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Carsley turns a Moongate into an aperture of illusion

By Gina Fairley
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Gary Carsley, *Astria Portia 1 (In and with Art)*, 2013

Gary Carsley's new installation at IMA places Brisbane at the centre of landscape traditions.

Sciencefictive is a new installation by artist Gary Carsley, opening at Brisbane's Institute of Modern Art (IMA) this weekend, Saturday 31 May.

Brisbane-born Carsley has become known for his modular furniture installations that create spatial gardens, illusions inserted into the gallery, museum and art fair to contest and question our perception and relationship to the natural environment.

This new work is no exception; using the traditional Chinese Moongate as a device to puncture the white walls of the gallery, Carsley has created an immersive interior garden with a twist.

IMA explains: 'As visitors follow a path laid throughout the galleries, they will encounter these Moongates, which serve as windows onto gardens from around the world.

'These are displayed in the IMA galleries in a physical relationship to each other that they would have if Brisbane were the centre of the world. The entire work therefore functions as a giant *Mappa Mundi*, and encourages us to contemplate the complex balance between social construct, geography, and flora that characterises gardens.'

Typically, Carsley uses unique wallpapers and IKEA furniture that he skins with composite images, playing with the notion of photographic truth and timber veneers. They seeming pop in and out of their backdrop, transgressing boundaries between inside and outside, natural and constructed. Carsley has 'landscaped' these settings through placement of the furniture and the visual passage through the Moongates with a tone of theatrical direction.

It is not dissimilar to the work of the landscape architect, who has today become increasingly involved in how we visualize space, both private and public. Carsley draws on these trends and traditions globally, while suggesting 'an affinity between the process of conceiving and creating a garden and that of the artist—bringing land, sea, and sky together into evocative spaces that offer journeys and compel reflection'.

Gary Carsley's work has been presented in exhibitions in Amsterdam, New York, Germany, Shanghai and Singapore; in 2013 he completed a major public commission, *D.104 Toohey Forest*, installed at the Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Hospital, Coopers Plains, Brisbane.