

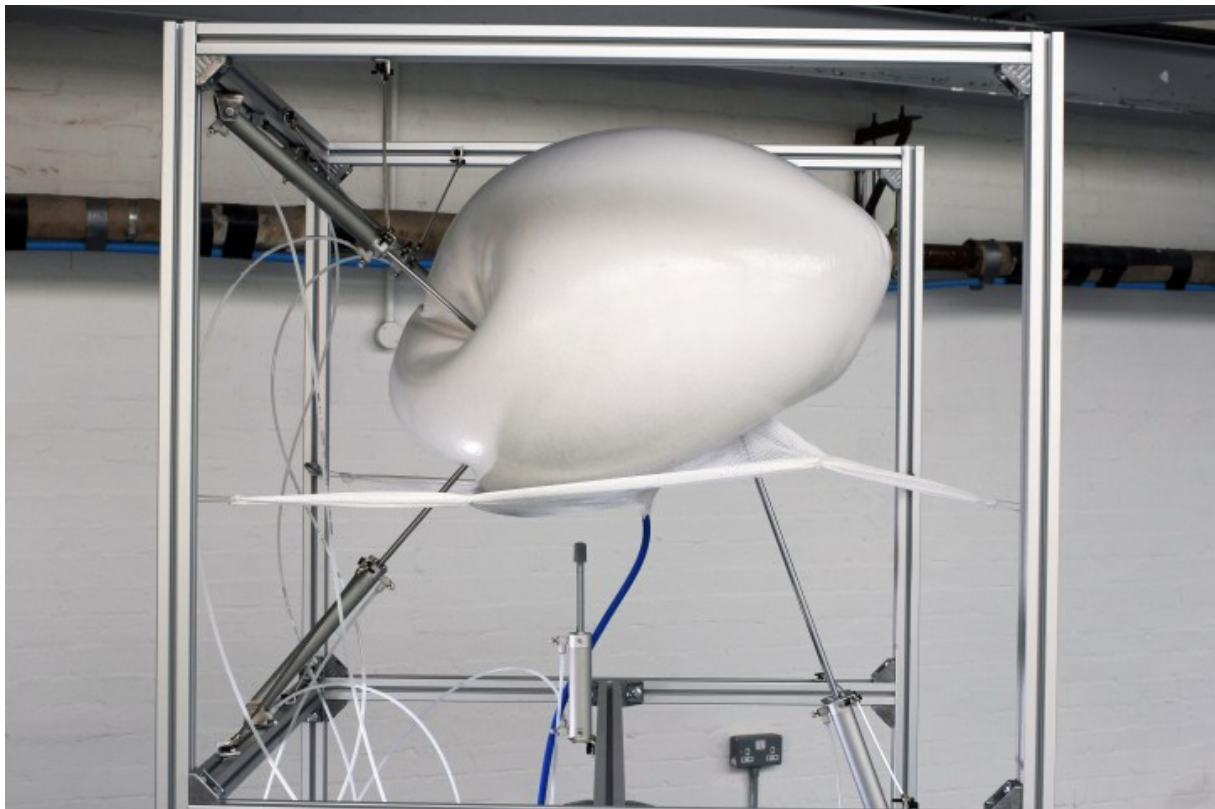
# Art Verge

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Yannis Kostarias, "Experience Kinetic Art through Harrison Pearce's innovative mind", Art Verge (October 19, 2017), online [ill.]

## Experience Kinetic Art through Harrison Pearce's innovative mind

Harrison Pearce (b.1986) is an emerging artist with demonstrated commitment and success in kinetic art. His practice flirts with innovation by applying engineering and science infused in a contemporary context of moving artworks that interestingly simulate human body processes or activities.



Harrison Pearce, Interview (prototype), Installation View, 2017, Dulwich College London Courtesy: Harrison Pearce

However, apart from a retrospective show on Alexander Calder's (1898-1976) kinetic artworks, how easy is it for a contemporary audience to feel engaged with such an exhibition today? Actually, the flexibility of the contemporary viewers, living in big metropolis like London, New York or Hong Kong, allow them to experiment their senses with a multidimensional display.

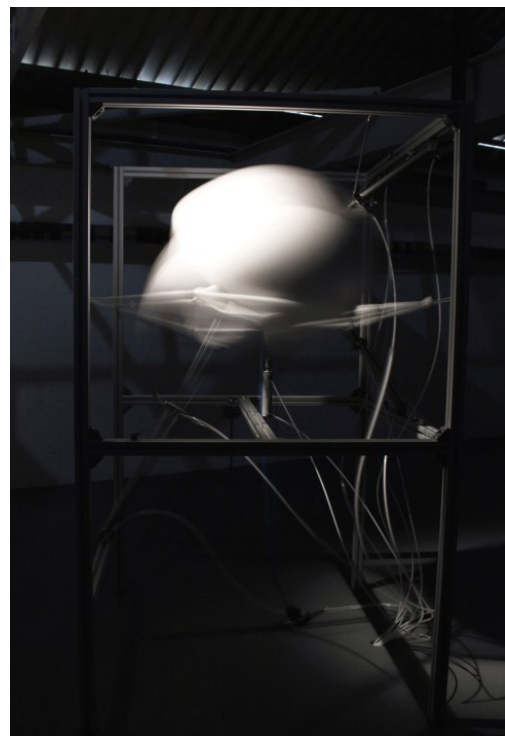
Pearce's artistic perspective emphasises on philosophical concepts around 'the mind, language and human experience in the context of new technologies and post digital cultures'. In this respect, artists like Pearce suggest a complete and alternative approach to experience art; dealing with an innovative potential aiming to develop a new language through which the analogies between art, science and human activity intersect in one show and set the bar for another era in the art world. At this point, such exhibitions offer some valuable space to new dynamic technologies in order to explore this genre.



Harrison Pearce, Interview (prototype), Installation View, 2017, Dulwich College London Courtesy: Harrison Pearce

Barren kinetic creations do not characterise Pearce's practice whose artworks favour an intellectual dialogue involving human, machines, space and time. Besides the advanced engineering background, Pearce's large-scale kinetic sculptural installations suggest a spatial dynamism rendering an additional asset for the viewer. Interview Prototype's -his current exhibition at Dulwich College in London- artworks are reminiscent of cutting-edge abstract art, science fiction mise-en-scène and experimental product design all in once. Music also plays a significant role in his show. Composed by Nico Muhly, the music score is upgrading the installation's interesting resonance by synchronous sound vibrations which effectively communicate with the rest of the abstract structure.

Someone could describe Harrison Pearce as a new media artist (not sure if he accepts this term), but most certainly his artistry underlines an ambition to suggest another way about how art can be perceived by the audience. Undefined sculptural arrangements reveal a visual aggression for the viewer's eyes. By using an interesting combination of materials, such as silicon or plastic, placed in a minimalistic context, the installation is raising the corporeal involvement of the viewer to a higher standard enhancing the visual experience in total.



Flying Harrison Pearce, Interview (prototype), Installation View, 2017, Dulwich College London Courtesy: Harrison Pearce

One In his interview with Art Verge, Pearce offers more details around his innovative artistic practice and also shares some insight to his daily routine.

<http://www.harrisonpearce.com/>



Harrison Pearce, Interview (prototype), Installation View, 2017, Dulwich College London, Courtesy: Harrison Pearce

**Art Verge: Can you tell us about the process of making your work?**

Harrison Pearce: It's a varied process. My work combines a wide range of materials and technical know-how. It is often the case that with each new piece I am encountering entirely new methods, if not making them up. But each piece always starts with an idea and the process is an ad hoc attempt to bring that idea into reality. I make drawings to think things through, especially the kinetic elements, and then I do lots of research to find the right materials for the job. This can often end up involving a great deal of collaboration, which I love.

**How would you define your work in few words (ideally in 3 words)?**

Kinetic, Sci-fi, theatrical.

**Regarding your current exhibition at Dulwich College in London, what is it all about?**

It's called Interview (prototype). The work is the first stage in an on-going collaboration with the composer Nico Muhly. I made it on a residency at Dulwich College, which allowed me to embrace an experimental approach. I made two large silicone sculptures, which face each other in a big industrial space; they are controlled by a pneumatic machine, which simultaneously appears to puppeteer and abuses the sculptures. The work weaves together absurdist theatre, minimalism and science fiction cinema. The aesthetic rubric and the movements are also derived from MRI scans and observations of surgery to study the biomechanics of speech. Hopefully, it alludes to broader references as well. I always try to make these industrial apparatus, which lunge into visceral bodily behaviours so that they feel uncanny.



A significant part of this kinetic installation is music, composed by Nico Muhly. How did that collaboration happen? Nico came to my solo show last year and we started talking about the process of developing ideas and recognised some similarities. Because of the kinetic aspect of my work, there is something intrinsically sonic, and at times musical, to it and that was something I wanted to expand on. Nico has had experience of collaborating with artists in the past so from there we decided to create a proposal for a collaborative work. The piece begins with Nico's score and I spent two months developing a sculptural installation as a response to the music. We wanted to make a piece that would take the idea of conversation as a musical gesture, with a back and forth structure. The particular kind of conversation we were thinking about was an interview, especially the sort that goes off the rails. That is why there is a foreboding sense of threat to the whole thing.

**Can you name any artists you, lately or generally, take inspiration from?**

In a recent review, the author mentioned Brancusi, Giacometti, Matthew Barney and Eva Hesse. I thought all of them were spot on.

**Creating a new artwork can be a solitary process. If this applies to you, when you concentrate on a new artwork does it affect your social life at all?**

Yes, quite a lot. Once a project is under way it's pretty full on. But because my practice can be collaborative I do actually speak to people. Yet again there are some things, which just take hours and hours of graft to make. I listen to a lot of stand up comedy when I'm working on something very physical.

**What about the place where you work? What's your studio space like, and how does it affect your process?**

I've been lucky with a handful of back-to-back residencies since graduating. It's only recently that I'm settling into my full-time studio. It's already bursting at the seams though so I often have to hunt out places where I can make things that won't disturb too many people. Sculpture can be a messy, noisy and toxic activity. Usually, it looks like a cross between a workshop, a scientific laboratory and a jungle gym.

**Which exhibition did you visit last?**

Jasper Johns at the Royal Academy

**What do you hope audiences will take from your work?**

I hope they will have an emotional response at the time and that some of the more conceptual ideas will spark interesting conversations with a philosophical bent, which might carry on after the experience. The work is very much about technological augmentation and lived experience in the information age. It is also deeply personal and I think with or without explanation people will walk away with something to think about because the work indiscriminately deals with being human.





**What does your mum think about your art?**

She says "it's very interesting", with quite a high pitch at the end.

**Are you a morning person or a night owl?**

Night owl. But my studio closes too early to permit it.

**Is the glass half empty or half full?**

Half full.

**What are your plans for the near future?**

I have another show coming up in December and after that I'm setting to work on the next stage of the collaboration with Nico. I've also started on a new body of work, which I'm very excited about. Watch this space!

