

# The Fine Art of Transpiring (omnium gatherum)

*Enjoy this trip*

*Enjoy this trip*

*And it is a trip*

*Countdown is progressing*<sup>1</sup>

Welcome to a world where timelines blur and peripatetic interests intersect, intertwine, disappear, and re-emerge into a never-ending evolution – this is the kaleidoscopic vision of Georgia Lucy. In the exhibition titled “Galileo Chew Chew” at Contemporary Art Tasmania, mash-ups drawn from art, music, culture, trash and life in general are reconfigured with no clear lines of distinction or priority. They are all equal. This is the medium. Eclectic bowerbird or gleaner meets passionate unfiltered observer with an occasionally elliptical sense of humour. There is no recycling. There is no need as detritus is reused, and there is no politically correct agenda, hidden or otherwise, nor any convenient carbon crediting. No buying and trading waivers, nor any favours. What you need is usually free, and you just need to want it.

*Harmful elements in the air*

*Symbols clashing everywhere*<sup>2</sup>

Make no mistake, Georgia Lucy’s head is not in the clouds, like some millennial cosmic hippy waving a diaphanous lavender scarf and hoping for the best. She’s fluid like quicksilver, disruptive and harder to pin down. More like some sort of post-punk celebrating the good, the bad and the frightening. No patronising placebos, Band-Aids for burst arteries or misplaced nostalgia recalling “The Sweet By and By” with vague promises, ineffectual support, faux goals, and ersatz commitments. It’s absurdist theatre tackling blue-sky thinking and running with it. Unhampered by rigid rules and the desperate need to please, it is more like if you can think it, you can do it. Anything to disrupt audiences from their complacency or apathy and have them face the real situation as the artist sees it. To poke the bear. This message is not one of doom and gloom or half-baked pies in the sky either. It’s not even telling you what to think or which side to take – it’s a challenge to play and play well.

*You got me runnin’, goin’ out of my mind*

*You got me thinkin’ that I’m wastin’ my time*<sup>3</sup>

Georgia Lucy is defying gravity but it’s not an “unbearable lightness of being” as the Czech-French novelist Milan Kundera would describe it. Rather, inspiration has come from her father, Matthew Lindsay Ingall. He is the son of the late Lindsay Ingall, who carried out the first continent-wide gravity survey of Australia. As a teenager, in his school holidays Matthew accompanied Lindsay in a survey of Tasmania and gained experience operating the gravity meters. He later inherited them. He would then go on to work as a geophysical surveyor using these instruments. These machines are a constant reminder, a kind of responsibility that is always looming for the artist even though the references are not obvious. They were a persistent presence throughout her childhood and memories of them have of course coloured her recollections. Implications and other ambient ambiguities have grown and morphed as the artist has emerged. These meters are mapping tools that reveal what is hidden under the earth despite various layers of sedimentary cover. Ore bodies are read as a positive gravity feature as the minerals are much denser than the rock that can surround them. Their revelations are a double-edged sword – “precious”, as Tolkien’s Sméagol deems in *The Lord of the Rings*, but also potentially corrupting with their possibilities. The artist constantly talks about these machines, and despite her father suffering from multiple system atrophy, his toes are filmed grasping rosemary and lemon verbena and they are not letting go.

*Then the loud sound did seem to fade  
Came back like a slow voice on a wave of phase  
That weren't no DJ  
That was hazy cosmic trace* <sup>4</sup>

Borrowing and then transporting her father's smaller back-up Worden Gravity Meters from the mainland (she was not allowed to touch the LaCoste and Romberg Gravity Meters) meant booking the meters their own seats on Jetstar. However, the pilot did not think these precision instruments looked anything like cellos. So, Georgia Lucy and her sister, Maile, were escorted off the plane with the meters and given a complementary overnight stay at an airport hotel. Her sister became the camera operator by being in the wrong place at the right time, and documenting it all; it all worked out in the end. A Pythonesque adventure where nothing went to script regardless of the pre-planning but what is the point if there are no surprises! Her father's instructions on using these machines had been recorded and are now being emitted or broadcast from speakers in the ethereal Brisbane Hotel, masquerading as a cable car that has taken to the skies in the gallery, distorted by acoustics and dis/ease.

*"Relax," said the night man  
"We are programmed to receive  
You can check-out any time you like  
But you can never leave!"* <sup>5</sup>

In the installation a model of the infamous hotel, actually located in the artist's hometown of Hobart, is winched around the gallery ceiling on a cable car-like tracking. This movement is achieved via an assortment of wheels including those from her father's wheelchair, dirt bikes (a nod to her Great North Walk trek last year during summer from Sydney to Newcastle), wheely bins and various other items sourced from her Dodges Ferry neighbourhood's hard rubbish. Playing alongside the recording of her father's instructions are live recordings from the hotel itself, which was once famous for its live music and a mecca for bands, assorted misfits, freaks and the gloriously Other. We have flickering memories of a rapidly disappearing experience where sticky carpets, the smell of stale beer and cheap alcohol, and dodgy dark lighting were acceptable as long as the music was real. No questions asked.

*We never make any sense  
But hell that never mattered* <sup>6</sup>

The exhibition is like an *American Horror Story* dreamscape set in Tasmania. Familiar objects are warped, sounds are distorted, and there are lights, noise, and strange shimmering movements, all jarring against each other with a junkyard intensity. It's like walking into a circus graveyard of oddly familiar objects that promised so much but leaves you unsure about its attraction. Nothing is quite what it seems to be, and what appears to be hastily made with whatever is at hand is not quite that either. There are messages embedded everywhere if you look hard enough, but their meaning is uncertain. Is the choice of newspaper and its print just misdirection; are we interpreting these signs with our own bias thinking, as perhaps not everything has a simple binary explanation? Or are we just reacting to the initial superficial reading and not looking at the spaces in between, the negatives or gaps? What is absent can be as important as what is in print. It is easy to be distracted and misled by attention-grabbing headlines and by patronising bell jar hysterics. Beware of standing out too much because it can get you into serious trouble.

*They saw me there in the square when I was shooting my mouth off  
About saving some fish.  
Now could that be construed as some radical's views or some liberals' wish ...* <sup>7</sup>

The earthworm, *Hypolimnus pedderensis* emerges from the bowels of the gallery floor. It was presumed extinct after the flooding in 1972 of a 10 sq km glacial lake for Tasmania's Middle Gordon hydroelectric scheme. Nowadays signposts on the Gordon River Road apply the name Lake Pedder to the 242 sq km body of water formed by the damming of the Serpentine and Huon rivers. Despite this, Georgia Lucy, like some ecological alchemist, has reanimated it and it's become very large, feeding on her imagination, a *Shai-Hulud*. The earthworm has been scaled up and looking like a decaying relic from the abyss. It's maw or jaw, now closed because it can no longer feed on the microbes and algae of Lake Pedder. The earthworm played an important role in the lake's ecology as its waste castings aerated the soil, which in turn improved its drainage and water holding capacities. Out of sight and out of mind.

*Little Red Riding Hood*

*You sure are lookin' good*

*You're everything that a big, bad wolf could want*

*Awooh! I mean baa*

*Baa? Baa*<sup>8</sup>

A rocking chair covered in real estate guides jingles and jangles with the sound of house keys. Like a carrot that you cannot eat it is a chair you cannot sit on and there is no verandah to rock on, and no house to belong to. It's a twisted fractured fairy tale and instead of the three little pigs in their own homes the wolf is now managing real estate and property. In a video, a little pig is hounding the Wolf Property real estate agency on the billboard greeting you near the Hobart airport. However, it is the pig that is doing all the huffing and puffing, and squealing LET ME IN, LET ME IN. The little pig is not giving up or shutting up, it is loud and proud. The wolf is now gatekeeper and letting only the right ones in. This little piggy is not the right stuff and has no chance of even getting a house of straw let alone some brick veneer with house prices skyrocketing and Airbnb being more lucrative than long-term rentals. Little pigs cannot even hide from the big bad wolf in the first place as they are now transient tumbleweed hobos bringing down the tone of the area and are encouraged to move on.

*You got mud on your face, you big disgrace*

*Kicking your can all over the place*<sup>9</sup>

Georgia Lucy's a team player, of sorts, playing AFL in this year's inaugural season for the Dodges Ferry Lady Sharks Division 3, with her sister. While her team made the grand final, the game has given her a plethora of injuries. Such is her dedication to the defensive half-back flank position that allows the player to create opportunities for the mid and forward lines. Being injured does not stop her; rather it's like pouring petrol on a flame. So, while many artists are solitary, Georgia Lucy operates in a vortex, and her enthusiasm is contagious, with friends, family and innocent bystanders being roped in to make things happen, just because they must. Like some avalanche gathering momentum downhill, things get picked up and carried along while other stuff is discarded.

Megan Oh, the plaster cast technician, who works at the Royal Hobart Hospital, uses her expertise with bandages to plaster goal posts that have tanked and collapsed. Technical engineer Stewart Houghton worked with the assorted wheels and motors to get the Brisbane Hotel cable car moving around the gallery on fish farm ropes that she has spliced together for length. And then there is the sound master, Callum Cusick, who orchestrated the cacophony of assorted sounds, recordings, and auditory ethers in that installation. Everyone is welcome. All are included.

*I'm comin' up so you better get this party started*

*I'm comin' up so you better get this party started*<sup>10</sup>

Forget Danish architect Jørn Utzon's shell-ribbed Sydney Opera House or Beijing's Bird's Nest, – Georgia Lucy is not waiting for the polarising sports stadium to be built at Hobart's Macquarie Point. Like seashells into limestone, local newspaper *The Mercury* is transformed by the artist into some sort

of sea urchin midden, full of flickering images of the trail-blazing Dodges Ferry Lady Sharks. However, Premier Rockliff won't need to wait till 2028 for Taylor Swift and her dulcet tones to permeate the stadium. In Georgia Lucy's stadium it will be her vocals emanating from the diva doll on a levitating stage from the roof into the arena, belting out anthems. Of course, Georgia Lucy's in a band, she's been in several and has played at the Brisbane Hotel numerous times. She knows what she's doing. Enjoy this trip.

*All aboard, all aboard, whoa  
(Come on, boy, do you wanna ride?)  
All board, all aboard, whoa*<sup>11</sup>

## **H.R.Hyatt-Johnston**

### **Shotgun 10 mentor and writer**

## **New work, industry access, critical engagement – Shotgun 10 culminated in *Galileo Chew Chew* by Georgia Lucy (21.10–18.11.23)**

<sup>1</sup> Pascal Gabriel, Miles Gregory, Mark Moore, 1988, "Overture: Theme From S'Express." Lyrics Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp., Sony/ATV Music Publishing (UK) Limited, May Twelfth Music, Angel & Maverick Llp, Kobalt Music Services, Australia.

<sup>2</sup> John Gareth McKay, Morris Kenneth Ian, Siouxsie Sioux, Steven Severin, 1978, "Hong Kong Gardens." The Scream, Siouxsie and the Banshees, Polydor Records, UK.

<sup>3</sup> Jeff Lynne, 1979, "Don't Bring Me Down." Discovery, Electric Light Orchestra. Jet Records, UK.

<sup>4</sup> David Bowie, 1972, "Starman." Chrysalis Music, Tintoretto Music, Chrysalis Music, Rzo Music, UK.

<sup>5</sup> Glenn Lewis Frey, Don Felder, Donald Hugh Henley, 1976, "Hotel California." Hotel California, Eagles, Red Cloud Music and Fingers Music, US.

<sup>6</sup> Miranda Cooper, Bob Ezrin, Dick Wagner, 1975, "Department of Youth." Welcome to My Nightmare, Alice Cooper, Atlantic Records, US.

<sup>7</sup> Pete Briquette and Bob Geldof, 1980, "Someone's Looking at You." The Boomtown Rats, Ensign Records, UK.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Blackwell, 1966, "L'il Red Riding Hood." Sam the Sham and the Pharaohs, MGM Records, US.

<sup>9</sup> Brian Harold May, 1977, "We Will Rock You." News of the World, Queen EMI Records, UK.

<sup>10</sup> Linda Perry, 2001, "Get The Party Started." LaFace-Arista Records, US.

<sup>11</sup> James Francis Cauty, Lawanda Ann McFarland, Ricky Lyte, William Ernest Drummond 1990, "Last Train to Trancentral."

**HELEN HYATT-JOHNSTON is a visual artist who lives in Sydney, on Eora Nation country. One half of the collaborative duo The Twilight Girls, she is a writer, list maker, collector and occasional curator. Hyatt-Johnston's diverse employment background in hospitals, environmental organisations and contemporary art spaces has resulted in a variety of roles, including general manager, registered nurse, midwife and preparator. Hyatt-Johnston's practice over the last thirty years has included performance, installation and video works that explores solitude, reflection, space and architecture. As part of The Twilight Girls, she has also made a number of works that reconsider and reinterpret how women are presented and represented in popular culture, cliché, myth and society.**

**Hyatt-Johnston's work has been shown at: Locust Projects, Miami; The Hood Gallery and Raid Projects, Los Angeles; Taipei Artist Village, Taiwan; Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane; Canberra Contemporary Art Space; Contemporary Art Tasmania, Hobart; Cementa, Kandos, NSW; and in Sydney at Performance Space, the Australian Centre for Photography, and 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art. Hyatt-Johnston's work is held in private and public collections and most recently acquired by the Chau Chak Wing Museum at the University of Sydney. Her writings have been published in the Journal of Asia-Pacific Pop Culture (Pennsylvania State University Press), Artist Profile, Artlink, Art Guide, Artspace Publications and World Lighthouse Society Journal. She is also the co-editor of a monograph on the late abstract painter Royston Harpur to be published in 2025.**