

Tania Ursomarzo

This is how we could appear

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Number 65, Fall 2003

La conquête de l'espace
The Conquest of Space

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/9099ac>

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Publisher(s)

Le Centre de diffusion 3D

ISSN

0821-9222 (print)

1923-2551 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this document

Lau, Y. (2003). Tania Ursomarzo: This is how we could appear. *Espace Sculpture*, (65), 41–41.

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This is how we could appear

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TANIA
URSOMARZO,
Untitled, 2003.
Life size dimension.
Photo: Y. Lau.

Recently, I saw the clothing by Tania Ursomarzo, a young architect/designer based in Toronto. I was taken by the manner in which her pieces regard the body, and by the fact that her clothing constructions are informed by their author's interest and practice in architecture, dance, and art; a fact that opens the possibility of discussing clothing within the overlapping neighbourhood of these disciplines, outside of the paradigm of fashion.

At first, I found it difficult to associate her pieces with a settled form of life, or life-style. They seem to resist the codification of *life into style*. There is something tenuous and open-ended about them. Even when the garment is resolved, decisions in the construction do not appear to be final, the piece does not appear "finished" (they seem to be *gestural*, or made to promote some unknown gestures). The pieces feel like prototypes, even though they are wearable and durable. Are they then not one-to-one scale prototypes of themselves, I wondered.

I feel her clothing embodies a process of perpetual formation, that it indexes the body as such: the body is identified as a site of potentialities, of movements, of gestures that are perpetually unfolding, and able thus to surpass the fixed geometry of entrenched customs and habits. For example, there is a series of white cotton tops and dresses that appear to be constructed mostly out of pleats. I think they suggest studies of how folds and pleats implicate and extend the body. The pleats seem to describe the body not by tracing its external contour, but by mapping its expressive potentials through a series of displacements. The garment adheres only provisionally to the body, until the folds exceed and "spin" away from it. It seems that the folds work to deliver the body, understood as a number of vectors of unforeseen direction and dimension, into the space around it. These experiments counter the commonly held perception of the body as receiver of styles. Instead, they promote an awareness of the body as an expressive agent, one that is perpetually forming new alliances with its surroundings. These pieces construct new expressive modalities for the body.

Another series of tops is constructed from cheesecloth. The front and back components are

identical planes cut into the shape of the torso. But this is where representation of the body ends. Since there is no front or back, the top can be worn both ways. The lightness of the fabric allowed the constructed character of the piece, its architectonics, to be very evident. The top appears to be provisionally held together by the stitches. The stitches have more visual weight than the cheesecloth. The directions of the stitches do not follow the body's outline or measure so much as a *logic* generated through the very process of construction and the nature of the fabric. Ursomarzo made a number of variations based on this informal/improvisational way of construction and discovery. Looking at the lines of the stitching, the garment behaves much like a set of blue prints, a collection of informal plans that are loosely held together to create a proposal for a top. There is no prior pattern to refer to. The plans are woven out of the process. The question is: how are we going to live in these pieces? What is our body going to become? It would seem that our lives must inevitably depart from these questions, since the tops do not allow the body, regarded as an expressive force in life, to be exhausted as a carrier of replaceable styles. ←

Éric Sauvé

Vert forêt

La Société de la Place des Arts, à Montréal, décidait l'an dernier de réaménager son Esplanade. Confié aux soins de l'architecte paysagiste Claude Cormier, le lieu possède désormais un caractère de véritable jardin public. À l'intérieur de ce projet, le bassin a été désigné comme un lieu d'intervention artistique appelé à être renouvelé chaque été, grâce au concours *Œuvre d'art éphémère*.

En mars dernier, suite à un appel de candidatures sur portfolios, Éric Sauvé a été choisi pour réaliser *Vert forêt*, un mur translucide d'une longueur de 28 mètres qui traverse le bassin. Cette «haie inorganique», composée d'éclats de verre de couleur verte contenus dans une structure d'aluminium elle-même recouverte de feuilles d'acrylique transparent, nous renvoie à la relation du paysage urbain à la nature. Diffraction, réflexion et réfraction de la lumière et de la couleur sont rehaussées par la transparence du verre et le mouvement de l'eau. ←

SOURCE : DANIELLE SAINT-DENIS

