

Toby Ziegler: Your shadow rising

29 November 2018 | **Melissa Pesa**

The autonomy of the image in the works of Toby Ziegler, a London-based multi-media artist is questioned by the expansion of digital media, and its transformation of our perception of the material world. Advances in technology have prioritised speed and proficiency over tactility and substance, and the traditional concept and production, as well as the hermeneutical aesthetics of a painting, or sculpture, is now varied.

Ziegler's practice is an investigation into how digital forms, and their construction, oscillate between intangible and cartesian space; a constant push and pull between abstraction and figurative, classical composition and digitally generated and manipulated imagery, and the outcome when you attempt to translate them into something physical.



Toby Ziegler, Your shadow rising, installation view at Mona (Museum of Old and New Art), Tasmania 2018. L-R: It'll soon be over (exquisite corpse), 2018, video still, and The human engine, 2018

Through painting, sculpture, and video, Ziegler interrogates the role of the artist in 'Your shadow rising' at Mona – The Museum of Old and New Art, Tasmania. New works reflect on themes of origins, trauma, and transformation, embodied in the inclusion of fire and 'a lump of volcanic rock'; and Ziegler's largest sculpture to date – the show's eponym – a grey 3D printed monument of Rococo forms that look like layers of sedimentary rock.

A large-scale hand-titled *The human engine* (2018) – a faceted, multi-layered sculpture of clear Perspex – is suspended from the ceiling. In its prismatic refraction of light and shadow, it projects the various dimensions of art making, as well as the various dimensions of art making, are visible.

The starting point for this sculpture was a drawing by Hendrick Ziegler, a Dutch Baroque printmaker, draftsman, and painter, says Ziegler. 'He drew his own hand after it was injured by molten metal – an accident that he felt was more of a blessing than a curse because it transformed the way he drew. He used sweeping arches from his shoulder rather than a straight line, and that this process made his drawings for a period to his collection of prints. 'I was interested in the physical processes of transformation in my own work.' Thus, the sculptural piece is a fitting introduction to the overall concept of the exhibition.



Tony Ziegler, Last ray, 2018 © Toby Ziegler. Photograph: Mona/Jesse Hunniford. Courtesy the artist and Mona (Museum of Old and New Art), Tasmania

Subject and medium strengthen in their merger while their narrative is stripped away, literally with an electric sander in three paintings displayed on three separate walls in the gallery space. Digitally rendered images of the human body are translated onto aluminium sheets by hand. Ziegler then partially removes the image, smoothing down sections into a lattice-like grid of the metal surface beneath. A framework of lost information (or data) is suggested, with randomly placed digits that perhaps relate to the arithmetic values of computer algorithms or, products of the digital hand.



Toby Ziegler, *Your shadow rising*, installation view at MONA, Tasmania 2018. L-R: *The violet hour*, *Your shadow rising*, *Empty pond*, 2018 © Toby Ziegler. Photograph: Mona/Jesse Hunniford. Courtesy the artist and Mona (Museum of Old and New Art), Tasmania

This transformation is paralleled in Ziegler's films, which focus on resolution and digital breakdowns. The secondary result of the initial objective, or the physical acts of decomposing, distorting, and damaging the materials, comes from 'slippage' between the virtual, idealised geometry and the actual image. *It'll soon be over (exquisite corpse)* (2018) is a two-channel video work which flickers images found online through Google's image search engine – and retrieval of visually similar images within a specific parameter or criteria. Each upload yields dramatically different results that become less related to one another, but form a ghostly echo to the original. The right-hand screen displays the images of various body parts, and microscopic cells, slowly rotating while the left-hand screen rapidly flashes a plethora of reduced, non-identical representations; city aerial views, musical scores, two hands kneading dough, a sofa, Pompeii embalmed bodies, a boxing match, dinosaurs, pre-cooked chicken roasts, dog underbellies, x-rays, and car boots among others, accompanied by a loud, synchronised musical beat. Its pulse is undeniably effective; resonating within and beyond the exhibition space.

At three-minute intervals, the screening stops and the room is silent, allowing the audience to pause and reflect, or like their digital conversions, reinterpret the image.

Mona - Museum of Old and New Art (<https://mona.net.au/>)

Until 25 March, 2019

Tasmania

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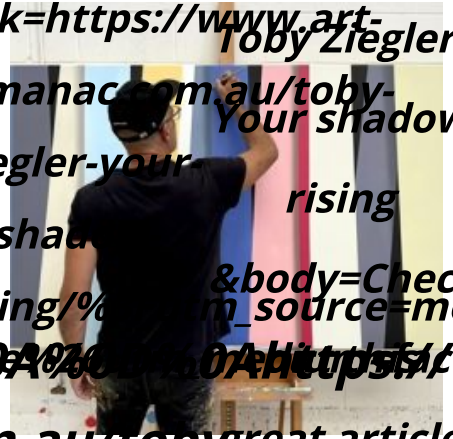
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Sydney Contemporary 2024 | Praxis-artspace | Damien Shen
(<https://www.art-almanac.com.au/sydney-contemporary-2024-praxis-artspace-damien-shen/>)

Damien Shen is a South Australian man of Ngarrindjeri and Chinese descent. As an artist, he draws on these cultural influences to create works of intense personal meaning.

Read more
(<https://www.art-almanac.com.au/sydney-contemporary-2024-praxis-artspace-damien-shen/>)

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Sydney Contemporary 2024 | Australian Galleries | Graeme Drendel
(<https://www.art-almanac.com.au/sc24-australian-galleries-graeme-drendel/>)

Graeme Drendel's 'Static and Silence' comprises oil paintings and mixed media collage works depicting isolated figures of solitude and introspection, even when depicted in groups or clusters.

Read more
(<https://www.art-almanac.com.au/sc24-australian-galleries-graeme-drendel/>)

Great article in the studio: Yanni Pounartzis
(<https://www.art-almanac.com.au/in-the-studio-yanni-pounartzis/>)

Sophia Harloway visits the studio of artist Yanni Pounartzis on a cold, foggy Canberra morning. The cavernous, light-filled space is an informal survey of his practice."

Read more
(<https://www.art-almanac.com.au/in-the-studio-yanni-pounartzis/>)

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