

Lilian Steiner

Flesh and Diamonds

Gertrude Contemporary
 Saturday 24 June –
 Sunday 27 August 2023

*The dancing body is not one that grows solo. It feeds off those around it, consciously and subconsciously, in a pinpoint moment in time and across expanded duration. Both through and without language, learnings accumulate within the body, within the spaces it occupies and in the archive of memory...and the dancing body is a tool acquired by Dance itself. Dance wears us, like a costume.*¹

In *Flesh and Diamonds*, I pay homage to eight of a vast community of dance artists who have shaped and continue to influence my practice. With the idea of classical busts as a starting point, I've attempted to portrait multiple aspects of these artists.

Lining the space, we encounter these artists' bare forms—a reminder of the raw materiality of bodies. At the same time, with their images suspended on fabric, these artists transform into something like garments, or even costumes. With these portraits I've tried to capture the timeless elegance and humble but powerful presence of these individuals as they hover here—quietly in motion.

As the centrepiece, the artists and their dancing signatures are depicted through my own embodied experience of them. Each sculpture was born from a dance offered by the invited artist. During those pinpoint moments in time, I—wearing a motion capture suit—attempted to embody the offered dance. Acknowledging that each dancer's personality, dimensions, weightedness, sensorial experience, imaginative logic and musical timings are unique and can never be exactly replicated, I allowed my own idiosyncrasies to layer with those of the dancer. Through this transference, we have together carved out an impression of that particular dance—a fossil.

Gertrude acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the traditional owners and custodians of the land and waters on which we operate. We pay our respects to the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation and their ancestors and Elders - past, present, and future.

Each fossil is a portrait which = them + me. Dance is absorbed. Bodies are absorbent. To me, embodied knowledge, dancery transference and the dancing community is more precious than any jewel. So with this exhibition, I offer a glimpse at a vast field of more-than-diamonds.
 –Lilian Steiner

Credits:

Major Collaborator (Photography, 3D Visualisation & 'Fossil' co-designer): Patrick Hamilton

*This project continues our collaboration with motion capture and 3D, sculptural design, developed for *To immortality and out the other side* (2022), commissioned by the Chunky Move ACTIVATORS program.

Contributing Dancers: Phillip Adams, Alice Dixon, Mara Galagher, Lucy Guerin, Rebecca Jensen, Shelley Lasica, Shian Law, Geoffrey Watson

This project was made possible through support from City of Melbourne and Chloe Munro.

A special thank you to dancers Sarah Aiken, Rachel Mackie, Timothy Walsh and Emile Zile, who were also part of the research.

Fabric printing by Image Digital.

¹ Text from *Dance Becomes Her*: a performance-lecture, by Lilian Steiner

List of works

1. Lilian Steiner
Phillip Adams, 2023
 Dye sublimation print on chiffon

2. Lilian Steiner
Rebecca Jensen, 2023
 Digital print on chiffon

3. Lilian Steiner
Shian Law, 2023
 Digital print on chiffon

4. Lilian Steiner
Alice Dixon, 2023
 Digital print on chiffon

5. Lilian Steiner
Lucy Guerin, 2023
 Digital print on chiffon

6. Lilian Steiner
Shelley Lasica, 2023
 Digital print on chiffon

7. Lilian Steiner
Mara Galagher, 2023
 Digital print on chiffon

8. Lilian Steiner
Geoffrey Watson, 2023
 Digital print on chiffon

9. Lilian Steiner
Fossils, 2023
 Digital print on chiffon, FDM 3D print, stainless steel, sound composition

