

**Todd Robinson**

***If you like to be looked at and I like to look at you, we can achieve an enjoyable personal relationship***

**Void, Melbourne,**

**August 13 - September 17, 2022**

*If you like to be looked at and I like to look at you, we can form an enjoyable personal relationship* presents a new series of sculptural works. This is Robinson's first solo exhibition in Melbourne. The series comprises wall mounted sculptures in bronze, textiles, and rope. The body of work engages themes of verisimilitude and truth, the ready-made, as well as the visceral encounter with art.

Each work is titled using phrases drawn from the writing of queer theorist Eve Sedgwick and Adam Frank in their reading of psychologist Sylvan Tompkins' theories of affect.<sup>1</sup> In a particular passage the writers draw attention to divergent personality traits or inclinations that combine in the context of human relationships. Robinson notes an analogy in the way his sculptures attempt to resolve two elements; through material dialogue and reciprocity and the paired traits listed in Sedgwick and Frank's text.

While each sculpture is presented as a unified and singular form, their material basis is ambiguous. Each work utilizes several components combining into a single wall mounted work - appearing as two lengths of braided rope or pieces of draped fabric. Each work composes a relationship of suspension and entwinement where one component is suspended from or wraps around the other. The works are hung from bronze rods originating as off-cuts from the casting process or are affixed directly to the wall. The bronze components are left with no patina taking a tawny brown and gold metallic appearance.

The material ambiguity derives from lost wax casting used to produce the series. The process involves the production of copies. In an approach the artist developed with the foundry actual lengths of braided rope served firstly as a model from which wax and then bronze copies are produced. Similarly, rectangular-shaped cut pieces of canvas fabric served as the basis from which wax then unique bronze copies are made for the textile works. In some of the sculptures both the bronze copy and rope or textiles are presented as a single work, placing the original and the copy in relation.

Despite their rigidity the bronze copies reproduce the fluid appearance of rope and textile as well as and the tessellation of braid and the warp and weft woven structure of textiles. The materials Robinson used to initially develop these works were on hand in the studio including, a cotton canvas painters drop cloth, and an assortment of ropes from previous projects.

The sculptures are realised through a series of technical, material, and conceptual transpositions of one object to another. The conveyed content of these material inversions is metaphoric but also makes a visceral appeal to the body of an observer.

*This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.*

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<sup>1</sup> Sedgwick, E., K. & A. Frank. 1995. Shame in the cybernetic fold: reading Sylvan Tompkins, in their (eds.) Shame and Its Sisters: A Sylvan Tompkins Reader.

*The artist would like to acknowledge the support of Crawford castings Sydney for their assistance in the production of this work.*