

LAURA WOODWARD
INTROVERTED

The artist would like to thank Barbara Bolt, Stephen Haley, Sarah Jane Haywood, Simon Boucher, Emil Toonen, Tim Coyne, Millie Francis, Sam Fagan, and Kent Wilson, with special thanks to Jem Selig Freeman.

Further work is viewable at laurawoodward.com.au; videos at vimeo.com/user8023708; follow the artist at www.facebook.com/LauraWoodwardArt

Images: front, left and top right, *Vessel*, 2013 (detail); right bottom, *Underwing*, 2010; back, *Web*, 2012 (shadow detail); images by the artist and Jem Selig Freeman.

The VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery is generously supported by the Margaret Lawrence Bequest.

VCA MARGARET LAWRENCE GALLERY
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Victorian College
of the Arts



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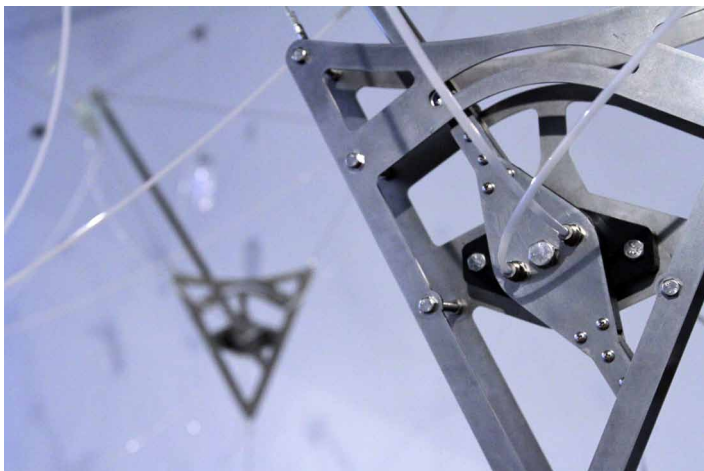
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Nothing exists in isolation. Information flows, synaptic nerves fire and selfish genes hitch rides inside soft machines of their own invention. The fractal rhythms of life loop in echoed reflections.

Laura Woodward engineers systems, balancing technical material precision with conceptual counterweights. Motion conveys process and amplifies an awareness of our own connective nature.

The artworks of *Introverted* exude a life force, as functioning machinic entities in their right or as symbolic reflections of external references. Or they're both simultaneously. Trace the behavioural patterns of a biological system and you may well discover the mirror of a cultural construct. And there's certainly an abundance of biology at play here, contrary to the material evidence of the manufactured pulleys, wires and steel frames.

In *Web* we see a circulatory system suspended. Tubes pulse, levers arch and vessels rise and fall with the transfer of



liquid through the system. Suspension is a mode of tension. A discourse with gravity in a state of daring. Antagonising inevitability. Architectural stability, harnessed, frames the system and is drawn in by articulated lines of steel wire.

Walking around *Underwing* I've become a micro-me. I'm concerned about the health of the hive and sympathetically drawn to the sadness of a life governed by the facilitation of the greatest good. Braced to its architectural context, the artwork connects itself to the building, activating the actions of its environment through its form and formalising the environment through its actions.

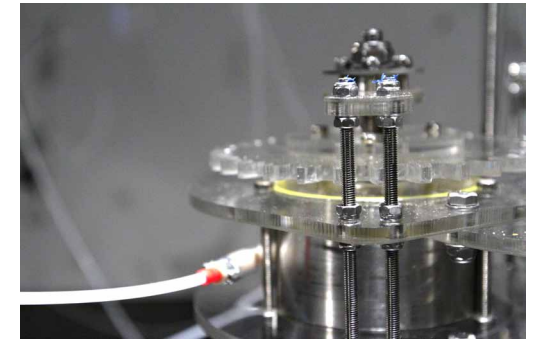
At play in Laura's work is information as flow. The transitory motion of data through functioning subsets of connective relations. The relationship of all the parts defines the system. The interactivity of the pulleys, the levers, the tubes, the pumps, and the wires, produces the procedural clues to maintain the relationship. This is the

network of life played out in machine aesthetics. Or the machines of life played out in network aesthetics. Or a network of machines played out in life aesthetics. Or all and some and various combinations of all of these simultaneously.

There's a tradition going back to early biological research

that looks at life as a system. Thinking of forms of life as sets of relations working together within definable boundaries spread from biology and made its way into cultural contexts. The study of systems has developed into a discipline in its own right, extending on ideas about plant cells to forest eco-systems and on into radar defence systems and the behaviours of financial markets. The underlying core concern is an appreciation of the interconnectivity of things. That the system is itself the a priori form and materials coalesce at various times to realise their collective nature.

Laura's works are captivating systems of representation and abstraction. She has deftly conjured functioning systems as self-referential, self-contained entities. Designing, engineering and



manufacturing most of the components and processes herself she has delimited the extraneous while orchestrating the elegant. These works are what they are, they are of themselves and in that purity they resonate as self-similar reflections across scales, categories and time.

Kent Wilson

www.thesubmachine.wordpress.com

