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# scope

Contemporary Research Topics

art & design 23  
September 2022

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**Scope: Contemporary Research Topics (Art & Design)** is peer-reviewed and published annually by **Scope: Contemporary Research Topics**, Otago Polytechnic Press. Otago Polytechnic Ltd is a subsidiary of Te Pūkenga - New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology.

The series *Scope (Art & Design)* aims to engage discussion on contemporary research in the visual arts and design. It is concerned with views and critical debates surrounding issues of practice, theory, history and their relationships as manifested through the visual and related arts and activities, such as sound, performance, curation, tactile and immersive environments, digital scapes and methodological considerations. With Aotearoa/New Zealand and its Pacific neighbours as a backdrop, but not its only stage, *Scope (Art & Design)* seeks to address the matters which concern contemporary artists and arts enquirers in their environments of practice.

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## REFLECTIONS FROM MATARIKI

Jane Venis

*Scope: Art & Design 23* is a celebration of our arts community here in Ōtepoti and beyond, a time to bring together a feast of creative projects that we edit and layout during the winter; for you to enjoy in the summer-break and beyond. I am writing this year's editorial at Matariki – a special time of the year in Aotearoa. At Matariki we look into the future with hope for new beginnings. We celebrate our whānau and attune to and connect with our environment.

It is also a time to remember and honour those, that we as an arts whānau, have lost in the past year. In particular, I would like to acknowledge artists Marilyn Webb, Peter Nicholls, and Martin Thompson who in their very different ways have added to our rich creative lives here. I have been liberal with the timeframes here because, although Peter died more than a year ago, his loss still resonates deeply within in our community. Both Peter and Marilyn taught for many years at the Dunedin School of Art and not only mentored generations of younger artists, but also created a legacy of artworks of local and national significance. Martin, familiar around Dunedin, was an outsider artist with an international profile who made his intricate drawings in his 'studio' of local cafes.

Professor Rangi Mātāmua of the Matariki Advisory Committee explains how Matariki is fundamentally connected with our environment "Matariki is more than just our connections to each other; it is also about our connections to our place in the world and our responsibility to the environment. During Matariki we hope people reflect on what they can do to ensure the wellbeing of the earth"<sup>1</sup>.

The notion of "our connections to our place in the world"<sup>2</sup> is a key value Caitlin Donnelly explores in "Māmā." In this article she details her newfound connection to whakapapa. She says that she came to terms with her previous dislocation as an adoptee and an identity of "iwi unknown," and created her studio project in response to three vital markers of her identity: Māori, wāhine, and kowhaea.

In this journal issue many of the articles are focused on environmental and or botanical themes, these also reflect the values mentioned by Mātāmua above. In her article "Immersed" Becky Cameron engages with the ecology of her suburban garden, "paying careful attention to what is here and now and to produce multiple responses to my coexistence within a web of relationships."<sup>3</sup> Alysha Bailey also works with a botanical theme. Creating digital images by placing plant materials directly onto a flat-bed scanner, she links (and names) each image to a historical female figure "freezing the garden and each plant in time, the images function as a portrait, as a document, and as monument."<sup>4</sup>

Artist in Residence, Amanda Watson's practice is also deeply connected to the land. She situates her explorative painting practice in context of new materialist theory, whereby she works 'in collaboration' with the land. She talks of the paintings carrying "a kind of whispered trace of the interactions between the land, the painting process and myself."<sup>5</sup> In Thomas Lord's photographic explorations, he also works *with* the land. He writes that his project "Super Sport Sunday" "required a slow and unspoken agreement with the location."<sup>6</sup> Unlike snapshot photography where an image is 'taken,' Lord's slower process allows "the image time to make itself."<sup>7</sup>

The politics of sustainability and engagement with environmental concerns caused by “the endless gluttony of capitalism”<sup>8</sup> is the focus of Nilgun Salur’s sobering, yet delightful, interview with Turkish graphic designer Savaş Çekiç who considers “that in terms of sustainability, producing without causing environmental degradation should be the primary goal of designers.”<sup>9</sup> Inge Andrew’s reflection on her teaching practice outlines the development of an interdisciplinary course using design based thinking, where learning is a social process, supported by collaboration and social interaction, in situated learning.

“Gift: Reflections on Journeys, Knowledge, Labour and Love” by Victoria Bell and Natalie Smith is the first of three articles focusing on the development of curated group exhibitions. It follows the development of “Gift” an exhibition at The Ashburton Art Gallery in 2022. The curators developed the notion of “Gift” as a foil for the “traditional consumer notion of the boxed, wrapped and ribboned gift” to explore gifts that were more enduring, yet less tangible such as “our natural environment; journeys; gifts of knowledge, labour and love,” themes that also resonate with the time of Matariki.<sup>10</sup>

For several years *Scope: Art & Design* has published a series of articles from the Art+Science exhibition series (now in its ninth year) and in this issue we are including recent research from Sierra Adler and Jenny Rock who interview a range of SciArt practitioners about their intentions, motivations, and perceived levels of audience engagement with their projects. Also, included in this issue are related articles from the 2022 Art+ Science exhibition themed “Air.” Pam McKinlay’s entertaining and informative article “Life’s a Gas” ranges over the role of air from ‘macro to micro’ including molecular, human, and planetary perspectives. We look to the night sky in Faye Nelson and Christine Keller’s project “Excited Oxygen” whereby ‘excited’ gases form auroras—that are equally exciting to those lucky enough to see them with naked eye.

The third group exhibition featured in this edition *Scope: Art & Design* is the development and hanging of the photo alumni show “A Little More Magenta.” The article by Mark Bolland and Rachel Hope Allan is an exploration of the curatorial process in successfully showing a collection of somewhat disparate works during the challenge of Covid. And.... we find out about the secret life of magenta.

Other texts in this issue centre on projects relating to the challenges of maintaining physical wellbeing. In “Threads of survival” Megan Griffiths discusses the four stages of her experience with intense physical pain and the subsequent gruelling experience of medication, addiction, and withdrawal. She shares with the reader this intensely personal journey and the artworks she made throughout her ordeal. Tracy Kennedy’s article “Memory on Cloth” also relates to the experience of chronic pain and sensory loss. She explores her experience with Fibromyalgia, through the surface manipulation and printing of textiles.

In “The Beast Lives on” painter Charlie Rzepecky writes with a vitality and fury that matches the energy and black humour of his paintings—works that refer to his female to male transition. As he says “The paintings are the visual equivalents of deafening screams. They encapsulate experience and shove it in your face.”<sup>11</sup> In contrast, Charlotte McLachlan’s narrative paintings reference early European fairy tales, they employ symbolism “to represent an abstract idea or to suggest a certain mood or emotion.”<sup>12</sup> In these works you are invited into an imagined and contemplative world, a state that is almost within reach. The writing is also contemplative, matching the mood of the paintings. However, what they have in common with Rzepecky is their dark side.

In “I am the Walrus or is it you?” Maggie Covell investigates the changing face of social activism with the advent of technological media— and the changes it brings to participatory projects. She discusses a public intervention “Hidden in Plain Sight” staged as part of her evolving masters’ project.

In contrast to a world packed with art that has meaning, the contemporary ‘OP art’ inspired work of Matthew Truhović takes an entirely different approach. He says that his work attempts to minimise outside distractions “in order to become absorbed in a singular sensory experience.”<sup>13</sup>



Lastly, we have a grouping of vastly different ceramics projects starting with Pam McKinlay's article on the making of "Neil Grant: Master Potter." This book, released to coincide with the survey exhibition of Grant's work was written by art historian Peter Stupples, backed with research from McKinlay and features photographs by Thomas Lord. This article is followed by an artist's page from Eva Ding a Chinese undergraduate student in ceramics. She tells of the joy of creating contemporary works in New Zealand, a freeing from the weight of the Chinese ceramic tradition. The tradition of creating multiple examples of the perfect bowl was the starting point of Liz Rowe's MFA project "The Exchange." As each bowl took one hour to make Rowe exchanged them for goods and services valued by the recipients for something worth an hour of their time. She says that "by eliminating a fixed price for the bowls, access was equal for all and not dependent on income or perceived status."<sup>14</sup>

Although not ceramics, the copper vessels of Sabin Perkins also speak of exchange and ritual. He describes his approach to life "through the metaphor of communion and spiritual identity"<sup>15</sup> which he expresses in his daily art practice. Spirituality is also a cornerstone of Wi Taepa's life and practice as a ceramic artist. Tracey-lee McNamara's article is a diary of the time Wi Taepa spent as Artist in Residence, 2021 in the Dunedin School of Art. She writes with a great deal of warmth about her experiences of his residency and the generosity he expressed to students and staff during his stay. In this article, Taepa speaks of *Waka Huia* one of his works

*Waka Huia* holds within itself all the memories of my time at Otago Polytechnic School of Art in 2021 – all of myself, all the people, students and tutors I met, all the new friends I made. It holds inside itself all that I did from the beginning to the end of my stay.<sup>16</sup>

Although many of these texts in *Scope: Art & Design 23* could be seen to connect to the underlying values of Matariki, it is evident that some projects detailed here have a more individual approach. They are conceptual, or they focus on materials and processes rather than overarching political or environmental themes. Enjoy the feast and share your copy, and please come back for seconds.

- 1 Rangi Mātāmua, "Values for Matariki Celebrations," (Matariki Advisory Committee Final Report Version 2, 2021) 4-5.  
<https://www.mbie.govt.nz/assets/values-for-matariki-celebrations-matariki-advisory-group.pdf>
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Becky Cameron, "Immersed," *Scope: Art & Design*, 23, 18.
- 4 Alysha Bailey, "My Mothers' Garden," *Scope: Art & Design*, 23, 32.
- 5 Amanda Watson, "Painting with Ōtepoti Dunedin: Artist in Residence at the Dunedin School of Art 2021" *Scope: Art & Design*, 23, 38.
- 6 Thomas Lord, "Super Sport Sunday," *Scope: Art & Design*, 23, 42.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Nilgun Salur, "The Designer's Responsibility for a Sustainable Environment, Using Savaş Çekiç as a Model" *Scope: Art & Design*, 23, 48.
- 9 Ibid, 51.
- 10 Victoria Bell and Natalie Smith, "Gift: Reflections on Journeys, Knowledge, Labour and Love," *Scope: Art & Design*, 23, 57.
- 11 Charlie Rzepecky, "The Beast Lives On," *Scope: Art & Design*, 23, 104.
- 12 Charlotte McLachlan, "Conquering Tales of Violence Through Imagery and Metaphor," *Scope: Art & Design*, 23, 109.
- 13 Matthew Trbuhović, "Arrested Movement," *Scope: Art & Design*, 23, 127..
- 14 Liz Rowe, "The exchange: Investigating Time, Labour, and Value," *Scope: Art & Design*, 23, 140.
- 15 Sabin Perkins, "Metaphors of Communion and Spiritual Identity," *Scope: Art & Design*, 23, 142.
- 16 Tracey-lee McNamara, "Uku Artist In Residence 2021," *Scope: Art & Design*, 23, 150.

**MĀMĀ****Caitlin Donnelly****INTRODUCTION**

Ko Uruao te waka.  
 Ko Ūpoko o Tahumatā te mauka.  
 Ko Kāi Tahu rātou ko Kāti Mamoe ko Pākehā ōku iwi.  
 Ko Kāti Irakehu tōku hapū.  
 Ko Tukuwaha rāua ko William Thomas ōku tupuna. I te taha tōku *Māmā*.  
 Nō Waihōpai ahua. E noho ana ahua I te Waikaka.  
 Ko Sutton rāua ko Henderson ōku mātua, engari ko Donnelly ōku mātua whāngai.  
 Tokorua āku tamariki.  
 Ko Caitlin Rose Donnelly tāku Ikoa.  
 Ko *Māmā* tāku mahi.<sup>1</sup>

First, we start with where we come from.<sup>2</sup> My pepeha connects me with my tupuna and the whenua. Kei te tika te korero i ō tatou tupuna; ka mua, ka muri. This means walking backwards into the future – the idea that we should look to the past to inform the future. This project started at the end of my Honours project, *Trace* (2015). For this article, I will walk you back through the journey that is *Māmā*, my Master's project that I worked on over six years. *Māmā* was made in response to three critical markers of my identity: Māori, wāhine, and kowhaea.<sup>3</sup>

**HE MANA TE MATAURAKA**

In 2015, I connected to my whakapapa and started engaging as Māori and, in doing so, came to terms with my previous dislocation as an adoptee and an identity of “iwi unknown.” I started *Māmā* by making trips to explore my heritage. The following statement by Areta Wilkinson helps to describe my experience of building relationships with my iwi: “Although I identify as a jeweller of Kai Tahu descent, I did not reside with my hapū or iwi in the South Island until I undertook this study journey. In the first instance, I had to acknowledge my outsider status and become part of the community with the aim of forging authentic relationships that would go beyond this project.”<sup>4</sup>

I experienced barriers when it came to claiming an identity as Māori (more so from non-Māori), to claiming an identity as a person outside the imposed mother role, and in claiming any identity outside the family farm, set within a traditional farming community. However, overcoming these obstacles and making connections grounded me in the place I had grown up, Waihōpai – the place all my bloodlines and adoptive lines trace back to – in Te Waipounamu/ the South Island.

As I visited sites and landscapes significant to my whakapapa, I felt a connection between forms in nature and moko designs from tupuna and kowhaiwhai panels. I began drawing these in my sketchbook, along with other forms familiar from my everyday life, to consider the stories they could tell and to find connections between everyday personal objects and the land. These all had a whakapapa before I even started.

Struggling with finding spare time and lack of sleep, with a second baby and shifting to another rural community – these things all became a big part of my life during this period and I took a break from study between 2016 and 2019. During that time my husband and I started a contract milking business, and I became a volunteer firefighter. I continued establishing relationships with my newfound whanau and learning tikaka, reo and whakapapa. Also, I became increasingly aware of sexism and racism around me. In exploring my identity, my work has been fuelled by my experiences. Sexism and racism are issues that have affected me personally. Some sample diary entries:

*I was helping paint murals at a kids' group. I said Waikaka for whatever reason, and a woman said, "Oh no, it is Waikacka." I said "Waikaka," she said, "no, it is waikacka." I said, "A.E.I.O.U, pretty sure that makes it Waikaka"; she again said "no, waikacka" and left.*

*He waited until my husband had gone to the toilet after the meeting to ask me, "How is your study going?" It was clear he had no interest; instead, it was a lead-in. I said "good," feeling like I had somehow permitted whatever was said next. He said, "because that is taking you off the farm." I was baffled; whoever said my place was on the farm!<sup>5</sup>*

I came back to study in 2019 and I was hōhā and felt exasperated about being dehumanised. At the same time, I was learning to stand strong in my feminist and Kai Tahu identity. Knowing my past and my genealogy led to my empowerment. I felt more freedom from the unknown floating feeling, now that I was anchored by tupuna. He mana te matauraka. The framework provided by intersectional feminism helped me to examine three personal identity markers: Māori, wāhine and kowhaea.

Intersectional feminism, based on standpoint theory, identifies how interlocking systems of power affect those most marginalised in society.<sup>6</sup> I explored colonisation from the viewpoint of my tupuna, which led me to study Kaupapa Māori theory. In a 1990 paper, Professor Graham Hingangaroa Smith set out six principles or components of Kaupapa Māori theory to counteract the colonial world view. "Hegemony is a way of thinking – it occurs when oppressed groups take on dominant group thinking and ideas uncritically and as 'common sense,' even though those ideas may in fact be contributing to forming their own oppression. It is the ultimate way to colonise a people; you have the colonised colonising themselves!"<sup>7</sup> In 1997 Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith expanded on these points. Other theorists have also contributed to the development and growth of Kaupapa Māori theory.<sup>8</sup>

Postcolonialism, like intersectional feminism, explores the interconnections formed by overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination that describe relations between the Coloniser and the Colonised, or the Other and the Self. Professor Masood Raja explains the multiple threads considered by postcolonial studies: intersectional, complex and situational.<sup>9</sup>



Figure 1. Caitlin Donnelly, *Studio wall right*, 2020.

This collage contains images of my work, sketchbook drawings from nature, documentation of a trip to meet my birth father and a crocheted woollen square as an off-take of a knitted blanket made for me by my birth mother:



Figure 2. Caitlin Donnelly, *Whakaputu* (detail), 2021, bedsheets, acrylic paint and primer; 110 x 230 x 190cm (approx.)

Feminist postcolonial writer Trinh T Minh-ha has been another crucial influence on my thinking. Trinh is a Vietnamese filmmaker; writer; literary theorist, composer and professor. She breaks down dominant language practices and insists on removing inherited categories so that hybrids and in-betweens can have more space. Her practice is cross-disciplinary, and she advocates for fluidity. In her 1989 book *Woman, Native, Other*, she critiqued language as being made by and for men. She looked at the power dynamics in her relevant fields and situations and teased them out, an approach which I found helpful in relating to my own situations.<sup>10</sup>

In an interview, Trinh claimed that intersectionality was at the centre of her book:

This arose from a strong commitment to understanding how, in relations of power, the embedded questions of gender, ethnicity, race, class, sexuality, religion and culture overlap and intertwine. This approach was already at the core of my book *Woman, Native, Other* in the early 1980s and the term is now popularised among feminists when referring to a more diverse and inclusive praxis. It's not new, but the fact that 'intersectional' has received widespread attention today could perhaps help the struggle to regain momentum among intellectuals, artists and activists alike.<sup>11</sup>

Exploring my identity within this context helped articulate my ongoing experiences as they relate to race, gender and place.

After June 2020, my works shifted away from being paintings on the wall as I explored the strengths and limitations of 'painted' scrunched bedsheets, using a performative process whereby cotton sheets were washed in diluted paint, rung out and left to dry on a line. Elastic strips torn from a fitted sheet were valued for their umbilical nature. They found their way into reflective works that referenced korowai, braids, putiputi and the Union Jack. The addition of other pieces of clothing and materials such as red-band socks and cloth nappies to the braids marked another change of direction as this korero developed.

## MĀMĀ – THE WORKS

*Rauru* is connected to the gallery floor; to the ground and symbolically to Papatāūnuku. Land, whenua, is not passive; it is gods, people and our tupuna. Therefore, it is a vital connection. *Rauru* is patterned like poi strings, as I know them, and draws lines creating a boundary separating the other works in this space. Reflecting my earlier journey, I think of this work as drawing a line in the sand. I chose three of these pieces to represent Māori, wāhine and kowhaea. The cords are wound up, strung up and pulled with tension. At the wall are figure-eight knots I learned in fire training – knotted sheets.

Ūkaipō connects with the ground and is dyed in hues of red by the 'washing in paint' process and shaped into folds in the drying process. I think of this work as a tupuna to the others, a mountain connected to whenua and also connected to womanhood. The domestic actions of horoi / laundry / making clean (soaking, scrubbing, wringing and hanging out) refer to my daily chore as a mother and female in rural Aotearoa. Clothing and sheets are intimate things connected to bodies; the



Figure 3. Caitlin Donnelly, *Māmā: Rauru*, 2021, bedsheets, cloth nappies, red-band socks, acrylic paint and primer; 160 x 170 x 510cm (approx.)





Figure 4. Caitlin Donnelly, *Māmā: Ūkaipō*, 2021, bedsheets, acrylic paint and primer, 270 x 170 x 40cm (approx.)

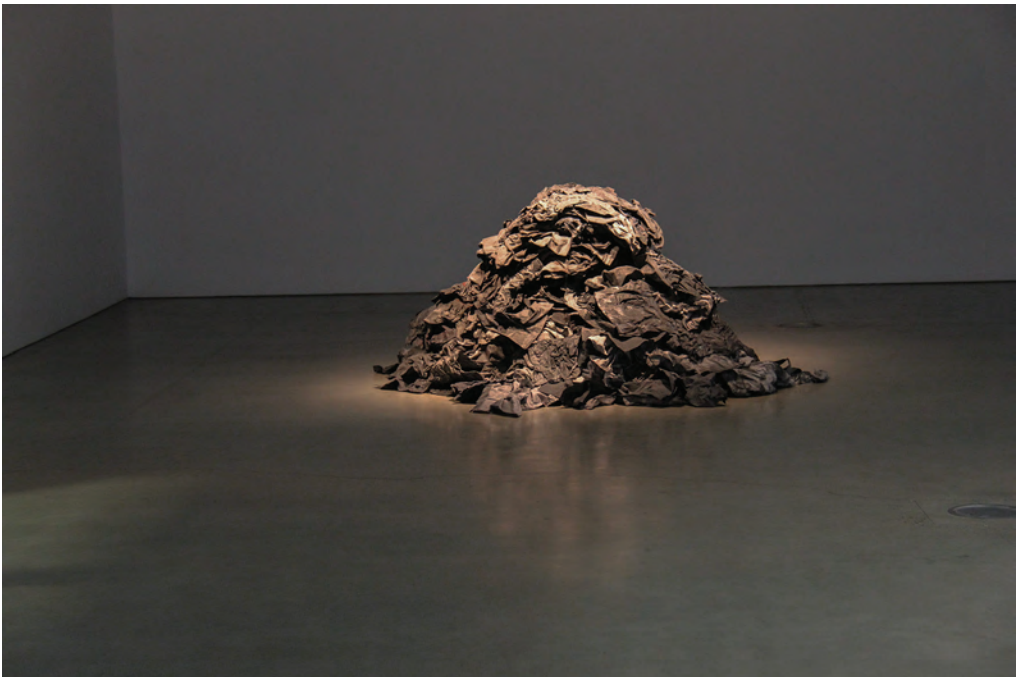


Figure 6. Caitlin Donnelly, *Māmā: Whakaputu*, 2021, bedsheets, acrylic paint and primer, 110 x 230 x 190cm (approx.)



Figure 5: Caitlin Donnelly, *Māmā: Ūkaipō* (detail), 2021, bedsheets, acrylic paint and primer, 270 x 170 x 40cm (approx.)

related exhibition expressed my reactions, thoughts and feelings of not fitting the situations I occupy. My research acknowledges historical trauma while responding to matters of domesticity. It looks backwards to look forward, to explore my identity markers of Māori, wāhine and kowhāea.

*Māmā* is an identity project where I have explored my growing understanding of being Kāi Tahu Māori, a mother, a woman in rural Aotearoa, and an adoptee. It is a trace of the invisible, repeated drudgery of the daily chore, a mark of my identity left visible.

To finish this article, I will end with the beginning, the whakatauki:

Ka mua, Ka muri  
walking backwards into the future

rawa taketake used here are all secondhand, so they required the tikaka of cleansing via wai to lift the tapu from the residue of their past lives. I followed the right tikaka after consulting with my whānau and advisors.<sup>12</sup> Whakapapa also led to studio tikaka.<sup>13</sup> Mary Kelly has told how she developed one of her works while washing at home, emphasising that our thinking and everyday lives are not separate.<sup>14</sup> Ūkaipō comes from a Māori and Mother narrative, of the body connected to whenua and the repetitive and bloody truth of wahine; the violent and frustrating reality of being kowhāea. The red hues speak of the process of birth and the visceral nature of motherhood.

Whakaputu is an accumulation of labour that is scaled to the human body. I choose to spotlight it as a toaka in a museum in order to gift it a high status. My experience of washing is repetitive and never-ending; I do so many daily labours in my various roles as Māori, wāhine and kowhāea. However, laundry speaks to me on emotive and symbolic levels because of the physicality, the wringing out.

## CONCLUSION

*Māmā* explored my identity while I was developing artworks that tangibly researched the whakapapa of three identity markers through the materiality of laundry and the colours whero and maku. The

**Caitlin Rose Donnelly** is a contemporary artist who works in various media, processes, and scales, including drawing, painting, textiles, and jewellery. Her practice is concerned with researching obstructions in identity. Her work often transforms rapidly, as her practice is process-driven. Caitlin is a mother in a small rural township, an artist, a student in Te Reo, a volunteer Firefighter, a station training coordinator, and the non-farming operator of a farming business-office requirements and HR.



Figure 7. Caitlin Donnelly. *Māmā*, 2021, Dunedin School of Art Gallery. Photograph: McKinlay.

Works included: *Rauru*, bedsheets, cloth nappies, red-band socks, acrylic paint and primer, 160 x 170 x 510cm (approx.);

*Ūkaipō*, bedsheets, acrylic paint and primer, 270 x 170 x 40cm (approx.);

*Whakaputu*, bedsheets, acrylic paint and primer, 110 x 230 x 190cm (approx.)

GLOSSARY	
Pepeha	Māori oral tradition that acknowledges where a person comes from via their ancestors and whānau (family).
Tupuna	Ancestors
Whenua	Land, placenta.
Kei te tika te korero i ō tatou tupuna.	"As is right: the words of our ancestors."
Whakataukī	A saying, proverb handed down from tupuna (ancestors). The full stories are often lost, but these fragments remain; they are a way for our tupuna to guide us and make sense of the world.
Whakapapa	Reciting whakapapa is central to all Māori institutions. Whakapapa is genealogy, lineage and descent, but more than that, whakapapa speaks of one's ancestry, a connection, a grounding, one's essence. It is who you are based on where you have been – and not you directly, but your ancestors. Whakapapa bonds you to elders, kuia and kaumātua/ tupuna and the atua (gods) to the land – not just through past and present occupation, but through the eponymous tupuna of the mauka (mountains) and whenua (land). Whakapapa is, therefore, the background and history of one's journey.
Iwi unknown	This phrase was written in a booklet made jointly by my birth family, adopted family and the adoption agency.
Iwi	Tribe.
Waihōpai	Invercargill

Moko	Traditional Māori face tattoo
Kowhaiwhai panels	Painted scrolls in meeting houses on the marae.
Wai	Water
Whanau	Family
Tikaka	The correct protocol for doing something. (Also spelled tikanga.)
Te reo	"The language," the Māori language.
Hōhā	Fed up
He mana te matauraka	"Knowledge is power" (mātauraka = mātauranga).
Korowai	Traditional cloak made from muka – the fibres of harakeke (flax).
Putiputi	Flower; woven from harakeke.
Intersectionality	An individual in a group can experience discrimination differently from the rest of the group due to their overlapping identities/groups. Thus, intersectionality is a critical structure that allows us to interpret how social and political characteristics combine to create various forms of discrimination and privilege.
"Art practice as research" theory	Art-based research. Making art is research. Theorists of this concept include Graeme Sullivan.
Korero	Words, story; speak (vb).
Horoī	Wash, washing, to wash.
Papatūānuku	Earth mother in Māori mythology.
Poi	A percussion instrument used in storytelling. The sound produced is the earth's mother's heartbeat.
Rauru	The umbilical cord or the plaiting of three cords.
Ūkaipō	The original home, life source, mother.
Whakaputu	Layer, stack; lie in a heap or store.
Toaka	Treasure. (Also spelled taonga.)
Te Po	The dark night, one of the stages of the creation story. Te Kore came first, then Te Po.
Rawa taketake	Raw materials.
Tapu	Sacred, restricted, holy
Whero	Red
Maku	Black. (Also spelled mangu.)
Māori	Ordinary, normal. The term was used to refer to all indigenous people of Aotearoa. They lived in tribal groups and were not one group prior to colonisation.
Wāhine	Woman
Kowhaea	Mother
Aotearoa	New Zealand
The Māori creation narrative	In the beginning, Ranginui (the sky father) and Papatūānuku (the earth mother) were joined together; and their children were born between them in darkness. Then, the children decided to separate their parents to allow light to come into the world. After this, the children became gods, ruling over the various elements of the natural world.

- 1 This is my pepeha. Translation: "I came from the Uruao canoe, the Ūpoko o Tahumatā ancestor and mountain. I am from Kāi Tahu, Kāti Mamoe and Pākehā tribes, and Kāti Irakehu subtribe. I descend from Tukuwaha and William Thomas, on my mother's side. I was born in Invercargill. I live in Waikaka. Sutton and Henderson are my parents; however, Donnelly are my adoptive parents. I have two children. My name is Caitlin Rose Donnelly. *Māmā* is my work [the Masters project which is the subject of this article]." Note: In the southern Māori dialect 'ng' often, but not always, gets changed to 'k' in spelling and pronunciation.
- 2 Ross Hemera, "Ko wai koe? Places that Ground You – You Need to Know the Past to Know You," paper presented at Tikaka, Culture and Creative Practice Seminar, Dunedin School of Art, Dunedin, 13 August 2015.
- 3 While wāhine and kowhaea are connected by issues affecting women, they are separated by motherhood's first-hand experience.
- 4 Areta Wilkinson, "Jewellery as Pepeha: Contemporary Jewellery Practice Informed by Māori Inquiry" (PhD diss., Massey University, 2014), 15.
- 5 Diary entries of the author.
- 6 Brittney Cooper, "Intersectionality," in *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory*, eds Lisa Disch and Mary Hawkesworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 386.
- 7 Graham Hingangaroa Smith, "Kaupapa Māori Theory: Theorizing Indigenous Transformation of Education & Schooling," paper presented at Kaupapa Māori Symposium, NZARE / AARE Joint Conference, Hyatt Hotel, Auckland, December, 2003, <https://www.aare.edu.au/data/publications/2003/pih03342.pdf>.
- 8 Professor Linda Tuhiwai Te Rina Smith is professor of indigenous education at the University of Waikato in Hamilton. She is author of many books, but her *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* is considered one of the most influential texts on Indigenous research. See also "Principles of Kaupapa Māori," *Rangahau*, <http://www.rangahau.co.nz/research-idea/27> (accessed 14 April 2021).
- 9 Masood Raja, *What is Postcolonialism? (Some Basic Ideas About Postcolonial Theory)* | *Postcolonial Literary Theory*, 25 September 2019, YouTube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c99SbGYKrGw>. Dr. Masood Raja is associate professor of post-colonial literature and theory in the English Department of the University of North Texas, the editor of *Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan Studies* and the founder of the Postcolonial Space website (<https://postcolonial.net>).
- 10 Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989).
- 11 Erika Balsom, "'There is No Such Thing as Documentary': An Interview with Trinh T. Minh-ha," *Frieze*, 1 November 2018, <https://www.frieze.com/article/there-no-such-thing-documentary-interview-trinh-t-minh-ha>.
- 12 Simon Kaan, private conversation, 17 April 2021.
- 13 The whakapapa of being horoi created the tikaka of cleansing via washing.
- 14 "The lint works as pigment and as an ephemeral reminder of daily life or, more specifically, of the never-ending rhythms of women's domestic labor," Jori Finkel, "Art Lurks in an Unlikely Place for Mary Keller: The Dryer," *New York Times*, 21 October 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/21/arts/mary-kelly-lint-art.html>.



## IMMERSED

Becky Cameron

### IMMERSED: REFLECTIONS ON AN MFA PROJECT

My final exhibition for my MFA was based on a lived engagement with the ecology of my suburban garden over a period of 18 months. Observational drawing, cyanotype and printmaking were used as a way of paying careful attention to what is here and now, and to produce multiple responses to my coexistence within a web of relationships. As I worked and drew in the garden, moving between reflecting and acting, I discovered and become part of some of the constantly evolving stories of the garden and the Anthropocene. The accumulation of individual works hung like an exploded sketchbook, suggesting multiple readings and connections. The strings left partly folded up pointed to the nature of the project as open-ended and unfinished.



Figure 1. Becky Cameron, *Immersed*, installation view, Dunedin School of Art gallery, March 2022. Photograph: Trisha Bennett.

### EVOLUTION OF THE PROJECT

But this exhibited work is not somewhere that I knew I'd end up at all when I started this project. I began this MFA part time in 2018 and wanted to address how I could make work that reflected being present and involved in my environment, engaged rather than overwhelmed or escapist in my interactions with the more-than-human world that I'm a part of and care for. With a background in printmaking and drawing, I'd made numerous works exploring ideas around how we relate to our environment and investigating different tactics to break down the division between humans and nature in my work but wasn't satisfied with my results; the making was immersive but the object produced seemed to undermine that. I saw the master's study as a time to rethink my approach.

In the first semester produced drawings as a participant in the *Art+Oceans* project, experimenting with different mapping strategies, and drawings responding to sound and wind patterns. Some works were subjective and arbitrary, while others had more “ground truthing” to them. These drawings moved away from nature as a traditional landscape view, incorporating different perspectives and ways of responding to place that I have carried on into later work.

I began working for the Department of Conservation as a seasonal ranger in Aspiring national park and started to develop an art practice that combined my work with a drawing project, producing drawings in response to my interactions and observations as I went about my daily life. I chose subjects that were interesting to me in ways deeper than just the visual, responding to things that were thought provoking, where I was wanting to learn something, and elements that were morally and ecologically complex.

The first Covid19 lockdown, in March 2020, meant that I had to leave the national park and return to Dunedin. This re-acquaintance with my house and garden prompted a reconfiguring of my Masters, with my focus shifted from the grand and distant *Nature* of the national park, to the domestic *nature* of my own suburban garden. I'd come to realise that the national park didn't offer a way to really live in the natural world: I was kept at a distance by legislation, and by the colonial ideology of humans versus the pristine wilderness, and was reliant on food and supplies being helicoptered in. The garden on the other hand seemed to offer a way of learning and experimenting with how to live in relationship with my surroundings, a microcosm of how humans might best interact with the more than human world in the Anthropocene. Gardening and art can both be seen as ways of exploring interactions and effects between humans and other things in a conscious way. Both require paying careful attention to what is happening here and now. Climate change and biodiversity loss are cultural as much as scientific events, and art can play a role in exploring and debating the current climate crisis.<sup>1</sup>



Figure 2. Shoreline mapping, 2018, ink on paper; 297x210mm.



Figure 3. A circumnavigation of Quarantine Island Kamau Taurua by kayak, 2018, ink on paper; approx. 700x500x220 mm.

Figure 4 (Below). Conservation means killing things (mice caught in the trap on my porch), 2018-9, ink on paper; approx A5.





Figure 5. Garden Snail, 2021, pencil, watercolour and embossing on paper, A4.



Figure 6. Bees on borage, 2020, ink and dip pen with watercolour, A4.

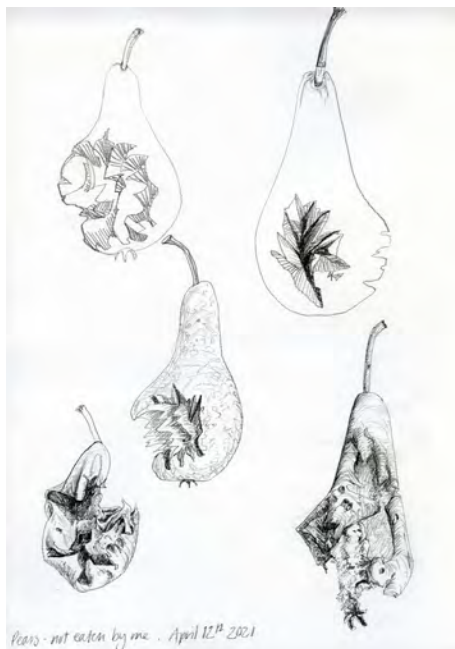


Figure 7. Pears not eaten by me, 2021, graphite on paper, A4.

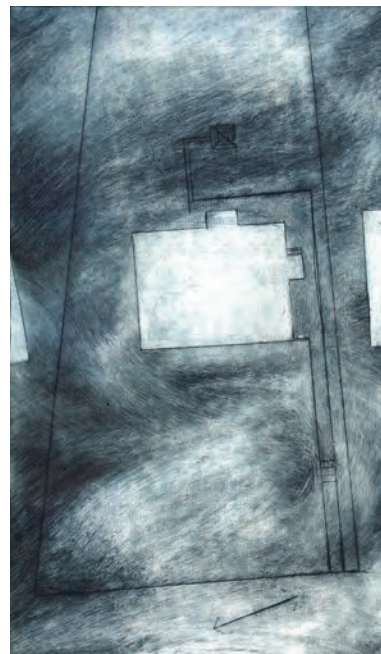


Figure 8. Windmap, Northwest, 2021, drypoint and monprint on paper, 500 x 300mm.



Figure 9. *Self-portrait: daisies and kowhai*, 2020, cyanotype on paper; 400x600mm.



Figure 10. *Self-portrait: rhizomes*, 2020, cyanotype on paper; 400x600mm.

I made drawings in response to my lived experience as I worked and recreated in my home garden. The drawings could be prompted by aesthetic pleasure; by seeking to understand something; or a sense of disquiet at what I am noticing.

I drew on a variety of drawing methods such as botanical drawing, field studies, classification, and mapping, seeing what each could offer.

Cyanotype, first used for botanical guides, was used to record plants and gardening tools, and suggest my relationships to them. Printmaking lent itself to multiples, favouring methods that produced variation within the repetition, mimicking the processes of growth and evolution, and the repetitive but constantly varied tasks of the garden.

I assumed as I accumulated drawings and prints of my garden that I would include birds and other animals as subject matter at some point but found myself reluctant. My focus instead became the plants of my garden. Perhaps they were more intriguing as they didn't fit the idea of the autonomous, discrete modern subject. Plants can be seen as multiple, shape-changing, rooted but full of life energy and drive; an embodiment of an interconnected way of being in the world.

As I go about the garden, their scents stir feelings and memories beyond my conscious control. The defences of some break and sting my skin, or their pollen irritates my lungs. Others I appreciate by taking into my mouth and eating so that their nutrients become part of my cells, influencing my health and mood.



In my reading in the New Materialisms, I was drawn to Serpil Oppermann's concept of "storied matter."<sup>2</sup> This adds to Bennett's idea of the "lively, agentic and generative"<sup>3</sup> aspects of matter by positing that

...matter is endowed with meanings and is thick with stories, manifesting as "storied matter." In other words, there are multiple stories of cosmology, geology, history, ecology, and life embodied in every form of materiality.<sup>4</sup>

These stories can be read by humans, at least partly, and told but are also part of them:

...matter's stories emerge through humans, but at the same time humans themselves emerge through 'material agencies' that leave their traces in lives as well as stories.<sup>5</sup>

My role as an artist is to be open to the interconnected and constantly evolving stories that are around me and that I am a part of in the non-human elements of my garden. I create these stories in my art works and am created by them in turn. At their best, the artworks will contain more than I put into them and have their own thingness and agency. And the artwork-viewer interaction can share and add to these garden and Anthropocene stories.

At the start of my research, I included notes on indigenous ways of thinking about and acting in the world, thinking of them as a contrast to the dominant modern Western world view. But as the project progressed, again and again there was a striking correlation between indigenous thought and recent developments in Western thought such as ecology and the new materialisms. Both see the world and all in it as interconnected, formed of and by a web of relationships. Humans are inextricably part of their environment, in a relationship of reciprocity rather than dominance. There is no need for the modernist dualities of living versus non-living, as all things can be considered to have agency or *mauri*.

## MAKING THE INDIVIDUAL PARTS INTO A WHOLE

By the end of the third semester, I had made around 150 works in response to my garden, very disparate in size, medium, and visual language. An unruly anarchive, or maybe a family album or scrap book of my garden, but not yet an exhibition.

I carried out a series of trial hangs, putting up works in grids or scattered groupings on the wall to assess the implications of these. None of the arrangements I made felt entirely right, but as I worked and thought through this process, I made several decisions as to how I wanted the work to move forward. I wanted it to all read as a whole, as a reflection of a whole loose ecology of the garden, and one with many possible readings. It also needed to be non-hierarchical, and so move away from linear or grid displays. I decided to unify it by making all works the same or similar size, by cropping or reprinting them, so that one element didn't read as more important than another. I also decided to include pretty much all the works I'd made for this same reason: all were valid responses.

A wall-based display began to seem too limited as any arrangement narrowed down the number of stories that could be told at one time. I started to think about taking the works off the wall into a more three-dimensional arrangement, and made a few scale models, experimenting with different materials and methods of hanging. Discovering draughting film solved the problem of the works on paper being one-sided; this material is translucent so images can be read from both sides, and light is let through. It can be drawn or painted onto directly, or digitally printed.

I made a scale drawing on graph paper of how I envisioned the gallery installation to take shape, and prepared linen bookbinding thread as the horizontal support, with domestic sewing thread as the vertical drops, wound onto scraps of newspaper to enable the rigging to be transported to the gallery space with minimal tangling. The pictures would be attached to the vertical threads with paper clips, in keeping with the ephemeral and domestic nature of the installation. This allowed them to be placed at different heights, so not in solely linear ways.





Figures 11 - 12. Installation of *Immersed* in the Dunedin School of Art gallery.

After the months working in an often solitary way, I really appreciated the assistance and company of friends who'd volunteered to help with for the installation of the lights and the grid of threads. Once these were in place and I started to put up works it was obvious that my carefully measured out plan wouldn't work – they needed to be grouped together more rather than evenly scattered. To get the work to function as a whole I would need to do a small area then work out from there, rather than trying to put everything up at once. I hung a small group up that had visual echoes in their theme and shape and built on from them, clustering the works around the light bulbs. For simplicity and visual appeal, I grouped works along a colour spectrum. The overall shape evolved organically in the space as I gradually added pieces.

I'd hung nearly all the art works when a horizontal line of thread pulled out of the wall, bringing the neighboring line down with it in a big tangle. I managed to untangle the vertical threads holding the artworks enough to put the main horizontal lines back up, but it wasn't possible to entirely unravel everything. I decided to leave some of this tangle, rather than cut away and re tie the threads. I realised that this was a fitting parallel to my work in the garden as well as the installation – my sporadic attempts to impose order and structure meeting randomness and chaos, and the agency of things other than myself. I might want neat rows of healthy vegetables, but what I got was also the caterpillars eating the broccoli seedlings, and the couch grass drilling through the potatoes.

There are so many potential variables in how it could be installed, with different lighting, space, or configuration, without the newspaper and empty threads. There's no one right answer to it, and I had to accept that like a garden it's never really finished. I decided in this case to leave the scraps of newsprint, as a record of the process and labour of installation, and part of the ephemera and detritus of everyday life. They reminded me of chrysalises, potential drawings that haven't been done yet. The empty threads seemed like ghosts of what's gone already from the land, such as the majestic podocarps that gave Pine Hill its name.

I'd decided to light the work from within, using hanging domestic light bulbs, the different color temperatures giving a sense of different seasons or times of day.

The work is somewhat dimly lit, suggesting autumn, end of day, or indeed end of days; but also, less pessimistically, that dusk and autumn are times of change, are liminal. And maybe that slightly melancholy feel fits with an allegory of the role of art and gardening: all that work and striving but still I hardly know anything, there are so many gaps in the relationship. This also reflects my ambiguous relationship with my garden, which is sometimes a pleasure and sustenance, but at other times feels isolating and labourious. The work cast striking shadows across the walls and floor of the gallery, extending the work beyond the limits of my small garden, and suggesting memories of past gardens.

The work had evolved considerably from a pile of flat images. It had become a sculpture, and as you move in to see one bit, you lose sight of another section, with individual pieces shifting into focus and then out again as they twist round on their threads against the lights. This helps suggest multiple stories in the work, of things learnt, enjoyed, struggled with, of triumph and failure on a minute scale. Stories of co-habitation and the everyday moral dilemmas of cabbage whites, caterpillars, and snails. It feels like an elusive, changing work, embodying an ecological perspective that views the world not as an object to be depicted but as a set of relations to be worked with. How things function in assemblages, with complex and shifting interactions, rather than as individual entities, is the key factor.

## CONCLUSION

The result functions as a metaphor for, rather than a straightforward depiction of, the processes of gardening and of art. Both are ongoing and never finished processes, with multiple possible stories and outcomes. There is an interplay of intention and chance, with multiple agents having an affect. Many repeated small actions move the work forward, without there necessarily being a clear outcome.

This is a new type of artwork for me, and it's not totally resolved, or a closed book. It's only as I've been looking back that I've seen any sort of clear progression. A lot of the time I was struggling as I felt I was repeating what I could already do, making images through the traditional mediums of drawing and printmaking, and found it hard to trust the artistic process, to be in that interplay between planning and chance, letting things evolve. But this way of working fits a need in me to search for the big picture while also being drawn to the details. It forms a way of being able to keep working away in a persistent, small-scale way that's part of my daily life; and see that accumulate into something new and interesting.



Figure 13. *Immersed*, 2022, detail of newspaper bundle.

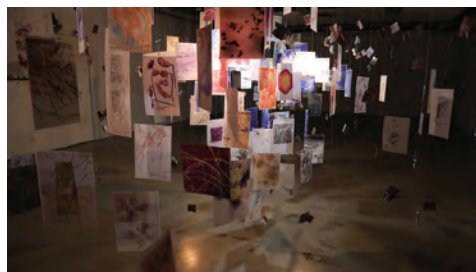


Figure 14. *Immersed*, shadows, installation view, Dunedin School of Art gallery, March 2022.



Figure 15. *Immersed*, 2022, detail of installation, Dunedin School of Art gallery, March 2022.

My art practice forms part of my reflection on my actions and interactions, and this reflection then feeds back into by art practice and my other actions. I think maybe the biggest outcome of this project for me has been a stronger grasp of this praxis. Working in this integrated way has helped me break down a binary that is often existed in my own life, of art versus being in the hills, or art versus a practical engagement with the world. Yet, in concentrating on my own separate garden, I've felt the negative effects of the individualistic way of dividing up land and of working that came with colonization. I've been in danger of having an anti-social art practice and will keep developing how working and art making and reflecting and learning can all be part of a sustainable and vital way of living for me. The activities of reflecting and drawing are enmeshed with my everyday life, overlapping with the practice of gardening. I need to remember that all are provisional, process based, inevitably subjective, and embrace this uncertainty as I carry on to future projects.

**Becky Cameron** uses drawing as her main tool to explore themes of ecology, memory and belonging, seeking to develop a sustainable practice that enmeshes art with daily life. She graduated from the Dunedin School of Art with a BVA Honours in 2013 and has just completed her MFA there.

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- 2 Serpil Oppermann, *Storied Matter* [Entry for Posthuman Glossary. Edited by Rosi Braidotti and Maria Hlavajova, London: Bloomsbury, forthcoming]. [https://www.academia.edu/23028796/STORIED\\_MATTER\\_Entry\\_for\\_Posthuman\\_Glossary\\_Edited\\_by\\_Rosi\\_Braidotti\\_and\\_Maria\\_Hlavajova\\_London\\_Bloomsbury\\_forthcoming\\_\(24/9/2021\)](https://www.academia.edu/23028796/STORIED_MATTER_Entry_for_Posthuman_Glossary_Edited_by_Rosi_Braidotti_and_Maria_Hlavajova_London_Bloomsbury_forthcoming_(24/9/2021))
- 3 Jane Bennett, Introduction to *Vibrant Matter: a political ecology of things*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010)
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## MY MOTHERS' GARDEN

Alysha Bailey

This series began with its title: *My Mothers' Garden*. Initially this related to the limited geographical nature of the project and the ako opportunity between myself and my mother-in-law. I had planned to document the plants from her garden via flatbed scanner, guided by seasonality and my mother-in-law's expert gardening knowledge. However, it became clear that each plant held the potential for a more intimate story. A story of women past, histories unacknowledged, unknown, or forgotten.<sup>1</sup> From serial killers to botanical heavyweights the images began to serve as portraits of the gardener, the plant, and the woman for which each image is titled. The project title itself became less literal and more of a universal homage.

The scanner is integral to this work because of its high resolution and the ability to position plants directly on to the glass. Deploying a contemporary enlightenment approach this methodology focused on experimentation with old technology just handled in a new way, combining scientific reason with art. Inherently, the scanner has limitations, but these are also its greatest strengths. The extreme shallow depth of field yields challenging and unforgiving results with a perspective specific to a scanner.

The glass plate plays an important role and is in fact a part of the image. Detritus, smudges, pollen, and sap all make a regular appearance, only made possible by the plants being laid directly on to a flat transparent surface.<sup>2</sup> In contrast to society's present inclination to require a quick fix of visual material, the scanner needs to take a substantive look at the object it is recording. A floral document laid upon glass, captured with a high level of digital detail, provides a unique opportunity to investigate botanical evidence and highlight photography's ability to recreate reality for evidence and argument.<sup>3</sup>

Each image in *My Mothers' Garden* is titled for the story of a woman with the intention of resurfacing the history and encouraging a contemporary dialogue. The plants provided the tool connect to these women's stories.

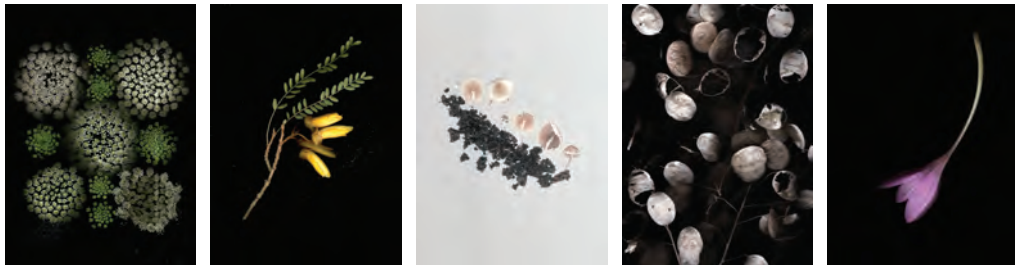




Figure 1. Alysha Bailey, *Sarah Churchill*, 2021,  
Digital ink-jet print on Epson Hot Press Bright, 1016 × 738 mm.

**SARAH CHURCHILL**  
*(False Queen Anne's Lace)*

The Duchess of Marlborough was an English courtier who became one of the most influential women of the seventeenth century. Largely through her connection to Queen Anne, she helped her husband rise into government. Eventually she fought with the Queen over political differences and was dismissed from court, but still went on to be one of the richest women in Europe.





Figure 2. Alysha Bailey, *Lucy Cranwell*, 2021.  
Digital ink-jet print on Epson Hot Press Bright, 1016 x 738 mm.

## LUCY CRANWELL

(*Kōwhai*)

A New Zealand botanist, Lucy Cranwell was New Zealand's first female curator at the Auckland Museum and the first woman to win Te Apārangi's Hector Medal. Her fieldwork, alongside Lucy Moore, was the most extensive done to date by women in New Zealand. Cranwell became an expert in pollen analysis, opening a whole new field of New Zealand's botanical past.



Figure 3. Alysha Bailey, *Beatrix Potter*, 2021,  
Digital ink-jet print on Epson Hot Press Bright, 1016 × 738 mm.

## BEATRIX POTTER

### *(Fairy Ring Mushrooms)*

While most famous for her illustrated children's books, Potter was first an accomplished scientist particularly interested in mycology. She conducted her own research and proposed a new theory on the reproduction and germination of spores. Because of strict rules excluding women from scientific research, her work was never taken seriously in her lifetime, but her research and botanical drawings have gone on to be widely regarded.





Figure 4. Alysha Bailey, *Valentina Tereshkova*, 2021,  
Digital ink-jet print on Epson Hot Press Bright, 1016 x 738 mm.

## VALENTINA TERESHKOVA

(*Lunaria annua*)

Cosmonaut Valentina Tereshkova was the first woman to enter space in 1963, two years after the first person. It would be another 20 years until a second woman went to space. While there are no physical reasons why women are less suited to space, they make up only just over 10% of all space travellers. No women have ever been to the moon.



Figure 5. Alysha Bailey, *Catherine Wilson*, 2021,  
Digital ink-jet print on Epson Hot Press Bright, 1016 × 738 mm.

## CATHERINE WILSON

The serial killer Catherine Wilson was the last woman to be publicly hanged in England in 1862. Wilson worked as a nurse, befriending her elderly patients with the goal of being written into their wills, before poisoning them with colchicum. Despite being only convicted of one murder, she was suspected of seven.

The images in the series *My Mothers' Garden* were pulled from a forty-dollar domestic printer/scanner; the type we all have stashed away at the back of a cupboard. Each scan was taken with the lid open either in a blacked-out room or with a variety of external light sources that created the variation in the backgrounds. Earlier scans had included more complex compositions, but these gave way to the singular plant images which upheld the integrity of each plant. This decision also provided each large print the space to breathe within its story.

*My Mothers' Garden* explored how plants can inspire storytelling both in their environment and beyond, acknowledging the garden as a unifying place both historically and contemporarily.<sup>4</sup> The ephemerality and fragility of plants and the perpetual evolution of the garden was a constant reminder of the vulnerability of history. By freezing the garden and each plant in time, the images function as a portrait, as a document, and as monument.

**Alysha Bailey** (<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6409-4067>) is an artist and photographer currently based in Ōtepoti Dunedin. Recently embarking upon further study, her current practice focuses on lensless photography. Bailey is a senior lecturer in digital photography and Head of Programmes for Art & Design Certificates and Diplomas at Te Maru Pūmanawa College of Creative Practice & Enterprise, Otago Polytechnic, New Zealand.

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## PAINTING WITH ŌTEPOTI DUNEDIN: ARTIST IN RESIDENCE AT THE DUNEDIN SCHOOL OF ART 2021

Amanda Watson



Figure 1. A painting being made in an area of native forest. Image courtesy of the artist.

My painting practice investigates how painting can open up unexpected ways of seeing the world, primarily by spending time in particular environments and seeing how painting materials, the place and myself as an artist can collaborate to make paintings. The way I work utilises a process of laying canvas over surfaces of the land and painting on it in a 'bunched-up' way (Figure 1), and then in the studio working into the canvas further by referencing drawings, photographs and memories of being there. In a nutshell, the paintings record my encounters with specific geographical sites, and so the thought of spending two months painting in Ōtepoti Dunedin as part of the Dunedin School of Art's Fred Staub Artist in Residence Programme truly excited me, and I wondered what might emerge from my time in the area.

French philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard (1924-98) talks about how people experience a place differently depending on their perspective – each of us will think differently about the same place and, in this way, places are unknowable.<sup>1</sup> This idea that landscape exists outside of us and our understanding of it – paired with Jane Bennett's concept of "thing power," where things have the ability to affect us<sup>2</sup> – led me to wonder how much my work might be influenced by painting in specific places in Dunedin. If "things" such as the land, trees or painting materials might have some kind of

agency in the making of paintings, then my up-close encounters with places during the residency could bear witness to a kind of 'unknowing,' and these experiences could be materialised in the paintings that I was to make over these two months.

During the residency I lived on-site and worked in a studio alongside the students, as well as engaging with the wider artistic community. During my first week I gave a public presentation situating my painting practice within a theoretical and contemporary art context, as part of the Dunedin School of Art's public seminar programme. Connecting with the students and staff in this way at the start of my residency, along with being met at the airport and the early morning powhiri, made me feel warmly welcomed in this vibrant community.

In that first week I encountered work by two significant New Zealand artists who have a connection to the area, Joanna Margaret Paul (1945-2003), and Ralph Hōtere (Te Aupōuri, 1931-2013). Small intimate paintings by Joanna Margaret Paul had been uncovered in a church in Port Chalmers for the occasion of her retrospective exhibition at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, and on my second day I travelled to see them with two new friends who kindly invited me on their morning's excursion. I was struck by the bright sunny colours coming from the paintings themselves, and the light refracting through the stained-glass windows next to them. The 14 works, painted on plaster supports and placed around the walls, reminded me of frescoes<sup>3</sup> with their chalk-like surfaces, and the intimacy of their small size compelled me to move up close to them.

Later that day in Port Chalmers we went to the Hōtere Garden Oputae situated on top of the hill overlooking the port. The first sculpture I came across was Ralph Hōtere's *Black Phoenix II* (1991), made from the wreckage of a hull of a fishing boat that had caught fire at a boat-building company's premises in Careys Bay. The charred and aged wood was imbued with character; and the light coming through the red pieces of glass reminded me of Joanna's paintings and the colourful windows we had just seen at the church. I think that my encounters with these works in situ had a subtle influence on the work that I made during my residency, particularly in terms of the aspect of light and because of their physical links to place.

My exploration of specific geographical sites in the area began with these two locations and spread out over the coming weeks. Over a weekend my husband and I spent time in the big hills overlooking the city, where unusually shaped octagonal rock formations look out over the area, and further afield to Aramoana and Waitati and back through the native forests on Mt Cargill. Closer to home, I explored green spaces within walking distance of my house, specifically in the Town Belt and the Dunedin Botanic Garden. I also tagged along with students and staff to see Esther Bosshard's exhibition at the RDS Gallery – where her luscious paintings filled the gallery with that familiar and comforting aroma of freshly made oil paintings – and Joe L'Estrange's beautifully delicate paintings of flowers and neighbourhoods at the Brett McDowell Gallery. I enjoyed the small scale of these paintings and the way the artists had responded to localities in the area.



Figures 2-4. A drawing made on-site.  
Image courtesy of the artist.



## CARVING OUT FAMILIAR PATHWAYS

As I began to explore locations closer to home, I took long walks to familiarise myself with the area. On one of these days I gravitated towards Māori Hill and came across a narrow tract of native forest near Newington Avenue. The mixture of forest and city, with the sounds of birds singing and vehicles going up and down the roads nearby, was somehow comforting. Along with 'wrapping' the land, I took photographs and moving-image records and made sketches to record my experience of being there. Back in the studio I developed drawings using paper and ink, paying attention to the edges and corners of the photographs that I was working from, and making other decisions from my memory of being there.



Figure 5-6. A reference photograph taken during my garden walks.  
Image courtesy of the artist.

After two weeks of my stay in Dunedin, New Zealand entered a 'Covid-19 lockdown' and the pandemic-related restrictions meant that I did not venture too far from home. My usual way of working in tracts of uncultivated land on large canvases was disrupted and reinvented as I began to paint on a small scale in nearby gardens. As part of my strategy to counter the isolation I began a daily walk to the Dunedin Botanic Garden, a cultivated space that has its origins in colonial creativity.<sup>4</sup> This daily walk became integral to the work that I was about to make and was made even more enjoyable when my daughter, who was studying in Dunedin, would join me.

The places I walked through became familiar and I began to expect the twists and turns, the sounds and the visual signposts of the trees and plants. I was drawn to the rough pathways through native bush, and usually made it to the top of the Garden, surrounded by brightly coloured rhododendrons and cherry blossoms which appeared towards the middle of September. At particular places I would take out small pieces of prepared watercolour card that fitted nicely into my workbook and make drawings with ink pens and water (Figures 2, 3 and 4).

This act of repetition materialised in my work as I painted in my studio every afternoon from consolidated memories of these places, aided by drawings and photographs (Figures 5 and 6). These afternoons became a time of fleshing out my encounters with these places, and as I painted I retraced memories of my walks and performed repeated lines and shapes in the work, overlaying drawing marks with wrapping marks (Figure 7). I would make work inside and outside the studio, utilising the garden by the front door for making wrappings.



Figure 7. *At the Art House and walking in the gardens, Ōtepoti Dunedin*,  
by Amanda Watson,  
ink on canvas, 910x830mm. Image courtesy of the artist.



Figure 8. *Walking through the trees, Ōtepoti Dunedin*,  
by Amanda Watson,  
ink on canvas, 380x320mm. Image courtesy of the artist.



Figure 9. *At the Art House and walking in the gardens, Ōtepoti Dunedin 2*,  
by Amanda Watson,  
ink on canvas, 510x405mm. Image courtesy of the artist.



Figure 10. *Early mornings in the gardens, Ōtepoti Dunedin 4*,  
by Amanda Watson,  
ink on canvas, 500x440mm. Image courtesy of the artist.





Figure 11. [Detail] *At the Art House and walking in the gardens after the rain, Ōtepoti Dunedin III*, by Amanda Watson, ink on canvas, 610x480mm. Image courtesy of the artist.



Figure 12. *Early mornings in the gardens, Ōtepoti Dunedin 3*, by Amanda Watson, ink on canvas, 500x440mm. Image courtesy of the artist.

I had been thinking about how to introduce colour to my work for some months and it seemed timely to start delving into this area of investigation, perhaps influenced by walking among the vibrant colours in the Botanic Garden and seeing the work of Joanna Margaret Paul. Perhaps also because of the many rich sunrises I experienced at the house – on one particular morning I happened to be up early and caught sight of a sky luminous with pink light.

The black ink that I typically use for this process has a wonderfully crisp finish to it, and I began to experiment with how this could be achieved with coloured ink. I made a multitude of test pieces with differing methods of application. The backs and edges of these tests became of interest to me as much as the faces as the ink soaked through and gathered on the edges. I used canvas and various types of card, inks and additives and pushed the boundaries with their application, and along with the myriad of duds there were some happy outcomes.

Although I did not achieve the consistency of colour that I was looking for, the process of experimentation allowed me to understand the nature of these inks and supports and how they could work together, and I began to investigate this result in multiple small-scale works (Figures 8, 9 and 10). Even though the paintings were small, they were evocative of my expansive walks in the gardens and were somehow intimate and close at the same time, almost like taking those brief glances up as you walk along a pathway. Some of the colours seemed to be like dimming evening light appearing through branches and leaves, or flashes of sunlight moving across coloured leaves.

The house became lined with paintings after many days and nights of working, and I was able to see them all together as I walked from room to room. By the fourth week of the residency, after hours of walking, looking and painting, I began to see how all these investigations could work together to tell a story about my encounters with these places. The methods of soaking canvases with colour, wrapping canvases, walking in the gardens, and the act of drawing formed the working process and functioned to bring together a body of work.

The paintings maintained their sculptural form even when installed on the wall, as the canvases remembered the creases and contours from when they were 'wrapped' over surfaces (Figure 11). This was mostly due to the small size and light weight of the canvas, that did not engage much of a gravitational pull downwards – a quality that the larger canvases I usually make struggle with. I liked the way this allowed for the edges and backs of the canvas to be somewhat visible and become part of the work for people to view.

## A BROAD ECOLOGICAL ASSEMBLAGE

If I think about my time painting in Ōtepoti in the context of new materialist theory, I could say that the paintings all carry a kind of whispered trace of the interactions between the land, the painting process and myself. Jane Bennett's way of thinking about how the interactions between things can occur to create new understandings,<sup>5</sup> and Donna Haraway's concept of "borderlands" as places where the push and pull of knowledge occur and new connections arise,<sup>6</sup> make sense of my process of painting and experience of the land. These two concepts are underpinned by Bruno Latour's "actor-network" theory, where he suggests that everything exists in networks of relationships.<sup>7</sup> He uses the term "actant" to describe both human and non-human agents or "things" involved in these relationships, and suggests that the shifting and changing bonding between actants is in constant flux, without external forces making them into something, and in this way the network organises itself.

Instead of focusing on painting pictorial scenes, I have worked with the land and the studio environment to create the paintings, letting the unpredictable take place on the canvas. This approach to painting – where I view myself as one of the actants involved, rather than the only one – frees the painting process from accepted ideas about places, as it facilitates the kind of borderland described by Haraway and brings my attention to the vitality that may be occurring between things there. I hope that this approach to painting has reduced my agency as artist slightly and increased the agency of the places themselves and the painting materials, with a view to seeing myself as part of the ensemble or of a broader ecological assemblage. It was in my encounters of these places in Ōtepoti as I painted that surprising understandings of these geographies occurred and were made visible in my paintings.

I also enjoy Lauren Greyson's<sup>8</sup> rather positive perspective about looking at the present moment, or at the relationships that exist *now*, in order to help with finding solutions for future problems. In a similar way to Bennett<sup>9</sup> and Haraway,<sup>10</sup> she talks about "being attuned" or "recognising" things occurring between things. It is in this context that I like to think of my painting interactions with Dunedin gardens as something that might be opening up an opportunity to bring solutions in some small way in the future. I wonder if there are things that were subliminally "recognised" in the paintings as they were occurring that are now recorded in the finished works, things that perhaps were outside of my cognitive perception?

## UNDERSTANDINGS OF ŌTEPOTI DUNEDIN

I have experienced Ōtepoti Dunedin in a close and local way, on foot in the geographical vicinity of the Dunedin School of Art, and in relative isolation, and I am in wonder of it.

During this time of investigating local environments, I have encountered cultivated spaces in local gardens in repetitive and meditative ways. I have witnessed a gradual unfolding of springtime in the colours and flowers on my walks, and these colours found their way into my paintings in bright blues, pinks and yellows. These daily walks added to my understanding of the area as I connected with the pathways I explored in a physically present manner. In the studio, I was able to outwork these observations through drawing and painting my experience and memory of these walks.

Because it was a bit colder than I was used to, I tended to keep my walks to between one and two hours, which is shorter than my usual working timeframe, and this influenced the types of marks I made, the support choice and the process of drawing. The marks became fluid and quick as I kept my drawing times short in order



Figure 13. *Early mornings in the gardens, Ōtepoti Dunedin 2*,  
by Amanda Watson,  
ink on canvas, 500x440mm.  
Image courtesy of the artist.



Figure 14. *Light flickering through foliage and walking in the gardens, Ōtepoti Dunedin 1*,  
by Amanda Watson,  
ink on canvas, 950x785mm.  
Image courtesy of the artist.

to keep warm, and in order to preserve energy as I stood while drawing.<sup>11</sup> I preferred small-sized, heavy card that could fit into my workbook to carry it there and back, and gravitated towards pen and ink because they were small and light and I could easily walk with them. These media accommodated themselves to rapid gestural work, and the drawings had a lovely sense of immediacy which I attempted to pick up in the paintings.

Working in local gardens was a new direction for me, as previously my practice had focused on off-the-grid locations. Because these gardens were just a short distance from my studio and easily accessible, I was able to return to them often and enjoy a high level of engagement with them, and this contributed to the large number of small-scale paintings that I produced. The sculptural paintings varied in size including five unstretched paintings (Figures 14 and 15) and five smaller sculptural paintings (Figures 10, 11, 12 and 13). There were also 25 small drawings made with ink pen and ink wash (Figures 2, 3 and 4), and eight small unstretched paintings (Figure 8) made with ink on gesso on canvas. As a result of the two months



Figure 15. *Light flickering through foliage and walking in the gardens, Ōtepoti Dunedin 3*,  
by Amanda Watson,  
ink on canvas, 1040x950mm.  
Image courtesy of the artist.

set aside for the residency, with no other distractions, I was able to develop the work on a daily basis with a lot of thought and time. This contributed to a sense of flow and connection among the work.

What Lyotard,<sup>12</sup> Haraway,<sup>13</sup> Bennett<sup>14</sup> and Latour<sup>15</sup> all point toward in their writing is the idea that the world contains more than the eye can see, and perhaps the time I spent painting in Dunedin has let the places I explored act as a creative protagonist in my work rather than merely being objects of observation, and perhaps this approach has given voice to some previously unseen things.

During the residency, I have enjoyed painting exchanges with Dunedin that were abundant and productive, where the gestural mark and the painting process recaptured a sense of directness to reveal my encounters with the land. I hope that these paintings give voice to the flourishing and life that these geographies bear witness to, and that they are enjoyed.

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- 1 Jean-Francois Lyotard, "Scapeland," in *The Lyotard Reader*, ed. Andrew Benjamin (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).
- 2 Jane Bennett, "The Force of Things," in her *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC & London: Duke University Press, 2010), 1-19.
- 3 Fresco painting is a mural-making technique where pigment is pressed into wet plaster; it was used widely during the Italian Renaissance.
- 4 The native forest near Māori Hill was another one of these spaces. While in Dunedin I endeavoured to locate history and stories about these areas from a te ao Māori perspective, but found such material difficult to source. Hopefully in the future these doors might open to me.
- 5 Bennett, "Force of Things."
- 6 Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," in her *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2016).
- 7 Bruno Latour, "On Actor-network Theory. A Few Clarifications, Plus More Than a Few Complications," *Philosophical Literary Journal Logos*, 27:1 (2017), 173-97.
- 8 Lauren Greyson, *Vital Reenchantments: Biophilia, Gaia, Cosmos, and the Affectively Ecological* (Earth, Milky Way: Punctum Books, 2019).
- 9 Bennett, "Force of Things."
- 10 Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto."
- 11 The ground was often wet so I would avoid sitting down. However, I found that drawing while standing was a tiring way to work for long anything longer than 30 minutes at a time.
- 12 Lyotard, "Scapeland."
- 13 Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto."
- 14 Bennett, "Force of Things."
- 15 Latour, "Actor-network Theory."



## SUPER SPORT SUNDAY

Thomas Lord

In 2004, TV3 in New Zealand was running a segment on the Sunday news programme called 'Super Sports Sunday'. Double the length of a weeknight segment, it nearly filled half of the hour-long news with the latest from the world of sport. At the same time, this phrase -*Super Sport Sunday*- was appropriated by Dunedin/Ōtepoti youths as a text message code, for a cannabis inspired day walk. These were often formative outings for many young Ōtepoti locals who participated in these rituals, often leaving with a different perspective on place, upbringing, privilege, and a transformed relationship with the world. In 2020, with the New Zealand cannabis referendum taking place, I was offered an exhibition slot at the Huw Davies Gallery in Canberra. Australian Capital Territory (ACT) had recently decriminalized Cannabis, so I decided to make a new body of work by visiting some of the locations where these rites of passages had taken place or are still taking place.



Figure 1. Thomas Lord, *Mowed lawn at Evansdale Glen*, 2020, hand printed silver gelatin photograph, 82 x 66.1 cm.

I aimed to make photographic images to gaze into with little to no interpretive control, images which allowed the viewer to be free to their own devices while looking long and hard into these spaces. To provide these “long looks”<sup>1</sup> into locations of contemplation, I used a large format film camera. This process, with its inbuilt limitations require the photographer to slow down. These limitations include the need for the camera to be on a tripod, a timely focussing process and composing the projected image upside down and in reverse as it appears on the ground glass, all of which allowed me to be more present in the landscape as I performed these meditative tasks. When I was ready to release the shutter, often for exposures between 30 seconds to 20 minutes, I was not forced to hide behind the back of the camera and this allowed me to roam freely, stand and sit alongside the camera in conversation with the surroundings as the image was being made. I first travelled to Evansdale Glen, a beautiful scenic reserve often bypassed, as access is off State Highway 1 and the formidable Kirimoko Hill. While I looked for a place to set up my camera, birdsong was interrupted by the engine brakes of trucks making the steep descent nearby, and although I was by myself, the reserve had been mowed as if an important game of cricket is about to take place. My composition is of the mowed lawns leading up to a ruin of old reservoir, shadowed by the native bush behind it. Taken in a hurry, my thoughts were not in the present but leading to all the other locations on my list.

As I returned to my car, I double checked all the equipment and realised that my loupe was missing. The loupe is a simple but important magnification device that is used for focussing a large format camera. I followed my steps back to where the camera had been set up to find no trace of the missing magnifying glass. The sun was intense and directly above me at this point. I started catastrophising worst case scenarios of burning down the forest I had come to observe. I spent another hour or so, kicking through lawn clippings until I was drawn to an iridescent kereru feather. The purple and greens of the feather pulled me out of the mental funk that had taken over and I was forced to sit for a while. After several deep breaths, I spotted the loupe within arm’s reach of where the feather had been found. A timely reminder to slow things down and that this kind of photography requires patience, as the images are received not taken. Unlike the methods used in snapshot photography, where a decisive moment is taken quickly and often without consent from the subject, this project required a slow and unspoken agreement with the location. The slower exposure times evade the opportunity to take something from the moment but rather allow the image time to make itself.

This incident forced me to set some new parameters for the project:

1. Visit only one location a day
2. Spend at least two hours at a location
3. It’s ok to not make an image on a visit
4. Enjoy being there and try not to think too much

This new framework permitted the work to flow easily and progress with each excursion. Putting aside pre-existing ideas, the lens focussed on liminal spaces and details along the paths. I used a 210mm lens which is a slightly narrower angle of view of the human eye when mounted on a 4x5 camera. A focal length which allowed me to close-in-on a space, but leave enough room, to reveal the stage for where an activity had taken place.

The project began to change at a leisurely pace as evidence of ruins, non-native weeds growing within native forest remnant, wire fences prohibiting entrance into pine plantations, started to speak of something other than my initial project plan.

One photograph that made the final edit *Tōtara roots overlooking the Pacific Ocean* initially caught my eye as the exposed roots of a Tōtara reminded me of an ideal seat where visitors may rest while ascending the steep sand dune. During the making of this image, I thought of the 1879 painting *Sandfly Bay* from Nicholas Chevalier; a painting showing the location of the photograph and depicting endemic bush, which in some cases make their way down to the coast. This brought on a sense of anemoia,<sup>2</sup> nostalgia for a past I had never experienced, while in the presence of a lone figure acting as a natural monument within an empty dune.



Figure 2. Thomas Lord, *Tōtara roots overlooking the Pacific Ocean*, 2020, hand printed silver gelatin photograph, 82 x 66.1 cm.

The Canberra exhibition space is a rectangular room of 7.2m x 2.8m. Wanting to print the images at least 80cm wide, forced me to cut my initial edit from 18 to 12 to 9 images. This was a challenging task for me which required some advice from peers. Having arrived at 9, I decided to curate the show as a map of Dunedin Harbour and the Otago Peninsula, the floor space acting as the harbour as you walk around the exhibition. I left enough space between images to spend time at each location also leaving the small entrance wall blank while exiting the gallery into another exhibition.

For this exhibition I decided to collaborate with New South Wales based master darkroom printer Sandra Barnard of Sandyprints. I first witnessed her darkroom wizardry in 2020 at Harry Culy's show, *Mirror City* at the Jhana Millers Gallery in Wellington. I was impressed by her printing and welcomed the idea of the prints travelling interstate rather than internationally to meet the gallery's deadline. Although I had a desired look in mind, it was through Sandra's eye and multiple test prints that the final works started to come to life. Fibre based prints need time to dry and time to be properly pressed. Unfortunately, a combination of high humidity and mass flooding, created a whole new meaning to wet printing process and pushed the deadline to the limit. The gallery team did a fantastic job with installation, keeping me in the loop at every stage of the hang. Due to travel restrictions, I was unable to attend the month-long show but enjoyed reading reviews and people's feedback online.

A recurring comment was that the work was "mysterious,"<sup>3</sup> with guests left wanting more information about the spaces they had spent time gazing into.





Figure 3. Thomas Lord, *Pūrākaunui pine forest*, 2020, hand printed silver gelatin photograph, 82 x 66.1 cm.

Shortly after the Canberra show *Pūrākaunui pine forest*, was selected to be part of the Dunedin School of Art photography alumni show, *A little more Magenta*, and was the first showing of any of this work in New Zealand. The image chosen had been made while walking along a beach track only to stop when I heard frogs in the distance. During camera set up a shaft of light illuminated the wire fence in the foreground and isolated individual trees within the forest.<sup>4</sup> Needles from the pine plantation accumulated in a haystack like formation and the light lasted until I packed down. The calling of frogs was replaced by the aggressive barking of dogs on the back of a ute as it half-heartedly slowed down to pass me. I embrace these serendipitous moments when I work, as the mood of a location plays a significant role in my decision making. Doors are always opening and closing as to when it is a good time to for an image to be made, but I generally rely on an environmental factor that forces me to stop, as evident with the frogs as an opening and dogs as a closing in *Pūrākaunui pine forest*.

In another collaboration, I worked with Silvi Glattauer from The Baldessin Press and Studio in Victoria to make solar plates from my exhibition images. Solar plates are used with traditional etching techniques to produce a photo intaglio print. As a practicing artist, Silvi's work is concerned with her love for nature and a deep concern for the environment. It was a comfortable collaboration as these themes run through my work and within this series also. Collaboration is important to me as it offers the work a chance to receive additional expertise and a fresh perspective after months of being absorbed within the process and beginning to settle for what my ideal print should be.



Figure 4. Thomas Lord, *Map of Muaupoko*, 2022, test photogravure print.

Currently, I am in the process of using these plates to hand print an extended catalogue using the photopolymer photogravure process. Unlike the darkroom prints these are A5 which constitutes a very small enlargement from the 4x5 negative. A size which provides maximum detail at a smaller scale, similar to a childhood pastime of drawing on a balloon only to pop it and discover your original drawing shrunk down to a size which would make drawing at that detail, on that surface impossible. In the hand printed catalogue, I have included three additional works from one of the earlier edits and will sequence the images differently from the installation in Canberra.

I have continued to use the methodologies explored in Super Sport Sunday beyond this project. I've found myself returning to the locations from this series every weekend which has led to a new body of work of that makes up some of the research toward my MFA. I now find myself focusing on the textures and the hidden details, not the stages of Super Sports Sunday. While patiently waiting and responding to intuition, I seek to uncover and understand the allure of these, sometimes mysterious, places of contemplation.



Figure 5. Test printing at The DSA P Lab. Photograph: Lynn Taylor.

**Thomas Lord** is a lecturer in the photography studio at the Dunedin School of Art. As well as photography, Thomas has held exhibitions in painting where nostalgia, ecology and the concept of home forms a common thread between the two media.

- 1 Michael Collins, 'The long look,' Tate Research Publication, 2002, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/bernd-becher-and-hilla-becher-718/long-look>, accessed 2 June 2022.
- 2 The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows. March 31, 2022. <https://www.dictionaryofobscuresorrows.com/post/105778238455/anemoia-n-nostalgia-for-a-time-youve-never>
- 3 Building Blocks, Super Sport Sunday and Altering the Edges are on at PhotoAccess. March 22, 2022 <https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/7206185/exploring-landscape-through-different-media/>
- 4 Rachel Allan, Mark Bolland. A little more magenta. Dunedin. MRT Press. 2021
- 5 Silvi Glattauer. March 22, 2022. <https://www.silvi.com.au/about-silvi-glattauer>

## THE DESIGNER'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT, USING SAVAŞ ÇEKİÇ AS A MODEL

Nilgun Salur

*They always say time changes things,  
but you actually have to change them yourself.*

Andy Warhol<sup>1</sup>

When we consider that a society is a living organism in the sociological sense, the graphic designer monitors the process within the system, utilises its details, and solves problems. The message that the designer wants to give society in terms of sustainability and environmental sensitivity is intended to reach the target audience through the medium of design. In line with today's changing needs, the designer contributes to a sustainable lifestyle through their contemporary and creative attitude. The artist leads social change in terms of environmental awareness. As Warhol put it, "They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself."

We all owe an immeasurable debt to the planet we live on and have individual responsibilities to it. Graphic designers need to determine their place in the system as problem-solving creators and take their share of this responsibility by taking up an ethical stance when dealing with employers and customers.

### SAVAŞ ÇEKİÇ

Savaş Çekiç was born in Turkey in 1960. He graduated from the Department of Graphic Design in the Faculty of Fine Arts at Mimar Sinan University in 1984. A professional graphic designer and illustrator, Çekiç works from his own studio, Savaş Çekiç Design, established in 1987, and specialises in packaging, corporate identity, publishing, and book design and illustration as well as posters, brochures, catalogues, annual reports, calendars and prospectuses. He is the owner and art director of the magazine *No Design*, specialising in the field of social design. He acted as a design consultant for the Theatres of Greater Metropolitan Istanbul, being responsible for the design of all the theatres' visual materials between 1995 and 1997. He served as a member of the board of directors of the Turkish Association of Graphic Designers from 1996 to 1997. He has been an instructor in design at the Department of Graphic Arts in the School of Fine Arts at Marmara University since 1997.

Since 2009, Çekiç has been in charge of design consultancy for the Bakırköy Municipal Theatres in Istanbul and is responsible for the design of their visual materials. Çekiç's work has been represented in major museums such as the Lahti Museum, the Ogaki Museum, the Dansk Plakat Museum and the Zurich Poster Museum. His poster designs have been shown in



Figure 1. Savaş Çekiç,  
artist photo.

<http://savascelikdesign.com/biyografi>.

many solo and group exhibitions in Turkey and also in biennials and triennials worldwide. His work has won him many national and international awards and he has been published in renowned graphic design magazines including *Graphis*, *Novum* and *Grafik Tasarım-Turkey*. In 2010, he acted as curator and director of the 1st Marmara University International Invitational Poster Biennial.<sup>2</sup>

The most significant feature of Savaş Çekiç's productions is the direct reflection of his conception of the world and his thoughts about events in his work. Even his political commitments may be discerned in his designs. Posters with political and social themes, often reflecting his own political preferences, hold an important place among his designs (Figures 2-7).

## THE INTERVIEW

I was privileged to interview Çekiç about sustainability, environmental awareness and design.

**N. Salur:** What are your thoughts on design and ecodesign for a sustainable life?

**S. Çekiç:** As a priority, we need to produce designs that are suitable for the existing ecological system, do not threaten life and meet human needs in harmony with nature; design for sustainable living should be the aim. This is an inevitable fact at the point we have reached. If we do not pay enough attention to this situation, biological life on earth will disappear at an irreversible speed. The balance of nature is deteriorating rapidly. Taking account of climate change alone, a small increase of two degrees in average temperatures will be enough to upset the balance of life on our planet. We are faced with serious chaos. Even this situation does not seem to be dire enough for human beings to stop their insatiable greed for production and consumption.

While this is the case, of course, good design becomes increasingly important. Maybe it is better not to design, to be content with existing designs. At this point, it is necessary to make the correct diagnosis. The main source of all these problems is the endless gluttony of capitalism. Mankind is about to succumb to the system it has created.

Design is one of the main building blocks of this system. Designers now have to choose a side. They will either be on the side of the System or biological life. In my opinion, if a designer chooses in favour of biological life, he must quickly move away from the system. There is no other option.

**N. Salur:** In the process of a graphic design from brief to delivery, what is the designer's role in environmentally responsible design?

**S. Çekiç:** No design can be environment friendly; one can only do relatively less damage. Unfortunately, we cannot produce any design without exploiting the world's limited resources. A design can be produced in the name of imagination, but when it comes to execution, finite resources are required. Of course, if the designer is environmentally aware, he would absolutely plump for the least polluting option. But even this choice cannot save him from guilt.

**N. Salur:** How do you evaluate the attitudes of companies employing graphic designers in our country (Turkey) towards the environment? Do you think that companies have reached a sufficient level of awareness of the concept of a sustainable environment?

**S. Çekiç:** As a result of globalisation and brutal capitalism, all local firms in our country have either been amalgamated or cooperate with existing global firms. Observe how sensitive companies in America or Europe are on the issue of sustainability – companies in our country are equally responsive. They all seem to be very sensitive, but it's just for show. Sincere sensitivity on this issue would result in an immediate halt to existing production and starting to produce goods only to meet the real needs of human beings. Such a company does not exist, either in our country or in other countries.

**N. Salur:** What is proportion of graphic design in Turkey reflects approaches such as “environmentally sensitive design” and “sustainable design,” and is this sufficient? Do you think such work is effective in raising awareness? Do you think that this design approach can be realistically applied within the capitalist system?

**S. Çekiç:** When we look at the role of the designer, many productions are made in the name of environmental sensitivity. But not all of these are socially focused – rather they reflect intellectual activity. It is a phenomenon that does not go beyond the Facebook project, where the producer shows off his creativity and expands his portfolio. It's not realistic at all. Unfortunately, when such activities fail to take on flesh and bones, they cannot go beyond showing off.

There is no real demand for action. Nobody cares about the state of our planet; life goes on, our bad habits continue. No one intends giving up their existing living standards. I no longer have faith the possibility of change in this area.

**N. Salur:** From the consumer's point of view, do you think this type of design will influence consumer choice? In other words, will the consumer turn to these types of products on the supposition that they will not harm nature?

**S. Çekiç:** There is no demand from consumers for this. Would the world look like this if there were consumers who made conscious choices? Capitalism could not ignore the demands of the consumer and naturally would have to be more sensitive on this issue – but producers are not faced with such demands.

**N. Salur:** What is the responsibility of the graphic designer to prevent damage to the environment and reduce negative impacts on a world which is rapidly changing and rapidly depleting natural resources?

**S. Çekiç:** I am speaking for all design disciplines when I say that we should stop designing. At the very least we should try to be personally conscious consumers. In general, we have to spread effective propaganda in order to develop this conscious consumer profile.

**N. Salur:** Do you think that the campaigns that seek to raise awareness of environmental sensitivity in our country are achieving their goals with respect to their target audiences?

**S. Çekiç:** There are no such activities. Those that exist are total eyewash.

**N. Salur:** Considering graphic designers, in addition to their aesthetic concerns, how should they use their materials in the service of environmentally friendly design?

**S. Çekiç:** The least polluting materials should be chosen. Go for reclaimed materials whenever possible and choose the cheapest design. Aim to benefit from the power of design and creativity, not physical materials. It is possible to benefit from all the possibilities offered by nature without reducing the quality of life.<sup>3</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Today, the damage caused by human beings to the environment and the destructive consequences of this damage have underlined the need for precautionary action in many areas. In today's world, where industrial production is occurring at an accelerating pace, many industries are producing 'waste mountains' in both cities and rural areas. Disposal of household waste without separation and recycling is a leading problem in developing societies. Much of the work undertaken by voluntary organisations concerned about environmental degradation and the future of the planet has failed to achieve its purpose. As in many areas, the level of awareness shown by societies around the globe on environmental issues leaves much to be desired, again leading to failure.





Figure 2. Savaş Çekiç,  
poster, 2017.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CXISo17gmF>.



Figure 3. Savaş Çekiç,  
poster, 2017.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CYbZtgEAYhe>.



Figure 4. Savaş Çekiç,  
*My White Body is  
a Dark Stain – Thanks to You*, 2010.  
[http://savasekicdesign.com/portfolio/  
my-white-body-is-a-dark-stain-thanks-to-you](http://savasekicdesign.com/portfolio/my-white-body-is-a-dark-stain-thanks-to-you).



Figure 5. Savaş Çekiç,  
*Isin-ma!, War-ming!*, 2008.

A series of posters designed to draw  
attention to global warming.  
<http://savasekicdesign.com/portfolio/isin-ma>,



Figure 6. Savaş Çekiç,  
*Isin-ma!, War-ming!*, 2008.

A series of posters designed to draw  
attention to global warming.  
<http://savasekicdesign.com/portfolio/isin-ma>,



Figure 7. Savaş Çekiç,  
*Isin-ma!, War-ming!*, 2008.

A series of posters designed to draw  
attention to global warming.  
<http://savasekicdesign.com/portfolio/isin-ma>,

Non-governmental organisations such as Greenpeace and WWF are trying to attract attention to the dire state of the planet by protesting about numerous environmental issues. The main problem is that their activism is failing to reach all segments of society and the solutions they offer are sidelined due to political and economic conflicts of interest. These and other movements advocating for the future of the planet should be supported and the level of social awareness raised across the board so that each individual becomes an activist for environmental sensitivity.

As Çekiç notes, it is possible to benefit from all the possibilities offered by nature without reducing our quality of life. However; this will only happen if sustainability and recycling are included in all areas of life. Beginning at the highest levels, all sectors should aim to follow serious environmental policies, striving not to overload the agreed sustainability framework in all production stages. Only in this way can a livable environment be left for future generations to enjoy.

Today, as natural resources are rapidly running out, and in concert with global social economic and cultural changes, the graphic designer can play an important role in preventing damage to the environment, in sustaining the planet and reducing our negative impacts on it, thus creating a sustainable environment. To further these goals, industry and educational institutions should come up with projects that will create environmental awareness and keep it alive. As Victor Papanek advocates, environmental awareness can be created in society by means of such projects.<sup>4</sup> The poster series designed by Çekiç in 2017 draws attention to the damage caused by microplastics that threaten all living organisms (Figures 2-3).

Producers who have adopted environmental awareness and sustainability as leading principles work to ensure that their products are environmentally friendly, and frequently use text with environmental themes in their products. It is the graphic designer who is charged with presenting and introducing the product to the consumer. Thus the graphic designer should raise the consumer's environmental awareness by producing creative ideas, as well as offering manufacturers ideas that enhance company policies on sustainability. In terms of sustainability, producing without causing environmental degradation should be the primary goal of designers.

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1 [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/andy\\_warhol\\_109768](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/andy_warhol_109768) (accessed 30 May 2022).

2 "Biyografi," *Savaş Çekiç Design Studio*, <http://savascekicdesign.com/biyografi> (accessed 30 May, 2022).

3 Nilgün Salur, "Graphic Design in Terms of Sustainability and Recycling" (PhD thesis, Plastic Arts Department, Kocaeli University Institute of Social Sciences, 2014), 66, 157-60.

4 Victor Papanek, *Design For The Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change*, 2nd ed. (London: Thames & Hudson, 1985).

## DESIGNING FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY AT THE SCHOOL OF DESIGN

Inge Andrew

Interdisciplinary teamwork is a key objective at the Otago Polytechnic School of Design. As staff we work together in an open plan office, but we also install this kaupapa in our learners. Workplaces are diverse places, and we all have skills that can contribute to both the work culture and the practice we engage with. Corbacho et al define interdisciplinary education as supporting skills that cross disciplines to solve a problem, create a product or raise a question that may be impossible for one single discipline.<sup>1</sup> For the last four weeks of the 2021 academic year, the second-year students from the Bachelor of Design (Communication, Fashion and Product) were divided into interdisciplinary teams and partnered with a local organisation to develop creative solutions for their current challenges. These organisations came from within Otago Polytechnic as well as from the wider Ōtepoti community. They were:

- Student Support (OP)
- Pōpopo Wormporium Resource Recovery (OP)
- Bachelor of Information Technology (OP)
- Otago Polytechnic Student Association (OPSA)
- Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group
- Trade Aid New Zealand (Dunedin branch)

Teams within disciplines may have worked well but this was an opportunity to combine skills and perspectives towards a community focused project. The four-week course combined design thinking processes, design methodologies and presentation techniques, working together on a design for social innovation and sustainability. In our current global reality, it is critical that we instigate a sense of social responsibility into our learners. Along with self-efficacy, solving problems sustainably in tertiary teaching needs to combine lessons in interdisciplinary collaboration.<sup>2</sup> This was an opportunity to engage learners with what it means to work at a community level and use design thinking and Human Centred Design (HCD) techniques to understand the user experience, identify a design intervention point and work towards a sustainable and innovative design outcome. Design thinking is inherently optimistic, constructive, and experiential and “addresses the needs of the people who will consume a product or service and the infrastructure that enables it.”<sup>3</sup>

Along with the application of design research and development processes, we incorporated bicultural values of manaakitanga, whakawhanaungatanga and kaitiakitanga into the learning outcomes so learners could consider how tikanga can be embedded into their design thinking and practice. We installed the idea that this could be at both a personal and group level as well as how they perceived their clients embedding these values into their own work processes. Whakawhanaungatanga for example established the importance of connection and relationship building with each other, with the client as well as the surrounding space within which we worked. When working in a team, it's also important to learn that everyone has a part to play and success is determined by communication, commitment and manaakitanga. We broke down the levels of manaakitanga, explaining that it's more than care and

support but it's also about āki (encouragement) and mana is never taken but always given. These are values that we want to be part of our learners' everyday vernacular, informing their design practice going forward into their graduate year and their future careers.

We also embedded the Otago Polytechnic strategic goal of leading the way in sustainable practice. Sustainability by its very nature is a complex issue which can require a diverse interdisciplinary approach. These learners, nearing the end of the second year have built up a portfolio of design skills from their specific disciplines and before they enter their final year, they need to add social innovation to their pūtea. These learners may not end up working for non-for-profit agencies but can still gain expertise in design for social innovation. Stokols refers to this learning as 'transdisciplinary orientation' which consists of learning new values, attitudes, beliefs, conceptual skills and knowledge. This also includes transcultural understanding and cooperation as well as global consciousness. This practice can increase learner's perception of diverse viewpoints (within their own group, their class and their client) as well as develop thoughtful, open-minded individuals.<sup>4</sup>

According to Corbacho et al, to develop any interdisciplinary course Vygotsky's theory on social constructivism can be applied where learning is a social process, supported by collaboration and social interaction.<sup>5</sup> In situated learning, students engage in a community of practice and develop a path towards becoming a practitioner (in whatever field they choose). We can also apply Schön's practice of 'reflection in action' 'which can help students prepare for the complex and unpredictable problems of workplaces. This helps to produce graduates with solid problem-solving skills that can be applied to their careers. So often we exist in a vacuum within our learning institutions and need to continually remind ourselves that learners can and should experience community-based learning. COVID-19 too has helped us to connect with our communities and realise we can assist each other from the ground up.

On the first day of the project, we were coached by Billy Matheson, an experienced designer, educator, and facilitator who has a passion for emergent social process and inhabiting our creativity. He runs workshops and retreats for businesses who are interested in looking at positive change and commitment to social enterprise. He ran a morning workshop with the students, using a customer centric design activity developed for the Auckland Council. Learners were put into pairs and went through an exercise of designing the ultimate food event for their partner. The learners used interview skills and curiosity to discover their partners' perfect experience, reframe and define the opportunity and generate ideas (both obvious and radical). After checking in with their partner, the last part of the exercise was to reflect and generate a new and final solution (based on everything they had learnt about each other). This exercise developed empathy, problem solving, analytical thinking which resulted in both deliberate and 'pie in the sky' ideas.

Over the next four weeks, students were put into their interdisciplinary teams and met with their clients. It was up to the learners to co-ordinate themselves with team roles and use design thinking and HCD to come up with a design opportunity and innovative solutions to the challenges posed by the clients. Design thinking is a methodology for creative thinking which works through phases of empathise, define, ideate, prototype, test and assessment. These are not necessarily linear and different stages can be re-visited at different times. We also integrated user journey maps which are a common method used in design. In its most basic form, a journey map is a visualisation of a process a user goes through to accomplish a goal. The 5 E's Framework (entice, enter, engage, exit, extend) was useful in order to understand a customer's experience with a product or service. This also helps to create a narrative with the user's thoughts and emotions as they go through a user process<sup>7</sup>. Although we had a short turn around, the learners used this method in order to gain some understanding of their client and customer user experiences. This process also helped to identify a design pain point and possible solutions.

On the final day, 18 teams presented their work to their clients and the students and School of Design staff. The learners identified design problems and opportunities, looked at current and future user journeys, implemented customer personas, situational analysis and market research as well as provided scope for future opportunities. Each team developed a range of design propositions, such as app development, website re-design, brand and

logo development, interior development, spatial re-design, communication strategies, visual language, social media development and merchandise development. A team within the Trade Aid group for example looked at how they could engage with customers by informing them about the maker of the product. They created an interactive product swing tag in the form of the origami fortune teller game, sparking memories of childhood as well as drawing the customer's attention to information about the maker and how the purchase has helped them and their community (figure 1 and 2).



Figure 1: Prototype of Trade Aid Swing Tag.

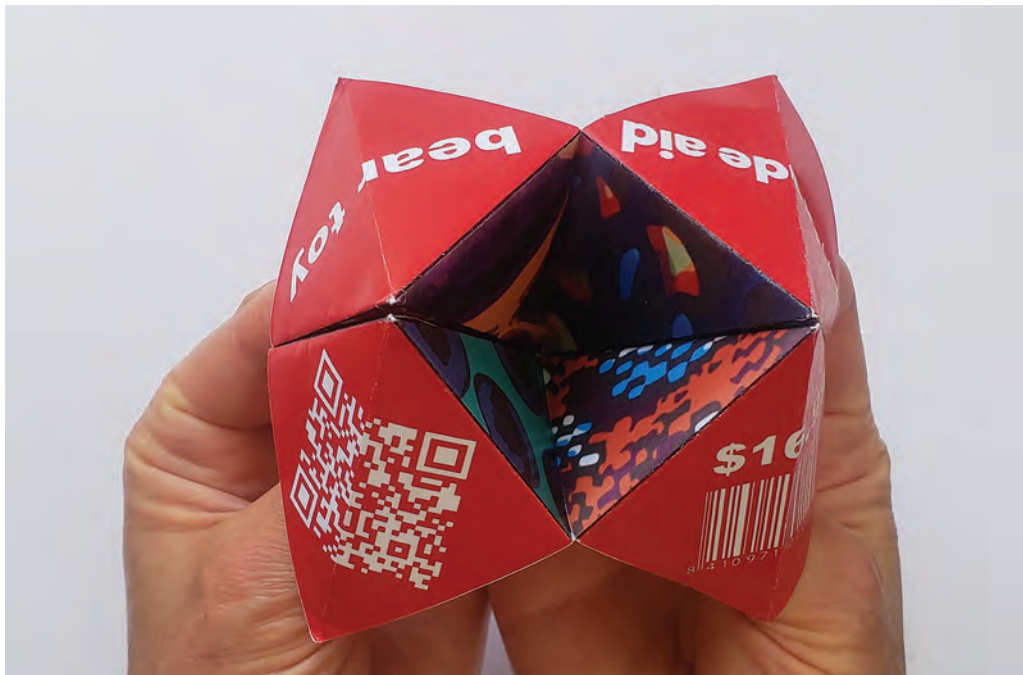


Figure 2: Prototype of Trade Aid Swing Tag.

A team in the OPSA group surveyed users and found that students experienced hardship around the affordability of food. They developed 'OPSA Eats' whereby OPSA could collaborate with students at Otago Polytechnic Culinary Arts to create affordable food bags for student dinners. They embedded manaakitanga into their outcome, ensuring that OPSA helps to relieve some financial stress but also empower students to learn to cook for themselves.

Another team worked with Student Success and found there was a lack of awareness about this service but also that meeting rooms in the Hub were perceived as being too public and hence intimidating for students who may wish to seek support. They developed a concept to increase privacy by designing a screen that incorporated Māori design elements of ahu ahu mataroa (representative of a new challenge) and pakati (courage and strength; from a moko worn by warriors). They also delivered ideas around posters and an app which highlighted the services that Student Success offer in a clearer and more neurodiverse way, for an improved user journey.

Teams that worked with the Otago Peninsula Biodiversity Group looked at how they could increase community engagement with the vision of a 'predator free peninsula'. The groups created interesting and bold signage as well as interior visions for the new visitor centre. One group also created a version of the Lilliput Libraries and Pataka Kai where native seedlings could be swapped with neighbours as well as an innovative translucent roadside signage, showing the development of biodiversity over time as one looked through it towards the landscape beyond. Their ideas were informed by kaitiakitanga, care and protection for the environment, looking to protect the ecosystems as well as the culture of the Otago Peninsula.

Working in a team environment can be challenging and there were some issues. These included respect for a diversity of perspectives as well as those that simply didn't pull their weight. Working in an open-ended project where the learning was experiential, and method driven (rather than outcome driven) required collaboration within the team and trust of the process. This certainly caused some frustration on the part of the learners as they were keen to start making rather than thinking and reflecting. The teams were self-directed and it often felt easier to go with the first good idea rather than diversifying and extending other concepts. In the feedback from students, they clearly enjoyed meeting new people, and getting to know other students from communication, product and fashion backgrounds. They were also grateful for the interaction with a client, giving them further confidence to work in a professional setting. Working closely with both client and consumer, design thinking can create innovative solutions to problems which bubble up from below rather than imposed from the top<sup>8</sup>. The projects that these students worked on covered a number of social factors including the building of empathy and understanding towards others, improving social equity, increasing education, empowering customers and extending capability of both client and customer.

Many design schools around the world are tackling social and sustainability projects. Through this project we joined over 60 international design labs across the globe who have joined the DESIS (Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability network ([www.desisnetwork.org/](http://www.desisnetwork.org/))). Being part of this network has allowed the Otago Polytechnic Design School to be more confident in their focus on sustainability and community led projects ([www.op.ac.nz/industry-and-research/research/desis](http://www.op.ac.nz/industry-and-research/research/desis)). We have a point of difference in Aotearoa New Zealand in the way that we approach sustainability with a bicultural lens and connect our practice with the land that we stand on and the people we work with. As we continue to develop this course, we look forward to how we can continue to learn from each other and from the community projects we invest in.



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- 1 Ana M Corbacho et al, "Interdisciplinary higher education with a focus on academic motivation and teamwork diversity," *International Journal of Educational Research* 2-2 (2021), 1 – 10.
- 2 Jessie L Knowlton et al, "Teaching interdisciplinary sustainability science teamwork skills to graduate students using in-person and web-based interactions," *Sustainability* 6-12 (2014), 9428 – 9440.
- 3 T Brown, & J Wyatt, "Design Thinking for Social Innovation," *Stanford Social Innovation Review* (2010). [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/design\\_thinking\\_for\\_social\\_innovation](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/design_thinking_for_social_innovation)
- 4 Jessie L Knowlton et al, (2014).
- 5 Ana M Corbacho et al, (2021).
- 6 Donald Schön, "The Reflective Practitioner," *How Professionals Think in Action* (Aldershot, Hants, UK, 1995).
- 7 S Gibbons, "Journey Mapping 101," *Nielsen Norman Group*, 9 Dec 2018, <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/journey-mapping-101/>.
- 8 Brown and Wyatt, "Design Thinking"

## GIFT: REFLECTIONS ON JOURNEYS, KNOWLEDGE, LABOUR AND LOVE

Victoria Bell and Natalie Smith

*gift*, Ashburton Art Gallery, Ashburton, Aotearoa New Zealand (8th May – 19th June 2022), was a group show curated by Victoria Bell (Dunedin School of Art) and Dr Natalie Smith (University of Otago), exploring unique and personal stories of gift giving (& receiving). Traversing different cultural and conceptual understandings of giving, the exhibition ultimately presented eleven artworks that moved beyond the traditional consumer notion of the boxed, wrapped and beribboned gift to explore; our natural environment; journeys; gifts of knowledge, labour and love. Artists in *gift* were; Rachel Hope Allan, Dr Margo Barton, Tui Emma Gillies and Sulieti Fieme'a Burrows MNZM, Neil Emmerson, Alice Jones, Madison Kelly (Kāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe), Dr Stella Lange, Anna Muirhead, Louise Sutherland QSM, Metiria Turei (Ngāti Kahungunu, Te Ātihaunui-a-Pāpārangī), and Georgina May Young (Te Upokorehe, Whakatōhea, Irish).

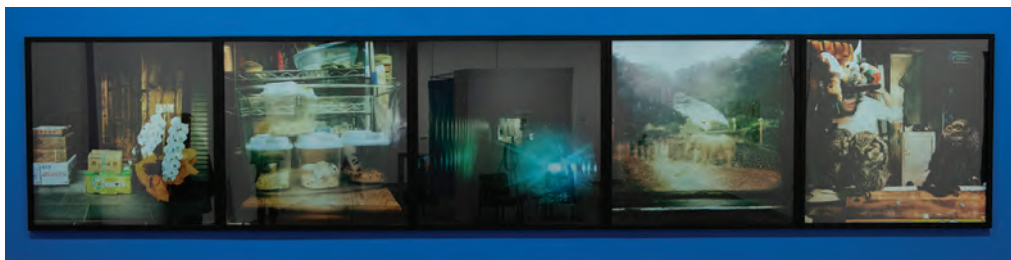


Figure 1. Rachel Hope Allan, *Fukuro no Su Café*, 2022, *Not Fit for EXPORT*, 2022, 蘭, 2022, *Perfect Peach*, 2022, *White Elephant*, 2022, 1000 × 1000 mm, Archival print on Moab Slickrock Metallic paper 300gsm.

For *gift*, Rachel Hope Allan showed five photographic works that explore the complex relationship she has with Japan, butted together edge to edge on a painted blue wall that activated the luminous Japanese-green hue of her photo series. The shimmering images record her idiosyncratic experiences of journeying in Japan and speak to the polysemous nature and complex culture of gift giving in Japanese cultures. In *Not fit for EXPORT* (2022) Allan alludes to the practice of giving 'cute' pets as gifts while in *Fukuro no Su Café* (2022) stuffed and surrendered animals sit side by side. In her artist statement *White Elephant* (2022) Allan makes reference to;

"[...] the burden sometimes attached to certain gifts, referencing the historical idiom of the 'white elephant', the onerous, sometimes expensive gift that is much more trouble than it is worth. It also refers to the complex problem of Ivory, which is still legally traded in Japan."

Orchids, gifts to bring good fortune and peace, wait to be delivered in 蘭 (2022); notoriously hard to grow, orchids were initially in Japan kept only by royalty and the most powerful (and were sometimes linked to Samurai). *Perfect Peach* (2022) references the unforgettable gift of acceptance Allan felt in Japan; a home coming of a kind as Allan has Japanese ancestry.



Figure 2. Dr Margo Barton, *aHead of time*, 2022,  
Dimensions variable, Mixed media.

Dr Margo Barton's work *aHead of time* (2022) consisted of 8 white, woven hats, illuminated by deeply coloured Perspex pattern shapes derived from a 19th century head measuring device, the Allié Ainé conformateur. The conformateur (also exhibited in the show), is a tool used to create half sized patterns, to the exact shape of a person's head, lumps, bumps and all and has been a key instrument of millinery for more than 100 years. The contraption, placed on one's head, allows a half size pattern to be drawn, of the circumference of a person's skull. Then this half-sized pattern may be scaled up to life-size, allowing a bespoke, perfectly fitted hat to be custom made from its contours. The Allié Ainé conformateur shown in *gift*, was specifically gifted to Barton by a gentleman who said that she and he, were the only two people who yet still, knew what a conformateur was. The gift giver saw Barton as a guardian of the device's knowledge; the person who would keep this unusual machine safe and useful. Milliner Barton describes the device as a 3D measurer; like a full body scanner; before its time, and an inspiration for her doctoral studies.

Dr Stella Lange's work *I made this for you* (2022), a pair of knitted socks, acknowledges that labour, or the gift of time, is the most valuable gift that can be given. In Lange's work, time is not measured by a clock, or calendar – but in terms of intent and attention. *I made this for you* is accompanied by a scroll of text that replicates the neat and methodical rows of knitting pattern instructions however this is no mere direction to knit one, pearl one, rather *Invisible cost – Accounting* (2022) meticulously charts Lange's sock making journey, recording every minute of her gift of love. On Thursday the 13th of January Lange sat down from 7-8.30pm to cast on 64 stitches and produce 12 rows of knitting within the space of 90 minutes. As the socks progress Lange notes on Wednesday 23rd February that she is on to the foot of sock two. This labour of love concludes on Saturday 26th February at 10.45am, with Lange noting in the last lines of the artwork;

"2163 minutes I thought of you and wondered if you would appreciate these. 27 days, I set aside other things to work on these socks for you. 21120 stitches - mindful making, these lace socks took my close attention. I made this for you, I hope you like them."



Figure 3. Dr Stella Lange, *I made this for you*, 2022,  
400 x 500 mm, Skilled hand labour,  
New Zealand Wool and Nylon.  
*Invisible cost – Accounting*, 2022,  
3000 X 600 mm, Digital print on 160gsm paper.

American-born, Canterbury artist Alice Jones pondered a different labour of love, the gift of motherhood in two large colourful quilted pieces, *Good Mothers Remember to Serve Fruit at Breakfast* (2022) and *Good Mothers Clean the House for Hours* (2022). Jones posited that motherhood is often seen as a woman's greatest accomplishment but the reality is rather more messy. Babies need a lot of help and maternal bodies seldom return to their pre-pregnancy shape. Popular media cultures may judge Mothers for not providing organic food, or a wide variety of extracurricular activities for their children. But the reality is Mothers (of every definition) today often lack a support system of older, more experienced women. Society expects mothers to bear the responsibility of successful child rearing, even when they have little, or no, social or financial help.



Figure 4. Alice Jones,  
(left) *Good Mothers Remember to Serve Fruit at Breakfast*, 2022,  
(Right) *Good Mothers Clean the House for Hours*, 2022,  
1230 mm x 930 mm (approx.), Fabric, steam a seam, thread.

Motherhood is also central to Anna Muirhead's work, *Your cry was 好听了*, (2022), pronounced 'your cry was hǎo tīng le' and meaning 'your cry was a pleasant sound'. The title references the birth of her second son and was presented as a mixed media work consisting of; a custom curtain rail with hospital curtains, waiting room furniture, her own OPTease retrievable vena cava filter; an artist book and framed watercolour. The artwork records Muirhead's experience of her son's birth while in China. Dramatically, the artist was rushed to hospital with a blood clot in her leg when eight months pregnant. She was received lifesaving treatment in the form of an OPTease vena cava filter; a device that stopped the blood clot from entering her heart and lungs, ultimately giving her and newborn child, the gift of life. For *gift* Muirhead therefore created a hospital room-like space with blue curtains laser cut with star charts. She notes that the star charts refer to the tiniest blimp in time between her and her son's births, when considered within the context universal time, the smallness of our lives within the scope of all time on earth. With the profundity of their mortality resonating throughout the artwork, viewers could stand within the curtained space, and gaze at Muirhead's (now removed) life-saving vena cava filter; framed on the wall, lit up like a precious icon. Muirhead's hospital stay, the complications and moments in between are documented from fragments and memories, in an artist book made especially for *gift*, that audiences are invited to view and read while sitting in a waiting room set up just outside the hospital curtained setting.

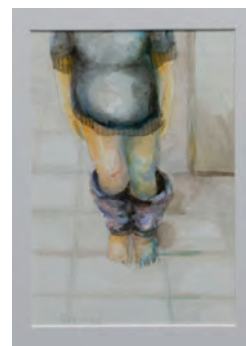


Figure 5a. Anna Muirhead,  
*Your cry was 好听了*, 2022,  
Dimensions variable,  
Close up photograph of  
framed watercolour.

Figure 5b. Anna Muirhead, *Your cry was 好听了*, 2022,  
Dimensions variable, Close up photograph of the  
custom hospital curtains and the OPTease  
Retrievable Vena Cava Filter.





Figure 6. Tui Emma Gillies & Sulieti Fieme'a Burrows MNZM, *The Last Kai*, 2022, 2500 x 5000 mm, Tonga tapa cloth, umea (red earth from Vava'u), kupesi rubbing and mixed media.

Tui Emma Gillies and Sulieti Fieme'a Burrows MNZM are a daughter and mother team from Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. Their large work, *The Last Kai* (5000 mm x 2500 mm) drew inspiration from Leonardo da Vinci's iconic 15th century work *The Last Supper*. Their work consists of layers of Tongan tapa cloth, umea (red earth from Vava'u), kupesi rubbings and mixed media. The templates for the kupesi etchings were made by their family over 80 years ago in Tonga and reference the gift of family knowledge passed down through generations. Burrows undertook the background stencils, while Gillies created the foreground scene which offers up a reflection on the function of masks as a form of cultural and social identity, and the role of the church in Pacific Island culture. During the pandemic the church became a community health hub for Pasifika peoples. Gillies notes the first time she was given a disposable face mask was by her husband, in 2020, one month after Covid-19 entered Aotearoa New Zealand. At first Gillies says she felt uneasy. Several years on however, she has become accustomed to wearing it and accepts this new accessory while continuing to reflect on the role of face coverings in many cultures; masks can be worn at a mardi gras to reduce self-consciousness and inhibitions, helping to release the wild person usually hidden behind a more sedate exterior; many indigenous cultures wear masks to represent spirits or ancestors or a legendary figure from folklore; we also all know of people who disguise their true feelings and intentions with a 'mask', manipulating impressions of themselves. While ostensibly the mask during a pandemic is a health protection measure, it still hides things... fear, sometimes paranoia or anxiety.

Georgina May Young's delicately embroidered works on handwoven linen refer to small acts of generosity in the face of a monumental climate crisis. *Offering* (2022); *Undergrowth* (2022) and *Garden E hoa* (2022) are embroidered with flowers and fruits. Young's work meditates on gift giving in the gardening community; of harvests and gluts of produce and the giving of seeds and food to a neighbour over the fence, or to friends, whānau. These acts of giving forge connections, inspire growth and nourish these communities. The natural world is impregnated into all of these works, *Garden E hoa* is made with handwoven linen coloured with one-uku from Ōhiwa, Ōpotiki, while *Offering* and *Undergrowth* are coloured with walnut.





Figure 7. Georgina May Young,

*Garden E hoa*, 2022, Cotton thread, handwoven linen coloured with one-uku from Ōhiwa, Ōpotiki, 450 x 620 mm.

*Undergrowth*, 2022, Cotton thread, handwoven linen coloured with walnut, 440 x 430 mm.

*Offering*, 2022, Cotton thread, handwoven linen coloured with walnut, 440 x 430 mm.

Like Young, Metiria Turei drew inspiration from the natural world for her work *Whanokē* (2022), taniko, digital print, aluminium and totemic sculptural forms monumentalise te taiao. In imagining walking through the work, first we pass under kowhai and her pitau where whakapapa is the source of all things. Then kōtukutuku with her ngutu, the natural world we all inhabit. And finally, the harakeke with her niho taniwha, passing out into the cosmos. For all the erratic and difficult times we have lived through recently, Papatūānuku still provides us with audacious colour, form and scent as her gifts to us.



Figure 8. Metiria Turei, *Whanokē*, 2022, 2400 x 2000 mm, Aluminium, felt and cord.

Madison Kelly furthers the discussion of gifts from the natural world by exploring the often contentious terrain of environmental gifting and eco-tourism in her delicately woven work *Matarua Fence Walk* (2022) made of jewellery, fencing and utility wire, this work referenced the Orokonui Eco Sanctuary fence. Using whatu aho ruā, a method of double weft twining often used to create korowai (feathered cloaks) Kelly acknowledged the name gifted to Orokonui by her hapu Kāti Huirapa ki Puketeraki, Te Korowai of Mihiwaka. Mihiwaka is one of two mountains that form the valley of the sanctuary, while the forest is imagined as a korowai, cloaking the landscape. Kelly notes the Orokonui Ecosanctuary becomes a site for witnessing original gifts – introduced species, such as the possum, a predator, and future promises, a predator free future. As she argues in her artist statement;



Figure 9. Madison Kelly, *Matarua Fence Walk*, 2022, 1000 x 2000 mm, Jewellery, fencing and utility wire.

"...the fence's thin undulating perimeter is an uncanny liminality between native and introduced, concealed and excluded, giving and taking. The fence is offered as conceptual site for impressions of gifting/un-gifting within Aotearoa's conservation landscape."

The garden is also central in Neil Emmerson's lush green work (*I was his...*) (2004), seven woollen blankets, dyed and shaved, and *Untitled (shoe)* (2004) which explore the secrets held by the ANZAC Memorial Garden, Civic Park, Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia. For Emmerson, the discovery of a men's brogue in the public gardens, became a gift that prompted reflection on public spaces and masculinity. By day the park is a place for families and city workers, by night a sanctuary for illicit love.



Figure 10. Neil Emmerson, (*I was his...*), 2004, 9000 mm, Seven woollen blankets, dyed and shaved, painted pelmet, metal brackets.

*Untitled (shoe)*, 2004, 130 x 3100 x 100 mm, Found object, sound.  
*(habit@t)*, 2002, Frame size 875 x 745 mm, 500 mm x 380 mm, Multi-coloured print.  
 One from a set of twenty-one unique state prints; lithography and woodblock.

As Emerson notes in his artist statement:

"I first noticed the shoe hiding in the shade under a bench seat in an ANZAC Memorial Garden in Civic Park, Newcastle NSW. Brogue, not brand-new but well kept, freshly polished. The shoe of a civil servant I imagined. Civic Park is in central Newcastle and is surrounded by public offices, the Town Hall, the City Art Gallery and a couple of large old churches. I felt certain that the owner of the shoe would be back to retrieve it so I was surprised and somewhat delighted to find it there during my visit the next day to make more recordings. It was a tough choice to leave it there again for one more chance to be reunited with its owner and its pair. Upon my return the next day the shoe remained there, unmoved from where I had first spotted it. I took it, considered it a find, a rescue, a steal, a gift. It sings to you now with the sounds from its days and nights of curious abandonment the garden."



Figure 11. Louise Juliet Sutherland QSM (1926-1994), Two handmade and appliquéd skirts c. 1978. Hocken Collections Uare Taoka o Hākena, University of Otago, Ōtepoti Dunedin.

gift also offered the opportunity to reflect on institutional gifting with the inclusion of two handmade and appliquéd skirts created by Louise Sutherland QSM which are on loan from the Hocken Collections Uare Taoka o Hākena, University of Otago. Sutherland, an Ōtepoti Dunedin born cyclist, nurse and writer became the first person to cycle solo through the newly completed Trans-Amazonian Highway in 1978. She wore her scintillating skirts during lecture tours to raise funds for medical equipment which she gifted to the people of the Amazon. Excerpts from her diaries, deposited with the Hocken, provide an insight into her sartorial choices for her lecture tours. In a 1991 interview with the *Southland Times*, a journalist noted:

"Unable to imagine whether her audience would be 200 women in fine knit and pearls or a half-dozen homespun bodies, Miss Sutherland said she never felt she had dressed right.

So, she decided to dress to fit her talk and made skirts of colourful applique designs which illustrate where she went on her bike and what she saw.

She has silk versions which sparkle with glitter for the evening, showing showers of iridescent rain and shining sunsets and she has cotton skirts, for day-time talks, which show animals and herself on her bike, rain clouds and pictures of things she has seen – and with a quick waist movement another design comes into view – neat, nice."

('Author recounts Amazon jungle cycle ride adventure', *The Southland Times* Tuesday 17 September 1991, p 8)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In 2019 we put out a call for papers for an exhibition themed around the notion of gifts, or gifting. In between the call and the opening of *gift*, COVID-19 arrived, upending work schedules and personal lives for all. The journey to *gift* has been a long one. We would especially like to thank the artists in the show and Ashburton Art Gallery, for staying the course, trusting the project and for being so flexible and generous with us while *gift* was realised. We would like to acknowledge and thank too, Otago Polytechnic – Te Kura Mataini ki Otago, a subsidiary of Te Pūkenga – The New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology, for research funds in support of *gift*. VB & NS.

All photographs taken by Shirin Khosraviani, Images courtesy Ashburton Art Gallery.

**Dr Natalie Smith** is a Teaching Fellow in the Sociology, Gender Studies and Criminology Programme, University of Otago, and an independent researcher with an interest in New Zealand fashion design and textile arts. She holds a PhD in Art History and Theory and has curated a number of fashion exhibitions and published on New Zealand fashion and textile arts. In 2018 she co-curated *Unbound* (Dunedin School of Art Gallery, Otago Polytechnic, 21 September – 18 October 2018) a contemporary textiles exhibition with a Suffrage focus with Victoria Bell in 2018.

**Victoria Bell** (<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6410-8879>) is Head of Programmes - Bachelor of Visual Arts at the Dunedin School of Art, Te Maru Pūmanawa - College of Creative Practice and Enterprise at Otago Polytechnic - Te Kura Matatini ki Otago, a subsidiary of Te Pūkenga – The New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology, and also teaches Textiles at the school. Raised in Ōtautahi Christchurch, Bell has a Bachelor of Design in Craft Art from Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology (2000) and a Master of Fine Arts from the Dunedin School of Art (2011). In 2005 she received the Olivia Spencer Bower Award. Bell marries her roles in visual arts education with being an artist and mother.

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

**Rachel Hope Allan** is an artist and educator based in Ōtepoti Dunedin. She has a Master of Fine Art (Distinction) from the Dunedin School of Art, where she is now a principal lecturer in photography. Her work deals with restraint, curiosity and mimicry and has been featured in PhotoForum's 2020 *portfolio* review and in Stephen Bull's 2020 edition of *A Companion to Photography*. Allan exhibits nationally and internationally; most recently in *Postcards from Europe* at Cambridge University, UK (2022), The Auckland Festival of Photography (2021) and at the Jarvis Dooney Galerie, Berlin, (2018 & 2019). Allan's books are held in public collections in Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

**Dr Margo Barton** is Professor of Fashion at Otago Polytechnic - Te Kuru Matatini ki Otago, and Chair of iD Dunedin Fashion. She is a fashion educator, curator and practitioner, and has been involved in fashion for as long as she can remember. In her design practice she journeys between designing in 3D, in virtual, and in physical spaces, and focuses on the on-going exchange between designer, material and method. She is also passionate about connecting independent fashion designers with the public to encourage dialogue between wearer and designer. Barton was one of three curators, for the 2021 exhibition, *Fashion Forward >> Disruption through Design*, held at Otago Museum, Ōtepoti Dunedin.

**Neil Emmerson** is an Australian artist living and working in Ōtepoti Dunedin since 2006. Conceptually his work explores various Queer territories whilst formally it engages with print, sculpture and installation. His work is represented in major public institutions in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, including Toi o Tāmaki Auckland Art Gallery, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland; Australian National Gallery, Canberra; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. In 2006 he won the Fremantle Print Award, Australia.

**Tui Emma Gillies** is a Kiwi Tongan artist currently based in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland who specialises in tapa cloth. Her work mixes contemporary with traditional and can be challenging, confronting and controversial, but always with respect to the roots of the medium and the ancestors who practised it before her. Tui's work can be found in significant museum and gallery collections around the globe including, USA, Germany, Melbourne, Auckland, and also in many private collections. In 2018 she received the Creative New Zealand Pacific Heritage Art Award. She has also helped revive hiapo growing and the art of bark cloth making alongside her mother in Falevai, Vava'u where it had vanished decades earlier.

**Sulieti Fieme'a Burrows** is a Master creator of Tongan Heritage Arts who learnt many artistic skills from her mother, Ema Topeni. She grew up in Falevai, Vava'u, Tonga before migrating to Aotearoa New Zealand in 1978 to live with her husband in South Auckland until his death in 2013. Burrows has worked on various art projects including making Kahoa Heilala necklaces which were acquired by Otago Museum and Auckland Museum. She also works as a mother-daughter tapa team with her daughter, Tui Emma Gillies and has Ngatu and Kupesi works in collections around the world including The National Maritime Museum, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland; GRASSI Museum of Applied Arts, Germany; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne and Pick Museum of Anthropology in Illinois, USA. She received the Pasifika Heritage Art Award in 2018 alongside her daughter, and was made a member of The New Zealand Order of Merit (2020) for her services to Tongan art and education.



**Alice Jones** is a textile artist. Her work addresses issues faced by contemporary New Zealand women through the lens of traditional fairy tale narratives. She is especially interested in how patriarchal influences have led to social inequalities which disadvantage women. Her narrative style is based on quilting techniques where bright, cheerful fabric often contrasts with sombre messages. Jones also probes conflicts between art and craft, and women's historical association with textiles. She holds a Master of Visual Arts (Distinction) and Bachelor of Visual Arts from the Dunedin School of Art at Otago Polytechnic - Te Kuru Matatini ki Otago.

**Madison Kelly** (Kāi Tahu, Kāti Mamoe, Pākehā) graduated from the Dunedin School of Art in 2017, with a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Hons First Class) in drawing. Grounded in processes of observation and duration, their Ōtepoti Dunedin based practice works to explore multispecies histories and futures. Recent shows include *The Secret Path* (curated by Tini Whetū ki te Rangi with Dunedin Dream Brokerage, 2022), *Paemanu: Tauraka Toi* (Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 2021), *He Reka te Kūmara* (co-curated, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 2021), and *Soft Stones* (with Motoko Kikkawa, Olga Gallery, 2021). Kelly recently held the 2022 Blue Oyster Caselberg Trust Summer residency in Whaka Oho Rahi Broad Bay.

**Dr Stella Lange's** practice is balanced between textile based making and investigating historical methods of repair and mending, and publishing. In 2021 Lange was the recipient of a Surface Design Association of America (SDA) Award of Excellence for *Talking while Masked*. She is active in online and local knitting communities, and on Ravelry.com as KKFrog, where her knitting designs are available. As well, Lange is currently Co-President with Dr Natalie Smith of the Costume and Textile Association of New Zealand. With a generous fabric and fibre stash, three looms and three spinning wheels, Lange lives as a maker educator working at the Otago Polytechnic School of Design, in Ōtepoti Dunedin.

**Anna Muirhead** is a multidisciplinary artist and curator. Her art practice includes sculpture, installation, photography, drawing and collaborative projects such as *Cargo Bike Art Space* (2021-) and *The Back Boot Project* (2007). Her research encompasses a critique of historical narratives and present-day observations/experiences of environments and public space including gardens, cities, and institutions. She completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts (2003) and Masters in Fine Arts (2008) from the Dunedin School of Art and was awarded the William Hodges Fellowship in 2008. Muirhead lived in China for eight years, working as an arts educator. She participated with Red Gate Gallery's international residency programme in Beijing in 2014. Muirhead is currently living in Ōtepoti Dunedin with her family.

Ōtepoti Dunedin born **Louise Sutherland QSM** (1926-1994) was a cyclist, trained nurse, author and humanitarian. In her lifetime Sutherland pedalled over 60,000 kilometres through more than 50 countries, but it was the people of the Amazon who stole her heart. Her love of Amazon was fostered after an 18 month stint at the San Francisco Hospital, Apurimac Valley, Amazon Jungle (1974-1975). In 1975 she returned to New Zealand working as a representative for The Amazon Trust seeking donations and selling reprints of her first book about her cycling adventures, *I Follow the Wind* (1956) to raise funds for the Apurimac. In May 1978 she became the first person to cycle solo along the Trans-Amazon highway, a 4,400 kilometre journey detailed in the book *The Impossible Ride* (1982). Sutherland was regular speaker on the New Zealand service club and school circuit where she retold her adventures raising awareness and funds for the Amazon people in her colourfully hand-appliqued skirts.

**Metiria Turei** (Ngāti Kahungunu and Ati Hau nui a Pāpārangī) is an emerging artist, developing an Indigenous Futurism Māori textile art practice that utilises taniko, digital print, up-cycled materials and totemic sculptural forms. She is committed to creating works that can move and be touched. Art is a communication and textiles in particular seek out hands, need to be felt on the face and the scent of the fibres breathed in. Whakairo Māori is a physical manifestation of te ao Māori and therefore needs the physicality of our people to be truly understood. After a career in politics, artist and lawyer Turei is currently the Pūkenga Matua at the University of Otago in the Faculty of Law.

**Georgina May Young** (Te Upokorehe, Whakatōhea, Irish,) Born in Ōpōtiki and living in Ōtepoti Dunedin, Young's practice is centred on loom, needle and thread. Drawing heavily from indigenous and offshore woven histories, in her words, her art practice is "a slow meditation on the fragility of life and our ecosystems, revolving around whenua, whānau and whakapapa". An avid gardener and textile artist, Young's work is informed by the process of time, weaving literally and figuratively between ancestral knowledge and optimistic futures. She has exhibited across Aotearoa New Zealand and selected exhibitions include *Labour of Body*, Corban Estate (2019); *A Short Run: A Selection of New Zealand Lathe Cut Records*, The Dowse Art Museum (2020); *The Sunlight Lies Down Across Everything* with Rebecca Hasselman, OLGA Gallery (2021) and *He Reka Te Kumara*, Dunedin Public Art Gallery (2021).

## INTENTIONALITY IN ENGAGEMENT: UNDERSTANDING THE MOTIVATIONS OF SCIART PRACTITIONERS

Sierra Adler and Jenny Rock

Science and art practitioners contribute to wide-ranging collaborative 'SciArt' projects, using tools from each discipline to bring new interpretations and meanings to our lived experiences. Many SciArt projects demonstrate the value of art as a communicative platform for scientific complexities. In the right conditions, science and art can work hand-in-hand to situate scientific findings within a public context and generate new purpose and/or novel viewpoints.<sup>1</sup>

Art allows audiences to witness objective realities from their individual subjective perspective,<sup>2</sup> bringing with them their unique lived experiences and emotional ways of knowing. In this, art can be an invaluable resource for helping to navigate dialogue and decision-making around value-dependent problems, particularly challenging socio-ecological issues.<sup>3</sup>

SciArt allows its subjects to work in the abstract, to appeal to larger systems and human intuition, to address problems free from the demands of the scientific process to "pose wider cultural questions that scientists themselves are not always able or willing to ask".<sup>4</sup> This helps us gather around big and intangible issues that require community-level decision-making processes and solutions.

As such, SciArt provides an opportunity to nurture the "creative resilience of communities".<sup>5</sup> Such people-oriented interventions position SciArt practice as an essential element of community science communication and engagement platforms, particularly when it comes to creating change in lived environments.

However, in order for SciArt work to 'perform' accordingly, it must demonstrably achieve audience engagement. Although some research has assessed engagement in SciArt projects, (e.g. Amy Brady 2018; Paul Glinkowski and Anne Bamford 2009; Brett Wilson, Barbara Hawkins and Stuart Sim 2014), relatively little work has gauged practitioners' intentionality towards audience engagement within their creative process. Such insight might help guide future SciArt endeavors and begin a conversation about what 'success' in socially-engaged SciArt looks like.

Our recent research on New Zealand-based artists who practice SciArt aimed to identify the artists' motivations and communication goals with regard to audience engagement, focusing specifically on artists' intentionality within their creative process. Here, 'intentionality' is understood as the deliberate translation of ideological motivation into the tangible elements of a work, and the evolution of one's practice in reference to a given motivation in hopes of achieving a desired outcome. We summarise here some of the key findings from this research, emerging from content analysis of a series of in-depth interviews with eight practicing artists.

## UNDERSTANDING AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

Engagement is a notoriously challenging behavioral outcome to measure.<sup>6</sup> Subjective, nuanced, and often internalised, engagement has proven difficult to assess, both in and outside of structured learning environments. The artists interviewed in our study reported using a variety of means to measure engagement, mostly limited to subjective and informal observation-based methods.

Those measures that leaned towards more objective assessment were typically only carried out during an event (e.g. a workshop), and thus did not include the ongoing engagement occurring as audience members processed information and emotions after the event. The majority of artists interviewed reported not feeling that they ever got a full understanding of the interactions and engagement that occurred with their work through the measurements they used.

The artists interviewed fell naturally into two categories of practice - those creating interactive works and those creating non-interactive works. Their work was also displayed in different locations, with the non-interactive work tending to be displayed in gallery settings and interactive works most often in public spaces (physical or online), or during workshops, etc.

Artists whose work was primarily displayed in galleries typically assessed audience engagement through their encounters with individuals at gallery openings, which they saw as providing valuable opportunity for interaction. These artists reported often being crowded with people coming up to them to discuss their interpretations of given works. Artists noted that such interactions obviously reflected certain viewer's personalities; some were more interested in vocalising reactions than others.

As might be expected, engagement was a crucial element for artists creating interactive works. They reported higher interest in assessing and enhancing their audience engagement. They often assessed such engagement by documenting audience interaction with specific components of their work – e.g. by the audience recording aspects of their interaction in writing, or through short questionnaires. Within the interview data, there was clearly a direct relationship between an artist's desire for audience interaction with their works and their intentionality of design to encourage such engagement, but also with their propensity to try to measure the extent of engagement.

## ARTIST MOTIVATIONS

The work of artists interviewed in this research demonstrated an intentionality in applying arts practice to address issues surrounding resilience, environmental reclamation and restoration, corruption, and many other value-laden issues. However, our interviews also showed that artists' motivations and intentionality in creating for an audience vary widely.

Some referenced their work as a "social duty", some focused their work on transforming their own lived environments, and some used their practice as a means of "sanctuary" from the outside world. While most artists referenced distinct motivations, only some reported their work to have a desired effect on their audiences.

Interactive artists often reported motivations related to instigating change by transforming behaviors and/or mindsets, whereas artists producing non-interactive works tended to be focused on aesthetic and personal goals. Though some of the non-interactive artists reported positive experiences in engaging with their audiences at gallery openings or through social media, they did not seem to necessarily place value on pieces of work that elicited a greater amount of engagement. Some non-interactive artists even went as far as to say that they did not want more audience feedback, nor would feedback alter their work, as they preferred to create in solitude for personal purpose.

## A CASE FOR MORE INTENTIONAL INTERACTIVE ENGAGEMENT IN SCIART

If the admixture of science and art into SciArt is to do more than inspire personal aesthetic expression, our results suggest benefits from greater intentionality in not only incorporating interactivity for engagement but also assessing its effectiveness. For instance, within the field of education, engagement is well-known as a crucial element of scientific information retention,<sup>7</sup> and that active learning conditions (versus passive) create more engaged and motivated students<sup>8</sup> and improve critical thinking skills.<sup>9</sup> In encountering works with intellectual rigor outside of structured learning environments, information appears to best be processed through authentic applications and experiences.

Together, this suggests that interactivity in SciArt is valuable for enhancing audience engagement through attention, retention and participatory motivation to contextualise the SciArt work within their lives. Works of SciArt can allow for these personal connections in two ways – first, they provide good scope for presenting new information applied in a real-world context, which ideally resonates with audiences within the course of their own lives. Second, artistic interpretations can reinforce information that audiences may have learned previously, but not fully processed.

Although the value of interactive audience engagement may be clear, ways to easily incorporate it into the creative process may not be. An emergent theme throughout our interviews was that virtual platforms can serve as a proxy for interactive engagement, particularly for non-interactive artists during periods in between gallery shows. Half of the non-interactive artists interviewed were frequent users of social media and/or blogs as an outlet for audience interaction. Digital platforms allow for large and diverse audiences, regular interaction with those audiences, and a forum for structured feedback. They also offer the potential to tap into analytics in order to compose a broad understanding of one's audience.

Some artists indicated that they also used public talks and presentations as forums for structured audience engagement. One envisioned a future where artists contributed articles to academic journals, outlining their process and intentions in creating an artwork, and in doing so, extending the work's reach outside of the gallery (similar to artists' digital presences). Several artists suggested that they felt that displaying their work in informal spaces promoted better quality of engagement for their audiences. They emphasized that the value of SciArt comes from the mixing of ideas, and informal environments grants viewers the freedom to engage with that which entices them.

Breaking down barriers of accessibility to bring their works of SciArt to unique groups remained a huge challenge for the artists interviewed. Many of them felt that, although displaying their work in informal spaces was an essential component for reaching broader audiences, finding new informal forums for those connections to occur was challenging. A combination of these and other engagement practices is perhaps the ideal situation enabling different audiences to absorb a work through a variety of mediums, and with differing levels of accompanying interpretation.

SciArt allows its subjects to work in the abstract, to appeal to larger systems and human intuition, to address problems free from the demands of the scientific process, and to “pose wider cultural questions that scientists themselves are not always able or willing to ask”.<sup>10</sup> This helps to gather us around big and intangible issues that require community-level decision-making processes and solutions. As such SciArt provides an opportunity to nurture the “creative resilience of communities”.<sup>11</sup>

Such people-oriented interventions position SciArt practice as an essential element of community science communication platforms, particularly when it comes to creating change in lived environments. The work of artists interviewed in this research demonstrated an intentionality in applying arts practice to address issues surrounding resilience, environmental reclamation and restoration, corruption, and many other value-laden issues.



## FURTHER BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES

Throughout the interviews, artists referenced a variety of stumbling blocks to their SciArt process, but a recurring theme involved situations in which artist and scientist collaborators had differing expectations. Many artists reflected on times that they felt they had been brought into a project as “vessels for prettification”, instead of practicing professionals with distinct communication intentions and skill sets. Ede suggests that SciArt enterprises require a thoughtful approach from all collaborators because art “cannot *directly* be ‘about’ science... if art is ‘about’ anything, it is a reflection of human experience in complexity and it emanates from an inventive individual with an unusual and sideways view on things”.<sup>12</sup>

Many artists also expressed frustration that the arts and sciences continue to be siloed, and their practitioners are encouraged to proceed on separate paths. Most viewed their work as an attempt to bridge the two disciplines, and often, an effort to demonstrate the similarities between them. Though almost all of the artists had experienced some positive and valuable relationships with scientific partners, and had found forums to support their work, generally they found huge room for improvement.

It is apparent that the most important element for SciArt’s continued proliferation and wider success, as we face daunting environmental changes and unceasing scientific advancements, is a culturally and financially supportive environment in which to grow. In no small part, this can also support artists in intentionally developing interactive elements to engage their audiences further; and in measuring the wide-reaching impact of their work. Generally, our interviews suggested that when an artist’s motivation and intentionality were related to fostering change, they used their artworks as platforms for empowering stewardship, learning, or public engagement with their lived environments. They created works with intentionality related to those outcomes, and often attempted to produce measurable impacts.

More support for such endeavors will add further weight to the value of SciArt for scientists (to engage with artists to make meaning of their work for public enlightenment), for education (to situate SciArt as a teaching tool in classrooms and in informal learning environments), and for society (recognising art’s value for communities worldwide in framing questions, decision-making and understanding our communal experience). SciArt will thrive where it is championed, supported and where its value is rendered towards meaningful endpoints.

**Sierra Adler** is a writer with a master’s in science communication from the University of Otago in New Zealand. Her work focuses on public perception of science, the use of SciArt for science communication, and scientifically informed community-based decision-making practices.

**Dr Jenny Rock** (<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7250-6463>) is has an interdisciplinary background in science and the arts/humanities, and is an applied and academic researcher in both spaces - often focusing on their integration. She currently holds lecturing and research positions at several academic institutions within NZ and internationally.

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## LIFE'S A GAS

Pam McKinlay

"It is the air's ubiquitous presence that becomes an absence."<sup>1</sup> In *The Forgetting of Air*, Luce Irigaray draws on the notion of "the ontology of breath" to ask us to focus on air as a requisite for life, thought and action. Air has been neglected in Western philosophy because "air does not show itself. As such, it escapes appearing as (a) being. It allows itself to be forgotten."<sup>2</sup>

Air is life. We are air-born. We can last three weeks without food, 3-4 days without water, but mere minutes without air. In Te Ao Māori, hau is the breath or wind of life. Air/breath/wind is the nebulous thing that connects all living beings. Anne Salmond, in *Tears of Rangi*, describes air as flowing in an endless cycle, nurturing, sustaining and transforming all whom it touches.<sup>3</sup> *Tihei Mauri Ora* – behold the breath of life!

The ninth annual Art+Science Project called for responses and collaborations on the theme of "AIR."<sup>4</sup> The project partners brought together their research and imaginations to explore the many interconnected notions of "air," scaling between human breathing and planetary breathing in the past, present and future. This report shares a narrative told as a call and response between the science and the emergent artworks during the process of the project.

### OUR WORLD IN BREATH

We are living in our third planetary atmosphere. Our air has changed over the history of our planet. Air appears transparent to the naked eye, but we have ways of reading the changing nature of air. What we breathe and how we breathe contributes to good health outcomes and human wellbeing. A myriad of research bodies such as NIWA are tasked with daily monitoring of air quality. What is 'fresh air'? What makes up good outdoor air quality? What's in our air?

"What's in our air?" is also a question of where the air is that we are asking about. We must envisage air as having architecture. It exists in layers of density or stratification and its movement is influenced by topography (laminar flow). Analysis of air reveals the chemical composition of gases and fluctuations inside the thin blue line of our atmosphere. The air in Earth's atmosphere is made up of approximately 78 percent nitrogen and 21 percent oxygen, as well as other gases (water vapour is also present in variable and rapidly changing quantities, so these proportions are for 'standard dry air'). Into this mix we can also add natural and anthropogenic aerosols. Carbon dioxide makes up only a small part of the atmosphere. It is an important atmospheric gas that helps absorb heat that radiates from the planet, but excessive concentrations from burning are changing our current atmosphere. Indoors, there are different issues when we cannot trust our air – no less so than right now, with pathogens like SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 travelling the airstreams and leaving havoc in their wake.



NIWA scientist Gustavo Olivares partnered with Pam McKinlay in a Curious Minds Participatory Science Platform Project. The data from this citizen science project was used in a sculptural visualisation in the exhibition, alongside a collaborative citizen art provocation.



Stella Lange worked with an epidemiology team led by Dr Michael Baker on past, current and future preventative measures directed at Covid-19 and the importance of correct mask use.

Jackie Herkt's pick-up woven panel was inspired by the "Scan in" Poster issued by the Ministry of Health during the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic lockdown.

Sofia Kalogeropoulou's choreography explored the social impacts of air and isolation using social distancing and Perspex barriers in a dance performance.

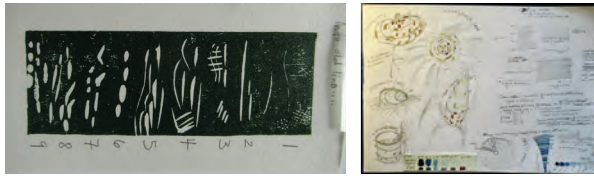
## IN THE PRESENCE OF BUTTERFLIES

We generally can't see air, but we can feel its presence. Wind is moving air, caused by pressure differences in the atmosphere. Those air pressure differences are what drive a lot of our weather. Robert FitzRoy (captain of HMS *Beagle* and former Governor General of New Zealand) is credited as the inventor of the weather forecast as we know it<sup>5</sup> – but, as we also know, weather forecasts are never as accurate as we would like them to be. Advances in scientific understanding reveal the complex systems underlying our weather. Driven by water vapour, constantly changing from gas to liquid and sometimes to a solid state, the weather system is activated by shifts in latent heat. The constant changes in temperature cause changes in pressure zones which we call high- and low-pressure fronts, whose shifting behaviour makes it difficult to predict our weather by more than a couple of days.



In "Seeing the Wind", mathematician Sarah Wakes uses computational fluid dynamics to look at the effects of wind velocity and turbulence on dune landscapes and evaluate restorative measures to improve dune stability. Katharine Allard created an echo of Wakes' research into wind modelling using marram grass ash material as a substrate for a fine metalpoint drawing.

Weather patterns collated in meteorological histories are used to predict future weather conditions and events and long-term effects on climate over an even longer period. The atmosphere is a complex and chaotic system. To paraphrase Robert Sapolsky, fixing clocks and fixing clouds require different mindsets. You can pull apart your clock and find the bit that is not working and fix the gearing (or whatever) and a clock will run again. But fixing clouds (to reflect more UV or produce more rain) is a different story. You can't dissect a cloud and put it together again – it is a complex system. A clock can be fixed by additive knowledge and technology, but clouds are non-linear and are at the whim of chaotic forces and elements.<sup>6</sup> These individually inconsequential differences, which can gather momentum to become consequential, are known as the “butterfly effect.”<sup>7</sup> While long-term observations of weather patterns, as well as paleoclimate records, are used to investigate change and predict future scenarios, scientific understanding is only a part of the work that is needed to bring about change to mitigate the rapid changes we are causing to our planetary atmosphere.

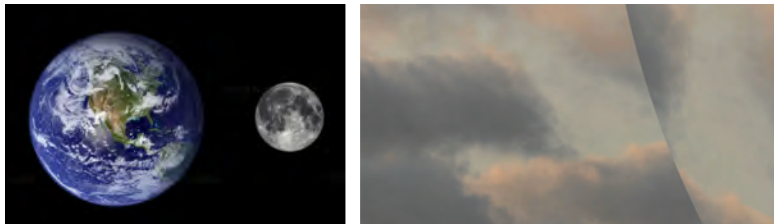


*Longitudinal records of local air temperature were used by Jenny Rock working with 30 years of data (daily recordings) from her father's farm journals. (image – work in progress).*

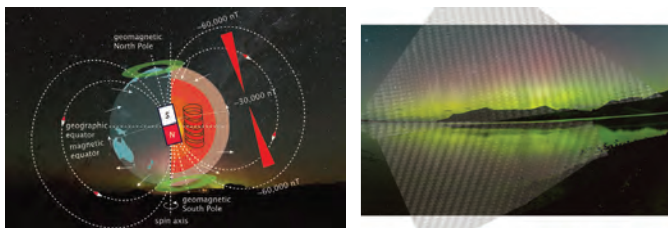
*Jenny Rock also used air temperature data from MetService records in a social art engagement.*

## THIN BLUE LINE

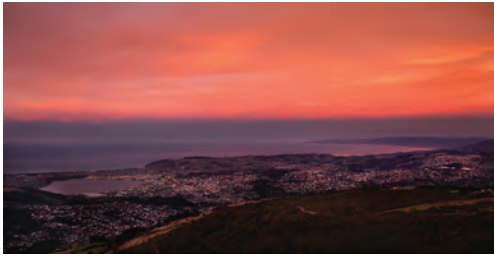
Earth's atmosphere has a protective layer of ozone which is roughly the thickness of two coins.<sup>8</sup> Within the thin blue line of gas and dust encircling our planet is our air – a name we use for the mixture of gases making up Earth's atmosphere (from Greek *atmos* – gas or vapour – and *sphaira*, ball or sphere).<sup>9</sup> “Air” extends around the Earth's surface many kilometres around and up. Like water, air has tidal flows (fluid dynamics).



*Tidal air flows were the confluence of interest in a work by artist Louise Beer, who worked with Geoff Wyvill. (Louise Beer, video still, at right).*



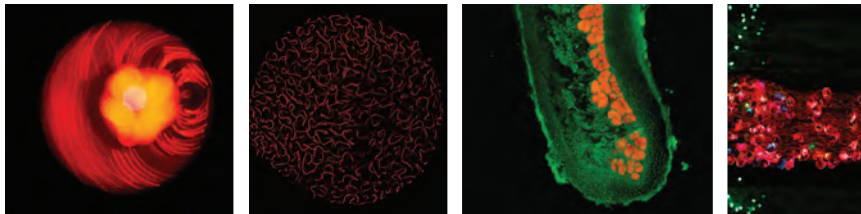
*Earth's atmosphere is protected by a magnetic shield which is constantly entangled with the solar winds. The magnetosphere of excited oxygen is the research topic explored by Faye Nelson, with artist Christine Keller and astronomer/aurora chaser, Ian Griffin. (concept image Christine Keller overlaid Ian Griffin aurora photograph).*



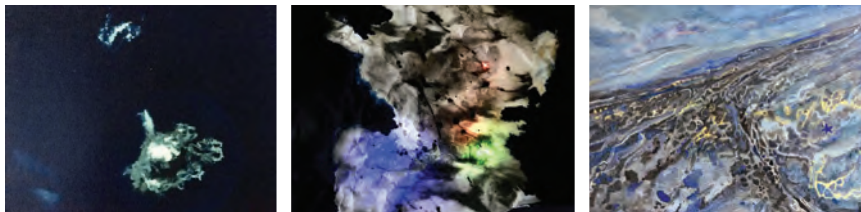
Sunrises and sunsets reveal the dramatic and picturesque effects of volcanic aerosols in the stratosphere (at around 20-25km) above New Zealand). NIWA has recorded the aerosols which originated from the plume of gas and ash that was ejected when the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano erupted in January. They have been dispersing around the globe, with concentrations spiking in the New Zealand region since mid-May.

(© Otago Daily Times, Photograph: Stephen Jaquiere, image used with permission).

From geological evidence we know that this is Earth's third and current atmosphere. The first living organisms were anaerobic and lived underwater near volcanoes, using sulphur to drive their metabolism. The Great Oxidation Event (GOE) was caused by cyanobacteria which evolved three billion years ago to use photosynthesis to capture the sun's energy. Oxygen was produced as a side product and gradually began to accumulate in Earth's atmosphere.<sup>10</sup> Photosynthesis is a complex system, but many people learned a simplified equation which encapsulates the fundamentals at school:  $\text{CO}_2 + 6 \text{H}_2\text{O} > \text{C}_6\text{H}_{12}\text{O}_6 + \text{O}_2$ . With the change in atmospheric chemistry many existing species died out. For this reason, the GOE is sometimes called the Great Oxidation Catastrophe: "Free oxygen also destroyed the ability of many nitrogen-fixing bacteria to do their thing, since oxygen tears the iron atoms at the heart of the nitrogenase enzyme."<sup>11</sup>



Cyanobacteria is the research area of botanist Tina Summerfield, who worked with Pam McKinlay on a woven light piece representing the symbiotic relationship with lichen. Another small work represented the fluorescence and fluorescence-decay of light-sensitive cells during photosynthesis in wild *Nostoc* cyanobacteria. (From left confocal microscopy of wild *Nostoc* by Tina Summerfield, Cyano-fluore video by Pam McKinlay, confocal microscopy of symbiotic *Nostoc* in lichen by Tina Summerfield, Interwoven fluochroma by PamMcKinlay, a tapestry of woven light).



Craig Cook experimented with a cyanotype process using algae to create indexical impressions on site at a location where the cyanotype-algae blooms. Samples of cyanobacteria were developed into cyanotype impressions.



"The past always sticks to the present," as author Nathan Harris puts it.<sup>12</sup> Mud and ice trap gases from deep time, and scientists have found ways of reading cores through various analytic lenses as geo-temporal texts. By unlocking the secrets of cores samples, it is possible to trace these geo-chemical timelines and the atmospheric conditions in which previous plants and organisms lived and breathed. Long-time schema are helping us prepare for our near-future atmosphere, brought about by human activity, that is upsetting the delicate balance of minor gases. Science writer Sam Kean puts the matter succinctly: "Nature simply can't bail fast enough to keep up ... Fluctuations in CO<sub>2</sub>, methane and other GHG have been responsible for climate changes over millennia, but concentrations and rate of change is faster now than geological processes such as forestation and phytoplankton can sequester."<sup>13</sup>

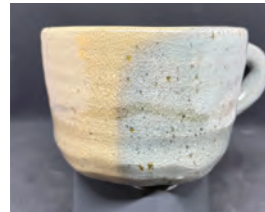


*Past atmospheric conditions are captured in the mud washed off the Southern Alps and revealed in core samples collected off the coast of South Island Fjords. Locke Unhold experimented with material from core samples, often high in iron, in clay and glaze preparations, which were then processed at elevated temperature to metamorphose into different forms of the minerals.*

## RESPIRATION: SAVE YOUR BREATH

What happens when we breathe? How do other lifeforms 'breathe'? Like the sea, our breath begins somewhere else each day. Each breath is different; "the ghosts of breaths past continue to flit around you every second of every hour, confronting you with every single breath."<sup>14</sup> We share breath with anything and everything that ever lived ... and we breathe on average 20,000 times a day. There is a thought experiment (Eurocentrically) named "Caesar's last breath" which simply asks the question, how many molecules of Caesar's last breath did we just inhale in our last breath?

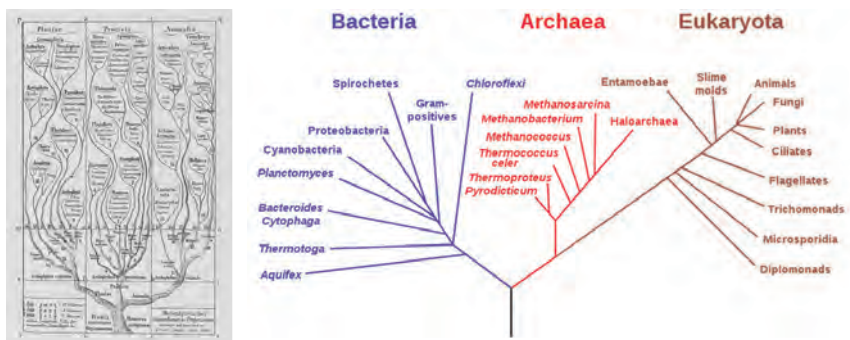
*Mike Palin (Geology Department) and Down the Rabbit Hole Art Collective made an interactive piece which acknowledged the relationship of the GOE and iron saturation to the notion of first breath drawn by animals. Visitors to the gallery sprayed the work with sea water to accentuate surface rusting in real time during the exhibition.*



*Mike Palin and Locke Unhold collaborated on another GOE project. Locke prepared several vessels with iron-rich glazes which were fired in oxidising and reduction firings to reveal the complex chemistry of these atmospheres in the kilns.*

For the purposes of the exhibition (and a younger audience), we made the subject of our question “the last moa’s breath.” The experiment assumes that there is half a litre of air in each breath (it was small moa) and that the last breath is one full litre (enough to fill a balloon five inches in diameter). The last breath when exhaled is blown away and around the globe. The whole breath is dispersed but does not disappear – its molecules remain. According to calculations, each litre of air has 25 sextillion (21 noughts) molecules which is 0 ... (19 noughts). 1 percent of all our air. At the end of some mind-blowing calculations (spoiler alert!), one molecule of the last moa’s breath will appear in our next breath and, over a day, thousands will be inhaled.<sup>15</sup>

Not all living things need air to breathe and sustain life, but all animals do. We can go without food for a week, water for a few days, but we cannot survive without breathing oxygen in our air. We do not even think to breathe. We do it automatically. But what are we breathing? The oxygen we breathe needs to be continuously replaced in our bodies. Air is a mixture of gases, but it is the oxygen in this gaseous mix that animals need to survive. For us, breathing is a process of gas exchange. The oxygen in the air we inhale moves from the lungs to the blood, and at the same time carbon dioxide gas moves from our blood to be exhaled.



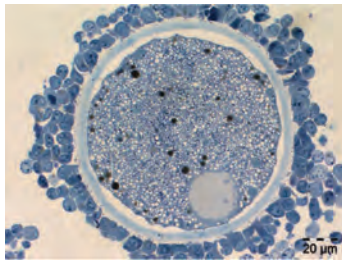
Photosynthesising cyanobacteria not only changed the geochemistry of the planet, they transformed the tree of life, enabling development opportunities for multicellular life on Earth as we know it now, including plants and animals. These were the first breaths to be taken on Earth. (image Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919). See also a modern phylogenetic tree, showing the three life domains: bacteria, archaea, and eukaryota. (images Wikimedia commons).



Artist Heramaahina Eketone, worked with ASPIRE 2025 (Research for a tobacco-free Aotearoa) research led by Janet Hoek, looking at notions of hauora and being smoke-free through a Te Ao Māori lens.

We got a sense of the mechanics of breathing in the tomography of lungs and oxygen delivery in a work by Sophie White, Scientist, Lab technician, preparator, dissector.

“Our bodies, suffused with atmospheres, ancestors and chemical compounds produced by sunlight, are ‘meterontological,’” according to Janine Randerson. “We are the weather.”<sup>16</sup> A clutch of tuatara eggs will have their sex determined after they are laid by the environmental conditions they experience, including air temperature and humidity. If temperatures in the nest are high, then the eggs will hatch as male. Animals also owe a debt to another aerobic pioneer called mitochondria. Each of our cells contain mitochondria which use oxygen to extract the chemical energy from sugars like glucose. We need a constant supply of oxygen to supply our mitochondrial batteries from the very first hint of life. Nano-research into mitochondria looks at the causes of human embryo failure, triggered by changes in mitochondrial form (which affects vital function).



*“Dreaming of Oocytes” was a collaborative artwork made by artists Vivien Dwyer and Andrea Muggeridge with scientist Karen Reader using bead and wire-work and tiny felted balls. Their collaborative creation was based on the nano microscopy of Karen Reader. (image: light microscope image of a section through a sheep oocyte surrounded by cumulus cells.)*

## PHOTOSYNTHESIS: BREATH-TAKING SPLENDOURS AND THE WOOD-WIDE WEB

In the top six inches of the forest floor lies a vast and flourishing communication system as old as photosynthesis itself. This is where we find an exquisitely balanced symbiotic relationship between mycorrhizal fungi and tree roots which provide a network of channels for resources and messages between individual trees. The resulting plant chatter is as complex and efficient as our own worldwide web. In recent research, biologists have discovered the existence of Mother trees: larger, older specimens that, with the help of their fungi, serve as system hubs in life and as nutrient sources in death. This mycorrhizal network thus connects and stabilizes the forest, and by extension, our entire planet's biosphere. (Lorraine Roy)<sup>17</sup>

Living things also need nitrogen to make new cells, but they cannot take it directly from the nitrogen gas in the air. As a result, we all live in symbiosis with other life-forms that can convert atmospheric nitrogen into usable forms – including those living organisms we rely on for photosynthesis (and once again our oxygen production). The unique ecology and biology of tree–fungi relationships shows that there is so much more to the world of plants than what we can see. Hidden in the soil, tangled among the tree roots, is the “wood-wide-web” of fungi that both take energy and give energy to the trees. Trees need the fungi and the fungi need the trees.<sup>18</sup> They live in a complex entanglement of relationship to each other – in cooperation, mutuality, support and alliance.

Suzanne Simard's book *Finding the Mother Tree* is one woman's story of discovery regarding the incredible mutualism unfolding under our forests. It is more efficient for a plant to invest in cultivating fungi than growing more roots, because fungal walls are thin, lack cellulose and lignin and require far less energy to make:

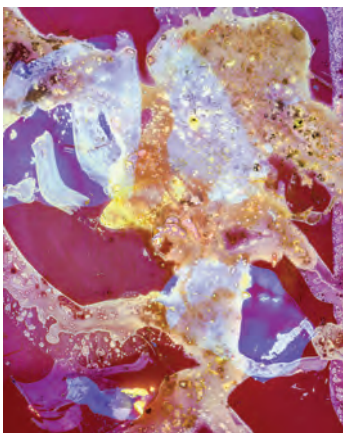
The mycorrhizal fungal threads grow between the cells of the plant roots in a web around each plant cell. The plant passes the photosynthetic sugars through its cell walls to the adjacent fungal cell. The fungus needs this sugary meal to grow its network of fungal threads through the soil to pick up water and nutrients. The fungus is a co-operator; a mediator; a helper.<sup>19</sup>



Large areas of Te Wai Pounamu are covered in native southern beech forest (*Nothofagus*). There are many hundreds of species of native mycorrhizal mushrooms associated with these including purple pouch fungus varieties.

David Orlovich's research, focussing on symbiotic fungi, is explored in the etched-glass work of Danielle Munro (concept drawing above).

Thomas Lord also responded to David Orlovich's research, using the indexical qualities of camera-less photography to grow mycelium onto 4 x 5 inch colour sheet film which he buried in the forest and then developed and printed. Film was buried in the forest under the spot where a mushroom had been collected so it was most likely the same mycelium interacting with the film surface (above right).



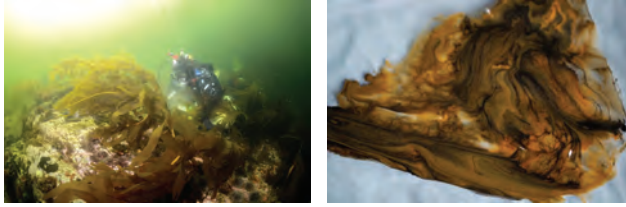
In another work Thomas collected *Russula* from the forest, cloned specimens using a petrie dish and then transferred onto the film for a month, before processing and printing.

(image: Thomas Lord photo, *Russula*, 2022).

## FLOW | AUTOFLUORESCENCE

We think of terrestrial trees and plants as the "lungs of the Earth," providing a kind of essential bio-service for us as photosynthesising oxygen producers and air scrubbers. However, every second breath we take was made in the ocean. Marine macro-algae, seaweeds, are photosynthetic aquatic organisms vital to the functioning of our marine ecosystems, not only for gas exchange but by providing habitat and crucial nursery environments. In Te Ao Māori, Hinemoana was the creator of all forms of seaweed, critical in the whakapapa of all shellfish and kai moana.<sup>20</sup>

There are three main types of macroalgae, differentiated by pigment: green, brown and red. They are not closely related and have different evolutionary paths, but have similar physical characteristics because of the environment they share.<sup>21</sup> They vary enormously in size, shape and growth. The smallest macroalgae can only be properly seen with a microscope, whereas giant kelp can form massive forests reaching for more than 30m. There are an estimated 48 species of introduced seaweeds now flourishing in New Zealand waters. Of these, *Undaria pinnatifida*, a species highly valued for food in Asia,<sup>22</sup> is not welcome in our waters. Because of its size, ability to live in a wide range of habitats and its reproductive output, *Undaria* is outcompeting our native species.



*Teina Ellia made flowing painted works which responded to Gaby Keeler's research on the invasive kelp *Undaria pinnatifida*. *Undaria* can slowly monopolise reef space and resources by outcompeting native seaweeds, which can eventually alter the ecosystem. Gaby's research shows it may be possible to reduce this impact by divers manually removing the invader from the reef, thus slowing the spread of *Undaria* in our harbours and along our coastlines. Seaweeds are ecosystem engineers that provide structure and oxygen to the underwater world.*

Our marine environments are also at the mercy of air quality including the consequences of ocean acidification. While we have become familiar with the devastation caused by bleaching in coral reefs, there are also grave consequences deriving from an increase in average ocean temperatures and localised marine heat waves on the unsung photosynthesising heroes of the seas: the phytoplankton. In 2018, a species of plankton, *Syracosphaera azurea*, was named after the television series *Blue Planet* and its world-renowned narrator Sir David Attenborough, who stated, "If you said that plankton, the phytoplankton, the green oxygen-producing plankton in the oceans is more important to our atmosphere than the whole of the rainforest, which I think is true, people would be astonished."<sup>23</sup>



*In "Too Hot to Handle," with scientist Linn Hoffman (Botany), the importance of photosynthesising phytoplankton and effects of elevated carbon dioxide levels on coccosphere form and function was explored in a community outreach piece (Pam McKinlay photo and 3D model by James Perrelet<sup>24</sup>, printing by William Early). Creative workshops were facilitated by Vivien Dwyer (crochet cocco workshop) and Finn McKinlay (origami cocco workshop).*



*"There's a crack in my Ocean" looked at Grace Duke's PhD research on diatom based reconstruction of ocean environment and circumpolar changes with effects on the Southern Ocean. Cooling and warming effects on sea ice affected the position of the polar front with corresponding shifts in atmospheric conditions during the warm period of the Pliocene, when carbon dioxide levels were at ~400ppm. Down the Rabbit Hole Art Collective 2022 (Pam McKinlay, with technical assistance from Brendon Monson 3D modelling and printing, Locke Unhold glazing. Image: work in progress).*



## TIAKINA TE ĀNGI | PROTECT OUR AIR

The air we breathe, the water we drink, the soil we grow our food in and the raw materials we make our shelter from, are all under threat as shifts in greenhouse gases change our atmosphere, with catastrophic consequences. The Art+Science exhibition gives audiences an opportunity to negotiate the implications of scientific reasoning through a narrative lens, allowing the viewer to engage with these realities at their own pace and from the bedrock of their own cultural background and experience. The answers we seek are blowing in the wind. Each artwork in "AIR: Life's a Gas" draw our attention to our intimate relationship with air. Their stories demand that we turn our attention urgently to global atmospheric changes that are driving us dangerously close to our planetary boundaries.

We currently also find ourselves in a pandemic where the threat is more personal. Covid-19 is the result of our unsatiated encroachment into wild. A silent assassin has left the wild places and the viral lion is at the door. As it invades our collective air cavities, it makes bold inroads into our collective consciousness. Across the world, as we relentlessly destroy natural habitats and disable essential bio-eco services, we need to take stock of what we are doing to ourselves. Will we remember when this current crisis passes, and we can breathe more easily, that we are not separate and *apart* from, but a *part* of a global system which we call nature.

The sky has no borders, so I will leave the last word to a public health message that appears on the giant screen in Beijing's Tiananmen Square when red alerts are posted for high pollution levels:

保护大气环境人人有责

*protecting the atmospheric environment is everyone's responsibility*<sup>25</sup>

The Art+Science Project 2022 team was led by Pam McKinlay from the Dunedin School of Art, with the assistance of Dr Jenny Rock and others.

**Pam McKinlay** (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1731-6437>) is an art historian with work and research experience in applied science, art and in publishing. Her work is concerned with the transference of ideas and knowledge – the process and practice of making, and the process and practice of making available to the public important findings in contemporary science via the various platforms she supports. She is the curator of the Art+Science project.

### Acknowledgement:

**Dr Jenny Rock** has been involved with the Art+Science Project for many years in different roles: as co-coordinator; researcher (examining its collaborative effects on artists, scientists, and the viewing public), social art practitioner for public works, and as an artist. She has an interdisciplinary background in biological science and the arts/humanities, and is an applied and academic researcher in both spaces - often focusing on their integration.



- 1 Christina Grammatikopoulou, "Remembering the Air: Luce Irigaray's Ontology of Breath," *interartive*, <https://interartive.org/2014/05/irigaray-air>.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Anne Salmond, *Tears of Rangī: Experiments across Worlds* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2017), 13. Hau is the force that drives the entire world, not just human relations.
- 4 The Art+Science initiative was originated by Peter Stupples (Dunedin School of Art) and Ruth Napper (University of Otago) in 2013. Prompted by an annual theme, artists and scientists in specific disciplines share their ideas and experience, and produce an exhibition based on their resulting collaborations. The aim of the project has always been creative cooperation – not the illustration of scientific research.
- 5 Peter Moore, *The Weather Experiment: The Pioneers who Sought to See the Future* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux), introduction.
- 6 Robert Sapolsky, 22. *Emergence and Complexity*, Stanford University, Biology 101, 21 May 2010, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o\\_ZuWbX-CyE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_ZuWbX-CyE).
- 7 Edward N Lorenz, "Predictability; Does the Flap of a Butterfly's Wings in Brazil Set off a Tornado in Texas?," paper presented at the American Association for the Advancement of Science, 139th Meeting, 29 December 1972, [https://eapsweb.mit.edu/sites/default/files/Butterfly\\_1972.pdf](https://eapsweb.mit.edu/sites/default/files/Butterfly_1972.pdf).
- 8 NASA, "NASA Ozone Watch," <https://ozonewatch.gsfc.nasa.gov/facts/dobson.html>. The average amount of ozone in the atmosphere is roughly 300 Dobson Units, equivalent to a layer three millimetres (0.12 inches) thick – the height of 2 pennies stacked together.
- 9 Sam Kean, *Caesar's Last Breath: The Epic Story of the Air around Us* (New York: Doubleday, 2017). The term "atmosphere" was coined by astronomer and mathematician Willebrord Snellius (1580-1626) to refer to the gaseous sphere enveloping Earth and other planets.
- 10 Kean, *Caesar's Last Breath*. As the keenly observant will notice, the end sugar contains six oxygens. "More to the point, it contains just six of the 18 oxygens available at the beginning. Conservation of mass says that atoms can neither be created nor destroyed, so we can conclude from this that photosynthesis must produce free oxygen gas (O<sub>2</sub>) as a by-product."
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 "Nathan Harris: Intimate Civil War Tale Treads New Ground," interview by Kim Hill, Saturday Morning, RNZ, 23 October 2021, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/saturday/audio/2018817601/nathan-harris-intimate-civil-war-tale-treads-new-ground>.
- 13 Kean, *Caesar's Last Breath*, 316.
- 14 Ibid., 1-14.
- 15 Ibid..
- 16 Cited in Carol Brown, "The Air between Us," *Performing Ecologies*, [https://static-cdn.edit.site/users-files/dcc4ea29081b5fdb9f330e0b0ddde4aa/theair-betweenus\\_performing-ecologies\(2\).pdf?dl=1](https://static-cdn.edit.site/users-files/dcc4ea29081b5fdb9f330e0b0ddde4aa/theair-betweenus_performing-ecologies(2).pdf?dl=1).
- 17 "Gallery – Woven Woods 2017-2022," Lorraine Roy Art Textiles, <https://www.lroyart.com/gallery.php?cat=28>.
- 18 Suzanne Simard, *Finding the Mother Tree: Uncovering the Wisdom and Intelligence of the Forest* (London: Allen Lane, 2021), 60.
- 19 Ibid., 232.
- 20 Elsdon Best, *Maori Religion and Mythology Part 2: Origin of Shellfish, Etc*, <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz/tm/scholarly/tei-Bes02Reli-t1-body-d4-d3-d8.html>.
- 21 Wendy Nelson, *New Zealand Seaweeds: An Illustrated Guide* (Wellington: Te Papa Press, 2020), 118.
- 22 Miek Zwamborn, *Seaweed: An Enchanting Miscellany*, trans. Michele Hutchison (Vancouver, BC: Greystone Books, 2020), 125. Each April 14 a seaweed festival is held in Uto, Japan, in honour of Dr Kathleen Drew-Baker, who is honoured as "The Mother of the Sea" in Japan for her work on nori, from her study of *Porphyra umbilicalis* in Wales. The British algologist unravelled the complex reproductive cycle of red seaweed in a private seaside lab, work which led to the commercial cultivation of nori.
- 23 David Shukman, "Plankton Named after BBC Blue Planet Series," *BBC News*, 17 April 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-43796939>.
- 24 Jamie Perrelet, 3D printing file "3D Printing the Long Term Carbon Cycle", <https://www.fractalteapot.com/portfolio/3d-printing-carbon-cycle/>, Printing by William Early. Acknowledgement to Lynn Taylor of the Sandpit Collective (Lynn Taylor and Jenny Rock) for assistance with file. Lynn was part of an earlier project in Art+Oceans, 2018.
- 25 "Beijing Watches Fake Sunrise on Video Screen amid Smog Emergency (PHOTOS)," *Huffington Post*, 17 January 2014, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/01/17/beijing-fake-sunrise\\_n\\_4618536.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/01/17/beijing-fake-sunrise_n_4618536.html).

## EXCITED OXYGEN – LIFE EXISTS HERE

Faye Nelson and Christine Keller



Figure 1. Aurora beams viewed from Taieri (Taieri) Mouth, August 2014. Photograph: Ian Griffin.

For this Art+Science project (whose theme was air), we look to auroras where excited atmospheric gases light up the night sky. In Ōtepoti Dunedin we often see the top of distant aurora australis over the horizon, through the near-vertical auroral beams (Figure 1). When we see these we are looking at Earth's magnetic field (Figure 2).

Auroras require three components: stellar wind (or plasma), a planetary magnetic field and atmospheric gases.<sup>1</sup> Solar plasma (itself an interplanetary magnetic field) hits the magnetosphere enveloping and protecting Earth's atmosphere; charged particles then spiral down magnetic field lines and penetrate Earth's atmosphere, exciting atmospheric gases. As the excited gases relax back to their lower energy state, they emit light.

Following the introductory Art+Air meeting, scientists and artists visit each other's spaces. On visiting weaver Christine Keller's Dunedin's LoomRoom, paleomagnetist Faye Nelson was struck by how the warp threads on the floor looms looked like magnetic field lines. Paleomagnetists study Earth's changing magnetic field as recorded by rocks and sediments. Ferrimagnetic minerals such as magnetite ( $\text{Fe}_3\text{O}_4$ ) – an iron oxide – act as tiny compasses, locking the magnetic field vector (strength and direction) into the geologic record.

Christine had glow-in-the-dark thread from Germany in her inventory, which called for an aurora-related weaving project. Glow-in-the-dark thread is treated with a phosphorescent substance that absorbs light and then releases it over time after the light source has been removed. In a way, phosphorescence is like remanent magnetism, the fundamental process behind paleomagnetism, in that magnetisation is retained even after the magnetic field is removed.

Christine visited the Otago Paleomagnetic Research Facility at the University of Otago, where she immediately felt at home reading the three-dimensional vector diagrams portraying the Earth's past magnetic field. Recalling the description of charged particles spiralling down magnetic field lines, Christine thought of the weave structures of the twill family, with visible diagonals in the way that the two-thread system's warp and weft cross each other.

## EARTH'S MAGNETISM

Both geomagnetic storms and magnetic polarity transitions push auroras to lower latitudes. Earth's magnetic field is generated by a geodynamo – the fluid motion of Earth's liquid iron outer core. According to the geocentric axial dipole (GAD) model, Earth's 'bar magnet,' when averaged over tens of thousands of years, is aligned to Earth's spin axis. Thus, inclination (the dip angle) can be derived from latitude ( $I$ ) using the formula  $\tan I = 2 \tan \lambda$ .

Ōtepoti Dunedin's GAD inclination is  $-64$  degrees (the negative sign indicates that the field is pointing outward, the current, normal polarity in the Southern Hemisphere). However, Earth's magnetic poles are constantly wandering, and Earth's geomagnetic field is not aligned with Earth's spin axis (Figure 2). According to the International Geomagnetic Reference Field (IGRF-13) model, the field at Ōtepoti Dunedin in 2022 is inclined to  $-70$  degrees.<sup>3</sup> If a strong solar flare hits Earth, we may see that  $70$ -degree angle reflected in the auroral beams over Dunedin. Earth's dipole field (Figure 2) has weakened, and the magnetic poles have travelled to the opposite polar region at various times throughout geological history. Recent full transitions have taken as long as twelve thousand years.<sup>4</sup> At some point in the future a geomagnetic pole may move over Ōtepoti Dunedin, and steep auroral beams will light up our night sky.

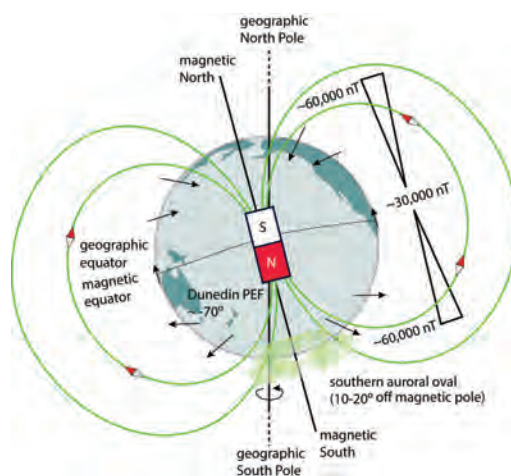


Figure 2. Earth's inclined geomagnetic field.<sup>2</sup>

## EXCITED OXYGEN

The source of the auroral green at 557.7 nm on the visible light spectrum was not known until 1925, when physicists Gordon Shrum and John McLennan reproduced the spectral green line in the cryogenic laboratory at the University of Toronto, when they discovered it to be oxygen.<sup>5</sup> Green auroras predominate due to free oxygen – produced via photosynthesis – in Earth's atmosphere at 100–150 km altitude. Auroras' sub-polar lights are like neon crowns signalling "life exists here" on this planet.<sup>6</sup>

## ARTIST'S RESPONSE

### Christine Keller

After initial discussions with Faye, my challenge was to create a wall hanging that depicted our aurora as it appears in the local night sky. Weaving is the crossing of thread systems, warp and wefts. I responded to the verticals and relevant angles of -70 and -64 degrees in the aurora and, using phosphorescent materials in combination with opaque ones, created weave structures which were emphasised in the diagonal. This was done on an AVL 24-shaft Compu-Dobby loom. I used locally grown and spun wool from Milton and twine produced in the now defunct Donaghy's Rope and Twine factory to keep to the local story.

The work *Excited Oxygen* was viewed in a dark space to accentuate the effect of the 'glow-in-the-dark' yarn, as if encountering an aurora in the Dunedin night sky – as many are encouraged to do by Otago Museum's director and aurora-hunter Ian Griffin.

A smaller version of the piece was shown in the entrance so that people could appreciate the fabric structure in the light, as only the phosphorescent effects would be visible in the dark space.



Figure 3. Christine Keller, concept image for Art+Air Project.  
Photograph: Ian Griffin.

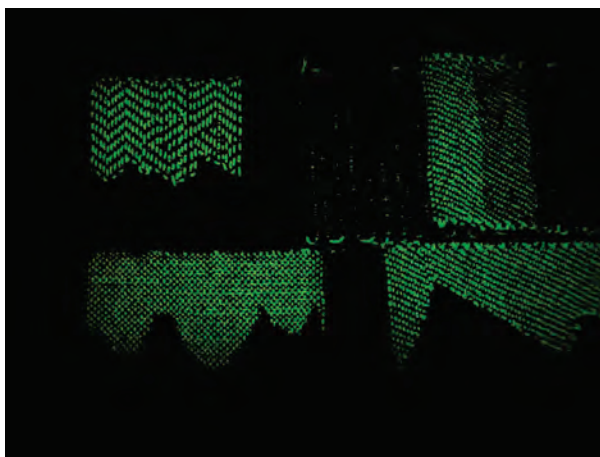
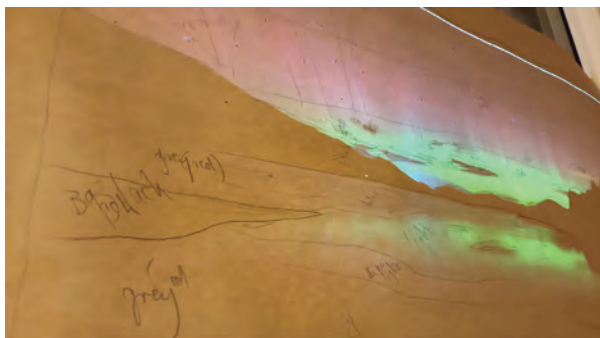


Figure 4 & 5. Christine Keller, Exploratory work in progress.

German-born, New Zealand-based artist **Christine Keller** holds an MFA from Concordia University (2004) in Montreal, Canada, and a Masters equivalent from Gesamthochschule Uni Kassel (1994), Germany. Christine has exhibited her award-winning work nationally and internationally since 1987. She was the academic leader of the Textile Section of Dunedin School of Art at Otago Polytechnic from 2005 to 2010. In late 2012 she founded the Dunedin-based weaving studio Weaving on Hillingdon, and in 2015 the community space known as Dunedin's LoomRoom.

**Faye Nelson** (<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6241-0628>) is a geologist and technician at the Otago Paleomagnetism Research Facility (Department of Geology, University of Otago). This is Faye's second Art+Science project.

- 1 M Windridge, *Aurora: In search of the Northern Lights* (London: William Collins, 2016).
- 2 Diagram redrawn from MW McElhinny, *Palaeomagnetism and Plate Tectonics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973). World Data Center for Geomagnetism, Kyoto, "Model field at a point by IGRF (IGRF-13)," <https://wdc.kugi.kyoto-u.ac.jp/igrf/point/index.html> (accessed 1 May 2022).
- 3 F E Nelson, GS Wilson and H I Neil, "Sediment Flux Variability during the Last 1.8 Ma, Hokitika Canyon, New Zealand," manuscript in preparation.
- 4 H Kragh, "The Green Line: A Chapter in the History of Auroral Physics," *Astronomy & Geophysics*, 50:5 (2009), 5.25–5.28.
- 5 S-I Akasofu, *Exploring the Secrets of the Aurora*, 2nd ed. (New York: Springer, 2007).

## A LITTLE MORE MAGENTA

Mark Bolland and Rachel Hope Allan

PHOTO Alumni Show  
DUNEDIN SCHOOL OF ART GALLERY  
ŌTEPOTI  
20 September – 1 October 2021

**Exhibiting artists:** Alysha Bailey, Robyn Bardas, Emily Crooks, Lucy Fulford, Emily Hlaváč Green, Thomas Lord, Alex Lovell-Smith, Kevin Miles, Kristin O'Sullivan Peren (KOP), Dallas Robertson, Jessie-Lee Robertson, Kate van der Drift, Hayley Walmsey

**Curated by:** Mark Bolland and Rachel H Allan

### WORKING:AGAINST THE GRAIN

"A Little More Magenta" was born on the floor of a windowless office, coffee in hand, a global pandemic at our door. It was to be an alumni exhibition, symposium and workshop series that showcased the many and varied talents of our photography graduates.

The original working title was "Against the Grain," and the brief was open, our only stipulation being that the work had to have been completed after graduation. We received proposals from New York, Auckland and Gibston Valley, Otaki and Ōtepoti Dunedin.

While it was obvious from the outset that we had a show, the prospect of holding a symposium and conducting public workshops quickly became another casualty of the global pandemic. In our 'photo bubble,' we pushed photocopies of the submissions around the table, grouped them into piles, separated them and then regrouped again. We did this in our coffee breaks, between online supervision sessions and, finally, by video call.

With the installation date rapidly approaching, we crossed our fingers, hoping that works stuck between islands or at framers would miraculously show up. Our back-up plan was to print the works that failed to arrive in-house ourselves.



Figure 1. Catalogue for "A Little More Magenta."  
Published by MRT Press, Dunedin, New Zealand,  
with support from Otago Polytechnic.



All the images in "A Little More Magenta" highlighted the importance of looking, the importance of time, the importance of light. From darkrooms and scanners, polaroids and photograms the poetic character of image-capturing reverberated. So too did the importance of just a little more magenta ...

## IN UNDER ONE HUNDRED WORDS: WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT MAGENTA? OR, AN ODE TO TRIAMINOTRIPHENYL CARBONIUM CHLORIDE

There is no wavelength of light  
That corresponds to purplish-red, reddish-purple or mauvish crimson,  
so loved by Gauguin and Matisse.  
And technically speaking,  
That colour of a flamingo,  
The Ode line,  
And arguably the best character in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*,  
doesn't actually exist.  
But there is always room for a little more magenta.  
My Fuschine friend,  
Baptised in blood,  
Seen as #FF00FF on our screens.  
That peculiar physiologically and psychologically perceived hue.  
The big M in cMyk.  
The R & B without the G  
Oh, how we would be lost without you.  
Magenta.

Rachel H Allan

## MAGENTA

When I was a photography student, I learnt how to recognise colour casts in prints. I was lucky enough to have a friend in my class who had been a professional printer. We would take our prints from the darkroom to the window at the end of the corridor and he would say "It's a little too magenta, put three green in it," or "It's too green, put a little more magenta in it." Photography students learn how to see 'photographically'. They see like the camera sees – the world flattened, framed and cut up into segments, always from a single, stationary, vantage point. They see how to draw attention to something by bringing it into sharp focus, and how to move attention away from it by blurring. They may even start to see everything in shades of grey or in cyan, magenta and yellow.

When you study photography, you start to see how different photographs are from the way we see and experience the world, but also how individual and subjective a photograph can be. You learn how routine, similar and prescribed most photographs are, too. And you learn to try to get as far away from those everyday photos as you can. As a photography student, you will frequently encounter incredulity. People will stare aghast when you tell them what you are studying. As if to say, "Everyone does that all the time, without a degree or even trying," or "Have you seen my Insta?" Photography students try to find more and more creative ways to politely say, "But most photographs are sooo boring. Mine aren't."

## Capture and Release

Photography is always a two-part process, input followed by output, capture and release. Curating and installing an exhibition of alumni work brought new meanings to these ideas, whilst also feeling like a not-too-distant echo of the exercises and conversations shared by photography teachers and students. Photography teachers spend a lot of time encouraging students to make images more carefully, to slow down and pay attention to the details. Equally, editing and sequencing are something that photography teachers and students spend a lot of time on. Here the first part was already done and, with the students already gone, it was left to the teachers to concentrate on the second part. Some images needed printing, with all the considerations of scale and material that entails, and this was often done as a negotiation, with an absent artist specifying their requirements by remote control.

The real joy, though, was in the curating and sequencing of the show. Images that had no connection to one another; beyond their makers' status as 'alumni,' were introduced to each other and asked to become acquainted. Like matchmakers, we tried various pairings and combinations, hoping that some would spark. The work of syntax is frequently overlooked by both art and art history, where the emphasis is often on the single image, and also by popular culture and media, where images are often grouped chronologically, algorithmically, thoughtlessly. Syntax is essential to meaning making in photography, as it is in curation, but sequencing is also a balancing act, a negotiation between prose and poetry. Here we lent more to the latter and were inspired by the preponderance of fluid forms and the focus-less-ness so beloved of the camera-eye to create a wobbly skein of pictures. Free birds flying briefly in formation.

## Mark Bolland

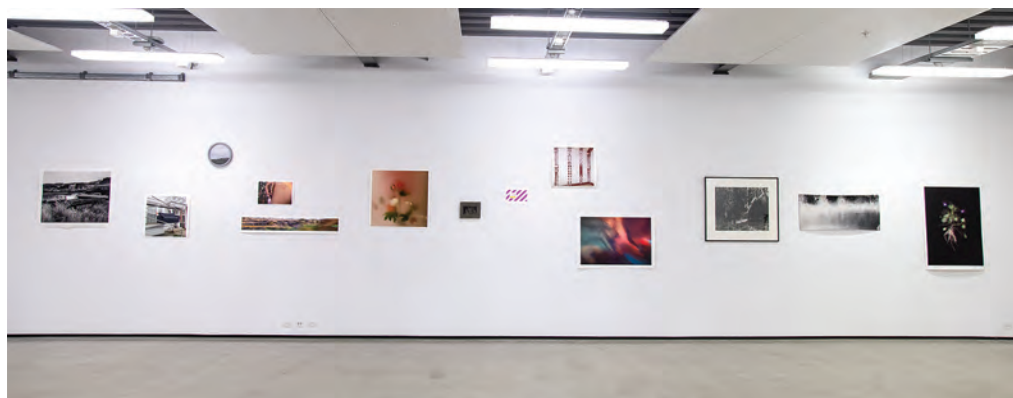


Figure 2. "A Little More Magenta," installation view. Photograph: Thomas Lord.

**Mark Bolland** (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5647-1683>) is a principal lecturer in photography at the Dunedin School of Art, Otago Polytechnic. Originally from the UK, he is a teacher, writer and artist. In parallel with teaching and exhibiting artwork, he has written essays for books and exhibition catalogues, as well as many articles for journals and magazines.

**Rachel Hope Allan** (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1624-6457>) is an artist, educator and writer based in Ōtepoti. She has a Master of Fine Art (Distinction) from the Dunedin School of Art, where she is a principal lecturer in photography. Rachel exhibits nationally and internationally, most recently in "Postcards from Europe" at Cambridge University, UK (2022), "Gift" at Ashburton Art Gallery (2022), and the Auckland Festival of Photography (2021). Allan's photobooks are held in public collections in Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

Figure 3.  
Alysha Bailey,  
*Heartsease*, 2021,  
digital ink-jet print on  
Epson Hot Press Bright,  
1016 × 711.2mm.



Figure 4.  
Dallas Robertson,  
*Work #2, "Candid"*, 2021,  
concrete, resin, screenprint,  
200 × 255mm.

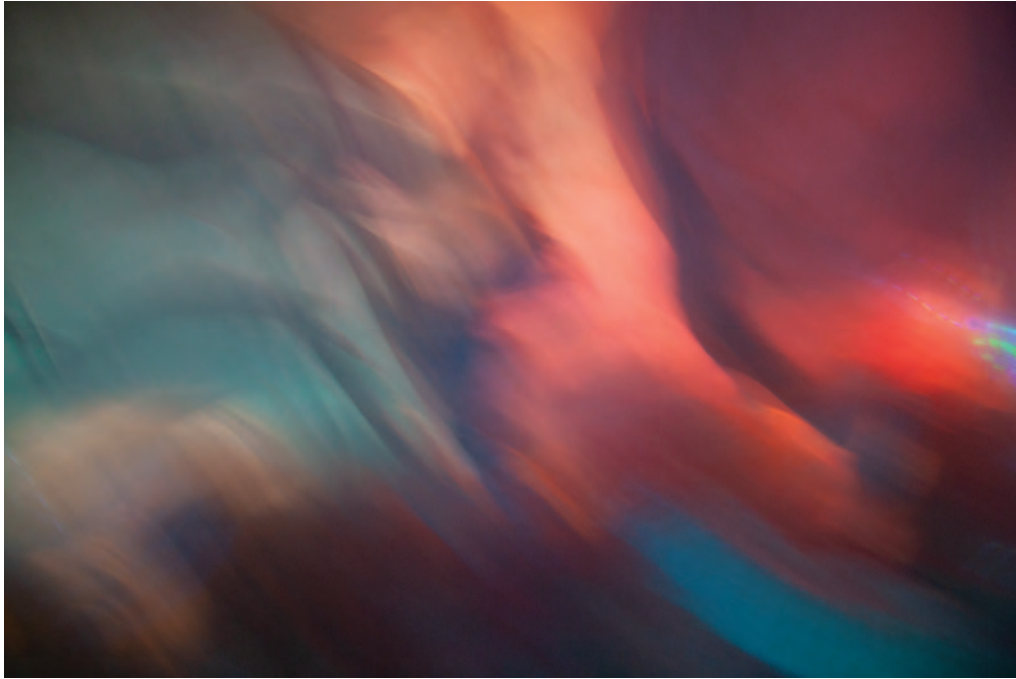


Figure 5. Kristin O'Sullivan Peren, *Places of Trauma: Clouded*, 2021, digital ink-jet print on Epson Hot Press Bright, 1000 × 680mm.

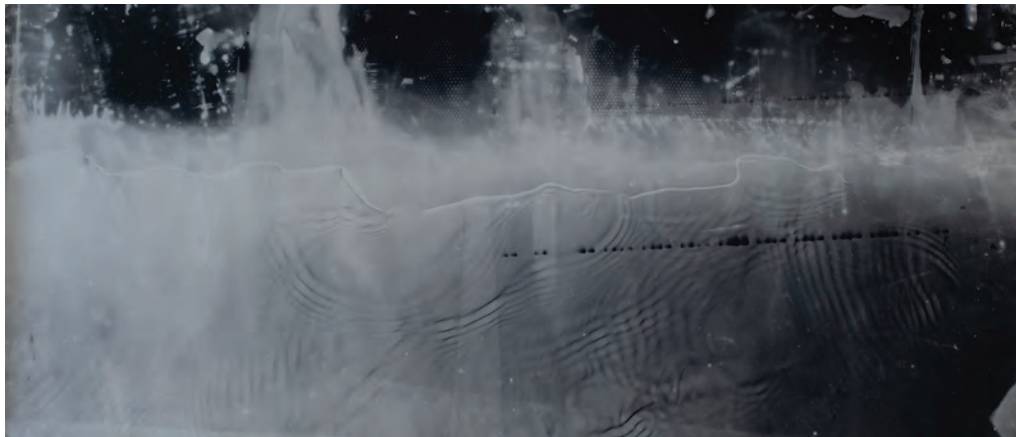


Figure 6. Kevin Miles, *Procession #2, Te Whanganui-a-Tara*, 2021, gelatin silver photogram, 460 × 1060mm.

## THREADS OF SURVIVAL

Megan Griffiths

### Threads

*A theme or characteristic running throughout a situation or piece of writing.<sup>1</sup>*

*Hanging by a Thread: To be in a very dangerous situation or state: to be very close to death, failure, etc.<sup>2</sup>*

### Survival

*The state or fact of continuing to live or exist, typically in spite of an accident, ordeal, or difficult circumstances.<sup>3</sup>*

The dissertation and artworks for my Masters degree are from the four stages of my "ordeal" – pain, medication, addiction and withdrawal. The start of this entire saga (for it seemed like a long-running soap opera at the time) was the pain that came with a lumbar discectomy. As my pain increased over time, I went from codeine to morphine and eventually oxycodone. In the space of 20 days in January 2019, I went from taking 60mg of oxycodone per day to taking 480mg per day.

In March that year, two significant events happened. Firstly, after a fall I was X-rayed on my right side. The doctor came back to me with the stunning diagnosis that my right hip had been destroyed by osteoarthritis in less than three years, and that I needed an immediate hip replacement before my hip collapsed. I really thought he was exaggerating how badly I needed the operation; however he wasn't, and I got my operation only six weeks after diagnosis.

The second thing that happened, as a result of the anaesthetic assessment I had had for my back operation (yes – I still needed that as well!), was that the anaesthetist indicated that he was unsure how well they would be able to control my pain post-operatively as I was on such a high dosage of narcotics. The sudden requirement for me to have an urgent hip replacement operation induced my GP to reduce the amount of oxycodone I was taking.

The result of this was that the first day after I started taking a reduced dose I ended up in the Emergency Department having my first taste of withdrawal symptoms. Between then and July, I got a taste of a multitude of withdrawal symptoms, some mild and some nasty.

In the week before Easter in April 2019, I had my hip replacement, and my initial relief that a lot of my pain was gone was tempered by having excruciating pain above my right knee after surgery. This seemed to be some type of muscular pain, but despite all the narcotics I was given nothing helped. The first 48 hours of pain were the worst, but I had the same excruciating pain on moving my right leg for about a month.

This then, was where I was at when I started on my *Threads of Survival* journey.

## PAIN

*An unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage or described in terms of such damage.*

International Association for the Study of Pain<sup>4</sup>

Lying in bed in the hospital in severe pain, when I closed my eyes all I could see was black with red lines. This was the basis for my artwork on pain.

After a period of recovery, I decided to express what I had experienced in hospital through a small artwork consisting of six A5 sized pages in a concertina format. I used a black cotton background and red thread, cord and ribbon for the lines. I hoped that this might help me get over the experience. This book became the maquette for my larger work *Six Days of Pain*.

The panels each represent one of the six days I was in hospital – from Monday (when I had surgery) to Saturday. The six panels show a visual scale of the pain I was in. The density of the colour represents the amount of pain I felt, while the height of the panels represents time. Each piece was then stretched onto a canvas. Stretching these as one would a painting elevates them to be viewed more as an artwork than a textile work – but, for me, the stretching symbolises the tension that comes with the pain, as if I am on tenterhooks waiting for the pain to return.

The background material was a viscose/lycra blend. It had a slight stretch, but was backed with interfacing to keep it stable. I collected a selection of the brightest red threads, ribbons and cords that I could find, including some with sparkle, and these were then either sewn or couched onto each of the six panels.

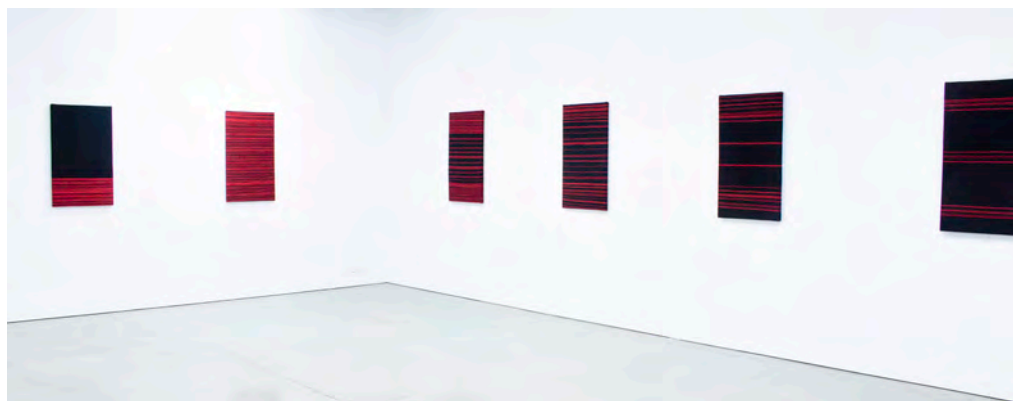


Figure 1. Megan Griffiths, *Six Days of Pain*, 2019, fabric, threads, ribbon, cord, 960 x 3300mm. Photograph: Tracy Griffiths.

Why do people create art showing their pain? By sharing their art with the world, artists are able to work through their pain, externalising it, lifting pain out of the ordinary and giving it value. Pain as a theme is not new, but my project about the depiction of my pain is mine alone. Early art depicting pain mostly show scenes from the Bible, or the lives of later saints and martyrs. Artists did not paint their own pain, but rather the pain of others. In the twentieth-first century, art about pain is more personal. Some artists have used self-portraits to show personal pain, while other artists have used more abstract art to show concepts of pain.



## MEDICATION

*Sometimes I say the medication is even tougher than the illness.*

Sanya Richards-Ross<sup>5</sup>

When I first had back pain I was given paracetamol and ibuprofen. Paracetamol is classed as a multi-purpose pain medication, and very rarely has side effects. Ibuprofen is a NSAID – a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medication – which some people can take easily, and others suffer severe side effects.

When these two pain medication no longer controlled the pain, I was given codeine, which belongs to the class of drugs called opioids. These originated from the opium poppy. The first opioid was created in 1760 and called “laudanum.”<sup>16</sup> This ubiquitous substance was prolifically used throughout the Victorian era. Once codeine no longer worked, I went onto morphine, and finally to oxycodone. The strength of opioid drugs is measured in morphine equivalents: morphine = 1, codeine = 0.15 and oxycodone = 1.5. There is no cap on the daily dose of these drugs that can be prescribed.

One of the most difficult things I had to cope with was how often the dosage of my prescriptions changed, especially oxycodone. I had so much trouble remembering to take the pills at the right times and in the correct amounts that I bought two things to help; the first was a notebook divided into days, documenting the times at which the long-acting and short-acting pills were to be taken. The second was a smart watch so I could programme in the times to take the medications each day.

My artwork *Scripted* came about from my interest in what medications I had taken. I put the list of medications in a spreadsheet, adding a new column each time my prescription changed. The result, when shown in size order, looked like a skyscraper – the more medication I took, the taller the building. I decided to call this *Scripted*, as a play on the fact that prescriptions are also called scripts and that script is another term for handwriting, which is why I chose a font type that looked handwritten. The final piece is 7.5 metres long, with almost 50 columns. The drug names are embroidered by backstitch onto the background; however, due to the size of the piece and the 2020 lockdown, only part of the length was embroidered. The final piece had the look of the skyline of a major city, with the lists of medications looking like 3-D tower blocks, especially those housing “Big Pharma” companies.

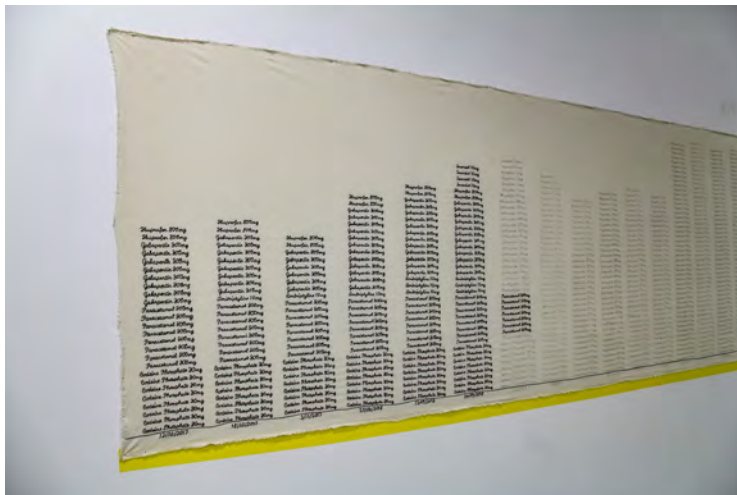


Figure 2. Megan Griffiths, *Scripted*, 2020, calico, black thread, safety tape, 7500 x 970mm. Photograph: Pam McKinlay.

## ADDICTION

*"As with other opioids, tolerance and physical dependence tend to develop upon repeated administration of oxycodone."*

That one small sentence, buried in the middle of the 14-page Medicine Data Sheet (MDS) for OxyNorm (also in the MDS for OxyContin, Morphine and Codeine) is the only comment Medsafe – New Zealand's medicine and medical devices safety authority – makes about the possibility of addiction to these opioid medications. Despite many comments and beliefs over time that various Opioid medications are not addictive, ALL OF THEM ARE! Of course, it depends on the strength and how long the medication is taken as to whether a person becomes addicted. Codeine can be taken in large amounts for long periods of time with no problems for most people, while oxycodone only needs a short amount of time to become addictive.

In the 1800s, the search began for the 'Holy Grail' of pharmaceuticals – a drug with the painkilling properties of morphine, but without the addiction.<sup>7</sup> The drug we now know as heroin was first created by Englishman CR Alder Wright 1874. Nothing further was done with it until 1898 when a chemist called Felix Hoffman, working for German company Beyer, independently recreated diacetylmorphine or heroin while attempting to produce codeine.<sup>8</sup> It was named for the German word *heroisch* (heroic) due to its painkilling effect on users.<sup>9</sup>

Although Beyer claimed that heroin was non-addictive – it was widely sold as a cure-all for both adults and children – it didn't take long for stories of tolerance, dependence and addiction to show up.<sup>10</sup>

In 1980 a letter to the New England Medical Journal stated: "We conclude that despite widespread use of narcotic drugs in hospitals, the development of addiction is rare in medical patients with no history of addiction."<sup>11</sup> This statement was misconstrued and, over time, became 'gospel' for doctors prescribing narcotics.

Enter the next big drug to make claims of minimal addiction: oxycodone. With doctors now feeling free to prescribe opioid medication due to assumed minimal addiction, and drug company Purdue's aggressive marketing, doctors went on a spree of prescription writing, with minimal physical examination of patients.<sup>12</sup> These drugs were often sold on the street for cash, leading to an explosion of addiction in all social classes. Between 2007 and 2012, West Virginia, a state with 1.8 million people, received 780 million hydrocodone and oxycodone pills – enough for 433 pills for every person, regardless of age, in the state. In the same period, 1700 people died from hydrocodone and oxycodone overdose.<sup>13</sup> Thus the term "hillbilly heroin" was coined. In 2015 it was estimated that two million Americans were suffering from opioid use disorder from using prescription pain medications, and that up to 80 percent of heroin addicts had first become addicted from using painkillers.<sup>14</sup>

Although I knew that codeine and morphine could be addictive, I naively assumed that tailing off any opiate painkillers would be no different from tailing off the occasional dose of steroids I got for bronchitis. In short, a pain (as a seven-day steroid course could take another 14 days of tailing off), but nothing more than that. When my GP suggested oxycodone, I had sufficient qualms about possible addiction that I asked about the possibility. The response was a standard reply: "If you are taking oxycodone for pain rather than recreationally, you are unlikely to become addicted."

So, when did I realise I was addicted? Like many people in this predicament, I never realised I was addicted until I started to tail off the medication. To be precise, I was suffering from 'dependency' rather than actual addiction – my body craved the drug, but my mind did not. For me, addiction was something I had never even considered. It was only after starting to decrease the dosage of oxycodone that I found I had a problem. While it was easy for me to visualise *Six Days of Pain*, *Scripted* and *Under my Skin*, my only concept of *Fools Gold* was that I had been caught or hooked by something unseen and unheard.

I decided to create a net and looked at what thread would be suitable. I chose a thread that was almost see-through and made up of multiple strands woven together. Because of the material the thread is made from, it sparkles when light shines on it.

For many people on drugs, chasing the next high is all they can think about – but chasing a high is like looking for gold, but finding only fool's gold (iron pyrite). There is no substance to the high, and as soon as it finishes the person affected is looking for another high. With these thoughts, and the thread I chose sparkling in the light – enticing and hooking the viewer – I decided to call this piece *Fools Gold*. The second part of this piece consists of medication containers from the course of medication I took during 2019. The opioid medication hangs below a shelf with fishhooks dangling beneath (Figure 3) – the larger the hook, the more addictive the medication. The remaining medication packets are piled up along the shelf.

## WITHDRAWAL

*You want a description of hell?  
I can give it to you.*

Elizabeth Kipp<sup>15</sup>

When withdrawing from an addictive drug, your body takes no account of whether you are both mentally and physically addicted or only physically addicted. Withdrawal symptoms are the same – with no quarter given. After the anaesthetist's report following my first visit to the orthopaedic surgeon in February 2019, my doctor took to heart his comments that I was on such a high dose of oxycodone that it would be very hard to adequately relieve my pain after surgery. My doctor talked to me about the tapering off of oxycodone – it was no different from tapering off steroids. One week of taking a steroid had resulted in three weeks tapering off it. No problem. She mentioned no possible side effects, so I expected none.

The morning after my first reduction in dose, I remember feeling rather hot as I arrived at a café for coffee, but shortly after getting my drink I started getting cold. I remember putting on my jacket, but that making no difference. My head was in such a fog I couldn't do anything. I couldn't even drink my coffee. I was shivering uncontrollably. I suddenly realised that I was probably suffering from withdrawal and decided to contact my doctor. However, that day, Monday, was Otago Anniversary Day, so no doctor. I ended up going to the Emergency Department, but only started to feel better after it was time for my next dose.



Figure 3: Megan Griffiths, Detail of *Fools Gold*.  
Photograph: Pam McKinlay.



Figure 4: Megan Griffiths, *Fools Gold*, 2020,  
thread, medicine containers, shelving, fishing line, fish hooks, size variable.  
Photograph: Pam McKinlay.

My biggest fear was that each time I reduced the dose (once a week), I would have the same side effects. Luckily, I did not, but throughout the tapering off period I had problems with insomnia, chills, depression, involuntary twitching, poor concentration, suicidal thoughts and depression, an inability to feel pleasure, chronic fatigue and the feeling that my skin was crawling. While I did not get all these symptoms every day, I certainly had some each day, especially involuntary twitching. While Mondays were always the worst, they were never as bad as that first Monday.

My doctor told me that once I reached 10mg of oxycodone, my body should have forgotten all about the medication and I could stop with no further problems. I was a bit wary of that advice, considering I was still having some withdrawal symptoms, so I tapered down to 5mg (from a starting point of 960mg). I stayed on 5mg for two weeks, working up the courage to finally stop. This I did on Sunday 28 July and, while I was expecting some reaction, I did not expect the reaction I got.

For the next four days I was in hell. I could not sleep, I was constantly thinking about suicide, my arms and legs constantly twitched, but worst of all was the feeling of something crawling under my skin. While I could almost control it during the day, at night it was hell. I could not sleep, I moved from bed to chair and back again, but nothing I did could stop the crawling feeling. I felt I was going mad!

Each day was a fight not to take more medication to quell my symptoms. Unbelievably, when I woke up on Friday, after finally falling asleep, the worst was over. The crawling feeling and the twitching had stopped, but it was still some months before the final vestiges of the drug wore off.

This feeling was what led me to my fourth artwork, *Under My Skin*. When I look back on my own experience of withdrawal, the one thing that stands out in my memory is the crawling feeling. I had never felt anything like it before, and I hope I never feel anything like it again. However, feeling it is one thing, being able to transform it into an artwork is another matter entirely.

I conceived the crawling feeling as like worms crawling under the skin, and I started looking into techniques to show this. I was able to create the effect I wanted by using twin needles to sew the 'worms' on dyed cheesecloth. Once I had completed the sewing of the 'worm' overlay, I turned my attention to what would go underneath. I decided on a female figure, and used a tracing of my own body as a starting point.



Figure 5. Megan Griffiths, *Under My Skin*, 2020,  
Photograph: Pam McKinlay.



Figure 6: Megan Griffiths, *Under My Skin*, 2020, detail view, thread, fabric, wool, nylon net, cheesecloth, 1940 x 925mm. Photograph: Tessa Watson.

I used a background of stiff netting, overlaid with a full-sized figure in cotton fabric that was a shade darker than the overlay. The figure was drawn onto paper which was overlaid by the cotton fabric, then the figure was couched onto the netting around the edges using wool and the same thread as the overlay. The paper was then removed, and the fabric outside of the couched figure was carefully cut away, leaving the bare net behind. The final piece was framed in such a way as to stretch the overlay and sandwich the two layers together, while still being see-through.

I had never thought of my studio work as art therapy and did not set out to engage with this practice. However, in hindsight, my project did act as a form of therapy. I could not properly process and free myself of the experience of addiction without making it public – *getting it out there*, so to speak. Julia Kristeva said in a recent interview that as “a reader of [Simone] de Beauvoir, I understand freedom ... as the capacity to transcend oneself with the help of others: within the complexity of one’s ties to others.”<sup>16</sup> In reaching out to others, in telling people through my studio work and my writing about my addiction experience, I started to feel less burdened, lighter.

Thinking back now, the slowness of my making served a purpose. The fact that most of the studio work is – and may very well remain – in an incomplete state, also seems to serve a purpose: I went through a process, finished work is not essential.

**Megan Griffiths** graduated from the Dunedin School of Art with a Masters of Fine Art (with Distinction) in 2020. She continues her art practice from home, and has had several pieces in a Central Otago gallery. Her *Six Days of Pain* has been purchased, and will shortly be on public display in the board room of the Dunedin Symphony Orchestra.

- 1 Oxford Languages online dictionary (lexico.com), s.v. "thread."
- 2 Merriam-Webster online dictionary (merriam-webster.com), s.v. "hang by a thread."
- 3 Oxford Languages online dictionary (lexico.com), s.v. "survival."
- 4 Massieh Moayed and Karen Davis, "Theories of Pain: From Specificity to Gate Control," *Journal of Neurophysiology*, 109:1 (2013), 7.
- 5 "Sanya Richards-Ross Quotes," BrainyQuote, [www.brainyquote.com/authors/sanya-richards-ross-quotes](http://www.brainyquote.com/authors/sanya-richards-ross-quotes).
- 6 Enrique Ravina, *The Evolution of Drug Discovery: From Traditional Medicines to Modern Drugs* (Weinheim: Wiley-VCH, 2011), 1.
- 7 Travis Rieder, *In Pain: A Bioethicist's Personal Struggle with Opioids* (New York: Harper Collins, 2019), 46.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Deborah Moore, "Heroin: A Brief History of Unintended Consequences," *Times Union*, 24 August 2014, <https://www.timesunion.com/518life/article/Heroin-A-brief-history-of-unintended-consequences-5705610.php>.
- 10 Rieder, *In Pain*, 48.
- 11 Jane Porter and Hershel Jick, "Addiction Rare in Patients Treated with Narcotics," *New England Journal of Medicine*, 302:2 (1980), 123.
- 12 Marcia Meldrum, ed., *Opioids and Pain Relief: A Historical Perspective* (Seattle, WA: IASP Press, 2003), 46.
- 13 Mark Charette, "Grim Statistics Support Chiropractic Non-Drug Alternatives to Opioids," *Chiropractic Economics*, 4 October 2019, <https://www.chiroeco.com/opioid-statistics>.
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- 15 Harriet Ryan, Lisa Girion and Scott Glover, "'You Want a Description of Hell?' OxyContin's 12-Hour Problem," *Los Angeles Times*, 5 May 2016, <https://www.latimes.com/projects/oxycontin-part1>.
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## MEMORY ON CLOTH

Tracy Kennedy



Figure 1. Tracy Kennedy,  
*Pain*, 2020,  
Dye & Surface Manipulation  
on polyester.

**Pain**

It comes without warning, mostly  
Holding joints coldly  
Weak in its intent  
Embarrassing itself with its lack of care  
Taking its toll on body and mind  
Lying low under the covers.<sup>1</sup>

*Memory on Cloth* is part of a wider body of textile artwork, incorporating analogue and digital textile techniques that create a 'topography of cloth', mapping a personal journey of chronic pain and sensory loss. *The Sensory Topography of Cloth: Soft Armour and Worn Stories*<sup>2</sup> is the title of a final MVA project undertaken at the Dunedin School of Art, exploring the notion of responding to a chronic pain disorder; Fibromyalgia, via the medium of textile surface manipulation. Cloth is transformed through folding, dye, and heat, to emulate a personal landscape, intended to evoke an emotional response in the viewer, while application of stitch further distorts the surface. An intuitive process emerging from a decade's long textile practice,

and reflectively named 'controlled serendipity', informs the surface tension. Inspired by the idea of 'hybrid craft', a phrase coined by textile artist Cathy Treadaway<sup>3</sup> cloth manipulated by hand is further digitally enhanced for print. Rediscovering a penchant for prose, as an unexpected reaction to the manipulated cloth, a further layer of meaning emerges. The cloth takes on a life of its own, obscuring and exposing a deeply personal narrative.

Combining storytelling and visual art through layers of text and image, multi-media artist Francis Stark evokes similar feelings of loss and pain from a personal feminist viewpoint<sup>4</sup>. Working within western feminist frameworks, I too explore perspectives of experiencing pain within the feminine body. Chronic pain in the body can often be linked to emotional and physical abuse, a lack of control and choice over one's own body. The pressure to conform to societal expectations and the silhouettes of feminine beauty can exacerbate symptoms related to negative body image. Links to feminist intersectional politics and the sartorial were explored, including the representation of dress as a symbol for place and culture in the paintings of Frida Kahlo.<sup>5</sup> The work of artist Barbara Graf presented exploration of form, movement, and sensation through textile manipulation, with a focus on altered sensation caused by a diagnosis of a chronic illness, Multiple Sclerosis.<sup>6</sup> My focus is on the creation of cloth that reflects these struggles, evokes meaning and presents a visual narrative alongside storytelling.

Digital manipulation further distorts the origins of the work through enlarged, pixelated imagery digitally printed onto fabric and suspended in space. This magnified imagery plays with the idea of pain at a cellular level within the body, while the analogue to digital transformation displaces cloth from a customary worn material to the wall of the gallery.

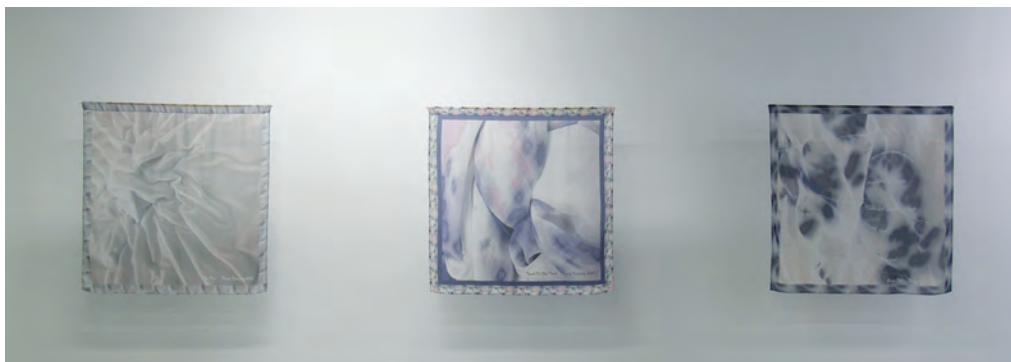


Figure 2. Tracy Kennedy, *Topography of Cloth*, 2021, exhibition installation. Digital print on polyester.



Figure 3. Tracy Kennedy, *Sartorial Longing*, 2020, (detail)  
Dye & Surface Manipulation  
on Polyester:

### Sartorial Longing

A square, a rectangle  
Same, same  
Worn as statement  
Protection, protest  
Longing to say something new.<sup>7</sup>

As the cloth is wrapped around the hand and exposed within a photocopier; different images emerge, a more obvious connection to the body, to the medical, to the human condition. A personal snapshot of struggle focussed on the point of most discomfort.

Through exploration of a range of media a piece of cloth is elevated from a flat, lifeless weave to a topographical surface, a holder of memory, and an enabler for storytelling, representing the lived experience of a chronic pain syndrome. Textile surface manipulation, dye, stitch, and digital print are juxtaposed and layered within a 3D and 2D landscape, jointly exhibited on and off the body.

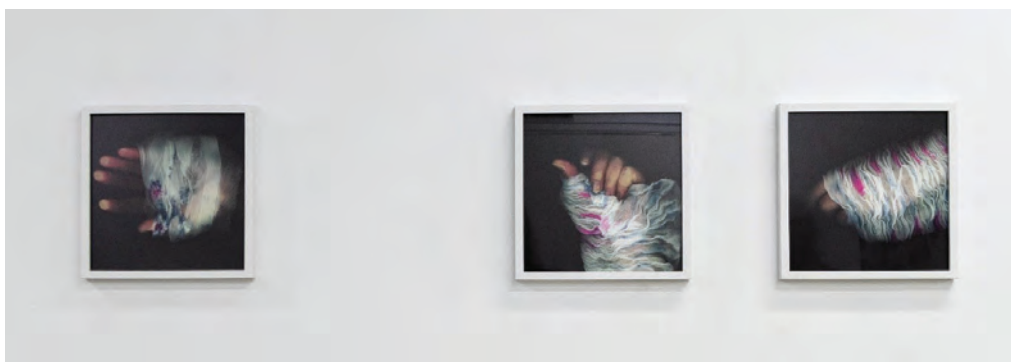


Figure 4. Tracy Kennedy, *Topography of Cloth*, 2021, exhibition installation. Digital print on paper.

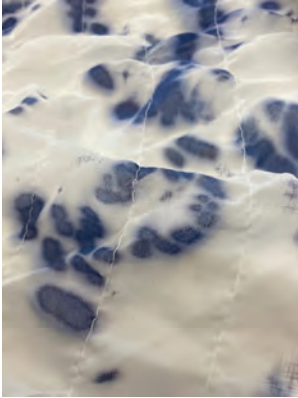


Figure 5. Tracy Kennedy,  
*Brain Fog*, 2020,  
Dye & Surface Manipulation  
on Polyester:

### Brain Fog

There are no words coming,  
Fragments of thought  
Disturbed cotton wool fight  
Tired effort  
Sensory overload.<sup>8</sup>

**Tracy Kennedy** (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5263-7607>) is a textile artist and long-standing design practitioner, currently teaching within the School of Design at Otago Polytechnic. She holds a Master of Visual Arts from the Dunedin School of Art, a Post-Grad in Design, and a Bachelor of Design (Fashion) from Otago Polytechnic. Current art practice includes exploring the human condition through storytelling and the surface manipulation of cloth.

- 1 Tracy Kennedy, "Pain," 2020.
- 2 Tracy Kennedy, "The Sensory Topography of Cloth: Soft Armour and Worn Stories," Master's Thesis, Dunedin School of Art, Otago Polytechnic, 2021.
- 3 Cathy Treadaway, "Printed Textiles," in *Crafting Textiles in the Digital Age*: edited by Nithikul Nimkulrat, Faith Kane, Kerry Walton, (London & New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016) 17-33.
- 4 Francis Stark and Ali Subotnick, (ed) "UH-OH Frances Stark 1991-2015." (Los Angeles: Hammer Museum, University of California, 2015).
- 5 (Frida Kahlo.org, n.d.) *Frida Kahlo Paintings, Biography quotes* <https://www.fridakahlo.org/marxism-will-give-health-to-the-sick.jsp>
- 6 Barbara Graf, "Corporeal Explorations: From Embodiments of Bodily Expressions to Visual Recordings of Physical Sensations", *Scope (Art & Design)* 20, (2020): 19-30 [https://www.thescope.org/assets/scopes/3\\_SCOPE\\_20\\_Graf.pdf](https://www.thescope.org/assets/scopes/3_SCOPE_20_Graf.pdf)
- 7 Tracy Kennedy, "Sartorial Longing," 2020.
- 8 Tracy Kennedy, "Brain Fog," 2020.

## THE BEAST LIVES ON

Charlie Rzepecky

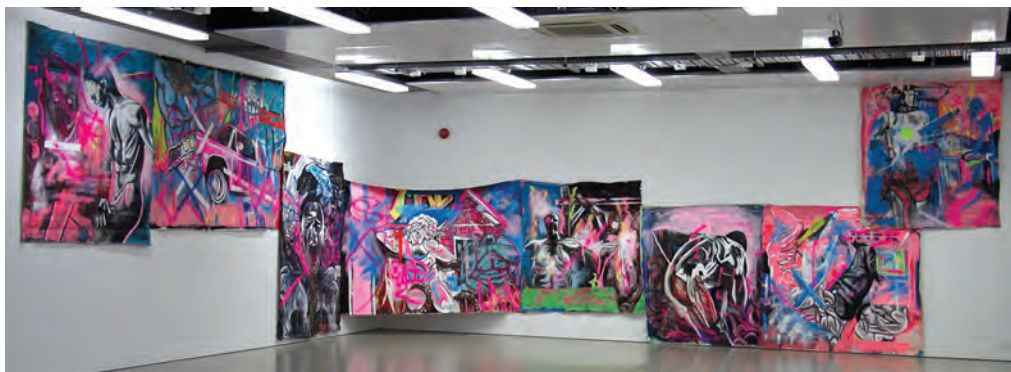


Figure 1. Charlie Rzepecky, *I WANT SOME T I NEED SOME T I GOT SOME T I TOOK SOME T*, 2020, mixed media.

## MORPHED

Beast, a figure put together, big and strong, virile even. This article outlines the fusion of concepts that connect through my work but were perhaps previously unconnected – such as the presentation of transgenderism aided by the concept of clowning mixed with nihilistic neo-expressionistic painting methods. This fusion of seemingly dichotomous qualities becomes integral to understanding my paintings. The paintings are divided into two series: *I WANT SOME T I NEED SOME T I GOT SOME T I TOOK SOME T* and *OSCILLATE*. Specifically, the project that produced them refers to female-to-male (FTM) transition, diving into concepts of castration and breast anxieties which are a natural occurrence in this type of transition experience. Sex and gender merge in a show of dark humour. The paintings are the visual equivalents of deafening screams. They encapsulate experience and shove it in your face. No apologies. Ego, religion, homosexuality, psychosis, violence and gender are more than moderate themes. The paintings sample, mix and morph realities which aren't traditionally connected visually. Rich vs. poor. Insane vs. sane. Hell vs. Heaven. Male vs. female. Binaries are imaginatively interrogated time and time again, a source of frustration, a source that is unresolved.

## CYCLE OF THE BEAST

In my work, a sense of decorum is washed away by the drums of the explicit.

My paintings unpack theories and concepts of transgenderism borrowed from Wu Tsang and Boychild, who are multimedia transgender artists. I am exploring figures which implement a new social structure, dissolving the dichotomy between male and female. A dream visualised. Painting with a transgender lens becomes a steady oscillation between the male and female binaries, the ability to see both sides in this showdown of the 'sexes.'



Figure 2. Charlie Rzepecky, *TRANSITION*, 2021, mixed media, 3.7 x 1.8m.

Through painting, I consider my process to be a type of 'clowning,' with a hope to heal via image. 'Monophasic consciousness' is a style of consciousness that fails to accept other forms of consciousness, and generally occurs in Western civilisations.<sup>1</sup> Failure to integrate the 'other' means that through monophasic teachings, consciousness and reality become biased and one-sided. When there is no other; then what we think we know becomes narrow.<sup>2</sup> These paintings are an integration of the 'other,' a transgender version of human, where dualistic binary thinking is challenged visually, in a shamanic way.<sup>3</sup> In community practice, clowning occurs when one uses humour and magical knowledge to heal. Humour often plays on anxieties and fears, making light of tough situations and established schools of thought.<sup>4</sup>

Art is elusive – it's communication, and communication is certainly elusive. It's difficult to hold down, difficult to capture in a 'correct' way. Instead, it's easier to think of art as 'floating.' It will move with the tides, get pummelled by waves and hopefully float away on its journey to entice. Clowning becomes a way to emphasise this philosophy of 'floating,' as seen in my work. 'Symbolic healing' causes psychosomatic transformation and is instigated through clowning.<sup>5</sup> Bio-reductionist concepts of disease and physical health are increasingly less received, people instead looking to alternative healing practices like clowning to instigate a fuller conception of health.<sup>6</sup> Universality is at the core of concepts of clowning, from the anti-culturalist presentation to the transcendental role of clowning



Figure 3. Charlie Rzepecky, *WE ARE UNICORNS*, 2021, mixed media, 3.7 x 1.8m (left).  
Charlie Rzepecky, *LAOCOONS REVENGE*, 2020, mixed media, 3.7 x 1.8m (right).





Figure 4. Charlie Rzepecky, *DISEMBODIED*, 2019-2021, mixed media, 4 x 1.8m.

To understand heterosexuality is to understand indoctrination. "Heterosexuality hasn't always existed."<sup>15</sup> Currently, heterosexuality and its perimeters are beginning to dissolve.<sup>16</sup> Bio-penises and bio-vaginas take over our porn industry, arguably as cultural propaganda.<sup>17</sup> This means if a bio-penis doesn't penetrate a bio-vagina then it's not considered sex.<sup>18</sup> Confrontation plays a major part in the viewing of the works. I am man. I am man with a vagina.

behaviour.<sup>7</sup> Wu Tsang and Boychild's work are indicative of my aspirations for my paintings, particularly where dark humour is used. Semiotics and symbols are used in clown performances to invert cultural rules, creating metacultural texts that provoke emotional responses.<sup>8</sup> These emotional responses can be anything – not exclusively laughter – but they provide psychological healing.<sup>9</sup> Transference and catharsis can occur in the clown's audience – transference being the process of psychoanalytically using a medium, often actioned by a therapist, though in this case a clown, to solve emotions originally felt in childhood.<sup>10</sup> Often I see my paintings as this medium, which has resolved childhood fears in me. The painter, therefore, might positively influence another and successfully 'clown.'

Finding Paul B Preciado's book *Testo Junkie* has been a turning point in my painterly confidence.<sup>11</sup> I find their work ahead of its time, ahead of my time. I find *Testo Junkie* orgy-like. The people, the varying genders, predicaments, the collision of sex and politics. The coining of the term "pharmacopornographic" is stunning and fitting.<sup>12</sup> The concept of taking testosterone is linked to the "pharmaceutical exploitation of living species."<sup>13</sup> My excitement in my own experience of testosterone is rooted in the beyond, beyond experience, beyond politics, beyond sex. Preciado says that heterosexuality is an institution that has its own sexual currency.<sup>14</sup> Heterosexual delusion within society and the information consumed as a result has become a philosophical interest for me.

**Charlie Rzepecky** is a transgender artist who originally hails from Tāmaki Makaurau. He used to go by the name Charlotte Rzepecky when he was female. He has an MVA from Otago Polytechnic, specialising in painting.



- 1 Michael Winkelman, *Shamanism: The Neural Ecology of Consciousness and Healing* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2000).
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Matthew Stone, "All about the Boychild," i-D, 13 November 2013, [https://i-d.vice.com/en\\_us/article/qv887d/all-about-the-boychild](https://i-d.vice.com/en_us/article/qv887d/all-about-the-boychild).
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- 5 Linda Miller-Van Blerkom, "Clown Doctors: Shaman Healers of Western Medicine," *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, new series, 9:4 (1995), 462-75, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/648831> (accessed 15 March 2021).
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- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Beatriz (Paul B.) Preciado, *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era* (New York: Feminist Press, 2008).
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- 18 Ibid.

## CONQUERING TALES OF VIOLENCE THROUGH IMAGERY AND METAPHOR

Charlotte McLachlan

When we were children we liked to play in pretend houses. I am the oldest, and have always been more industrious than my sisters, even in play. The houses were just about always my creation, and I would willingly do the hard work of planning and collecting the materials, and then the careful construction. My sisters were happy enough to go along with my ideas for a while, until they got bored and moved onto other games or TV. I, on the other hand, was lost in a timeless realm, inside interior spaces in my mind. This was the early development of my young artist self.



Figure 1. Charlotte McLachlan, *Lost*, 2020/21,  
acrylic on canvas, 3300 x 1800mm.

To the side of our house was a grassy area with sycamore and elderberry trees. Most of our houses were built there; big lean-to type constructions made with fallen branches with leaves piled on top, or tiny houses with many rooms made from twigs, all woven together with wool. One was up high with imaginary stairs, perched flat on top of a chopped tree trunk. Another was just down the road, in the long grass of a farmer's paddock. That one had a long crawl entranceway leading to a circular, flattened down 'room' where you could lie down and look up into the infinite blue summer sky. I made houses out of anything and everything – so great was my wish to be anywhere other than my actual house.

My MFA project, "Animal Inside," deals with the issue of violence used to gain power and control over animals and women. I used Charles Perrault's fairytale "Donkeyskin" as an apparatus for my research and studio practice. My narrative paintings follow the style of the early European fairytales of the 1900s, depicting stories which are brief and to the point, relying on symbolism – relating to an object, a colour or an animal – to represent an abstract idea or to suggest a certain mood or emotion. The tale of "Donkeyskin" is essentially a horror story, juxtaposed with the familiar context of home and family. It is about a young woman who is so terrified within her home that she has no choice but to flee. In order to escape, she is forced to first kill a donkey and then disguise herself inside its pelt.



Figure 2. Charlotte McLachlan, *Between Worlds*, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 3000 x 1800mm.

Sigmund Freud used the term "the uncanny" (*das Unheimliche*) to describe a sense of estrangement within the home, the presence of something threatening and unknown that lies within the bounds of the intimate.<sup>2</sup> For Freud, the uncanny is a type of dread which returns to what is long familiar; something new that exists in something already known. He used the term *heimlich* ("homely"), with its opposite *unheimlich*, to point out that most "homely" scenarios have a dark underside, and are not in fact safe: he plays the unhomely off against the homely, the known and comfortable, on the one hand, and the concealed and threatening, on the other. For Freud, the home is a type of secret place, and the unhomely or the uncanny is something that should have remained secret, but has been revealed.<sup>3</sup> For us, Freud's distinction between the homely and unhomely in the domestic context has become a distinction between the private and public realms – a contrast which is very relevant to contemporary discussions about gender and violence within the home.

Central to the tale of "Donkeyskin" is the cruel slaughter of a pet donkey. According to Carol Adams, male perpetrators of domestic violence often also harm or kill pets as a means of instilling terror in family members.<sup>4</sup> When pets are harmed or killed in this context, it sends the message that such harm could also potentially be inflicted on family members, that matters of life and death are literally in the hands of the perpetrator. However, in the tale of "Donkeyskin," it is the female protagonist who commits an act of animal cruelty in order to escape the violence being perpetrated against herself. In the killing of the donkey, she reiterates both a gendered and species hierarchy. Adams shows how we enact species hierarchies when we make animals "absent referents" through language.<sup>5</sup> For example, when we rename carcasses with less confronting names, before consumers eat them, or when animals become metaphors for describing human experiences.

As humans we tend to project notions of brutality, and what we think of as primitive and animalistic qualities, onto animals – as if we are above these kinds of behaviours ourselves. Everyday human practices that exploit and harm animals lurk in the ‘shadow’ of the human psyche. Carl Jung developed the concept of the “shadow” to describe the unconscious, disowned, “dark” aspects of the personality.<sup>6</sup> They are “dark” because they consist predominantly of the negative, socially or religiously depreciated human emotions and impulses such as sexual lust, power strivings, selfishness, greed, envy, anger or rage. Our “shadow” impulses are completely obscured from conscious awareness – whatever we cannot bear to know about ourselves becomes part of the shadow. Many of the darker elements of “Donkeyskin” might be considered the shadow material of the human psyche. “Donkeyskin” is a universal story about hidden horrors that have persisted across time, cultures and socioeconomic divides. These horrors remain locked away in the private sphere of the domestic; they are secret, and are also kept as a kind of “secret” from the conscious mind.

Throughout my project I have employed some favourite motifs of the aesthetic uncanny, including the use of the double and of repetition.<sup>7</sup> The animals in my works frequently morph into various alternate forms of themselves (the double). They are sometimes seen outside and sometimes inside, moving into domestic scenes, the habitat of their humans. Donkeys and horses are frequently depicted as a (repeating) motif in the wallpaper of domestic interiors. While the paintings refer to human interaction with these animals, humans are almost completely absent, with only traces of their presence left behind. I emphasise dark shadows in my paintings to reference the dark side of human behaviour. Alongside my use of dark shadowing, I have adopted another version of this concept with my use of translucence, which denotes psychological qualities. These are not as heavily disowned or denied as the shadow impulses, but are rather things which may be just within reach ... barely known, or imagined, distorted or forgotten.



Figure 3. Charlotte McLachlan, *I See You Walk Between The Realms*, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 3000 × 1800mm.



In my project, I drew on Susan Stewart's writing about the miniature and the gigantic, examining the different qualities that scale and space bring to the viewer's experience. The most quintessential miniature is the dollhouse – "a house within a house promises an infinitely profound interiority."<sup>8</sup> In contrast, the gigantic is experienced as all-encompassing and all-powerful. "The most typical gigantic world is the sky – a vast undifferentiated space marked only by the constant movement of clouds with their amorphous forms."<sup>9</sup>

Paintings can be thought of as "spaces," or narrative structures, and I have explored the use of the uncanny in the context of inside and outside spaces, juxtaposing the experiences of the claustrophobic and the remote.

According to Bachelard, "outside and inside are both intimate – they are always ready to be reversed to exchange their hostility."<sup>10</sup> "Too much space smothers us much more than if there were not enough ... precisely because of too much riding and too much freedom, and of the unchanging horizon, in spite of our desperate gallopings, the pampa assumed the aspect of a prison for me, a prison that was bigger than the others" (quoting the poet Jules Supervielle).<sup>11</sup> In trying to create a sense of the uncanny within a space, the 'ingredient' required need not be one thing or another; but something subtler than this device versus that other one. There is something about the tension in between. Many elements of the uncanny reside in the ambiguity of the familiar or the repeated, something that creeps up on you because you didn't notice it at first glance.

The work in my MFA project is not bloody or gory, but instead alludes to its violent themes in more subtle ways. The dreamscape qualities of the works are infused with elements of grace and beauty, inviting the viewer's own projections and a reinterpretation of the tale. I invite personal reflection rather than offering abject horror, which would run the risk of alienating the viewer.

I have modified the fairytale "Donkeyskin" in a series of narrative paintings which explore scale in relation to positions of power. In the original version of the story the animal killed for its skin is a donkey, but the animal has also been portrayed as a horse, a deer and even a cat in subsequent versions. A retelling of "Donkeyskin" fits within the discourse of various postmodern feminist groups, where there has been a strong move to revise and rewrite many traditional fairytales.

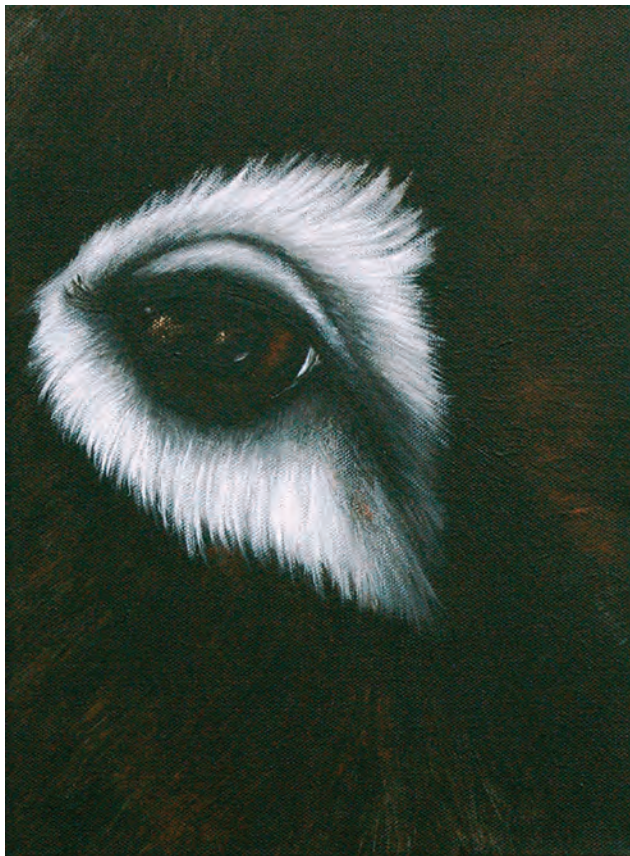


Figure 4. Charlotte McLachlan, *I See*, 2021, acrylic on canvas, 230 x 304mm.

Veronica Schaones writes:

A story's artistic and cultural power can reach or return to its full effect only in a revision. It is vital to distinguish revisions from duplicates, not only for the sake of aesthetic quality and artistic achievement, but also in order to avoid thoughtlessly recycling stories or propaganda whose messages have caused great harm; rewriting stories so as to expose and/or transform underlying misogynies is one of the tasks of feminist revisionism. Revision has the potential to expose the ideological underpinnings of the stories that shape our lives, not in order that we surrender to them but in order that we can shape them in turn.<sup>12</sup>

"Animal Inside" invites others to identify with, 'imagine into' and shape the tale for themselves. After all, storytelling is part of our psychic development. We all need to have a story, a way of unifying our experiences and our sense of self. Stories help integrate and make sense of our experiences.<sup>13</sup>



Figure 5. Charlotte McLachlan, *The Red Jacket*, 2021, acrylic on canvas, 304 x 230 mm.

**Charlotte McLachlan** graduated from the Dunedin School of Art with a Master of Fine Arts (distinction) in 2021. She lives and works in Dunedin as an artist and as a psychotherapist. Her current painting practice explores psychoanalysis, power relations, the environment, animals and insects, and nostalgia.



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- 3 S Fisher, "Summary: The Uncanny / Sigmund Freud (+review)," *Cultural Reader*, blog post, 23 February 2014, <https://culturalstudiesnow.blogspot.com/2014/02/sigmund-freud-uncanny-summary-and-review.html> (accessed April 2019).
- 4 Carol J Adams, "Women Battering and Harm to Animals," in *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations*, eds Carol J Adams and Josephine Donovan (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 55-84.
- 5 Carol J Adams, "The Rape of Animals, The Butchering of Women," in her *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (London: Continuum, 2010), 64-91.
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- 8 S Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 61.
- 9 Ibid., 74.
- 10 G Bachelard, "The Dialectics of Outside and Inside," in his *The Poetics of Space* (London: Penguin Classics, 2014), 223. (Originally pub. 1958.)
- 11 Ibid., 221.
- 12 V Schanoes, *Fairy Tales, Myth, and Psychoanalytic Theory: Feminism and Retelling the Tale* (London: Routledge, 2014), 57.
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# I AM THE WALRUS OR, IS IT YOU? REFRAMING CONNECTIONS: HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY AND ACTIVIST ART

Maggie Covell

## PRELUDE

Forming connections is a humanist exercise where we are in constant flux for *meaning* in an attempt to make sense of the empirical world we inhabit. Familiarity can be a small comfort in this technological society of *new media* where the digital sphere is socially constructed to propel some into the limelight while cyberbullying others into the void. Filters have become image currency, tuning, tweaking, manipulating realities in hopes of populating likes, to trend, or boost visibility. In an age of instant gratification where social media has become a religion, this relationship between image and 'follower' is a sort of digital-power dynamic between sender and receiver oscillating between the states of credibility, and relevance. Thus, social-content is produced, uploaded, shared, commented upon in a plethora of *trans-parasocial interactivity*, which generates a 'perceived interconnectedness.'<sup>1</sup> It is this drive to *connect* that a propensity for 'going public' online has emerged to demonstrate a burgeoning transparency that promotes reciprocal interactivity while altering forms of communication, both mass and interpersonal. Hence, this intersection of private and public functions as a sort of hybrid territory appearing in a multiplicity of spaces including the conceptual, the physical, and the digital.

How then does the art-world fare amidst this image saturation in the *new-media* bubble where concept appropriation is only a click away, and IP might as well be entrenched like a digital watermark (only to be photoshopped out). Seemingly, contemporary artists are finding the rapid development and adoption of technological media within recent years has altered a community of practice, and the audience landscape. Participation has become a networked experience where ensuing engagement requires packaged content, circulating instantaneously across multiple platforms resulting in acclimatised cultural understandings, and relational behaviours through computational interactivity. In short, if you are not *au fait* with maintaining social presence and or extending your digital footprint then you better YouTube a tutorial quick-smart.

My MFA project *Hidden in Plain Sight* had to hit the ground running particularly, the approach to deployment as a relational exercise where physical public spaces, and the digital social territories had a barrage of ethical, and procedural obligations. This was in part because the project centres its examination on mental health and body autonomy issues connected to individuals who identify as female, within New Zealand society. Within phase one the project entered an intense period of planning (through local body government), while completing an in-depth ethical process via Otago Polytechnic Research Ethics Committee (OPREC).

The premise of this article is to discuss how the notion of 'reframing' (an existing work) through 'interactivity' advocates meaning as a production of thought in reciprocity – as a strategy. In context to phases one and two of *Hidden in Plain Sight*, 'reframing' was inextricably linked to relational and other interpersonal intra-actions which aided in the dissemination of information through the project's outputs. Within its strategy the project also focused on a feminist post-structural framing of the *biography* as a collective exercise utilising its online focus group as

'subjects-in-relation', ethical subjects who are reflexively aware of discursive practices and are capable of disrupting the signifying processes. This notion of narrative perspectives draws from the project's conceptual framework of "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892) a 19th century short story written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. The project revisits this work through a contemporary lens positioning it as an *activist* composition, connecting it to other political works which look at the split between the 'collective' and the 'personal' as a form of witnessing discourse.<sup>2</sup>

## ACTIVE-STRATEGY

Cuban born, American conceptual artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres *Untitled* (Billboard) series (1991) has been paramount in devising a project strategy. To provide further context, Gonzalez-Torres was openly homosexual during the height of the AIDS pandemic, and was HIV positive during an ultra-conservative period under the Reagan administration.<sup>3</sup> Gonzalez-Torres ability to produce works, which viewed art as a critical agent for social change while diplomatically guiding his audience through difficult terrain is both an education device, and an 'active' political demonstration.<sup>4</sup> Gonzalez-Torres' body of work teaches us that activism has many evolving facets, is as much poetic as it is cognitive, can at times be quiet (in its contemplation), and apart from the political, traverses a complex set of power systems in search of social justice. It is from these socio-political declarations that I have developed a response through my own position as a violent trauma survivor. As a result of multiple violent traumas, I spent my twenties under psychiatric care, heavily medicated, trapped inside my own history, trying to forge a way back to lucidity, to the rational. My narrative played a key role in *reciprocity* through *trans para-social* relations with the project's online focus group of one hundred and sixty women. My *biography* was uploaded into the digital forum as a discussion prompt, and to facilitate 'collective interaction.' This resulted in a deluge of information which was 'reframed' in contribution to the project's ethical, conceptual, and procedural frameworks.

*Lived experience* as an auto-biographical record is yet another intellectual layer within Gonzalez-Torres work wherein, documentation as an ideology is also a measure of truth. In the *Untitled* (Billboard) series two dozen eulogies were deployed throughout New York's densely populated borough of Manhattan, into mass-communication spaces generally occupied by the language of advertising. A monochromatic image of an empty bed was mounted across multiple sites engaging in a ghostly realm between art and commerce, in remembrance of Ross Laycock, Gonzalez-Torres' lover who had died of AIDS complications. The image offers a window into private contemplation while outlines of absence, and presence are etched onto sheets and pillows, a trace of a life lived. The work also underlines a quiet devastation through the literal and metaphorical depressions a person leaves behind, in turn motivating the viewer to *think* unaccompanied by instruction.

Taking the private public through *lived experience* is also present within Charlotte Perkins Gilman's, "The Yellow Wallpaper" a semi biographical account of a young woman's gradual descent into psychosis. This work is often cited as an early piece of feminist writing given its textual homage to the inner workings of mental health while exposing patriarchal indictment, and the subjugation of women through its critical examination of societal expectations.<sup>5</sup> Revisiting this narrative through a contemporary lens also aids in the reemergence of the female voice (and scholarship) within current society illuminating *perspectives* specifically, how women's narratives are depicted and represented. Anchored to language, this story and its female subjectivity can be read as a sort of *collective biography*. The significance of a 'wallpapered-prison' in which the protagonist is confined echoes the political position of countless women lost within multiple systems including medical (health), judicial, education, and cultural (societal).

The project invited women from its online focus group to actively engage with *histories* through a post-structural 'reframing' where contributions to a 'collective-biography' functioned as an act of reclamation, redirecting agency. The action of rewriting their own history altered the *subjectivity* moving beyond the individualised towards a community orientation, which emancipates from grand narratives and oppressive power dynamics.<sup>6</sup> The 'collective-biographies' have functioned as a profuse resource from which the project has drawn from and interacts (Figure. 7).

Dr Hyun-Jean Lee, associate professor of Communications and Art at Yoshi University discusses in her essay "After Felix Gonzalez-Torres: The New Active Audience in the Social Media Era," the *socio-performative* role spectators now occupy. Lee infers that, "this transformative behaviour from *passive* to *active* in terms of the 'interactive' (artwork) brings its own communication protocols that enable movement within cultural stratification, shifting meaning as a postmodernist strategy through an ideation process of 'reframing'"<sup>7</sup> Reflecting on what Lee indicates within the text, the active-spectator has the ability to not only elevate an artwork (outside of the pedagogical, and institutional) but, from a cognitive standpoint, offer an alternative context within the conceptual framework. This is a key component in the socio-dynamic between sender and receiver (*synchronous interactivity*) specifically, in the context of recontextualizing existing works through a contemporary lens. In this instance Lee articulates that retaining 'relevance' is crucial, it's what impacts across time with multifarious audiences responding to, and extending upon the original voice/narrative as an intervention. Thus, maintaining the 'active' within *activism* needs to exceed the lifespan of the maker, to *become* in legacy, a work which operates outside of the artist as an independent entity (a critical agent).

*Synchronous interactivity* can be described as; part of new communicative theories which have been developed to explicate new forms of social interactions using a 'influencer-follower' model which sits firmly within the digital territory. Professor of Communications at Nanyang Technological University Chen Lou reframes *trans-parasocial* relations through this model. In discussion she writes, "co-creation of 'value' is a reciprocal and interpersonal process involving an education arc intersection between contributing parties. This intersecting term can be applied in the production of knowledge."<sup>8</sup>

In context to Hidden in Plain Sight's strategy I turn towards The Beatles, specifically John Lennon, and "I Am the Walrus" (1967) a song that featured on the *Magical Mystery Tour* album and film. This particular song has its own cultural, historical, and social connections which operate in multiple territories, but also a work that re-visits existing works from the literary canon to include; Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* (1871), James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939), and Shakespeare's *King Lear* (1608).<sup>9</sup> Lennon reframes these texts to confound listeners and more specifically, the critics and academics who had begun to examine Beatles lyrics.<sup>10</sup> This reframing can also be viewed as a subversive act of socio-defiance towards *authority* in this instance, the education and class systems. Lennon re-orient's meaning (communication) through the nonsense poetry of Carroll, which in turn invokes the complex polysemy of Joycean word play (elevated by literary scholarship). The insertion of *King Lear* at the song's conclusion introduces a layered interactivity placed within the audio mastering, signaling a myriad of relations like social stratification.

The socio-cultural impact of The Beatles positions Lennon as a form of proto-influencer specifically, the strategy and use of mass-media to promote his and Yoko Ono's activist 'bed-ins' (1969) a declaration against the Vietnam War, as a 'reframing' of Ono's earlier 'event scores'. This body of work was a direct expression her *lived experience* during WWII, the escalated Allied bombing in Tokyo (1945) and the atomic bombs dropped by US forces over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. <sup>11</sup> The 'bed-ins' can be viewed as strategic instalments within a series of actions for peace in which counterculture activists, and other musicians were invited to 'co-create' as a form of *trans-parasocial relations*. Gonzalez-Torres would later 'reframe' the bed as a political motif in his *Untitled* (Billboard) series utilising the mass-communication platform of the 'billboard' to transmit a 'universal' state of intimacy and loss. This commentary on the equality of people as intimate entities regardless of sexual orientation is also linked to Ono's 'Bag-piece' (1964). Hence, this back and forth across the decades of bed and billboard signifies an intersectional space for political declaration, positioning the billboard as a *peripatetic apparatus* interacting on multiple relational-layers.

In her most recent anti-war iteration Ono returns to this 'peripatetic apparatus' in "Imagine Peace" (2022) a stark reminder at the power-dynamic of rhetoric. Like Gonzalez-Torres had evoked decades earlier Ono conjures Lennon from the same ghostly realm inviting new audiences to contemplate.

In phases one and two of *Hidden in Plain Sight* a co-creation strategy modelled off the activist works of Lennon, Ono, and Gonzalez-Torres included working alongside Dunedin based alt-orchestra, "The Something Quartet" (Figures 5,6). Through a series of key 'creative-negotiations', "The Something Quartet" were tasked with producing multiple instrumental iterations with revolving musicians. Each iteration was a 'reframing' of the preceding version which were constructed through a range of relational exchanges that mirrored the project's creative outputs. This included; a live performance, digital online versions via social media, and a soundscape that accompanied an interactive video work *Watchwords from Them* (2021). Utilising the *synchronous interactivity* Lennon and Ono employed as part of their 'bed-in' strategy the project formed an interconnectedness with the musicians through digital territories, and with the practical facets of phases one and two. This included volunteering as part of the installation team (Figures 3, 4), online engagement via social media platforms, a BOOSTED campaign, and attending workshops where members of the public assisted in making signs and wallpaper that contributed to an installation artwork.

## REFRAMING VIOLENCE

Sixties political activist Abbie Hoffman has argued the importance of the popular music scene forming cultural artefacts which in turn formed part of the cultural revolution, where The Beatles were seen as 'men of ideas' contributing to the radical visual, and musical styles which reflected a new intellectualism.<sup>12</sup> The Beatles (as cultural figures) were positioned as a new type of masculinity one which rejected the traditional mores, and embedded violence of post-war Britain, and the Vietnam conflict within established society. Dr Martin King, Cultural Theorist and principal Lecturer of Social Care and Social Work programmes at Manchester Metropolitan University outlines in his essay, "Roll up for the Mystery Tour: Reading The Beatles' *Magical Mystery Tour* as a countercultural anti-masculinist text." King views the notion of; "anti-masculinity as a device for social reform specifically social movements like the counterculture"<sup>13</sup> King also discusses the incremental shift in The Beatles image representation through the mass-media as; "a subversive agenda perpetuated by the band to include new ideas around spirituality, peace, love, drugs and mind expansion and the ways men think"<sup>14</sup>

In response to King and drawing on the work of Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci it is important to note that dominant conceptualisations of masculinity were reproduced through; "key institutions such as the State, the Church, education, and the mass media – the hegemonic apparatus characterised of political society monopolised by a specific privileged group within the social complex or totality of social relations which exercises coercive power."<sup>15</sup> Hegemonic masculinity is not just about men in relation to women but is a particular type of masculinity (heterosexual) to which others are subordinated.

Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" extends upon this societal dissonance from a historiographical milieu where Victorian attitudes to women's health still holds within current society. From the opening passages this narrative outlines the notion of 'hegemonic masculinity' versus the *hysterical* in a power play between external control (the patriarchy) and 'sickness'. The journal entries are crucial in understanding the narrator's subjugation where an artificial femininity is developed as a device of resistance from her own fragmented self or dissociation.

In phase one wallpapered billboards were constructed from mass-produced objects taken from the project's 'collective-biographies'. The objects were tied to individual experiences linked to trauma, sexual violence, psychiatric illness, mental health distress, and other social interactions relating to the body (Figures 1-4). These objects can also be viewed as psychological anchors bound to artificial femininity and hyper-vigilance. A small grouping of 'signs' accompanied the billboards which were appropriated from behaviour-modifying language found within physical social-spaces like; "No Public Access" and "Danger Ahead." The signs were then reframed into three lettered versions/arrangements taking on altered meanings, while invoking Carroll's non-sense poetry (Figures 1-4).

As aforementioned, "I Am the Walrus" takes its conceptual framework from Carroll's non-sense poetry, "The Walrus and the Carpenter," (1871) a work constructed as a subversion, or mimesis to the moral code perpetrated within children's education lessons (of the Victorian period).<sup>16</sup> In her essay, "Violence in the Poems in the Alice

books and Lewis Carroll's intended Audience," Arifa Ghani Rahman discusses the use of language as a concealment device. Ghani Rahman infers, "illogical poetry reads as a parody of Victorian moral precepts on the surface, are in fact invested with messages removed from didactic lessons to reveal a deeper level of violence appropriated from the external world."<sup>17</sup> As Ghani Rahman suggests, "For whom are these stories intended? Perhaps a more mature audience capable of handling the intensity of the violence that pervades the stories, and especially the poems."<sup>18</sup>

Of all Carroll's nonsense verses "The Walrus and the Carpenter" has attracted the most speculation around its ultimate meaning. This work suggests a pervasive quality to the violence where both the *Walrus* and the *Carpenter* can be seen to hold a hierarchical power-dynamic over the landscape and it is through brutal acts committed without consent that entitlement through submission surfaces as *hegemonic masculinity*. This infliction of violence contributes to the wider text highlighting how violence is employed and for what ends. Particularly, in reference to Alice's state of mind throughout Carroll's narratives as an oppressive position through the attitudes and practices of other characters. But it is the nonsense-poetry which is perhaps the most challenging in its ridicule of Victorian moralising and its appropriation of adult-based violence.

During phase one of *Hidden in Plain Sight* (Figure 2) the Billboard installation at Museum reserve, Otago Museum was vandalised and damaged. Initially the perpetrators were unknown in respect to gender, motivations, and other social identifiers. What became apparent during the course of re-installation was that the act of 'mindless destruction' was in fact, particularly violent. The installation had been constructed from sound materials, secured beneath the reserve's surface, and reinforced with supportive brace-work. The vandals completely upended the installation from its sitting position requiring tremendous force. A trail of frenzied footprints amidst broken parts, and torn earth suggests that they jumped on top of the structure in an act of decimation. Later, after several media interviews a 'group' of young males supposedly came forward, in an off record conversation they discussed their actions as, "boys just being boys."

Rather than consider these actions as an artwork the project takes the position of viewing this as 'hegemonic masculinity'. The 'mindless-destruction' like Carroll's non-sense poetry conceals a cacophony of violence beneath its surface, so deep-rooted within established society it intertwines entitlement with malfeasance. It is after all, specific actions without consent, which are unbeholden to consequence. Gramsci's observations remind us that the reproduction of 'certain masculinities' within the social sector are an infiltration by the power structures. Therefore, one must consider at a much deeper subconscious level, that 'hegemonic masculinity' is a form of generational alterity—handed down.

## IN CONCLUSION

Phases one and two of *Hidden in Plain Sight* have been a huge undertaking involving a series of complex ethical, and procedural processes required to deploy art into public spaces. Felix Gonzalez-Torres body of work has been instrumental in forming a strategy for a certain kind of artist who employs *lived experience* when taking the private public as a critical agent for social reform. This is by no means an easy position to occupy as it carries a tremendous weight through expectation, out there in the open under public scrutiny. Gonzalez-Torres and the activist works of Lennon and Ono have also called attention to the importance of 'interactivity' as a *collective experience*, and production of thought in reciprocity.

Working alongside various community organisations like the Dunedin Dream Brokerage who activate found spaces for creative projects has been an eye opening, and networked experience. The relational components of the project have provided a fascinating output of information, shaping the approach to research practices. In phase two the project also ran a successful BOOSTED campaign where crowdfunding helped finance deliverables. This campaign along with the sponsorship from local business has fostered an ongoing source of capital and can be viewed as *trans-parasocial relations*.





Figure 1. Installation view of *Trauma Chevron Billboards + Signs* at Union Lawn University of Otago, Dunedin, August 2021.  
© Otago Daily Times. Image courtesy of the Otago Daily Times. Photograph: Peter Macintosh



Figure 2. Vandalised artwork at Museum Reserve, Otago Museum, Dunedin, August 2021.  
© Otago Daily Times. Image courtesy of Otago Daily Times. Photograph: Linda Robertson.



Figure 3. Reinstalling vandalised installation at Museum Reserve, Otago Museum, Dunedin, Late August 2021.



Figure 4. Second Installation location for *Trauma Chevron Billboards + Signs* at Mornington Park, Dunedin, September 2021.





Figure 5. Closing showcase of the *Hidden in Plain Sight* project, Dunedin CBD. The Something Quartet live performance. Image courtesy of Dunedin Dream Brokerage. © Photograph: Justin Spiers.



Figure 6. Closing showcase of the *Hidden in Plain Sight* project, Dunedin CBD. The Something Quartet live performance. Image courtesy of Dunedin Dream Brokerage. © Photograph: Justin Spiers.



Figure 7. Closing showcase for phase two of the project *Hidden in Plain Sight*. Public made installation in the background. Image courtesy of The Dunedin Dream Brokerage. © Photograph: Justin Spiers.

**Maggie Covell** is a visual artist based in Ōtepoti where she is currently an MFA candidate at the Dunedin School of Art. Her visual arts practice works across a range of mediums to include; drawing, installation, digital-painting, and video. Presently, her work is focused on the 'creative-intervention' as a form of socio-political declaration, where the artwork is viewed as a 'critical agent' for social reform (activist art). Covell also graduated from Otago University in 2013 with a BA - double major in Art History & Theory, and English, and in 2015 received an Honors degree in Art History & Theory.

- 1 The concept of parasocial relation, originally introduced by Horton and Wohl (1956), describes an illusory and enduring social relation with media personage including celebrities and media figures—through mediated encounters, which is often experienced by the audience. Coined in an era of TV and radio, this concept has been 'reframed' in application of technology/new media that includes 'social-media'. Social-media is seen to facilitate collective interaction, and enduring attachment. See: Chen Lou, "Social Media Influencers and Followers: Theorization of a Trans-Parasocial Relation and Explication of Its Implications for Influencer Advertising" *Journal of Advertising* (2021): 4
- 2 Professor Jane Blocker writes: "Because the witness is split, divided between events that occurred but that he cannot speak or images that are clearly rendered and yet remain hidden—public presentations of artworks that witness traumas require an ethical approach, the question is not what but "how." See: Adair Roundthwaite, "Split Witness: Metaphorical Extensions of Life in the Art of Felix Gonzalez-Torres" in *Representations* (Winter 2010): 37
- 3 The Reagan administration's unwillingness to recognise and confront the AIDS epidemic has gone down in history as one of the deepest and most enduring scars on its legacy. The president of the United States did not so much as publicly utter the name of the disease until September 1985. Not until the spring of 1987 did Reagan give a major speech about AIDS. By that time, the disease had already struck 36,058 Americans, of whom 20,849 had died. See: Karen Tumulty "Nancy Reagan's Real Role in the AIDS Crisis," in *The Atlantic online*, April 12, 2021. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2021/04/full-story-nancy-reagan-and-aids-crisis/618552/>

- 4 Gonzalez-Torres's work involved a viral strategy meant to infect power in an attempt to bring about greater conditions of social justice—conception of his work as a living body lines up with a major form of jurisprudence or legal review that conceives of the body of laws as a living organism, or Living Constitution. Jurists who ascribe to the notion of the living Constitution conceive of the body of laws as alive, requiring interpretation that is flexible to sustain the law's viability in an ever-changing social environment. See: Josh Takano Chambers-Letson "Contracting Justice: The Viral Strategy of Felix Gonzalez-Torres," *Criticism* 51: 4 (2009): 559-560
- 5 Most of the pioneering work on "The Yellow Wallpaper" occurred during the 1970s and 1980s when scholars were challenging what they perceived to be a patriarchal literary canon and arguing for the centrality of politics in literature and literary criticism. Susan S. Lanser became a vital scholar arguing for the importance of revisiting female narratives in particular "The Yellow Wallpaper" because of specific attributes; its struggle to get published (1892), its semi-autobiographical content relating to crippling societal pressures, and the variation in subsequent publications (representation of women's narratives). See: Julie Bates Dock, Daphne Ryan Allen, Jennifer Palais, and Kristen Tracy, "But One Expects That": Charlotte Perkins Gilman's 'The Yellow Wallpaper' and the Shifting Light of Scholarship," *PMLA* 111: 1 (1996): 54
- 6 Power is understood in terms of lines and force. It is not the property of one gender; *its strategies, its maneuvers, its tactics and techniques* are always contingent and unstable. Feminist post-structuralist theory is interested in the movement from one configuration of feminism or of gender. In post-structuralist analysis the rational conscious subject is decentered—Old ways of knowing, such as through master or grand narratives, are resisted as arbiters of meaning, even while they are recognised as having constitutive force. See: Bronwyn Davies and Susanne Gannon, Chapter 36 "Feminism/Poststructuralism" in *Research Methods in the Social Sciences* eds. Bridget Somekh and Cathy Lewin, London: Sage Publications (2005): 314
- 7 Hyun Jean Lee & Jeong Han Kim, "After Felix Gonzalez-Torres: The New Active Audience in Social Media Era," *Third Text* 30 (2016): 485
- 8 Lou (2021): 12
- 9 At the end of the song listeners hear a scene of King Lear in the background, with Oswald's final words, "O, untimely death!" standing out." The reading of Lear happened to be on the radio at the exact time the song was being recorded. Some Beatle-ologists claim that *goo goo ga joob* is taken from James Joyce's stream-of-consciousness epic, *Finnegans Wake*. *Finnegans Wake*, after all, has many echoes of Carroll. See: Ben Zimmer, "The Delights of Parsing the Beatles' most Nonsensical Song" *The Atlantic online* (November 25th, 2017). <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2017/11/i-am-the-walrus-50-years-later/546698/>
- 10 Ibid. The song was sparked by a letter to Lennon from a student at Quarry Bank, their old high school in Liverpool. The student said that his literature class were analysing lyrics to Beatles songs, which Lennon found utterly ridiculous. The image of a "Quarry Bank literature master pontificating about the symbolism of Lennon-McCartney" inspired him to come up with "yellow matter custard".
- 11 After the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the U.S. Army prohibited images that showed the effects of the blasts. Ten years later, when photographs, drawings and written accounts were finally permitted, one of the most common descriptions was how the blasts had shredded people's clothes—Ono reframed this in her 'event score' *Cut Piece* a performative act of reciprocity. See: Sebastian Smee, "No matter what the haters say, Yoko Ono was always about peace. Now her message is on a Times Square billboard" in *The Washington Post online*, (23 March 2022). <https://www.washingtonpost.com/arts-entertainment/2022/03/23/yoko-ono-john-lennon-imagine-peace-billboard/>
- 12 Martin King, "Roll up for the Mystery Tour: Reading The Beatles' *Magical Mystery Tour* as a countercultural anti-masculinist text," in *Global Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences*, 4 (2015): 2 Abbie Hoffman's historical importance stems from his role in two of the 1960s' most important flashpoints over the First Amendment—the Chicago police riot of 1968 and the ensuing trial of the 'Chicago Seven'. In addition, he pioneered new forms of activism that combined celebrity, media spectacle, comedy, and cynicism. See "The Briscoe Center Acquires the Abbie Hoffman Papers" *The Briscoe Center for American History online*. <https://briscoecenter.org/about/news/the-briscoe-center-acquires-the-abbie-hoffman-papers/>
- 13 Ibid., 5
- 14 Ibid., 7
- 15 Antonio Gramsci. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks: State and Civil Society*. ed and trans. Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. ElecBook (London: 1999): 507
- 16 Mimesis describes the process of imitation or mimicry through which artists portray and interpret the world. Mimesis is not a literary device or technique, but rather a way of thinking about a work of art—Carroll's Alice works are full of embedded societal violence pitched as educational lessons. Given the changes that were taking place in Victorian England triggered by things like Darwin's scientific investigations, religious doubts and controversies, and the Industrial Revolution, Carroll's works could not have remained free of the influences of his environment. See: Arifa Ghani Rahman, "Violence in the Poems in the Alice books and Lewis Carroll's intended Audience" in *InSight: Rivier academic Journal*, 10: 1 (Spring 2014): 2
- 17 Ibid., 2
- 18 Ibid., 3

## ARRESTED MOVEMENT

Matthew Trbuhović

### INTRODUCTION

I recently explained to my father that I undoubtedly became a designer due to his influence and generosity to me back in the 1970s. An obsessive rummager of the remainder bins downstairs at Auckland's Whitcombe & Tombs, he would often return home on a Thursday night (payday) with not only fish and chips, but also variety of bargains – the best of which were art books. After some clear misses with Goya, Titian and Velazquez, he eventually cracked it with a compendium of 1960s Op art, a poster book of MC Escher and books of surrealist painters including Salvador Dali, Magritte and Max Ernst. The visual illusions, fantasy and graphical mastery evident in these books inspired me to spend countless hours drawing, trying to imitate the amazing artworks. He also surprised me with my first records, notably David Bowie's *Aladdin Sane*, a Hendrix/Who sampler; and an obscure T-Rex album – things that he knew nothing about since he loathed all modern music, but nonetheless they sparked a lifelong passion for music in me. To a young teenager these were treasures, and provided an escape from the stiff, expatriate British culture of my parents, historical maps, opera and *The Goon Show*. We weren't allowed to watch anything American. More than one friend who came to skateboard after school described our place as being "a bit of a morgue".

School centered on art, history and music – my plan was to be an art historian based in Italy. But after the arrival of Punk and New Wave, I ditched the clarinet for the sax and decided I needed to go to art school. I didn't expect this would mean I'd end up in Dunedin – I barely knew where it was – but, armed with a lot of jerseys, blankets and a Conway heater, I turned up at Dunedin School of Art. Since it was the 80s, I put all those years of classical music lessons to use by joining a rock band within the first week. This was indeed the life. Although I didn't follow a very straight path, I eventually ended up with a fulfilling career in digital design and illustration. However, a couple of decades later, 2019 found me wondering what the point of it all was. I had originally wanted to be an artist (or a musician), but had begun to resent the marketing side and felt conflicted about working as a creative in what can at times feel like a dishonest industry. I felt I had spent years designing things for other people that were meant to be beautiful, but often just ended up being discarded as rubbish.

I needed a break from design and marketing and planned to set aside my familiar digital tools and start an MFA. I thought I'd take up painting.

### REBOOT / TWO YEARS OF WEEKENDS

I soon found out that painting is hard, and maybe I should have spent a few years preparing before starting this. Also, I didn't seem to have any ideas. Panic set in and I felt a bit sick about what I had gotten myself into. I had to make a start, so I turned to what I knew best: photography.

I started by wandering around in Dunedin's industrial precinct – a ghost town in the weekends – taking hundreds of photos of buildings, metallic debris and any textures that caught my eye. Not put off by the strange looks from the person who handed me back my photos, I felt I had something to start with as I flicked through them. One particular shot of metallic roller doors showed some potential; the imperfect parallel lines had a rhythm, and the natural rust, paint and dents provided colour and contrast to their linearity.





Figure 1. Series source material, photo.

I made some blurred versions on the computer which smoothed out the representational reference points, and prepared a number of variations of some of them – flipping them to provide mirror versions, boosting the colour and contrast, as well as sharpening and blurring some into abstraction. Once printed, I sliced the photos into uniform narrow strips and began rearranging them into panoramic compositions, with the strips carefully mounted at varying levels.

I had been working on the floor; and found that my fixed viewing distance had unconsciously set the focal point at which the strips optically interacted with each other. The consistency of the slices and precise mounting created a rhythm, and the juxtaposition of blurred and sharp strips made some appear to be set forward and others set back. Because some strips were mounted in the reverse of this pattern – blurred in the foreground and sharp at the back – they confused the optical assumption of their position in space in relation to each other and created a depth-of-field effect. When viewed from the focal point, the composition stimulated the eyes with an optical vibration.

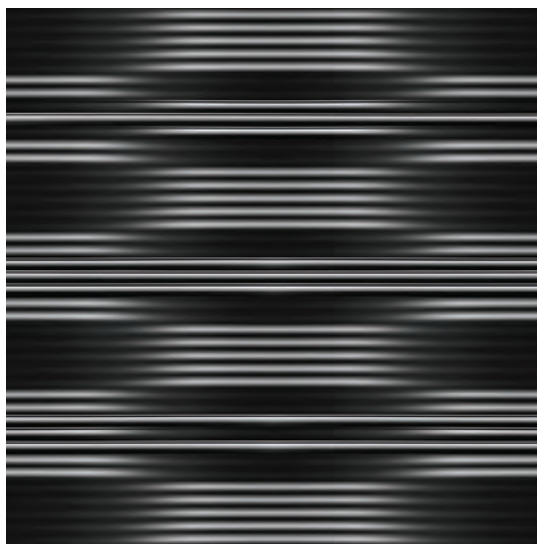


Figure 2. Matthew Trbuhović, *Flow III*, 2019, strip-cut inkjet prints mounted on board, 600 x 600 mm.

## IT'S A PROJECT NOW

My research began as a survey of Constructivism and Op art, centering on Bridget Riley and Victor Vasarely, before broadening to include Carlos Cruz-Diez, Jim Lambie and Gerhard Richter. I was intrigued by Richter's process of abstraction – starting with a single abstract painting, then reducing a portion or slice into multiple pattern states and iterations over successive years, resulting in an entirely new optical work with little relation to its source.<sup>1</sup> New Zealand artists Ralph Hotere, Mervyn Williams, André Hemer and Sara Hughes were particularly relevant, and demonstrated that Op was alive and well in contemporary New Zealand.

The 1960s movement had been relatively short-lived and was regarded at the time as gimmicky and superficial by some critics, in particular Clement Greenberg, who went as far as to label it as kitsch.<sup>2</sup> Op had the misfortune to emerge when advertising was reaching a state of maturity as a powerful visual mechanism for consumerism. It has taken until the twenty-first century for Op art to undergo a revival, in a time where advertising and social media reign supreme and are almost unavoidable in our daily lives. In contrast to its precursor, contemporary Op art isn't revolutionary among contemporary art movements, and is not influenced by the political ideologies that existed in the 1960s. Many of its devices are familiar to us from everyday use in advertising, fashion and graphic media. While still providing a vehicle for conceptual and socio-political expression, contemporary art appears to be concerned with the generation of personal and social experiences, engaging and immersing viewers with installations, light and moving image displays, and capitalising on the possibilities that twenty-first-century technology and materials can offer to artists.

## COVID CREATES A GLITCH

Covid-19 arrived, and New Zealand's first lockdown abruptly halted my printing efforts. The only way to continue was to rethink my process and switch to working on a computer. Using a digital canvas and an illustrated version of the original photographic strip, I began work on a new series using seven variations of the new illustrated unit. It seemed ironic to be using my design tools and processes for my MFA, but there were benefits. I could draw an analogy between my strict set of variations and Vasarely's concept of Plastic Unity;<sup>3</sup> experimenting and testing out options quickly without laboriously cutting up prints. While the work was being 'designed' with commercial tools, I was satisfied that it was, in essence, anti-marketing. The compositions were simple, monochromatic and lacked any readable subject matter or obvious messaging. Their purpose was solely to become activated by the viewer's concentrated gaze and produce an optical vibration.

Throughout the project there was debate as to whether it was photo-collage, post-photography or sculpture. Although the original source material was photographic, the mechanical act of taking a picture and the use of the photographic medium had little relevance to the finished work. My original photo had undergone multiple transitions and translations through different states and media – from a stable physical reality to a digitised and

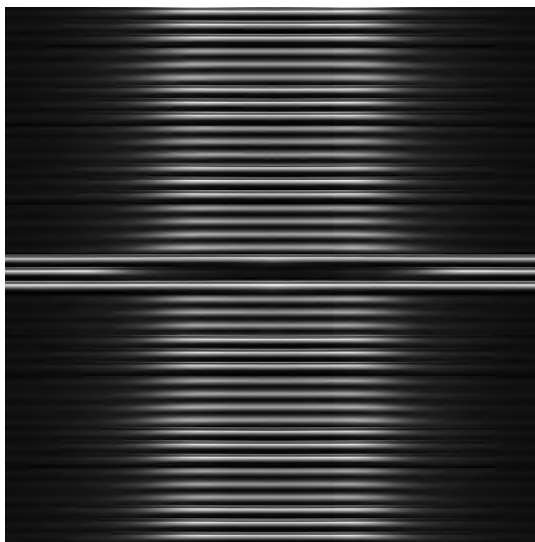


Figure 3. Matthew Trbuhović, *Flow I*, 2019, strip-cut inkjet prints mounted on board, 600 x 600 mm.

printed photo; deconstruction and reconstruction; and finally to a state where eye and brain and space and time play the central role. Perhaps it doesn't even matter, since Gerhard Richter refers to his *Strip* series (2011-2015) as paintings<sup>4</sup> even though, technically, they are digital prints.

Working digitally provided many challenges, and attempting to share progress with my supervisors by Zoom was a disaster. They couldn't see the optical vibration I was experiencing because, like much Op art, it seldom translates through media successfully and requires the viewer to be physically present to experience the complete and personal optical effect. A photograph, print or digital file of an Op image rarely engages or activates optically in comparison to physical presence. Time and movement in a three-dimensional space are key factors required for Op imagery to reveal its vitality experientially.



Figure 4. Matthew Trbuhović, *Wave I, II, IV*, 2020, strip-cut inkjet prints mounted on board, 315 x 315 mm.

Post-lockdown, the new monochromatic series was printed, cut and assembled with layered mounting for the final exhibition, along with a series of digitally developed miniatures. Two new large-scale digital designs were printed to test the effectiveness of an increase in size and, despite being flat prints, their optical vibration and illusion of depth was intense and demonstrated that layered mounting was not necessary to achieve the three-dimensional quality I had been pursuing.

## BUT WHAT'S THE POINT?

At the gallery I was asked by someone in my marketing team what the work was about. Although my intention had been to reject a 'purpose' in the way that design is used for commerce, explaining these motivations didn't seem important and had the potential to detract from the immediacy and simplicity of the work. My objective was now to minimise external distractions and provoke curiosity, allowing the viewer to remove themselves from their own reality and the clamour of modern life – even if just for a brief moment – in order to become absorbed in a singular sensory experience.

**Matthew Trbuhović** has worked as a Digital Designer in Ōtepoti/Dunedin since 1996. His interest is primarily in post-photographic optical art, and he completed his MFA (with Distinction) at Dunedin School of Art in 2021.

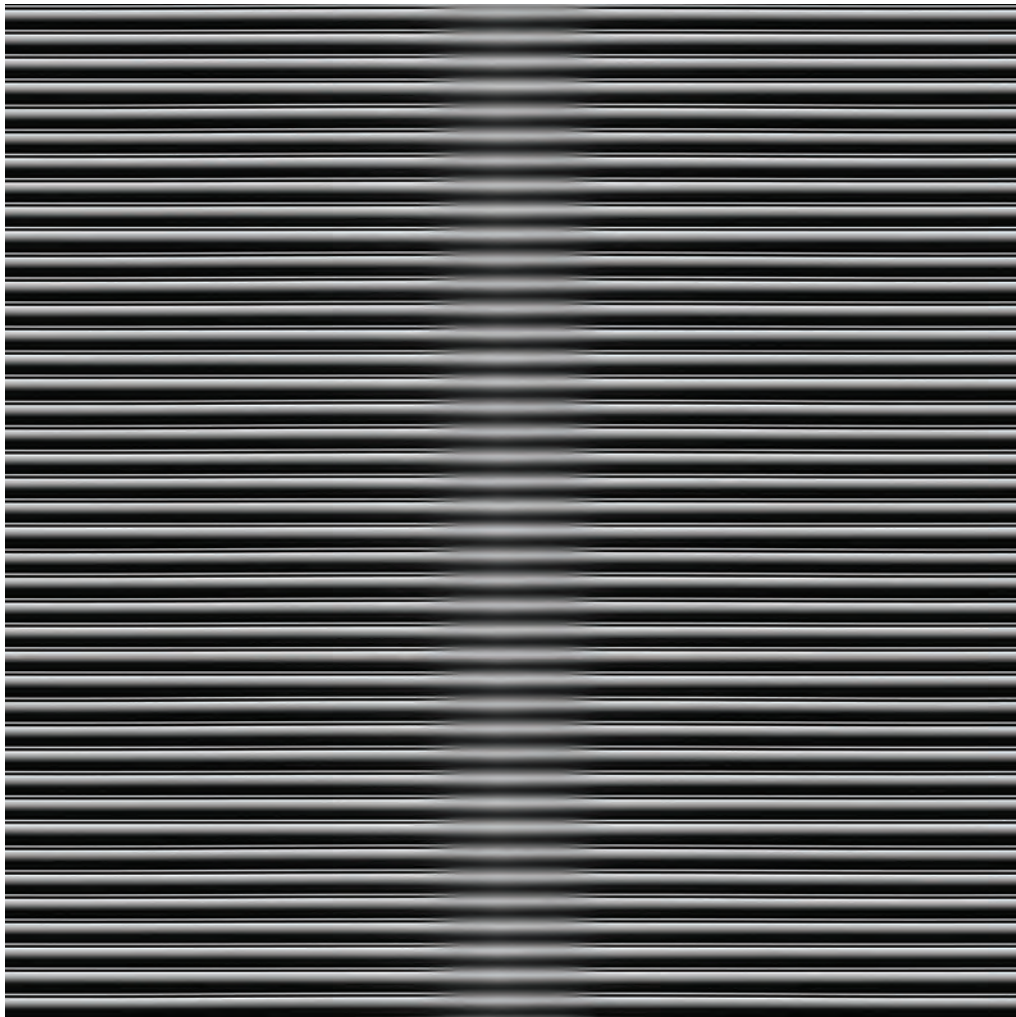


Figure 5. Matthew Trbuhović, *Turbulence I*, 2020, inkjet print mounted on board, 1000 x 1000 mm.

- 1 See "Gerhard Richter, *Abstract Painting (724-4)*," 1990, 920 x 1260 mm, oil on canvas, <https://www.gerhardrichter.com/en/art/paintings/abstracts/abstracts-19901994-31/abstract-painting-6851/?&referer=search&title=Abstract+Painting+%28724-4%29&keyword=Abstract+Painting+%28724-4%29> accessed 20/11/20.
- 2 Clement Greenberg, "Avant Garde Attitudes," <http://www.sharecom.ca/greenberg/avantgarde.html>. Lecture originally published by the Power Institute of Fine Arts, University of Sydney, 1969 (accessed 1 November 2020).
- 3 Gaston Diehl, *Vasarely* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1973), 64.
- 4 See <https://www.gerhard-richter.com/en/art/paintings/abstracts/abstracts-19901994-31/abstract-painting-6851/?&referer=search&title=Abstract+Painting+%28724-4%29&keyword=Abstract+Painting+%28724-4%29>.

## NEIL GRANT: MASTER POTTER THE MAKING OF THE BOOK AND EXHIBITION

Pam McKinlay with Peter Stupples,  
Thomas Lord, Joanna Wernham and Rob Cloughley

*Neil Grant: Master Potter*, with text by art historian Peter Stupples, shines a light on the development of Neil Grant's skill and artistry with clay and fire, and his legacy as an art educator. The book was launched at an event hosted by Dunedin (UNESCO) City of Literature, on 20 October 2021. Its release coincided with a survey exhibition of Grant's ceramic works curated by Rob Cloughley, Neil Grant and Pam McKinlay. The exhibition was timed to overlap with the diamond jubilee of the New Zealand Society of Potters,<sup>1</sup> of which Neil was a founding and lifetime member. *Neil Grant: Master Potter* is a significant contribution to the art history of Aotearoa New Zealand, covering 60 years not only of Neil's career, but developments in the wider community of studio pottery and ceramics art education in New Zealand.

### TYPOGRAPHY

*Neil Grant: Master Potter* is the collective effort of Peter Stupples (author), Thomas Lord (studio photography), Joanna Wernham (book design) and Pam McKinlay (researcher and publisher).

The manuscript began life in 2019, with the intention of being a catalogue essay for an exhibition proposed for 2021. On-the-ground research, with Pam working with Neil's private collection and personal archive in Dunedin, revealed a wealth of material which augmented Peter's extensive research on primary sources in libraries and online. Further colour came from conversations sorting through material, working closely with Neil and his wife Niki, teasing apart the narratives. Later, in-depth Zoom interviews occurred between Neil (Dunedin) and Peter (based in Wellington). Another feature of the book were recollections from former students and colleagues Neil had taught or worked with over the years. Several weeks of Covid-19 lockdown in 2020 also played a creative role, with the essay blossoming into a sizeable manuscript, at which point we realised that it had the potential to become a small monograph.

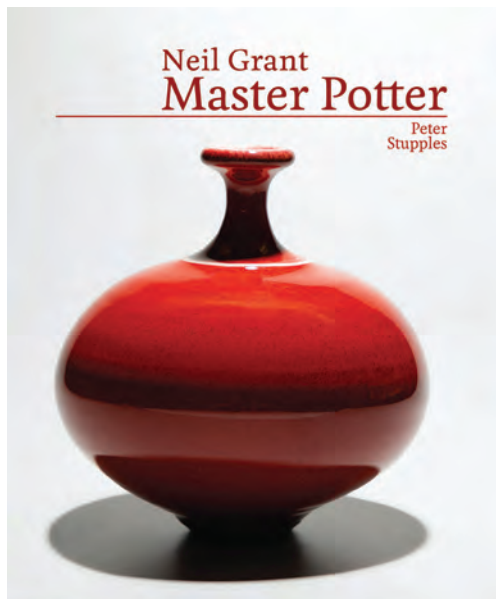


Figure 1. *Neil Grant: Master Potter*, front cover.



The book was intended to function as an illustrated catalogue of the 2021 exhibition and also as a standalone biography. It needed to accommodate a mix of Peter's thought-provoking original text, archival print matter and images, additional technical explanations on glazes (by Rob and Neil), plus the commissioned photographs (by Thomas Lord). The question was whether to separate the biographical/archival materials and follow them with the exhibition items at the rear of the book, or to interweave the studio images. We chose the latter option, interspersing the works in the living story.

Following our first design efforts, we were fortunate to receive professional advice from publisher Gareth St John Thomas (Exisle Publishing); he suggested that our format was too modest, and encouraged us to be more ambitious and adopt a standard American format for the book (page size 235 x 280mm). This is a custom size (not standard) in New Zealand so was not the cheapest solution, but was far more pleasing aesthetically. Each chapter and page of the new book design was storyboarded by Pam McKinlay to assist with the design, layout and photography. This draft layout gave everyone involved a sense of the size, look and feel of the book – the design vision – over the course of the project.



Figure 2. Sample page layout from book.

The decision was made early on to make the book a wholly New Zealand design production, including type fonts which Joanna Wernham sourced from Kris Sowersby's Type Foundry. A combination of serif and sans-serif fonts was chosen to complement Neil's Anglo-Shino approach, reflecting a feeling for the traditional, but with a modern twist. Harmony and counterpoint were achieved through the sans-serif/serif mix in headers and body type, using the sans-serif typefaces National and Karbon for body and caption text, with the serif font Feijoa used for the headings that opened each chapter:

The signature image, plus the serif header for each chapter opening, set the stylistic tone for each section. Double columns were eschewed in favour of a single block of text, with generous margins framing the print space to enhance continuous reading. "A little more width not only gives the text more presence; it implies that it might be worth savouring."<sup>12</sup> Colour notes were added in fine lines taken from the tenmoku teapot<sup>3</sup> to frame the captions. Colour was also used in the subheads, which were designed to lead rather than dominate the text. The margins were another design feature. As well as keeping the print space clean, the extra-wide margins were utilised to hold captions and explanatory commentaries. Once the rules of the grid were in place, there was freedom to improvise at critical moments.

Thomas Lord was commissioned to undertake the studio photography. Thomas has spent time living and working in Japan.<sup>4</sup> His love of Japanese culture brought an added sensitivity, and respect for the *mingei* aesthetic in Neil's work is evident in the photographs chosen for the book. Thomas trialled background, framing and lighting style in a lighting studio ahead of the photoshoot day. His expert lighting skills were brought to the fore when the shoot took place using a makeshift lighting rig in Neil's living room.

Supplementary photographs in the book, including photos of Neil in his studio, the artist's ceramic mural in Dunedin Public Hospital, works in Neil's garden and studio facilities in the ceramics department at the Dunedin School of Art were taken by Pam McKinlay.



Figure 3. Thomas Lord taking photographs for the book on location at Neil Grant's home, Dunedin.

## NEIL GRANT: MASTER POTTER SURVEY EXHIBITION 1960-2021

8-28 October 2021, Dunedin School of Art Gallery<sup>5</sup>

Neil Grant was a contemporary of Len Castle, Mirek Smíšek, Barry Brickell, Doris Lusk, Peter Stichbury and Doreen Blumhardt. His 60-year career as a studio potter and ceramic artist spans the years from the flowering of domestic rustic pots in New Zealand to the era of large sculptural ceramics and architectural commissions. He is well known for his distinctive reworking of traditional Shino-Japanese pottery into a fusion of Anglo-Asian forms and recreating them in new and exciting ways. His work and teaching links the Hamada and Leach influence with the new era of ceramics. While the 'domestic' sometimes sits in a marginalised space in the twenty-first century, Neil Grant's work elevates this sphere. His commitment to quality is a reminder of the artist's physical relationship with the object framed as an intimate encounter in the everyday at the hand of the maker.

Grant achieved early recognition in his art career and was selected for the exhibition "Young Artists New Zealand" in 1961.<sup>6</sup> From the 1960s to the 1980s Grant was a regular exhibitor at New Vision Gallery, Auckland. New Vision was one of the most influential galleries



Figure 4. Sample page layout from book.



#### Tenmoku Glaze

Tenmoku (sometimes spelled temmoku), a Japanese term, is a family of stoneware iron-brown glazes, that fire to black or dark brown with a surface that resembles oil spots, with flashes of light brown on rims or edges. The word tenmoku was the name given by the Japanese for the tea-bowls imported from China, specifically from the T'ien Mu mountains, where the tea ceremony had its origins, where they were sometimes referred to as 'Jian stoneware' or 'black ware'. The oil spot effect was achieved by using a layer of iron-rich slip under a similarly iron-rich glaze. In the heat of the kiln, around 1300°C, the molten glaze and slip form a separate iron-rich layer and the boiling glaze brings some of the iron particles to the surface. As the kiln cools the spots of iron crystallise as magnetite, creating iridescent spots across the surface, so-called 'oil spots'.

Figure 5. Wall label of *tenmoku* glazed teapot, with commentary explaining glaze types and how such forms were created. Before flying out of New Zealand, the Hamadas visited Grant's studio in Auckland where Shōji Hamada chose a pot, a deep-sided bowl with an oil-spot *tenmoku* glaze, like the one shown here. "Neil Grant: Master Potter Survey Exhibition 1960-2021."

in a crucial period of cultural change in the visual arts in New Zealand, specialising in high-quality applied and contemporary art.<sup>7</sup> He featured in the second New Vision Gallery calendar (1968) of local artists photographed by Marti Friedlander.<sup>8</sup>

Like his contemporaries, Grant's career followed a course from the vogue for rustic pottery in the 1960s to the rise of studio-based sculptural and conceptual ceramics in New Zealand. Peter Stupples writes that this was a shift from parochial amateurism to a postmodern internationalism fed by an increasingly sophisticated professionalism. The elaboration of form was accompanied by changes in function,

from pots for domestic use to bespoke ceramics, candidates for display in bourgeois interiors and national gallery collections. The style of pottery [also] changed from the dominance of Anglo-Orientalism, originally influenced by Bernard Leach and Shōji Hamada, to a heterogeneity of forms influenced by the globalisation of information: closed styles based upon individual studios, regional characteristics or national traditions have given way, almost everywhere, to a rootless cosmopolitanism. Within this whirlwind of cultural mixing, Grant remained constant to his own creative agenda, born of Leach and Hamada, refined by his experience of the wider world of ceramics but focussed on the virtues, as he sees it, of the ancient Oriental history of fired clay.<sup>9</sup>

These virtues were rooted in the *mingei* style, an Arts and Crafts-type aesthetic where the domestic is revered in the everyday.<sup>10</sup> This tradition was at odds with aspiring middle-class tastes for decorated bone-china wares imported from England and New Zealand tableware such as Crown Lynn commercial potteries. For Grant, a major consideration was how each piece sat in space as an object. Equally important was the flow of process from raw earth to table: skill at the wheel, technical knowledge and an understanding of the complexities of the relationships between glaze and kiln – a blending of art and science which became truly ingrained over a lifetime's work.

Grant's work developed its own momentum beginning with the early mass-produced pots of his early Auckland years, which answered the needs of financial stability but never produced a lowering of standards. The domestic ware eventually made room to share space with more conceptual pieces such as the nikau piece pots.<sup>11</sup> At Otago Polytechnic Grant returned to a reconsideration of Asian influences, not in imitation of Shino-Japanese pottery, but as an original reworking of the tradition, experimenting, refining, rearticulating and recombining both form and glaze – “innovation as the perpetual accretion of small instances.”<sup>12</sup> Work from this period includes refined deep-fluted bowls with delicate celadon glazes or rich copper reds, pour-glazed shallow bowls (his “criss-cross” pots<sup>13</sup>) and expert control over in his *chūn* and *tenmoku* work.<sup>14</sup>

Neil's contribution to the world of New Zealand ceramics continued at the Dunedin School of Art where he taught for over 40 years in the Ceramics Studio. Throughout his extensive career as an art educator, Neil continued to develop his own practice, juggling the demands of students and an art career with family commitments.

*“Twenty years to learn, twenty years to forget, and then the real work begins.”*

Neil Grant

**Pam McKinlay** (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1731-6437>) has worked as a teaching and research assistant at the Dunedin School of Art since 2006 and shared an office with Neil for many years. She has worked in publishing for most of her working life, from humble beginnings in the OUSA *Critic* office, Dunedin, working with waxed galleys to working as a typesetter at advertising agency Amazing Faces in Sydney.

**Peter Stupples** is a social historian of art and specialist in the Russian avant-garde. He has taught at the University of York in the United Kingdom, at the University of Otago and the Dunedin School of Art at the Otago Polytechnic. At the Dunedin School of Art, he was responsible for the distance programme in art history and theory for the Diploma in Ceramic Arts, where he was a colleague of Neil Grant's.

**Thomas Lord** is a lecturer and technical teacher in the photography studio at the Dunedin School of Art. As well as photography, Thomas has held exhibitions in painting where nostalgia, ecology and the concept of home form a common thread between the two media. Recent projects include a group show on the Isle of Lewis, Scotland, as part of the Hebridean Dark Skies Festival and his 2021 large-format photographic series *Super Sport Sunday*.

**Joanna Wernham** has an extensive background in design, print, hard media and product design. She has worked for the Design Studies and Foundations Studies programmes at the University of Otago. Joanna is a member of Dunedin's LoomRoom as both a weaver and loom technician and is also renowned in Dunedin for her creativity in the world of miniature furniture making. From 2016 she has been a lead designer on the *Scope (Art & Design)* journal.

**Rob Cloughley** is the programme coordinator for the Diploma in Ceramic Art and ceramic lecturer in the Dunedin School of Art. He has worked for Otago Polytechnic since 2002 and holds a Master of Fine Art. Rob's practice is in ceramic sculpture and he teaches a wide variety of ceramic-related topics.

- 1 In 2018 the society was renamed the Ceramics Association of New Zealand (Ceramics NZ). See <https://ceramicsnz.org/about/history>.
- 2 Robert Bringhurst, *Back to the Master: The Elements of Typographic Style*, 2nd ed. (Vancouver, BC: Hartley and Marks 1999), 163.
- 3 Peter Stupples, *Neil Grant: Master Potter* (Dunedin: Pamphlaterra Publications, 2021), 21 (Page 27).
- 4 Thomas Lord, "screams like home: A Photobook Project," *Scope: Contemporary Research Topics (Art & Design)*, 22 (2021), 175-81, <https://doi.org/10.34074/scop.1022002>.
- 5 For photo documentation of the exhibition see [https://www.flickr.com/photos/dunedin\\_school\\_of\\_art/albums/72157720081179772](https://www.flickr.com/photos/dunedin_school_of_art/albums/72157720081179772).
- 6 Stupples, *Neil Grant*, 11. "In May [Neil] was one of the three sculptors selected as part of an exhibition, 'Young New Zealand Artists'. The exhibition included young emerging artists such as Ralph Hotere, Greer Twiss and Arnold Wilson."
- 7 Len Bell, "The New Vision Gallery, Auckland," *Auckland Art Gallery, Toi o Tāmaki*, 4 July 2018, <https://www.aucklandartgallery.com/article/the-new-vision-gallery-auckland?q=%2Farticle%2Fthe-new-vision-gallery-auckland> (accessed 2 February 2020).
- 8 Stupples, *Neil Grant*, 38. According to Douglas Lloyd Jenkins, "Potters in the sixties were the pin-up stars of the Auckland art scene."
- 9 Stupples, *Neil Grant*, 130.
- 10 Ibid., 48.
- 11 Ibid., 37. "Piece pots" is the name Grant gave these ceramic forms, made in two pieces. See *ibid.*, p. 77, for a photo of Neil Grant in his studio creating forms for the Fletcher Brownbuilt Pottery Award in 1977.
- 12 Stupples, *Neil Grant*, 131 (quote Neil Grant).
- 13 Stupples, *Neil Grant*, 124. "From 1995 to the present, Grant has experimented with variations on his Chūn/tenmoku dishes with a series of ladle-poured, criss-cross patterns, a decorative technique, originating in Mashiko-ware, in which Hamada excelled. The technique has an ancient Japanese provenance known as *hishaku*, named after the wooden ladles used to carry water from the kettle to the tea bowl in the Japanese tea ceremony. This is a tricky process to get right as the pouring must begin before it is over the dish to prevent splash marks. ... The glaze must be thick enough to run slowly across the tenmoku/Chūn surface. If the plate is held at an angle the glaze can run from a dense top to a thinner base."
- 14 Stupples, *Neil Grant*, 80. "Chūn or Jūn glazes are opalescent bluish stoneware glazes ... originating in Song Dynasty, China. These high fire glazes are typically fired to Cone 8 or 10. Their color is primarily an optical illusion stemming from light refracted off the inside of bubbles trapped in the glaze. The glazes are usually high in silica. The color comes from small percentages of iron often enhanced with minute amounts of copper. Chūn glazes are often used in conjunction with copper red slips underneath to develop a range of opalescent purples and blues. Similar opalescent effects may be made by covering a high-iron content temmoku glaze with a fluid ash glaze." Robin Hopper, "The Beautiful Variations of Chun Glazes," *Ceramic Arts Network*, blog post, 7 February 2022, <https://ceramicartsnetwork.org/daily/article/The-Beautiful-Variations-of-Chun-Glazes>.



## DRIVEN BY A WILD FORCE

Eva Ding

Arriving in another country as a new immigrant always comes with mixed emotions, and finding a place between fitting in and feeling alienated is something that has preoccupied me for eight years. The experience of living in a different culture is the process of getting to know this new world better and getting to know myself better at the same time. I love this country for its unparalleled natural scenery and diverse cultural atmosphere, enabling me to live in freedom and happiness. It is an open society where equality, love, acceptance and tolerance are all striven for.

Choosing to study ceramics as my major was perhaps the result of an obsession or a particular emotion. I often saw exquisite ancient Chinese porcelain in museums in China in my childhood, and I have admired people with the specific skills required to make such pieces ever since.

The Dunedin School of Art at Otago Polytechnic brought me many fantastic experiences; I was tirelessly kneading, rolling, pinching and coiling. Bringing with me the unique experience of immigrant status, I inserted my emotions into my study in the second semester of the first year. One morning, I remember rushing into the head of department, Rob's office and saying I wanted to challenge myself through a 'multiple' project that would aim to create 'us.' It would be a time-consuming project, involving the making of numerous small sticks out of different clay materials and coiling natural grogs (like stone, sand and soil) into clay bodies and firing them at different temperatures. At the same time, this would also be an infrequent opportunity for me to study the properties of different clays. Rob readily supported my proposal; I then made a lot of sticks.

I have a strong interest in the different clay materials of ceramics. The beauty of glaze is incomparable; however, the natural power of clay, which comes from the earth and from nature, has always attracted me. I used earthenware, stoneware, porcelain and different grogs, and batch-firing them in Cone4, Cone6, Cone10R, Cone08R Raku, and Cone6R Saggers allowed me to achieve distinctive colours and textures. Instead of using glaze, I tried to exploit as much of the natural diversity as possible in the clays themselves, utilising an open display mode with no fixed pattern.

I named the resulting work *This is Us* – a large number of unglazed ceramic sticks made of varied materials fired in different atmospheres. Each stick stands for an individual who, together with all the others, constitutes our multicultural society. I was honoured to receive the ceramic award in the ECC NZ Student Craft / Design Awards for 2020.

Over time, my understanding of ceramics has changed utterly through my study at Otago Polytechnic. I fell in love with handmade ceramics. The rough and irregular asymmetrical aesthetics I had never seen in Chinese porcelains have entirely mastered me. While China has never been free from the constraints of traditional aesthetics in the development of modern and contemporary ceramic art, Japan was influenced by modern Western art in the twentieth century and took a different direction under the guidance of the Sodeisha Group, who pioneered modern Japanese ceramic art. I began to think about a question lingering in my mind during my second year's study: How to understand the relationship between ceramic art and art in general? It may be a question that plagues a lot of ceramic artists – I feel that we are in a dilemma, with our work poised between art and craft.



Figures 1-4. Eva Ding, *This is Us*, 2020, unglazed clay.





During my second year, when I finally made my first decent teapot on the wheel and circulated it on WeChat (a Chinese social media site) for comments from friends, most people commented that the spout was too long and unattractive. I could not argue with them. I knew that they were shackled by traditional aesthetics, and so believed that my teapot should match the style of the conventional small-spout pot (which is functional). Nevertheless, I was outraged. Why should it be functional? Can't I make something different? Overnight, I produced another teapot – this time handmade – with an exaggerated spout (*Rout III – Teapot*); it was a 'rebellion' against tradition and an attempt to break through inherited layers of convention.



Figure 5. Eva Ding, *Rout III – Teapot*, earthenware with bright chartreuse lichen glaze, cone 06. Runner up, Waiclay National Ceramics Premier Award, 2022.

In his book *Shards – Garth Clark on Ceramic Art*, the author says: "Within ceramics, one still finds a somewhat tortured ambivalence between the ambition of being a meaningful contemporary artist functioning on the medium's edge, and on the other hand, reflecting a love of the medium's tradition."<sup>1</sup> Very contradictory impulses. His words hit my heart. This inner anxiety plagues me almost every day – the love and appreciation of traditional handicrafts is countered by the feeling of being shackled by tradition.

It's funny how I sometimes feel like a teenage rebel trying to validate my existence by doing everything against the rules. In the traditional handicraft world, inheritance is crucial. But the most exciting thing about art is that artists don't have to imitate history; instead, artists are those who rewrite history with their distinctive understandings of the world and creative visual languages. Although the world is continuously developing in cycles revealing specific trends, the complex political and socio-cultural phenomena at play and the fundamental conflicts involved are different at each stage of human history. An artist cannot use techniques from 200 years ago to represent the current human experience adequately. Likewise, although I often feel an ardent desire to make a delicate and practical vase or mug to pay homage to tradition, at the same time such a work is no longer enough to carry what I want to express. Carrying this confusion inside me, I continue to complete my bachelor's degree in visual arts.

I am possessed by a wild force that drives me to make change. Transforming one's art practice is painful and requires continuous self-denial, moments of breakthrough, and constant thinking and practice. I hope that my work can be a medium to connect me and my audience, or a bridge to connect the shared emotions of independent individuals with different social experiences. Maybe this motivation has arisen because, as an immigrant, I am always seeking to find a sense of identity.

**Eva Ding** is studying in her third year of a Bachelor of Visual Arts in ceramics and sculpture at the Dunedin School of Art at Otago Polytechnic. Eva says: "I am from China and have lived in New Zealand for almost nine years. My art practice focuses on contemporary ceramics, immigration status and the social/cultural environment. This year, the focus of my art practice is on the gender inequality experienced by Chinese girls and women and the manifestation of feminism in Chinese contemporary art."

<sup>1</sup> Garth Clark, *Shards – Garth Clark on Ceramic Art* (New York: Ceramic Arts Foundation, 2003), 358.

## THE EXCHANGE: INVESTIGATING TIME, LABOUR, AND VALUE

Liz Rowe

*The Exchange* was part of a practice-based Master of Fine Arts completed through the Dunedin School of Art. My intention was to create the perfect ceramic bowl, repeat the form hundreds if not thousands of times, and investigate the dispersal of the resulting bowls. The key themes explored in the project were time, labour and value.

As well as being visually pleasing, the perfect bowl had to be a satisfying shape to hold and use, and multi-purpose to be as useful as possible – a bowl for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and for drinking out of, if required. My perfect bowl had an open form, a foot ring, was made with 1.25 kilos of stoneware clay and glazed with a high-fired wood-ash glaze in a gas kiln. Each bowl was given a unique identifier consisting of a two-word, four-letter phrase – such as “fake news,” “home fire,” “busy body” – and a number between zero and 9,999.

As an ordinary item in our kitchens, the meaning of a bowl is acquired through use. We all have our favourites, whether in terms of the item's shape, size, colour or history. And as part of our everyday activity of eating there is an active, even performative, character to a bowl. The dispersal method chosen for *The Exchange* project reflected this engagement by involving people as participants. Each bowl took approximately one hour to make – from preparing the clay to making, firing and documenting the final product – and was exchanged for an hour of the participant's time. The exchanged hour could be measured in all sorts of ways: it could be the hourly rate someone earned, or an hour doing something for me, or for another person or pursuit I felt was important or valuable. Participants could choose as many or as few bowls as they liked. Each one was valued at one hour of my time and I exchanged it for one hour of theirs.





By the end of the project nearly 300 bowls had been made and were available for exchange. Each exchange was discussed and agreed by both parties and documented by way of a non-binding contract, my written record and photographs as appropriate. The first exchange was made in February 2021 and the last in December that year, by which time I had completed 69 exchanges for 259 bowls. Exchanges were varied, and included baking for me and others, bead making, website help, locally dug and processed clay, gardening, wool spinning, massage, haircuts, prose writing, and poetry. Eleven of the exchanges were for voluntary work, three for money, and the remainder were for me, including nine pieces of writing and/or poetry and one consisting of conversation.

## MEASURING SUCCESS

While measuring 'success' or 'failure' in a project like this is not straightforward, I see social, economic and political outcomes flowing from it. As far as social value is concerned, the different perspectives participants brought to the project and the conversations we had as we negotiated hours for hours were a richly rewarding part of this project. Discussions were often about the ideas behind the project, such as the value of labour and time, the search for perfection and the attraction of handmade things. Many participants brought welcome feedback, often mentioning that the bowls were in regular use and talking of how much they enjoyed using them. One participant said her teenagers were more engaged in family meals when the bowls were used.

Economic values were very much to the fore. There was a strong element of self-determination in the way the exchanges were valued and, by eliminating a fixed price for the bowls, access was equal for all and not dependent on income or perceived status.

Political considerations also emerged from the consideration of time. The decoupling of time from the usual drive for doing more with less allows a broader perspective to be taken on how we use time, opening up new possibilities including seeing time as available for grassroots political and collective activities.

## TIME, LABOUR AND VALUE

Time and labour were inextricably linked throughout the project. Time for most of us now centres on clocks, calendars and diaries; a commodity to be managed daily. Conventional economics dictates that workers should constantly strive to do more in less time. Countering this, an important principle of *The Exchange* was that both parties set their own hour equivalents, unrelated to mainstream economic measures. These hour equivalents were also unrelated to the conventional hierarchical character of hourly rates that feeds the impression that people on higher rates of pay have more value or worth to society than those on lower rates.

The repetitive aspect of the process was intended to highlight mass production, and in particular issues relating to skilled versus unskilled labour; 'cheap' factory labour; and anonymous workers on production lines versus artists working in a studio environment. While these issues remained relevant, the project seemed determined to resist a reading involving mass production. Any attempt to make the same bowl over and over was thwarted by the range of colours obtained from the same glaze recipe and the way the shape frequently distorted in the firing process. The coding system was intended to be the only identifying difference between bowls, asserting the uniqueness of each one in the face of mass production, but instead only highlighted the differences. My skill set, while extending beyond that of an untrained assembly-line worker, did not become so fluent that I could turn out bowl after bowl looking the same. Differences between skilled and unskilled labour and artist versus factory worker are not as clear-cut as might have been imagined.

Value in our economic system of market capitalism is a slippery concept. We often equate it with price and like to feel that we've got good "value for money" with our purchases. But it works the other way, too. We're willing to accept that an item from a premium brand has more value than one that serves the same purpose from an



unknown maker. In the same way, a ceramic bowl handmade by an artist potter in the studio is seen to have more value than one from the factory floor. It was noteworthy that many participants in *The Exchange* found it difficult to set a value on their time and equate it to the value of a bowl without the fallback position of a fixed price for the bowl.

## EVERY MINUTE IS PRECIOUS

*The Exchange* became a central part of my larger MFA project “Every Minute is Precious” – a title taken from one of the writing exchanges about time. As the process of making got underway, the two-word phrases started to take on a life of their own and generated ideas outside the orbit of *The Exchange*. Some of the phrases lent themselves to making into ceramic word blocks which could incorporate a range of experimental glazes. A further set were used in a series of letterpress works produced at the University of Otago’s Otakou Press. An exhibition documenting the exchanges and the larger project was held at the Dunedin School of Art Gallery, Riego Street, Dunedin, 14-18 March 2022. A photographic record of the exhibition and more details about *The Exchange* project can be accessed at [www.exchange.arts.nz](http://www.exchange.arts.nz).

Dunedin artist **Liz Rowe** graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts, majoring in sculpture, in 2007. She pursued a full-time art practice for the next few years, working across several disciplines including ceramics, painting and sculpture. In 2013 her interests took a turn sideways when she decided to investigate chocolate making, establishing craft chocolate company OCHO. After six years, and with the company growing, she decided to bow out and return to the arts. Liz completed a Master of Fine Arts in March 2022.

## METAPHORS OF COMMUNION AND SPIRITUAL IDENTITY

Sabin Perkins

### INTRODUCTION

I am interested in the notion of sacrifice and how food has been used in the iconography of Christian art, particularly in relation to the sacrament of the Eucharist. In what follows, I will discuss my art practice through the metaphor of communion and spiritual identity, which I find manifested in my daily art practice. I am a chef, a jeweller and a Christian. This is my personal journey from the kitchen via the jewellery workshop. The final installation piece in my postgraduate exhibition "Sacrifice, Food and Death" (4-8 April, 2022) was a metaphorical exploration of sacrifice and deliverance, expressed through the form, colour and materials of nine copper communion cups resting on a stone altar; juxtaposing the ephemeral aesthetics of the Catholic baroque fantasy with the austere Anglican architectural aesthetic.

I am not always fully engaged in the mental and spiritual demands of communion when at church. At times, I drift off and show more interest in the iconography within the Anglican cathedral. My gaze settles on the leadlight windows and I reflect on the image of the crucifixion and the message of suffering it embodies and how this is conveyed in outline, colour and light. When I visit the Polish Catholic church in Broad Bay once a month, my mind wanders during the service to the ornate crucifix behind the altar and its depiction of outer and inner suffering and sacrifice.

As I wait my turn for communion, I deliberate on the dichotomy between the spiritual encounter of transubstantiation<sup>1</sup> and consecration and my focus on the beauty and embodied agony of the artwork of Christ dying on the cross. Have I betrayed my Protestant theology and idolised the cross? I suspect this is a fusion of both approaches, as I have a Protestant father and a Catholic mother:

### THE MEMORY OF KITCHEN RITUALS

To give my artwork some context, I started my chef's apprenticeship at age 15 in 1975 in Invercargill. My head chef had been a Dutch commando as well as an Olympian in jujitsu. Knife throwing and hand-to-hand combat techniques were demonstrated in quiet evenings in the kitchen of the Grand Hotel. Boning knives were flung from one end of the kitchen into sacks of potatoes at the other end. The projected construct of kitchen masculinity was performed so as to remove any doubt that one's occupation might be perceived as effeminate. In her article "Playing to the Senses: Food as a Performance Medium" Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett discusses performance within food preparation as being about display, about executing and completing something, and how to behave within that context.<sup>2</sup> Today the same attitudes can be observed in characters such as Gordon Ramsay and Marco Pierre White.

### Food, Sacrifice, Death

*"It requires more courage to suffer than to die"*

(Napoléon Bonaparte).<sup>3</sup>

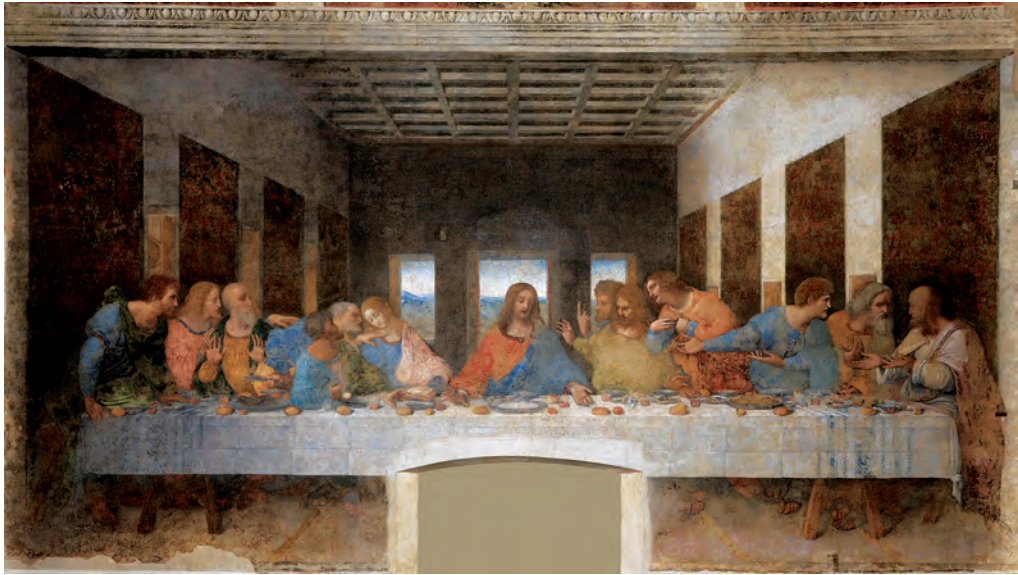


Figure 1. Leonardo Da Vinci, *The Last Supper*, c1495-98, oil on canvas, 70 x 88 cm.  
Wikimedia commons.

In the Bible, death means separation. There are two types: physical (first) death involves the separation of the body from the spirit, and spiritual (second) death involves the separation of the spirit from the presence of God.<sup>4</sup> While all must face the first, not everyone must face the second death. For obvious reasons, food and death are associated: without sustenance and warmth, we die.

The Greek understanding of sacrifice was in part based on guilt and the relationship with the animal immolated. This emphasis can also be seen in the Christian notion of sacrifice as evidenced by the sacrificial lamb, "a metaphorical reference to a person or animal sacrificed (killed or discounted in some way) for the common good."<sup>5</sup> It can be argued that the notion of sacrifice juxtaposes two theologies. On the one hand, a Greek sacrifice means "I am released of guilt because I am grateful for the death of an animal and the meat that I consume," while, on the other hand, "I am aware of how my Christian God sacrificed his only son. Jesus was the metaphorical sacrificial lamb to cleanse my sins. Greek and Christian theology allow me to live without guilt, providing I remember who sacrificed themselves for my sustenance."

Christianity reinforces the spiritual meaning of bread and wine as the representation of sacrifice<sup>6</sup> and, by extension, the taking of life in many ways. Therefore, both spiritual and physical life depend on death. As explained by Dorita Hannah,<sup>7</sup> in Judeo-Christian traditions, the slaying of the beast (animal) was associated with the use of the altar: Sacrificial slaying is an act performed to establish or sustain a proper relationship with the divine, through an offering consecrated by its own destruction. This offered victim acts as an intermediary between the sacred and the profane. Its existence allows for the two worlds to be present and interdependent while simultaneously remaining distinct.<sup>8</sup>

Judeo-Christian tradition and texts are full of examples of sacrifice, overwhelmingly related to food/sustenance – the bread and wine, the offering of an animal.<sup>9</sup> Clearly, however, the central sacrifice is Jesus Christ himself, who died on the cross and who prefigured his own sacrifice through the Last Supper. In Christian belief, the Eucharist/communion – the taking of bread and wine – quite literally embodies sacrifice. One element cannot work without the other: suffering, death and sacrifice depend on one another.

Cooking reminds me primarily that food is a facet of the struggle for life. Life depends on death. Butchering the animal's body still requires the human body to complete the process: a machine cannot suffice; only the organic can adapt to the organic. The hand guides the transition from life to death efficiently and humanely.

Multiple meanings can be found in Jesus's final meal with his disciples, the feast that sealed food's significant role in religious art and symbolism. The Last Supper was a goodbye, of course, but was also, symbolically, Christ offering himself so others could atone for their sin. It was the first Eucharist: the bread and wine offered as atonement for sin, a central philosophy in Christian belief.

## DAILY RITUALS FOR SUSTENANCE

A kitchen is one of the last places where we still use raw objects that have a connection to the natural environment. Natural ingredients and hand tools, such as my wooden-handled knife, cutting board and wooden spoons. These objects, such as my knife, have a relationship: the hand and the knife are one. The chopping block involves the daily ritual of scraping salt into the wood to kill the bacteria. Rituals are often derived from everyday objects, such as my chef's knife. A daily ritual attributed to the kitchen is my apron: it corresponds to the categories of ritual dress. When I put the apron on, I perform an act of initiation. I fold the apron into a three-folded band; I tie a bow around my belly. Putting on an apron means exiting my everyday world: I enter the poetical world of the kitchen. It is functional, but also symbolic. My general mood changes on wearing the apron. Food in this context becomes a rich narrative, a fusion of cultures and ingredients. Combine this with the process of physical production and it becomes philosophical consumption. Consumption becomes a spiritual nourishment.

## SACRAMENTAL VESSELS AND SYMBOLISM IN THE TIME OF COVID

A Christian chalice is a utensil used in communion to hold the consecrated body and blood of Jesus Christ in the liturgy of the Eucharist. A chalice is a goblet-shaped wine cup. It symbolises the cup from which Jesus Christ drank with his disciples during the Last Supper. The cup of love and unity is unavoidably a cup of sacrifice. Sharing the cup is an intimate action that may makes me feel uncomfortable during communion in Covid times. Our lives have changed since the Covid-19 pandemic; internationally, many churches have closed their physical doors. One of the practices at issue is the use of the common cup versus individual communal cups. Many denominations have looked to the common cup used in the sacrament of Holy Eucharist as a site of germ transmission. However, the Church of England has controversially said "no" to the individual cup.<sup>10</sup>

The concept of individual cups seems self-centred and individualistic, an outlook which is contradictory to the spirit of the shared unity of the sacrament cup. While the Rev. Dr Hilary M Bogert-Winkler argues that "the urge to use individual disposable communion cups as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic is understandable for hygiene reasons,"<sup>11</sup> she asserts that the use of pre-filled individual disposable cups undermines the aesthetic and liturgical significance of the shared silver communal cup. She continues that the importance placed on hygiene and hygiene reform is a way of associating physical health with moral superiority, effectively excluding particular groups such as African-Americans and immigrants.<sup>12</sup> In contrast to the individual cup 'reformers,' church leaders in favour of retaining the common cup argued that hygiene reform was closely allied with separation of class and therefore argued against it.

## A PERSONAL COMMUNION

My final work in the exhibition started with the production of a single raised brass cup. However, given the context of the pandemic, I realised that the sharing of the common cup in Covid times might cause unnecessary material pain and suffering. As a result of this, I transformed the project into the production of nine individual copper

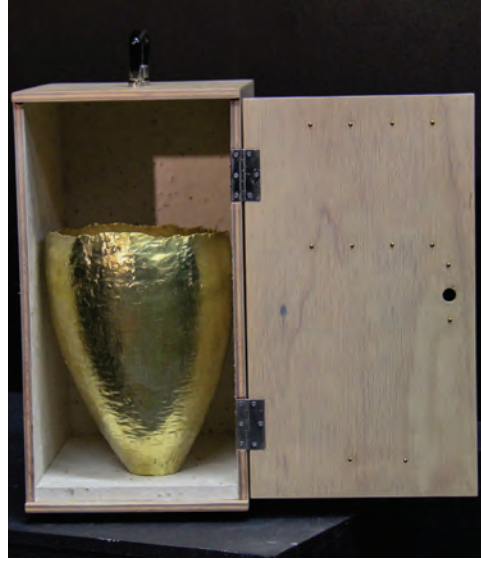


communion cups. My intention is to partake in communion with nine friends. I chose the number nine as it is symbolic of divine completeness. In Christian numerology it conveys finality, as Christ died at the ninth hour. The copper communion cups rested on a stone altar.

My exploration of the Christian communion rite set out to examine the links between sacrifice, food, death and the visual arts. My research has led me to the raising of a final urn to hold the ashes of the dead, and so the tenth and final vessel will symbolise the final sacrifice.



Figures 2-6, Sabin Perkins, 2022, selection of installation images and details from the exhibition.



**Sabin Perkins** is a chef, jeweller and a Christian who is interested in the notion of sacrifice. He notes that in this essay "I discuss my own histories as a chef, artist, educator and practitioner of Christianity and how these come together in the production of sacramental artworks discussing food and sacrifice. I describe what I am doing metaphorically, frequently using the metaphor of communion, which I find manifested in my daily practice."

Photographs: Pam McKinlay.

- 1 The sacrament of communion is based around the notion of the transmutation of the body, as flesh and blood, into a spiritual essence that is consumed by the body of the person partaking in the Eucharist.
- 2 Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Playing to the Senses: Food as a Performance Medium," *Performance Research*, 4 (1999), 1-30.
- 3 Ray Hamilton, ed., *Military Quotations: Stirring Words of War and Peace* (Chichester: Summersdale Publishers, 2012).
- 4 John Ankerberg and Dillon Burroughs, *How is Christianity Different from Other Religions?* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2008).
- 5 Ernest Milner and Frank Hoerner, *A Dialogue on Christianity* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, 2010), 48.
- 6 Lawrence Feingold, *The Eucharist: Mystery of Presence, Sacrifice, and Communion* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2018).
- 7 Dorita Hannah, "Butcher's White: Where the Art Market meets the Meat Market in New York City," in *Eating Architecture*, eds Jamie Horwitz and Paulette Singley (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2004), 279-300.
- 8 Ibid., 285-6.
- 9 Norman Wirzba, *Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
- 10 Hilary M Bogert-Winkler, "Individual Communion Cups, Community, and Covid-19," *Montreal Dio* [Montreal Diocesan Theological College], blog post, 30 June 2020, <https://montrealdio.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Bogert-Winkler-Common-Cup.pdf> (accessed 5 December 2021).
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Daniel Sack, *Whitebread Protestants: Food and Religion in American Culture*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

## UKU ARTIST IN RESIDENCE 2021: WI TAEPA

Tracey-lee McNamara

During 2021 we were blessed with the presence of Wi Taepa (Wi Te Tau Pirika Taepa of Ngāti Whakaue, Te Arawa and Te Ati Awa) as our artist in residence at the ceramics department in the Otago Polytechnic School of Art.

Wi is a spiritual man, a kaumātua – his light shines long and bright wherever he goes. As a new acquaintance, I was constantly captivated by the cross-section of humanity that Wi attracted for a chat.

Wi joined the ceramics school in late April and stayed till July 2021; his door was always open. Many students and fellow tutors visited to sit and talk with him about art, life, techniques and ideas. His openness to conversation, his joy in meeting new people, his understanding of art theory and feminism provided fuel for many of the stimulating conversations shared. Wi's ability to relate to people and help them realise their own potential through connection, understanding and spirituality was witnessed often. He asked some important questions about "what is held in the space between the rims," in an artistic or spiritual sense, rather than relating to the physical presence of the pot.



Figure 1. Day one in Wi's studio.



Figure 2. Wi during his tutorial on coiling and slab building.

Wi's ceramics, as with his other disciplines within his art practice, follow his philosophy built around Papatūānukū (earth mother), Ranginui (father sky), te marama (the light), te pōuri (the darkness), te rā (the day), te mutunga (the end). For him, everything is connected through the gods, especially the earth mother and the light and dark side of all that exists.

Wi utilises a hand-building approach, employing coil and slab techniques. His tools are many and varied, mostly hand-built, with some made from the organic materials to hand – for example, a tree branch could become the imprint on his clay surface. His skills at forming hand-built circular objects were imparted to us during a shared lesson showing us how the pinch and coil depth need to be precise, how this would then define the outcomes. He challenged us to make 30 circular balls using the pinch method, then cut each one with a wire to examine thickness and form on both inside and outside surfaces. This was intended to give us an understanding of form, 'seeing it' through our fingers and thumbs. In essence, to make, to break down, to study, to reform and therefore to learn.

Wi enjoys firing with naturally occurring glaze elements like black iron oxide or terra sigillata ("sealed earth"), clay suspended in water at specific gravity, a technique used in Roman times. This process requires a lot of burnishing, polishing with a stone, after dipping the pot in terra sigillata, so as to achieve a gloss-like sealed surface. We also experimented with a technique using a 44-gallon drum and gas to achieve black carbon glazing.



Figure 3. Making terra sigillata.



Figure 4. Black carbon firing drum.

While students studying for the ceramics diploma from other parts of the country were in Dunedin, we held a pit-firing session. Pit firing is an ancient and widely used technique used to fire pots. Figures 6-11 offer a photo study from the day.

The next morning when the pit was opened, it looked like something from an eruption. Where the carbon had been trapped, we saw black; where the fire was hottest, we saw white; and where copper wire, nutrients and other organic materials had been added, we saw flashes of various colours. The pieces were removed, then scrubbed several times to enable us to admire the results.

In addition to teaching, Wi was also working on a body of work for a show with Dunedin artist Simon Kaan near the end of his stay; some examples of that collaboration are shown in Figure 5. Each piece was hand-crafted and, as students, we got to watch them take form from beginning to end. The pace Wi sets reflects his slow, thoughtful work routine, juggling many pieces at once.



Figure 5. Pieces created for a joint exhibition with Simon Kaan.





Figure 6. All materials and bricks assembled ready to make a pit fire. We had gathered pallets for burning, a nutrient block from farmlands, some copper wire, sawdust and other organic materials, along with our bisque pots to place in the fire pit.



Figure 7. The students are ready to build an above-ground pit fire with the bricks. In the foreground is the in-ground pit fire.



Figure 8. Within the loosely made pit fire we placed our work, intertwined with wood and fine wood sawdust, and then lit the fire from the top so that it burned downwards. This technique heats the work slowly and avoids subjecting it to heat shock.



Figure 9. We kept stoking the fire; by the end of the day every piece of pallet had been burned.



Figure 10. The pits were covered late in the day to protect them against the weather and left to fully burn down and cool overnight.



Figure 11. Pit fire the next day.



Wi never stops thinking. He is alert to the world and art ideas flow freely to him, with little restriction on creativity. He is open to experience and always experimenting; his creative voice is heard within each object he forms. Wi spent time working on one piece, *Waka Huia*, from the beginning of his time with the Otago Polytechnic School of Art to the end of his stay. I asked Wi what it meant to him, and my interpretation of his answer is as follows: "*Waka Huia* holds within itself all the memories of my time at Otago Polytechnic School of Art in 2021 – all of myself, all the people, students and tutors I met, all the new friends I made. It holds inside itself all that I did from the beginning to the end of my stay."

Wi never had time to glaze-fire *Waka Huia* – it sits in a bisque state in the collection awaiting Wi's return.



Figure 12. *Waka Huia* by Wi Taepa.

**Tracey-lee McNamara** was born in Auckland, but now lives in Otago. Her interest in clay was first aroused by night-school classes at Otago Polytechnic. She is a mature student, now in her third year of part-time ceramics study. She finds clay a fantastic medium, acting as a catalyst for other practices such as screen printing and ceramic pencil drawing. She uses wheel and hand-building techniques. Tracey-lee is also working towards building a Japanese-inspired Minigama kiln to ash-fire some pots.

**Wi Taepa** was born in 1946 and grew up within a Anglican family as his father was a minister who led several congregations over the years, including the Rangiatea church in Otaki. He is a veteran of Vietnam and has worked within the prison system and with at risk youth and given back much to his community. Wi currently resides in the Porirua area. His exhibition at the "Auckland Art Gallery 'Retrospective'" was the first Auckland Gallery presentation of a major survey of a senior Māori artist". (Wi Taepa Retrospective Auckland art gallery publication). In 2022 Wi was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to Māori art, particularly ceramics.

All photographs by Tracey-lee McNamara unless otherwise stated.





