

Das Cinema: Episode 5
Transcript: Agatha Gothe-Snape
Interviewed by Nick Garner
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Filming: David Barker

NG

Coming back to what we were talking about earlier: the idea of navigating the intangibility of emotions and the emotional landscape...

A G-S

I think, in order to navigate these emotional territories I reach for things that I can use to describe the intangibility of the emotions and colour is a really good example of that. I want to use the atmospheric qualities of colour and coloured light as well as painted colour as a metaphor for the emotional states we move through... is that a bit more concise?

NG

Yeah. Maybe let's move onto what you're thinking of doing for the next work, with Primavera at the Museum of Contemporary Art.

A G-S

For *Primavera*, I think Katie Dyer, the curator, really wanted to, it's a terrible word but 'showcase' the diversity of my practice. I've been working for many years in artist run spaces as an artist and as a performer and I also have what's not really an illustrative but gauche painting practice that borders on graphic illustration or poster design. All those things are in my practice and I've never found it easy to describe or easy to explain people and it's so diverse and the activities are so broad I think it's hard for people, and me, to try to understand the connection between anything. The connections are there but it's so diverse it's hard to grasp [all the angles] [?] [studio noise] I think Katie wanted to put all those activities in one room so people could begin to draw connections between them. So for Primavera: One thing I have been working on in the last year is working with Power Point, as in Microsoft Power Point, as the main tool for creating text animations. I really love Power Point because it restricts me completely in terms of its capabilities as a program. I'm not a very technical person so I don't want to get involved with any programs that give me too much creative expression. I really love things that limit me. If I get too involved in the hugeness of the world or the possibilities, the endless possibilities of being an

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artist, it's just too much. By using Power Point I can really limit my possibilities and make really clear decisions. Baldessari [John Baldessari, b. 1931] says that every art is just a series of decisions that you're making as you push away all the other choices and for me things like Power Point really do that. One of the works is called *True False Love Consciousness* and it's just a repetitive text based animation that I make with the animation tools in Power Point. When I've done it before the atmospheric quality of that is very strong because it's just colour and light and text. I also have a series of five gauche paintings based on this ordering of colours idea, coming out of different emotional states that I've mapped with mind maps and I translate those mind maps into a series of colours. Their gauche posters and they're very graphic, they look like some relic of late hard-edge Australian abstraction but they also have really fine notations based on the emotional qualities of each colour. They're hovering between things. The third component is my work with Brian (??) which is called *Wrong Solo*, it's a collaboration. We are doing this thing called 'cruising', which is a performance activity that happens in the gallery. It's a live activity where Brian and I partake in this activity called 'cruising' which is basically just like walking but with a slightly heightened awareness. So there's quite a lot of things going on in the gallery. I think they're all about the same thing which is this navigation of the emotional territories of whatever space you find yourself in, whether that be your own body, the gallery or the public space or the private space.

[Concisely:] So there's three works in the exhibition at *Primavera* and each draws on the most direct, pared back, simplest means possible to communicate the sense of the intangibility of emotions and each work also is ultimately about how we navigate out emotions as humans, moving through these emotional territories whether we do that in our own bodies, in our intimate relationships, in spaces like a gallery or public spaces, that is the connection between the works.

– End of First Take –

NG

You were talking about how your multi-sided practice ties back to your work within artist run initiatives, could you tell us about working with ARIs and the earlier stages?

A G-S

I've always been around artists, my parents are artists, I worked as a performer and did my bachelor of arts and it wasn't till quite late that I went to Art School and it became apparent that you have to put a lot of energy into the community if you

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want the community to exist. I also really believe in a place, a Sydney or an Australia that in some ways, in a traditional sense, is on the margins and peripheries in terms of the art world and you have to put a lot of good energy into places like this so that people don't leave. Being involved with Firstdraft and now I run an ARI as well, *The Cosmic Battle For Your Heart*, is really important to the world. If you want the world to be good then you have to make it good. Also for me, having historical connections with older artists is very important too, so understanding how we connect to artists just a bit older than us and artists a bit older than that. Often that's really forgotten in Australia. Through ARIs and through communities this really drives my practice and I guess that's why my activities are so diverse, there's a lot of stuff going on in my tiny brain. [laughs]

NG

So that'll cover where you're coming from. Now let's talk about where you're going. So I guess the question would be... so this *Primavera*, a bit of a 'who's hot' show, how does this fit with your practice, do you now go on and get represented?

A G-S

I think part of my practice and part of who I am is always interested in rigorously critiquing the systems that we perceive and are complicit with as artists and how those systems don't necessarily help us, or the culture of Australia. 'The culture of Australia' That sounds so nationalistic but help us here where we are, we're here right now. So, I'm really sceptical about seeing things in black and white. I was recently in this show *ACCA New* which is the Melbourne equivalent of *Primavera*, so that's two big shows this year and I think I see everything as so fleeting, it's such a fickle world, you can be very popular for one moment but I get a very deep sense that know one really gets what I do, it's still out of reach what I do as an artist. I hardly do anything at all as an artist – I deal with intangibility – so I don't have any great ambitions of how this can propel. I'm so honoured to be in the show but I just take it all with a grain of salt.

NG

That's cool. Now is there anything else you wanted to say when you were thinking about this in the shower this morning?

A G-S

Yeah there probably is, as long as I didn't sound ungrateful about being in *Primavera*.

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NG

No, I like the idea of not being complicit...

A G-S

We have to, as artists that's our job!

– End of Second Take –