

Australian Centre for Contemporary Art Dallas Brooks Drive South Yarra Victoria Australia 3141
Tel+613 9654 6422 fax+613 9650 3438 acca@connect.net.au www.artnow.org.au Wed-Fri 10-6 Sat/Sun 10-6

**ARTS
VICTORIA**



**MONASH
UNIVERSITY**



David Cross
Viscous
19 to 23 July (note special times)

 **CORPORATE INITIATIVES**
Audio Visual Specialists

Viscous

Viscous is a performance by artist David Cross that attempts to challenge the ways in which we engage and come to know the human body. In the tradition of extreme physical performance art of the 70s Cross will 'perform' 8 hours a day over five days in a tightly confined space. This space is a specially constructed elongated hollow timber rectangle, reminiscent of minimal sculpture from the 60s. The audience may interact and communicate with Cross as he moves up and down the box on a trolley system. Although viewers cannot see his body except for the odd glimpse through the slots in the box, it is possible to sense it otherwise, hearing the trolley run up and down the box, hearing the artist's breathing.

In this way Viscous examines the role of senses other than sight in constructing our knowledge of a body or even confirming something as subtle as 'human presence'.

But it also examines historical changes in the perception of masculinity, intervening in the construction of the heroic male figure understood through the conventions of 1970s Body Art including works by Vito Acconci or Chris Burden where the artists lived beneath the gallery floor or high on a shelf in the gallery for the exhibition period.

In this extreme performance over the period of a week, Cross tests his own physical endurance and references these formal developments in sculpture and performance art but also – and most importantly – confronts the viewer with a shocking, revelatory experience.

The Sydney Morning Herald art critic Bruce James described the work as 'the most unsettling, indeed horrific, performance work I've ever witnessed, not because it involved inflicted violence, endured pain or the mistreatment of animals, but because

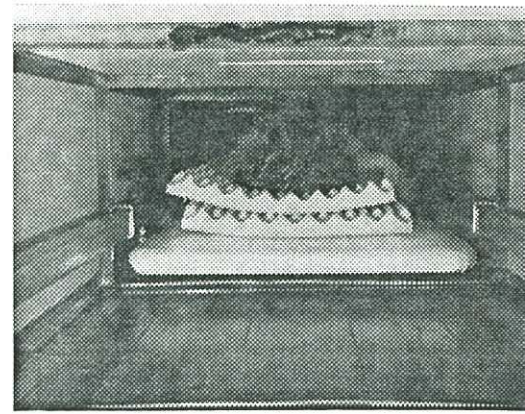
everything about it operates upon one's perceptions to create curiosity, and reward curiosity with fear, or at least a sense of insidiousness'. So while seeing may not always be believing, we should nonetheless be compelled to see it for ourselves.

Select Exhibitions

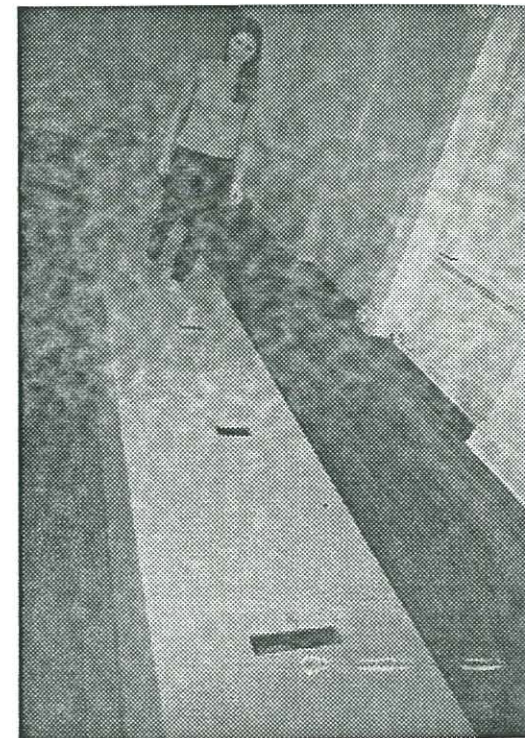
2000 Toilet Break (video), with Dean Milson and Stuart Geddes, part of blink Australian Centre of Contemporary Art, Melbourne
2000 Studio Anybody promotional video (performance), AGIdeas conference, Melbourne
1999 Viscous (performance/ installation), Australian Perspecta 99, The Performance Space, Sydney
1998 Ball (with Jason Keats), Western Oval Football Ground, Next Wave Festival, Melbourne
1998 Palimpsest (video/ installation), Span Galleries, Melbourne
1998 5 minutes from Everywhere (book project with Mark Bradford), *Dialogue*, Words for Type issue, pp 22-29
1996 Silences (performance/ installation, with Performance Art is Dead), Linden Gallery, Melbourne
1996 Look/ Cum/ Donor (performance/site specific installation with Performance Art is Dead), Hindmarsh Roller Skating Rink, Adelaide
1995 Flesh Back Bare (performance/ video/ installation with Performance Art is Dead), The Cow Palace, North Melbourne
1994 99 cents (performance), Cnr 5th Avenue and 49th Street, New York
1994 Your Burning Gaze (installation/ performance), Making Sense Contemporary Artspace, North Melbourne

Selected Bibliography

Bruce James, 'Give Me Big, Bad and Ugly', (review of Perspecta 99) *Sydney Morning Herald*, September 11, 1999, p 12.
Mark Pennings, *Writing as Video*, (catalogue essay), Span Gallery, Melbourne, 1998
Karen Porter, 'Flesh Back Bare', (review), *Adelaide Advertiser*, 27 February 1996
Avalon Spelling, 'Flesh Back Bare', (review), *DB Newspaper*, 5 February 1996
Adelaide Sarah Thomas, 'Unique Look at IVF', (review) *Adelaide Advertiser*, 27 February 1996



Images
Over: Viscous (detail) 1999
Above: Viscous, interior view, 1999
Below: Viscous installation view 1999



Published by
Australian Centre for Contemporary Art
Copyright artist and author.
Images copyright the artist. No material, whether written or photographic, may be reproduced without the permission of the artist, author and
Australian Centre for Contemporary Art
Director: Jenepher Duncan
Curator: Stuart Koop
Gallery Co-ordinator: Vikki McInnes

ACCA is supported through the Victorian Government through Arts Victoria – Department of Premier and Cabinet. ACCA is assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body. Printing by DI Print. Audio visual by Corporate Initiative.

