

## CROSSING DISCIPLINES

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In the Dunedin School of Art and the School of Design at Otago Polytechnic, disciplines are fostered and protected. Ceramics, Drawing, Electronic Arts, Jewellery & Metalsmithing, Painting, Photography, Print, Sculpture, Textiles in the Dunedin School of Art and Architecture, Communication, Culinary Arts, Fashion and Product in the School of Design all have their own histories and traditions, their own tools and skill sets. These disciplines even have their own distinct philosophies, languages, customs, and ways of doing and being in the world. Students have often said to me that they experience 'culture shock' when they move from one to another due to the differences they experience. At Otago Polytechnic we are fortunate to be able to retain such a rich array of voices for the benefit of art and design practice and for students, rather than having to default to the so-called "studio without borders" which is a nice phrase for mere blandness. This issue of *Scope: Contemporary Research Topics, Art + Design* show, however, how strong disciplines have the nerve and confidence to cross their own borders and to explore synergies with others in a multitude of different registers.

Mark Bolland traces the connections between photography and architecture in a fascinating exploration of the origins and technologies of the photographic impulse not restricted to the limitations of the camera. Leoni Schmidt investigates the Boros Bunker in Berlin that has been transformed into an art gallery wherein contemporary sculpture reinscribes a site of previous trauma with new possibilities.

Michael Greaves reflects on a recent symposium hosted by ELIA (the European League of Institutes of the Arts) in London. The Dunedin School of Art is a member of ELIA and benefits much by this connection. Greaves' reflection considers the "elastic classroom" a topic central to the educational system under scrutiny at the symposium he participated in. Here, a painter engages with pedagogical concerns central to the core function of our institution, namely teaching and learning.

Rebecca Hamid critiques the global system of capitalism with regard to the art market and the ways in which it enables money laundering and tax evasion by the ultra-rich. Again, a system is under scrutiny, this time, however, the way around it is not clear as the writer herself admits when offering alternative ways in which the artist's agency can be made manifest in a corrupt marketplace. Hamid brings a knowledge of the economy together with a knowledge of art fairs, international biennales, and the crazy excesses of an art world sometimes run amok.

In direct contrast with a global view on systems and excesses, Rose McGowan presents a history of one man's steady ceramic practice in a local area. The reader learns of the resilience and craft skills of an artist and marvels at the physical strength and expertise underpinning the making of large wheel-thrown vessels. The role of the body in art making is clear in this contribution, as is also the case in many other ways within the texts included in this issue.

Rachel Allan's photographic work incorporates the forensic body while also making a bold statement about the connection between the photographic and the sculptural. Sarah Baird's angry bodies resist the insulting words hurled at women and people who are not heterosexual. Here, text and sculpture work together and bounces off one another. Kiri Mitchell's large sculptural bodies find another life in electronic art when they come alive in a narrative claymation version, strongly critical of stereotypes but also deeply understanding of fetishist behaviours.

Bodily touch features in Lesley Brook's review of an exhibition predicated on touch and visitors' responses when actually being invited to touch art works. Her investigation of the impact of art on audiences connected with CLINK, a jewellery & metalsmithing project that tested the abilities of artists and art students to improvise and think and make 'on the run', as it were.

Human touch is also invited by Michael Morley and Morgan Oliver's project wherein the bodily sense of smell also plays a part when scent is released in a space inhabited by sculptural objects brought to life through light and colour.

Where Mark Wong writes about Charlotte Parallel's practice, the division between disciplines and between the senses unravels as she records sounds in locales and creates sculptural ensembles to house these in alerting us to the environmental impact of what is there but not normally heard by the human ear. At present, Dunedinites are alert to such a practice after Caro McCaw's cross-disciplinary project on whales and how sound impacts on their habitats were experienced in spaces around town.

Hannah Joynt's body walked the length of New Zealand during a drawing adventure of which she tells in her contribution to this issue of *Scope*. A typology of drawing emerged from her master's project and each register in this engages the human body and its relationship with the landscape in a different way.

Walking is also crucial to Martin Kean's recent work wherein drawing with electronic media on the floor invites those who walk past to enter a projection which then changes to accommodate their presence. Here, a colleague from Information Technology, Patricia Haden, collaborated and supported with her expertise.

The body and its costume is central to Neil Emmerson's foregrounding of the cruel murder of a man merely for being homosexual. Cruelty to the body is all the more excruciating when 'masked' by textile effects in the prints, which on a large scale take on the form of a hard grid in which the act of cruelty is endlessly repeated, as Bridie Lonie points out in her marvellously insightful text alongside the artist's work.

Margo Barton's work in Fashion considers the garment and hat both as artefacts but also from the perspective of the wearer's experience. The hat 'becomes' a sculpture and at the same time a 'camera' or a 'lens' to see the world with. Margo has long been interested in the conjunction between Fashion and Photography, but in her project report in this issue of *Scope*, she has taken this to another level of critical sophistication.

Pam McKinlay studied textiles and this shows in her careful report on the materialities and disciplinary conjunctions with textiles shown at the recent Costume and Textile Association of New Zealand Conference. The body and its relationships with textiles was centre stage and the textiles were printed on, sculpted into form, painted on, embroidered through and so forth. Also in Rekha Shailaj's love for the Indian kurta in her Fashion practice reported on in this issue, we see the centrality of the body and the conjunction with textile-sculpture as the kurta takes on a range of silhouettes and structures.

Last but not least, Jack Ross contributes a poem in homage to a painting by Graham Fletcher wherein the artist questions the placement of Pacific artefacts in modernist interiors. Gavin O'Brien reminds the reader of Captain Cook's voyages to the South Seas when he became the first European to set foot on the Pacific island that would later become known as Aotearoa New Zealand. O'Brien's contribution points out the presence of designed artefacts during Cook's encounter with Maori. These artefacts clothe the body, transport the body, or extend the body – each holding portents as to the future and carrying a rich set of associations: the British uniform, a ship and rowing boats, a spear, guns and – at the centre of the encounter -- a nail bartered to become Te Horetā's taonga (treasure) as a multi-use tool to tip a spear or gouge holes for the bindings of a waka (canoe). Here, the close connections between design and power emerge as yet another theme in this varied and cross-disciplinary issue of *Scope*.

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