

Out of Hours Exhibition

GUT FEELING

Making Beauty: Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva

*Djanogly Gallery, Nottingham
20 August 2016 – 30 October 2016*

Making Beauty is a site-specific installation at Djanogly Gallery in Nottingham by the artist Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva. She is a highly-respected artist from Macedonia who has exhibited at the Venice Biennale representing her country, and the Vatican. The exhibition contains reconfigurations of two previous major works of Hadzi-Vasileva; *Fragility*, previously in the Fabrica gallery in Brighton, and *Haruspex*, commissioned by the Vatican in 2015 for display in its Pavilion at the Venice Biennale.

Supported by Wellcome Trust funding, the artist collaborated with three digestive-disease specialist departments at University College Hospital (London), the University of East Anglia (Norwich), and the University of Nottingham, for the past year. She has taken inspiration from both her time spent in laboratory settings as well as direct conversations with patients. Some of her exhibition pieces have even been made using models and techniques from the novel technology used in these medical research departments.

On entering the exhibition one is

Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, Rendition of Self, 2016, Cow stomach, turned wood, audio, photo Nick Dunmur, courtesy Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva.



Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, Fragility, 2015; caul fat, plastic, metal and wire; 2400 cm x 7350 cm x 700 cm, Fabrica Gallery, Brighton, England; Photo: Tom Thistethwaite, © the artist, courtesy the artist.

immediately struck by the lace-like structure suspended from the ceiling. This work, entitled *Fragility* (above) is composed of preserved caul fat painstakingly transformed into shimmering transparent sheets. These layers of hanging sheets with vein-like lace patterns transform the room into a cloud-like environment. At the end of this room, a spherical object is suspended from the ceiling and is titled *Haruspex*. This piece conveys an eerie feeling with its tentacle-like structures draping down to the floor.

Following this grand entrance, the exhibition flows to the right with many individual smaller pieces of the artist's work. What I found most interesting was the dome-shaped cow's stomach playing gurgling bowel sounds (left); it is certainly a surreal experience listening to digestive sounds coming from what was once a living stomach!

The gallery is accompanied by an insightful video interview introducing Hadzi-Vasileva; despite the the obvious intricate level of planning and preparation needed to create these works she intrigues us further by saying she *'never knows what each piece is going to look like until it's complete'*.

That I suppose is the beauty and curse of using natural products for art. The overarching concept throughout the

exhibition is one of 'life after death' and I believe the artist has fulfilled this ambition as she has created exactly that with these dead pieces of tissue now becoming lasting pieces of art.

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Making Beauty: Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva is exhibiting at Djanogly Gallery, Nottingham Lakeside Arts, Nottingham, until October 30th 2016.

www.lakesidearts.org.uk/

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