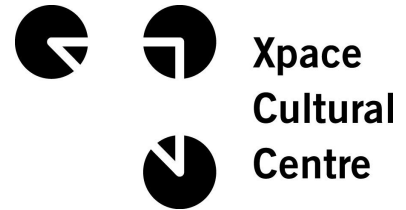


WINDOW SPACE



Scission

Gabby Gerbasi

September 12– October 17, 2026

"We" "ourselves" are caught up in the rhythms, pulsations and patternings of non-human forces. There is no inside except as a folding of the outside. The mirror cracks: I am the other and I always was.

—Mark Fisher, *The Weird and the Eerie*.

Gabriella Gerbasi's exhibition *Scission*, presented in the Window Space of Xspace Cultural Centre, makes the electric infra-ordinary its luminous subject. Gerbasi charges the unnoticed substrata of daily life— drab grey transmission towers and polymer power lines— with currents of beauty, astonishment and meaning. The painter's stark departure from feminine figuration vaults us away from the realm of identity and into that of existence.

The raw material of Gerbasi's previous work is the image itself. Drawing from an archive of digital representations of women, the artist's glitchy transformations of the shapely figures are meditations on the construction + commodification of femininity = the debris of an inescapable online ecosystem. While the artist retains a formal apparatus

that superimposes images of varying opacity over one another, *Scission* presents something more unbridled and elemental.

The nest of wires carry a current which, after undergoing several unobservable transformations, will birth the very images of women we witness on our screens, Gerbasi's former cathexis. Seen through the light of cyborgian genesis, the electric grid emits an almost maternal presence, its thicket of cords the inexhaustible motor of all life force. What is to become— what pixel will beam, what gear will turn, what fuel must combust— is imminent, an open source of wonder.

Ours is an age of unpredictable machinic desires. But the period of latency that gives rise to desire is also cause for apprehension.

That anxiety is the only emotion that doesn't deceive is a psychoanalytic maxim I find myself returning to in sputtering moments of uncertainty. Anxiety is a raw, unmediated confrontation with the truth of our own existence. Anxiety is a bundle of nerves, whose energized entanglements are not unlike the cables that float overhead. The live wires that are yet to be disentangled—straightened out and enclosed in moulding, caulked over in depersonalizing white gunk, in an effort to make presentable to the world—are a displacement of our equally snarled insides, skittish like the currents of a psyche before it is corralled into the self.

While an ingénue of some obsolete parlour may have sought the sun, sea or fresh air to declutter her mind, on her recent trips to Italy and Japan, Gabriella found herself taking photos of electric wiring on her digicam. Her fascination with the power lines stems from their endless extension forward, refusing to terminate into a destination.¹ *Scission* is a study of dynamism.

¹ Gabriella Gerbasi, conversation with the author, August 22, 2026.

Gerbasì's focalization of these frenzied structures betrays a preoccupation with what the French cultural theorist Paul Virillio has termed 'velocity' — a compression of time and space that problematizes contemporary existence. Of this disorientation he says:

I think the old image, the old reality, was a reality that can be presented as a space-time reality. Man lived in a time system of his actual presence: when he wasn't there, he wasn't there. Today we are entering a space which is speed-space... This new other time is that of electronic transmission, of high-tech machines, and therefore, man is present in this sort of time, not via his physical presence, but via programming.²

This absence looms over Gerbasì's paintings. The absence is somewhat foreboding, a gap into which one can insert the prophesied replacement of human consciousness.

In the second of the two panels, *Steal Away*, we observe an indistinct figure ravaged by the excess coils, his structural integrity further obscured by the sunflares of the refractive camera lens. Whether he is bursting through these chains or buckling under their strain is uncertain. This ambiguity follows through in his posture apropos the glowing cross of the first painting, eponymously titled *Scission* — does he face away from the sigil, or is he turning towards it?

Despite my desire, the tabula cannot be deciphered like an equation.

The brightness of the cross, like the sun, is too potent to be viewed with the naked eye. Its light instead must be reconstituted via screens. This detachment is multiplied by the

² "Speed-Space," interview by Jerome Sans, in *Virilio Live: Selected Interviews*, ed. John Armitage (London: SAGE Publications, 2001), 71.

viewer's vantage point on the outside, separated by the window. The reflections flitting across its glass are prismatically incorporated into the painting, making the spectral nature of the cross and the figure even more apparent. Meaning appears and disappears like an apparition.

Despite the staggering mass of cables that litter the canvas, our contact with the current of anxiety—the overwhelming question of being—remains obscured, insulated. It too is contemplated at a distance. Like the charge that courses through transmission towers, we are destined to hover and never land.

Gerbasi regards this interminability with both longing and apprehension—the charge is ambivalent.

“When you invent the plane, you also invent the plane crash.”³ When you build a system that connects everyone, you also lay the path to irremediable disconnection. Like the crumbling statue of Gerbasi's exhibition *Scission*, we are caught up in the excesses of existence—it's too late to pull the plug.

– Namah

³ Paul Virilio, *Politics of the Very Worst*, trans. Rachel Bloul, ed. Sylvère Lotringer (New York: Semiotext(e), 1999), 89.