

Practising and participating - Table cloth – drawn and embroidered -Evolving table – sculptural > companion history - BRITT – formalism – textiles, architecture and spaces - Part of the twisted object... The 12 o'clock lunch - They don't have to connect; shared history as women; might not connect - A moment, it shifts and moves - Uncertainty, nuance - Fictive outcome

From With(In) | March 13 - 24th 2023, George Paton Gallery

Britt Salt, Helvi Apted and Shannon Slee met at the hands of serendipity. They were allocated studios side by side in the Victorian College of the Arts's stables. Communing each day for a midday lunch, the artists bonded over a shared interest in textiles, materiality and the sculptural tendencies of fabric.

Where Britt's work recalls formalism and architectural spatiality, Shannon looks to the political and historical significance of textiles and Helvi experiments with wearable sculptures that are at once playful and political. However, in From With(In), these three artists look beyond their divergent practices and conceptual underpinnings towards a speculative future of collaboration.

What runs from the inception of their meeting into this future is a thread. While a singular thread may be indiscernible from another, when united with others it carries the potential to be anything: a shirt; blanket; tapestry. This multiplicity is at the core of Ursula Le Guin's essay *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction* (1986), in which Le Guin contemplates if it is the woven bag, rather than the spear, that propelled human development. In contrast to the spear's destructive, linear tendencies, she finds an overlooked power in the carrier bag. A vessel and a recipient, the bag refuses a single hero, rather finding priority in sharing and gathering. Here, the humble thread is instilled with the spirit of collaboration, which, when woven with others becomes a "belly of the universe... womb of things to be and tomb of things that were, [an] unending story."

The outcomes of collaboration are not only productive, but also rooted in care. In coming together, an implicit promise is made that no sole party will be burdened with absolute responsibility – the load is dispersed, the activity sustained in many hands. Collaboration is of course not native to the myths of Western art, most of which star a singular male artist in a state of romanticised solitude. However, within the soft mess of the carrier bag, this hero is compelled into unease – he is but one thing in a collection of many. By casting our attention beyond the protagonist, the carrier bag opens a vast, boundless and ambiguous field of potential, an infinite web of possibility.

Collaboration is embedded in the past, present, and future of From With(In). Three artists came together, united by serendipitous proximity, to consciously collaborate. Two writers sit together now, entangled in the web of co-creation. On the horizon, an audience will gather to sit at Britt, Shannon, and Helvi's table, collectively embroidering the same cloth.

Written by Izzy Baker and Mia Palmer-Verevis

> Shifting them into a different context... shift in location and medium SHANNON – cataloguing - Feminist - Textiles have a role to play in telling - Gleaning – gathering unwanted potatoes after the harvest - Rather than relying on the rigidity of the spear, they embrace ambiguity. - Gleaning – gathering - What does it look like? - Connection and collaboration - Activating the thread in different spaces... activation of the textiles - What are more like a web than a linear outcome - Performance > Activate the textiles - Why would you have this show? Access point - Slee – imagined future - Why would you have this show? Access point - Uncertainty, nuance - Fictive outcome