

Barbara Campbell *The Seduction of Art* 1996

Colour video, 4:3, sound, 11:30 minutes



Barbara Campbell (b.1961 in Beaudesert, Queensland, lives and works in Sydney) is an internationally recognised performance, installation, and video artist. She studied both fine art and art history before completing a Doctorate at the University of Sydney in 2016. Her oeuvre explores women's personal and historical fictions, the visual and adaptive qualities of texts, and how the meaning of a work changes according to the physical and contextual properties of its location, whether gallery, museum, atrium, tower, radio airwaves, or the internet.

Co-performed with Peter Anderson in 1996, and originally performed with Ted Riggs in 1982, *The Seduction of Art* is a conceptual work of detailed observation and careful description, a slow and detached expression of the impact of the modern on the remains of empire in the 1960s. The video is a long single shot of Campbell lying on a mattress wrapped in red satin. A man in a black suit is lightly stroking the length of her body, which is covered by a white sheet. It presents a young girl's memory of being taken by her maiden aunt on a cultural outing to see a special artwork at the Brisbane City Hall, and presages her subsequent career. As she says 'The first time I was seduced by art I was 13 years old. It was a special trip.' The agent of this seduction was Jackson Pollock's *Blue Poles*. As Campbell has noted, '...this is a story about an "expressionist" master painter and his masterpiece', which she tells in an expressionless manner despite the expressionism of Pollock's work.