

# Melissa MacLeod's installation, "Rock Your World"

at first glance appears to be merely an open invitation for child's play. A false floor, with its structural support system hidden from view, completely fills a room and sits a metre or so above ground level. Its steps, strategically placed just inside the doorway, encourage participation.

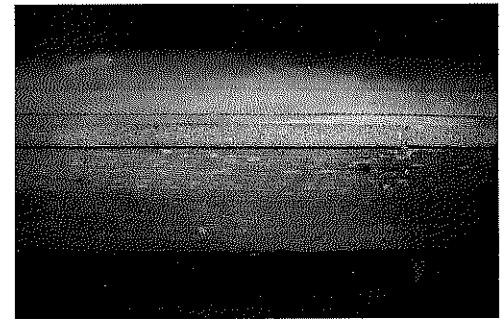
Once inside the room, the particle board bobs beneath my feet, and I bounce, enjoying the whimsical opportunity Melissa has created. Reluctantly, I climb down and venture into the second space. A single television monitor is braced against the wall, the cable snaked across the

wooden floor. I climb up the steps to get a better view. An arrangement of coils, sandwiched between wooden planks, stands poised- ready to spring, revealing the structural components underneath the false floor.

I go back to the first room and jump more emphatically this time. It is different knowing about the camera underneath the floor boards. I rush back in hope of catching the movement on screen. But, the motionless picture mocks me.

I am reminded of security cameras. The ones that show my profile when I look towards the monitor. When I look straight at the camera I know a full view of my face is shown. No matter how quickly I turn towards the screen, I will always be faced with my profile. It is the same with "Rock Your World". Regardless of how quickly I rush to the monitor, I am unable to see my effect on those springs.

Of course, I could ask a friend to jump as I watch the monitor, but it's not the same. Just as no one else's face on those security monitors will appease me, it's *my* bounce I wish to see on screen.



## Melissa MacLeod at The Physics Room, August 9 - September 7



Installation Views of "Rock Your World"

By dividing the monitor and the camera, Melissa has actually fused the two rooms. The events in one room are relayed in the other. If there is motion depicted on screen, there is action taking place in the other space. Likewise, there cannot be any activity in the first space without it being displayed in the second room.

There are physical links between the two rooms as well. The cable, which is hooked up to the monitor,

is a literal connection between the equipment. The eye follows the cable across the floor to the second room, down the steps, and into the first room. It reinforces the connection established by the video image. Likewise, the false floor joins the spaces. It has been constructed to be the same level as the floor of the second room with the same number of steps cut into it.

Melissa not only manipulates the architectural aspects of the room by raising the floor, but also distorts and reshapes the audience. While feeling like a child, bouncing, one has the awkward sensation of also being a giant. The room's height has shrunk and the naked bulbs, hanging limply from the ceiling, are now uncomfortably close.

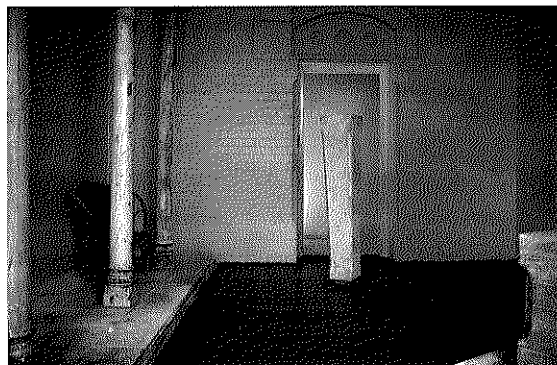
And then there's the dialogue between the viewer/participant and the installation. The viewer ceases to be a passive observer and is incorporated into the work. The false floor unexpectedly quivers and the visitor is given permission to play, to loosen up, to add whimsy to her or his day. Then, the monitor reveals the psychological aspect and a sense of frustration and dissatisfaction is introduced. One cannot help but feel cheated out of witnessing his or her personal spring. But then, that's the attraction. Human expectation and desire are constantly present and Melissa understands this. She has created a sincere work of art which is an exploration of human nature as well as an expression of both the expected and the unexpected.

Celia Mendoza

## the physics room

a contemporary art project space

### Scale of Sorrows the view 'Wakatipu' Stuart Griffiths and David Watson, 14 September - 12 October



## the therapy room

19 October - 30 November

37 page works  
from Australia, the UK and the US  
curated by  
Suzanne Treister  
The Contemporary  
Art Centre of  
South Australia



A COMPONENT OF

white hysteria

CONTEMPORARY  
ART CENTRE OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA