



Sometimes you will never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory.

Dr Seuss

DAY 5, 5am Sunday 18.3.18

A day in the life of this installation represents about 15 human years. It was born on Wednesday. That makes it 60 years old and that feels about right. I'm 46 and if I think about it in terms of a life and years, I reckon yesterday it was looking like I feel. Still a lot to give. Some nice perspectives but not as reliable in getting a good photo as it once was; definitely have to be a bit more selective on the angle. Coming apart in spots but generally still full of energy and certainly not done with yet.

But it has aged overnight, through no fault of its own. It's 5am. The strong wind (which is how I come to be here at such an hour, sure I was going to find it completely unravelling), has given it a solid beating. It is hanging on and although diminished, there is still beauty if you don't expect it to look like it did on day one. The stress and strain somehow brings a lightness to the whole thing. Its life has clearly taken its toll but its blowing about gently and that movement is soothing. I've just come from checking on our other installation at The Hub General Store. It has fared better. Perhaps not hit so hard by life.

I always planned to let this installation age gracefully. I knew it would get a bit haggard but I didn't think it would bother me. And it mostly doesn't. I've toyed with the idea of blowing up some fresh balloons and sneaking them in, in an effort to help it along but how would that work? Would a few plump, blush balloons inserted here and there really fool anyone? The whole body of work screams of its journey. Of time. Those few insertions would surely look odd. It's tempting but I don't think we can recapture it in that way....it has to be left to age.

I must say, I didn't expect it to age quite so quickly. Literally overnight. Anyone who saw it yesterday might be a bit shocked to see it now and I can't say for sure, but I don't think there will be much left by Tuesday when it will hit the proverbial 100. Even now, it's structure, once wrapped in the plumpness of its body is starting to reveal itself. It won't make it to the end of the week, I'm fairly certain of that.

I worry that some people might be disappointed. This probably isn't what they have come to see, certainly not what has been so heavily represented in social media over the past few days. It will be interesting if, in its decline, it receives the same kind of celebration for its transitional beauty. I'm hopeful. The immediate question: where is the beauty in this now? It has lost its volume, its fullness - so what is left?

I urge you to sit still and think. Let your mind wander as mine has to the circle of life, to how precious each step of it is. Look to the beauty in your children, your family, friends and in yourselves for the moment that you have right now because it won't ever be the same. Life. Death. It's all around and it never sits still. The accelerated life in this breathing sculpture is no different to you and I. Born, bright, fighting, living, dying.

This beautiful, billowing thing is ageing. Our culture doesn't really teach us to hold on to our elderly with great fervour. We aren't disrespectful and it's not our fault that our cities and lifestyles are no longer structured in a way that nurtures the last phases of life. We do our best. We visit as often as we can. Where once small villages, walking distances, less complicated lives all helped us cocoon ourselves in the familiar rhythms of daily family routines, we now live far away from each other, our phones never stop the relentless flow of information, it's easier to find a place to let our elderly be comfortable rather than find a way to fit them in. Not true for everyone (there are some notable exceptions I can think of) but as a general rule, it rings true. Meanwhile, back in the main game; beauty is orchestrated and there are so many ways of sharing what we think the world is looking to see from us that it is getting harder to keep up and harder to decipher real from staged. Trying to live up to what we think is normal or expected is draining.

And it's all interconnected. The time we spend on one thing while we neglect something else. Every choice comes at a price. I love this installation. I loved it when it was born and there is grace in its demise. I knew it would be beautiful but I also knew it would give more than just a nice moment. I didn't expect gale force winds to cause me to get up at 4am to check on it, to drive the hour it took to get here or to be sitting in a small one way street in Abbotsford with only the sound of crickets in the air. As I write, the sculpture is stone still. The wind has played its hand and moved on. Ironically, I could have stayed tucked up in bed but I'm grateful for the chance to sit here with this work.

Don't expect so much of it today. Let it rest a bit, as it is. It gave its everything yesterday. Today, come in a bit closer. Take the time to look beyond what you thought you might see and look for the beauty that is right in front of you. There's a message it will whisper to you if you are willing to listen.

Jacqueline Foti-Lowe is a Director and owner of Hub. She commissioned this work, Diminishing Elation for Melbourne Design Week.

Wed 14.3 0-15yrs INSTALLATION
Thu 15.3 16-30yrs
Fri 16.3 31-45yrs
Sat 17.3 46-50yrs
Sun 18.3 51-65yrs DAY 5
Mon 19.3 66-80yrs
Tue 20.3 81-95yrs
Wed 21.3 96-110yrs
Thu 22.3 111-125yrs
Fri 23.3 126-140yrs
Sat 24.3 141-155yrs
Sun 25.3 156-170yrs
Mon 26.3 171-185yrs

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Hub Showroom
16-28 Duke Street, Abbotsford
MON - SAT 10am-5:30pm
SUN During Design Week

The Hub General Store
36 Cambridge Street, Collingwood
OPEN EVERY DAY 10am-7pm

