

DEGREES OF COMPLIANCE

SIMON CROSBIE

A use of technical elements as an intermediary process between performance artist and audience was also central to Barbara Campbell's *Cries from the Tower*. Campbell's strategy was to perform at a distance from the audience. The image of the performer, on the rooftop, unfurling her embroidered dress was relayed to the audience inside the tower of Queen's College. At the same time, footage of her sewing stitches into her hand, and unthreading them, was projected onto a small circular screen above the video projection. The technological aspect was subtle, attuned to the surroundings, to the voice, and to an awareness of both the artist's close proximity and of her absence.

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CHECKING IN AT HOTEL EXPERIMENTA

STEVEN BALL

We drive along Swanston Street in time for Barbara Campbell's performance, *Cries from the Tower*. The tower at Melbourne University's Queens College was built in the 14th century, and for most of the last 19 years of her life, Mary Queen of Scots was imprisoned there, writing letters to rally support, and embroidering tapestries. Barbara Campbell's Queen of Scots is seen in silhouette, a projected video image relayed live (although not necessarily apparently) from the roof of the tower. She unravels the embroidered ribbon of her skirt which falls in a continuous stream into the space occupied by the assembled audience while a Super 8 film of her embroidering the palm of her hand is projected onto a disc. The 'Credo' and 'Agnus Dei' from 'Mass for Four Parts' by William Byrd sings through the reverberant room. Disruption and re-interpretation of historical, spatial and video time in the specificity of the resonances of the location, and the elegant irony of the performance, reclaim theatrical space from the cliches of its conventions.

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