

These mesmeric new works from Dennis Del Favero explore the relationship between the human and the natural world, figured across landscapes of the body, the earth, the oceans, and the upper atmosphere, and enunciated in the sound of storms, plangent electronic music, and the insistent whispers of the dreaming self. *Leibniz* (2D video), *Miasma* (3D video), and *Nebula II* (AI interactive with 3D video) are companion works that collectively bring us face to face with internal and external landscapes, with doors ensconced in both the darkness we carry in our minds and that which hovers at the limits of our inner vision, and the exploding, folding and jagged lights of planetary, atmospheric motion and power. Not doors of perception, but doors that we need, and cannot help, perceive. We come face to face with our own night terrors but found within the universe that encloses us, frees us, knows us best.

*Leibniz* transports the viewer into the atmosphere above Australia, a land of great wets and the big dry, and the Pacific, an ocean that holds the earth in place – each landmass pulling against and away and towards any other, buffeted and held fast by the tides. *Leibniz* recreates seven days of vaporous movement that roll in and away and around our planet. This movement is an entity that calls us but without emotion, a strange door of both light and darkness, one that we should not unknowingly stray through. *Leibniz* honours the graceful protection that these waters of earth and sky afford our vulnerability. We are nothing in all that water but we are nothing without it. The soundtrack ends in a passage of heavy rain, drenching us and taking us home to the summer downpours.

*Miasma* is a world of dreams, waking dreams that trip you up as you fall into a terrifying sudden incapacity of the senses, a desire to be in control plunging into failure. One cannot oneself cohere in space that has doors but no walls, and gateways without boundaries. There you are, stumbling in the dark, listening to the fear of other voices, unknown, unreachable, despite the fissures that must be all around one, the gaps between self and madness that every dream keeps in its depths, to tempt, to threaten the dreamer with oblivion. Ocean, forest, clouds, upper atmosphere take their turn as dreamscapes– but it is the image of the forest that I returned to, time and again, in *Miasma*. This dead-looking wood, those criss-crossed fallen timbers on the forest floor, and the breathy voice of the frightened wanderer, hardly able to know the land she walks on, let alone see it as we do, this is the beginning of panic. This is the dream when we are in a place we ought to know, but we don't know the way out, and we can't remember how we got in. And yet above and around and below us the landscape of the massive world, the floating clouds, the hallucinatory sky and the roiling oceans, persist.

*Nebula II* requires human and machine collaboration to progress through the work. Each scenario emerges from drifting and darting particles assembled as a quivering sphere by you, the dreamer. Each particle will respond to our effort. The sphere thus assembled is more or less whole, but only briefly. Its barely controlled beauty affords a frisson of coherence that explodes into structures and spaces that overwhelm the screen. They are mobile, intentional, and quite irresistibly sad. *Nebula* comprises four such image worlds: the bloodstream, snow falling, terrain rising, and the atmosphere. A woman's voice guides the dreamer in a juxtaposition of discovery and meditation. This is dangerous terrain, meteorologies of the body sweep through dark space, interior and atmospheric at once. The woman's voice says that she seeks some kind of completion, she is in the throes of desire, she knows what she wants. Most of all she is sure that she is alone, and she knows that this journey is not one for a child. We/she are in the realm of truly adult adventure, where the only option, if one is to call oneself an adult at all, is to move forward precipitously and embrace desire as one might sink one's face into a cloud of snow. There are beasts prowling besides us in the darkness, but we are the darkness and we are also the beasts, so we move together, despite fear and because of beauty.

Stephi Hemelryk Donald, Sydney, August 2017 (Image: Forest. *Miasma*) (Image: terrain, *Nebula*)