

'I feel like chicken tonight'

Rosy Martin

This piece was inspired by a conversation when Kay and I were planning the workshops with the Freudian Slips, in which I said that my neck was feeling chicken-like, and I began humming the 'I feel like tonight' refrain.....

I needed to find a way of making this feeling visible, and link it to the rhetoric around women and ageing, especially regarding the 'look' and the 'ideal of youth'.

I entered the space, wearing a 'Moulin Rouge' type headdress of white feathers, high heels and black satin lingerie.

These statements were read off the packaging of the items during the first part of the performance, as face cream was rubbed into the face, neck and body:-

'NoAge Essentiel. Age-defense renewal serum.

Revolutionary formula. Optitelomerase + 2 anti-oxidants = the Ageproof complex.

"Magical" effects. Specifically designed by Dior Laboratories, this magical texture, the 'New Skin System' becomes one with the skin to "Plump up" retexture and smooth it on application.'

'Say no to ageing' NoAge leaflet Christian Dior Paris 2001

'After a certain age, facial tissues weaken, wrinkles increase and the skin loses its firmness. A major innovation from the L'Oreal Laboratories, new 'Revitalift' with Nanosomes of Pro-Retinoal A and with Par-Elastyl has been developed to effectively combat the skin's signs of ageing ...

Your face looks visibly younger.'

L'Oreal packaging 2001

'At the cutting edge of skin care technology, Face Sculptor with pro-phosphor has been called 'a face-lift in a jar' as the skin is instantly firmed and lifted and fine lines are smoothed away.'

Vision spring 2001 Helena Rubinstein

Then a 'space blanket' was shown to the audience

'Emergency blanket, security blanket'

As it was unfurled, I said:

'Chickee. Chickadee. Bird, Who's that nice bird over there. Boiler hen. Broiler hen. Bird.'

and turned it into an elegant dress.

Whilst singing 'I feel like chicken tonight' I moved around the space, and unfurled white frilled 'wings', which I then wrapped around my ankles.

I then laid down on the floor - and transformed myself into an oven-ready chicken.

1. 'I feel like chicken tonight' advert for a brand of ready made meals and sauces