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Christchurch Art Gallery

Te Puna o Waiwhetu
Bulletin Issue no.190
Summer 2017-18

An Undeniable Promise

Lana Lopesi on contemporary
feminist art practice in
Aotearoa New Zealand.

Climate Change and Art

A lexicon from Amy Howden -
Chapman and Abby Cunliffe.

Representing Women

Rodryn Maree Pickens on
Ann Shelton's *Dark Matter*.

Raiding the Minibar

Lara Strongman on a selection
of works from *Your Hotel Brain*.

The London Club

Jenny Harper, Felicity Milburn
and Jo Blair discuss historic
connections and great
friendships.

Shigeyuki Kinbara

Nathan Pohio looks at
a recent addition to
the collection.

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Director's Foreword

JENNY HARPER

November 2017

As I write this, I'm still smiling with pleasure and pride at the huge success of the Gallery Foundation's fundraising drive for our own work by Ron Mueck. Wonderful in its own right, it's amazing to finish the 2017 calendar year knowing a sculpture by Mueck is now on its way to join the other four 'great works' for Christchurch.

To me, Mueck seems an obvious choice to complete our series of five great works to mark the five long years our doors were closed—in a positive way. The National Gallery of Victoria exhibition of his work, which showed here in 2010, was neatly sandwiched between a series of life- and city-changing seismic events in this region. It resonated with this community beyond any of our expectations, attracting more than 135,400 visitors—many of whom had never been to the Gallery before. Visitors talked to each other within and after the exhibition, and very few have forgotten their visit.

It seemed we all saw ourselves and others we knew or had seen out of the corner of our eye in these works; collectively we marvelled at Mueck's skill in rendering the human form and engendering some form of untapped emotion in us all. Certainly, we understood the anxiety of *Woman in Bed* after 4 September in a way we might not have before—but we were equally impressed with the artist's extraordinary ability to recall the range of life's experiences, from death to birth and death again. Sometimes self-referential, Mueck's work is unquestionably universal in its impact.

Ron Mueck shot to fame in the art world when a smaller-than-life-size sculpture of his father, imagined in death after the event, was included in *Sensation*, a pivotal exhibition at London's Royal Academy in 1997.

Since then, his work has been collected and shown in galleries and art museums across the globe.

Mueck makes his works slowly and methodically—we'll be waiting for ours well into 2018. However, in September a few of us visited him in his studio on the Isle of Wight, where he shared the very beginnings of an idea for his next piece. After a period in Melbourne, where a major piece, *MASS*, is included in a triennial exhibition opening at the NGV in December, he'll be painstakingly working on our piece, investigating its scale and making revisions as he continues on the imaginative adventure that informs his sculptural practice.

I know how proud we'll be as a community to own and exhibit the first of his sculptures to be acquired for a New Zealand collection. Already inextricably part of our Gallery's history as well as our collective imagination, I'm confident that his work will come to mean a lot to us. And I'm pleased to note that, as with others of the five major works our Foundation has helped us acquire to mark this particular time, it is externally funded. Yes, we held sausage sizzles and we asked our friends to pledge to help the campaign, but, ultimately, it was the collective hope for a work of Ron's for Christchurch that carried the day in our collective imaginations.

We enjoyed a visit from the Governor-General, Her Excellency Dame Patsy Reddy and her husband Sir David Gascoigne on Show Day this month. I was quietly pleased not everyone was at the Christchurch show on our local public holiday—and it was nice to have a lot of visitors in the Gallery as well as these honoured guests. Some spaces were closed, with exhibition changes behind the scenes, but there was plenty to see; and we were all

amused to find three young men crocheting with yellow yarn helping to complete Ani O’Neill’s piece in *Yellow Moon*. Dame Patsy willingly had her photograph taken there!

It seems a good time for breaking down the gender mould—and so, in advance of the 125th anniversary of the year in which women won the right to vote in New Zealand, I’m also pleased to note that we are starting our summer season and the 2018 year with the downstairs galleries filled with work by women: Ann Shelton, Rachael Rakena and the redoubtable Jacqueline Fahey.

In this edition of *Bulletin* we hear from Lana Lopesi, who looks at the burden of expectation on Fahey’s work. Fahey was one of the first New Zealand artists to paint from a women’s perspective, making paintings which challenged accepted archetypes of female experience and what were ‘appropriate’ subjects for art. Lopesi asks how we might look at contemporary feminist art practice within Aotearoa New Zealand today. And Robyn Maree Pickens examines the ways that photographic artist Ann Shelton represents women through their absence. Operating where documentary and conceptual photography meet, Shelton counters the objectification of women by showing us the dark matter of marginalised female lives.

As an acceptance of the realities of anthropogenic climate change enters our political dialogue, Amy Howden-Chapman and Abby Cunnane survey the language currently surrounding it. With a series from their continuing Distance Plan project, they offer a lexicon intended to encourage reasoned discussion and action about the ways we are altering our environment.

And Lara Strongman offers us a window into the thinking and motivations of five of the artists featured in *Your Hotel Brain*. Pagework comes from Christchurch artist Melissa Macleod, who highlights the concerns of residents in this city’s eastern suburbs; and *My Favourite* comes from landscape architect Megan Wraight, who picks a painting by Olivia Spencer Bower with a family connection.

Finally, all of us at the Gallery, my colleagues, our Foundation and our Friends, wish our readers, our supporters and their families, near and far, the compliments of the season. We hope 2018 brings all you and we wish for.



THE PLAGUE
THE NEW GUYE CONGA
MAINSTAY 1980

WOMEN
ARTISTS
1980-1982

MY SKIRTS IN YOUR ROOM

JAHEV

An Undeniable Promise

‘There is such a burden of expectation placed on Anne’s painting, and on the exhibition... itself. I feel, like many women painters that she is being asked to prove an undeniable promise. This is unfair.’¹

Jacqueline Fahey

My only interaction to date with the eminent Jacqueline Fahey was earlier this year, when I got the chance to be her editor for an article about Anne McCahon. It was an intimidating task, not only because it was Fahey, but also because it was one artworld pioneer writing about another—matriarchs to be specific. The end result was a revelation, full of insights into Fahey’s and McCahon’s relationship, and into the conversations of the time; the difficulties they faced as artists and their expected role as women in general. *Jacqueline Fahey: Say Something!* at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu is a much deserved and needed survey of Fahey’s influential domestic interiors from the 1970s and beyond. *Say Something!* bears this same burden of feminism and is, perhaps, another exhibition asked to prove an undeniable promise.

In her assertion of lived female, and feminist, experience as a valid subject for artmaking, Fahey was one of the first New Zealand artists to paint from a woman’s perspective. Fahey started painting in the late 1950s, before taking time out for her three children and her husband’s demanding career. But by the late 1960s she had taken to painting again, and she has rarely stopped since. In a 2012 interview for the *Listener* with Sally Blundell, Fahey commented, ‘Saying that this [the home] is an important arena was a defensive act for women. Reality is not ‘somewhere else’. Big decisions aren’t just made when you go off to the office or the boardroom. They are often made in the kitchen.’²

Fahey's vigour and politics were very reflective of the time. In the 1960s, the world of the New Zealand woman was limited in almost every respect, from family life to the workplace. A woman was expected to follow one path: marry, start a family quickly and devote her life to homemaking. As one woman quoted in *A Strange Stirring: The Feminine Mystique and American Women at the Dawn of the 1960s* put it, 'The female doesn't really expect a lot from life. She's here as someone's keeper—her husband's or her children's.'³ The feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s began in reaction to this gender inequality and was known as the second wave of feminism (the first wave being the suffrage movement).

Originally focused on dismantling workplace inequality, such as denial of access to better jobs and salary inequity, via anti-discrimination laws, the motivations expanded to other concerns such as abortion. In the United States, public 'Speak-outs' were held, where women admitted to illegal abortions and explained their reasons for doing so, removing the shameful stigma. This idea of needing to speak out mirrors that of Fahey's need to 'say something', which typifies both the feminist movement and the feminist art movement that emerged at the same time. At a moment when the idea that women were fundamentally inferior to men was being criticised, feminist art was critical of gender expectations within the industry and the very male art historical canon, making work through a staunchly feminist lens.

This critique of the canon was perhaps best typified in a 1971 essay by Linda Nochlin, 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?' She wrote, 'The fault lies not in our stars, our hormones, our menstrual cycles, or our empty internal spaces, but in our institutions and our education.'⁴ Women brought to light the patriarchal history in which almost all famous art was made by men and for men.

However, fast forward to 2017, and the world for women is very different—as too is the feminist conversation. There are far fewer discriminatory laws against women, and women no longer need to marry for economic security. Yet as American writer Jessa Crispin comments, 'just because a certain population of women—who are mostly white, educated and upper middle class—can participate in higher levels of society, that doesn't make it a victory for all women ... it's the collective that needs taking care of.'⁵ And so, the feminist movement is currently in perhaps its biggest expansion yet through the mobilisation of women of colour, indigenous women and trans women, who are ensuring that feminism includes every type of woman.

Much of this expansion of the feminist movement is indebted to the work of Kimberlé Crenshaw, who introduced intersectionality to feminist theory in the 1980s. Crenshaw's focus is on how the law responds to issues that include gender and race discrimination. The particular challenge is that antidiscrimination laws look at gender and race separately; consequently African American women and other women of colour experience overlapping forms of discrimination and the law, unaware how to combine the two, leaves these women with no justice.

Crenshaw often refers to the case *DeGraffenreid v. General Motors* in writing,





interviews and lectures. In this 1976 case, a group of African American women argued they were receiving compound discrimination excluding them from employment opportunity. They contended that although women were eligible for office and secretarial jobs, in practice such positions were only offered to white women, barring African American women from seeking employment in the company. The courts weighed the allegations of race and gender discrimination separately, finding that the employment of African American male factory workers disproved racial discrimination, and the employment of white female office workers disproved gender discrimination. The court declined to consider compound discrimination, and dismissed the case.

The term gained prominence in the 1990s when sociologist Patricia Hill Collins reintroduced the idea as part of her discussion on black feminism. This term replaced her previously coined expression ‘black feminist thought’,⁶ ‘and increased the general applicability of her theory from African American women to all women’.⁷ Much like Crenshaw, Collins argued that cultural patterns of oppression are not only interrelated, but are bound together and influenced by the intersectional systems of society—such as race, gender, class and ethnicity—referred to as ‘interlocking oppression’.

Feminists and feminist artists today argue that an understanding of intersectionality is a vital element to gaining political and social equality and improving our democratic system. Collins’s theory represents the sociological crossroads between modern and postmodern feminist thought. This diversification of feminism is known as the third wave, and the fourth wave seems to have moved all of this online.

With such a varied understanding of what feminism is, the question of feminist art practice within Aotearoa is bit of a head scratcher. While women at the vanguard of the second wave such as Fahey, and matriarchs such as Judy Darragh twenty years later, are easy to point out as feminist artists, it seems almost impossible to pinpoint with emergent practices today. I am not even sure how you would frame a feminist lens in 2017, conceptually let alone aesthetically. Yet while considering all of these advancements to feminist thought, it is astounding that one thing has not changed: the pay gap is still huge, especially within the arts. This highlights the simple fact that despite it all, the system itself is still incredibly patriarchal. So then the question becomes, is feminism whatever acts in opposition to the patriarchy?

One collective which acts in direct response to this undervaluing of women by diversifying the art community is Fresh and Fruity. Co-directed by Mya Middleton (Ngāi Tahu) and Hana Pera Aoake (Ngāti Mahuta, Ngāti Te Wehi, Ngāti Raukawa), Fresh and Fruity was founded in 2013. The all-female collective started as a physical space in Ōtepoti Dunedin, and now functions completely online. Their work is pushing boundaries in terms of opening up safe spaces, having women control their own representations, and challenging expectations around the way women’s art is presented.

Another collective of emboldened women making great art is Mata Aho, which comprises Erena Baker (Te Atiawa ki Whakarongotai, Ngāti Toa Rangātira), Sarah Hudson (Ngāti Awa, Ngāi Tūhoe), Bridget Reweti (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāi Te Rangi) and Terri Te Tau (Rangitāne ki Wairarapa). They produce large-scale textile works with a single collective authorship within the contemporary realities of mātauranga Māori. And earlier this year they were among the first ever New Zealand representatives to *Documenta* alongside Nathan Pohio and Ralph Hotere, something which is made all the more satisfying because they are all mana whenua women.

FAFSWAG is another collective which undeniably represents this new wave of feminism. The platform provides a space as well as visibility for members of the Pacific rainbow community. A big part of that has been exposure for Pacific trans women in performance art across Aotearoa in spaces such as Artspace, ST PAUL St Gallery and CoCA, as well breaking into more traditional performance arts spaces such as the Basement Theatre.

In 1980 feminist Lucy R. Lippard, commented that feminist art was ‘neither a style nor a movement but instead a value system, a revolutionary strategy, a way of life.’⁸ I can’t help but think that statement is truer now than ever. To try to pinpoint feminism today seems counterproductive to the widening of conversations about mobility, equity and visibility that is diverse and local. Rather than locating artists to, in Fahey’s words, provide the undeniable promise, perhaps it is as simple as just being a woman working within a patriarchal art system. Would that make all women working within this industry today feminists?

Lana Lopesi (Satapuala/Siumu) is a writer and critic based in Tāmaki Makaurau. Jacqueline Fahey: Say Something is on display until 11 March 2018.

Notes

- 1 pantograph-punch.com/post/Anne-McCahon
- 2 www.noted.co.nz/archive/listener-nz-2012/interview-jacqueline-fahey/
- 3 Stephanie Coontz, *A Strange Stirring: The Feminine Mystique and American Women at the Dawn of the 1960s*, New York: Basic Books, 2011, p.42.
- 4 Linda Nochlin, ‘Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?’, *Woman in Sexist Society: Studies in Power and Powerlessness*, New York: Basic Books, 1971.
- 5 Jessa Crispin, *Why I Am Not a Feminist: A Feminist Manifesto*, New York: Melville House, 2017.
- 6 Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*, New York: Routledge, 2000.
- 7 Susan A. Mann and Douglas J. Huffman, ‘The decentering of second wave feminism and the rise of the third wave’, *Science & Society*, special issue: Marxist-Feminist Thought Today, Guilford Publications, vol.69, no.1, January 2005, pp.56–91.
- 8 Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Framing Feminism: Art and the Women’s Movement 1970–85*, New York: Pandora Press, 1987.



CLIMATE CHANGE & ART : A LEXICON

The following lexicon terms are the most recent addition to an ongoing project that surveys the language currently surrounding anthropogenic climate change. Through proposing neologisms and promoting less well-known terms, we wish to encourage interdisciplinary discussion, and by extension accelerate the pace of action. Through this lexicon we argue that the science around climate change is developing so rapidly that we need new language to articulate its processes and effects. The lexicon is also based on the recognition that evolving science produces evolving policy, and politics must be commensurate with this.

Further terms including those listed to the right can be found at:

TheDistancePlan.org

The Distance Plan is a project founded by Abby Cunnane and Amy Howden-Chapman that brings together artists, writers and designers to promote discussion of climate change within the arts. The Distance Plan works through exhibitions, public forums and the Distance Plan Press, which produces publications, including an annual journal.

OCEAN INFLAMMATION
ECOCRITICISM
INTIMATION OF TRAUMA
VERY-LONG-BASELINE INTERFEROMETRY
PLANETARY SKIN
INSURRECTIONARY AGRICULTURAL MILIEUX
CLIMATE HOSTAGE
FIRST PERSON CLIMATE KNOWLEDGE
SITES OF SIGNIFICANCE
CITIZEN SCIENCE
EMPTY ANIMATION
PROTEST AS CELEBRATION
BRUTE FORCE INFRASTRUCTURE
MAPPING AS DIFFERENTIAL
LIVING BORDERS
KERMADECIAN
DENIHILISM
WICKED PROBLEMS
INTERGENERATIONAL JUSTICE
ANNUAL EXCEEDANCE PROBABILITY
THE GREAT TRANSITION
SCIENTIFIC RISK BIAS
RESILIENCE RHETORIC
HYPEROBJECTS
VITAL MATERIALISM
RE-COMMUNILISATION
THE CULTURAL COST OF CARBON
HEALTH GOTH
ENERGY SOVEREIGNTY
CAPITALOCENE
HABITAT NOSTALGIA
SMALL AGENCIES
GREEN FASCISM

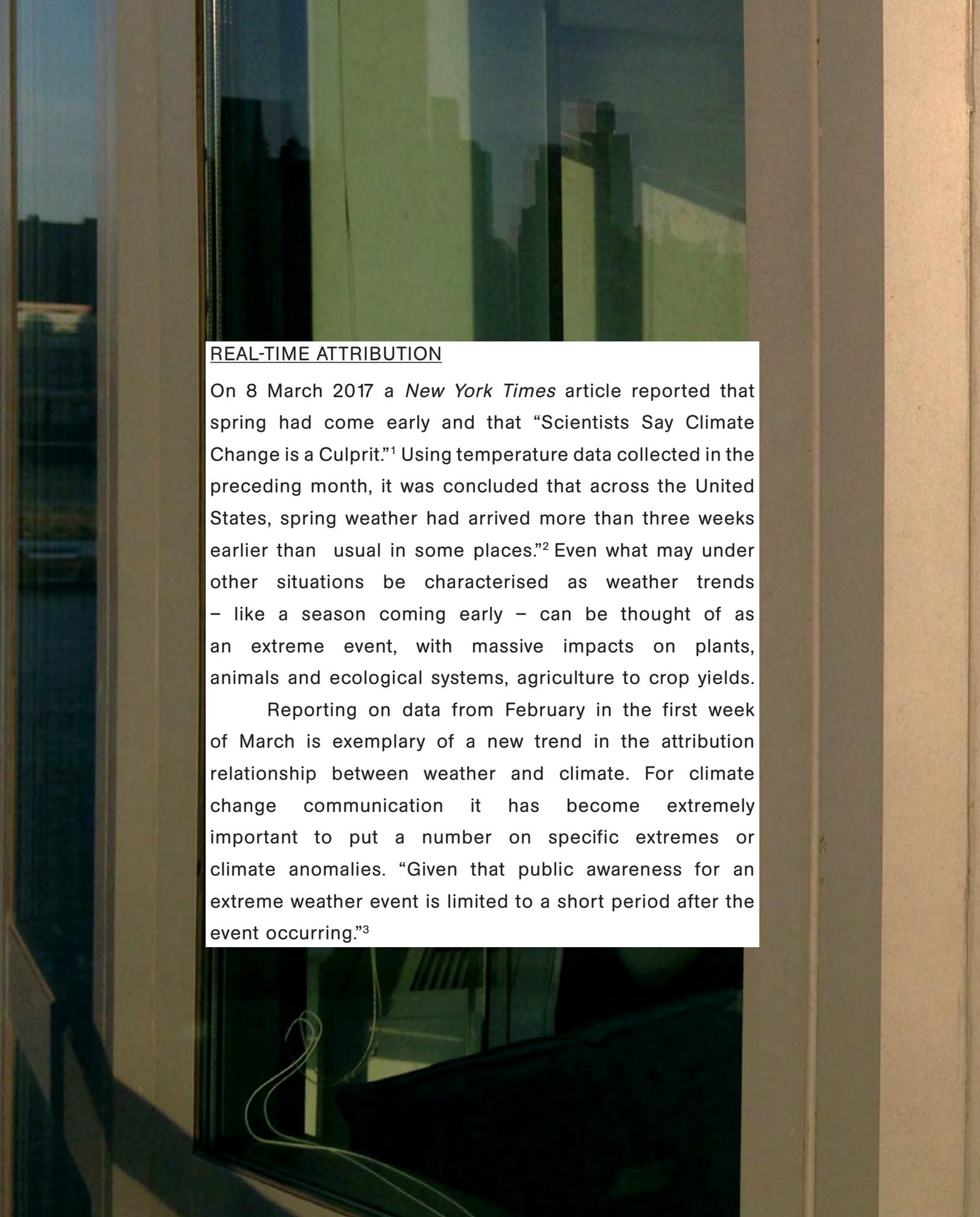
ATMOSPHERE AS 'AER NULLIUS'

The idea of the atmosphere (and hence the climate) as an empty territory, belonging to no-one and exempt from existing power structures. This positions the climate as a psycho-symbolic space to be freely conceptualised by predominantly Euro-American theories of resilience and ecological governance which often pay little attention to longstanding indigenous knowledge and political stakes. Anthropologist Zoe Todd uses the term *aer nullius* in her recent essay 'An Indigenous feminist's take on the Ontological Turn: Ontology is just another term for colonisation.'¹ Building on the work of Glen Coulthard (Yellowknives Dene) she argues that thinkers framing the atmosphere as a form of 'commons' can be guilty of presenting it as a power neutral blank slate up for the taking. Perhaps a conceptual parallel to the colonial project of declaring land *terra nullius* or 'nobody's land', *aer nullius* translates as 'air belonging to no-one.'²

SEE ALSO: Greenwash, Eco-colonialism, Terraforming.

1. Zoe Todd, 'An Indigenous Feminist's Take on the Ontological Turn Ontology is Just Another Term for Colonialism', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, vol.29, no.1, March 2016. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/johs.12124/full>.

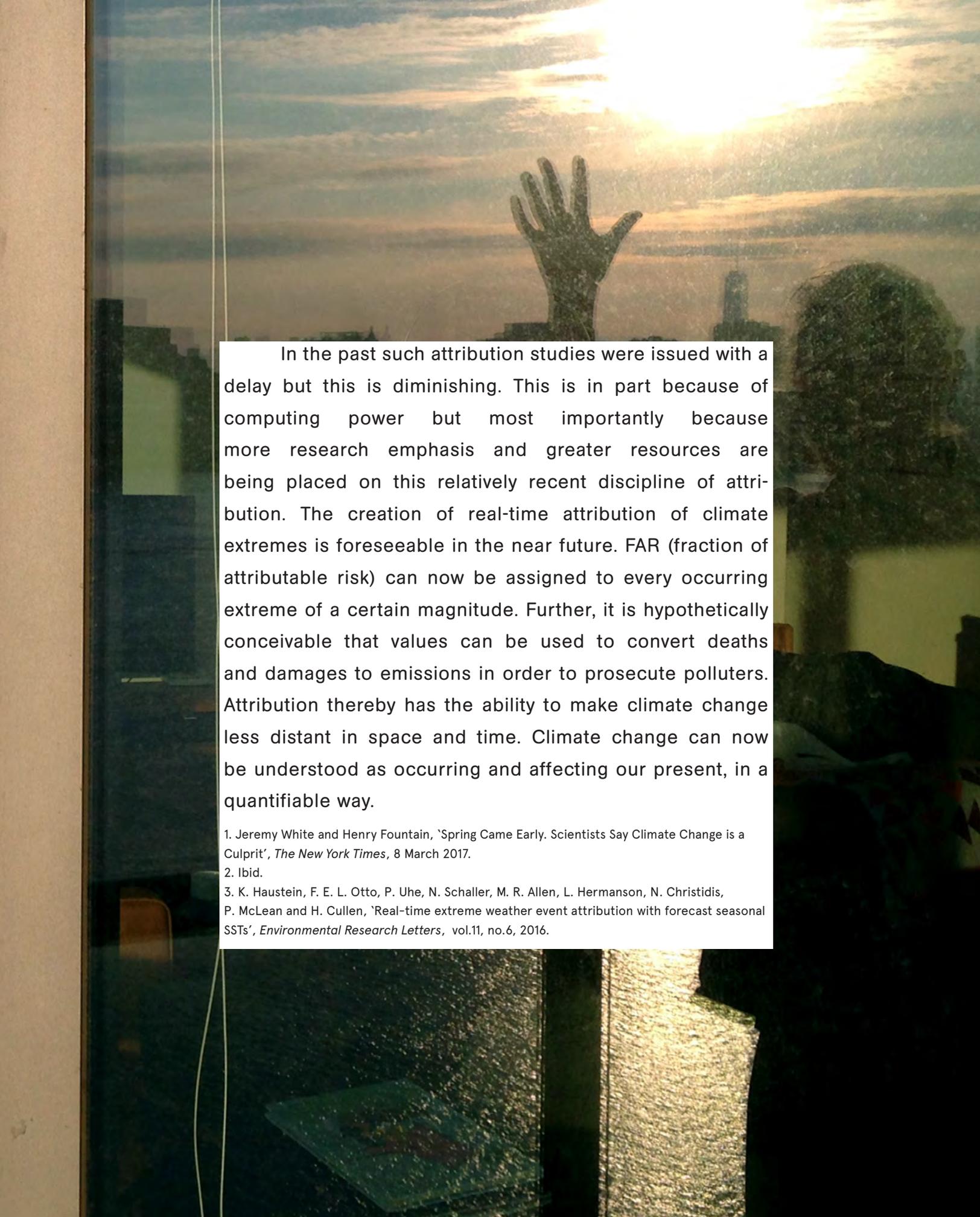
2. Ibid.



REAL-TIME ATTRIBUTION

On 8 March 2017 a *New York Times* article reported that spring had come early and that “Scientists Say Climate Change is a Culprit.”¹ Using temperature data collected in the preceding month, it was concluded that across the United States, spring weather had arrived more than three weeks earlier than usual in some places.”² Even what may under other situations be characterised as weather trends – like a season coming early – can be thought of as an extreme event, with massive impacts on plants, animals and ecological systems, agriculture to crop yields.

Reporting on data from February in the first week of March is exemplary of a new trend in the attribution relationship between weather and climate. For climate change communication it has become extremely important to put a number on specific extremes or climate anomalies. “Given that public awareness for an extreme weather event is limited to a short period after the event occurring.”³

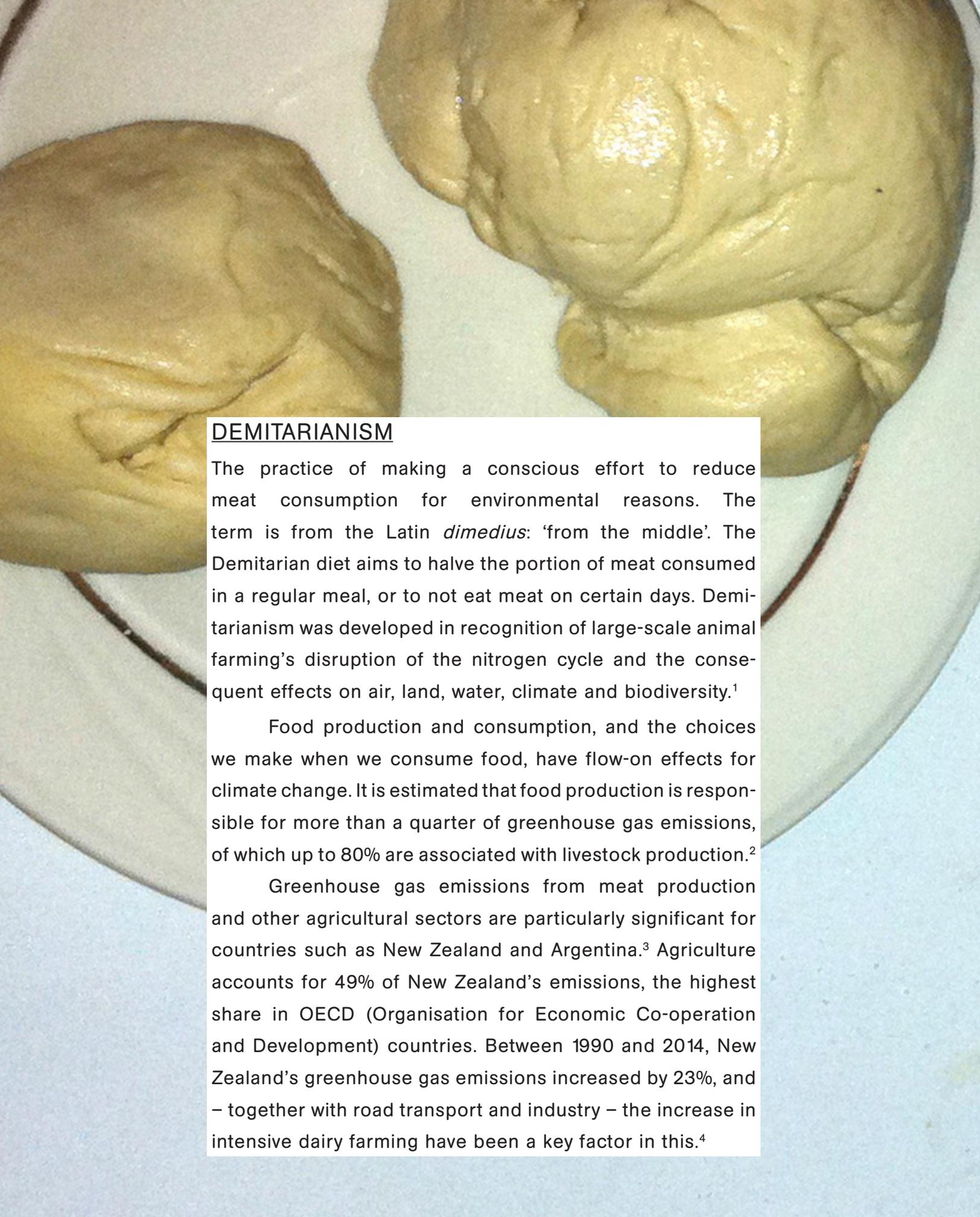


In the past such attribution studies were issued with a delay but this is diminishing. This is in part because of computing power but most importantly because more research emphasis and greater resources are being placed on this relatively recent discipline of attribution. The creation of real-time attribution of climate extremes is foreseeable in the near future. FAR (fraction of attributable risk) can now be assigned to every occurring extreme of a certain magnitude. Further, it is hypothetically conceivable that values can be used to convert deaths and damages to emissions in order to prosecute polluters. Attribution thereby has the ability to make climate change less distant in space and time. Climate change can now be understood as occurring and affecting our present, in a quantifiable way.

1. Jeremy White and Henry Fountain, 'Spring Came Early. Scientists Say Climate Change is a Culprit', *The New York Times*, 8 March 2017.

2. Ibid.

3. K. Haustein, F. E. L. Otto, P. Uhe, N. Schaller, M. R. Allen, L. Hermanson, N. Christidis, P. McLean and H. Cullen, 'Real-time extreme weather event attribution with forecast seasonal SSTs', *Environmental Research Letters*, vol.11, no.6, 2016.

The background of the page is a close-up photograph of two golden-brown braided bread rolls, possibly challah, resting on a white ceramic plate. The rolls are positioned on either side of a central text box. The lighting is bright, highlighting the texture and sheen of the bread's surface.

DEMITARIANISM

The practice of making a conscious effort to reduce meat consumption for environmental reasons. The term is from the Latin *dime dius*: 'from the middle'. The Demitarian diet aims to halve the portion of meat consumed in a regular meal, or to not eat meat on certain days. Demitarianism was developed in recognition of large-scale animal farming's disruption of the nitrogen cycle and the consequent effects on air, land, water, climate and biodiversity.¹

Food production and consumption, and the choices we make when we consume food, have flow-on effects for climate change. It is estimated that food production is responsible for more than a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions, of which up to 80% are associated with livestock production.²

Greenhouse gas emissions from meat production and other agricultural sectors are particularly significant for countries such as New Zealand and Argentina.³ Agriculture accounts for 49% of New Zealand's emissions, the highest share in OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries. Between 1990 and 2014, New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions increased by 23%, and – together with road transport and industry – the increase in intensive dairy farming have been a key factor in this.⁴

Greenhouse gas emissions due to meat production and other agricultural sectors in New Zealand include emissions from methane and nitrous oxide, plus carbon dioxide released from the tilling of soil. Methane is largely produced by the belching of livestock; nitrous oxide from animals urinating and the use of fertilisers. While methane is a powerful greenhouse gas, its lifetime in the atmosphere is around 8 to 9 years, unlike CO₂, which lingers (about 19% of an emission made today will still be in the atmosphere in a thousand years' time). Nitrous oxide (N₂O) is also a long-lived gas. This lingering of CO₂ and N₂O in the atmosphere locks in warming on a much greater scale than the effect of methane.

Reaching a fossil-fuel-free world economy by 2050 will include transforming “the world’s food system from a major carbon emitter into a major carbon store.”⁵ As well as reducing greenhouse gas emissions from meat consumption this will also have the “advantage of easing pressure on land use”,⁶ allowing land to be used for reforestation efforts, which will be vital for negative emissions (carbon removal from the atmosphere). Further, changing diets may be more effective than technological mitigation options for avoiding climate change,⁷ as strategies for protecting carbon-rich forests or adopting low-emission production techniques can increase land scarcity and production costs and push up food prices.

1. The term was established in 2009 in Barsac, France at the combined workshop of Nitrogen in Europe (NinE) and Biodiversity in European Grasslands: Impacts of Nitrogen (BEGIN), which resulted in: ‘The Barsac Declaration: Environmental Sustainability and the Demitarian Diet’. <http://www.nine-esf.org/sites/nine-esf.org/files/Barsac%20Declaration%20V5.pdf>

2. ‘Analysis and valuation of the health and climate change co-benefits of dietary change’, in Marco Springmann, H. Charles, J. Godfray, Mike Rayner, Peter Scarborough (eds.), *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences United States*, vol.113, no.15, 2016.

3. ‘Mitigation Update: Agriculture and Soil Management in the Spotlight’, Jennifer Allan, 23 March 2017. <http://sdg.iisd.org>.

4. New Zealand’s Greenhouse Gas Inventory 1990–2014 (Wellington: Ministry for the Environment, 2016).

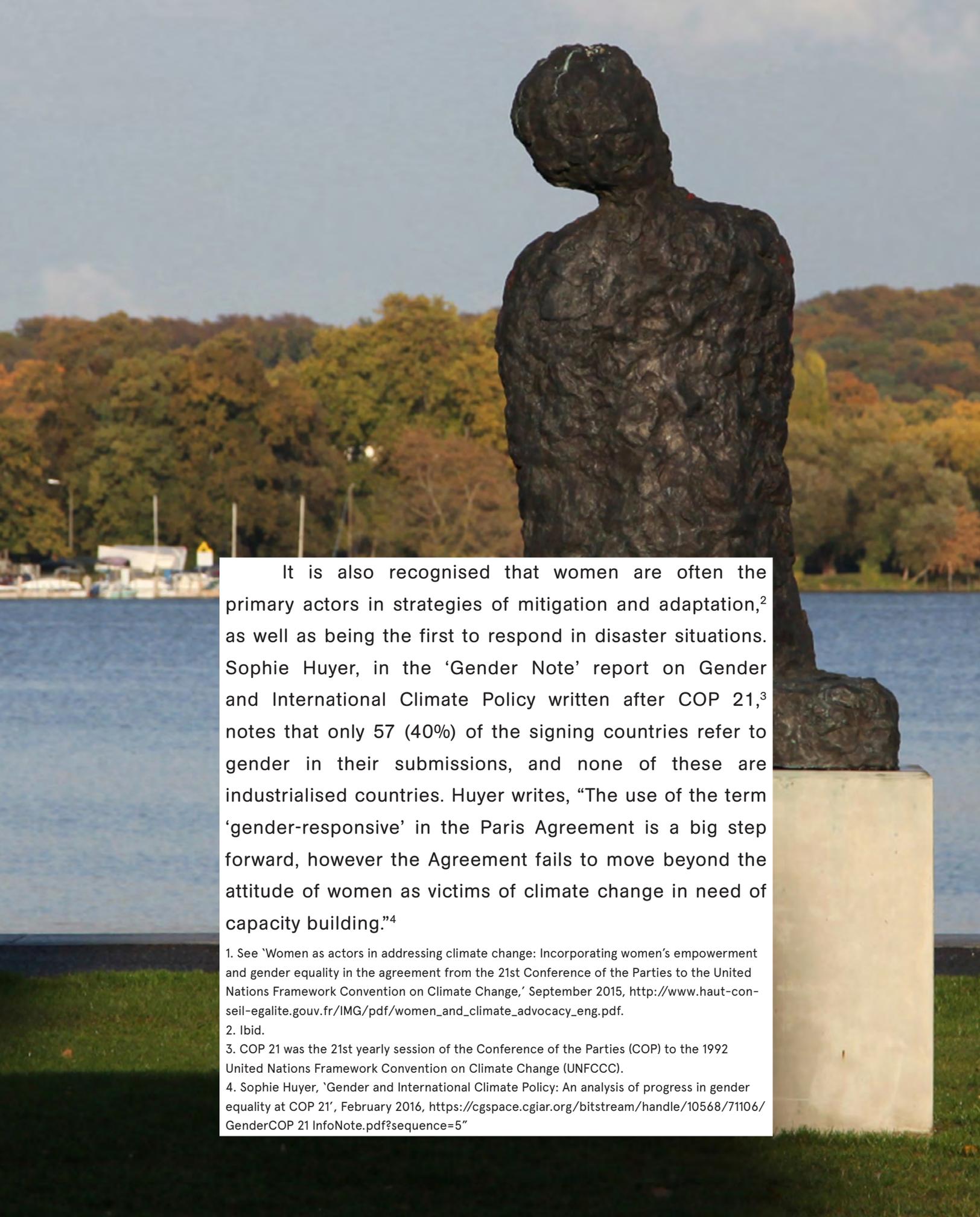
5. Johan Rockstrom, ‘Why the World Economy Has to Be Carbon Free by 2050,’ *The New York Times*, 23 March 2017.

6. Springmann, et al., (2016).

7. Ibid.

GENDERED CLIMATE IMPACT

The differential vulnerability of women to the effects of climate change. This is amplified by the fact that women make up the majority of the world's poor, and that in the developing world, two-thirds of farmers are women. A contributing factor is existing hierarchies of gendered power. Put simply, unequal access to resources and to decision-making processes places women in a position where they are disproportionately affected by environmental changes that impact sources of livelihood. Loss of biodiversity, as a result of climate change, can mean that women have to travel further for food and water, while extreme weather events result in more deaths to women than men. Men are also generally more likely to migrate, while women stay home with dependants. Inequality that affects access to reproductive health services is compounded in events of disaster and instability, where the incidents of rape and assault are increased.¹



It is also recognised that women are often the primary actors in strategies of mitigation and adaptation,² as well as being the first to respond in disaster situations. Sophie Huyer, in the ‘Gender Note’ report on Gender and International Climate Policy written after COP 21,³ notes that only 57 (40%) of the signing countries refer to gender in their submissions, and none of these are industrialised countries. Huyer writes, “The use of the term ‘gender-responsive’ in the Paris Agreement is a big step forward, however the Agreement fails to move beyond the attitude of women as victims of climate change in need of capacity building.”⁴

1. See ‘Women as actors in addressing climate change: Incorporating women’s empowerment and gender equality in the agreement from the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,’ September 2015, http://www.haut-conseil-egalite.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/women_and_climate_advocacy_eng.pdf.

2. Ibid.

3. COP 21 was the 21st yearly session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

4. Sophie Huyer, ‘Gender and International Climate Policy: An analysis of progress in gender equality at COP 21’, February 2016, <https://cgspace.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10568/71106/GenderCOP21InfoNote.pdf?sequence=5>”

**Representing
Women:**

**Ann Shelton's
Dark Matter**

What is ‘dark matter’? For theoretical physicists it is matter that cannot be directly observed but whose existence is nevertheless scientifically calculable—productively *present* yet simultaneously *invisible*. In a similar vein, the everyday phrase ‘dark matter’ describes objects, conditions and situations that harbour unease or trauma. Trauma that is often concealed, repressed, or buried. Both definitions are active in Ann Shelton’s mid-career review exhibition *Dark Matter*, and they provide a rich point of entry into this compelling collection of her photographic work. These are photographs that bristle with intensity and refuse to let their subjects die a quiet archival death.

Curated by Zara Stanhope, *Dark Matter* foregrounds Shelton’s practice of researching marginalised members of society. Recalling the theoretical physicist’s definition of dark matter, she does this obliquely through what could be termed architectural and geographical surrogates, such as landscapes, historical sites, buildings, trees and plants. Shelton’s dark matter subjects are such that they cannot be directly observed; while it is true that photographing architectural and geographical sites is, in most instances, the only way the artist *can* represent her subjects, the formal techniques she deploys disrupt an easy or uncomplicated transposition from subject to site.

Through conceptual framing and formal strategies, Shelton toys with presence and absence as modes of representing female subjects. Her women are frequently historical and marginalised by their gender, by their sexuality, or as a result of their actions.

Perhaps the most important point to make concrete—one that has been hinted at by the language of surrogates, absence and presence—is that, with rare exceptions, people are largely absent from Shelton’s photographic practice. The notable exceptions to this are *Redeye* (1995–7) and *my friends are electric* (1997–2016). *Redeye* exemplifies the decision Shelton made in the late 1990s to turn the camera on the people

and scenes that comprised her immediate world, rather than on the ‘other’.¹ In the intervening decades portraits of Shelton’s friends in *my friends are electric* constitute the only human subjects photographed since this decision, although these portraits were only edited and published in 2016. In the comprehensive publication that accompanies the exhibition (also called *Dark Matter*), Shelton describes this decision to remove people (‘figuratively speaking’) as a ‘big shift.’²

The bracketed clause ‘figuratively speaking’ is important, as Shelton goes on to say: ‘They [people] are still very much present but through absence.’³ So who are *they*? Predominantly women who are marginalised by race, class, sexuality, and by the violence they have experienced. In some instances a convergence of these states has provoked women to *themselves* commit violent acts thereby further marginalising them as women (frequently the recipients of violence, not the perpetrators). And why these subjects? In Shelton’s words, ‘My projects are committed ... to representing obscured histories or alienated narratives through absence.’⁴ This commitment—with particular focus on female subjects—is present in three bodies of photographic work: *Public Places* (2001–3), *room room* (2008) and *jane says* (2015–16). Dark matter is evident in these three series as both something that cannot be directly observed (absence/presence) and as trauma. Each series deploys a distinct photographic strategy to buttress the dynamic of absence/presence and to problematise the medium of photography, especially the claims of veracity made in its name.

By interrogating the erasure (or sensationalism) and ‘othering’ of these marginalised subjects, Shelton’s project meets key feminist objectives of ‘shifting, changing or revealing dominant understandings in order to challenge power relations and improve the material conditions for the lives of groups and individuals.’⁵ By problematising the representation of marginalised subjects through formal strategies,

Shelton adheres to the conviction that ‘feminist discussions of representation must be continuously self-critical, but at the same time not abandon the task of working towards an ethical involvement with “others”’⁶

In diametric opposition to its innocuous title, *Public Places* is a series of large C-type photographs heavy with dark matter. Drawn from biographical, fictional, and ficto-biographical sources (fiction, film), the subjects of *Public Places* include Janet Frame; Kerewin Holmes (the protagonist of Keri Hulme’s *The Bone People*); Aileen Wuornos; a class of disappeared Australian school girls; ‘baby farmer’ Minnie Dean; and Pauline Parker and Juliet Hulme, who murdered Parker’s mother in Christchurch’s Port Hills in 1954.

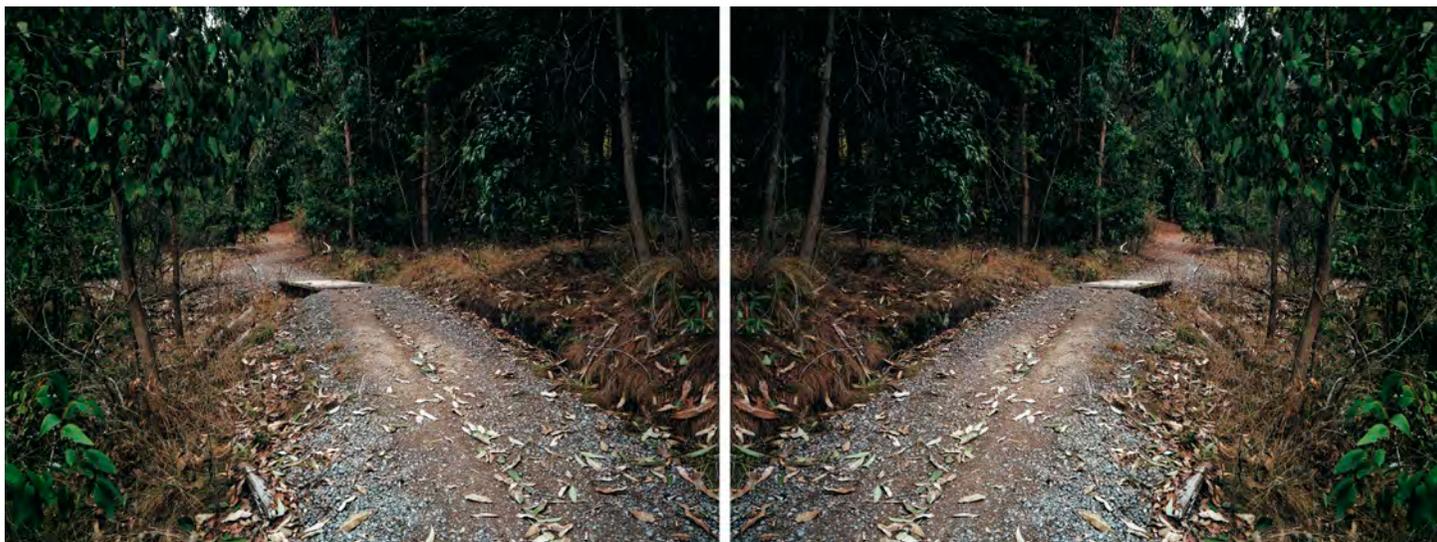
Shelton photographed actual architectural or geographical sites pertaining to each of the women, be they imagined or real. To characterise Parker and Hulme, she photographed the leaf-strewn forest trail in the Port Hills where the two girls murdered Parker’s mother. The dilapidated, eyeless windows and doors of the Seacliff Asylum in North Otago characterise Janet Frame. But how do we know this by looking at large landscape photographs? Primarily through the labour of the lengthy titles Shelton gives to each work. The full title of the Parker-Hulme work is: *Doublet (After Heavenly Creatures), Parker-Hulme crime scene, Port Hills, Christchurch, New Zealand*. In this title we have an allusive word ‘Doublet’ that incorporates both ‘double’ and ‘doubt’, although I am not suggesting that Shelton is questioning whether or not the incident took place. But the word does ease the viewer into the event’s cinematic portrayal by Peter Jackson, only to deposit them into the historical and geographical specificity of the Port Hills.

Lengthy titles do not do all the labour, however. It is significant that each work in *Public Places* is not only a diptych, but a diptych that is doubled and reversed—a replication, a double, along a horizontal axis. Shelton

demonstrates the impossibility of one truth-bearing image, and the corresponding idea that there is not (only) one story, or one version of events. Ostensibly displaced from representation, these marginalised female subjects are co-constituted with the architectural or geographical locations Shelton photographs, *named* (as in not forgotten) by the lengthy titles, and *amplified* by the formal strategy of a doubled and reversed diptych. These formal strategies create potential additional spaces to listen out, or search the archive for the backstories that doubtlessly contributed to the situations in which these women found themselves and acted.

From exterior landscapes, Shelton’s series *room* moves indoors, specifically to the ‘private’ dwellings of clients housed in the Salvation Army’s now closed rehabilitation centre for drug and alcohol addiction on Rotoroa Island in Auckland’s Hauraki Gulf. Shelton photographs vacant rooms in the women’s Phoenix block that are dilapidated and worn by use and neglect. The narrow, stained mattresses and peeling wallpaper contrast with the pastel shades of the walls. Here too the viewer has arrived in the after-melt, in dark matter’s aftermath. Foregoing the diptych format of *Public Places* but retaining the strategy of reversing the image, Shelton amplifies the presence of the Phoenix block women with a fisheye effect that shunts the abject rooms into the viewer’s eye. Rather than presenting the expected concave depiction of an inmate under surveillance, Shelton forces the viewer to assume the role of the spied upon, a formal decision that perhaps attempts to return a measure of agency to the Phoenix women.

This intention of recuperating agency for marginalised women seems heightened in Shelton’s most recent body of work *jane says*. Each of the nine works from this series presented in *Dark Matter* depicts an elegant *haute-flora* tribute of flowers, weeds or



Ann Shelton *Doublet (After Heavenly Creatures)*, Parker-Hulme Crime Scene Port Hills, Christchurch, New Zealand 2001. Diptych, C-type prints.
From the series *Public Places*. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 2004



Ann Shelton *Phoenix block*, room # unknown [yellow walls] 2008. C-type photograph

herbs arranged and displayed in a distinctive vessel against a vivid monotone backdrop. As with *Public Places* the title and the ostensible subject matter of *jane says* can be deceptive. The floral tributes against bright backdrops are beautiful but they characterise the limited reproductive agency of women over their own bodies; each botanical entity has been used as part of a recipe or tincture for either an emmenagogue or abortifacient: they are plants that enabled women to control reproduction. Each tribute therefore represents the loss of esoteric or arcane knowledge, and subsequent co-optation of women's reproductive control by pharmaceutical companies.

As with *Public Places*, the lengthy titles of *jane says* undertake a measure of the labour in decoding their apparently benign subjects. Each of the nine photographs has, in addition to a Latin taxonomical name, a comparative taxonomy of female 'types' whether historical (The Courtesan, *Poroporo [Solanum sp.]*), fictional (The Mermaid, *Wormwood [Artemisia sp.]*), moral-cultural (The Scarlet Women, *Valerian [Valeriana sp.]*) or diminutive-cultural (The Ingénue, *Yarrow [Archillea sp.]*). In *jane says* stereotypical types of women, *haute-flora* as abortifacients and the loss of (natural) reproductive agency converge powerfully. To further articulate the message, Shelton designed a large takeaway sheet titled *the physical garden* that incorporates an extensive anthology of excerpts on the abortive and emmenagogic properties of plants. In recognition of the historically oral mode of transmitting plant knowledge *the physical garden's* paper archive is recited aloud amongst fresh flowers strewn before *jane says*. In this body of work Shelton instantiates a performative dimension to conceptually and formally activate the dynamic interplay of absence and presence that characterises her compelling representations of marginalised female subjects.

Images of women as commodified, sexualised

objects in capitalist societies are ever present and difficult to avoid. By *not* photographing women (particularly in the three series that focus on women), Shelton is at once countering the objectification of women *and* highlighting the invisibility of (non-objectified) women. Shelton presents us with this impasse. Furthermore, the absence of women prompts the question: is it possible to represent women as full, non-sexualised, non-objectified subjects? What would such representations of women look like? In a photographic language of doubles and reversals that leaves space for change, Shelton shows us the dark matter of female lives limited by the violence of narrow stereotypes.

Robyn Maree Pickens is a PhD candidate in the field of eco-poetics at the University of Otago. Her writing has appeared in ANZJA, Art + Australia Online, Art New Zealand, and Art News. Ann Shelton: Dark Matter is on display from 16 December 2017 until 15 April 2018. Exhibition organised by Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki.

Notes

- 1 Ann Shelton, *Ann Shelton: Dark Matter*, Auckland: Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 2016, p.33.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid., p.36.
- 5 Amy Hinterberger, 'Feminism and the Politics of Representation: Towards a Critical and Ethical Encounter with "Others"', *Journal of International Women's Studies*, vol.8, no.2, 2007, p.75.
- 6 Ibid.

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NGMAN ON A SELECTION OTEL BRAIN

When does history start? What is the time span of the present? When do the margins of the contemporary begin to dissolve into the past? Our collection-based exhibition, *Your Hotel Brain*, looks at a group of New Zealand artists who came to prominence in the 1990s. Collectively their work explores ideas that have been critical to art-making in Aotearoa New Zealand over the past twenty years. Identity politics, unreliable autobiographies and references to a broad spectrum of visual culture—including Black Sabbath’s music, prison tattoos, automotive burn-outs and our no-smoking legislation—traverse the contested ground of recent New Zealand art, linking the just-past with the emerging present. A selection of works from the exhibition is reproduced here.

Bill Hammond painted *Volcano Flag* in exchange for a food and beverages tab at Lyttelton's Volcano Café, later the Lava Bar. It hung there for about fifteen years until the building was demolished following the Christchurch earthquakes of 2010–11. The front window of the café looked out across Lyttelton Harbour, the caldera of a vast extinct volcano, which Hammond has imagined shooting ash plumes and blowing smoke rings.

Hammond's birds, too, gesture towards a time before human habitation of New Zealand—an environment he had encountered a few years earlier on a trip to the Auckland Islands. 'It's bird land. You feel like a time-traveller, as if you have just stumbled upon it—primeval forests, ratas like Walt Disney would make. It's a beautiful place, but it's also full of ghosts, shipwrecks, death...'

Different stories, timeframes and images collide in Hammond's canvases as if in a dream, or as if fragments of consciousness were projected on a screen. 'I don't have a tight brief,' he says. 'I fumble around history, picking up bits and pieces.'

In the 1980s and 90s he used discarded objects from everyday life—strips of wallpaper, coffee tables and the reverse side of commercial signs—as grounds for his work. He painted *Volcano Flag* on an old World War I army tent that he found in the basement of his house and left on the washing line for several years to bleach in the sun and rain. 'I like things that have acquired a patina of time', he said. Its sister work, *Buller's Table Cloth*, which was painted on the other side of the tent, is in the collection of Auckland Art Gallery.

With its square format and dancing skeleton guitarist, *Volcano Flag* looks a bit like an album cover for an unnamed Southern Gothic band—and points to the distinctive relationship between art, contemporary music and the landscape in the Canterbury region.



VOLCANO FLAG



Back in the 1990s, Jason Greig famously said that heavy metal band Black Sabbath was the thing that got him up and going and wanting to draw. It's a line that's often been quoted in relation to his work, probably because it seems to be at odds with the refinement and virtuosity of his printmaking technique, or the venerable tradition of artists in which he works—Redon, Goya and Piranesi. Greig, however, said that Black Sabbath's music was fuel: 'the imagery and the weight of it ... I do heavy, laden drawings, dense. When I hear some really loud guitars it gives me the same sort of feeling.'

The images collected here span nearly two decades and reveal a remarkably consistent imagination, forged in Greig's reading of nineteenth-century Gothic novelists such as Mary Shelley and Edgar Allan Poe, and what he describes as the 'battle of good and evil' in mid-twentieth-century movies. Light falls across blasted volcanic landscapes; isolated figures clutch books or brandish scythes; sinister deals of one sort or another appear to be in the process of playing out. The corners of most of the images are dark, vignettted like an early photograph. For Greig, the past is full of unfinished business. 'I guess it's about wearing your lineage on your sleeve. I reckon that images of last century are catching up with this.'

Greig's figures are versions of himself, 'but I try to disguise it a bit'. They evoke psychological states of alienation and estrangement, and depict life as a long strange journey into the unknown. 'My art is about love; lost and found. It's about dark lonely places; imagined and real. And it's about the constant naggin' thought that the end is always nearer. I have dealt with my demons, in life and on pieces of pummelled paper. The road I have travelled has been paved with gold that shines, and with bile that fumes.'

Clockwise from left:

Jason Greig *Vulcan paradise* 1998. Monoprint. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 1998

Jason Greig *An orbital thought* 1993–2014. Monoprint. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, gift of June Vialls Goldstein 2015 in memory of her grandson Louis Cooke 1993–2014

Jason Greig *Blood is thicker* 2005. Monoprint. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 2005

Jason Greig *The Malcontent* 1993. Monoprint. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 1993

Jason Greig *Depth charge* 2005. Monoprint. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 2005

Jason Greig *Walt's wet dream* 2012. Monoprint. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 2012

Margaret Dawson took several attempts to make *Marg n.l. Persona* over a series of evenings. She'd made drawings of how she envisaged the photograph, to act as a guide; she wanted the broken sunlight on the weatherboards to reflect similar patterns as the leopard-skin coat she'd found in an op shop; she needed to wrangle the cats. (The white one, Eve, was named after the artist Evelyn Page: Dawson rescued her from outside the Robert McDougall Art Gallery.) When she'd got all of the elements in place, Dawson checked the composition with a Polaroid then assumed her position. A flatmate pressed the button on her camera.

Marg n.l. Persona is a self-portrait that is also a fiction, gesturing towards the idea, perhaps, that all selves are essentially constructions. 'It seemed natural to use myself as an actor,' said Dawson, 'showing how one can move into a role, and out...' It took a lot of work to appear so casual. The photograph looks like a snapshot—a suburban woman looking after her cats, pictured in the doorway of her house one early evening, not doing anything particularly special—but the large scale of the print gives her actions a significance that compels attention. 'I work intuitively as a feminist,' Dawson noted at the time. 'My work has changed from observing with a camera (recording) to examining behaviour, acts for life.'

Hobbyhorse (outside) was made eighteen years later: the setting, again, was Dawson's weatherboard house. It's one of a series of works concerned with ideas of playfulness. 'I was playing with representations of women of various ages. Both of these women had their own distinctive style regardless of latest fashion. Although I didn't know them well I admired their self-confidence. I asked one to select lighter clothes from her wardrobe and the other darker. Positioning one woman outside and the other inside created a mystery, a tension—and suggested a story in the

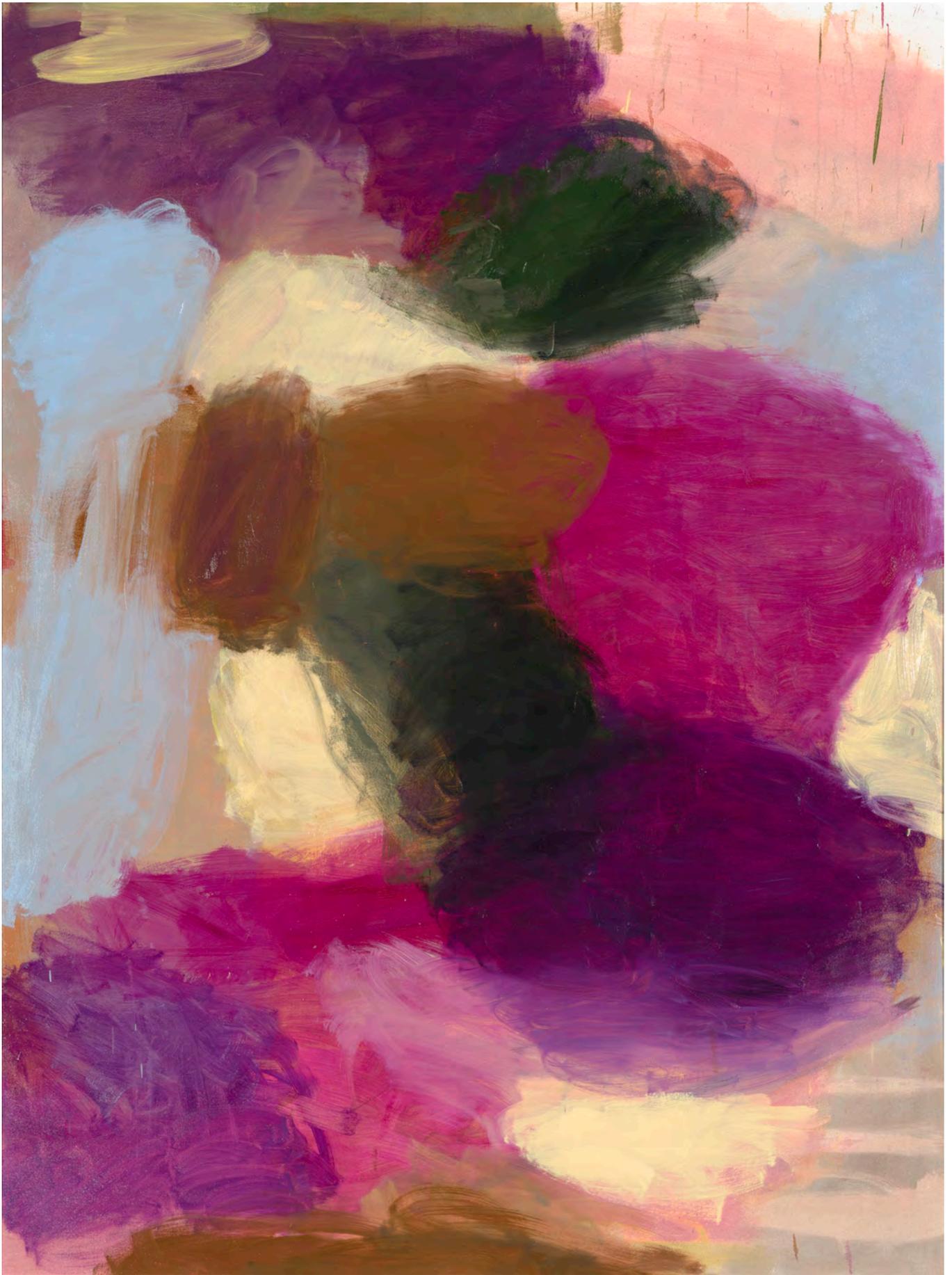
image, although mine might be a different one from the next viewer's.'

Dawson's aim, in both images, was to achieve a female gaze—meaning that she was keen to establish a female perspective for both the production and reception of the image. 'There are always problems,' she's said, 'with putting representations of women in the picture.' A heterosexual male gaze is the default perspective of advertising and the mass media, in which a woman becomes a spectacle to be looked at, and is judged on her age and appearance. Dawson's photographs subvert this convention, training her gaze on the unspectacular everyday lives of women.

Margaret Dawson *Hobbyhorse (outside)* 2005. C-type print. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 2005

Margaret Dawson *Marg n.l. Persona* 1987. C-type print. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 1988





In a Lonely Place is the title of a classic film noir directed by Nicholas Ray, who was best known for the counterculture movie that starred James Dean in his most celebrated role, *Rebel Without A Cause*. When Robin Neate was titling this work—which comes from a series he called the *Ray Paintings*—he chose the phrase for its evocative feeling and ability to provoke personal readings from the viewer. ‘*In a lonely place*. I’ve been thinking maybe that’s where painting is today; but at the time that I chose it I was thinking more about the loneliness of working in your studio or even living in this part of the world.’

The Ray Paintings continue Neate’s earlier explorations of abstraction in photographs and experimental films. ‘Cinema has influenced me as much as painting,’ he says. ‘Growing up in New Zealand, cinema gave you ideas from the wider world that might resonate with you.’ Falls of light in darkened rooms, clouds of dust in a projector beam, the blur of an out-of-focus image; Neate’s abstract paintings recall long afternoons spent in movie theatre matinees during the 1950s and 1960s while other kids were outside playing sport. ‘The way we see history is always linked to our personal histories. How and when we encounter images is always significant. It’s that emotional context for art that interests me the most.’

Neate’s works reveal a concern for the discarded and outmoded: painting, he suggests, is not a linear practice but one filled with loops and double-backs, whose history—along with the wider register of visual culture—is instantly available as source material for a contemporary artist.

Over the years, Séraphine Pick has collected a large personal archive of images, which she uses as the starting point for her paintings. Recently, she's been working with images she's found online—but in 1997 when she painted *Untitled*, she was still largely using analogue images. Clippings. Bits of paper. Things torn out of magazines. Stills from movies, or pornographic photos. And images that she drew from memory or experienced in dreams.

Untitled is from a series sometimes referred to as Pick's blackboard paintings. Produced after she returned from Europe in 1995–6, they signalled a shift in her practice away from her more confessional works of the early 1990s, where she created a series of talismanic objects inspired by memories of her childhood experiences. Like her other blackboard paintings, *Untitled* is full of revisions and erasures, where forms are variously painted in and rubbed out, as if Pick had changed her mind part way through. Some figures have been given weight and mass while others are scratched in with the wrong end of the paint brush. At the bottom of the painting, an electric jug is boiling—it's as if the figures above are writhing in clouds of steam, forming themselves out of fog. There's no horizon line: rather than a landscape, this is a dreamscape, an unbounded weightless space in which everything is happening all at once and everything needs to be considered in relation to everything else.

Pick's earlier works were widely understood to be autobiographical, but she strongly repudiated that at the time. 'The autobiographical is not literal,' she has said, firmly. With their looser

handling, and surrealistic scenarios, *Untitled* and other works from this period made it clear that Pick's bigger project was a consideration of the way that we imagine ourselves into being. Dreams, experiences, memories and found images combine and recombine in Pick's painting—and in the subconscious of the individual—to produce a self which is always in the process of becoming something, or someone, else.

Séraphine Pick *Untitled* 1998. Oil on canvas. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 1998



Shigeyuki Kihara

Behind the work of Auckland-based artist Shigeyuki Kihara lies a vigorous research ethic that falls into complex alignment with her cultural, political and gender identities. Born to a Japanese father and Samoan mother on Upolo in 1975, Kihara was raised in Samoa, Japan and Indonesia before moving to Wellington to study at age fifteen. Describing herself as a transgender person of the Pacific experience, she is *Fa'afafine*—a person within Samoan society who 'does in the manner of a woman',¹ who

exists in the *va*. The *va* can be understood as a space of betweenness, or as Albert Wendt writes 'Not a space that separates but relates, that holds separate entities and things together in the Unity-that-is-All, the space that is context, giving meaning to things.'² As happens in colonised nations, indigenous structures become compromised; with the introduction of Christianity to Samoa the traditional place of *Fa'afafine* was quickly discouraged.

These experiences give Kihara a rich, multicultural lens through

which to view the world; the dualities and nuance in her experience produce complex works which use art historical references to facilitate powerful critiques of colonial history.

This is particularly evident in one of two works recently purchased by the Gallery, *Roman Catholic Church, Apia* (2013). Having discovered Thomas Andrew's 1866 photograph, *A Samoan Half Caste*, Kihara developed a persona named Salome—after the biblical figure who, she notes, influenced



Shigeyuki Kihara *Roman Catholic Church, Apia* 2013. C-type print. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 2017

politics through dance. In *Roman Catholic Church, Apia* we see Salome, dressed in black Victorian mourning clothes, posed to consider the effects of colonialism and the church upon Samoan culture. As she performs a quiet stillness in the heavily damaged vastness of the Roman Catholic Church, a kind of white noise feedback happens within the frame. The image becomes all the more expressive when we discover that wearing the Victorian dress is described by the artist as a violence or ‘bondage’ against the body.³ But juxtaposed against this political expressionism is a deep sense of tenderness as the artist also clearly recognises what the destruction of the church means to a community she loves.

Along with *After Tsunami Galu Afi, Lalomanu* (2013), which was also purchased by the Gallery, Kihara’s *Roman Catholic Church, Apia* forms part of the artist’s *Where Do We Come From? What*

Are We? Where Are We Going? series, which comprises twenty-one works. Named after Paul Gauguin’s last major work in 1897, the series illustrates an idea far from the painter’s idyll on the course of life; rather the artist pays witness to Samoa in the aftermath of 2012’s Cyclone Evan. Throughout the series, Salome is positioned with her back or profile to the viewer, guiding our gaze towards the landscape, environment, monuments and architecture and opening a space for us to enter. It’s reminiscent of Holly Hunter in *The Piano*, but also of another cinematic moment, referenced many times by generations of the LGBT+ communities—the final scene in *Gone with the Wind* as Vivien Leigh’s Scarlet O’Hara contemplates the end of one day and the potential of another.

As much as we are Salome’s guest, she controls our gaze; we are not witness to persons in states of shock or trauma, nor

are we invited to panoramas of the land subjugated by the disparaging twenty-first-century phenomena of ‘disaster porn’. Instead she performs in a quiet way, slowing things down, and letting the juxtaposition of the dress, the landscape and architecture fill each image with a complex range of senses, ideas and emotions.

Nathan Pohio

Assistant curator

Notes

1 Taken from the title of the artist’s work *Fa’a fafine: In the Manner of a Woman, Triptych 1* (2004–5) in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

2 Artist statement for Shigeyuki Kihara’s *Taua-luga: The Last Dance* (2006), www.youtube.com/watch?v=ev-vieSdb4I.

3 Albert Wendt, ‘Tatauing the Post-Colonial Body’, *Span*, 42–3, April 1996, pp.15–29.



Shigeyuki Kihara *After Tsunami Galu Afi, Lalomanu* 2013. C-type print. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 2017

The London Club

In September 2017, Gallery director Jenny Harper, curator Felicity Milburn and Jo Blair, of the Gallery Foundation's contracted development services, Brown Bread, went to London, taking a group of supporters who received a very special tour of the city's art highlights. While there, they further developed the Foundation's new London Club. Recently they sat down together in Jenny's office...

Felicity Milburn: Jenny, why is London such an important connection for Christchurch?

Jenny Harper: There are historic connections—our collection was very English from the beginning, and many artists looked that way in the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries; I also think back to the time when Jonathan Mane-Wheoki selected works for it from British dealers in the early 1970s. But more than that, it's a very important part of the art world. It's also somewhere we know a range of interesting people, and where many New Zealanders, including former Christchurch residents, live.

Jo Blair: We first went to London because of the fourth work in the Foundation's five great work series, Bridget Riley's *Cosmos*. We decided to take special donors who contributed to the fundraising there to meet Bridget. But it's an intriguing coincidence that four of our five great works seem to have English connections.

JH: That's right. Our interest in a London community has emerged off the back of the five great works. And it's been made possible by an amazing relationship with Singapore Airlines who help us get there. The series emerged out of a rather unfortunate cut in our acquisitions budget. That gave us the idea of developing an endowment to act as a buffer against the unpredictability of council funding and a changing city climate after the earthquakes. I felt so strongly about collections development and collections funding that I thought it was important to mark this pivotal time (the five years the Gallery spent closed for repairs) by setting out to buy five great works for the city and building a \$5m endowment.

JB: In 2016 we offered ten women donor spots to help buy the Bridget Riley work (we ended up with nine women, one family of women and one group of women). In return, they were offered the chance to go with Jenny to meet Bridget in her London studio last year. Some of the donors couldn't get there because, you know, some of us can't always drop everything and go to London without planning it for a couple of years... So they offered the tour to their children who were living there, which was really nice. We saw some of our group fall in love with Bridget's art after a seven-hour day with her. It was beautiful. People think you have to be into art and know a lot to be involved, but it's not about that. It's actually about...

JH: ...coming along and being open to it and learning together.

JB: There was quite a phenomenal London-based fundraising campaign for Christchurch straight after the earthquakes led by some amazing Kiwis who had been there for a long time, which raised \$18 million.

JH: And it seemed their contribution to Christchurch had been acknowledged generally, but perhaps not personally.

JB: So we wondered if there was still a pulse there, a need to connect? Would they still care, and could we engage with them better now through art? So we gathered a few people at New Zealand House, just friends and family really as a starter, and it seemed that what we were doing in Christchurch with the Gallery really moved them. We didn't ask for any money, we were just there to test the relationship out. What was amazing, however, was that we came home with donations from very generous souls when we hadn't even made an 'ask'. And that gave us confidence to go back.

FM: So what's the long game for London?

JH: This year the Foundation committed to investing in London—we've been twice in a year and made a range of friends over there and we want to keep them.

JB: Well, we're just really getting to know them. We're on the 'second date' so to speak. We've managed to meet some quite exceptional people who are heartened by what we're doing. It seems like people appreciated this bridge, this connection through art, that we are offering to the city.

JH: So, we launched the Mueck campaign in April this year. We had a party at Quo Vadis restaurant and another one at Hauser & Wirth gallery. Sir Nick Serota popped in, and Ron Mueck's *Still Life* (the dead chicken) was on show, which was amazing. Anthony d'Offay, who is Ron Mueck's agent (even though he doesn't have a gallery anymore) helped us launch it. Mueck now lives on the Isle of Wight most of the time, but he's from Melbourne originally. He was chosen to create our fifth great work as Christchurch had an already established connection with his work through the extraordinary response to his exhibition in the summer of 2010/11. Mueck was so impressed with the space that we gave the exhibition, and with the public response that he, I think, has a real soft spot for the city and what we've gone through. He and Charlie Clark his technician, came over here at the end of November last year and we gave them time to walk around, talk to people and to see the Christchurch that they'd visited before but which was so altered.

So he's become, in a sense, one of us.

FM: It's about the art and the audience, the connection between them.

JH: Yes. The everyday person. We had amazing numbers of people going to see an exhibition by an artist they'd never heard of; paying to see contemporary art. I think we were unsettled after the 4 September earthquakes and somehow the humanity of those works spoke to us in a remarkable way.

JB: So! We were on a mission to raise \$1 million to buy a Ron Mueck and part of the proposition was to offer seven spots of major gifts of \$100,000. We offered those donors the opportunity to meet Ron at his studio on the Isle of Wight in September this year.

JH: It was an amazing day.

JB: We also took Felicity with us...

FM: Very willingly...

JB: The advice we'd had from our earlier visit was that people really want to connect with Christchurch, but they also want to connect with what's happening in the contemporary art scene throughout New Zealand. This time we put on a lecture about that at the ICA, delivered by Felicity.

JH: People really, really appreciated it. It was a great overview of the work of six artists, all with some connection to Christchurch; it wasn't directly about responses to the earthquakes. It was just a nice introduction to some of the work here and by then people had met others and it was all pretty convivial. It's important to keep up people's interest, so we organised a number of other events that were pretty special. We had a private tour of the Bruce Nauman Artist Room at Tate Modern with Anthony d'Offay and a tour of the Serpentine.

JB: We would never have got those without Jenny's relationships. Felicity also took our group to see six of her favourite works at the Tate and Jenny showed us her favourites at the Courtauld Galleries.

JH: So it's access to experiences people wouldn't ordinarily have, but there's also a sense of relationship, of giving and return. It's not just a one-way channel.

JB: It does feel quite mutual. Great friendships come out of these trips too, and when we go to London, people are grateful for the chance to talk about what's happening here. Long may it last!

The Christchurch Art Gallery Foundation would like to thank the first givers to its London Club, who collectively made a \$100,000 gift to the Our Own Ron campaign.

Leading the way...

Gregory Ambler
Tania and Anton Beardsly
Penny Brown
Harvey Brown
Anne Candler
Kirsten Edwards
Sandy and Michael Fisher
Gaye and Kent Gardener
Liz Grant
Anna Bond Gunning
Trevor and Louisa Hall
Tony Halligan
Nic Hamilton
Brent Hansen
Bronwen Horton
Douglas Jenkins
Sigrid Wilkinson and Stephen Kirk
Jessica Kirker
NZ Womens' Network
Martin Prior
Eric Tracey
Stephen Waley-Cohen
Penny Walker
Sarah Wall
Michael Watt

With special thanks to Singapore Airlines, Margot and Fergus Henderson, Jeremy Lee and Caravan Restaurants.



Christchurch Art Gallery publications—the perfect gift.

Say Something! Jacqueline Fahey \$29.99

*Felicity Milburn with
Allie Eagle, Julia Holden,
Bronwyn Labrum, Lana
Lopesi, Zoe Roland and
Julia Waite*

Jacqueline Fahey's
unflinching 1970s paintings
of domestic reality are
revisited by contemporary
feminist authors.

300 x 210mm / 64 pages
978-1-877375-52-1

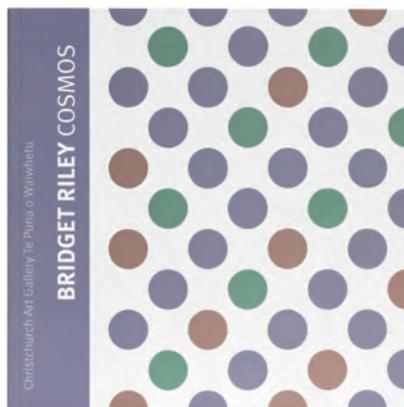


Bridget Riley: Cosmos \$30

*Jenny Harper, Richard Schiff,
Paul Moorhouse, Éric de
Chasse and Bridget Riley*

Bridget Riley's paintings
require our active participation
—there's no chance of
uninvolved viewing either
from a distance or closer up.

210 x 210mm / 120 pages
978-1-9998539-0-7



Aberhart Starts Here \$39.99

*Lara Strongman with
Laurence Aberhart*

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in an accelerating world.

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Get closer to art with the Friends

Friends Speaker of the Month: Quentin MacFarlane

21 February 2018, 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium
Friends \$5, non-members \$8, students with ID free
All welcome

Friends
CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY
TE PUNA O WAIWHEHU

Artist Quentin MacFarlane has spent decades observing the art scene in New Zealand. As an early exponent of abstraction, he is recognised for his formalist marine paintings and advocacy for modernism in the 1960s. Join him as he delves into the highlights of his personal archives, pictorial and video collection.

Book at christchurchartgallery.org.nz/events

To join the Friends and enjoy more great events, head to christchurchartgallery.org.nz/friends. Check out the event listings on pages 60–3 for everything else we have coming up.

Image: Quentin MacFarlane *Southerly Stormclouds* (detail) undated. Acrylic on canvas. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhehu, purchased 1969



My Favourite

Megan Wraight is an internationally acclaimed New Zealand landscape architect and founding director of Wraight + Associates.

This work of art paints connections for me—to people, to this landscape and this place. My great-great-grandparents John Henry Menzies and Francis Elizabeth Menzies settled here in the 1870s. I was intrigued to discover that, way back then, the Christchurch parochial attitude was already well established. When he purchased the land John Henry encountered difficulty at the land office; he wrote, ‘A map was the first step. I was a stranger. You must not, even now be a stranger in Canterbury. Not one of the clerks would take any notice of me. It was entirely a case of favouritism.’¹

John Henry Menzies was a prolific carver. He carved the interiors of several houses at Menzies Bay including Rahutai, which is now sadly derelict but beautifully recorded in a photograph by Neil Pardington. John Henry also built and carved St Luke’s church at Little Akaloa. My brother, Tim Wraight, is an artist and carver and inherited his eye, skill and tools.

My grandfather, Bob Thorpe, spent much of his childhood at Menzies Bay, surviving one of the homestead’s fires. His youngest sister, my great aunt Dr Paddy Bassett, recalls living at Rahutai, being taught by a governess and sleeping out on the veranda, which is why she still sleeps with the window wide open.

Coincidentally, Olivia Spencer Bower was friends with Paddy. Olivia and Paddy’s late husband Collin were friends in their youth, and Olivia stayed with them in Hamilton. Paddy had not known she had painted Menzies Bay.

The painting has a Japanese painterly quality, a beauty in its pared back simple colour washes. The fine eucalypt trees on the solid landforms. The soft curves of the snow with a slight melancholy to the stripped landscape. The weight in the valley base, a hint of those deep-cut bays of Banks Peninsula. It is a beautiful watercolour of a place connected.

¹ Ian H. Menzies, *The Story of Menzies Bay*, Pegasus Press, Christchurch, 1970, p.5.



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Pagework no.35

Each quarter the Gallery commissions an artist to create a new work of art especially for Bulletin. It's about actively supporting the generation of new work.

Since the earthquakes, I've become much more conscious of the diverse soil types and ground conditions across the city—the volcanic rock of the Port Hills, the peaty soils of former waterways, the gravels of the northwest, the silt and sandiness of the east. Different types of ground respond differently to earthquakes. They are also treated differently when it comes to rebuilding on them.

It's a commonly-held perception in the city that the east, an area hit particularly hard by the events of 2010–11, has suffered disproportionately from a long drawn-out rebuild. Melissa Macleod, who has lived in New Brighton with her young family for the past decade, feels the marginalisation of the east keenly. She lives in sight of the sea, and when the easterly wind picks up, sand blows through cracks in doors and collects in tiny drifts in the rooms of her house. Her pagework brings Brighton sand into the pages of *Bulletin*, an awkward accumulation in the margin that steadfastly asserts the presence of the city's coastal suburbs.

In her recent installation work, Macleod has developed a practice of placing sculptural forms in problematic sites. Her stated intention is 'to confront or create a problem that causes reflection'. Here she has treated the double-page spread as an architectural interior, a space with 'two moving walls and a central

corner', and introduced sand as a discordant element—as it if had been picked up and deposited between the pages by the wind hunting along the beach. The original of Macleod's *gift of ghosts* exists as an installation of sand that would literally fall from the pages of *Bulletin*; its reproduction here is as a photograph. But its effect is equally to chafe against the politics of the rebuild, while offering a quiet reminder that the sea suburbs are here.

Lara Strongman
Senior curator

new sandcastles on the window sill this morning, form
like dreams in the night

find ways under and in, on east winds

We filter

sweet salt air via bottle lake refuse and QEII remains
gift of ghosts

Melissa Macleod, 2017

'Pagework' has been generously supported by an
anonymous donor.

Melissa Macleod *gift of ghosts* 2017. Brighton sand on paper





Christchurch Art Gallery
Te Puna o Waiwhetu is proud
to welcome Greystone Wines
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loved and most visited gallery
in New Zealand.’

—Nik Mavromatis, Greystone Wines



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Exhibition Programme

Opening this Quarter

Closer: Old Favourites, New Stories

From 16 December 2017
Intriguing new perspectives on ten of the Gallery's most famous and best-loved paintings.

Ann Shelton: Dark Matter

16 December 2017 – 15 April 2018
An expansive view of Shelton's tightly conceived, large scale and hyperreal photography.

Pickaxes and Shovels: Colonial Canterbury Landscapes

17 February – 5 August 2018
See the lives of the early settlers and Kāi Tahu tangata whenua in this selection of extraordinary works by frontier Pākehā artists.

Closing this Quarter

Aberhart Starts Here

Until 6 February 2018
Iconic and unseen early photographs of Christchurch by Laurence Aberhart.

He Rau Maharataka Whenua: A Memory of Land

Until 18 February 2018
Canterbury modernist landscape painting poignantly revised from within a Kāi Tahu perspective.

He Waka Eke Noa

Until 18 February 2018
Colonial-era portraits represent a legacy that illuminates the present.

Beneath the Ranges

Until 18 February 2018
Mid twentieth-century artists focus on people working in the land.

Te Tihi o Kahukura:

The Citadel of Kahukura

Until 18 February 2018
A series of works produced by Bill Sutton under the mantle of Te Tihi o Kahukura.

Ongoing

Jacqueline Fahey: Say Something!

Until 11 March 2018
Psychologically charged paintings from the 1970s bristling with the intensity of domestic life.

Rachael Rakena: Rerekiho

Until 11 March 2018
Kāi Tahu artist Rachael Rakena's sublime and immersive video installation.

The Weight of Sunlight

Sunlight, warmth and the lure of escape and travel.

Yellow Moon:

He Marama Kōwhai

Yellow is a colour with impact—it's time to encounter its brilliance.

Untitled #1050

Expand your mind with this selection from the collection.

Your Hotel Brain

Energies and anxieties from the threshold of the new millennium.

Martin Creed: Everything is Going to be Alright

A completely unequivocal, but also pretty darn ambiguous, work for Christchurch.

Tony de Lautour: Silent Patterns

An outdoor painting inspired by wartime Dazzle camouflage.

Reuben Paterson: The End

A sparkling elevator installation offering an unexpected space for contemplation and connection.

Laurence Aberhart: Kamala, Astral and Charlotte, Lyttelton, March 1983

Aberhart's photograph of Lyttelton children is displayed on our Gloucester Street billboard.

Ronnie Van Hout: Quasi

A giant sculpture on the Gallery roof.

S raphine Pick: Untitled (Bathers)

Pick's lush watercolour offers a utopian vision in the carpark elevator.

Marie Shannon: The Aachen Faxes

Marie Shannon's sound work contemplates love, loss and longing across distance.

Tomorrow Still Comes:

Natalia Saegusa
A fragmented, poetic temporary wall painting by Natalia Saegusa.

Coming Soon

Our Collection: 19th and 20th Century New Zealand Art

Opens 3 March 2018
Our lively new historical collection exhibitions explore M ori architecture, colonial portraiture, early landscape painting and mid-century abstraction.

John Stezaker: Lost World

Opens 24 March 2018
British artist John Stezaker is known for his distinctive, often deceptively simple, collages.

Events

Talks

Jacqueline Fahey: *Painting the Personal and the Political*

6 December / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free

Art historian Julie King builds on a personal connection to place Jacqueline Fahey's practice in the context of New Zealand art history, and asks what makes it unusual and why it had such an impact at the time.

Ann Shelton

16 December / 2pm / meet at the front desk / free

Join artist Ann Shelton as she discusses the uncertain and shifting narratives and histories of her lens-based work in her new exhibition *Dark Matter*.

Jacqueline Fahey

10 January / 6pm / meet at the front desk / free

Join committed feminist, acclaimed author and legend of New Zealand painting Jacqueline Fahey in a walk around *Say Something!* This recently-opened exhibition features some of Fahey's best-known paintings from the 1970s and 80s.

Curators' Tour of Collection Favourites

7 February / 6pm / meet at the front desk / free

Join the Gallery curators for this one-off tour of their personal highlights and collection favourites, followed by a glass of wine and a chat about the Gallery collection.

Lucinda Hawksley

11 February / 3pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free

British writer (and great-great-great-granddaughter of Charles Dickens) Lucinda Hawksley hits Christchurch for a very special talk. Hawksley's books are entertaining and diverse, embracing the worlds of art history, social history, the history of London and travel writing.

In association with WORD.

Friends Speaker of the Month: Quentin MacFarlane

21 February / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium /

Friends \$5, non-members \$8, students with ID free

Delving into his personal archives, pictorial and video collection, Quentin reminisces on his influences, friendships and collaborations. This is a rare insight into the local art scene from an artist whose own body of work is highly regarded, and held in numerous collections, including the Gallery's.

Pickaxes and Shovels

28 February / 6pm / meet at the front desk / free

Curator Peter Vangioni discusses the Canterbury colonial narratives behind the historical works in his new show *Pickaxes and Shovels*.

Films

This Air is a Material

17 December / 2pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free

Ann Shelton was one of New Zealand's first female photojournalists. This film deepens the understanding of an important artist and her work, illuminating not only her practice but also the small towns, urban myths and creative communities that shaped it.

49 mins.

Elf

20 December / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free

Catch a Christmas film classic. Buddy (Will Ferrell) was a baby in an orphanage who stowed away in Santa's sack and ended up at the North Pole. All grown up and too big for elf jobs, Santa sends Buddy to New York City to find his birth father.

97 mins.

Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory

17 January / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free

Based on the classic Roald Dahl story, this 1971 film follows a young boy who wins a tour through the most magnificent chocolate factory in the world, led by the world's most unusual candy-maker—Willy Wonka.

100 mins.

David Lynch: The Art Life

31 January / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free

Artist and filmmaker David Lynch discusses his early life and the events that shaped his outlook on art and the creative process in this incredible documentary.

90 mins.

Special Events

Delaney Davidson presents 'Magic Lightbox'

6 December / 7.30pm / NZI Foyer and Arcade / free

Fresh from the success of his recent European tour, Delaney presents the final show of his New Zealand Magic Lightbox tour at the Gallery. Blending live music and film, Arts Laureate Delaney gives us a glimpse of a forgotten time—dusty highways, old Europe, and the 'new world' of the USA and New Zealand as you've never seen it before.

With special guest Bruce Russell.

Friends Breakfast and Private Tour

Saturday 16 December / 8.15am / Universo Brasserie and Bar / Cost \$30 (includes breakfast)

Join the Friends for a special end of year Christmas breakfast in Universo, followed by a tour of the two new exhibitions, *Ann Shelton: Dark Matter* and *Closer* with senior curator Lara Strongman. This is a great opportunity to see and hear about the new shows before the Gallery opens to the public. Come and celebrate the end of the Gallery's second year open with other like-minded people. Bookings essential: visit christchurchartgallery.org.nz/friends or the Design Store.

The Physical Garden

16 December / 3pm / *Dark Matter* exhibition space / free

A performance accompanying Ann Shelton's series *jane says*, exploring and activating narratives relating to the artist's interest in plant histories and the legacy of women's use of plants for fertility and birth control.

Friends Event: Coffee + Art

23 February / 11.45am / Universo Brasserie & Bar

Join Friends for a caffeine fix and great conversation in Universo, then enjoy a 30-minute Art Bites talk. See our website for Art Bites listings.

Friends Summer Trip: Māori Rock Art off site and in situ

27 January / meet at the Gallery at 8.45am / \$110 (includes entry to the rock art sites, lunch and bus travel)

Join the Friends for a trip to Timaru to visit the Te Ana Māori Rock Art Centre, then travel to the Opihi rock art site near Pleasant Point for lunch and on to view the rock art in the caves. A wonderful opportunity to hear the stories and traditions with a local Māori guide.

World Buskers Festival 2018

18–28 January / Gallery forecourt

It's the Buskers' 25th Birthday! Check their website for details of the shows and acts at the Gallery.

worldbuskersfestival.com

Waitangi Day at the Gallery

6 February / all day / Gallery forecourt / free

Head to the Gallery on Waitangi Day to partake and create on our national day. We have some pretty special, interactive events planned so be sure to check out the Gallery website to find out more.

Family Activities

Kids Christmas Drop-in

20–3 December / 11am – 4pm / Education Centre / free

Bring the whole family in and make some crafty Christmas decorations.

All ages

Summer Create Space

22–6 January / 11am – 4pm / Education Centre / free

Sketch, create and make. Kids can let their creative skills fly with our summer holiday drop-in.

All ages

Fly Me to the Moon

11 February / 11am / Education Centre / \$5 per child

Taking inspiration from our exhibition *Yellow Moon*, children will make their own moonscape to take home.

Bookings through the Gallery website.

Ages 5–9

Screen-printing Workshop

14 February / 6pm / Education Centre / \$15

Make and print your own t-shirt design with Gallery educator and artist Bianca van Leeuwen. Bring a white t-shirt and we'll provide the rest. Bookings through the Gallery website.

Age 16+

Mellow Yellow

18 February / 11am / Education Centre / \$10 per child

Yoga for children inspired by our family show *Yellow Moon* and led by inspirational teacher Kotte. Using imagination and creativity, this class is designed to bring body awareness to children, helping them release stress and still their minds.

Bookings through the Gallery website.

Ages 3–11

Screen-printing Workshop for Kids

25 February / 11am / Education Centre / \$15

Kids will learn the art of screen-printing while making and printing their own t-shirt design. Kids will need to bring a white t-shirt, we'll provide the rest. Bookings through the Gallery website.

Ages 8+



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Please see christchurchartgallery.org.nz/support/foundation for a full list.

Thank you to the generous partners of our five great works:

Michael Parekowhai Chapman's Homer

1093 generous donations from Christchurch and beyond, along with proceeds from the first annual gala fundraising dinner

Bill Culbert Bebop

Purchased with assistance from Gabrielle Tasman and proceeds from the second annual gala fundraising dinner

Martin Creed Work No. 2314 [Everything is going to be alright]

Thanks to Grumps

Bridget Riley Cosmos

Heather Boock; Ros Burdon; Kate Burt; Dame Jenny Gibbs; Ann de Lambert and daughters, Sarah, Elizabeth, Diana, and Rachel; Barbara, Lady Stewart; Gabrielle Tasman; Jenny Todd; Nicky Wagner; and the Wellington Women's Group (est. 1984)

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