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February 2012

### **Laura Buckley, Fata Morgana, Eliza Apperly**

Laura Buckley's *Fata Morgana* doesn't quite fill the Cell Project Space in its dimensions but in piercing audio and frantic image, it consumes the entire room. In this new installation, commissioned especially by and for Cell Project, Buckley has constructed a six-metre long, wooden-framed, internally mirrored hexagonal structure into which she projects a blurring, blinding, deafening 8-minute, 18-second video loop. The impact is instant, immersive and exhausting – a kaleidoscope and a cacophony at once.

Jarring juxtapositions seem central to Buckley's concept – not only between the steady materiality of the wooden tunnel and the frantic motion of the projected video, but also between the sequence of featured forms and sounds. Minute decorative details are followed by looming geometries. Some forms flicker for a matter of seconds while others swirl and swell across the reflective surfaces for almost half a minute. Then, out of a conundrum of colours and shapes, there is suddenly what looks like a fire-dancer, then a close-up of a music-box ballerina. Later, seemingly multiplying monochrome twirls abruptly give way to silhouetted figures upon a sea-shore. Again and again, the video lurches from the abstract to the personable, the indistinct to the identifiable.

In her accompanying soundtrack, meanwhile, Buckley leaps through human, mechanical and natural sounds, drawing on sources as disparate as a child's babbling, industrial drilling, footsteps, waves and techno music. Sonic disturbances and digital glitches further disrupt this discordant din, creating the overall effect of some angry radio reception, roaring through pure noise, ricocheting from sound to sound.

Amid this veritable onslaught of, shapes, phonics, patterns and forms, the viewer's urge for understanding becomes part of *Fata Morgana*'s game. Looking, or venturing, into Buckley's speeding, shifting, shrieking tunnel, heads ache and eyes blur. The mind races to work as fast as the surrounding images and sounds, puzzling at their jarring disjunctions, seeking out some subtle and soothing dialectic by which it might all just stop, stay still and make sense. Amid her ongoing exploration of digital image-making, Buckley seems to pitch person against pixels, the body's abilities against technology's powers and pace.

The sleek, reflective surfaces of the tunnel's walls, ceiling and floor exaggerate our participation in the piece, so that our baffled eyes bounce back at us, and so that our own mirror images become part of the swirling shapes, stand beside the couple on the beach. A further opposition is set up between what we perceive to be real (the fall of our feet upon the reflective floor) and the seemingly unreal, or surreal, pictures and resonances which surround us. With its title referring to an intricate form of mirage, *Fata Morgana* confuses what we see to be true and confounds our sense of presence and self as a result.

