

John A Douglas (Australia), *The Visceral Garden*, 1080p HD Video with Sound, 2014(single channel version)
Duration: 16 minutes and 45 seconds

SYNOPSIS:

he Visceral Garden – Landscape & Specimen articulates the ontological experience of chronic illness through interpretive narrative. Set in imaginary landscapes, it incorporates the motifs of Greco-Roman storytelling (Arachne and Orpheus). Transforming from gold to copper and then into a red figure, John A Douglas is trapped by Arachne (Naomi Oliver) and then falls from a portal into a visceral underworld where he is eventually devoured by diseased organs.

Organ specimens which correspond with the artists' medical conditions are collaged into surreal landscapes, signifying the various states that his body experiences; a forest of bones represents hyperphosphorus, a macro view of an asthmatic lung becomes a satellite view of a desert landscape, and a parathyroid gland evokes a strange underwater creature. The work defines the delicate balance and daily struggle between illness and recovery, death and survival and the interconnectedness of all living things.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Born Sydney Australia 1960
Lives and works in Sydney
www.johnadouglas.com.au

John A Douglas is represented by Chalk Horse gallery, Darlinghurst, NSW, Australia: www.chalkhorse.com.au

John A Douglas is an artist whose practice investigates through scientific and collaborative, immersive performance approaches, his ongoing experience of chronic illness and treatment. He offers a unique and personal perspective as both artist & patient that intersects with biomedical science, clinical treatment and his own human and emotional experience as a renal patient. In 2011 he began to incorporate his dialysis treatment into his own practice & in 2012 he initiated a residency at The Museum of Human Disease & School of Media Arts, UNSW for the development and production of work responding to dialysis & chronic renal disease funded by the Australia Council. He also collaborated with artist/choreographer Sue Healey to develop a structured movement score for video and live performance. The outcome was a ten-hour durational performance installation conducted while connected to a peritoneal dialysis machine shown at Performance Space, Carriageworks as a part of ISEA 2013. In April 2014 Douglas received a kidney transplant and while recovering from surgery he put together a team of local and international artists and was awarded a Creative Australia Development grant. He commenced an ongoing residency at Symbiotica Lab investigating the effects of anti-rejection drugs on his body and has established a research partnership with Ingrid Bachmann at Concordia University in Montreal. His work is seen as ironic and comical while being meditative and reflective. Douglas aims to inform and engage audiences, awakening them to the medical and non-medical (emotional) experiences of long term illness, often pushing his body to the limits of existence in order to survive. His new work *Circles of Fire* is currently in the development and will begin an exhibition program from mid 2016..