



Parallel Park Tandem  
Cut Thumb ARI January 2016



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## Parallel Park *Tandem*

Holly Bates and Tayla Haggarty explore themes of gender, sexuality and representation in their respective practices. When working together as Parallel Park these concerns are amplified. Romantically involved, the collaboration combines their individual interests in materiality, recontextualised found objects, humour, metaphor, gender and sexuality, and merges them with questions pertaining to pairing, love and relationships. The resulting work is critical, funny and seductive in its presentation. In their work to date, they have provided lesbian manicures (google it), produced a music video of sexual athletics, and cast 101 cement double-ended dildos and exhibited them as a bone yard, but to list a few.

*Tandem* is their next offering and is quite an ambitious work and exhibition. Installed in Cut Thumb's gallery, the work consists of two distinct elements: a set-like installation (in the shed), and a live-feed video projection (under the house) of said installation. The shed houses what could be described as a music video-like set. Comprising a glitzy backdrop, bright lights, a used exercise bike with attached BMX stunt pegs, a soundtrack blaring and fans blasting, the scene invokes memories of 90s exercise videos. In this scene however, there are no G-string leotards over bike pants. Rather, the scene is set and is waiting for us to complete the work.

The empty set invites audience participation, in pairs. The bicycle is unoccupied and is calling for performers. Traditional tandem bikes consist of two seats, two sets of pedals and two wheels, they are designed to share the workload between two – they are an ideal romantic metaphor. However, this is not a traditional tandem bike. In Parallel Park's version, there is room for only one to comfortably sit and pedal, while the partner must rest on the pegs, up close and personal. How will these relationship dynamics play out? As duos approach the bike, who will be seated and peddling, and who will want to be taken for the ride? The work provokes additional personal questions such as: As a partner do you coast along, while your significant other does all the hard work? Will you allow someone else to take control of the situation, while you can sit back and relax? Are you more concerned with your appearance than the actual dynamics of your relationship? Is relationship intimacy invited or labored? Or will you instead go it alone, peddling and/or resting solo for your 15 seconds of fame?

Regardless of whether or not they the participants are peddling or resting, they are going nowhere, except to the moving image projected under the house. They are performing both live to an audience and mediated by the flat, edited projection. The audience is split into two: viewer/participant/performer or viewer/watcher/audience. The two iterations of the work present two views of the one action; one is messy, warts and all, while the other presents a more slick, edited façade. Depicting two sides of a relationship, perhaps?

The dual aspect of the work extends this line of questioning to include a broader dialogue regarding the role of performance, documentation and mediation in art. By offering both a "real" and "constructed" representation of the scene and ensuing performance/s, they are asking us to question our role in this discussion. Where will you position yourself to view the "art"? Parallel Park proposes a great deal of questions in this exhibition relating to the dynamics of relationships, the role of the artist vs. audience and the representation of the real (unedited) vs. the constructed (edited). While this may seem like a lot to ask from one work, the personality of *Tandem* invites us in to have fun first, and ask questions later.

Courtney Coombs. 2016



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