

## THE GLASS CLOSET

Neil Emmerson

This project, *The Glass Closet* by Neil Emmerson, was presented as a “hit-and-run” public project and installed as if it was an exclusive, high-fashion, designer-label outlet on the main shopping street of Dunedin (available to be viewed through the window 24 hours a day, but open only by appointment). As a satellite event for the ANZAAE Conference held at the Dunedin School of Art at Otago Polytechnic, it enacts a relational slippage between opposed axiomatic positions like public/private, closure/disclosure and knowledge/ignorance in order to introduce the subject of internalised and externalised homophobia as a parallel to the common judicial and extra-judicial punishment of homosexuals, both locally and on the world stage. Costumes that play with the concepts of discipline and terrorism (sacred relics or perverse accessories?) are displayed as high camp parodies of international *haute couture* consumer culture that blend fetishised signs of the religious, penal and psycho-medical in the mode of an allegorical, disembodied confessional.

“Thus we must posit an aesthetics where theory and interpretation are juxtaposed to, or traced above, the effects of the passions, where a muscular contraction or spasm is worth as much as a concept.”

Allen S Weiss, “Iconology and Perversion”, *Art and Criticism Monograph Series*, vol. 4 (Melbourne: Art & Text Publications, 1988), 35.

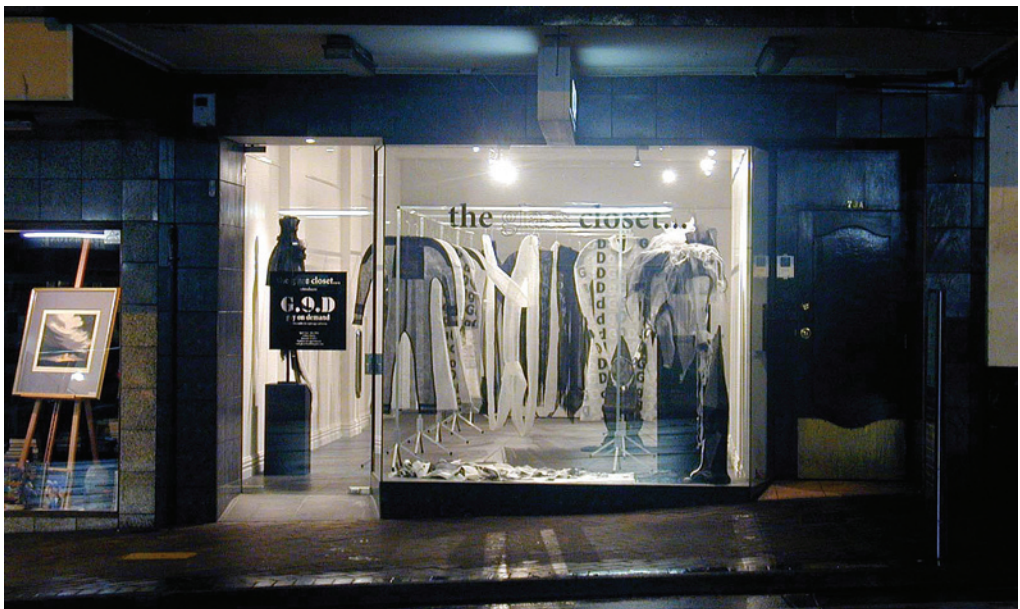


Figure 1: Neil Emmerson, *The Glass Closet*, Installation view, ROCDA, Princes St. Dunedin, 2009.



Figure 2: Neil Emmerson, *The Glass Closet*, Installation view, ROCDA, Princes St. Dunedin, 2009. Plastic/nylon, various threads, zips, enamel paint and aluminium suspension system. Dimensions variable.



Figure 3: Neil Emmerson, *The Glass Closet*, Installation view, ROCDA, Princes St. Dunedin, 2009. Plastic/nylon, various threads, zips, enamel paint and aluminium suspension system. Dimensions variable.



Figure 4: Neil Emmerson, *The Glass Closet*, Installation view, ROCDA, Princes St. Dunedin, 2009. Plastic/nylon, various threads, zips, enamel paint and aluminium suspension system. Dimensions variable.

**Neil Emmerson** is an Australian artist living and working in Dunedin, New Zealand. He is a senior lecturer and Head of the Printmaking Studio at the Dunedin School of Art at Otago Polytechnic.