

# *Caving in*

Zoya Godoroja-Prieckaerts

August, 2019

*Caving in* is the second iteration of an exhibition presented at Watch This Space ARI (Mparntwe/Alice Springs) in 2018, *Building Walls*. The two exhibitions are underpinned by the same process and concept, though the original exhibition consisted of a single large cubed space rather than multiple organic-shaped spaces made specifically for individual viewing.

In 2018, Dan M. Procházka wrote a piece responding to *Building Walls*.

## ***Kindness in Revolt***

Dan M. Procházka

The anti-patriarchal struggle is often defined as the resistance against male oppression. A broadened definition expands the conversation to the resistance against all arbitrary ‘certainties’ used to impose control. *Building Walls* uses this second definition as a philosophical basis to quietly dismantle patriarchy. In process and in lived feel, the piece exudes the vulnerability and openness of its creator.

By working with each panel in a burst of unmoderated and unplanned intensity, Godoroja-Prieckaerts takes a risk in the hope of excavating something real from her psyche. The contention is that vulnerability is not in details meticulously refined and presented just so. It is not an aesthetic curated to the public tastes. Real vulnerability is the capacity to fail. It is the imperfection generated as the interior landscape grapples ad lib with a fluctuating exterior. This tension is captured and celebrated on an architectural scale in *Building Walls*. The resultant room of 12 panels addresses the diversity of this struggle. At times the panels suggest the process was violent, exhausting, lonely. Other panels show the process yielded calligraphic shapes serene and curious. The fallible process of creation is Godoroja-Prieckaerts' first anti-patriarchal act.

The artistic sensibility of Godoroja-Prieckaerts provides needed ballast to the intentional uncertainty of making. The artist's experience over a decade of smaller-scale compositions is evident and provides an aesthetic continuity whilst also empowering her to explore a diversity of form. Moreover, I never felt like there was a loss of intent; each of the 12 panels succeeds - though some more articulately than others - in communicating their own particular terrain of emotion.

When pulling aside the curtain like panel and entering *Building Walls* the feeling is immediately welcoming. The ‘room’ literally glows with a soft light piercing the canvas. The space's embryonic quality is an invitation for the weary traveller to stay a while and recline. This is Godoroja-Prieckaerts second anti-patriarchal act; to embrace the public rather than confront them.

Once I entered the sanctuary I did not feel obligated to critically engage with the work, rather I felt valid simply enjoying the general ambiance of the space. Any insights or chance glances at a particular cluster of shapes felt incidental rather than mandatory. Whilst attending the events held in the work - the life drawing class featuring a particularly exposed Godoroja-Prieckaerts, or the beautifully sensual contemporary dance performance - the content of the panels swayed between the background and the foreground of my awareness. This organic sway was subtly powerful. I unknowingly shed some of my guard and without realising began seriously contemplating the panels addressing anger, fear, or despair. *Building Walls'* use of openness and generosity succeeded in disarming me to engage empathetically with another. Considered as a whole the piece suggests free vulnerability may be a powerful tool in any liberator's repertoire.

Dan M. Procházka is a graduate architect from Gippsland specialising in small housing, passive housing and share housing. He spent several years co-managing the Wurruk'an eco-village and is a proud member of the Earthworker cooperative. He is currently on a bicycle based study tour from Gippsland to Bohemia.

Both *Building Walls* and *Caving in* were created on Arrernte land in Central Australia. Colonisation continues to be a real and significant issue for First Nations people and culture here, on Country where sovereignty has never been ceded. Zoya Godoroja-Prieckaerts and Dan M. Procházka pay their deepest respects to the Central and Eastern Arrernte people of Mparntwe, Antulye and Irlpme (Alice Springs), and all First Nations people across the country and history.