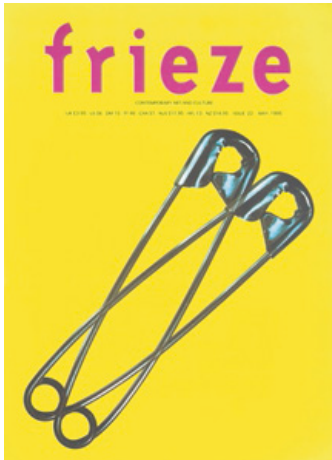


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## Margherita Manzelli

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(Translated from the Italian by Gilda Williams)

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A dark-haired young woman in a wide black dress sits on the steps of a perpetually shaded room for weeks at a stretch, as if carefully following a schedule. Her face has a hard beauty and between her teeth, through a karate gum shield that distorts her regular features, she clenches 103 fishing lines which extend upwards like a bundle of extremely long hairs. The threads hit a pane of glass covering half the doorway, then, as if refracted in water, suddenly change direction and rise at an angle towards the ceiling of the room across the hallway. Hanging from the ceiling in the white light are 103 small drawings on paper tied to each thread.

The drawings depict landscapes, blurred as if seen from a speeding train or inspired by barely-read novels. They flutter like swamp gnats; ready to rise and fall all at once depending on the movements of the woman's mouth, which appears to both hold them back and vomit them out. The drawings are the last remains of the perceived world, taking an indelible hold on the nervous system and travelling downward, all the way to the pit of the stomach. Some of the images are accompanied by a thought: brief words drawn from the artist's notebooks and written out by hand. But these words are not a narrative caption or verbal diary intended to complement the images; the writings reiterate the overall impression of fragmentation.

The exhibition plays on two levels. On one hand, there is concentration, effort, loneliness and the physicality of a body which also 'represents' itself; an idea reinforced by the pane of glass, which frames the figure of the woman and transforms it into a living sculpture. On the other hand, there is the notion of thoughts suspended like inconclusive words and phrases; at times spoken deliberately and at other times spat out involuntarily. Margherita Manz-elli, in her first solo exhibition, displays metaphorically all the dread of having to 'sustain' her work with a passion and intensity straight from the gut, whilst revealing that it is already capable of standing up on its own.