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Exhibits range across mediums and topics

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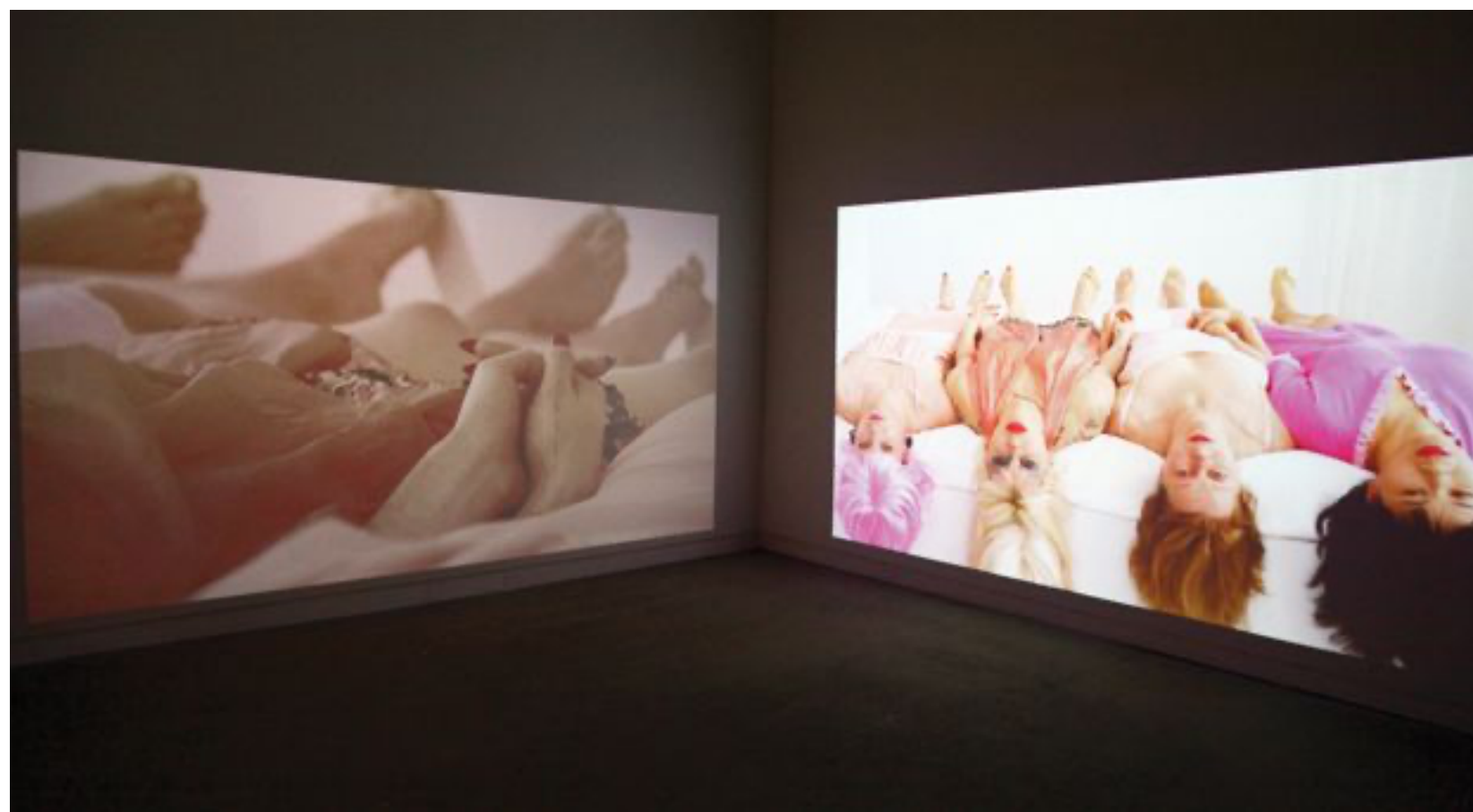


Photo: Chris Yao

Running until Apr. 28, Modern Fuel is showcasing two unique exhibits tackling all too familiar social issues like gender identity and environmentalism.

Chun Hua Catherine Dong's *The Drift Latitudes* and Jocelyn Purdie's *Nature FIXED (on resilience)* are challenging expressions of art and its political impacts.

Dong's *The Drift Latitudes* attempts to reflect the gap between the body as an image and as experienced reality. Using four projectors, overlapping audio and compelling imagery, Dong creates a claustrophobic and intriguing piece of artwork in the Modern Fuel space.

A Chinese-born artist based out of Montreal, Dong is known for her work with the body as a means of expression and as a conduit for critique of gender, race and immigration.

Situated in an open room, the viewer's attention is in a game of tug-o-war between four different screens, often showing different videos, featuring four models with one for every screen. The viewer watches each person go through a series of activities, ranging from putting on make-up to attending a dance party complete with unicorn masks and neon lights.

Featuring explicit imagery like nudity, Dong's piece is a unique commentary on gender through the showcasing of nude androgynous models. The piece ends with the models embracing each other, only to loop again for further viewings.

The video format creates an awkward, yet magnetic piece. It doesn't feel like a video, rather a live performance. The models have awkward moments filled with silence and blank stares, but that only made it feel more immersive. The video format allows the viewer to be enveloped in the exhibit, which is a bold creative choice by Dong that makes seeing this exhibit worth it.

While ambitious, the message of the piece at times feels inaccessible. The overlapping dialogue, raising music and eye-grabbing imagery sometimes makes it difficult to focus on what the piece is trying to achieve. This can be interpreted as a commentary on how cis-gendered social systems aren't accessible to their community and this inaccessibility can be a form of reciprocal exclusion to illustrate that point.

The second exhibit featured is Jocelyn Purdie's *Nature FIXED (on resilience)*. Exploring the relationship between humanity and the environment, Purdie's work features her impressive craftsmanship of branch structures from tree logs tied together with nuts, bolts, crutches and various everyday items.



The logs balance precariously against each other, stabilized by screws, ropes and seemingly whatever was lying around. The end result is a fascinating juxtaposition of nature and society.

Every branch of the exhibit features a story within it: miniature beekeepers, cars and animals are all placed inside and around the assembled pieces, suggesting a commentary on humanity's dependence on nature. The presence of man-made objects furthers both exhibits' trends of familiar commentary in an unusual fashion. Purdie excels at creating a fascinating and ambitious piece of work.

However, like everyone's favourite ogre, Purdie's exhibits has layers. Every subsequent examination of the sculptures reveals a new detail, scratch and figure. Her sculptures are rich with irony and commentary.

Overall, both of these new Modern Fuel exhibits do an excellent job of portraying their message, and their creativity alone makes them worth a visit.

Tags: Modern Fuel / contemporary art / Tett Centre