

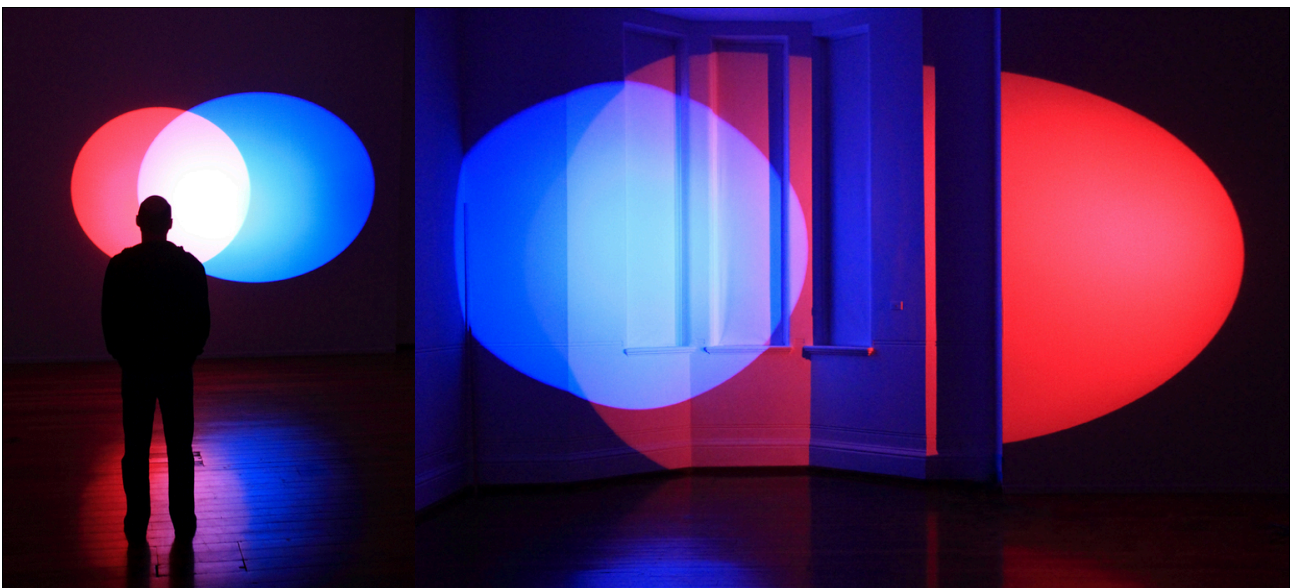
Space can be interpreted as an available area, the distance from another, and a physical universe beyond earth's atmosphere, while Present is in a particular place, occurring now, and to exhibit. These lexical ambiguities are relevant to the creative prism of Australian artist Michaela Gleave, whose body of work reflects her interest in atmospheric phenomena, conceptual gaps between constructed existence and natural world, and investigating limitations of sensory perception through the use of light, space and water. Even as a student, she examined the formation of reality in the human mind, and sought to break down theoretical distinctions between art, history, ecology, physics and astronomy (American Australian Association, n.d.) and the relationship between the universe and time. Synchronic time is free from the adjacent, a snapshot, static, the point on a graph, while diachronic time is the outer limit of related moments, moving, cultural aggregation, the graph. Gleave's created spaces, immersive installations and videos such as *Our Frozen Moment* (2012), *A Day Is Longer Than A Year* (2013), and *Waiting for Time (7 Hour Confetti Work)* (2014) create spatial and temporal aesthetics which depend upon an interplay of synchronic and diachronic time to add meaning.



Our Frozen Moment. Photography: Silversalt, 2012.

Gleave has an interest in the perception of illusory atmospheric phenomena within a constructed space, and how a created urban environment co-exists within exposure to elements. In *Our Frozen Moment* (2012), participants on stage are immersed in strobe lit-frozen droplets, creating an illusory visual galaxy that shifts and reforms in the darkness, even though the soaking presence of water is continuous on the skin of the participants. The use of space, water and light highlights slippages in a constructed world (American Australian Association, n.d.) as the water, bound by gravity, does not cease falling because the light has dimmed. Outside the stage, these

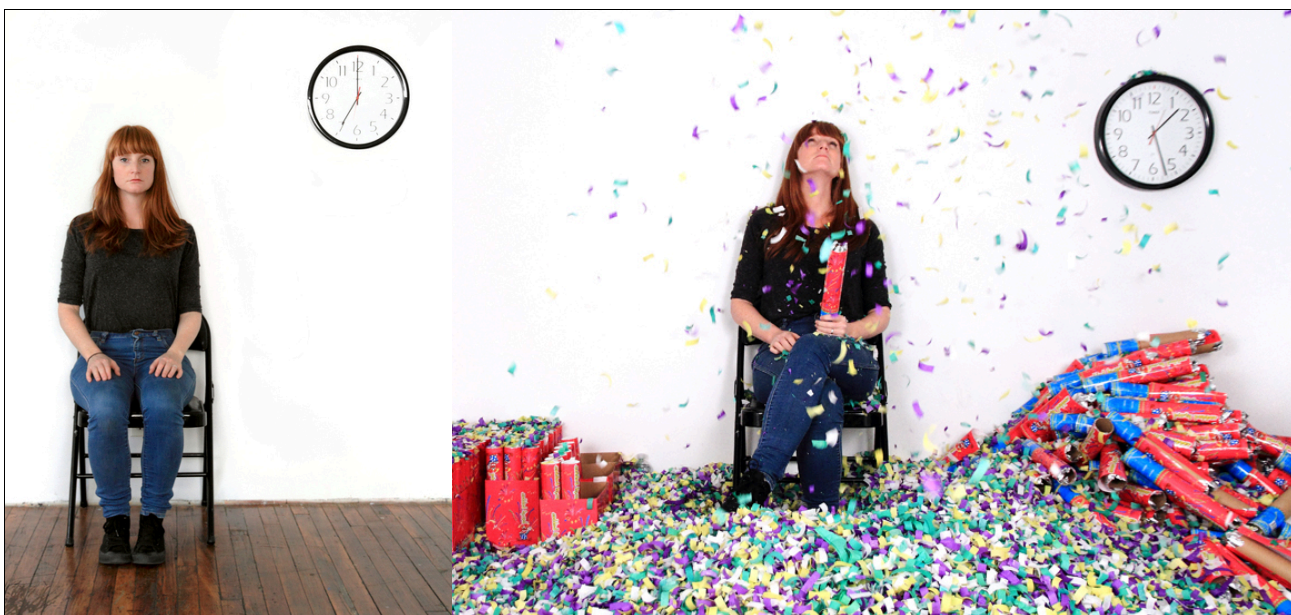
dark-clad people become black holes when the mist is illuminated, the celestial referencing a deliberate choice by the artist, whose fascination is with space and time. Gleave admits ‘my work is quite excessive ... what I'm doing is trying to highlight the excess and waste that's all around us’ (Chipperfield, 2010) and the use of reclaimed urban rain is a reminder of the interior within an elemental environment. Gleave confirms ‘Water ... makes visible the otherwise invisible temperaments of this dynamic environment. The illusory properties of water ... in the atmosphere act as mediators between the materiality of the earth’s surface and intangible stretches of the universe beyond’ (2007; p.16). The *Our* of the title signifies that Gleave perceived this installation not as isolated flashes but as the aggregation of experiences over its duration. Light is both present and historic, and continues out into the universe forever. She draws upon theatre and science to place each participant viewer in the centre of their own universe, and to mark this experience in the synchronic:diachronic continuum of their own lives.



A Day Is Longer Than A Year. Photography: Silversalt, 2013.

Installations by Gleave are carefully constructed spaces designed to replicate a controlled environment of the mechanisms of the universe and human systems, and structures used to perceive the nature of reality. In 2012, Gleave was artist-in-residence with CSIRO's Astronomy and Space Science Division and spent that time reflecting ‘upon our shifting understanding of matter, time and space, oscillating between intimate experience and a constantly expanding knowledge of the universe’ (Hollow, 2013). Her abiding interest of diachronic experience made up of synchronic parts is a recurrent theme, exploring outcomes of ‘sensorial information ... within a different or more complete set of surrounding perceptions’ (2007; p.10). In *A Day Is Longer Than A Year* (2013) Gleave examines how the infinite nature of time and space shares properties. Hermanson (2012,

p.39) notes that 'Architecture, a synchronic phenomenon, and film, a diachronic one, find mutual correspondences as a result of the experiential and the sensorial', a reminder that the room, although fixed, acts upon the making of moments. The architectural space is a cinematic screen, and the asynchronous red and blue spotlights travel against each other, remodelling themselves reactively over a five-hour cycle. Each orbit is a marker of assigned time, but it is their various spatiotemporal coming together that creates a perceptual memory. The 'goal is to discover the similar as well as the dissimilar and to highlight continuities as well as discontinuities' (Emmerson 2005, p.55). The viewer notes these collisions as a synchronic moment although, in reality, this is an optical ambiguity, as the lights never slow in their diachronic orbits and time does not stand still. A *Day* can pass by interminably, every moment marked and worried over, whereas it is much harder to experience the passing of a *Year* with as much intensity, even though it is a greater measure of minutes.



Waiting For Time (7 Hour Confetti Work). Photography: Michaela Gleave, 2014.

Gleave's endurance performances are created as a measure how the contraction of space acts upon the expansion of time, and how the more constricted the space, the slower the experience of passing time can be. *Waiting for Time (7 Hour Confetti Work)* (Gleave, 2014a) uses live streaming to promulgate her seven-hour performance which allows her to transcend the physical locational and temporal fixity of her studio and be simultaneously present. The delivery through live streaming and YouTube raises an issue whether a performance is diminished through the lack of physical presence of the artist (Parsons-Lord, 2015), which could be answered by Gleave's idea that the mind fills in what it perceives to be present (and even *the* present) based on spatial and temporal

cues. Time measured by the unquestioned authority of the clock on the wall is ambiguous, and the multitude of international viewers watching via YouTube would be incrementally out of sync. The artist acted upon by synchronic time becomes herself a clock, marking each minute with an item associated with annual celebrations such as birthdays and New Year's Eve. As the pile of new poppers on her right shrinks, the pile of discards on her left grows, and the confetti builds around her feet in a curve that graphs her progress. These synchronic explosions are endlessly reenacted in isolation, but the ordering of these happenings *in eventu* builds a diachronic event (Koselleck, 2004; p.219). The abridged seven-minute *Explosion Edit* video (Gleave, 2014b) displays the contraction of time in a representation that is instantly understood by viewers. Cinema critic Pallasmaa (2001) noted 'We do not live separately in material and mental worlds; these experiential dimensions ... past, present and future are inseparably intermixed'. The entire seven hour video is available from the artist, while the seven minute video endures on YouTube, a reminder of how the way time is codified works by cultural assent.

An artistic career can itself be examined in terms of synchronic pieces and diachronic progression, and Michaela Gleave revels in opportunities to develop materials that effect 'a "slowing down" of perceptual processes by interfering with the normally unconscious flow of interpretations' (2007; p.11). *Our Frozen Moment* explores the relevance of environment in an urban construct and creates an analogous galaxy that places participants in two viewpoints that reflects the duality of space and time and the eternal existence of light. *A Day Is Longer Than A Year* examines the nature of time in space, and how synchronic moments are remembered and experienced with an intensity that seemingly makes time stand still, compared to the blurred regularity of diachronic passages. *Waiting for Time (7 Hour Confetti Work)* highlights how restricted space can attenuate the experience of time and how predisposed to manipulation the culture of marking time can be. Gleave continues to examine the spaces between the perception and reality of synchronic and diachronic time and allows limitless contemplation of its accumulated meanings. She uses simple elements in constructed environments to trace parallel pathways of continuity and change in the memory and understanding of the onlooker, and challenges them to broaden the way they mark time as inhabitants of the universe.

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