**Todd Robinson**

**The Wringing Core**

**5 - 30 July 2017**

The Wringing Core comprises sculptural, video and photographic works that continue Robinson’s exploration of the conditions of audience reception; that is how we encounter the art object. This exhibition stems from two initially separate bodies of work - one a series of sartorial studies depicting the interaction between garments the artist created and sensory-tactile materials including water and sand. The focus of these video studies is the performer-participants’ corporeal responses to the materials upon their bodies. The second is a series of wooden sculptures that buckle and bend as if subject to some invisible force.

While suggestive of a wooden henge or perhaps funerary poles the objects eschew any explicit references yet subtly correspond to the body, and its articulations, if one thinks of jointed knees and elbows, and the deviations of our bodies, primarily around a central core or spine. Despite the integrity of wood as a material, these upright sculptures appear to soften, kink, and collapse upon themselves, as if unable to sustain their own weight.

It will not be completely obvious but these sculptures are in fact the result of a virtual simulation. That is, they are the product of a digital animation whereby a series of identical rectilinear forms take on the soft and malleable properties of materials such as foam and putty, which are then subject to forces of compression in combination and other virtual forces.  The results from these animations are preserved and then milled from large wooden posts using a four axis CNC machine process. This process is only obliquely alluded to. A photograph on the wall directly opposite the sculptures shows the arrangement of upright wooden posts prior to this paradoxical transformation, located in the identical position in which they stand within the gallery space.

Yet the photographic image and its simulacra embodied in the series of distorted sculptures contrive a fiction and suggest the wooden forms have undergone some strange transmogrification within the gallery space itself. Notably a viewer cannot observe the sculptures and the photograph in a single view; they must rotate their bodies to face the opposite direction, and then back again in an attempt to study the discrepancies between the actual sculptures and those depicted in the photographic image.

This provides a clue to the artist’s motivations. The artist is interested in eliciting not necessarily a cognitive dissonance, but rather a corporeal one, whereby through the use of ambiguous and fictive materialities one’s embodied perceptual grasp of a situation is undermined. This bodily register is further elaborated in this exhibition with reference to therapeutic body practices such as meditation and relaxation techniques, which feature in photographic documentation of a typed instruction sheet. Instructions from the document provide titles for each of the individual sculptures, such as ‘*I can feel the tension, draining away from my body, washing away from my fingers, out of my fingertips’* and ‘*I shall be completely and totally relaxed’.*In this way, The Wringing Core pursues a kind of corporeal appeal, with the work itself taking shape within the embodied encounter between the sculptural object and the audience.

Todd Robinson works primarily with sculpture and installation. This exhibition draws on an ongoing series of gravity inspired sculptures featured in Oooh (2013), Experiments in Natural Philosophy (2015) and Oooh Aaah (2016). His work embraces an uncanny realism and utilises ambiguous and fictive materialities to engender tactile and visceral responses to the art object. Recent institutional group exhibitions include Soft Core, curated by Michael Do, first presented at Casula Powerhouse in 2016 and touring to regional galleries in NSW and Victoria though 2018; Fantastic Worlds (2015), Rockhampton Art Gallery, QLD; Right Here Right Now (2015), Penrith Regional Gallery; and Sculpture from the Collection (2015), Ipswich Art Gallery, QLD. In 2016, Robinson was the winner of the Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize, and is currently working on a large scale sculptural commission in Nanjing, China. His works are held in the public collections of Ipswich Art Gallery, Queensland; National Gallery of Victoria; Artbank; and Woollahra Council. The Wringing Core is Robinson’s second solo exhibition at Galerie pompom.

**Credits**

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