



gary deirmendjian – a survey of a broad practice

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catalogue



UWS Art Gallery
Werrington Campus

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notes: All images courtesy of the artist

For further information and a current CV refer to artist's website - www.garo.com.au

curator's statement

This exhibition, explores the broad practice of Sydney based artist, Gary Deirmendjian, concentrating particularly upon his art's practice over the past 3 years. At the core of this artist's work is the exploration of the influence of social conditioning upon the individual. His work concentrates on everyday moments, commonly experienced by the masses.

This theme is articulated repeatedly in diverse forms and media throughout this exhibition, whether this be via his found objects scans, the ECG sculptures or the countless little persuasions wall reliefs. The works act as random records of an individual's experience, which focuses one's attention upon the fact that human activity is but a '*....tiny momentary existence on a speck of dust within this universe set adrift in boundless space*', and this artist is in awe of that uncertainty and the endless creative possibilities which is presents.

Monica McMahon
Art Curator, UWS



exhibition image showing *sediment I*, 2007, and scanned portraits

artist's statement - world view work & practice

In essence, it is the tidal mechanisms of social conditioning that concern my work - influence, cementing of unquestioned attitudes and acceptance on mass. In turn the work finds inspiration in the ever enduring and conquering individual of any time and place, who has come to see beyond their assumed certainties.

On a personal front there has been a lifelong struggle towards a firming appreciation of our oneness as a single species and the fact of our extreme smallness in the context of a vast, humming and indifferent universe. Our tiny momentary existence on a speck of dust set adrift in boundless space is clear. Ultimately it is the felt sublime of this worldview that pressured my expression, and one that still continues to fuel it.

Once a believer I now rest my faith in uncertainty.

I've come to appreciate art as being simply a suggestive form of inarticulate communication. The body and range of my work may be considered to be bound more so by a certain underlying unity of intent born of the above worldview, and less so by any conscious attempt at stylistic unity. Through the work I aim only to show, demonstrate and suggest, without consciously taking any moral or ethical position, and without implying or alluding to any remedy.

Aesthetically the work is concerned with creating a suggestive field of visual and physical experience.

Typically born of a conceptual impulse, a given work is realised through a process of making towards a certain tightness, guided by the sensibilities, as well as formal and site considerations. I lean strongly towards scale, stillness, the out-of-door and the grounded. Material, formal and symbolic elements at play in any given work are quantifiably reduced and aim at common readability.

The idea of actuality - of material, form, object-hood, characteristic attributes and processes - has become a most important element in the making mix. It must however satisfy the filter of sensibilities and must contribute consistently to the intent and potential suggestions in a work.

The potential of awe is genuinely sought as another active and felt element.

What always proves exciting is the lure and resistance of an unknown next step, where a leap must be taken, whether intellectual, aesthetic, artistic, physical, material and/or procedural.

Gary Deirmendjian
Artist

sediment I – *sediment* series

In the sediment series the figures are of adult males un-referenced to any model or image, all encrusted with mud and other organic debris. They are articulated horizontally and are impossibly poised. The bodies appear to defy gravity, lightly contacting the ground typically at the points of the flesh as apposed to being supported by any skeletal and muscular integrity.

Although appearing conscious, signs of self-assurance and self-assertion are far less apparent.

Just as plant forms respond to the surges of the river, here the body and limbs appear articulated as though by the pressures of some engulfing fluid medium in flux. Notions of being carried by unseen forces of ones own context and conditioning, may come to mind.

I like to imagine these bodies as being like grains of sand in a state of slow sedimentary entrapment at the murky interface between river and riverbed, about to be embedded into a fresh layer of some sedimentary bedrock complex.



sediment I, 2007, 86cm(H) x180cm x 80cm, mud & other media

scanned portraits

In this series a flat bed scanner is used as the image capture device. It is a technique believed to be a unique in its application to photographic portraiture.

Unlike in film or digital photography where the receptive fields respond to a sudden wetting of light, here image capture is more akin to a patient sedimentary process.

Beneath the glass pane the slowly advancing band of light records progressive slices of observed information, one discrete layer at a time. Movements during scanning translate to morphed distortions in the image outcome.

In the scanning, as each observed slice becomes digitally frozen, the next is still a free proposition – though only for moment longer.



narrow past, 2009, left image, 100cm x 65cm, giclée print

falling, 2009, 100cm x 71cm, giclée print

ECG

While the fingerprint is a physical marker of individual identity that survives death, one's pulsing being in the passing moment could best be represented by another set of highly individualised lines.

The ECG (electrocardiogram) records the electrical activity of the heart measured at the body surface by various electrical leads. The recording provides information on heart rate, rhythm, and intracardiac conduction.

Here, I've taken a representative ECG cycle from a recent recording of my own condition, and created a set of instructions for a computer controlled hot-wire to cut through block polystyrene.



ECG arch, 2009, 59cm(H) x 58cm x 22cm, polystyrene

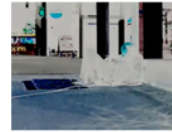
shared vids – YouTube channel *manumente*

As an artist, it is for me essential to find means to connect directly with a broader public, one-to-one, free of any obligation, mediation or justification. This, preferably in more public and openly shared space. I've come to appreciate YouTube as one such place.

Shared vids were at first about my ephemeral and free in public works. However, somewhat enticed by the experience there, works in their own right began to emerge.

They now exist for as long as they will, along with the zillion things already there and the zillion yet to come - good, bad, ugly ... (who is to judge?).

As though surrendering little poems in bottles to the sea, I'm very curious to see how far and wide these makings will drift in time and, more importantly, who they will "reach".



sediment true
2009, duration 1:08



a sinking the poet saw
2008, duration 1:01



dialogue
2009, duration 1:22



delivery - a little metaphor
2009, duration 4:54



a taste of blood
2009, duration 4:35



hollow promise - cottlesloe
2009, duration 2:35



origin of species
2009, duration 1:11



sediment I
2008, duration 1:50



the yellow hoop
2008, duration 1:53

DVD menu, Exhibition DVD, 2009

shadow people

The ground is the last bastion in the struggle against the humbling force of gravity - the last receptacle for all things that must eventually fall.

Here, fallen shadows of anonymous pedestrians are rendered as negative images and are rotated to indicate them as having stood up. The distorted body shapes are now full of light with fuzzy and buzzing edges. At times they appear almost eager to spark. Engulfed in darkness they appear contained, for the flooring upon which they once fell, has now become their ceiling.

Besides the individual's position and orientation, the distortions are dictated totally by the relative physical conditions at the moment of capture - i.e. ground topography, light source and the viewer's own perspective.

In some ways this treatment may serve as a truer representation of the momentary and incidental nature of individual existence and conditioning.



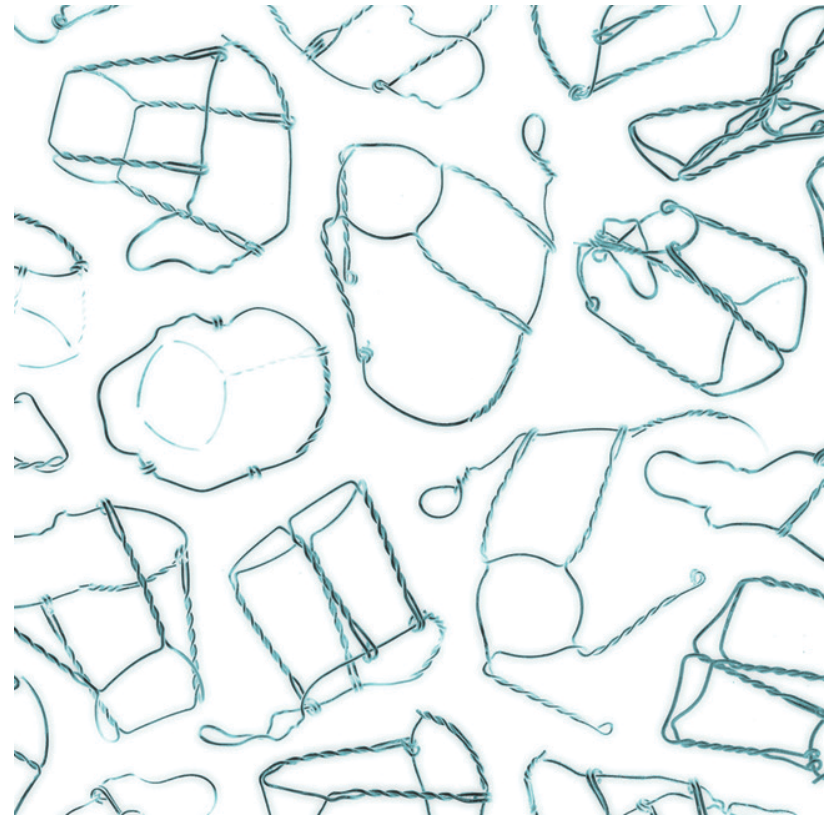
the plastic bag gets away, 2008, 20.5cm x 27.5cm, giclée print

they fell – *found objects scanned series*

The wire champagne cage, or muselet, is a generic disposable object that has arisen into common consciousness. Their spent presence is quickly read as the evidence of shared experience of some celebratory nature.

The cages individually scanned for this image are just a few of the thousand or so collected on new year's morning, 2008, at Rushcutters Bay Park, Sydney. Here the masses had gathered only a few hours earlier in the name of ushering in the New Year. Most of the cages therefore must have been spent within a minute or so of each other, just as the clock struck midnight.

Although essentially of the same kind, when found their now wildly varied forms were a clear testament to the incidental nature of the happenings that had conditioned them.



they fell, 2008, detail, 85cm x 85cm, giclée print

sediment true – *the image in negative* series

I see him often – though not lately. He told me once that his name was James. He warned on another occasion that his state was a surprisingly easy one to slide into.

Within my practice the negative image is actively explored for its own aesthetic and metaphoric potential. Here however it is also a means of protecting his anonymity.



sediment true, 2009, 39.5cm x 57.5cm, giclée print