary science and its roots in alchemy and their continual search for the immortal and immutable.

"We are still fundamentally searching for the Elixir of Life and Elise, Dorna, Bronwyn and Fotini's works all pursue this," she said.

Quiet Terror: Studio, Lab and Experiment on the Edge of the Unknown will be on display in the **Digital Media Centre Gallery, Innovation Campus** from **9am-5pm** until December 14.

Drinks with the artist and openings of the installation will be held on **December 6** (4pm-6pm) and **December 8** (3pm-6pm).

