

*A Desirable Trajectory\**  
by Shannon Fitzgerald

*All The World's A Stage, And All The Men and Women Merely Players.* Shakespeare's line from *As You Like It* suggests that we merely go through the stages of our life acting out various roles. Inspired by Shakespearian notions of fate, Liz Rodda woefully explores probable, desirable, imaginable, and unimaginable futures based on past and present day events in her exhibition *Tomorrows*. In this multi-media installation, Rodda examines biography, narrative, and the unknown future as literal and metaphorical entrances and exits.

*Tomorrows* includes singular works juxtaposed together to create a larger conceptual terrain that considers fate, probability, and desire. Within this narrative, Rodda is the protagonist seeking and even fumbling for the next adventure, the next love, and the next mystery. Although biographical in origin, her inquiry resonates more broadly as a collective fascination with the charting of one's path in a complex world. Setting the stage for *Tomorrows* is *Curtains*, a large-scale projected color film in which a drawn, deep crimson red velvet stage curtain moves faintly in an endless loop. The subtle movement alludes to activity backstage. Tellingly, the drama is "without beginning or end" and suggests "infinite waiting in which viewers anticipate nothing more than anticipation itself."<sup>1</sup> Interested in what lies beyond the here and now, Rodda creates a curious theatricality of nothing, as what exists behind the curtain is never revealed.

In *The Future Is Not What I Used To Think*—a hand-written flowchart of premonitions, scenarios, and chain reactions—the artist determines possible futures based on conflicting dream interpretations. Indeed, a map of fate, a map of circumstance, a map of desire—both real and imagined—disclose internal musings born of physical vulnerability, emotional fragility, and psychological insecurity, wherein the plausible reads as poetic. Sequential recordings culminate in an obsessively lovely, longing. The sculpture *Plan For Victory*, a tiny black jade cut into the shape of an icosahedron is isolated in an encased pedestal. The twenty-sided glossy die, materially imbued with magical connotations, is presented as artifact; its function in determining fate is now preserved in static honor. The installation is punctuated by a pair of photographs, *2010/2011*, in which the past and present are rendered indistinguishable. The images of the night sky—specifically Rodda's zodiac Taurus—are taken a split second before and after midnight on New Year's Eve recording moments in two calendar years. Referencing the distant cosmos, a doppelganging occurs that proposes an inconsequentiality of astrology, while also punning the way in which fate is often understood as written in the stars. As such, she puts forth a temporary condition in which she is concurrently extradited from the past and estranged from her present.

Rodda acknowledges that she is not master of her own fate: she is a mere player. She considers the micro and macro that build upon themselves in tenuous proximity; tiny everyday human revelations are juxtaposed alongside more ethereal ones to balance a distinct interior monologue. Despite the burden of the unknown and a fanciful obsession with reflection and indecision, Rodda's distinct unease is quietly stunning.

\*This essay was first published in ART 365, Oklahoma Visual Arts Coalition, Oklahoma City, 2011 on the occasion of an exhibition of the same title.

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<sup>1</sup> Liz Rodda, *Artist Statement*, 2011.