

*Stephanie Jane Burt*

*What  
is  
the  
current  
that  
presents  
a  
behaved  
waist*

*14 March—19 April 2020*



Puncture and pleasure  
Blindfolded and poised

An unruly touch  
Escapes a cruel tautology

The shadow of her hand  
Supple movement

An ambiguous composition  
Bound for freedom





“What is the current that makes machinery, that makes it crackle,  
what is the current that presents a long line and a necessary waist.  
What is this current.”  
— Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons*



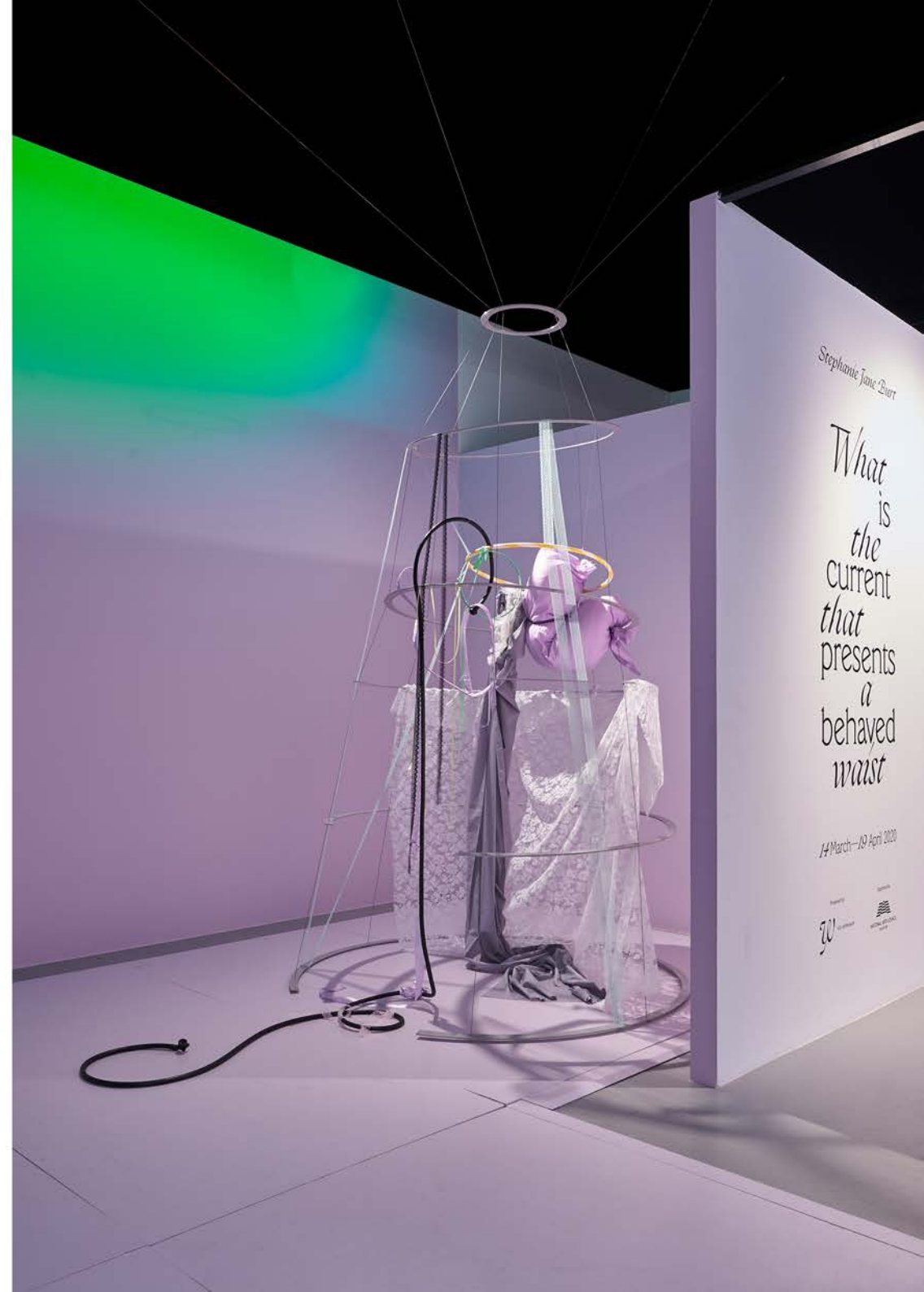
Adapted from Gertrude Stein's poetry, the exhibition title prefaces a shared inquiry into the conditions that enable specific ways of looking and behaving to surface. What is this current, Stein asks without a question mark, suggesting a question that has not yet sought its resolution. Stephanie Jane Burt takes up this similar question in relation to Alfred Hitchcock's film *Vertigo*, considering the very currents that prescribe images of ideal womanhood and how these scripts can be refracted and divested of power.

*What is the current that presents a behaved waist* continues the artist's interest and engagement with film and fiction and considers the key but often eclipsed character of Judy at the heart of *Vertigo* who becomes a shadow to the fictitious ideal of Madeleine. Despite her centrality to the film narrative, Judy is often eclipsed by Madeleine who stands in as a mould of desirable femininity. The film follows detective Scottie as he investigates and grows obsessed with his friend's wife, Madeleine, eventually coming to the realisation that she does not exist beyond Judy's performance. As Scottie goes on to begin a relationship with Judy, he desperately attempts to remake her in Madeleine's image. In a pivotal moment of the film, Judy is captured as silhouette against a lurid green light as she reflects on her feelings for Scottie and eventually complies with his desires so that she can be better loved by him.

The same green light is also present in the exhibition to signal a return to Judy and her moment of contemplation as she negotiates the price of love. Burt envisions the gallery as a *mise-en-scène* that stages a parallel fiction for Judy, giving space for her interiority to be contemplated and complicated. The armature for the central installation follows the shape of the crinoline, a stiff and structured petticoat that was popularised in the 1800s. As a clothing device that was both rejoiced for its innovation in women's fashion and reviled for the danger that was posed to its wearer, the crinoline frames considerations of Judy as a character who struggles with her own agency and freedom as her resistance to being shaped by Scottie becomes whittled down over the course of the film.

Through a material language that plays with the integration and disintegration of various materials such as metal, wire, ribbon, lace and other scrap fabric, Burt stages various interactions between hard and soft materials that visualises the very conflicting and lively tensions that shape Judy's interior landscape. This dialogue between oppositional qualities also alludes to the fraught im/possibility of freedom as Judy attempts to assert herself even if she cannot completely shed Madeleine off. In its translation from the film to the exhibition, the polished rigour of Madeleine's grey suit also loses its symbolic authority as it becomes unravelled into a vulnerable state of disarray. Rather than compose an ideal scenario of Judy's escape into freedom, the exhibition choreographs how the stiff and unyielding costume of Madeleine can yield to other possibilities of becoming.

Stephanie Jane Burt,  
*What is the current that presents a behaved waist*, 2020.  
Steel crinoline structure, sewn fabric cushion, sewn grey suit, lace,  
scrap fabric, garden hose, and ribbons,  
dimensions variable.



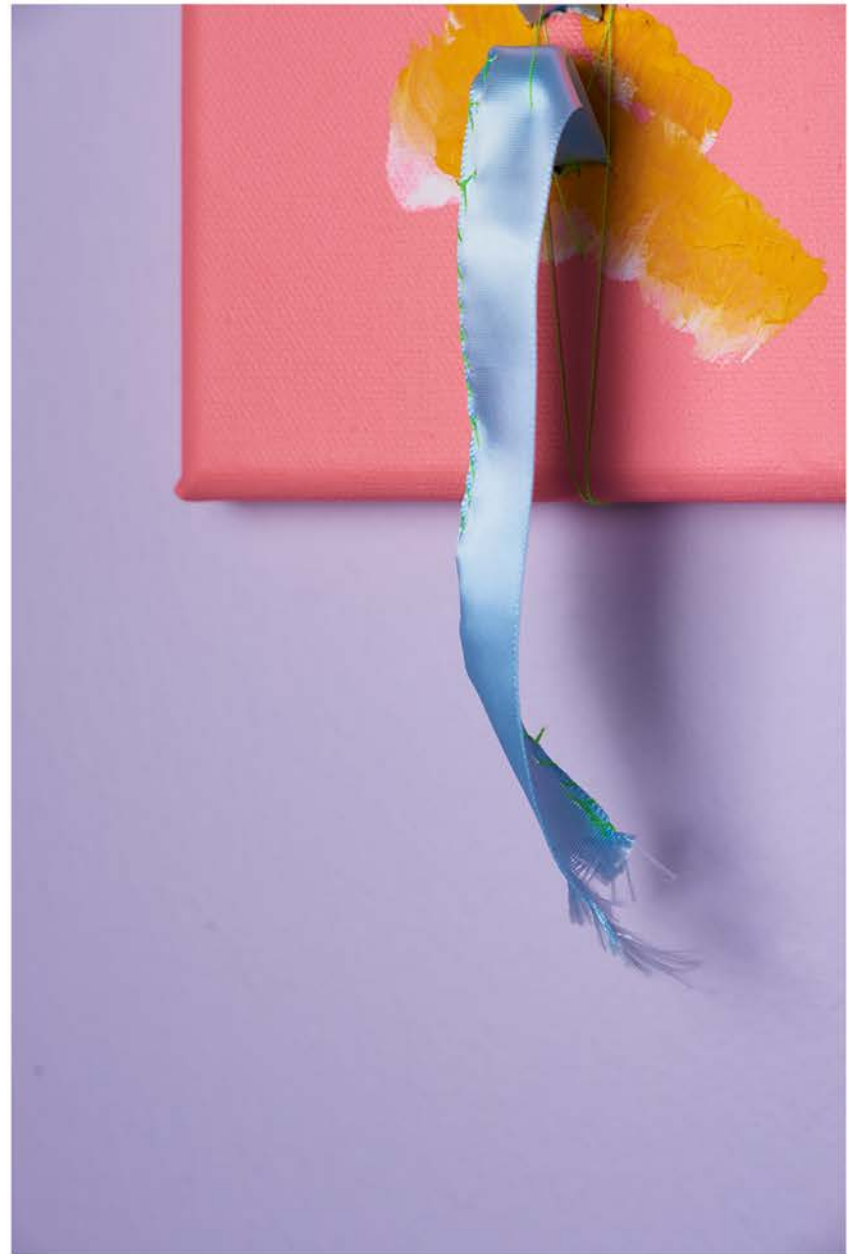








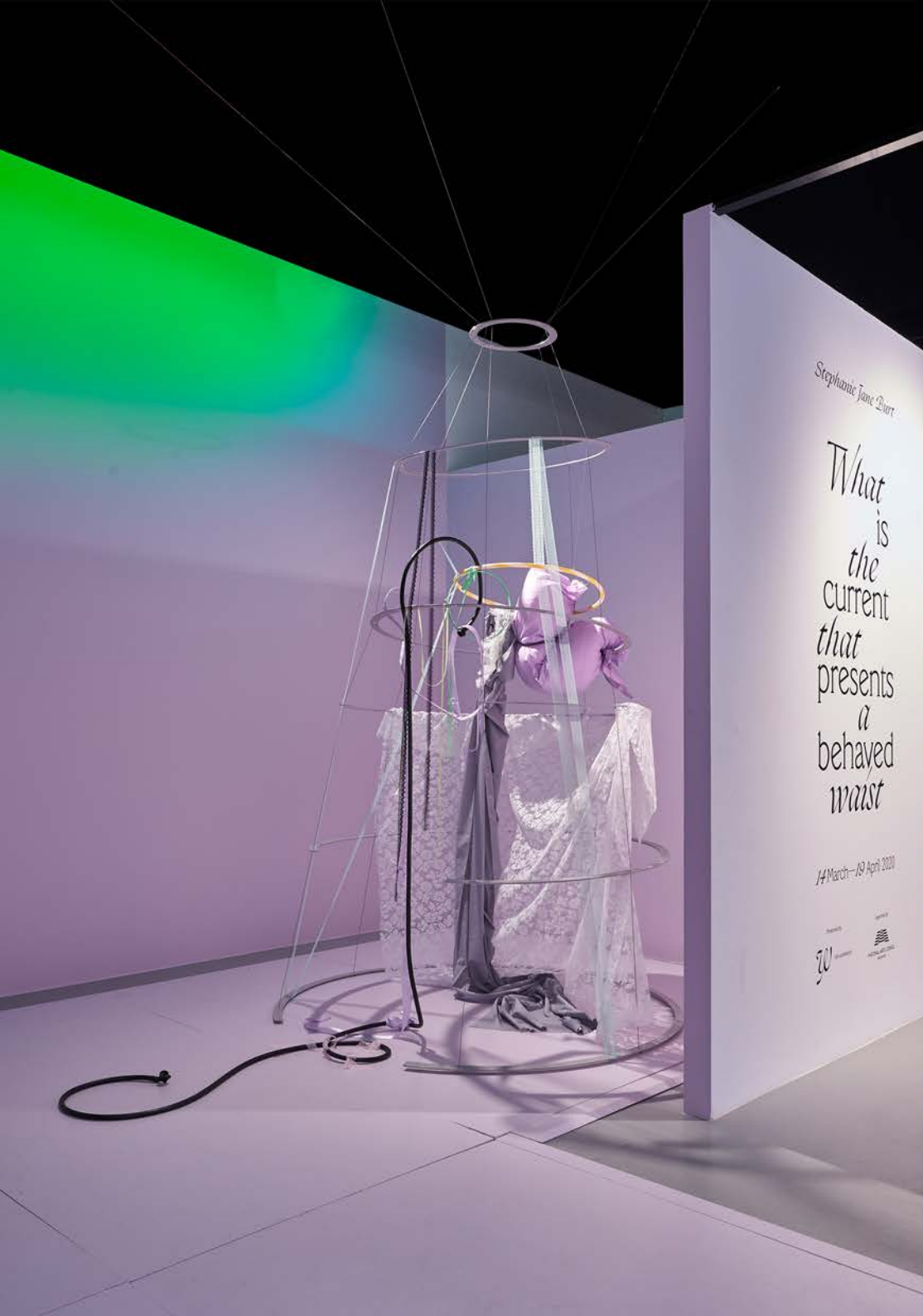
Stephanie Jane Burt,  
*What is the current that presents a behaved waist*, 2020.  
Sewn cushion, ribbon, lace, and acrylic on canvas, 23.9 x 18 cm.



Stephanie Jane Burt,  
*What is the current that presents a behaved waist*, 2020.  
Ribbon and acrylic on canvas, 15 x 15 cm.



Stephanie Jane Burt,  
*What is the current that presents a behaved waist*, 2020.  
Acrylic on canvas, 15 x 15 cm.







FILM NOTES



In Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, what arises is the tension played by an act between a woman trying to gain the love of a man who has fallen for an image crafted by another

In this act of exchange, the real is never mediated, authenticity is never reconciled

The idea of an image, or an obsession with surface mutes the persona of Judy who by devotion of her adoration chooses to give in to the ideal of Scottie's fixation

In an exchange of love or what she deems of love, she becomes his ideal and thus loses herself, the film continues in a horrifying manner which encapsulates the idea of 'falling', dizziness as central to the film's title, is revealed in elements, Scottie drives down the hills of San Francisco and never up, scenes of his illusions spiral into nothingness, the act of 'falling' in love, is repeated through these motifs, chasing spirals which are seen in Madeline's hair, and within the story itself

In order to gain Scottie's affection, she gives herself up, this act of self sacrifice to take the place of an image — an image that was crafted by another man

Yet before this decision was made, she readily saw her role as a tool, in a letter that never got sent to Scottie — a tool of deception, she argues against her transformation into Madeline, and refuses to wear Madeline's suit

In her empathy and desire for love, she tends to his obsessions, an obsession with an image, an ideal, a projection on a woman who did not exist

Choosing Judy as a character conveys an attempt to free her from her decisions she made in a bid to be loved. A feminist interpretation of Hitchcock's *Vertigo* is an attempt to rewrite a narrative that was scripted and born out of male desire and his attempt to control and love a woman of his fantasies — a woman crafted by an image of another, a woman who represented Scottie's ego where his fixations were determinate of his own projections, a narrative that belonged not to the woman but Scottie himself, an attempt to interject is an attempt to provide an alternative to Judy's voice which was often eclipsed

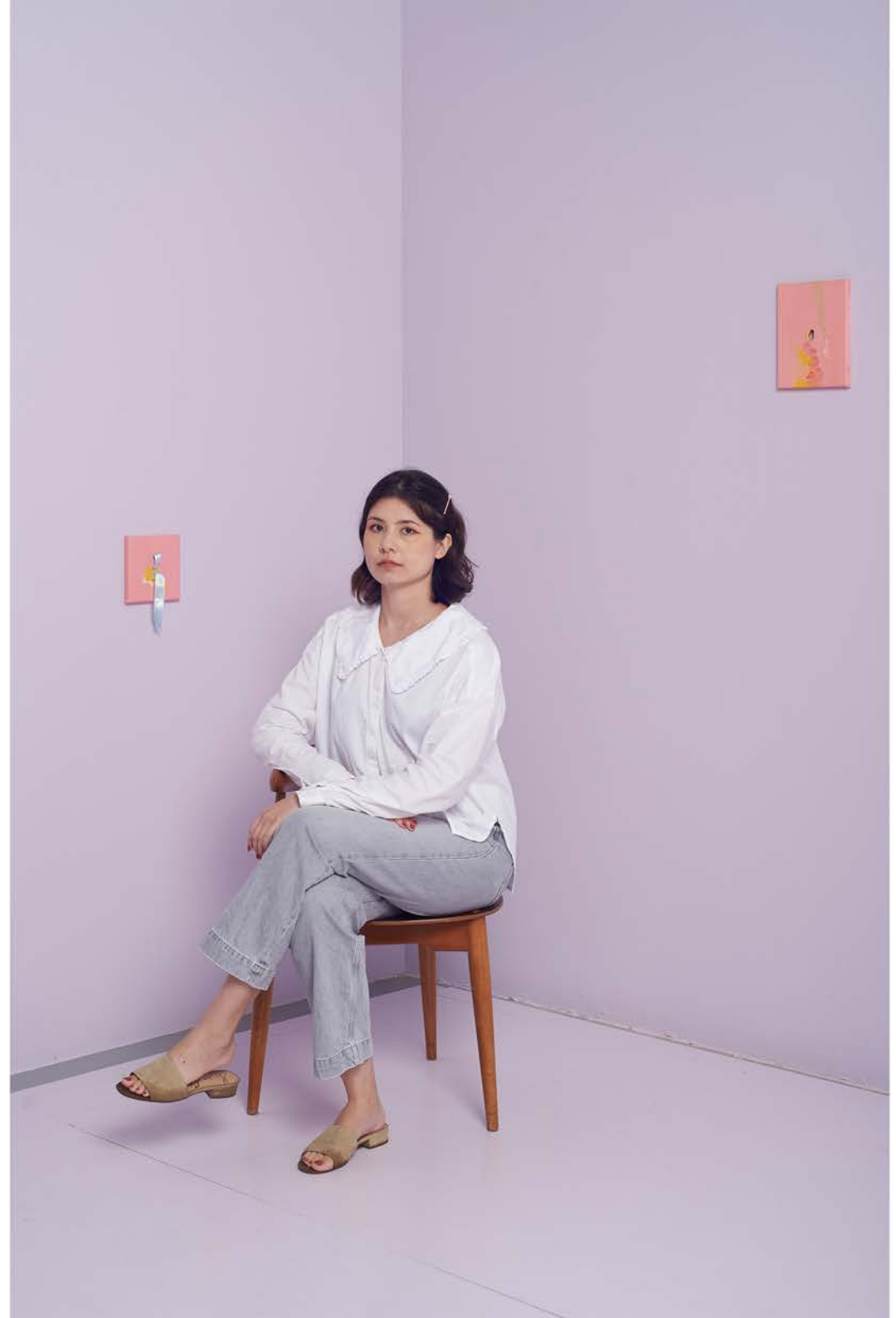
—Stephanie Jane Burt





## About the artist

Stephanie Jane Burt is an artist whose practice spans from sculptural installations to fictional prose. She completed her studies at Glasgow School of Art, where she received her Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Painting and her Master of Fine Arts. Her work invites the viewer to explore dialogues between her installations and their settings through a fictional narrative at times referencing film and literature. Her research looks across feminism, gender, an analysis of girl culture and the nouveau roman. She recently completed a residency at ISCP New York in 2019 and has started a research project, *A Stubborn Bloom*, which explores representations of femininity within fashion, film and material culture.



**Education**

- 2012 - 2014** Master of Fine Art, Glasgow School of Art, **UK**  
**2010 - 2012** BA(HONS), Painting and Printmaking, Glasgow School of Art, **UK**  
**2005 - 2008** Diploma, Painting and Printmaking, Nanyang Academy of Fine Art, **Singapore**

**Exhibitions (Selected)**

- 2019** International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP) Residency, Open House Studios, **New York**  
*Catalogue*, Yeo Workshop, **Singapore**
- 2018** *Image + Body*, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, **Singapore**  
*Gender Hierarchy*, Grey Projects, **Singapore**  
*Potluck*, Telok Kurau, **Singapore**  
*Video Video*, Anti/Anti Studio, **New York**
- 2017** *Discipline the City*, The Substation, **Singapore**  
*Girl Culture*, Art Jakarta 2017 (Yeo Workshop Booth), **Jakarta**  
*Suppose, there is A (curated by Stephanie Burt)*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, **Singapore**  
*Lock Route (curated by Khairuddin Hori)*, Gillman Barracks, **Singapore**  
Art Stage 2017 (Yeo Workshop Booth), **Singapore**  
*Fantasy Islands*, Objectifs, **Singapore**
- 2016** *O Dear What Can The Matter Be*, Yeo Workshop, Gillman Barracks, **Singapore** (Solo Exhibition)  
*The Republic of Dreams*, Mizuma Gallery, Gillman Barracks, **Singapore**  
*A Frangipani for Her Grave Thoughts*, Ikkan Art International Gallery, **Singapore**  
State of Motion, organized by Asian Film Archive, for Singapore Art Week 2016, **Singapore**  
*PPC: A Public Living Room*, People's Park Complex, **Singapore**
- 2015** *Multiples*, The Art Space, **Singapore**  
*Wolf, Sister, Hidden Treasure*, Mason Gross School of Arts, **New Jersey**  
*This House Has Been Far Out at Sea*, Glasgow Open House Festival, **Glasgow**  
*Potong Ice-Cream \$2*, Latent Spaces at Art Stage Singapore, **Singapore**  
*Janus*, 87 Saltmarket, **Glasgow**
- 2014** *Primavera 3*, Galerie Frédéric Lacroix, **Paris**  
*The Beach that Never Was*, Hayama Projects, Institute of Contemporary Arts, **Singapore**

The Glasgow School of Art MFA Degree Show, Glue Factory, **Glasgow**  
*An/Other Ending*, Glasgow Open House Festival, **Glasgow**  
Hidden Door Festival, Market Street Vaults, **Edinburgh**  
The Glasgow School of Art MFA Auction, The Art School, **Glasgow**

**2013** *One Cut One Bow*, The Old Hairdressers, **Glasgow**

*1913 Rite of Spring*, 134 Renfrew Street, **Glasgow**  
MFA Interim Show, Mackintosh Gallery, **Glasgow School of Art**  
RSA New Contemporaries, Royal Scottish Academy, **Edinburgh**

**2012** The Glasgow School of Art MFA Auction, SWG3 Gallery, **Glasgow**

*New Firm*, Candid Arts Trust, **London**  
The Glasgow School of Art Degree Show, Glasgow School of Art, **Glasgow**

**2011** I Know Where You're Coming From You Know Where I'm Going, The Art School, **Glasgow**

37 Dalhousie Street, Garnethill, **Glasgow**  
Newberry Tower, Glasgow School of Art, **Glasgow**

#### **Residencies/Awards/Talks/:**

**2019** PassionArts Festival, People's Association, The Movement, Public Commission, **Singapore**

International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP) Residency, **New York**  
Capability Development Grant for International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP) Residency, **New York**

**2017** Artist Talk at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts School of Art & Design (SOAD) Lecture Series, **Singapore**

MCCY (Ministry of Culture, Community & Youth) Public Bus Commission, **Singapore**  
Presentation and Participation Grant by National Arts Council for *Suppose, There is A*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, **Singapore**

**2016** Presentation and Participation Grant by National Arts Council for *O Dear What Can The Matter Be*, Yeo Workshop, **Singapore**

Co- Founded: soft/WALL/studs- a Studio, Project Space and Library. soft/WALL/studs functions as an artist studio as well as a non-profit arts space that hosts exhibitions, residencies, film screenings, music performances, reading groups as well as a platform for independent artist talks  
Founder: Bubble Gum and Death Metal (BGDM), an intersectional feminist art platform and collective. BGDM hosts film screenings, exhibitions, presentations and workshops  
Artist Talk at Independent Archive & Resource Centre, **Singapore**

**2014** Dena Foundation Artist Residency Program – Promotion *Carla*, at the Centre des Récollets, Paris, Grant of NAC, National Arts Council of Singapore

**2013** Chalmers - Jervise Prize, Royal Scottish Academy

**2012** W O Hutcheson Prize for Drawing, Glasgow School of Art

**2009 – 2011** National Arts Council Writing Mentor Access Project (MAP) Singapore

## Publications

- 2017** Mobile Ekphrasis, Publication to Print (upcoming)  
Columbia Journal, *Mobile Ekphrasis*, Columbia University School of the Arts, **U.S.A**  
Staple Magazine, *Mobile Ekphrasis*, a project in collaboration with writer Christina Chua, **Singapore**
- 2016** Artist Book published for exhibition *O Dear What Can The Matter Be*, Books Kinokuniya, **Singapore**  
Artist Book published for exhibition *O Dear What Can The Matter Be*, Yeo Workshop, **Singapore**
- 2015** 'Before the Birth of Writing' - Prose for Feminist Rant Zine, **Singapore**  
"Red Is The Color Of", Fiction Prose for My Bookcase Live Publication as part of 'This House Has Been Far Out at Sea', Glasgow Open House Festival, **Glasgow**  
"Suspicious Stitches Between Leather and Lace", Artist Book Publication for Dena Foundation Artist Residency Program, Grant of NAC, National Arts Council of Singapore  
"The Whale And The Rabbit", Fiction Prose for E-Zine, Hot Tub Astronaut, **Edinburgh**  
"Bonds", Fiction Prose for Ellipsis Journal Issue B, **Singapore**  
"Ah Ma" Prose for the Portrait Project, Portraits of the Singapore Straits  
"From His Window To Mine". Prose for Plenum Magazine, **Glasgow**
- 2011** For Patricia and Other Matters", Prose for Publication Ceriph #3

## Press

- 2020** Plural Art Magazine, Conversations, February 2020  
FEMALE Singapore, 'The Duo Behind A Stubborn Bloom Are The Academics Redefining The Fashion Exhibition', Keng Yang Shuen, FEMALE Magazine January Issue 2020
- 2018** Buro247 Magazine, 'Local non-profit arts space Grey Project collaborates with Seoul's Space One to interrogate gender hierarchy', Aravin Sandran, 12 September 2018  
Singapore Art Gallery Guide, Gender Hierarchy Listing, September 2018  
ArtHop Southeast Asia, 'Welcome to Reality: A Review of Discipline the City, An Interlude', Christina Chua, 5 June 2018  
MU/SE Magazine Feature, 'MU/SE of The Future', Interview with Euginia Tan, Mar-Apr Magazine Issue 2018
- 2017** ART REPUBLIK Singapore, 'Artist as Collectors', Nadya Wang, ART REPUBLIK Magazine Issue 17, December 2017  
Arts Equator Magazine, 'Contingent Spaces: Discipline the City at the Substation', Chloe Ho, 13 November 2017  
Harper's Bazaar Singapore, 'The Local Motion, A Look At 12 Leading Artists and Rising Stars Who Have Shaped The Local Art Scene' Gillian Daniel, August Issue 2017  
Harper's Bazaar Singapore, Editors Letter, Kenneth Goh, Editor-in-Chief, Harper's Bazaar Art Magazine, August Issue 2017

Harper's Bazaar Indonesia, 'Relation Between Art and Fashion in Art Jakarta 2017', Arinta Wirasto, 3 August 2017  
Art Republik Listing, Suppose There is A, March May 2017  
ViuTV Channel Interview, Hong Kong  
TodayOnline, 'Gillman Barracks now a hotbed of local contemporary art', Reena Devi, 20 March 2017  
Shift Magazine, Lock Route 2017, Japan  
Singapore Art Week 2017 Closeups: Fantasy Islands Interview, Jan 2017  
Singapore Tourism Board, 'Feast for the Eyes', Singapore Art Week 2017  
the Artling, Listing, Singapore Art Week 2017  
Buro247 Listing, 20 - 22 Jan 2017  
Singapore Art Week 2017 Closeups: Fantasy Islands Video Interview, Jan 2017  
HighEnd Magazine, Aesthetic Escapade, Aulia Meidiska, Jan 2017  
FrameZero, Fantasy Islands: The Exploration of 'Islandness' and Imagined Lines, Joant Ubeda, Jan 2017  
ArtRadar, Singaporean and Indonesian artists explore 'Fantasy Islands' at Objectifs, Singapore, Bruce Quek, 20 Jan 2017  
Zaobao Singapore, Singapore Art Week 2017, 9 Jan 2017  
The Business Times Arts, 'In The Mood For Connection', Cheah Ui-Hoon, 6 Jan 2017  
TodayOnline, 'Bringing Art to the Masses', Reena Devi, Singapore Art Week 2017  
Cleo Magazine Feature, Beauty Section, Jan 2017  
Arnoldii Arts Club Magazine, Singaporean Artist Feature: Stephanie Burt, Anca Rujoiu, 24th Jan 2017  
ArtAsiaPacific Almanac, Jan Feb 2017

**2016** Cleo Magazine Feature, 'Welcome to Stephanie's World', Cleo Magazine Singapore, Dec 2016  
ArtAsiaPacific, 'O Dear What Can The Matter Be' Review, Ho Rui An, Issue 101 Nov/Dec 2016  
AugustMan Magazine, 'Feminism is a Dirty Word' Oct 2016  
Ocula Magazine, Between abstraction and interaction: A report from Singapore, Alice Russotti, 20 Oct 2016  
ArtHop Southeast Asia, #Under30Unveiled: Interview with Stephanie Jane Burt, Christina Chua, 19 Oct 2016  
Visual Culture in Southeast Asia, Exhibition Review, 16 Oct 2016  
Randian-Online, 'O Dear What Can The Matter Be', Oct 2016  
Nook Mag, 'O Dear What Can the Matter Be' : A chat with artist Stephanie Burt and curator Anca Rujoiu, Audrey Chiang, 4 Oct 2016  
Buro247 Listing, 2 - 4 Sept 2016 Singapore  
TimeOut Listing, Singapore  
The Straits Times Singapore, Hour At The Museum: Liminal State at Mizuma Gallery, Nabilah Said, 12 August 2016  
The Straits Times Singapore, 'Old movies say so much about the past', Ho Ai Li, 31 Jan 2016  
State of Motion- Highlights, Video Interview, Asian Film Archive, Jan 2016  
SINdie Your eye on Singapore films and beyond, Singapore 18 January 2016  
HereNow, Singapore, 'A Public Living Room', January 2016  
The Cambelles Magazine, Singapore Art Week 2016  
The Straits Times Singapore, 'When film, art and real life collide', John Lui 13 Jan 2016  
The Business Times Singapore, 'Ride down movie memory lane', Helmi Yusof, 1 Jan 2016

**2015** Exhibition Review – JANUS – Stephanie Burt and Kirsty Palmer”, Blair Thomson, Feb 2015

- 2014** TODAY Online, Arts Guide: Sept 6 to 14, The Beach That Never Was, Singapore, Sept 2014  
Kathleen Ditzig, 'To Stephanie with Love', The Beach That Never Was, Hayama Projects  
Central Station, "Glasgow School of Art MFA 2014", June 2014  
Art in Scotland TV, 'An/Other Ending' Glasgow Open House Art Festival, May 2014  
(Artist Stephanie Burt introduces her work, which is showing as part of Glasgow Open House Festival. Featuring sculptural and video works, the exhibition is created in response to Chantal Akerman's film Je, Tu, Il, Elle (1976), and explores themes of isolation, time and domesticity.)  
Edinburgh Evening News, "Vaulting Ambition", 27 March 2014  
Hidden Door Festival 2014 Interview, 4 December 2013
- 2009** 'Red Series II' is used for Poster Image for film "In The House of Straw", Directed by Yeo Siew Hua, Singapore

*In the green pallor of the hotel room, JUDY faces the mirror and catches SCOTTIE's eyes. She watches him watch her, searching for traces of a dream. She is tired of looking at him as the master of her genesis. The newly bought grey suit is wrinkled on the floor, a gaping hole at the shoulder from when she stretched it too far just trying to extend her hands. Its ruined fabric drenched in green is a sorry sight. It reminds her that she must return home to comfort and to herself. When he speaks, she turns away and imagines herself folding into space. She only answers to her own name.*



## About the Curator

Samantha Yap (b. 1993) shuffles between writing and project management across the fields of art and design. She curated at second sight (2019) at Coda Culture and her writing was featured in the poetry anthology My Lot Is a Sky (2018). As a writer, she works with poetry, fiction, and is especially attached to ekphrastic modes of writing. Currently, she is in the final term of her degree in English Literature and Art History at the Nanyang Technological University of Singapore, where she is researching on vulnerability and writing.



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