

A Gentle Man (Part II) (1975-2029)

Exhibition Audio Description by Becky Beasley

Gallery 2

The gallery is 7 metres wide and about 20 metres long. It has a series of columns along the entry side, allowing one to enter freely from the walkway at any point.

The Floor (an artwork)

The entire floor of the gallery has been laid with a pale green linoleum which the manufacturer has named, Wellness Green. I have used this green several times before in exhibitions. It's very calm and creates a relaxing, natural overall tone. As the gallery is large and open, the entirely pale green floor creates a very expansive sensation, like an open meadow in Springtime. Across the floor, a series of hand-cut linoleum designs have been inset flush into the floor. Each of these has been reproduced in a 3D printed version and are available for handling in Gallery 1.

To the left on entering, black linoleum silhouettes of The Great Lakes of North America have been inset into the floor. They were drawn by myself and then skilfully hand-cut in linoleum from my paper templates by the linoleum fitter. They are at a scale of approximately 1 to 300,000. So,

to give a sense of the relative scale, Lake Superior, the largest of the Great Lakes, for example, which is 563 kilometres wide, is 1.75 metres wide in my silhouette.

Lake Ontario, the smallest of the lakes, is my favourite in linoleum, as it is quite tiny, at just 90 x 30 centimetres. There are two mid-green coloured metal conversation benches positioned around the lakes.

At the far end of the gallery, set into the floor, is a large, hand-cut, black linoleum lake, titled, 'Lake Faulkner'. This lake is about 3 metres long and 1.9 metres wide and is cut from the silhouette of the profile of the face and neck of American author, William Faulkner. He has a slightly chunky bent nose.

There are two conversation benches positioned around Lake Faulkner. I will describe the benches which I designed myself in more detail later.

In addition, set into the flooring around the gallery, there are several other inset elements around the gallery floor. These have been aqua jet-cut for me by the manufacturer as they contain words and are too detailed to be hand-cut. The words are cut in black linoleum and set into circles or ovals made from the same Wellness Green as the rest of the floor. Two of these are 1 metre diameter circles in which are phrases which are written out in a full circle around the inside of the circumference.

One of these reads, 'When? You say. I answer you. When I have circumscribed my sphere.

This is a citation from the wonderful fragmentary, 'Notebooks of Joseph Joubert', from 1800.

And the other reads, Ursula Le Guin "I am a man." Gustave Flaubert "Madame Bovary, c'est moi."

The 1 metre diameter of the floor element means it is a very neat size for a person to stand inside the blank green centre with the text all around one. There are also two 50-centimetre diameter circle elements. One has the word WEST, in capitals, with an arrow below the word, pointing to the left. The other has the word EAST in capitals with an arrow below the word, pointing to the right. These have been oriented correctly within the gallery: EAST points due east and WEST points due West. The circle means that as this floor tours with this exhibition the arrows can be turned and re-oriented correctly at each venue. There are also four 50-centimetre-wide lozenge-shaped smaller elements which have been inset around Lake Faulkner each with a phrase or single word: A lake in a forest. A bench under a pine. Drinking water at night. Clearing.

The Lakes Tables

Towards the centre of the gallery, are four black, table-like sculptures.

The tabletops of three of these have been cut in black MDF from the same templates as the Great Lakes linoleum flooring beyond. The tables are each 72 centimetres high and have slim tubular black metal legs. The tabletops themselves have been inset with a dark charcoal-coloured furniture linoleum, which is smoother than flooring linoleum, and almost silky, to the touch.

The fourth table is the largest, at about 2 x 1.5 metres and is made from the same materials and from the same silhouette as Lake Faulkner, albeit at a size about one third smaller than the floor lake.

Each of the four tables are set with small arrangements of objects – primarily hand-made vessel-like ceramic items and some vintage printed matter. I will describe these in more detail later.

So, these black tables appear quite like three-dimensional shadows of the lakes' linoleum flooring elements.

The Walls

To the left on entering the gallery, on the near end wall, besides the Great Lakes linoleum floor, are hung two one metre wide flat-screens on which are playing parts one and two of my four piece video work, 'A Gentle Man'.

At the other, far end wall, is a four metre wide video projection which shows part four of the video work. At right-angles to this, on the left-hand adjacent side wall is another four metre wide video projection showing the third part of the video work. So, parts three and four are presented as large projections onto the walls around Lake Faulkner.

The light at the far end of the gallery is dimmer, as there is less daylight here due to the last opening at the end of the columned walkway having been closed in, and light comes primarily from the projected light from the large wall projections. My intention is that the far end of the gallery feels like a shady place, like a clearing in a forest and, as such, is soothing in contrast to the lighter aspect of the other day-lit end of the gallery.

Along the walls of the larger long, back wall of the gallery there are a series of framed black and white photographs which have been installed on a series of shallow oak picture shelves, so the frames, instead of hanging flat on the walls, lean back slightly.

This was intentional in allowing the framed photographs to have a more physical presence than when they are hung flat to the walls. The picture shelves are made from light oak and are each either 2 metres long or 1.5 metres long and each holds a sequence of two or three of the framed photographs. I will describe these photographs in more

detail later. The picture shelves have been purposely installed low, to be comfortably viewed from a lower height or a seated position. The tilted angle means that they are also comfortable to view from a standing position.

There is a sense of pacing and composition to the hanging of the shelf sequences, which stretch the full lengths of the long gallery wall. This extension of the horizontal line through the modularity of the shelves is intended to highlight the length of long back wall of the gallery space, and to be experienced through linear movement. I imagine children running along its full length.

The small groupings of the framed photographs leant on the picture shelves are sequenced in a repetitive yet tidal rhythm – using sequences of alternating close-up photographs of a fig tree and a pair of hands holding various natural objects. I will describe the photographs in more detail later.

Within music, composition with a repetitive yet tidal rhythm, often utilizes, 'ostinati', a term which means the repetition, or repetition with slight variation, of musical phrases or patterns, and can create a soothing, hypnotic, or "wave-like" effect.

Within the pastoral landscape form of the exhibition, the works described thus far are all expressed through organic

curved shapes and forms. The composition of the restrained horizontal line of the picture shelves, in contrast, might function as the equivalent of a horizon line, and the photographs expressing a space beyond their flat picture plane, their 'views'.

Gallery 3

The gallery is approximately 7 by 8 metres and has three full height wide windows on the fall wall, facing onto the street. It has a polished pale grey concrete floor.

To the left on entering at two conversation benches facing towards the windows. Near the centre of the gallery hang three large, long dusky pink linen curtain-like sculptures which are rotating slowly from motors fixed to the ceiling. On the far wall to the left on entering there is a single small colour photograph.

The H. S. P. Curtains

Directly ahead, across the centre of the gallery, are three tall, soft pink-linen, vertical, curtain-like sculptures which are hung from the ceiling, and which are rotating. The three hanging dusky pink linen works are in a row, side by side, with one metre gaps between each of them, so that one can

move freely between them. They are slowly rotating at one revolution per minute. They are soft and sweeping, almost dancing around, quite playfully, animated. I imagine them like cartoon curtains, but which have been animated from delicate pastel-pink watercolour illustrations.

I will describe the specific shape and form of each of these sculptures in a little more detail now.

They are each 2.4 metres tall from the floor, by 2 metres in length and 1.25 metres in width. The linen fabric has been sewn at the top over metal rails. The rails they hang from have been welded into the shapes of the capital letters, H, S and P.

They are hung from the ceiling with cables which have been attached to motors set to rotate at one revolution per minute. And so, they are slowly revolving in space. The soft dusky pink linen is hung so as to just sweep the floor as they move.

So, these are my dancing H, S, P curtain sculptures and they are quite joyful to observe. You might like to brush the moving linen with your hand, or stand between them with your arms extended, and feel the soft linen slowly brushing against your palms.

H.S.P. is an acronym for Highly Sensitive Person after the title of a book by academic, Elaine Aaron, first published in 1999.



BACK! (Ilford Ceramic), 2021
 Archival digital print on Hahnemühle Fine Art Photo Rag
 Edition 1/3, 42 x 33 cm



BACK! (DUSK I), 2021
 Gelatin silverprint, Oak frame
 Unique, 31 x 38.5 cm



BACK! (DUSK II), 2021
Gelatin silverprint, Oak frame
Unique, 38 x 31.5 cm

Each of the three hanging linen sculptures have a single black and white framed photograph hung from the top rail on a brass rod.

One is portrait format and about 30x40cm in size and depicts an old fashion ceramic Ilford photographic processing tank. It looks like a rectangular vase. On the near end, printed backwards is the word, Ilford. Ilford is a historic photographic manufacturing company.

The other two photographs are related to each other. One is landscape format, the other portrait format. They are also about 30x40cm in size. They both depict a dusky toned, close up of the collar, nape and upper-back section of a black and white striped shirt. Each has a small object laid onto the shirt. The portrait format photograph has a vintage

matchbook laid just to the left and slightly low of centre. Across the matchbox are the words,, International Computers. The landscape format photograph depicts the same matchbook to the left and a circular metal ashtray to the right, where the back of the heart would be.



The single photograph is by Luigi Ghirri, an Italian photographer from the 1970's. The photograph belongs to the artist. **The photograph is landscape format and is approximately 20 x 30 cm in size and framed in a slightly pink pale wooden frame within a large soft white mount. It is titled, *Parigi (Paris)* (1978).**

The colour photograph depicts a landscape. In the distance, a variety of types of trees, in the middle distance a lake – with two small rowing boats,

creating a pastoral leisure-time scene. In the foreground, two teens with short thick hair, both in grey jumpers, who sit cross legged facing each other on the concrete ground by the waters-edge. Between them on the ground is a chess board. The teens' gazes are both focused on the chess board.

To the left of the teens is a low grassy knoll. Leant against the low railing around the edge of the grass a deep brown, heavy- likely suede- coat, which, on first viewing can be mistaken for a dog.

This photograph is in my personal art collection. It is, in this exhibition, what David Lynch called ' the eye of the duck scene'. Lynch used the phrase "the eye of the duck" to describe a specific, perfectly placed scene that captures the entire emotional core and aesthetic truth of a film.