

Massimo Guerrera

Darboral (And the patient maintenance of a practice field)

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[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

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Massimo GUERRERA, *Darbora* (And the patient maintenance of a practice field)

Andrew TAGGART

With socked feet, I enter through the doors of the Darling Foundry's main exhibition space and step up over a soft padded bridge, out onto a network of carpets and various flooring panels. With each step, from one plateau to the next, the shifting surface textures upon the soles of my feet spawn a heightened awareness of my own physicality. I am positioned in between arrangements of flora, sculptural moulds and castings. Handwritten messages, interspersed throughout the sprawling installation, dangle from the ceiling and decorate the walls and multi-coloured insulation panels.

Structurally, the non-linearity of *Darbora* mimics our inextricable everyday hyperlinked realities. The circuitous relationships between the installation's sites are accentuated by a tethered system of paint-encrusted string and wire. Light bulbs hang and invoke synaptic encounters, gently suggesting the interconnectedness of our peripheral surroundings. There is an ease, a comfort to this experience, or in Guerrero's words, this *rendez-vous indéfini*.

Finding an empty space, I place my belongings on the floor, sit, rest,

converse with my companion, and then drift out amongst a series of stations. In one corner, three adults and a small child leaf through volumes of Guerrero's photographs and drawings; documentations of past performances and orchestrated social events. Nearby, a low-lying table surrounded by pillows, supports plates of dried and rotting fruit, utensils, tea bowls, and a teapot. These are the remnants of another one of the artist's signature gatherings, whereby friends meet to eat, engage and create many of the objects that now fill the Darling Foundry.

Among these objects are a large number of organic, sculptural masses containing bodily impressions: moulds made from a friend's mouth, a tongue, an abstraction of an anal cavity. Some objects are less decipherable, bringing to mind the more foreign parts of our bodies—the sights of which we do not immediately recognize. One rather stumpy object sits on the floor, hairy and covered in a transparent medium as though it was recently removed from the ear of an oversized head. These works not only evoke the digestive and excretive processes of our bodies, but can also be seen to symbolize sculpture's potential to be metamorphic.

Guerrera's process of sculpture-

making resists completion. Like food passing through the body, his work transforms over time; shape-shifting, changing between states and generating new meaning. He does not work alone, but rather employs a collective strategy integral to the reading of his work. The greater part of his sculptural objects are produced collaboratively by means of gatherings, neo-Surrealist in nature, where friends are invited to participate in an expanded game of Exquisite Corpse; re-imagining, fragmenting and combining body parts into a physical manifestation of the collective experience.

Guerrera's territory is familiar in that it uses human interaction as a point of departure, presenting a schema for heightened socializations. Where the work strays from the typical strategies of relational aesthetics however, is in its exclusivity. Only a select group of the artist's peers is invited to partake in any given happening, whereas the viewer is asked only to bear witness to its wake. Surrounded by an archive of objects heavy with histories of collective construction, part of me can't help but feel that I have somehow missed the party.

Darbora, with its multiplex of ideas and studies, does however plant a seed within me, epitomized by the

small fruit trees scattered through the exhibition space. The social gatherings may be over, but new life has been left to grow. In fact, the sprouting fruit trees are a direct consequence of Guerrero's get-togethers; the artist having planted the seeds discarded from the communal meals—seeds rich with the moisture of human mouths—into fertile soil. *Darbora* continues to grow and change in me, provoking a consideration of the potential for art to be manifest through a kind of generative process, creating a space for the cultivation of patience. ←

Massimo Guerrero, *Darbora*
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Andrew TAGGART is a visual artist from Vancouver, currently pursuing an MA in Fine Art at the National Academy of the Arts in Bergen, Norway, in collaboration with his wife, Chloe Lewis. He received a BFA in Sculpture from Concordia University, Montreal in 2005, and his work has most recently been included in *X International* at Gallery Luis Adelantado in Valencia, Spain. In October 2008, he will present a solo exhibition at Le Petit Trianon in Lethbridge, Alberta.

Massimo GUERRERA,
Darbora, 2008.
Photo: courtesy of
the artist.

