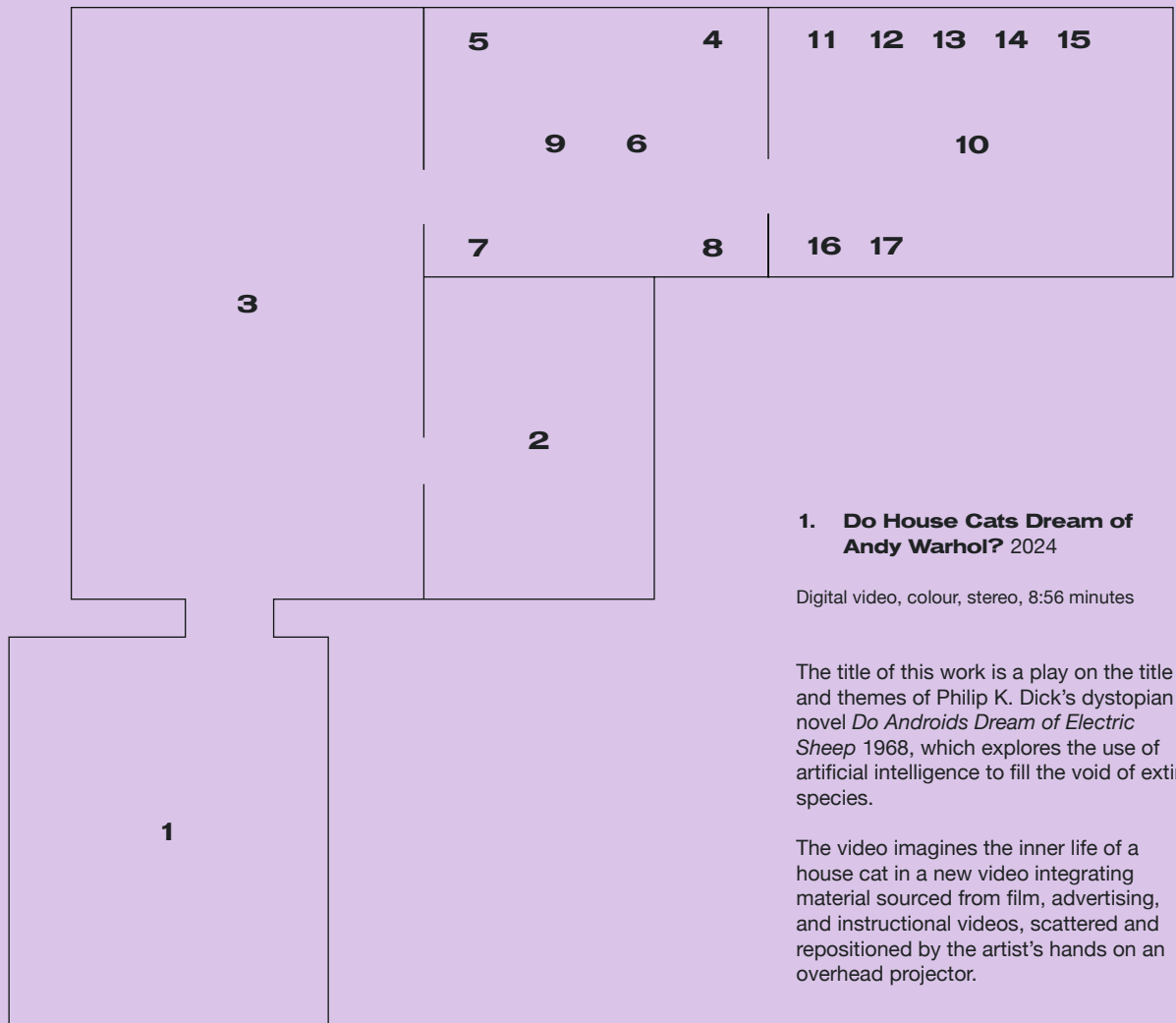


SARAH CONTOS EYELASH HORIZON



1. Do House Cats Dream of Andy Warhol? 2024

Digital video, colour, stereo, 8:56 minutes

The title of this work is a play on the title and themes of Philip K. Dick's dystopian novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* 1968, which explores the use of artificial intelligence to fill the void of extinct species.

The video imagines the inner life of a house cat in a new video integrating material sourced from film, advertising, and instructional videos, scattered and repositioned by the artist's hands on an overhead projector.

Cats imbued with human behaviours are frequent visitors in Contos's work. They embody the dual guise of protective, comforting companion and aloof, feline foe. The recurring motif of disembodied hands also implicates the artist as both an unseen director and an active participant in the work.

Chopping and layering images in a process of self-editing, Contos allows viewers to momentarily dwell in nostalgic worlds. Here, a childhood yearning for a Garfield cat-shaped telephone is intimately connected to the memory of a loved pet, replaced by a digital cat dreaming of fame outside of the house.

BRAIN

2. **Universes Built and Destroyed in a Dressing Room of a Protagonist Yet to be Born** 2024

Repurposed cane furniture, hand cast aluminium, electroplated objects, found furniture and encyclopedias, plywood, glass, LED electrics, mirror, repurposed leather jackets, various fabrics, par can, stainless steel hardware, screenprint on various fabrics, polyester fibre, synthetic wigs, aluminium foil tape, rattan, Australian sheepskin and wool, polyurethane foam, mouldable foam, polymer clay, video tape, nail polish, oil on board, mannequin hands, rubber, artist collection of haberdashery

This installation expands on Contos's previous work and her growing repertoire of evolving ideas and materials. Sculptural objects and screenprinted fabrics are arranged together to fashion a curious relationship between a striptease dance sequence from the film *Flashdance* 1983, the Maschinenmensch robot in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* 1927, and the pseudoscience of spirit channelling.

Anthropomorphic cane assemblages, 'pleaser heels', frilled fabrics, mirrors, and a hessian figure seated on a chair are some of the elements that inhabit Contos's dressing room and stage. Aluminium heads here and elsewhere resemble the *Metropolis* robot, combining appealing and unnerving features to suggest technology's dual potential to advance and dehumanise humanity. Screen printed fabrics depict artificially generated images of a woman's face, melting candles, and hypnotic patterns. The woman's eyes are closed, and her head is cradled by disembodied hands. She appears to be holding a scientific instrument that issues a telekinetic signal to summon and rearrange images and ideas with the power of the mind.

WOMB

3. **MoTH-eRR** 2023

Three-channel digital video, colour, stereo, 13.23 minutes

MoTH-eRR expresses the complexities and contradictions inherent in the human condition through the organ of the womb, exemplifying its duality as both a nourishing, life growing space and an abject, uncanny void.

Inspired by German expressionist cinema, Contos's video uses distinctive stylistic features, including unconventional compositions and dark themes, suggesting feelings of inner turmoil and the idea of childbirth as a speculative experience. Generative software manipulates and loops imagery together to create a narrative that unfolds across three chapters depicting the fictional life cycle of a human-hybrid moth.

MoTH-eRR's protagonist embodies childlike and malevolent characteristics. At first, she appears as a 'Pierrot' styled figure with a chalk-white face and arched eyebrows to conceal her vulnerabilities. By the second chapter, she has transformed into a more authoritative persona, wearing the brightly patterned wings of a moth as a protective mask—a theatrical deterrent to make enemies believe they are facing a larger, more dangerous creature. In the third chapter, her hands link together to cradle moths in various states of metamorphosis. The hybrid moth embryo is implanted within a computer-generated womb as a series of flashing images come to rest on a melting candle, symbolising the beginning of a new life cycle.

BELLY

4. **Lead Perfumed Embryo** 2024
5. **Moulting TV Sunburn** 2024
6. **She Daemon Cracks** 2024
7. **Spider Earth Spit and Froth** 2024
8. **Under Four Decades and Six Years of Bitten Transparent Fingernails** 2024
9. **Orb Skins** 2024

Stainless steel armature and hardware, hand tufted acrylic and Australian wool fibres, rubber, polyester fibre, artist's collection of button and beads, LED electrics, leather, mild steel, mannequin hands, found vanity mirrors, charms, repurposed leather, Perspex mount, chain, plastic, printed transparency film, thread, safety pins, iridescent plastic

Cocoons and moults are recurring motifs in Contos's practice, inspired by science fiction's ability to conjure imagined worlds that express fears of the unseen and unknown. She is particularly drawn to films such as *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* 1978 and the *Alien* franchise 1979–2024 where parasitic aliens inhabit human bodies, replacing the essence of humanity with something 'other'.

Using a heavy-duty tufting gun, Contos creates plush cocoons and secreting moults. They are adorned with fabrics, chains, plastic skins, buttons, images of teen idols, lights, mannequin hands, and vanity mirrors. The installation is a potent site for psychological change, an intimate space for holding memories and yearnings of the past while embracing the shedding required to nurture future dreams and desires. While Contos's cocoons and moults may not evoke the same palpable fear located within science fiction films, they summon the existential anxiety associated with aging and letting go of unfulfilled hopes and dreams.

SOUL

10. **Where Old Trees Are Spaceships and Rocks Are Snow** 2024

Hand cast aluminium, PVC piping, stainless steel hardware, polyurethane foam, paint, glitter, rubber, nickel chain, water pump, epoxy, rubber

Embodying ideas of the soul and intangible transformations, works in this gallery capture profound connections between life, water, and regeneration.

Where Old Trees Are Spaceships and Rocks Are Snow is a fountain assembled from hand cast aluminium forms attached to a steel scaffold, with water cascading over and throughout. Contos has melted down remnants of previous artworks to forge new forms that bear traces of their former existence. They include a patchwork of knitted and crocheted samplers, floral bouquets, fairies, and a parliament of wise owls. Wind chimes activated by the water flow serve as a memento mori, and the bells remind us of our mortality as a new life cycle begins again.

11. **RE-MARIA1935** 2024
12. **RE-MARIA1969** 2024
13. **RE-MARIA1984** 2024
14. **RE-MARIA1996** 2024
15. **RE-MARIA2003** 2024

Hand cast aluminium, chain, stainless steel hardware, wood, paint, found charms

16. **Gravity Above** 2024
17. **Gravity Below** 2024

Screen prints on canvas

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