

The Hairy Panic is series of photographs of a Land Art Installation that took place out in the windswept grasslands surrounding Lake George, NSW, Australia. The Installation consisted of pink hybrid tumbleweeds made of steel and human hair placed within the drought stricken yet romantic and painfully sublime landscape.

The name of the work comes from the 2016 invasion of the Australian town Wangaratta by “Panicum effuse” a native species of tumbleweed. An overgrowth of the human labelled weed occurs due to dry and windy conditions combined with soil toxicity levels that causes the plant to thrive. The choice to name the project after this event came from wanting a way to share a narrative with the viewer that causes them to reflect on our past and present day treatment and documentation of the land and its inhabitants.

The aesthetics of production are also means of communication, highlighting the power to both shape and be shaped by landscapes, past, future and present. The use of photographs has been used to reflect on the violent legacy of the medium through documentation within both the Sciences and Social Sciences towards women, indigenous communities, other minority groups and all those who have historically fallen outside of the Western definition of what is Human.

The work explores the role of a material agency within the historical legacy of the materials used. The medium of human hair itself was chosen due to its nitrogen bonds that can be used as fertiliser absorbed by both the soil and the crops we that we then consume. The hair has been collected from women to draw attention to the connection of that of the female body and that of live stock, agricultural and sexual means of production and reproduction.

The work reflects on the history and politics behind the aesthetics of landscape documentation as both a means of production and as a means of aesthetic communication of what it is to be alien.

Some of the photos included are shots taken behind the scenes by the artist of her friends who helped and accompanied her out in the landscape to do the installation. Some of the installation expeditions took place during Australia’s worse Bushfire season brought on due to climate change and a federal government who refused to listen to experts warning them it was coming. The smoke from the bushfires themselves became so toxic causing everyone on the expedition to have to wear filter masks to be able to breathe.