



I'm like a Fleur, I long to ride away.

The other night I went with my friend Chris to watch him perform standup comedy for the first time. It was an open mic night and everyone who signed up was given five minutes of stage time, my job was to laugh at Chris' jokes if no-one else was laughing, but fortunately for everyone involved Chris was funny and people laughed and I wasn't needed.

One thing I did pick up from sitting through a night of 15 open mic comedians is that whenever someone began their set with some variation of "Hi, this is my first time..." it received a big round of applause and the audience were more generous with their expectations and were more easily impressed. The reason I bring it up is because this is my first time at writing an exhibition essay and so I figure I should make a point of telling you in the hopes that while you're reading this you too might be more generous with your expectations and be more easily impressed.

But ok, I'm up to the third paragraph and I still haven't mentioned the work of Fleur Summers, whose exhibition this is. So alright, there are three pieces in the show, and as you can see, they're beanbags with peddles. I'm actually writing this while peddling on one of them. That's what you're meant to do by the way; get comfy and have a peddle. You can consider the artworks as objects but they are also very much intended to be activated. There's no sign in the room telling you you're allowed to do it, Fleur was worried that'd be too didactic, but I'm allowed to be didactic, if anything I'm just happy to be using a smart word like didactic, and so yeah, have a peddle. The hope is that through the rhythm of peddling your mind goes into a place where it starts having its best ideas.

If these things actually work then everyone should get one, and what do you think; do they work? Are you having good ideas while you're peddling? So far all I've thought about is that if I was a comedian I'd begin every gig with "This is my first time trying standup..." Maybe I should begin every essay with "This is my first time writing..." Or maybe it's best if you only do it once, like getting your appendix out. Well, I guess maybe it's possible you can do it twice, like losing an eye in a cycling accident. Speaking of which, in the news this week Melbourne's Lord Mayor Robert Doyle announced that King Street, the street you're most likely standing on right now while you read this, is apparently unfit for cyclists. And so pretty soon the only peddling we'll be able to do on King Street will be on this Fleur Summers artwork, aside from all the drug peddling of course.

Taking a timeout specifically just to think, away from things like screens and headphones, is something I've been consciously trying to do more of, and it's hard. And you definitely can't get an experience like this on an exercise bike at the gym, it's too loud. It's like a nightclub in there with the top 40 hits blasting and a TV screen in every direction showing hot bods seducing you in music video clips. Having said that though I was once in the gym when the tv's and music stopped working and all of a sudden all you could hear was everyone groaning and the clinking of weights, it was like a scene from some horror movie I'd be too scared to watch, and without the distraction of all the hot bods on the TV you start to notice all the hot bods working out around you that you're not allowed to look at. It was much weirder. The gym is a way better place with loud music and a hundred video screens.

But I've drifted off topic again; it's hard to stay on topic when I'm writing this from on an artwork where the whole idea of it is for my mind to wander. Anyway basically the only point of this beanbag with peddles piece is to help you think, and I don't mean to think about beanbags and peddles, I just mean to think in general. And basically my job as the writer is to try and convince you that that's important, but much like my job as Chris' laughter at the open mic gig, I'm probably not needed. And if the worst case scenario is that you spend some time thinking on this work but don't think much of the experience, well at the very least you'll have done some exercise. Speaking of which I've been peddling on this thing for a while now and I'm really starting to feel it in my legs, so thanks heaps for reading and I'll stop writing and leave you freewheeling with your thoughts.

Kenny Pittock

