

Opponent's Review

Eve Miller: *Soft Mechanisms*

Eve Miller's diploma project explores themes of addiction, repetition, anxiety, and collective pressure as they become embedded in subtle patterns of everyday behaviour. It reflects on how the human body is shaped not only by conscious intention and deliberate action, but also by habits and routines that are inherited, internalised, and enacted almost unconsciously in daily life. *Soft Mechanisms* explores the ways repetitive and compulsive behaviours have gradually become normalised within contemporary society.

The work represents her largest installation to date, in which she combines video, objects, and original poetry. In a darkened room, we move among several theatrically lit objects suspended in space, while two video projections unfold on the walls. The almost fairy-tale-like objects depicting various animals (a hedgehog, fox, bird, cow, and bee) were created from altered and upcycled bicycle helmets, combined with different textile materials and unified by a sense of softness that directly refers to the title of the installation. The headpieces are intended to evoke distinct personas, reflecting the tension between individuality and anonymity. "Each character represents a different feeling or mood – mysterious, sexy, crazy, energetic, intellectual, funky – and all of them are completely over the top," Eve told me during our conversation.

When we enter the space and encounter the headpieces together, the experience can feel like stepping into a pack of wolves or moving through a crowded street. Through their shapes, expansiveness, and scale, they evoke a strong physical presence and command a certain sense of respect. The installation constantly oscillates between a peaceful, playful, and poetic atmosphere and one that is anxious and overstimulating – a space capable of evoking unease and emotional tension in the viewer. Visitors are encouraged to try on the headpieces, touch them, and play with them. In some of them, they discover a switch which, once pressed, begins to play a recording of Eve reading her own poetry. When several visitors occupy the installation space at the same time, the recordings begin to overlap and merge into a dense sonic cluster – or, as the artist describes it, "it creates an orchestra." The poems are remarkably compelling – simultaneously contradictory, humorous, and melancholic. I believe her writing possesses considerable artistic and conceptual quality and deserves to be further explored and developed in her future projects.

On one of the walls, a video projection shows the artist performing different characters and further unfolding the stories of these entities. I appreciate that she incorporated her video performances into the installation, shaping it toward a more theatrical, almost avant-garde aesthetic that feels authentic to her artistic expression. Her performance becomes an essential component of the work, carrying a distinct emotional charge and contributing to the installation's layered, cohesive, and contemporary character. I also consider it a strong curatorial decision to present more abstract and turbulent video footage of everyday life on the opposite wall. I find that these three visually dominant components of the installation interact in a compelling way, successfully fulfilling the artist's conceptual intentions. However, I should note that at the time of writing this opponent's review, I had not yet had the opportunity to experience the final installation in person and therefore rely primarily on the artist's descriptions and our conversations.

When it comes to the theoretical part of the diploma project, I found it both interesting and intellectually stimulating. The essay is professionally written, well-structured, and communicates information clearly and efficiently. I would strongly encourage Eve to continue working with text in her future practice, as writing appears to be a genuine strength of her artistic expression.

I evaluate the diploma work with the grade: 1 - excellent.

I recommend the awarding of the title MgA.



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