

*Life is overcoming matter, making matter over into one's image, but also succumbing to matter, bending oneself to it, using and being used by it.*¹

There is something melancholy about the three vertical forms of *An Attempt to Harmonise*. They have been pushed and pressed into the perfect corners of the gallery space then removed, reversed and rearranged into the centre. There they commune naked; so physical and bodily, standing in for and continuing the artists performance and somehow entirely active on their own. Though created through a performative process from Kiera Brew Kurec, they are also changelings themselves at the whim interior and exterior matter and forces.

The conglomerate of matter and material at play in *An Attempt to Harmonise* remember and record the imprint and presence of the performer, as well as bend to the forces upon and within the clay itself. Messy and voluptuous against their sleek frames, the forms are monuments to the time spent and space filled in each of the corners between and by a body and architecture. Though removed and placed centrally in the gallery the traces of clay and hand marks on the wall insist on their ongoing relationship to that particular point where all contending elements united. These traces combine surface, structure, clay, air and the artist's body and, like the whole installation, are a mingling of materials and forces that act upon, on, with, in and around each other and themselves.

Which part of a performance is the performance? When does it start and end? A question posed by many performative practices that interrogate the role of the live, the documented, the photographed, the witnessed and the recorded. Here rather than an audience or a video camera, the clay records the performance that the artist performs only for it, the space and herself. 'Cocktail Mix,' the cheapest clay you can buy, captures the time and energies of the artist visiting each three corners of the gallery space. The clay fills and makes solid the negative space and the air between the artist and the corners. At each corner the walls, artist and the clay meet, wrestling silently, stubbornly while the 'Cocktail Mix' captures the form between the perimeters of the body, the material and the space.

Unlike her regular engagement with in situ endurance performance, Brew Kurec here leaves the site and hands over the performance to the duration and endurance to the clay itself. For each perfect record it displays of surface and interaction, it also betrays its own active matter. These forms are not casts or moulds waiting to hold a more eternal substitute for the performance. They will

not be reused to make something permanent from the impermanent action. These forms in the middle of the room have an insistence in also recording and reflecting their own materiality as they start to slump and tire, bulge and declare imperfection against the constant and reliable stands that may only serve to highlight their organic fallibility over the duration of the exhibition.

In contrast to the clay forms, the framed photograph taken on the day of the initial performance seems a steadfast record- fixed, frozen and belying little indication of the mess around it. The clay forms however are quite sensual. Relative in scale to the height and weight of a human figure, they begin to bend, age and slump like one. As these forms continue to slump downward over the time after Brew Kurec has left, the clay takes on another recording: the demarcation of its own ongoing response to the space and time. The humidity, the temperature, the airflow, the odd careless and curious touch of the audience are all recorded on its trajectory. Porous as it is, it may harden and crumple, it may sag further toward the ground, exhausted from its rigid support. It may resemble an accelerated process of the aging body where each day, hour, minute is marked upon it, rather than just the mark of the artist's hour long effort in the corners.

Rather than a mastery over material there seems a continuing reciprocity between the artist and the ongoing evolution of these material forms. As the artist had lifted her head to take a breath free from clay and returned for another effort measured by the size of her lungs, now the air contained inside the clay material is also exhaled into the immaterial of the gallery space. Once held inside the form, assisting in its verticality, this element of air expelled by the clay's own weight now indefinitely mingles with the former breathe of the artist. The room and all in it has become a sum of seen and unseen forces.

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¹ Elizabeth Grosz, *The nick of time: politics, evolution, and the untimely*. (Crows Nest, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 2004),108.