

# Shades of grey (gray)

Thanks to Narelle Jubelin's reference to an obscure literary masterpiece, and those recent works of erotic fan-fiction by EL James currently topping the best-seller lists, this month's posting continues on a theme.

The occasion is Jubelin's occupation of the stairwell of the former Caulfield Technical School E Block (now the Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, Monash University), designed by architect Percy Everett, c. 1950, part of her exhibition *Vision in motion* at Monash University Museum of Art. Quoting from Paul Scheerbart's *The gray cloth and ten percent white: a ladies' novel* (1914), this intervention is part of Jubelin's ongoing heritage project of appropriating and revisiting modernist architectural sites, privileging her feminine fixation on the finer points of detail (through needlepoint, photographic archives etc.). These hand-written glass transcriptions in white, through which the grey urban vistas of the causeway and suburbs underscore her point, present a curious reflection on Scheerbart's cautionary tale of submission towards an aesthetic principle of harmony.

Here the architect, Krug, uncannily doubling the eponymous Christian Grey, CEO of Grey Enterprises Holdings Inc. in *Fifty shades of grey*, presents his megalomaniac vision of a global enterprise to erect cities of coloured glass, and travel between them in glass-walled airships, accompanied by his wife, Clara. As a mandatory condition of their marriage contract, Clara must wear only grey and white to complement his jewel-like edifices, a role to which she submits, but not without some resistant moves and exchanges.

Vampiric (*Twilight*) associations aside, if *Fifty shades of grey* is the Barbie version of Pauline Réage's *Story of O*, this novella by Scheerbart is even more lurid in scope; channeling what Jubelin quotes elsewhere in her show might otherwise be known as the Stendhal Syndrome (being overcome in the presence of a work of art). Walking up and down the stairs to grab the snatched quotes from a title I then felt compelled to get out from the library, I think I know what she means.

Narelle Jubelin, [Vision in motion](#), Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne, 24 April - 7 July 2012.



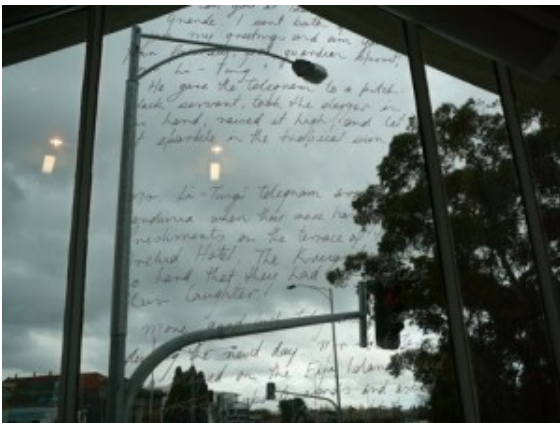
Narelle Jubelin, 'The gray cloth (glass transcriptions)', 2011-ongoing, Caulfield Technical School E Block (now Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, Monash University), architect Percy Everett, c. 1950. Photo: John Brash



Narelle Jubelin, 'The gray cloth (glass transcriptions)', 2011-ongoing



Narelle Jubelin, 'The gray cloth  
cloth (glass  
transcriptions)',  
2011-ongoing



Narelle Jubelin, 'The gray cloth  
(glass transcriptions)',  
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