



**Linda du Preez**







#### **Notes on Linda du Preez's work by Jeremy Wafer**

I would not have expected a canoe to be such a curious object but there it was: a curvy set of folds, bumps and hollows, all hot plastic in the veranda sun. At once weirdly sexual but at the same time disturbingly alien like the swelling body of a dolphin washed up on the beach, all pulpy beneath the blistering and parched skin. We spent a while discussing how the design evolved through a process of testing and fitting, how the fit of kayak to body is developed through forming the plasticine model to the shape of a leg, to the arc of the arm, the curve of the back, the length of the paddle, to the buoyancy and slide of the shape through moving water until an optimum relation of form to function is arrived at, a process as much intuitive and felt as it is able to be mathematically expressed.

Even stacked in her studio, after her Master's exhibition at Wits, Linda du Preez's sculptures retained their stark initial impact – the pure white ovoid symmetrical shapes, the beautifully modeled and cast plaster forms, reminiscent of bleached bones stacked and interlocking, the sharp slits in the tight surfaces of the set of black discs swelling like pregnant bellies on the wall. All of

these share the same sense of something which we recognize in our bodies, a knot in the stomach or the elastic edge of flesh in a clean cut: a kind of logical and necessary set of shapes in their abstractness. The modernist mantra of truth to materials echoes here as well: the bulky whiteness of plaster, the floppiness of black rubber tubes, the heaviness of fist sized lead weights; as does Corbusier's modular scaling of form to the human body.

This somewhat utopian search for smooth balance and clear symmetry which could, I think, take the work into a kind of Riefenstahl-ish athletic perfection is complicated and disturbed by a more interesting awkwardness in many of the pieces: a recognition that bodies ache, that muscles slump and that skin sags. A big black cube of hanging tendrils evokes an alarming sense of scale shift, a micro view through a forest of hairs perhaps. This more disquieting set of associations is particularly evident in a video work which frames the repeated action of a pair of bare feet resting and then raising themselves off the floor in an action which is perhaps the routine of a dancer's practicing but which here tips over into the uncanny.











**Images:** Simulacra  
(installation views and details)  
**Medium:** Video, Light, Plaster of  
Paris, Polymer, Rubber, Wax, Cast  
Iron and Wood  
**Dimensions:** Variable  
**Destination:** Substation, Wits  
University, 2005

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**Artist:** Linda du Preez  
**Concept:** Harrie Siertsema  
**Co-ordination:** Abrie Fourie



- ⊕ - Graskop
- ⊕ - Dullstroom
- ⊕ - Pretoria - Tshwane
- ⊕ - Irene - Tshwane
- ⊕ - Richmond
- ⊕ - Cape Town