

# MODERN ART OXFORD

## Event transcript - *History is What Hurts: The Politics of Debility in Jesse Darling's Work* (10 March 2022, Modern Art Oxford)

Speaker: Dr Giulia Smith, Leverhulme Early Career Research Fellow at the Ruskin School of Art and Worcester College, University of Oxford. Event introduced and chaired by Amy Budd, Senior Curator, Projects & Exhibitions at Modern Art Oxford.

### **Amy Budd:**

Hi there, good evening. My name is Amy Budd. I'm the Curator at Modern Art Oxford. And I'm very pleased to introduce tonight's event, *History Is What Hurts: The Politics of Debility* in Jesse Darling's works, by Dr Giulia Smith. And this is on the occasion of Jesse Darling's exhibition, *No Medals No Ribbons*, which is upstairs in our galleries. *No Medals No Ribbons* is the largest presentation of Jesse Darling's work to date, and it assembles artworks made over the last 10 years to highlight how Darling explores systems of power, such as government, religion, ideology, empire and technology, can be as fragile and contingent as multiple bodies. The exhibition has been curated by myself, and Jesse and is conceived as a symbolic landscape of recurring gestures and motifs ranging from airplanes in her presentation, which evoke counter histories and ideas of instability and dysfunction. So Giulia examines the political and ecological implications of Jesse's distinctive aesthetic of debility. And I'm very indebted to Giulia's previous writing on Jesse's practice, specifically in the essay, *Chronic Illnesses Critique: Crip Aesthetics across the Atlantic*, which was published in the Journal of the Association for Art History last April in 2021. Trying to find a very deep reading of Jesse's work is sometimes challenging, that really gets to grips with the close reading of the artworks and I really found Giulia's writing to be very generative and instructive for building a narrative around the exhibition, which was really trying to survey these artworks collectively and track the trajectory of this practice for the first time.

So I'm very delighted Giulia is here this evening. So Giulia will talk for around 40 minutes, after which there'll be a moment for some questions. This event is being recorded, which is why I'm using the microphone because it's really not a room big enough to need a microphone. But this allows us to record the speech. And so if you have any questions at the end, there'll be a microphone too.

So please also know that the gallery upstairs is now closed. But if you haven't seen the exhibition, please do come back. We're open until 1 May. So now to introduce our guest speaker, Dr Giulia Smith is a Leverhulme early career research fellow at the Ruskin School of Art and Worcester College at University of Oxford. Previously, she was a postdoctoral fellow at

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the Paul Mellon Center for British Art, and the Getty Research Institute, having received her PhD from the History of Art department at UCL in 2016. Smith specialises in Modern Contemporary Art, with an emphasis on the legacies of empire in Britain and across the Atlantic world. Her research focuses in part on the eco-aesthetic and eco-poetic traditions of the transnational Caribbean in relation to euro-centric and especially British conceptions of nature, landscape and ecology. Thank you, and please welcome Giulia. Thanks.

### **Dr Giulia Smith:**

Hi everyone, thank you all for coming. So I want to start actually, by thanking Amy and Jessie for giving me this opportunity and inviting me to give this talk. And I'm just really thrilled to have the opportunity to address so much of Jesse's work in one place. And for that place to be Oxford, where, as Amy said, I'm based as a scholar at the Ruskin School of Art, which incidentally also means that some of my students might be able to come and listen to this in person, which is a great added bonus for me. So as Amy mentioned, this is an expansion of an essay that I published last year, which really focuses on this idea of Crip Aesthetics. And it focuses largely on the way in which signifiers of illness, injury, and what is called debility, so the constant state of chronic illness in a kind of expanded sense, rather than disability. Specifically, I focus on how the symbolism and conceptual narratives around these notions of injury and sickness created a kind of political narrative across Jesse's work. And I was particularly interested in kind of removing this symbolism from more autobiographical readings, which are very common in relation to Jesse's work but also in general in our history and beyond.

Illness is very often seen as a kind of mark of exceptionality. So we're very hung up on a kind of tragic reading of illness as something that makes an individual exceptional and historically has been very tied up with notions of a kind of romantic vision of the artist as someone who is physically and mentally tortured. And so there has been this quite pernicious association between illness and creativity, which has inflicted much of how our historians and public museum-goers look at illness within modern artworks. So I really wanted to move away from that narrative and think more in relation to current writing and thinking, from disability activism and disability theory, but also in a much more vast panorama of philosophers and artists who are really thinking more about sickness and chronic illness as a kind of way of thinking about the limitations of the world we exist in, whether you want to call it colonialism or capitalism, the reality that shapes our everyday existences and of course, all of this has become ever more relevant in the aftermath of a pandemic in which many more people who wouldn't have otherwise connected with these discourses have perhaps come to realise what chronic fatigue, chronic illness might mean in terms of taking a position that is outside or critical of normative

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routines that we are sort of expected to perform, whether in our workplaces or as artists, or as family members as parents, as subjects in the world. So my interest was really in the idea of debility as a kind of analytic, not simply as a symptom but rather as a kind of way of looking. And rethinking the way we live as a conceptual philosophical framework as a form of critique. And in that it certainly wasn't my idea, but rather I'm very indebted to the work of authors, some of which I'll mention today, like Robert McRuer, Judith Butler and so forth, which might not be interesting or relevant to you. But I feel like I want to acknowledge my sources and my influences nonetheless.

And so this is an expansion of that material in which I'm going to try to look at a number of additional narratives that are woven into this aesthetic of debility. And so I want to start with these two works called *Sphinxes of the gate*, subtitled respectively *Wounded sentry* and *Pet sentry* (2018). So those of you who've already visited the show already know or you can gather from these images that the pair is designed to be displayed inside matching perspex boxes, which are supposed to be positioned at waist level on white plywood plinths. And this is done in reference to countless institutional buildings, including, for example, the British Museum, or the National Gallery in London, whose entrance is guarded by two stone lions. We have an example here. And so as you can see, Jesse's lion sentries are very, very different from these precedents, which typically hark back to the Enlightenment period, the inception of the modern age. And so to go back to them, Darling's sphinxes, I'd say display an emphatic lack of monumentality. Their anatomies are barely outlined by a skeleton of unpolished steel rods, for flesh, muscle and tendons are just left in the imagination. And instead of thick manes the two felines sport an aura of white expanded polystyrene blocks. The only cast elements are the muzzles and in the case of *Wounded Sentry*, the left paw, which resembles little more than a stump, wrapped in medical bandages, this emphasis on injury or what I call more broadly, the debility points to a more profound rejection of the heroism projected by the architecture of modern museums, as well as a disavowal and that's kind of core to my whole take on Jesse's work, or the sovereign subject conjured by these edifices as we know ad nauseam, male regal, self possessed, essentially the kind of course objecthood that is at the very basis of what we understand as modernity in the West. So, to me Darling's sculptures speak instead the language of the emasculation in keeping with the artists stated ambition to achieve, in their words a 'non-macho' sculpture practice. So we already see in these examples woven together, what might be understood on one level as a queer critique of masculinity, a critique of patriarchy, and histories of patriarchy, but also in a much more profound level an engagement with how these concepts and social formations have shaped our reality from the buildings and the squares we travel through, to the political fabric of our existence. And it's worth noting that these two sculptures, *Wounded Sentry* and *Pet Sentry* were originally created in 2018 to frame the neoclassical entrance of the room allotted to Darling for their Tate Britain show, where these sculptures mobilise the site specific critique of the National Collection, Tate Britain as an

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institution designed to house and glorify modern conceptions of political sovereignty and cultural enlightenment. So the exhibition at Tate Britain was titled *The Ballad of Saint Jerome* and I'm going to spend a little bit of time with it, because it was originally in the context of this exhibition that I started writing about Jesse's work. And so the title of *The Ballad of Saint Jerome*, suggests from the outset that the show basically hinged on rewriting a critical reinterpretation of the Christian legend of Saint Jerome and the Lion. And according to this parable, which I should probably mention, provided the iconography for countless paintings, particularly in the early modern period, the Christian scholar was studying in the library of a secluded monastery, when a lion suddenly appeared out of nowhere and recognising that the animal was in pain and injured, Jerome proceeded to extract a thorn from its paw, following which the now tame beast turned, allegedly into its most faithful companion, which is what is generally celebrated in these paintings.

So for Darling, the moral of the story was two sided in the sense that if initially, they'd been drawn to this narrative, because it suggested the possibility of interspecies kinship of this beautiful friendship or love story between an animal and a man and between two different species. And this idea, I think, Jesse talked about in terms of syndrome, recognizing the wound, the fragility and the other, and taking it in and embracing it, and this being this beautiful sort of allegory for a positive kind of political possibility. At the same time, the more they sat with the story, the more they started to rethink it through the viewpoint of the lion, and came to the conclusion that on the other hand the parable also establishes re-entrenches, the dominance of man over the wild and the wounded in that the lion had to sacrifice something fundamental to its nature, in order to be taken in by Jerome. And it's telling in this respect, that *Wounded Sentry* is gagged with a dog ball, so strapped on like a muzzle. The implement resembles bondage gear with bondage describing both a sexual practice and a state of enslavement. The implications of this symbolism to me are clear, even though they're multi-layered, so the lion takes on the submissive role, while Saint Jerome becomes the dominant lover in a homoerotic romance that transgresses the boundaries of species differentiation.

Audre Lorde once qualified the practice of S&M as quote "a depressing replay of the old and destructive, dominant subordinate mode of human relating and one sided power, which is even now grinding our Earth and our human consciousness into dust." Which is perhaps a harsh and unfair take on this form of relationship. But at the same time, I think it points to how the dynamic even in Jesse's work is pointing to much broader, more abstract power relations. And the idea at its core of what it means to perform a form of violence upon another subject, particularly a subject that is 'othered', however, you might interpret that. And so, to me in a similar way to the Audre Lorde point, *The Ballad of Saint Jerome* mobilises a profound critique of history. From one level you could interpret Darling's take on the Legend of Saint Jerome and the Lion as a kind of political commentary on the doctor patient relation, aligning it with a

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history of feminist and queer critiques of the paternalism on the medical sector, more profoundly the exhibition for me invited reflections on the Faustian nature of the modern social contract as an institution that historically has served the double function of protecting and at the same time policing its constituent subjects by offering vital benefits in the way that Jerome does by healing the lion and taking him in, in exchange with full compliance with the protocols of heteronormative capitalism. So there is a massive trade off, which is ultimately what becomes interesting about this Christian legend to Darling, at least, in my reading of the work. And I should say that this take on the parable is especially original, not just because of its queered connotations, but also because Saint Jerome has traditionally been seen as a real beacon of humanist values, which also explains his prominence as a pictorial subject during the Renaissance, this image of Jerome and the study with the lion is just always been a kind of idyllic, ideal of what the modern scholar, what the modern subject should be all about, the books, the relationship with the natural world, the mysticism, kind of all in this sort of perfectly harmonious, beautiful study setting that kind of feels really cosy and wonderful. That's very much the aesthetic of these early modern paintings. And so very much in contrast against received convention in 2018, Darling chose to portray Saint Jerome with a selection of authoritarian and at the same time sexually degrading props. So here, you're looking at, on the left *Regalia & Insignia (The Staff of Saint Jerome)*, that's the title of the assemblage, in which two 3D printed hands strung together with electrical wires uphold a baton made out of a rubber pole crowned by the tip of an upside down toilet brush. So Saint Jerome becomes this sort of, kind of scatological monarch.

And so for me - and I hope I'm not straying too much here - this work performs something comparable to the intellectual operation executed by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. In the dialectic of enlightenment, which was published towards the end of the Second World War, they put forward the controversial argument that fascism did not represent the aberration of the modern constitution, but rather its fulfillment. So in a central chapter of dialectic of enlightenment, the two philosophers focus on the Odyssey and they basically present the Odyssey as a foundational humanist text that we are often made to read, as part of a classical education, as exemplary of the cultivation of a myopic cult of rationality in modernity. So basically read as a secularized epic centered on the ability of a patrician man, Ulysses to overcome nature, magic and superstition, the Odyssey epitomizes also Adorno and Horkheimer argued in 1944 the repress problem of modern authoritarianism. Much in the same way, I think in 2018 Darling looked at Saint Jerome as a kind of prototype for the sovereign subject of modernity, particularly because this character had been taken up so much during the modern era. And by placing him at the foundation of the kind of world that we inhabit, as modern subjects particularly in Europe we see a kind of vision of modernity start to come through, which is not as a kind of apex of human progress, as the story is often still told, in spite of many decades of critique, but really as a kind of process of relentless colonization,

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subjection, and enslavement. And so I start with these works from Darling's exhibition at Tate Britain, because for me they epitomize, perhaps better than any other work, but I wanted to stress this is something that runs through all of their work from an early point in their career as an artist, they epitomize Darlings preoccupation with the violence of history, as itself a modern discourse that is inherently tied up with hegemonic narratives, practices and relationships.

And so it is this set of ideas that I want to bring to our interpretation of *No Ribbons No Medals*, an exhibition, which I hope you've seen, and whose titling stands from the outset as a critique of the triumphalism of history, with its strong, militaristic overtones. So, as recounted by the artist and this is kind of an amazing anecdote, the phrase *No Ribbons No Medals*, makes reference to a distant relative who - and I'm roughly paraphrasing Darling - as a German prisoner of World War Two, started fabricating hundreds of prosthetic limbs for his fellow prisoners, for his injured comrades, using pieces of window frames, metal chairs, cotton batting, rubber, from old tyres, essentially a whole range of camp scrap available around him. And so when the war then ended, he was sought out for recognition and decoration. However, he refused every attempt to basically give him a medal, saying that he preferred to just forget what happened, to just forget this history entirely. And I find this anecdote so powerful. It's an incredible story that is just found in your family history, particularly because also the materials and this is someone something that the artist remarked on, you know, the materials that this person was just using to create these prosthetic limbs were in a way comparable to the materials that Jesse uses, or their way in which they work using everyday materials at hand, debris, and things that can be put together through a kind of rough methods of construction. And, of course, the whole, you know, kind of aesthetic of the prosthetic and the medical is something that comes through very strong in their work, as we'll see more as I go through my slides. And so to wrap up this point, I think we find that a number of key themes and tropes that recur in the work of Darling and this anecdote, on the one hand, the figure of 'the cripple', as a casualty of grand historical narratives, rather than simply a casualty of a particular injury or trauma. To the idea that the past is not something to be glorified, but rather something that is best put to one side, critiqued.

And also, I guess, to some extent, the role of the artists as a kind of ingenious burglar, who is sifting through the debris of a weaponised world, ruled by self serving nationalisms, and one might even turn to a very different series of work from an earlier period, titled *Domestic Terror*, in which we see similar themes of militarism, of everydayness, kind of woven together with references is much more clearly embedded in a kind of post 9/11 world, which is very much a world that is inhabited by Darling's practice. And so I would invite you to keep seeing these themes of violence, of warfare of domination through their work as I move across it in my presentation, but also, obviously, as you look at the show. Because these are the themes that haven't really emerged sufficiently, I think, in relation to a Jesse's work, because there's been such a huge focus on thinking of it in relation to sexual politics, or the politics of identity, which

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are all important themes that are very much there, there is a kind of intersectional critique going on in so much of the work. But each one of these themes in and of itself, and in isolation really narrows down and reduces the ambition and the input of the work, as a work that is really reflecting on the history of modernity, on the history of a kind of Western project, which has very much led to the culture we inhabit today, particularly within a city like Oxford, of course, as a kind of bastion of modern enlightened knowledge. And so this critique of history for me, is what the exhibition here at Modern Art Oxford really brings out in a way that has not been done before, partly because so much of the discourse around Darling's work has been inflected by biographical narratives that have foregrounded the register of identity politics over the artist more substantial and more sustained. And I want to stress that this is something that was present in Darling's work from the outset, confrontation with the politics of modernity.

And so I feel at this point, if I don't give a little bit of background, it won't really be very clear what I'm talking about and I have here a selfie to illustrate this kind of genealogy, but then I thought that maybe Jesse would be coming. So I took it out. And I think that makes sense, because I'd rather not repeat the narrative visually, but I'm going to still recap it for you. Darling first gained notoriety as one of the most eloquent exponents of a current sense identified as 'post-internet art,' a moniker that, importantly, they objected to from the start. So as early as 2014, Darling made a point of explaining that the temporal prefix in this fashionably avant-gardist label should not be understood as quote, 'the successor to but rather the crisis of,' so the crisis of the internet rather than the kind of aftermath of digital technology. And so a clarification that from the outset positions their practice at odds with, and abashed, the celebrations of the novelties of the digital or of technological progress more broadly. And so then across a number of subsequent essays, Darling addresses the waning of 1990s net utopianism, and the reconfiguration of online space for data mining, following the launch of web 2.0, taking issue with the mystique held by this overwhelmingly corporate technology within the art world and beyond. So initially, it is true that they too, had hoped that the internet would provide an alternative to what they called 'meat space'. By supporting quotes, a mode of interaction that might mean I'd be able to say my piece 'without my tits getting in the way of discourse'. And in keeping with this ambition, some of the earliest artworks centre on selfies, and GIFs, which basically explore notions of gender performativity. And these works, which I, let's say, I have now consciously decided not to show you, played a key role in establishing these early narratives around Darling's work as one primarily concerned with issues of identity.

As early as 2015, however, the artists had already turned away from photography, seizing almost entirely to perform on camera and onstage. And that was a very deliberate decision. I remember at the time I invited them to do something for a conference, a program of performances that I was organising, and I was just devastated that they were just like, No, I'm

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not going to do anything using my body anymore. And I was like, but you only have two weeks. And that was the cutting off point. And it was, you know, had a lot of integrity with that decision and pretty much they followed through, removing their work from the kind of field of vision in a very strategic unconscious way. And so instead, they took up sculpture, partly in a move to short circuit the biographical focus of so much discourse around their practice, but also in an effort to move beyond the body as a basis for critiquing heteronormative conceptions of the self. So the relative eligibility of the object, they said, 'allowed me to hide in plain sight'. Also, their sculptures like *Material Girl*, here on the left and *Masquerade*, on the right, belong to this period of transition away from the selfie, let's say, made out of steel cord among other materials, and importantly, recycled plastic bags, emblazoned with the logos of low budget supermarkets, that kind of recurring material for this artists. These assemblages configure an expendable body politic at the threshold of exhaustion, between exhaustion and survival, capturing conditions of life lived precariously in the wake of a global market crash. And at this point, I think I want to just add a little bit and say that this practice was very much shaped by the fact that it came into being in a kind of post 2008 context. So in the aftermath of the financial crash, that essentially shaped the last 15 years, but also very much in relationship to the austerity agenda that has inflected the spaces that Darling, and many others have inhabited in this nation and internationally. And so this sense of crisis, at least one dimension of it, which is very grounded in a recent history, would have to be the sense of financial collapse, and the kind of mass poverty and mass vulnerability that resulted. But then, like everything with Darling's work, it's never really a question of pinning it down to a specific event, or a narrower sort of chronological context of a set of policies.

I've written quite extensively about how this work relates particularly to the policies pursued by David Cameron in relation to disability and vulnerability and welfare in the last 14, well during his tenure as Prime Minister. But I really want to emphasise that in turning these histories into abstract bodies into abstract sculptures, into symbols, then something happens whereby these objects then ultimately become sorts of portals for thinking about vulnerability on a much wider scale, and across a much wider kind of historical projective. So in a way they're taken out of this specific historical context and allow for a kind of much more ambitious reading, if you want. But it's still that context that is so essential to understanding how this artist was formed. And also the kind of precarious spaces they inhabited as an artist, who at the time was operating primarily in London, and what that meant on a very material level in terms of rents, in terms of support in terms of living and making art. Not to say that artists don't also occupy a hugely privileged place, often within society. And that's something that, these are the contradictions that Darling has, of course, been very aware of and has spoken about at length. So, I suppose the next step after this work in 2017, we see this sort of signifiers of vulnerability, or precarity, which is so embedded in a material level, in these cultures, not least because of how they sort of held together in ways that just feels, particularly the one with the wheels, it almost feels like you sort of can kind of run away or collapse any minute, there's this sort of almost comic tragic

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comic precarity too, I think that this is a kind of figurative piece. And these metaphors become increasingly intrinsic with a real kind of direct reference to being ill, as such as a very specific and very drastic form of vulnerability.

In 2017, Darling's solo show at Chapter New York, which you're looking at right now, titled *Support Levels*, went further in this direction, by including mobility canes bent to resemble animate creatures, commode chairs, crawling on the floor, and hygiene curtains with holes burned through them with a total effect of rendering the architectures of the care industrial complex as pressed, distressed and in pain. So as infrastructural conditions decompose under the pressure of austerity and privatisation, the body politics too was imagined as falling apart, making vulnerability a potentially charged political category. Certainly in this sense, Judith Butler has written that vulnerability should not be seen as a subjective position, so a sort of individual condition or liability, but rather a relationship shared across the field of objects, forces, subjects and passions that impinge upon us. And furthermore, in this essay titled *Rethinking Vulnerability and Resistance*, Butler goes on to cite failing public infrastructures, and rising global precarity, to argue that vulnerability is, in fact, the principal product of 21st century capitalism, and so becomes a kind of central way to think about what does it even mean to be political? What kind of futures are we seeking to imagine? What does the very idea of resistance mean? When vulnerability is something that affects populations on a mass scale. We cannot talk about a body without knowing what supports that body and what its relation to that support, or lack of support might be, Butler argued. Essentially suggesting, making a call for rethinking the meaning of resistance beyond what they call masculine models of autonomy, but essentially suggesting that the traditional idea of taking to the street or protesting and in very visible, very embodied and physical, very dynamic and also sort of exhausting ways, might not be a viable mode of political organisation for the vast majorities of populations who want to put pressure against essentially, a kind of neoliberal model of living. So it's necessary on a philosophical level, but also at the level of activist organisation to think about what it might mean to design a kind of politics around vulnerability and to work from there and what that might allow and I think there's a real sort of sense of hope in Butler's writing, for better or for worse, that this notion of global mobility might also sort of create more inclusive alliances. If instead of fragmented and with resistance between different identities, you start thinking about something like vulnerability, exhaustion, debility, chronic illness, you might be able to sort of galvanise a more collective body in order to start pressing for a kind of different world. Which is, as Darling themselves have put it, complicated because I think there's something they said at one point, that this idea that the sick will rule the world, if you've ever been truly ill, you'll know that there won't be a lot of ruling going around.

And so there's a real shortcoming to these sorts of philosophies, but they certainly have been very influential in the last five or six years, particularly in the art world. And I think they played a real role in shaping the space in Darling's work too. In particular it was produced in the midst of

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partial paralysis. Darling was so ill at the time of producing the installation that they actually had to rely on the help of close collaborators very extensively, though this was not explicitly foregrounded in the show. Rather, I'd say that personal experiences of extreme durability and dependency were translated into sculptural properties. For example, this piece titled *Plexus* (2017) where for this piece the artist hides a cool pack inside a back brace, which in turn was strapped onto disabled grab-bar installed onto the gallery wall. And so not only do these materials suggest injury and fragility because of their function, but the artist strategic insistence on fastening, and knotting, which is something that's very present throughout their work for me really gives the sense of something that is precarious of this sense of sort of interdependency on a kind of poetic metaphorical level. And so in a way, Judith Butler and my kind of theoretical philosophical arena insist that the concept of support is now crucial for thinking about a politics of resistance beyond historically masculine models of autonomy.

For Jesse Darling it is partly a question of changing the narrative of a medium of sculpture that is historically associated with public displays of authority. And we've seen that especially in the kind of public statues and the lions, particularly metal sculpture, has very often sort of embodied this role. And interestingly on the point about metal, welding too with Darling loses all kinds of virile connotations. Works like *Collapsed Cane*, which you can see here, made by adding an undulated aluminium bar between the handle and the rubber tip of a medical grade steel cane, negate the proverbial hardness of these materials, keeping the subject in-keeping with Darling's ambition to achieve what they call a 'non macho' sculpture practice. So there are so many levels to which these works are operating in terms of symbolism and the kind of techniques that Darling is using to assemble them, the sort of poetics that they evoke, in the way they occupy space, in the way they relate to gravity, and the sort of political and philosophical connotations that go with all of that. And yet, I think despite all these efforts to remove themselves from the narrative and try to efface their body (particularly since they've suffered with this illness) I think this focus on the biographical has crept in again. And in relation to the show at Tate Britain, the tendency was very much to associate the lion as the sort of the injured party in the *Legend of Saint Jerome and the Lion* with Darling. I had an image here that I also chose to remove, but which I feel comfortable discussing; a series of shots have circulated of the artist in the studio in which the artist is seen essentially posing in a similar kind of crouching position to the lion, and they also have a blonde mullet. So there was a real effort, they feel quite staged as images and I don't know if they were, but there was a real effort to sort of identify this figure of the lion with the artists and bring back the personal history of the artist into the show, which I think for me, what it does, is reduce this conversation around debility, vulnerability to again a kind of individual story. This artist had this accident which led to this diagnosis and the reality of them making work and struggling with partial paralysis, *rather* than this work is trying to kind of think about illness as something that is structural, as something that is shared on a mass scale as vulnerability, stress, fatigue, exhaustion. Debility is something that is really affecting entire populations and particularly

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marginalized populations, and not least queer populations. And so what does that mean in terms of thinking about a politics around that? So that's where the kind of autobiographical narrative really blunts the political edge, I think of Darling's work. Whereas actually I think, and I'm kind of conscious of these potential drawbacks - in an interview given around the time of the Tate show, they, the artist said, I was forced in a way because of what I was going through to think about chronic illness, chronic dysphoria, chronic belonging as a form of resistance, which is very much a kind of idea that Butler also has that these are positions from which one can mount a kind of push back. I think statements such as this one really given an indication of their desire to use art to turn personal experiences of the ability into a form of social critique. And significantly on this point, Darling's use of medical paraphernalia it turns out predates by far, their neurological symptoms, which came on as a result of giving birth in 2017.

So as early as 2015, in a show with the Takeshi Shiomitsu titled *Spirit Level* in London, the artist had presented a series of precariously balanced assemblages whose internal components had been fastened together with using tourniquet bands, which I know I can't pronounce. But hopefully you know what I mean. And also I don't have an image because it's been removed from the internet. And so I couldn't bring it but I have this image of *Princess Horse (Tiril's Horse)* another piece from 2015, which similarly is a kind of valiantly shabby reinterpretation of a hobby horse propped up by a crutch and an empty beer can. So already in 2015 crutches were very much there as a kind of favoured material. And this is again another piece that is willfully anti-monumental, and which belongs with Darling's repeated parodies of equestrian statues, and you see a here on the left *Equestrian Statue*, and on the right, *Cavalry*. And so this is again this universe of sculptures, of horses, comes in again as a kind of another materialisation, another critique of the kind of hegemonic cultures that have shaped the history of sculpture, and also the physical and ideological spaces we move through as modern subjects given that a equestrian statues are often displayed in public. And so by drawing attention to the ubiquity of the statues, Darling's sculptures once again demonstrate the extent to which symbolic structures of signification have contributed to maintaining a social order over time, based on ableist values of endurance, fitness and domination, which horses and lions very much represent.

And so in my more extensive research on Darling I've discussed works like *Princess Horse* in terms of what I've called 'Crip Aesthetics', approaching it through the lens of the work of Robert McRuer, an amazing theorist who has kind of been thinking about works primarily by disabled artists, who appear to offer a kind of bottom up critique of his the history of the monument by undercutting its traditional forms of authority but also amplifying the discord that characterizes for macro what he calls 'crip times.' So for McRuer, 'crip times' are kind of very basic level means austerity as a moment of aggravated social vulnerability. What's interesting to me is that in his writing the word 'crip' is not just a stand in for an identity, it's not just an individual, but more of a kind of historical predicament. So you have 'crip times' rather than 'crip selves'.

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And 'crip times', it sort of signifies the aftermath of the financial crash of 2008. But also a whole history of modernity that led to the kind of ableist regimes that we live with today. The focus on competition, a really neoliberal ideology that has emerged out of historic forms of capitalism. At the same time for McRuer, the hopeful 'crip times' also identifies that kind of practice of resistance. So his writings are really focused on work by artists that really push back particularly against cuts, welfare cuts during the last twenty years and which otherwise produce work that really has a kind of activist function. It is complicated. I'm not going to go into this now but I think that Darling's work has a complicated relationship to activism.

And what's the difference between the space outside the museum and within the museum, which we may want to discuss in the Q&A. But I think what I want to stick with today is, on the one hand, I think this idea of a kind of resistance or debilitated resistance is very present in Darling's work, as I've now argued, over and over again. But I think this poster perhaps more than any other work, because it's so literal, and obviously has text kind of shouting it out loud. I think it makes a similar point to McRuer. It's this idea that debility or disability is also a point, a kind of privileged position from which to resist the kind of extreme alienation and kind of violence of capitalism. And so which is a sort of unwitting argument that the expectation historically has been that particularly disabled people cannot occupy a place in the front line of resistance. Because resistance has so often been theorised and imagined as something that requires an able body in order to be performed. And so McRuer and others, as many activists have done historically, are very much turning that notion on their heads. What's also interesting about his work to me is that, first of all, he's thinking about debility in a sort of expansive sense and so for example, he speaks about coalition's of 'left behinds' who may or may not identify as disabled, but who can be comprehended as expansive. And I think that really resonates with this phrase, with this idea that Darling has often used as a kind of 'loser militia'. So a kind of coalition of losers and Darling's own terminology, which becomes a kind of just as powerful as it is marginal, just as militant, as it is marginal. And so it is reimagined as this kind of militia, propelled by asthma inhalers and the like, and it's a really strong image that has started off as a hashtag that Darling used in the early years of that practice and has run through a lot of their over time. And I think still everytime I step in one of their exhibitions, I immediately think, oh, the loser militia is taking up space. And still, it sticks with me as a really good framework for their work.

But also with this idea of 'crip time', McRuer really takes it further and starts to think about the experience of debility and disability as a kind of, not just again, as a kind of embodied experience and individual condition, but really a way of knowing the world, a way of thinking, a methodology and an analytic. And I think this again really resonates with Darling's work, which reimagines the whole history of Western so-called civilisation through the perspective of debility, and I think no work more than this titled *Epistemologies (shamed cabinet)*, really

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illustrates this idea of a kind of injury that becomes not only a badge of honour, but also a whole way of reimagining history as we know it. So this is a basic display case filled with archival binders. This is how they're described in the label, whose metal legs have been bent dramatically out of shape. And for me the sculpture really performs this idea of 'cripping the archive' of Western knowledge. More than any other work by Darling it can be seen as capturing the spirit of what McRuer calls 'crip epistemology' as a counter hegemonic discipline guided by in the words of Jack Halberstam's 'modes of not knowing, unknowing and failing to know' and these values could not be further from the techno positivist orthodoxies that continue to steer the world into what has already proven to be a catastrophic century not just for human populations, but in environmental terms, too. So for me there's something incredibly progressive about this giving up the attempt to control and know and shape reality through scientific methods and to embrace an epistemology that's founded around notions of failure and unknowing and there's a sort of humbleness in that too, and the question is, what kind of different reality can be constructed by approaching reality through that principle. Fallibility is certainly key to Darling's aesthetic and one finds it in their repeated portrayals of Icarus, whose fatal flight stands as a warning against human hubris, particularly with regards to science and technology, but in many other works and aspects of their work.

One finds it also, for example, in their repeated reinterpretations of Batman, which Darling has time and again transformed into a kind of fallen hero. And so the prototype for a man enhanced by electronic hardware, and a rigorous fitness routine, the original Batman character of course encapsulates distinctively patrician fantasies of self-weaponisation is a sort of another kind of Ulysses. And in stark contrast, a work like this one titled *Our Lady Batman of the Empty Center*, portrays the caged superhero as a kind of hemorrhaging beggar, complete with a gaping wound in the middle of his tinfoil torso, Band Aid wrappers, ECG stickers, cemetery flowers, and an empty paper cup in hand. And I could spend more time but I won't, on the aesthetics of wounds and holes and perforated spaces that really runs through Jesse's work, and which, again, for me very much represent wounds, but they also represent a kind of wounded world with all their sort of political and ecological connotations that might have. But they also for me suggest a kind of way of knowing what might it mean, if we model the ideals, even of masculinity around the wounded Batman rather than the original, I mean, although arguably, the original character is also pretty wounded. And I think that's why also this works very well. But for me this work really has echoes of Baudelaire - every time I think about Darling's work, I always go back to Baudelaire because he has this sort of like, you know, critique of everything. And in the same way that Baudelaire performed this role at the kind of onset of industrialisation of sort of imagining, kind of romanticising the debris of industrial modernity of sort of siding with, and celebrating the margin or the wounded and creating this sort of really fantastic and powerful sort of vision of a kind of socially impoverished world where there's still so much beauty and so much hope for a kind of different reality. And so for me these works do something similar. And I think all these, wilted flowers, sphinxes kind of fallen

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heroes, paupers, beggars, these are all very much part of a Baudelarian conception of reality. And this is where for me once again, to reiterate, you really have Darling as an artist who is measuring themselves with these grand historical figures, who really thought about history, and the major transformations in history, in kind of modes of production, in social relations. It's not really an artist who's just concerned with identity politics particularly as they're of course, nonetheless, totally integral to these conversations. And so that's my point about Baudelaire. I'm kind of drawing to a close here.

But I want to just spend a little bit more thinking about Darling's choice of materials, because I haven't really remarked on that, and it's such an important part of their practice. And really, that's also where this idea of fallibility and vulnerability comes through. There's plasters, bandages and medical supplies which have a very direct kind of symbolic connotation. They speak of sort of patched up hurt subjects, but also things like basic packing paper expanding foam, give the assemblages as a sort of provisional DIY air. At the same time, building components, like steel rods and jesmonite conjure up a body politics beset by the effects of real estate speculation and gentrification. Phenomena the artist has explicitly confronted and experienced firsthand before they finally decided to leave London for the more affordable Berlin. One might say, and I'm not the first to suggest that Darling's artwork are sculptural equivalents of what Hito Steyerl has called 'the poor image'. So for Steyerl the poor images and the debris of audio visual production, which might include pixelated videos, streaming with a poor internet connection or degraded image files was formed and has been made obsolete by later advances in the field of digital imaging. To me this is essentially the poor sculptures like the poor image, the poor sculpture speaks for the victims of the digital age and of history more broadly and of technological progress more broadly, rather than its champions, and in a way, Darling downgraded Batman to the former category.

Going on, cheap plastic implements and other polymer-based commodities replicate the materiality of a throwaway economy that has already compromised our planet beyond repair. I find myself drawn ambivalently to petrochemical materials Darling has recently admitted before adding - plastic in particular is a kind of 'zombie medium', bright blue, lurid, it doesn't really decay. And it's made from fossil fuels, which in a certain sense can be seen as the exhumation of the ancestors. Steel is the technology of coloniality and capitalism, industry, war. So there's this whole, again, history of the world embedded in these materials. And to the list of these kind of petrochemical materials that the artist seems to favour, one could also add aluminium, which is a prime military and medical technology, that Mimi Sheller, among others, an amazing book just called *Aluminium* by MIT (highly recommended) just so brilliant, has shown to be totally integral to 20th century experiences of speed, connectivity or mobility. Actually, Benito Mussolini's brother was a massive fan of aluminium and wrote a lot about it. So it's just you know, that aluminium should be the invention without which flying would not be possible is only

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fitting when one considers Darling's repeated use of this material to make artworks that reference wings and airplanes, and this installation with 600 paper or aluminium paper plane, kind of falling on the floor, speaks powerfully, is that sort of exemplary of this whole thematic strand in their work. It speaks very powerfully of ideas around travel exhaustion, which Darling has spoken about in particularly in relation to what an artist it kind of is expected to do. But also, I think, more broadly in relation to what globalisation means, and what globalised lives can mean both on the side of being overspent, over traveled but also in relation to how mobility is blocked and opened up on a very differential axis. And so we have very uneven access to mobility. And to explore further how it ties up with Darling's work, you know, Icarus is sort of a fallen figure that can't take off, this all signifies around freedom, a sort of impossibility, which again, speaks to the sort of big histories of like the social contract, the modern subject, but also more recent political history. Thinking about works there referenced 9/11, thinking about works that reference migration, airports, and paralysis in mobility both experienced individually, medically, but also politically, so all of these themes are very rich and kind of woven through these repeated references to planes and fallen winged figures, or figures whose wings have been clipped. And so with this final critique of progress, I guess it was these images of a sort of frustrated ascent, these are two words that I wanted to show in relation, I suppose to this last point, these ladders that go nowhere for me are so interesting. I'd love to hear more from the audience. It's not something I've really thought much about. But I just find this whole kind of narrative really interesting.

And moving on, I just want to end with this kind of final remarks on the ecological connotation of all of this work, because of course, the vision of a kind of terminally injured biosphere is the sort of inevitable corollary to a lot of this work, and particularly to this use of petrochemical materials. And so I want to end this talk with this cluster of arboreal forms that Darling made for the *Ballad of Saint Jerome* at Tate Britain using plastic tubes, upside down crutches, and toilet brushes again, conceived as a standing for the toxic economy, of petroleum modernity. That's how the artist has described it, the synthetic forest, really adding a manifestly ecological dimension to Darling's practice and their critique of modernity. Behind it providing the focal point for the installation was a gaping hole the artist compared to a wound, again, and an altarpiece for a society permanently in awe of its own self-destruction. Making unabashed use of metaphor, Darling has espoused an almost metaphysical, almost, ultimately approach to chronic illness and is also in this sense that I titled this talk, history is the basis of crisis financial, ecological, political, social, relational, and ultimately, for me, it is this sense of overriding emergency that this artist captures by assembling their work around materials and signifiers of debility. And so with this, I'm conscious that I went on for too long. So I'm just going to wrap it up here. And thank you for listening for ages. I did a little bit off the cuff because I didn't want it to be too formal. And so I'm sorry if I repeated myself. But again, thanks for listening.

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### **Amy Budd:**

Thank you so much. That was perfect. I think it kind of really reflected a lot of the thinking that Jesse and I went through with selecting the works. And it was like you were a fly on the wall of many conversations about pieces and the selection of works and what Jesse certainly understands what they're doing, and what I have found, even I mean, particularly how certain aspects of the military, especially in the last few weeks, like how those become so much more resonant within the exhibition, given the materials and certain motifs in the show. I've got a bunch of comments and questions, there's just things to really add. I think your point about not returning to the biography of the artist is very important with Jesse's work. And for this exhibition, maybe I just wanted to foreground that as a curatorial approach. We've been very careful in just trying to avoid certain characterisations of the work, which had been very prevalent within art press, and to really use this as an opportunity to create a new narrative much as Giulia's really thoroughly outlined around this work. And to really even with *Tiril's horse* highlighting that the use of the crutch is something that predates certain kinds of moments in their practice. And I thought that was really important to say that it's quite challenging, too, when you're working with a contemporary artist to really kind of set new terms around the work, and particularly with an artist such as Jesse, which is very entrenched way of talking about them in particular, and the work that they've made. So it's really refreshing to get that in-depth history there. That was one point I wanted to make. Another was really about the use of plastic bags. And you describe them as austerity work, which is very much what Jesse was describing, there's a piece in the show called *The Deputation*, and various allusions to plastic carrier bags. And actually, this is just an aside, but some of those pieces have been remade for the exhibition. A lot of the works are very fragile, precarious, some of them no longer exist, some have been made especially for this exhibition. But in terms of ecology, 'Bags for Life' mean that we can't really make those works anymore, either. So there's the interesting crystallisation of time within certain pieces, because they do come out of austerity politics, or thinking about the bedroom tax and material culture at the time. So it's interesting to survey the last 10 years and think how much has happened, and also how much material culture has continued to change over that period. Maybe one thing I wanted to ask actually was, you also pointed out that there are none of the early digital works. That was very intentional. This is an exhibition that focuses on sculpture and drawing, photography, and Jesse and I wanted to reframe, but also intentionally exclude a body of work, which they became very well known for, in the early 2010s. That isn't in the exhibition, but thinking about the selfie and how they've used the selfie a lot. And there's a lot of self portraits, I think, in the show, as well, a lot of these works are a bit of an approach towards an idea of a self portrait through sculpture. So that's something maybe I wanted to point out. And I've got some other questions. One thing we could start is your point about activism, which is a really good point and where that activism might be located in these works. I've written-down a phrase, which,

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when we were writing about the show, just really talking to Jesse and looking back at how they've talked about their work and one phrase is they see the work has been 'a call to arms and a call for hope'. And that was something that they've previously characterised their work about. And that isn't necessarily a form of activism. But this certainly is a provocation to an audience to come together. And maybe they're not practicing activism in the way that some artists might identify as political practice, but there is certainly an incentive to pull together a community and to kind of, yeah, as a call to arms within these works, would you say?

### **Dr Giulia Smith:**

I think that I, you know, I really hate the narrative that art has to be useful, because it's so abused, particularly by funders, and sort of government led funding schemes that trickle down into the agenda of institutions. And one of the reasons I was interested in this work compared to other work by artists who are working in a field of disability politics or 'crip aesthetics' is because it's really about kind of allegories, storytelling, symbolism, realism, and to me is not trying to do other things. And I really appreciate that. And I feel really, there's a real impoverishment, in kind of debates where that is no longer, that doesn't feel like it has enough of a place because everything has to give a kind of very clear, historically recognised form of activism or like, particularly a kind of usefulness where you can sort of really see, okay, well, this is the work and these are the effects. And that's how I'm measuring the success of the work. So I am, you know, I think there's a lot of nuance in where the political is within an art practice. And so, I feel they're very open to some of these statements. I mean, I don't know if their work functions as a call to arms. To be honest, I think I'm also a little bit too involved with it. I also met Jesse, I certainly saw their work first at the time where we were both involved with a number of spaces in London, there were kind of fighting some extent against the gentrification of Tottenham, largely, well, I'd a mixed area in North London, there was a lot in the way that people lived and how they understood their politics that was formed around a kind of an idea of militants, and the places where Jesse showed some of the earlier work were part of this, you know, kind of politics. So it's not like they have always operated within recognised museums that kind of occupy a different place from a militant kind of field embedded within the city. So I think there's just a lot more to say, but I also don't want to speak for them. And nor do I want to speak for the audience, I think, I don't know. I think it's an interesting question for everyone where they see the politics in the work. And I think sometimes some of these statements do feel overtly kind of utopian. But we also do need utopias, I just sometimes, the way they then get kind of mixed in with the agendas of museums that it's difficult to make kind of politically pure work that works for an art world as well. Let's say.

### **Amy Budd:**

Yeah, and I would also say that something I was thinking about when you were talking is the representation in the work and the fact that it's not wholly representative at all. Jesse really

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relies on a very evocative language, everything is suggestive rather than fully detailed or shown. And I think that is interesting to think about the politics of this work where it is so poetic, and so Baudelarian, open to interpretation and has a real very tragic beauty within in it I think. And lots of people have been responding to that. I think something about the Saint Jerome show in particular, Jesse would say that people thought was very depressing. Maybe these works about mortality and death, a lot of it is alluding to the finite quality of materials and of our bodies and of life and an inherent sense of failure. But there is a hopefulness in the work. This is a sense of resilience, the collapse canes do kind of, like this brazen snake here it's continuing to exist, it's kind of continuing to survive, and it's adapting and changing I think. That's maybe the incentive there, to kind of find hope within these incredibly oppressive conditions that they're trying to evoke.

### **Dr Giulia Smith:**

I think also for me, this may, I don't know what Jesse would say, debility has always been very, I found a lot of breathing space in there in a way that I wasn't finding in relation particularly to kind of Marxist narratives around what political action should look like. Very much on the grounds in relation to the fact that the aftermath of financial crisis, the war in Iraq, the raising of the university fees, there was just a lot of mobilization, a lot of creation, as there is for every generation, I suppose that's just my generation. And I often felt that goes in this conversation with older, really disenchanted sore super Marxist men who really didn't tolerate, like, they had such a narrow idea of what is political, what isn't. And I think this is also some of the critique that this work has received, particularly by people like me and Nina Power. And it just felt very oppressive. And for me, I really am also invested in those politics and certainly, like in Marxist reading of modernity, but there is a lot of breathing space. So I do connect to this idea of hope but I'm always very skeptical of going with the grand narratives. So I don't know if I can answer any of these questions.

### **Amy Budd:**

That's fine. Does anyone have any comments or things to share?

### **Audience member:**

I have a question. So, I just wanted to draw on something that I noticed when going around the exhibition in relation to what you said about the celebration of marginalising the romanticisation of disability, like quite Baudelarian sense. And the sense that I got from the exhibition actually is that Darling sort of creates idols, like maybe of disability. Like the sceptre of Jerome, and like, all of that sort of stuff. So I was wondering what you thought about that in their work?

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### **Dr Giulia Smith:**

I think that's very difficult. I think it's a really good question. The article that I wrote compares their work to that of Carolyn Lazard, who is an American artist who is, I'd say, quite skeptical of Darling's work on those grounds. And so I wanted to let that debate play out, which I think is a useful.. I would like to redirect you to reading that, in a way. I think it's useful, because you'd have to consider that aspect. And particularly when the work is then shown within a pretty successful, pretty visible space in an art industry, in a major museum, the work is sold, I mean, there has this whole and I can see, you know, work better than a lot of the kind of works, McRuer looks at in terms of art by disabled artists, were also activist is so much less palatable to the mainstream art market. And this is always a conversation that plays out in these kinds of situations. And so it's there. It's a limitation to the politics of the work for sure. At the same time, I think, I want to have a very expansive and rich definition of what can be the political and what how can we imagine it and I think storytelling also plays a big part in that. And that's where, you know, I don't want to reduce kind of politics of an artwork to a utilitarian framework, because I think it is very unfair of me to put make that comparison in the article because it doesn't necessarily cast a very positive light on justice work. It's almost like set up to fail, because the politics are so different. And I feel it doesn't totally do it justice. And I'm sure that a lot of our particularly older generation, a lot of people who live with disabilities, or are disabled artists would find the work very, very difficult because of that.

### **Amy Budd:**

I would just add to that this creating of the art and the creation of idols, something they often talk about is about the lesser saints. So they have a lot of hagiography in their work in thinking about the lineage of saints, though, and they've mentioned recently, people are still being sainted. You know, Harvey Milk is a saint, there's lots of other saints that are anointed, and they're maybe trying to with *No Medals No Ribbons* conjure a kind of counter Saint maybe, but I think you're right, there's some imaging there through like, decrepit materials of a version of an idol, but maybe one you wouldn't consider to be such.

### **Dr Giulia Smith:**

But I think also that the repressed sort of narrative in my talk is definitely religion and the church, because that's, you know, that's a huge part of what modernity as a kind of Western project, obviously, Christianity, and it's so pervasive in Oxford where Jesse grew up, I mean, the whole college system, and it's totally everywhere in the work. And I think it just needs someone who has interesting ideas about that, to write about it, which is definitely not me. I mean, I grew up in Rome went to too many churches in my life, I have zero interest in thinking about that, but I think Darling at one point said something along the lines of I kind of want to

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deconstruct modernity as a form of syncretic religion. So as a kind of, you know, so very much playing with this idea of idolatry, and a blind faith into sort of in some ideas like, like progress, for example. So that's all there. A great piece of writing waiting to happen.

### **Amy Budd:**

I think you pointed out it's very hard to talk about one aspect of the work as well, because it is modernity, and you've done a great job of synthesizing a lot of very complex ideas and histories and narratives that are so eloquently really distilled in particular works. Is there anything else? Okay, great.

### **Audience member:**

Thank you for your talk. There was much there. I wanted to maybe pick up on your suggestion that we speak a little bit about the museum and the way that this work functions in the space of the museum. And I was trying to kind of puzzle through what you were speaking about with this ambiguity that Butler also brings up between sort of the vitrines that are kind of falling over into the corners of the museum and are themselves sort of display architecture. For me, it was very ambiguous if they were slumping over because they were kind of protesting being made or protesting appearing in the space of the museum, or if they just couldn't stand, you know, if it was sort of an act of resistance, or if it was an act of debility. And I was wondering, kind of, in that ambiguity, what role does that cast the gallery in and or the museum in? Again, maybe just to mention, like the museum is like, the kind of emblem of modernity in many ways, it's very much the product of the modern age. And this work, which is very much a critique of certain ideas, and modernity is appearing within that architecture. So I was wondering where you saw the space of the museum is figuring into that?

### **Dr Giulia Smith:**

I think you're really done. I mean, it's a big part of the work especially with that work of Tate Britain. As Amy said, it's very difficult to isolate one strand, church, museum, signs, the medical profession. They're all sort of, you know, this is a kind of Foucauldian taking apart of the whole modern project of, you know, kind of what makes the fabric of our institutions. And I think that the use of plexiglass cabinets, works at the same time to create kind of, against something that sort of prevents, that stifles the work, that has this sense of something that is, I think at one point, they spoke about a kind of butterfly in a natural history museum, something that could have flown, but never has. And so there's this sense of a kind of freedom that is been, you know, something that's been specific. They have this kind of deadening effect, and

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they are specific references to museum practices. And, you know, not just the kind of modern art museum or the national collection, but the natural science, natural history museum and those kinds of genealogies. So there are lots of formal strategies that are deployed very consciously in order to critique the museum. I think it's just complicated, because the Darling is a very ambitious artist who wants to have a presence in museums. And they certainly want to be seen, I think, ultimately, there's a kind of mastery of play even in their like, relationship with failure and, and wanting to be recognised and why shouldn't they? And at the same time, there's a real sense of discomfort with being in a museum and placing the work in there and participating in this history. And so the work does a lot to address that. And I think you've picked up on a lot of those aspects. I feel this is a call for me. That's kind of challenging.

**Amy Budd:**

Thank you so much, Julia. That was really wonderful. And thank you for coming and do go see the exhibition. It's until the first of May, if you haven't.

**Dr Giulia Smith:**

Thank you.

// END OF TRANSCRIPT //