

Strong Language, Some Violence, Adult Themes
2008

Artspace Centre for Contemporary Art, Sydney
Photo Credits include Amanda Williams and Jennifer Leahy

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The title of this work refers to the ratings system of the Australian Office of Film and Literature Classification. The installation addresses our perception of global events, particularly through the torrent of images we experience in the digital age.

The government's ratings system represents a futile attempt to regulate our media consumption in the light of this proliferation.

The installation deals with the notion that our global mobility, both physical and economic is under extreme pressure right now due to the failure of nations, and emerging nations, to achieve mutual tolerance. As a result some of the most routine elements of our lives, such as air travel, are becoming enmeshed in major articulations of power.

This installation attempts to examine, in a socially engaged and politically charged way, recent historical events including 9/11 – through the reinvigoration of memory. The sculptural and video elements of the work are intended to function as mnemonic devices inviting viewers to re-examine their own experiences and responses.

The installation is divided into two sections. On entering the gallery the viewer first encounters a group of mute geometric forms isolated in a wash of flinty-white fluoro light. The grey sheet metal has the look of 'sculpture', recalling perhaps Donald Judd or Robert Morris, yet their schema also evokes the metal detector and x-ray hardware you'll find at any major airport.

There's a certain ambiguity I'm entertaining from the start intended to provoke a discomforting *deja vu* from within the safe zone of the art gallery. As you move towards the next section of the installation a video screen displays looped images of x-rayed luggage, referring once again to that depersonalised, liminal transit zone where for the authorities you represent nothing but 'risk potential' .

The portal to that zone is the walk-through metal detector, which is for me a very strong signifier of this transformation process – the exposing of one's corporeal self, like the flaying open of those bags by the x-ray machine. In the second section, I've set up a series of object and image relationships where I call into question issues such as the limited capacity of technology to make us any safer from global terrorism, and Western nationalism's refusal to acknowledge the socio-historical roots of terrorism. With wall text and vitrine, this section of the installation borrows from classic Museum display convention – that is, an assembly of artefacts and data inviting examination, and even judgement. In dealing with our age of anxiety, it's through the work's discursive and affective potential that I've hoped to achieve some sort of perspective.