

TRYING TO GIVE ART A SPORTING CHANCE

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In a year when it has just been revealed that hosting the America's Cup has created a net loss of \$156m, to be borne by the taxpayer, I am once again frustrated at the culture that always prioritises sport over art funding. Culturally, we seem to adhere to the outdated binary of either sporty or arty. We could learn from Te Ao Māori where everything is interconnected, where creative and physical energies are integral to emotional, spiritual and cultural wellbeing.

For me, I am stuck in the binary. This is my third attempt at writing an editorial for this latest issue that 'sports' a bumper crop of articles that have resisted some of my attempts to corral them into themes. This is because, just as I come to grips with some serious writing ... my iPhone alarm goes off and I rush upstairs to watch the Black Sticks (oh ... almost), Black Ferns (Oh Ruby!), Oly Whites (oh dear), Lisa, Lisa, LISA!! (we are now on first-name terms), and Laurel Hubbard – damned if she does and damned if she doesn't win. So far, adrenaline (mainlined via live stream) is winning hands down over academic focus and the contemplation of art.

So, this is editorial number three. Even though the show jumping is on this evening, there is no horse and rider (however brave) that will deter me from my task of introducing you to *Scope* 22. The only horses in my focus are those painted by Mike Cooke that are positioned obediently nose-to-tail on the cover. In contrast to the hyper-controlled horses of Olympic dressage, Cooke's horses – as his painting titles suggest – amble. They wander along, carrying riders who are contemplative and appear to offer no resistance to the whim of their mounts. Cooke's writing is equally seductive – we are taken on a journey ...

A journey of another kind is Rachel Hope Allan's delightfully dark and delicious exploration of Tokyo. In stark contrast to the Olympic Tokyo, her exploration of the city is peppered with tales of her ongoing romance with the perfect *tamago sando* (egg sandwich). Her map is littered with locations of the best available from Konbini, the local convenience stores. She deftly leads us into the conundrum of Tokyo and Shinjuku in particular; fast-paced yet serene, at once dangerous and dodgy, yet her writing is often focused on the wonders of the banal. Back to the Tokyo of the present and the Kiwi rider has just knocked down several poles and has time faults, too – perhaps he channelled Mike Cooke's image on the front of *Scope*, "*Preoccupied on Amble*".

The next article was conceived at the Venice Biennale – the "Olympics of the art world" – where the flags top the permanent pavilions of the more established nations. Yet, although one can critique the Biennale for perpetuating a competitive and elitist system, there is also a history of interventionist practice in these events. Performance artists Allora and Calzadilla made explicit the link between nationalism of the sporting and art worlds when they positioned an exercycle on an upturned tank outside the United States pavilion in 2011. The clunky, lumbering machine was powered by a team of US Olympic athletes.

In her article from the 2019 Venice Biennale, "Ambiguous Intervention at Mocenigo: Brigitte Niedermair," Leoni Schmidt reminds us that art intervention is not a new practice. She leads us through some unexpected historical examples before bringing us into the twisting alleyways of Venice to the Palazzo Mocenigo, where we are delivered into the heart of the article. Here Brigitte Niedermair's contemporary photographs are placed among the Mocenigo family paintings. According to Schmidt, this is an intervention both ambiguous and troubling.

It is Monday 8 August and the Olympics are finally over, and I am released from my brief, yet intense, flirtation with sport. I no longer find myself trying to make links, however tenuous, between the worlds of arty and sporty. Yes, Art and Design, it's all about you now.

As I reflect on the overall flavour of this issue, several themes have emerged. A large grouping of articles relates to artists working in collaboration, responding to common themes and working within the community. It is fitting that the first article in this grouping is titled "Off the Ground." In her project report, Charlotte Parallel introduces a series of four performative and interactive projects funded through the Dunedin Dream Brokerage, who create opportunities for artists to use temporary spaces within the urban environment.

The theme of community continues with a pairing of related articles by Bridie Lonie and Lesley Brooks. In "Complexity and Entanglement in Exhibiting Climate Change," Bridie Lonie discusses the background and development of "The Complete Entanglement of Everything," a group exhibition of works responding to climate change held at the Dunedin School of Art Gallery at the end of 2020. This exhibition was used by Lesley Brook as the raw material for her Master of Professional Practice research project. She interviewed viewers of the exhibition about why they reacted emotionally to specific works. Brooks reports on these findings in her article "A Sense of Entanglement: Artworks Contributing to Connectedness."

A focus on our planet continues in the next grouping of articles from the Art + Science series of collaborative projects facilitated and curated by Pam McKinlay. Some of these works also respond to the era of the Anthropocene; conversely, other projects respond to geological changes and focus on how our planet has shaped us as a species. "Earth Caught in Stone" was held this year at the Dunedin Community Gallery. As in previous iterations of this collaborative series, artists joined with scientists, individually or in small groups, to develop and exhibit works responding to the theme of Earth Sciences.

To continue with the theme of collaboration and curation of events, in "Together: The Collaborative Curatorial Practices of a Museum Curator, Historian and Fashion Design Educator," Jane Malthus, Moira White and Margo Barton discuss their collaborative curatorial practices that span over 20 years. They write of their research approaches to some of these collaborative events, exhibitions and texts.

A second large grouping of articles is another longstanding group project, *Clink*. This contemporary jewellery intervention is now in its seventh year and took place in two venues in Wellington: The Dowse Gallery and St Peter's Anglican Church courtyard. Unlike the more formal collaborative process of the Art + Science projects, participants in *Clink* take the risk of having to quickly resolve a substantial project in collaboration with complete strangers. Also within the *Clink* ethos is a levelling of the playing field to facilitate a project where experienced contemporary jewellers work alongside senior students.

To continue with the theme of opportunities for students, I turn now to two projects developed within the communication design team at Otago Polytechnic. The first of these is a report from "Design Futures," a symposium for graduating students. The event showcased a variety of professional approaches to design practices experienced by our alumni – students who have completed our programme and are now working in the industry. In contrast to the symposium aimed at design graduates, a second article with a student focus describes a type design project for first-year students. In "Local Narrative in Type Design," Lucy Richardson and Denise Narciso outline how students respond to designing a typeface based on local narratives embedded in the histories of our built environment in Ōtepoti / Dunedin.

A second smaller grouping comprises two related articles on the complexities of art practice as research. Through a discussion of four art projects – two of them completed within institutions as a student and undertaking residencies – Mark Baskett questions if the pressure exerted by academic institutions to regard art practice as research does indeed help support creative artistic output. Edward Hanfling also writes of the complexities inherent in negotiating art projects as research within the institution, and the added “care” required to ensure that projects fit into the acceptable bounds required by organisational ethics committees. But how does such a careful approach affect the quality of contemporary art created within an institution? What happens when artists don't take risks or push boundaries?

Lastly, I return to my editorial theme of “give art a sporting chance.” I was talking to a friend a couple of days ago who speculated what kind of culture we would have in Aotearoa NZ if there was even five minutes of ‘art news’ each day rounding up the TVNZ news hour; instead of only the ‘sports news.’ Would we be shouting encouragement at the television to our key artists?

So, until that unlikely occurrence is upon us, here is the art news, all in one ‘bumper issue’ of *Scope*. We have articles and reports from Masters’ graduates and emerging writers in a volume alongside texts from established writers. With so many articles it is not possible to introduce them all, so please enjoy the surprises ahead as you read *Scope* 22.