



**Left:** Danielle Freakley, Catherine Finigan, Shannon Holopainen & Ian Sawyer  
*The Art Student*, 2004  
Mixed media  
Dimensions Variable  
Image courtesy the artists  
Photo credit: Ian Sawyer

**Below:** Danielle Freakley & Hao Guo  
*The Hangover of Evolution*, 2004  
Mixed media  
Dimensions Variable  
Image courtesy the artists  
Photo credit: Hao Guo



# Danielle Freakley

*Artist Running Space*  
Various locations, 2005  
Reviewed by Jessie Angwin

Danielle Freakley's *Artist Running Space* (ARS) frightens me. Since October 2004, she has been reinventing herself after Frankenstein and releasing her monsters on an unsuspecting public. *ARS* is her latest performance work, for which she dresses up in a white suit and tie and puts a box over her head. Her performances violate public art spaces and satirise the concept of the Artist Run Initiative (ARI). Yet, unlike other ARIs in Melbourne like Contemporary Artist-Run New Initiative (CARNI), Dudespace in Brunswick or Axes Art Space in Camberwell, Freakley's Artist Running Space actively seeks out its audience and mows it down like suburban grass.

Fittingly, Freakley's latest project is based in Fitzroy, an inner suburb of Melbourne well known for its cultural diversity. If you catch the number 86 tram down Smith Street, you can see the diverse multicultural population that resides there, which includes Muslim women attired in the hijab and the all-enveloping burkha. These items have come under recent 'terror' fuelled fire for concealing the wearer's identity. Confronting as it is to see a woman wearing a burkha, Freakley's aim might be to point out its similarity to her *ARS* outfit, conceivably as a form of 'visual blankness'.

In *Artist Running Space*, Freakley subverts the function of the burkha as an arguably void space. Where the shape of a woman would normally appear, she instead creates a viewing space for art. Her performances encourage us to look at her as an 'art object', while simultaneously appreciating the work she exhibits. As a space for exhibition, she has literally 'worn' works by fellow emerging artists including Bree Dalton, Hao Guo, Catherine Finigan, Shannon Holopainen and Ian Sawyer. Ranging in concept from Guo's phallus-in-cheek take on the male artist to Dalton's psychologically and materially delicate assemblages of found objects, the works to date are actually a site-specific response by each exhibiting artist to the vulnerable nature of the space itself. The artists cannot help but feel empathy for the poor creature beneath the gallery's 'walls' who is evidently imprisoned in her own art practice.

For each show the exhibiting artists have nominated the place where Freakley will display the work. Her *ARS* performances have occurred in locations such as aquariums, men's toilets and art galleries, and herein lies the scary part of the performance: she can go anywhere at anytime, limited only by the awareness of her own mortality and the authorities. Perhaps this sounds familiar, yet to call her an 'art terrorist'



**Above:** Danielle Freakley & Bree Dalton  
*She Wipes Her Mouth Clean And Says....*, 2005  
Mixed media  
Dimensions Variable  
Image courtesy the artists  
Photo credit: Bree Dalton

is too simplistic. Rather Freakley is utilising the escalation in public fear to draw attention to how creativity might exist in public spaces. It is debatable if either art or terrorism can really change the world, but what is clear is that both are fuelled by passion – and Freakley is a fanatic. □

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