

DINING WITH CORDYCEPS

Exploring the Artwork of Jodie Goldring



Familiar yet alien – this is a device used repeatedly by Jodie Goldring as she explores form and meaning. For her latest exhibition, held from 14 September – 7 October 2012 at Incinerator Arts Complex in Moonee Ponds Victoria, an entire dining room became a sculptural installation with her signature cordyceps pushing through holes drilled into the surfaces of furniture.

The installation was two years in the making, with each cordyceps being created by hand from waste and recycled materials using the time consuming processes of stitching, coiling and twining. Goldring acknowledges the assistance of basketmakers Sue Dilley and Barbara Hawkins in creating the dining table, one of the most intricate objects to be

included in the show. The collaborative process involved monthly meetings over a six month period where work could be discussed and it was possible to observe the table evolving.

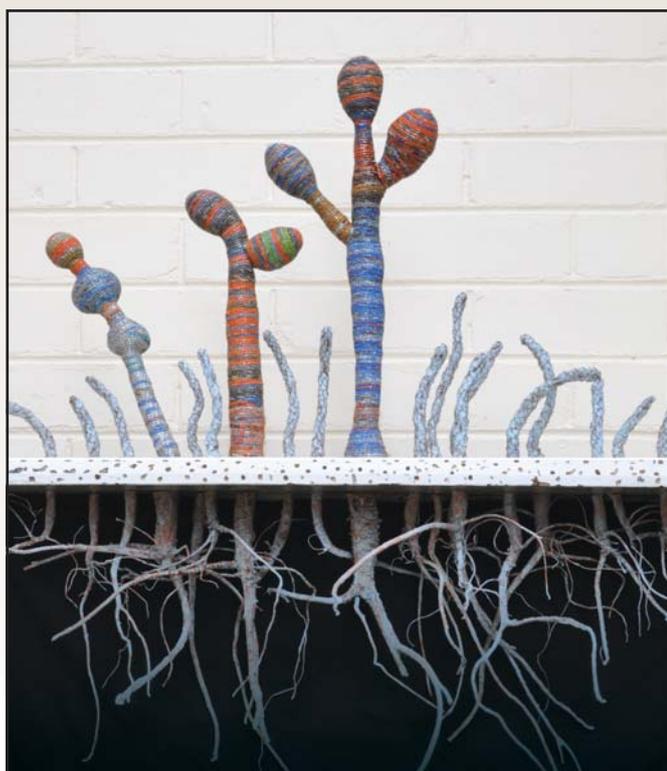
In his essay for the exhibition, *Insects and Rubbish*, Peter Eglezos notes, "In nature, the cordyceps is a parasitic fungus that invades, and infects a living host. The body of this unfortunate insect is then slowly overrun and replaced by the cordyceps and its long 'club-like' forms which begin to protrude from the body of this once living creature. The terms 'Parasitic' and 'Invading' are highly provocative; Goldring uses this metaphor to shed slightly pessimistic light on humankind. In Goldring's eyes, humankind

is a consuming and destructive organism, no less merciful towards its surrounding environment than this fungus is towards its insect host....



Opposite page top, TABLE WITH CORDYCEPS; recycled table, clothes, wool, flax, cumbungi, palm bark, bread bags, wire and poly fill; 134cmH x 120cmW x 120cmD; made 2011 by Jodie Goldring, Sue Dilley and Barbara Hawkins. Bottom of page, **DINING WITH CORDYCEPS** installation view including 'Mantelpiece with Cordyceps' and 'Chair 2 with Cordyceps' – plastic pool toy; plastic mattress bags, tree root & copper wire; 103cmH x 46cmW x 43dmD; made 2011.

This page below, detail of MANTELPIECE WITH CORDYCEPS, recycled mantelpiece, plastic bread bags, parsley roots, papier-maché, copper wire, linen thread and poly fill; 165cmH x 140cmW x 25cmD, made 2011. At right, **CORNER UNIT WITH CORDYCEPS,** recycled corner unit, plastic bread bags, pool toys, paper mix, wool, tree roots, copper wire, wire, rusting agents, lights & poly fill; 167cmH x 80cmW c 50cmD, made 2011. All photography by Jodie Goldring.



“As human beings, we have an almost unconscious connection to furniture. Tables, chairs and other domestic fixtures have become so embedded within our culture and lifestyles that one begins to feel slightly awkward when viewing the installation on display. There is a desire to give some form of functionality to these objects; to use the chairs, to sit on them. However they have been carefully and purposely stripped of their use. Overrun by Goldring’s colourful cordyceps, there is no longer any domestic use to these objects. This seems like a fairly simple thought, but it is in fact quite confronting. Perhaps Goldring is commenting on humanity’s utter dependence on these items, one is left vulnerable, surrounded by objects that once were familiar but no longer are.”

Goldring has explored a variety of media over the years including latex, plastic sheeting, fibreglass, steel and woven copper wire. Dining with Cordyceps continues and refines materials, techniques and ideas developed by her in more recent years. She joined the Basketmakers of Victoria in 2007 and participated in various workshops held by the organisation to expand her use of materials and techniques. Then in November 2009 she exhibited a series of trial works at the Yarra Sculpture Gallery using

newly acquired materials and techniques to ‘grow’ cordyceps off furniture - see Textile Fibre Forum #97, 2010 for Wendy Golden’s article *Cordyceps at Home*, Jodie Goldring.

Peter Eglezos concludes, “What is intriguing about Goldring’s work is that it is aesthetically quite beautiful; through her destruction of the furniture and manipulation of raw, recycled materials Goldring has created a series of sculptural works that are, in fact stunning. There is a powerful reference to humanity as a careless and destructive entity, and this is a very disturbing and confronting thought. However, Goldring works this idea into her artwork in such an intelligent and subtle way, that instead of blatantly screaming some sort of *‘I told you so’* cliché... the viewers are drawn into this conclusion through their own personal exploration of the beautiful world she has created.” □

This article was compiled by Janet De Boer from information provided by Jodie Goldring who currently makes her home in Melbourne and has worked consistently as a professional artist for over a decade along with teaching secondary students at Billanook College. Past projects can be seen on the website: www.jodiegoldring.com.au