

THE SLEEP OF REASON

DR ANTHONY GARDNER

If androids dream of electric sheep, then what do artworks dream of? Do they dream of their audience, of being popular, of being exposed, of being forgotten? Do they recall their recent pasts, being made in the studio or born in the mind? Or do they process their way through a longer time frame, through the history of art itself, working through that history like an artwork's genetic memory? As the gallery lights dim and slumber descends, are the dreams of art protective or ghoulish, productive or grim?

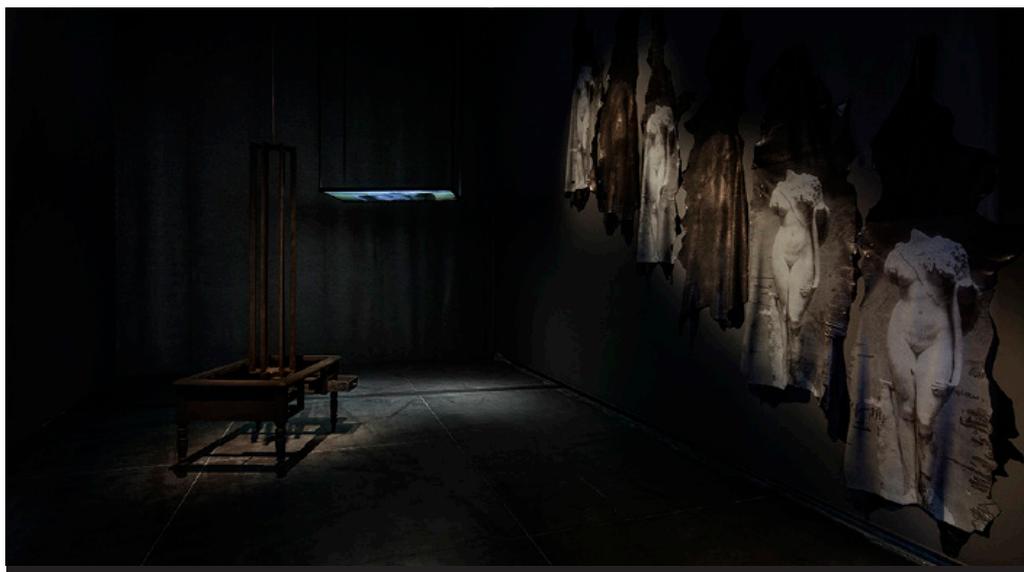
These questions haunt some of the greatest works of European art, and none more clearly than Francisco Goya's 1799 etching *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*. A man (perhaps representing Goya himself) has sunk his head into his arms and his arms onto a desk; behind him, crowding his space as much as his mind, are creatures of the night – owls, bats and cats – threatening this “sleep of reason” with monstrous activity and sleek watchfulness. It's a remarkable work, one I imagine comes to life only when the guards shut the museum or the collector their archive, and art's reveries are allowed to take flight, flickering through the darkness that now surrounds it.

ALL IN TIME. 2014

A Site for Re-recording History. 2014
charred 19th C cedar writing table,
charred wooden column armature,
petrified wood. 137 x 100 x 700 cm

Warrior A, Warrior B. 2014
4.44 min single channel projection,
sandblasted glass, etch primed steel,
sound. 155 x 90 x 385 cm

Suspicious Marble. 2012-2014
six double sided, screen printed leather
hides each approx. 270 x 100 cm



It's this same nocturnal space that fills Andrew Hazewinkel's latest installation, which, to my mind, bears more than a little resemblance to Goya's *mise-en-scene*. An old writing desk that once belonged to Hazewinkel's father stands burnt and blackened in the shadows. Behind it are not the beasts of Goya's vision but a swarm of leather hides hanging from the wall, their rich black surfaces bearing the image – front and back in succession across each hide – of a classical female torso, a “female Hercules”, headless. The desk's writing surface has been cut away and from its hard-edged interior erupts a column of human height, stretching up to what looks like another desk, inverted and hanging from the ceiling, its glass surface the screen onto which a video is projected of two Ancient Greek bronzes, the so-called Riace warriors. In the pulsing light cast by the projection, the female figures seem to move gently back and forth, the folds of the skins accentuating the foregrounding of a knee here, the backward step of a foot there, the thrust of a hand and the arc of a thigh.

Hazewinkel's room bears a kind of “sleep of reason” of its own. The desk is, after all, the place where histories are written (if rarely made); it's a site for sanctioning certain perspectives of the past that have come to stand for historical reason. Dormant in the dark, however, what erupts

from this site is not the usual recording of history, nor Goya's sense of monstrosity, but something more ambiguous and restless. Desire is at play here. The female torsos appear revived, as though seeking to eradicate centuries of age with a new expressive life, the marble replaced by skin, stillness replaced by yearning. Yet the history of this figure is complex, for it's not a classical statue but a nineteenth century forgery. The figure's desire to come alive is mixed with its claims to Antiquity; its material presence commingles with its inauthentic reality. The subtle pliability of material and image, past and what is present ultimately haunt the rigid column – it's tempting to consider it more like a phallus of human height – that emerges out of the desk before it. The authority of written history is shadowed by a more complex, if still softly monumental, set of negotiations.

Something similar is apparent with the projection. Unearthed from the Mediterranean seabed more than 2000 years after their making, the Riace bronzes are usually seen upright, heroic, locked away in a climate-controlled vitrine. In Hazewinkel's work, however, they're both intimately alive and curiously vulnerable. The camera brushes over nipples, toes, bronzed flesh, inner thighs, eroticising the inanimate. Yet the warriors are leant back into gurneys, rendered helpless, spent. Staring up at the projected image, it's hard not to mirror the warriors' upturned, slightly pleading gaze even as we follow the camera perving on their bodies. The rigid verticality of the warriors and the phallic column alike gives way to a more nuanced horizontality – or better still, to a kind of delicate limbo between axes, much like the limbo the statues lived in for millennia hidden beneath the sea (and which persists in a different guise, in the cryogenic capsule of the museum).

In fact, this sense of limbo is what the work as a whole desires, it seems, and what its dreams are made of. Between material presence and slippery image, between resurfaced histories and shaky pasts, between desks and their projections, Hazewinkel's work sits suspended in the darkness. Here, its sleep of reason is fitful, producing not dreaded monsters but creative ambiguities – wisps of possible memories, lusting for the inanimate, and the prospect that artworks can perhaps be yearning for things, too.

Dr Anthony Gardner is University Lecturer in Contemporary Art History and Theory,
The Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford

ALL IN TIME was originally commissioned by the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art. Photo: Andrew Curtis