

CARMEL LOUISE

Highly Commended: Contemporary Art Awards 2018

Reimagining the Regeneration Process

By Dr Julie Rees

Melbourne artist, Carmel Louise (b.1969), expands the boundaries of photography by experimenting with the visual and physical properties of the photographic print. Interested in the changes that occur in her local environment, her work, *Constructional No.1, V1 in 3D* (2017) reimagines the regeneration process of urban and suburban landscapes. The inspiration for this artwork came from an ongoing project called *Lygon Street* where Carmel photographically documented the revitalisation of Brunswick, Victoria over the past seven years. It was one photograph from this series that was used to create *Constructional No.1, V1 in 3D* (2017).

From a distance, the artwork may

appear to be two-dimensional. However, on closer inspection, the work reveals a meticulous rendered three-dimensional image, engaging the viewer through its structure, colour, and mesmerising patterns. The work consists of eight hand cut layers merged into a unified whole imparting a contemporary perspective on the gentrification process occurring across Melbourne and other cities in Australia.

Carmel's artistic means are labour intensive and complex, taking over 165 hours to complete the work. By using deconstructed photography—exploiting one photograph, a set of rules, post-processing techniques in Photoshop and intuition—and the traditional craft of paper tole, the resulting image turns our focus to

a structure once viewed as solid and fixed into an abstract entity. Each layer could be perceived as a passage of time offering a distinct 'take' on the history of one evolving architectural site. Carmel's work creates an intricate and distinctive visual aesthetic providing the audience with a unique metaphor for

the construction and deconstruction process of our environs. By taking a contemporary issue and recasting it in a new light, the work highlights the inevitable progress undertaken in our cities to cater to shifting demographics and the apparent housing shortage.

Carmel graduated with a Bachelor of Photography at the RMIT, Melbourne in 2010. Since then, she has taught

photography and Photoshop to a community group in St Kilda and curated their annual exhibitions at Ballarat Biennale, Brightspace, Chapel Off Chapel, St Kilda Town Hall Gallery, Gasworks Art Park, and The Laneway Artspace. More recently, Carmel has also opened a DIY Fine Art Printing Service in Melbourne offering an affordable service for artists.

On this page, *Constructional No.1, V1 in 3D* (2017), mixed media, 100 x 100cm.

Image courtesy of the artist

Carmel Louise's artwork can be viewed at:
<http://www.contemporaryartawards/finalist-exhibition-2018.com>

