

Loss of Horizon is an exhibition for the here and now, future and past, presenting new works by contemporary Australian artists, Jacquie Meng, Neil Beedie, Claire Welch, Jemima Lucas and Brigitte Podrasky.

The exhibition proposes an investigation of disequilibrium and sensations of falling and what it means to fall right now. This essay holds conversation with the artworks and elaborates upon the curatorial premise of the exhibition by Claire de Carteret.

LOSS OF HORIZON

Prochlorperazine (APO) Tablets 5mg: Take ONE tablet THREE times a day when required for vertigo or nausea.

Prochlorperazine is a phenothiazine neuroleptic that I have been prescribed to treat my benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV). BPPV is one of the most common causes of medical vertigo — the sudden sensation that you're spinning or that the inside of your head is spinning.

BPPV causes brief episodes of mild to intense dizziness. It is usually triggered by specific changes in your head's position. This might occur when you tip your head up or down, when you lie down, or when you turn over or sit up in bed. While attributed to a lack of sleep, I am convinced that my BPPV is exacerbated when I use elevators. It sounds strange, but I believe there is something inherently jarring within the process of stepping in, departing, feeling your body compress and subsequently arriving. Falling upwards so rapidly, that my bodily position has changed, but my mind has not had the chance to catch up.

There are many ways to fall. Amongst them, you can fall down, fall apart and fall in love. Each new way of falling is predicated on a relocation of the self to somewhere new. Each new way of falling also requires the acknowledgement of the passage of time as the price paid for the movement from point A to point B. To fall in love can happen as rapidly as falling out of love, however, it can also be excruciatingly slow, demanding that you are acutely aware of each descending moment. Nevertheless, you have relocated, you are not where, or how, you previously were. Sometimes we find ourselves at our new destination without acknowledging the journey it took to get there. You can be on your face in an instant, not knowing where it all went wrong. The choreography of the falling body is congruent with the chronometry of falling time, creating the unique circumstances for the transformative qualities of disequilibrium and freefall. In order to fall through the spatial, one must fall through the temporal. In order to fall through the temporal, one must fall through the spatial. As Laurie Anderson describes this process in 1983's *Walking and Falling*, 'over and over, you're falling. And then catching yourself from falling. And this is how you can be walking and falling at the same time.'

Vertigo is often presented as the perceptual embodiment of falling without the corporal reality of movement. However, this belies the physical transformational aspects of vertigo. Vertigo can move you. Vertigo is an inherently dynamic motion. It arises situationally, spatially, and temporarily, and combines discordant elements: tumult and permanence, termination and construction, creation and evolution, uncertainty and motion. It can make clear or obfuscate, cause upheaval and move heaven and earth. As a state of existence, the physically destabilising nature of vertigo indicates a temporal opening toward possible transformation and innovation.¹ ‘Many people purposefully and joyfully search for states of vertigo, relishing moments of blissful disorientation, self-abandonment, and catharsis.’² François Jullien understands a ‘fertile’ moment of dizziness to exist wherein, due to a loss of equilibrium and the person being ‘suspended from clearness,’ new ways of thinking can be found. It is apparent that to fall from within is a formidable feeling, a catalyst for conception and physical change.

But when does this change occur? With the culmination of the fall? Too often the transformative nature of flux is measured only when it has smashed into the pavement, its shards spirited away for collection, the remainder trickling into retrospective.

Hito Steyerl constructs the scenario that is at the centre of the explorations within *Loss of Horizon*.

Imagine you are falling. But there is no ground.³

If the measure of the transformational power of free fall and disequilibrium is its eventual cessation upon impact, what happens if we simply fall forever.

Traditionally we have attempted to remain static, measuring our place in the world in relation to the horizon line. Through physically mapping ourselves and the heavens to the horizontal lodestar, our place in the world was firmly established and we discovered certain ground on which we could physically place ourselves. The sun, however, has been able to escape below the horizon, and so too can it rise above it. Claire Welch reflects on the anxieties of searching for hope beyond the horizon. In *Dawn*, the body is ruptured, not in the culmination of the fall, but by agonisingly reaching for certainty, continuously contorting in its pursuit. In *watching it happen* we find that the boundary line of the horizon is capable of a superior type of violence. As the figure is split in two, we come to realise that the horizon line seeks to divide actuality and ambiguity where both protection and force are required to guard the individual from harm and assert personal autonomy.

If the act of reaching beyond the singular anchor of the horizon requires an extreme violence, Jemima Lucas shows us that making it beyond the horizon begets more violence still. *Tell me what you are. Will you hold me in your arms?* depicts a

¹ Plato, *Timaeus*, in Ruth Anderwald and Leonhard Grond (Vienna: Sternberg Press, 2019).

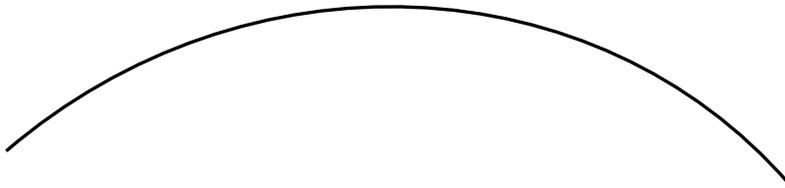
² Petra, Löffler, *Verteilte Aufmerksamkeit, Eine Mediengeschichte der Zerstreuung* (Zurich: diaphanes, 2013).

³ Hito Steyerl (e-flux Journal, 2011)

performance of constant rebirth achieved through calcification and decay. The petrified oyster is falling forever, stuck in the cycle of conception, copulation and cessation. To break the cycle would require not just moving beyond the horizon but removing the horizon entirely. Once the horizon is removed nothing can prevent falling forever, and not merely falling with gravity, but falling with force. To leave the horizon behind would require an escape velocity mirroring the acceleration of modernity in which the technological, economic, cultural and sexual expansion of our subsistence has flung apart concepts of ‘the real,’ liberating the oyster from its past and leaving it plummeting into an indeterminate future.

‘Thus, the particle horizon over many rollercoaster stages evolves simply as $L_H \sim a(t)/\sqrt{HH_1} \lesssim a(t)/H_1$.

Hence $\ell/L_H \lesssim \ell_{in} H_1$ ’⁴



‘I had a dream where I was clutching onto a rickety chair, it was clicking along a single rollercoaster track, as if it was making its way steadily to the top. The track had no start and no end, just an elevated curve in an empty sky.’ - Brigitte Podrasky

Brigitte makes real the geography of a world without a horizon line. A world without a horizon is not delineated by a tangible topography in which one can tumble and fall but is communicated by deep valleys of anticipation and towering peaks of calm. Brigitte’s work heralds Rosalind Krauss’ ‘fading of the logic of the monument’ as the forms do not sit in a precise place or speak in a symbolic tongue of the use and meaning of that place. Instead, it creates a novel place of its own logic and design whose rules are oxymoronicly immense and miniscule. It is in this contradiction that we find ourselves pondering the imagined landscape and inserting ourselves into a world without a horizon.

A world without people is probably a better place, a world with only you is even better. Neil Beedie’s voyage into the isolated and ambient speaks to what it would mean to exist and move in a world with no horizon. Surrounded by constant freefall, social links dematerialise. This can be of immense benefit. People are capable of betrayal, dishonesty and manipulation, with everchanging relationships, unions and social hierarchies. Even those we hold close may constitute an existential threat at any moment in time. The turn to individualism is frequently predicated by a moment of collective

⁴ Guido D’Amico and Nemanja Kaloper (Journal of Cosmology and Astroparticle Physics, 2021)

grief in which a common trauma, and the adversary that caused it, are employed to galvanise the collective in unitarian thought and single purpose. However, left with just oneself, collective thought become individual and therefore universal. All personal imaginaries become the mythos with which we use to move through the world around us and create relationships anew.

'You are the birth of everything new.

You are perfect.

*You are you.'*⁵

If the loss of horizon leaves us isolated we lose the ability to define who we are as the characteristics of collective consciousness fade with freefall. Foucauldian concepts of individual identity definition focus on interiority and the relation of the epistemic and the experiential. The Earl of Shaftsbury locates identity in feeling and affectivity. Jacquie Meng does not let either of these dead men, or any anyone else define how she defines herself. The rupture required to remove the horizon is propelled by immense forces creating a vibrant and dysphoric world. Jacquie taps into these forces, grounding them in the real and the here-and-now. The blueprint for defining identity through freefall is a repetition of ritual and the embracing of the radically expansive. *'But can we escape becoming dizzy? And who can affirm that vertigo does not haunt the whole of existence?.'*⁶ In the face of overwhelming vertigo, the horizon must be shattered again and again for us to find unending freefall, and ourselves, in the new world.

By Mitchell Krewaz

This text was written on Ngunnawal country and is exhibited on Gadigal land. Stanley Street Gallery would like to acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which we operate. We pay our respects to the Elders past and present. Sovereignty never ceded.

⁵ Richard Van Camp (*Little You*, 2013)

⁶ Franz Fanon (François Maspero, 1961)