

B. 186

Christchurch Art Gallery
Te Puna o Waiohētū
Bulletin Issue no.186
Summer 2016–17

The World is an Abstracting Machine
David Haines and Joyce Hinterding
talk about metaphysics, the occult
and the sublime.

The Devil's Blind Spot
Nine writers look at a number of
recent strategies in New Zealand
photography.

Letting the Bombast In
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avant-garde electro rocker and
sound artist J.G. Thirlwell.

Lisa Walker: 0 + 0 = 0
Felicity Milburn examines the
audaciously imagined work of art
jeweller Lisa Walker.

Postcard From...
Liyen Chong in Houston, Texas.

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Geology (detail from production still) 2015.
Real-time 3D environment, 2 x HD projections,
game engine, motion sensor, spatial 3D audio.
Commissioned by the MCA, supported by
Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu

Previous spread: Billy Apple and Jenny Harper
with *The Bridge: An Institutional Critique* 2016.
Photo: John Collie

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Director's Foreword

JENNY HARPER

November 2016

It is exactly ten years since I wrote my first foreword for Te Puna o Waiwhetu Christchurch Art Gallery's *Bulletin*. Then, the shadow of an elongated sculpture by Swiss sculptor Alberto Giacometti featured on the front cover of *B.147*, as we heralded the arrival of *Giacometti: Sculptures, Prints and Drawings from the Maeght Foundation* in November 2006. Toured by the Art Gallery of New South Wales, it was memorable and moving, and looking its very best here in our high-ceilinged and relatively new gallery spaces.

It's hard to fathom just how much has happened since, both in and around our inner-city art gallery. In particular, I look back on our five years of closure with a mixture of wonder and disbelief.

Now that the Gallery is open again, however, and almost fully operational, there's not as much personal time to recollect and analyse life before 2010–11. We can look back and regret lost time, but it's clear that our belief in the creativity of artists and how much good art really matters in this community has never wavered. As one visitor wrote recently in our comments book, 'Thank you for providing this rising from the rubble, glorious city with a wonderful place for art lovers and explorers to go.'

Such notes help us move forward with the determination that has marked the wonderful contributions to Christchurch made by our staff over the last ten years—both closed and open. So, it's pertinent now to note that two exhibitions we're presenting during the summer period, and which we

feature in *B.186*, have histories that go back to the days before our reopening.

The first is *Energies* by Australian artistic duo David Haines and Joyce Hinterding. Like *Giacometti* before it, this exhibition hails from Sydney—it is toured by our colleagues at the Museum of Contemporary Art. But the larger project is itself the development of another, which was originally first scheduled for Christchurch in 2012—a key work in the exhibition, *Geology* (2015), has at its core a series of electromagnetic readings made by the duo on a research trip to our then-closed Gallery in 2011. We welcome them back!

In addition, we are presenting the work of Lisa Walker, an artist who pushes the boundaries of what is wearable in jewellery. An exhibition of Walker's work was also a casualty of the many enforced changes to our exhibition schedule as we anticipated and planned numerous reopenings in 2011–12. So it's good to finally exhibit her work and to hear also from curator Felicity Milburn, who looks at her practice in this magazine.

We investigate recent strategies in New Zealand photography with the work of nine emerging and early-career photographers and photomedia artists, viewed through the lens of their contemporaries. Each work is accompanied by a short piece of writing commissioned from a peer writer. And we have an interview with veteran Australian musician and sound artist J.G. Thirlwell, who talked to writer Jo Burzynska before his performance at the Gallery in June this year.

Our Postcard is from Liyen Chong in Houston, Texas,

and Pagework is supplied by Christchurch artist Hannah Beehre, recently awarded the Parkin Drawing Prize.

By the time you read this, we will have reopened (fingers crossed) the car park under this building. With two new works connecting the car park to the world of art above, artists Marie Shannon and Séraphine Pick join Reuben Paterson in expanding our view of what's possible in lifts. We hope you enjoy them.

And, in time for your Christmas shopping, our Design Store is open, its sleek interior designed by award-winning Auckland designer Jamie McLellan. In keeping with the building's exterior, some of the furniture features a base of bluestone, and on one wall it boasts a delightful graphic freshly made in the space by street artist Andrew J. Steel. It's so good to have these facilities operational again and, in the next while, I hope to bring good news about a potential new operator for our café!

At this time of year, it's fitting to thank our volunteer guides for their unstinting service. Thanks also to the Friends of Christchurch Art Gallery for their great support, and simply for hanging in there with us. These have been difficult years for all of us, but especially for voluntary organisations.

Finally, thanks to our Foundation's board of trustees and to Brown Bread, who support their fundraising endeavours. The 2016 Foundation Gala Dinner on 15 October was second to none. Along with Foundation chair, Mike Stenhouse, I'm delighted to note that the TOGETHER endowment is now fully subscribed and

that our fourth major work of art will be a wall painting by the renowned and extraordinary English artist Bridget Riley. On your behalf and mine, I thank all the generous women who are making this great work possible and look forward to sharing more with you all as the artist's thinking progresses.

For me, the last ten years have been completely unpredictable, but also very good. Two others, deputy director Blair Jackson and projects and operations manager Neil Semple, started at this amazing art gallery only one week after I took up the role of director and we have shared the highs and lows. It's been a memorable expedition with them and all of our colleagues, past and present.

Thanks also to all of you, our loyal supporters and readers. I hope the new year is all you and we wish for.

P.S. I am rarely photographed with artists or with individual works of art. But, for Billy Apple, exceptions are made. And the end of his *Great Britten!* (which we knew he was coming to see again) seemed too good an opportunity to miss. Here Apple suggests a simple alteration to the Gallery's wavy bridge to make this feature less visually intrusive. He proposes straightening the curves to ease the path between the galleries on either side of our balcony. Who knows—one day, it may happen!



THE WORLD IS AN ABSTRACTING MACHINE

Australian artists David Haines and Joyce Hinterding live and work in the Blue Mountains, New South Wales. Working in a collaborative partnership as Haines & Hinterding, they explore the unseen energies that surround us through an artistic practice that incorporates science, the occult and philosophy. *Bulletin* editor David Simpson spoke to the artists in October 2016.

David Simpson: Your work *Geology* began with a series of recordings made inside Christchurch Art Gallery while we were closed in 2011. Did you have an idea of what you were aiming to produce, or was it shaped by the experience and the things that you found inside the building?

David Haines: It was a profoundly interesting experience, actually. We were quite affected by it, and the documentation we got was extensive. We went in there with a lot of tools that are common to our field recordings—VLF antennas, video cameras, still cameras. But what was amazing was that it really brought into focus this idea of the aleatory nature of events during the earthquake. Our practice has always been tuned to chaos in a sense, and it rearranged the Gallery into these things that we could connect with.

We spent time in Christchurch around Christmas [2011] and saw the absolute devastation and the change in people's feelings. We felt that we didn't want to literalise the event but to think in a more open way about the kinds of energies that take place in an event like that.

We then put the project into a long hiatus—we put it to sleep for a while and then we came back to it, which was a good move because it became its own work in the end. But I think that the document we recorded that day is something that we may work with at some stage in the future when there's even more distance. There was this really interesting idea about the institution being put into a deep freeze in some ways.

Joyce Hinterding: It was a very aesthetic experience. But literalising that experience wasn't turning it into an artwork for us. Thinking about the forces that produced that situation, however, led us back into thinking about the landscape and the strange dynamics that exist underneath it. And so *Geology* is a digital realm that has three levels: the big, open landscape level and then two interior levels. One is like an optical anechoic chamber—kind of sucking light, reflecting light and messing with light, but with all these rocks floating around. In the process of making the work we started working with New Zealand rocks. Originally we had them in big galleries; we were

working out how to get in and out of the spaces with the big rocks in them when we accidentally left a door open and they got out and started floating around in the space. We liked that so much we left them there and it became a kind of touchstone in the work, that the rocks have got inside the building. And the rocks all had the sounds of the electromagnetic field recordings from inside the Gallery.

DH: The most important thing, I think, was a deeper question around synthesis, because humans feel like they own synthesis but of course everything is synthesising continuously. So this exploration of digital realms is one that helps us attempt to answer metaphysical questions about all kinds of processes through very direct experience.

Within the [digital platforms we use] we can manipulate things and then watch how they react, so it's an experimental space. I really like that flexibility. The whole platform is a kind of terrain-mapping system. And then when it doesn't look traditionally like a terrain it's all about a coordinate system, which allows you to visualise things in three-dimensional space through abstractions. And of course, the world is an abstracting machine: the minute that it begins to coalesce out of noise (because noise is the bottom line, it's everything) it just differentiates itself into structure.

We're using a lot of these mathematical systems that other, much cleverer, people have coded; parametric systems that are able to manipulate algorithms around magnitude and detail. So we've become the mediators of a vast synthesis machine really, which is very exciting as artists—it could be endless. It feels endless.

DS: Is this software the Unreal Engine, the gaming software that you use primarily?

DH: Yes. At its core, the Engine is a vastly abstract entity, which personally I don't really want to know about; it would be, to me anyway, pathologically

frightening to have a real grasp of how it works. But in a sense no one's really a creator, they're a mediator. We're just moulding and shaping things. It's an aesthetic platform for us. And although we're deeply involved in its internals, in a sense the code also completely resists you. And that's what's interesting about it, this resistance to knowing everything.

DS: You've talked before about having to spend a lot of time battling [the Engine's] compulsion to provide dead people.

DH: Thankfully things have moved on a little bit since then...

JH: On the third level of the game—it's not a game, it's an interactive work—is a white space with a very melancholy soundtrack. But when you touch the object in it, the object begins to collapse and once it starts, you can't quite stop it. And I guess there's that question about Christchurch being caught up in a global moment where, you know, it's all changing and once it starts, it's happening around you. But in our work it's kind of beautiful and sad.

DH: Initially we had this idea about what it means when cultural formations come up against nature and the decks get incredibly shuffled—suddenly the institution gets reset and becomes this empty museum, and we can see the spookiness in all that. But when we were on the ground, it was very hard not to acknowledge the reality of these effects on people and, as outsiders coming to make a work, it seemed too glib and somehow banal to literalise that at the time. But certainly that idea is still a very resonant one and I think that thematic will appear again in our work.

There is a sort of stretch of energy—there are cultural energies and human energies and energies that belong to the internal workings of rocks...

JH: And environment.

DH: ...and environmental energies. And of course the electromagnetic spectrum is a really important

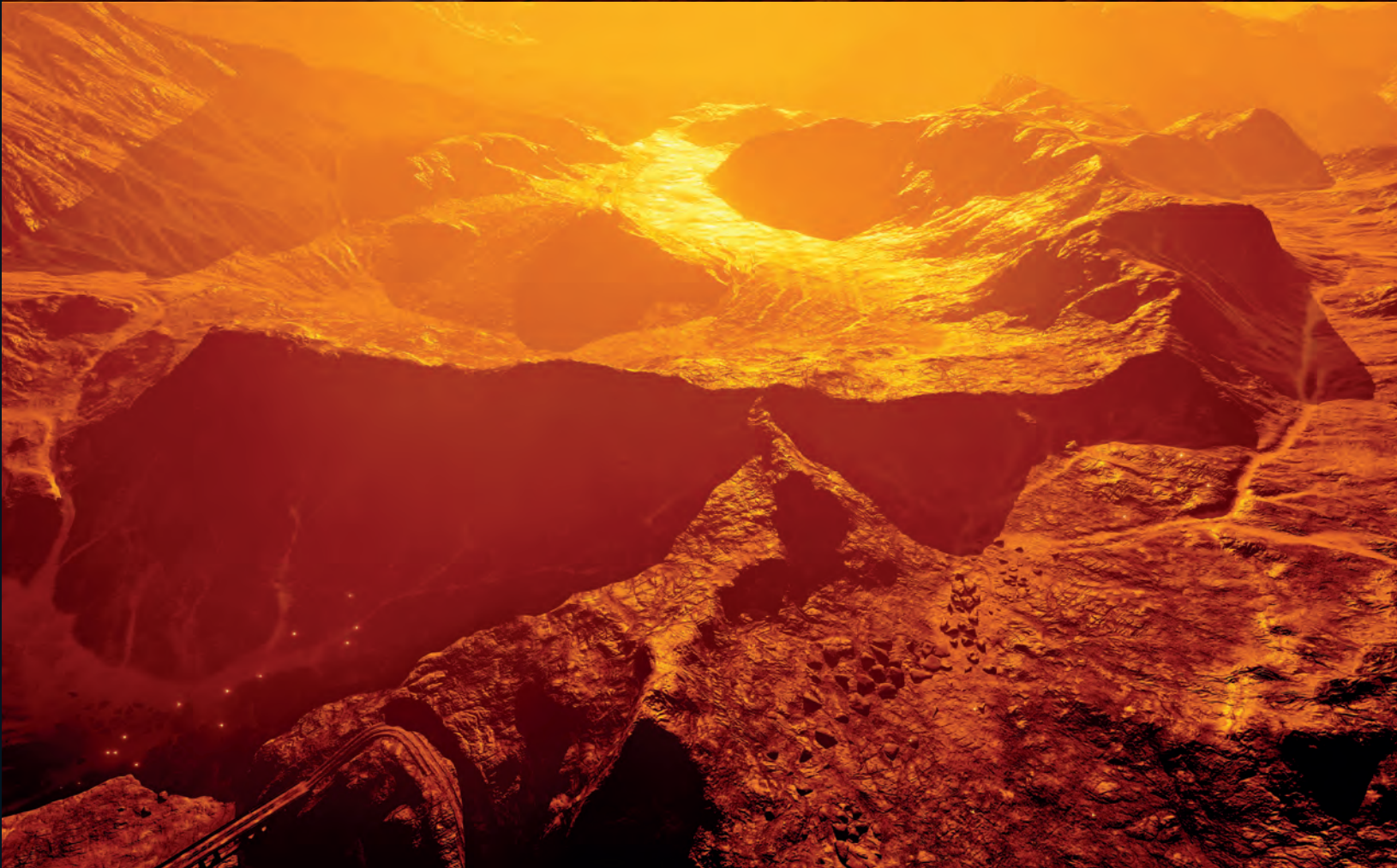


figure in our work. Looking at the [*Energies* exhibition] for some reason I see more of the science-fictional aspects of it all, in that there's as much that is invented as there is actual phenomena driving into the work. So we can have a structure like *Aeriology*, which is literally gathering energy out of the air, and then we can have the Reichian *Cloudbusters*, which are very speculative ideas about other states of matter, seen through this prism of weird psychoanalysis and sexual psyches and politics. And of course politics are also energies as well, so we're lucky—that's a very big palette right there.

DS: You've talked about the electromagnetic and about how, once you see the world through the electromagnetic, you'll never see it in quite the same way again. So how do you see the world?

DH: Nothing is solid. I mean, you jump off a cliff and it feels pretty solid, but that's gravity, isn't it? Matter isn't mattering anymore. There's this dichotomy between matter and the ephemeral world, and suddenly everything's quite ephemeral. Certainly my longstanding interest in aroma is because it is a frequency that you're smelling in the far infrared part of the spectrum that has a profound effect on the senses. You're smelling the stretch frequency of the molecules, and yet it has this profound sensory effect on beings that are tuned into it.

I think there's a two-way street there—a bi-directional experience between molecules and atoms, and people. It's easy to take out the human dimension, but in fact that's the circuit. There are all these circuits that we have in a sensorial way, and artists are attuned to the senses because that's how our work transmits and how it receives. We're sensory beings. Someone the other day was remarking that we were embedded in the electromagnetic and I was thinking, 'Well, that's not true, we are the electromagnetic.' That alone has to profoundly change any notion of 'being'. It makes you realise that

metaphysics can't really be done any more in the old sense of the word, without actually factoring in some of the instrumentality of realist activities like science, and what science is able to uncover.

DS: This is very current science and something that's changing constantly, but with works like the cloudbusters you're rebuilding devices that are more historical, slightly more speculative. You've followed controversial German psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich's device for channelling orgone energy to change the weather, but are they active machines or are they symbols for something else?

JH: Cloudbusters actually work! Eva Reich came to Australia in the late seventies, early eighties. She took the cloudbusters to one of those festivals, and they blew holes in clouds and made it rain. If you look on the internet, you'll find that there are people who are still 'weather working'. I mean, Reich's son Peter wrote *The Book of Dreams* about Reich's life, at the end of his life. And he writes about travelling across the desert and fighting aliens with the cloudbusters. He believed that the cloudbusters were stealing the organic energy from the planet.

DH: [Laughs]

JH: The book is absolutely fantastic. I studied Reich when I was a student, and it's always inspired me, and it inspired David as well. But the thing that really inspires us is the maverick thinking, it's thinking out of the box, it's thinking in slightly different ways. To a large degree his research has been discredited, but I think 'weather working' however, the idea of trying to control or manipulate the weather, would have to be about the most problematic concept that you can come up with. We were in an exhibition called *The Trouble With The Weather*, and it's fascinating because the trouble with the weather is that we can't control it. It seemed to us at the time that there was this fantastic conundrum around the weather and around devices and what they might do. It's worth thinking differently,







and if you could say one thing about Reich's work, it absolutely encouraged us to think differently.

DH: But the thing about the cloudbusters is that they are kind of sci-fi phallic objects. That a student of Freud would produce these guns, which are somehow sensitively divining a kind of feedback system between earth and sky like a Heideggerian wet dream—that was an intended Freudian pun, you know. They're fantastic artistic objects in that sense because they're complicated, they're paradoxical and, if they work (like the Malaysian government seems to think they do), they're kind of terrifying as well. Reich was a product of his time—he thought it was fine to go out and try to draw in the positive orgone energy.

It's a fantastic model for all kinds of research actually—fantasy and reality mixed together, and that complication to me is very interesting. Smarter people than I have proved that facts are just a combination of cultural and physical realities, brought together from many, many dimensions. The world is fantastically complicated. We claim certain things as being factual, but in fact it's a very fluid set of multi-dimensions that drive into that, and the artwork is the perfect platform for this because it's given the parameters to open up this conversation and try to complicate things.

JH: That work has provided so much discussion! I mean we've had the most bizarre and fantastic responses. It's been absolutely fascinating, we get caught up in pseudoscience, we get told that sex affects the weather...

DH: There's a lot on the internet around that work—people that are not part of the official commentary, like chemtrail busters. Google is this powerful eye on activities, and it opens up access to all these other cultures. But I think the reason why we wouldn't turn it on, is just in case it really does work.

JH: Well, see, David's a sceptic—sorry.

DS: I hear a difference of opinion there?

DH: But I won't discount it, because the one time we

did turn it on, almost by accident, it rained. We were very remorseful about that because it rained for four days. Would you make the earth die, or would you turn on the cloudbuster?

JH: There is also a question there about functionality and sculpture, and it ties the antenna works to the cloudbusters. Classically, sculpture is representational, it re-presents the world...

DH: Well, no, it's also non-functional.

JH: But the thing about the antennas is that they look at the electromagnetic resonant properties of metal objects, wire shapes and forms, graphite—how they resonate and how they are, in a sense, functional. The cloudbusters, then, are sculptures that have this functional potential. And that's part of their appeal, their aura; it's part of how they work as a sculptural objects. That potential to be functional makes them rather curious.

DH: This complication between the non-functional and the functional within all of these works is something that I'm starting to try to articulate. The functional hasn't been a traditional part of the narrative of art. Once an object slips into the functional it stops being art and it becomes a technical object or a design object or a religious object, for example. And this complication, this continual running up against functionality, is a very interesting frontier because it hasn't been fully worked through yet. Of course, artists certainly don't have an exclusive licence on creativity. That belongs to the whole world and the cosmos. But if we're at the end of art, then for me, this is a very interesting side alley. I feel that the work very much stands out as an art object; it's never built for any reason other than to be an art object, but it does contain these strongly functional aspects. And that is a very interesting challenge to more traditional notions of what modernism has been able to contain.

The other thing is, the reason that functionality exists is because in a way we're occult diviners; we're

always interested in revealing things that are partially concealed and things that you don't normally have access to. In a sense, they're noumenal aspects of these things, so you can take a seemingly inert material like copper and show that, in fact, it actually is playing a whole other role in how the cosmos is working, which will happen regardless of whether you mediate it. And that's what we're doing. We're putting on the beacons out there and saying hold on a minute, in your walls are these wires, humming.

The fact is that everything is kind of haunted by these things. And they may also have a kind of agency where we realise that they are just as powerful as we are. Even if they're not, they're still powerful and empowerment is at the essence of art. When Rothko takes pigment, he empowers a wine-blood sea on a canvas. And van Gogh really—he hit the yellow paint. What artists do well is empower experiences. Hey, energy in karma, that's the riddle of it.

DS: Everything around you, do you ever feel the urge just to switch it all off, to lock yourself in some kind of giant Faraday cage and just be away from it all?

JH: Yeah. What's not going to Christchurch is *Telepathy*, which is the anechoic chamber. But we do a lot of bushwalking in the Blue Mountains, and we walk in order to listen to the VLF—the very low frequency kind of spectrum, that's what you'd call natural radio. You need to be away from all of this, and so we do work on the counterpoint.

DH: When you get out in the wild country, a lot of these big structures are so beyond you that they really push you back—they're hardcore. There's a lot that resists that exploration, I guess, which is good. You appreciate them.

DS: So this very physical interaction with the landscape, it's a deliberate strategy to counterbalance the more technical aspects of your work, as well as having a research, fact-finding and exploratory aspect?

JH: No, I think it's a big part of who we are. It probably

begins with that, rather than being a kind of contrived counterpoint. David was a rock climber for...

DH: Twenty-five, thirty years. In a week on a river you can learn about entropy and also about how monolithic things can be, things that will utterly resist you because their timeframes are completely different. You can learn more in that way in a week than in a year of reading. But it's definitely how we put balance into our lives as well. That traditional desire to be outdoors is really special, and it's something a lot of New Zealanders certainly appreciate. You have these great geographical realms to explore. Plenty of big things there for such a compact space. But the outdoors has always produced metaphysical reflection—it's where the Western notion of the sublime comes from. In our era we're more able to deal with sensory overload than anyone could then. I mean, Immanuel Kant was positively frightened of smell, such a wimp. He should've done some Reichian therapy. We all favour sight and hearing above smell and touch, and that's foundational. It's how we're taught about the sublime in art history. And I think that the sublime has to be redefined in our era through all kinds of things, through technology and through our capacity for our senses to be able to wire up experiences in different ways. There's something about our landscape and our wilderness that really does make you feel small and pushes you back. It resists you, and it's exciting when that happens.

Energies: Haines & Hinterding is on display at the Gallery until 5 March 2017. Organised and toured by the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia.

Recent Strategies in New Zealand Photography

THE DEVIL'S

Te Puna o Waiwhetu Christchurch Art Gallery has a long-standing tradition of curating exhibitions of emerging and early-career artists. We do this in order to contribute to the ecology of the local art world, as well as because—quite straightforwardly—we're interested in the practices of artists at all stages of their careers, and would like to bring the work of outstanding younger artists to wider public attention. *The Devil's Blind Spot* is the latest in this ongoing series, but unlike earlier exhibitions, it's concerned with a single medium—photography.

Why concentrate on photography in an exhibition of up-and-coming artists? Two reasons. Firstly, because photographic practice has arguably never been stronger in New Zealand; the diversity of approaches taken by the various regional art schools is producing a broad spectrum of critically-engaged photography graduates, who are building on strong local and international photographic histories. And secondly, because photography is the pre-eminent visual medium of our time. We're bombarded by images, saturated with gifs and jpgs. With the rapid national take-up of smartphones and sharing technologies, many people have become not only photographers but also publishers and distributors of the

photographic image. I wanted to consider how a group of New Zealand artists born in the 1980s and 1990s, who have come of age with the digital image, are using a range of strategies to make photographic art in the digital era.

Although it doesn't attempt to be a comprehensive survey, *The Devil's Blind Spot* brings together a wide range of contemporary photographic practices. At one end of the spectrum are artists who use deliberately anachronistic technologies, such as large-format view cameras and analogue film. Their images may be hand-printed in a darkroom, or scanned and delivered as digital files. At the other end are artists who work with computer codes and data, and whose photographic practices might involve online distribution and interaction. There are artists who make photobooks and those who produce cameraless photographs; artists who incorporate photographs into mixed-media installations or who are concerned with the creative possibilities of photographic 'failure'; artists who explore aspects of personal or cultural identity from an insider's perspective; and artists who are concerned with the visibility of photography's own histories, as well as its relationship to other visual disciplines. Each represents a different kind of engagement with the

BLIND SPOT

contemporary, offering a distinctive critical reflection on the condition of culture at the present moment.

Every artist is represented by a new or recent body of work, and we've also commissioned accompanying texts on each artist's work by peer writers, which appear on the following pages. Mirroring the approach taken in the exhibition, which considers the diversity of contemporary photographic practice as a strength, each piece of writing has found its own form—an interview, a parallel text, an exploration of ideas, the intimate observations of a friend or the close reading of a fellow artist.

The Devil's Blind Spot is a title borrowed from the German writer Alexander Kluge. Subtitled 'Tales from the new century', Kluge's book of short, acerbic 'semi-documentary stories' acknowledges the pull of the past while anticipating the great turbulence of our future, and hovers—much like photography—between fact and fiction. In contrast to the 'decisive moment' of photography, the notion of the devil's blind spot gestures towards an indeterminate, hard-to-see period when history takes a new turn—a subtle course change that occurs while 'the devil' has his eye somewhere else. The shift in direction being gestured to in this exhibition is the result of the development of digital technologies and the consequent

explosion of vernacular photography. Rather than a schism with the past it simply implies a renewed form of connection.

Digital technologies have long since refuted whatever claims of 'truth' photography once had as a document of the real (and have also helped us to see that photographic reality was always a construction). But it is not so much that reality is vanishing, as that a new form of reality is emerging that acknowledges the subjectivities of its actors. A photograph is not just an aid to vision but also a means of representation, both visual and political. What is excluded from the picture has always been as significant as what is included. Like other art forms, photography provides the viewer with a way of seeing—a distinctive perspective on the contemporary moment. What a photograph pictures is always past, but in its unique ability to isolate and preserve a moment in time for future viewers, it brings that past into a continuous dialogue with the present.

Lara Strongman

Senior curator

Artist

Andrew Beck

Text by

Nina Dyer

Andrew Beck's latest body of work is simultaneously regressive and progressive. Regressive, in that he has adopted the antiquated process of cameraless photography; progressive, in that he does so to accentuate and resist the dissolution that comes in the wake of an age in which instant gratification and a saturation of digital images reigns. He channels the past in order to make an art that is entirely grounded in the present.

Cameraless images directly transmute an object's presence into an abstract representation. Working from the extreme end of the photographic spectrum, Beck circumvents the effects of modern, transitory visual media with striking works that act not only as photographs but also as substantial objects in themselves, sometimes manifesting even in sculptural forms. His recent works provide testament to the flexibility of photographs—their ability to speak not only of what is being represented but also of their method of production, in which moments in time are fragmented and frozen on a material surface.

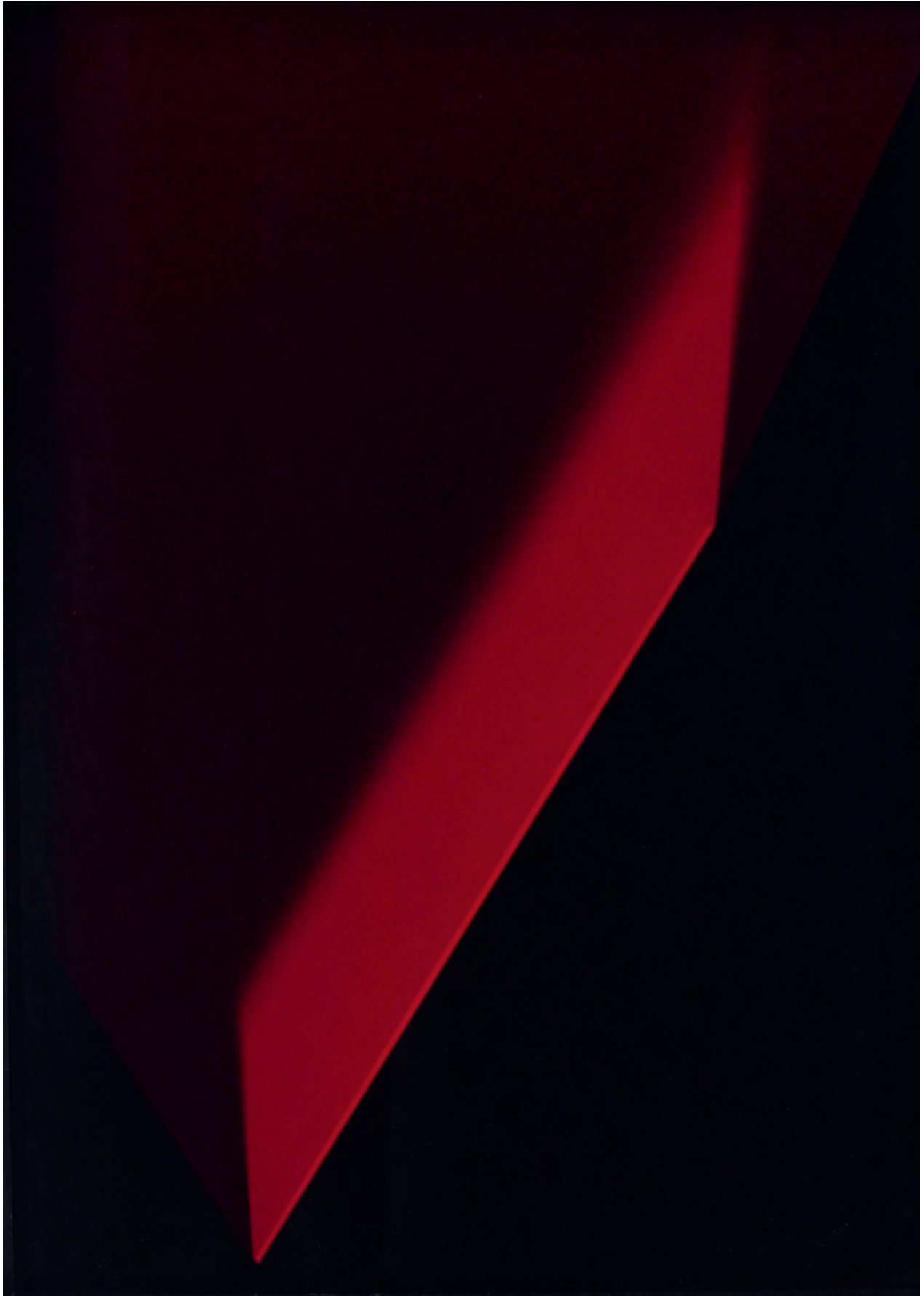
A deceptive sense of three-dimensional space is generated on a flat surface, an impressively nuanced feat when working with the limited process of photograms, which fix the shadowed outline of objects layered on a surface. Also brought to our awareness is a fourth non-spatial dimension—time. As temporal and material worlds collide, the introduction of a circular motif reminds us that the time being represented here as discrete, split into separate images, is still perceived by our senses as part of a continuous cycle of events.

By destabilising the un-manipulated reflection of the world in the photographic image, Beck uses old techniques to a new effect and plays with the viewer's perception. He presents

us with a fresh visual system of abstract geometries, while simultaneously taking cues from early twentieth-century Bauhaus and Soviet artists. The reiterated geometric forms act as symbols of the revelatory force of the photographic medium and its unique ability to capture fractured segments of time in space. Beck reduces his art to the purest elements available to the eye—an act of resistance in a world overwhelmed by visual stimulation.

Ultimately, the corporeal nature of Beck's photographic art provides a refreshing counter-experience to the one we are most familiar with today—the disconnect provided by a screen placed between viewer and image, a symptom of the digital age and its obsession with immateriality.

Nina Dyer is a Wellington-based art writer and student of art history and philosophy, currently studying under art historian and curator Geoffrey Batchen.



Artist

Holly Best

Text by

Alice Tappenden

Holly Best and I have been friends for almost ten years now, after meeting at art school where we both studied photography. Recently I found a letter Holly wrote to me a year or so ago, folded in half and shoved into a novel I'm yet to finish. In it, she asks questions of herself and her photographs: How do black and white images of her daughter fit with those she's taken in colour of friends, lovers and landscapes? Can she avoid being typecast as an earthquake photographer, or as a mother who photographs her child? How can she justify being (occasionally) more interested in colours, lines and shadows than the subjects she makes abstract? Now that I'm writing about her photographs in an attempt to define or at least consider what they are about, I'm faced with a related problem: are words like mine even helpful when trying to understand Holly's work?

It's easy to fall into photography's indexical trap: the myth that these images truthfully represent the world around us. So often I find myself looking *through* rather than *at* photographs—discussing not the artwork itself, but the people, things or places they depict in the 'real world'. But as countless writers before me have already discovered, it's impossible for photographs to tell the whole story of their subjects—and to define Holly's work by what it shows us misses the point. For as she said to me last week, her photographs are more like intuitive responses than calculated equations. And while they may be related to place, motherhood, friendship, or love, these things are not why she takes photographs and not what she goes looking for. As a writer—someone who relies on words to convey meaning—this is challenging and a little frustrating. Because words can't easily explain why Holly's photographs stick with their viewers; why people remember certain ones without seeing them for years.

For me, however, the impossibility of explaining what Holly's photographs are all about is exactly what makes them magical, because artworks are fundamentally different to words. It fascinates me that if her photographs were paintings (the medium which I think Holly is most influenced by) I might not even be having this internal wrestling-match. And by focusing on what we see in her photographs as opposed to how we experience them—what our instinctive reaction is—I think we're losing out. It's telling that in this new work, Holly has presented a conceptual idea that speaks about photography and her experience of being a photographer above all else. Choosing to interrogate and in fact eschew photography in a context where it would seem more appropriate to embrace it, she's avoided taking the obvious path. As she's observed, having a child has changed the way she looks at things; in that letter, she spoke of her daughter's 'focus and selections, such intensity and exact emotional response.' When looking at Holly's work, I think we could all do well to emulate such a reaction.

Alice Tappenden is a Wellington-based writer, who is particularly interested in contemporary photographic practice.

Nor'west Disappointment

When we moved into our house we were concerned the bus stop outside would cause unwanted noise.

During a nor'west, it turns out we are in the flight path. I had been taking photographs of the planes overhead, hearing them come in low, just skimming the roofs of suburbia.

Looking through my negatives later, I find a sequence of four beautiful photographs, none of which I had taken.

Artist

Jordana Bragg

Text by

Dilohana Lekamge

Jordana Bragg's ten part photographic series *Days Since and Again (So Soon)* (2016) complicates typical public interactions with androgynous bodies and those who identify as gender non-binary. Bragg uses the camera for the purposes of self-portraiture and actualisation; displaying their own body, on their own terms, both concealing and rejecting the social conventions and anatomical traits of the biologically female body.

The camera has an interesting relationship to performance art practice; it's commonly discussed as a device for the documentation of fleeting moments. In self-portraiture, however, the camera is set up solely to capture one specifically composed moment. In this way *Days Since and Again (So Soon)* is both documentation and traditional self-portraiture, as evidenced by the precise compositional decisions and stagnant body positioning, in combination with 'everyday' elements and an understanding that Bragg's performance-based oeuvre is most often captured in moving image.

Each item of clothing worn by the artist in these photographs is unisex: regularly worn in casual settings and in a contemporary context, does not connote direct associations with any one way of identifying or being identified. Bragg's clothing choices in many of these images, a light blue denim jacket, black jeans and black Dr Martens, adhere to a uniform of sorts. The everyday nature of their attire in the series in combination with Bragg's short and partially shaved haircut, makes it apparent that this is the artist's 'natural' expression of themselves, not performed specifically for the camera.

The images explore a variety of urban outdoor environments displaying moments where Bragg elongates their body to expose their concave bare stomach, ribs and bound breasts. The act of breast binding is practiced for many reasons by many different people, but in the LGBTQ+ community it is practiced for reasons associated with gender, for example to appear less-feminine or to suppress gender dysmorphia. Each image is documentation of

self-narrative surrounding gender identity and the way in which the body can be presented in the state that is intrinsic and comfortable, but not necessarily gender normative. Similarly, the images taken indoors present the artist in various states of undress; exposing their bare back, unshaven legs, stomach, tattoos, unzipped pants and underwear. The domestic spaces where the artist has selected to take the images, seem to be spaces where they feel safe enough to reveal aspects of their person that are largely considered private.

By making this series in the year following the completion of Bragg's fine arts degree, the disparity between the urban and domestic (and the artist's body in relation to each), addresses a lack of security that is a consequence of abandoning the studio, which once offered safety. Exhibiting a level of vulnerability by displaying an intimate perspective, the audience is provoked to humanise and feel a sense of empathy with a commonly objectified, misunderstood and under-represented subject.

Bragg's use of photographic self-portraiture has allowed for an assertion of control over how an audience may visually communicate with their body. In public contexts many individuals who visually challenge the aesthetic stereotypes of gender binary are often looked at and spoken to in a non-consensual manner—stared at and both verbally and physically harassed. Throughout this series the viewer's gaze is coerced into a conversation that the artist has initiated. The dialogue created by a marginalised body for a public audience allows for a greater understanding between the two parties—allowing someone to show how they view themselves and in turn how they would like to be viewed.

Dilohana Lekamge is a Wellington-based visual artist whose practice consists of live-performance and performance-based video works.



Artist

Conor Clarke

Text by

Nic Low

The day was overcast, the sky a tight-fitting lid. Drizzle jewelled our beards. We stood studying a row of barren mountains that scraped against the cloud. They were all unnamed and unclimbed. The potential for first ascents was thrilling.

‘There’s a good line here,’ I said, pointing to the nearest peak. ‘Up that valley then follow the spur to the main ridge. There’s that eroded step before the summit, but otherwise it looks pretty good.’

My companion made no reply.

‘Or that one,’ I said, gesturing to the sandy red massif to our right. ‘There’d be good climbing on that south face. Imagine the views!’

‘Yeah, imagine,’ the man said with a half-smile. ‘So which is it gonna be?’

‘That one,’ I said, nodding at the steeper of the two.

The man began to shovel the red mountain into a sack. We loaded it into the boot of my car. I gave him some money, and drove the peak home. Bricklayer Peak, I’d have called it. It was a real mountain all right, only one that had been rendered down to a pile of sand, then turned back into a mountain by wind and rain and time.

After more than a year in the Southern Alps for a book project, I’d been seeing scenic landscapes everywhere. Melbourne storm clouds were Aoraki’s glaciers. My rain-washed driveway became the Waimakariri seen from the air. Was this a Kiwi thing: everywhere you go, you always take the wilderness with you?

Like me, Conor Clarke is Kāi Tahu and living overseas. She whakapapas to Mangamaunu near the Seaward Kaikoura Range. I asked if she’d seen the corroded crags of Tapuae o Uenuku or Manakau in those piles of Berlin sand.

‘I saw “mountain scenery”,’ she replied. ‘What I saw I could relate to pictures of mountains, the epic, the immense, in a generic sense. I have been tramping before, and I have seen the

Southern Alps, and the Swiss Alps from a distance ... but I don’t know them intimately, only through depictions.’

Looking at *Scenic Potential*, her photos articulated what I’d missed at the quarry: that iconic mountains are built from both raw materials and a near-universal aesthetic code. William Gilpin’s rules for depicting scenery remain in force today. They teach us to frame wind and rain and time in ways that have nothing to do with any particular place.

There are other ways of framing mountains. Tapuae o Uenuku is a crew member from the Ārai Te Uru canoe; seeing him potentially recalls ancestral presence in the land. To the climber, that same peak offers potential routes to the top. To the entrepreneur it might be quarried for sand. But regardless, its potential is always also scenic. We’ve seen such mountains a thousand times. Which is why, when we see Conor’s meticulously constructed images, we assume we’re looking at nature itself.

Only, we’re not. What’s there is more honest. Tyre tracks, resembling the heavy machinery of glaciers, mark the images’ industrial origins. Mountain wildernesses were once literally *bewildering*. But as industrialisation rendered nature down into raw materials and sold them off, and life grew leisured and urban, Romanticism took hold. Escaping the ills of polluted cities to walk in the wild became a Victorian religion. Mountains became beautiful. *Scenic Potential* shows that the origin of mountain beauty is not in nature, but where Conor and I found it: in the quarries and factories of the West.

Nic Low is a writer and artist of Kāi Tahu and European descent. His first book, *Arms Race*, was a Listener and Australian Book Review book of the year. His second book will be a bicultural history of the Southern Alps told through walking journeys.



Artist

Solomon Mortimer

Text by

Taylor Wagstaff

There are apparent differences between a photographic self-portrait and a selfie; one is more constructed and the other casual, instantaneous. However, these self-portraits by Solomon Mortimer offer something distinct—a slowness of image that we all crave. In our hyper-mediated world images proliferate, whereas artistic photography remains still. It is this stillness that gives photographic self-portraiture its charm and vivacity.

Solomon's self-portraits are the antithesis of his current practice, where photographs fragment the body, isolating moments and exploiting its commodification. To turn the lens on himself acknowledges the presence of the photographer, implying both a sense of performativity and self-criticality. And yet how does an artist create something new to meet an audience's increasing demands for a breath of fresh air in a sea of representation? For Solomon the answer lies not only in technical skill but in a sensitivity to the construction of an image; a photograph is not just what's included, it's everything else that lies outside of it.

In this series of work, made predominantly between the years of 2011 to 2013, we see an artist taking pleasure in the play of representation, adopting a theatrical approach to image making, in a similar vein to the Pictures Generation of 1980s New York. Photographs are made both on the spur of the moment and as staged images; blending the divide between the real self and an imaginary one. In utilising photography as a medium with which to stage an image, Solomon is able to produce both fictional and accidental scenarios of masculine performativity by exploiting and embracing various tropes. In some photographs we might see his body stripped bare, exposed and vulnerable to the viewer; in another he becomes the quintessential soldier, the masculine citizen, ready to

kill for his country. When these tropes are played out, their constructiveness and mythos are not only questioned, but they are seen for what they are—costumes for hire.

Interestingly these photographs were created without intention of exhibition; they are in a way more like a visualisation of a personal diary, a site of personal reflection. Perhaps it is for this reason that they speak of creative freedom, detached from the pressures of producing work for an audience. And because they form part of an ongoing series they retain an incompleteness, a quality that implies the indefinite. It is here that Solomon's photographs feel intimate, authentic and easy. They offer a window into selfhood, through exposing its potential for renewal and rejuvenation.

Taylor Wagstaff has recently finished an MA at Elam School of Fine Arts and is currently a practicing artist based in Auckland. He is a regular writer for hashtag500words and works at the Auckland Art Gallery.



Artist

Ane Tonga

Text by

Nina Tonga

For the last eight years, Ane Tonga has worked on an ongoing project that explores Tongan concepts of gender through *nifo koula* (gold teeth). As her sister, I've been privy to her process and occasionally stepped in as an ad-hoc photography assistant. A few weeks ago we sat down at our parents' home in Auckland to reflect on two bodies of work: *Grills* (2012–14) and *Fakaētangata*, (2014–16).

Nina Tonga: Do you think our father, who was a dental technician in Tonga prior to moving to New Zealand, influenced your interest in nifo koula?

Ane Tonga: Oh, for sure! Growing up, we learned so many weird facts about teeth and dental care that I think, subconsciously, influenced this project. He operated on mum's *nifo koula* and worked directly with the dentists who implemented the procedure in Tonga... so I kind of feel like I made this for him, as well as the rest of our family.

Both the Grills photographs and the Fakaētangata are explorations of nifo koula, yet are quite different bodies of works. They do however share an ethnographic tension that must complicate your role as a photographer. What are your thoughts on this?

Because *nifo koula* had never been explored in visual culture, I was determined that these works didn't become ethnographic by default or a universal truth that is reflective of *nifo koula* for all Tongan people. They're not. They're not studies of people or of the practice, they're carefully constructed images that are intended to challenge and draw forth the tensions surrounding notions of gender and place that are embedded in *nifo koula*. Of course the images are informed by my own experiences, and equally the discussions with my family over many cups of tea.

Throughout your practice you've always been interested in the multisensory nature of site and landscape. Was the concept of site also important to your exploration of nifo koula?

Absolutely. *Grills* was produced in New Zealand and reflected the way in which *nifo koula* operates as a mnemonic device for Tongan communities living in diaspora. For many of my family members,

they acquired their *nifo koula* in Tonga as a way of commemorating the trip. Often the gold used for the procedure was sourced from family jewellery, which added further layers of meaning. For *Fakaētangata*, I wanted to understand what *nifo koula* means for people, more specifically men who live in Tonga. Being in Tonga allowed me to give context to the adornment practice, the location of the *toketā nifo* (dentists) and more importantly the process. I've tried to capture the procedure in this series as a rite of passage.

There is a possibility that your works may be read as objectifying because they offer close-up photographs of the mouths of our family members. Was this your intention?

Focusing in on this part of their bodies was a way of protecting their identities. It negates the gaze. Also, often with artworks that depict the mouth, we never hear the voices of the subjects so I developed two moving image works to sit alongside the images, *Malimali* and *Tohoaki'i*. I wanted the videos to work as a powerful reminder that they are living, breathing, people and not objects for study.

Throughout these projects we have spoken a lot about film-maker Barry Barclay. How has his work inspired your practice?

His concept of fourth cinema was influential to me; it operates on ideas of reciprocity and privileges the view of indigenous communities. It is incredibly empowering and allows indigenous peoples to control the camera rather than be the subject of its gaze. As an indigenous photographer, placing Tongans in front of my lens became a tool to challenge the historical misrepresentation of Pacific peoples.

Nina Tonga is curator, Pacific cultures at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.



Artist

Shaun Waugh

Text by

Simon Palenski

Drop shadows, a cluster of orange-red Agfa box lids, landscapes where forest remnants have been cut out of pasture and filled with washes of colour. Shaun Waugh's photographs explore how we perceive solid colour.

In Waugh's landscapes there is a vacuum, as if a suction has removed the patches of bush, and solid colour has taken its place. A void is made. Cut and colour, a form of deconstruction, renders a part of the image into nothingness; it shows intent, a hand. The landscape is not safe from manipulation. It is subject to whim and perception.

Whims can corrupt a landscape. Around the colour, nature has been mowed, fertilised, grass-seeded, fenced and irrigated. In the Department of Conservation's terms, it is threatened: 'likely to go extinct (or be reduced to a few small safe refuges) within the lifetime of those alive today.'

The colours obscure remnants of forest and bush on private land, much of which is protected by a covenant under the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust. The covenant 'serves to preserve or to facilitate the preservation of any landscape of aesthetic, cultural, recreational, scenic, scientific or social interest or value.' A few small safe refuges, secluded in the corners of farmland.

These colours are lifted from the GretagMacbeth ColorChecker® Chart. They were engineered to have a consistent appearance that would last through time and perception. Some of them are attempts to mimic those we see in nature: human skin tones, sky blue, leaf green, oranges and lemons.

Like a landscape, colour can be manipulated. Another series is titled *ΔE2000 1.1*, which is a measurement for colour; Δ, the Greek letter delta, stands for difference, and the E stands for

Empfindung—German for sensation, impression, a strong feeling.

These photographs are each within ΔE2000 1.1 of the original orange-red of the Agfa box lid that frames them. In other words, the two colours are a match. Waugh's reproduced orange and the box lid orange—the digital and the analogue—meet at the frame. A just-noticeable difference may divide them.

The drop shadow photographs also sample colours from the ColorChecker® Chart, and follow the same image/frame colour match process. Here, shadows, illusions of depth, are cast over a copy of a copy of a colour. One that was formulated in a lab to match a colour seen in nature.

Colour becomes the detail in these photographs. It obscures our vision. But there are variations in surface and tone, and within tone in shadow and under light. Maybe there are details reflected back, like in a mirror.

In the landscapes, colour seems to threaten to expand; to overwhelm nature and render it homogeneous and formless. Inside their box lids and frames, the colours have expanded to the point that the images are not photographs on a wall, but the colour itself.

Simon Palenski is a Christchurch-based writer. He has studied at the University of Canterbury and the International Institute of Modern Letters, Victoria University.



Artist

Rainer Weston

Text by

James Hope

In Rainer Weston's short video work *Liquid Crystal* (2015), found footage slowly advances towards the viewer through a swarm of pixilation. Repeating continuously amongst the multitude is a segment from episode one of John Berger's 1972 BBC series *Ways of Seeing*. This episode, which draws on ideas in Walter Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, examines how the invention of the camera and subsequent reproducibility of an image changes the meaning and context of that which it captures. To pay attention to this particular piece of footage amongst all the others can, in some measure, work towards an understanding of the crucial considerations that Weston explores throughout his practice.

Traversing the interstitial space between traditional photography and technology, Weston's diverse practice includes still life, appropriated imagery, 3D-rendering, photo manipulation and installation. This multi-faceted approach often produces work that is speculative of its own contemporaneity. His works are embedded in the language-forms of their own production, and self-reflective in that they acknowledge and celebrate this in their presentation and dispersal. They seek to interrogate the contemporary status of the image as an egalitarian cultural artefact.

Another of Weston's recent projects, *Tween Space* (2016), involved both an online component and a physical show. 'Digital Paintings' were generated via an algorithm that produced a new work every hour, on the hour, for the duration of the show, which was installed in the small window gallery Rockies in Auckland. These works consisted of stock footage of the eponymous 'Tweens', partially obscured by strokes digitally painted over the surface of the images. This work, imbued with a subtly subversive wit, raised issues about the nature of artistic labour and well-known art historical questions about

reproduction and authorship. On his personal Tumblr Weston quotes artist Parker Ito, who said, 'I heard Picasso made around 250,000 works in his lifetime. I could make that many jpegs in 5 years. And when I say 5 years, I mean 5 minutes.'

The permeability of the image throughout networks follows a logic inherent to the late capitalist circulation of images. They accelerate through different online nodes, their visibility dependent on how many likes, shares and reposts are received on social media services such as Facebook, Instagram and Tumblr. This could be said to be true of the majority of visual culture consumed today, not just the images produced for, and circulated entirely within, the networks of the internet. The ease of dissemination, production and reproducibility made available with the widespread adoption of the smartphone has democratised image production and consumption. To return to Weston's use of *Ways of Seeing*, the questions raised about the nature of the reproduced image and the context in which it is received become salient once again as we reflect on our contemporary society, where the internet plays such a crucial role as a vector in the transmission of information and visual culture.

James Hope is a graduate of the University of Canterbury majoring in art history and sociology. He divides his time between visitor hosting at Christchurch Art Gallery and working on various writing projects.



Artist

Chris Corson-Scott

Text by

Zara Sigglekow

Chris Corson-Scott's photographs are lyrical yet sparse ruminations on New Zealand's history and current climate. They are interior and exterior 'scapes' that note the intersection between the landscape and human activity, fusing personal connection (when people appear in his works they are friends) with the weight of place. He cites the nineteenth-century work of John Kinder and Alfred Sharpe as an influence—both share detailed observations of the land and concern for the environment without sentimentality.

Landscape is a central trope that threads through New Zealand art history and reflects the importance of land: economically, spiritually and as a site of conflict. During the colonial period European settlers imposed their vision on the land: it was deforested, fenced and urbanised. Concurrently artists painted New Zealand's landscape through the nostalgic lens of the art and light of Europe, in works that at times included Māori. Bush was tamed, thinned and enveloped in a romantic haze. Art mirrored life as the settlers sought to remake the landscape to match the Europe they had left. Throughout the twentieth century, the landscape continued to be subjected to the vision of artists as they sliced and reinterpreted it to fit their views.¹ The current iteration is contained in advertising—100% pure New Zealand, the mythical and unspoiled utopia.

By contrast, when considered within the lineage of the landscape, Chris's photographs operate to *reveal* imposition on the land, and the social and economic issues that have occurred since European settlement. Aesthetically, the land remains intact. With its fundamentally realist characteristics, the medium of photography ensures that these works are true to the physical essence of place, as seen in the texture

of wood, smoothness of the ocean and palette of the sky. Chris's viewpoint comes through the carefully chosen subjects, revealing historical progression from colonialisation, industrial development and the current neo-liberal epoch. A shipwreck on a beach alludes to European settlement; deserted and decaying hop-kilns and freezing works rot in small towns left vacant by the collapse of industry; and at the fringes of the city, urban sprawl encroaches on nature. The presence or absence of artists in their studios is also a recurring theme: emblematic of carving a way of life separate from the mainstream, and currently under threat due to the acceleration of property prices.

The cultural theorist Roland Barthes wrote of the 'punctum' in a photograph, which could be a small detail or a component: that element which 'rises from the scene', that accident that 'pricks' and 'bruises' me.² For me, the punctum in Chris's photographs is in the absence and stillness that he photographs: sitting between the realism of the landscape and the social concern of his work. It envelops and slows, containing the force of history and the present, which is where we, as onlookers, linger.

Zara Sigglekow is a Melbourne-based arts writer and curator.

Notes

1. Jane Davidson-Ladd, 'Watering Place: New Zealand Art 1642–1920', in Ron Brownson (ed.), *Art Toi: New Zealand Art at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki*, Auckland, 2011, pp.3–7.

2. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, Vintage Books, London, 2000 (first published in English by Jonathan Cape 1981).





letting the bombast in

J.G. Thirlwell is a man of many monikers and even more projects—from the epic avant-garde electro-rock of his thirty-five-year Foetus act to scoring orchestral work, from creating sound installations to cartoon soundtracks. Fellow sonic artist Jo Burzynska caught up with the Melbourne-born but long-time New York-resident composer/producer/performer at the Gallery before the opening performance of his first ever New Zealand tour in June 2016.

Jo Burzynska: You started out studying art, but by 1980 you were making music. What inspired you to make this transition?

J.G. Thirlwell: When I left school I was interested in studying graphic design, but I was always obsessed with music. I graduated from high school pretty young—when I was sixteen—so art school was a rite of passage. I spent a couple of years there and arrived at the conclusion that I wanted to do something in music, but I didn't know what that would be. At the time—this was 1978 and I was eighteen years old—I was swept up with punk rock and post-punk so I moved to London, which seemed to be the epicentre of where things were happening.

I've always loved art, and I continue to be very interested in it—it's not like I cut off my art career to work on music. There have always been ways of expressing that, firstly through my record covers. I've also done magazine work, covers for other people and even some sculptures. And then in the last ten to fifteen years, I've been working in sound art as well. There was never really a cut-off point.

But when I started making music and playing in a band in a democratic environment, I realised very quickly that this wasn't what I wanted to do. I wanted to make records, which is different from being a musician who becomes accomplished on their instrument or goes out and tours: the record is the artefact—an art object that's a multiple of which everyone can have an original. That continued in my process. There's a through-line

in a lot of the artwork that I do and in the names of the records: all the Foetus album titles are four letters and one syllable. I still consider what I do to be art.

JB: You seem to juggle an amazing quantity of projects at any one time, and they appear to be building in both number and diversity.

JGT: I guess I'm restless, and I like to have a lot of things going on at once. Everything seems to coexist in different stages of production and I tend to bounce back and forth between projects, sometimes three in one day. I've never been one to concentrate on just one project...

It's also the nature of what I do: as a self-employed artist you're walking a financial tightrope and tend to take on a lot of things. I might be doing commissions and commercial jobs and have an album I'll be working on for four years, or be invited to do a one-night-only installation piece. I now also work on two TV shows. I'm interested in a lot of different areas: no one thing can quench my thirst.

JB: Many people will have first encountered your work through your Foetus project, which, bar one hiatus, has been going for over three decades now. How has that evolved and where do you see it heading?

JGT: The first Foetus album came out on 1 January 1981, and it was my primary project for many years. When I first started it I was very prolific and changed the name many times, always with Foetus in the title—Foetus Vibrations, Scraping Foetus off the Wheel, You've Got Foetus on Your Breath, Foetus Interruptus and various other things. After doing that for ten years I settled for just Foetus, or Foetus Inc.

The sound in Foetus evolved a lot from album to album. It started to get increasingly instrumental, so I farmed off some of the instrumental stuff into another project, Steroid Maximus [Thirlwell's hybrid avant-garde jazz/big band/exotica act]. I want to do another Foetus album, but it's been a while and it's changed in nature over the last fifteen or so years, becoming more psychedelic and symphonic. I'd like to do the next album with an orchestra, for which I'll do all the arrangements in

advance. It will probably be the close of a chapter.

There are people who know me through Foetus and those who know me through other areas of my work and don't know Foetus at all. I kind of like that—not having to carry around one hundred per cent of my work with me all the time.

JB: You've remixed a wide array of artists, from John Carpenter to the Red Hot Chili Peppers. How do these and other collaborations fit within your overall creative vision?

JGT: With remixes, the artist is often not there with me and doesn't comment. I like to try to do a remix a year to try out things that I may not have an avenue for in my own work. The level of collaboration is different on every project. I wouldn't say I'm the best collaborator in the world as I'm a bit of a control freak, so I tend to steer the ship. However, *The Venture Bros.* [a US animated adult television series] is a very good collaboration as it reins me in but also gives me freedom. I have good communication with the director, Chris McCulloch, and it's a collaboration that has really pushed me musically to do things that I would never otherwise have done. It's made me better and been really fruitful. When you have to make half an hour of music that sounds like John Williams, you'd better sound like John Williams. But when I get a directive like that, it's going to be my version, which is bigger and badder and more demented!

JB: Writing music for orchestras has become a growing part of your work. Do you have any conventional musical training?

JGT: No, that's something I do on the fly. The first instrument I studied was cello, but I only lasted a few months. I always had problems with sight-reading, which was the same when I learned percussion. Then I stopped learning instruments, bought some synthesisers, started teaching myself and went down that route.

I've gone through a lot of technological eras, from tape loops and cassette collages, through samplers to computer programming. But the technology that's actually most interesting to me now is creating scores—



an ancient technology, but a technology nonetheless. It's exciting for me to be able to create things with that system, which are then filtered down through the fingers of virtuosic musicians.

JB: I see you've been re-scoring electronic and sample-generated music for traditional instrumentation, which has resulted in performances such as a chamber ensemble version of your experimental instrumental project, *Manorexia*.

JGT: That's been an evolution as well. One of the earlier things I did like that was a commission from UCLA to re-voice and rescore the Steroid Maximus album *Ectopia* for an eighteen-piece ensemble. That's when I started to get into the idea of re-voicing things I'd created in the studio with electronic sampling and live instruments.

That process continued to evolve, and when I started working on my *Manorexia* project again I did re-voicing. But then I figured out some instrumentation—two violins, a viola, a cello, piano, laptop and tuned percussion—that really worked as a way to transform the material, so I started thinking about just writing directly for these.

Then I was commissioned by Kronos Quartet to write a string quartet, which really excited me. There seems to be a lot that I can do with two violins, a viola and a cello, so I've written a few pieces for Kronos, as well as my own standalone pieces to continue my explorations. There's still so much that I want to do with the string quartet as I chip away at it.

I haven't learned conventional music so I don't have to unlearn it and come to things from a slightly different viewpoint. I unearth things through my experience working with musicians. Sometimes that works really well as it makes the music unique. However, it can make my music much harder to play—while trained musicians might think about the ease of playing something, I don't write like that.

JB: With its brass fanfares, sweeping strings and dramatic arrangements, much of your music has been characterised by its big bombastic sound. What draws you to this?

JGT: Maybe it excites me. I did an album that came out in 2005 called *Love*. I wanted it to be really sparse and restrained, and worked on a bunch of pieces in that direction. Then I realised that I had a different reaction, but had to give myself permission to let the bombast in. I think it's part of my nature and part of what I'm drawn to. Fortunately I have some excellent outlets for that, like *The Venture Bros*.

JB: It's through your soundtracks for *The Venture Bros*. that a whole new audience has been introduced to your music. How did that arise and what's it like making music for a cartoon?

JGT: That came about because a friend of the director turned him on to Steroid Maximus when he was working on the pilot script for the series. When he heard the music it gelled with him as the perfect soundtrack for *The Venture Bros*. universe.

They tracked me down and asked me if I was interested in scoring it. At first I said no, so they asked to licence some of my music to see how it worked; when they came back again I said I'd give it a try. What was nice was they were coming to me for what I do anyway, and it was an opportunity to do something I'd never done before. I find it exciting to step into a world I've never experienced.

The first year was actually very difficult as I was overwriting, still trying to negotiate *The Venture Bros*. universe and create a musical vocabulary for the show. But I got better and could change moods on a dime and become more nuanced, which has been good in informing my own music and other scoring. So it's been a good experience and there are people that know me from this who don't know the other things I do.

JB: Can you tell me more about the electroacoustic work *Cholera Nocebo*, which you're performing on this tour?

JGT: It came about at the behest of Mats Lindström from Elektronmusikstudion in Stockholm who invited me to play at the Arts Birthday Party Festival in Stockholm. That made me think about how I could create something with an elastic structure and some acoustic elements that was

malleable. It's something that develops, contracts and expands depending on the venue.

Another important part is the projection that I play in front of, which was made by a friend, Gia, who I'd drive home in Long Island down the expressway endlessly. After doing this so many times, I suggested she film it, so we had all this material and when Mats asked me to play, I thought it would be good to use for this. There's the footage of the Long Island expressway and it ends with footage of New York after Hurricane Sandy when Lower Manhattan was blacked out.

JB: Sound art is something in which you've also been involved more recently, through the likes of the *freq_out* installation. Can you tell me more about this project and your interest in this area?

JGT: *Freq_out* started in about 2003 and was conceived and curated by Carl Michael von Hausswolff, who invited twelve sound artists and composers to contribute. The concept behind the project is splitting the frequency spectrum into twelve discrete parts, each artist working within the frequency spectrum they're given without bleeding into the next frequency. It can be field recordings, compositions or just sounds within that spectrum.

We've done it twelve times now, so it's reached its full cycle and everyone has worked with each frequency. The idea is that it's an endless piece in which each part moves independently, so in the best of situations it's a multichannel piece that reacts to the environment in which we create it.

It's been done in lots of different environments. The first was in Copenhagen. We've done it in Chiang Mai, in Morocco, at the Site du Parti Communiste in Paris, in underground tunnels in Berlin, an old strip club in Belgium, and, most recently, in the sewers of Vienna. We respond to the place, and that response is both how it works acoustically and what the space itself talks about.

It sounds like a simple idea but there are so many different things you can do, especially creating an environment where people can come into a space to

which they've perhaps never been and transforming that space with sound.

I'm also really interested in environmental multichannel work. Someone can go in for as long or as short a time as they like and walk around in it, absorb it and take it in that way. So I've done some solo ones of those myself.

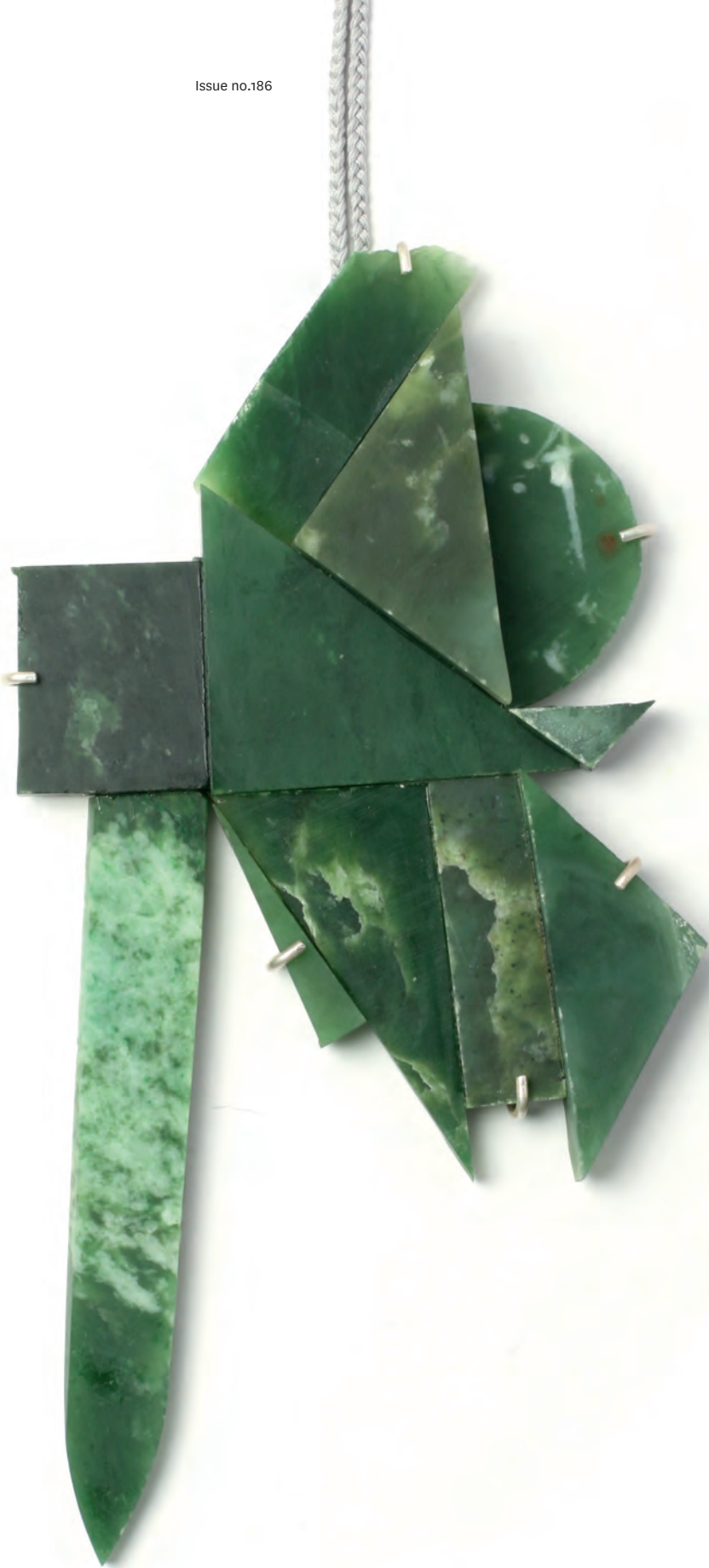
JB: Having worked in so many genres of music, are there any that you feel particularly connected with at present?

JGT: I'm really excited about what's labelled new composition—the contemporary classical/post classical scene—because there's such an amazing pool of players and ensembles out there. I'm excited about getting my works out through these people and creating new works. There are lot of different combinations of instruments I'd still like to use: sometimes there's not an ensemble with that range of instruments. I feel there is so much work I could do and I'm hungry to work in that field more.

Jo Burzynska—who also records and performs under the name Stanier Black-Five—is a New Zealand artist, writer and curator working in the areas of sound and the multisensory. She is co-editor of the Writing Around Sound journal and one of the founders and curators of The Auricle sonic arts gallery in Christchurch. Jo is currently based in Sydney, where she is undertaking a PhD at the University of New South Wales that explores the intersections between sound and taste.

Lisa Walker

0 + 0 = 0



It might be tempting to say that Lisa Walker makes jewellery out of any old thing—but it isn't true. The eclectic objects that form her distinctive necklaces, brooches and other body-adornments are meticulously selected and shrewdly modified before they see the light of day. She salvages her materials from an unlikely cornucopia of sources—re-presenting objects such as car parts, animal skins and even kitchen utensils through the frame of body adornment's long history. Tiny Lego hats, helmets and hairpieces—of the kind that clog vacuum cleaner nozzles in children's bedrooms around the world—are strung on finely plaited cords like exotic beads or shells; trashy gossip magazines are lashed together to yield a breastplate befitting our celebrity-obsessed culture; dozens of oboe reeds donated by a musician friend bristle round the wearer's neck like the teeth of some unimaginable deep sea leviathan.

Walker's work doesn't sit comfortably within the contours of conventional jewellery—it squirms, fidgets, stretches and unravels. 'I want to make pieces that don't fit any of those jewellery recipes, yet still make sense as jewellery,' she once said.¹ In a field known for refined finishes and seamless construction, her audaciously sized, deliberately low-tech pieces inject a blast of pure creative oxygen, wilfully disobeying established jewellery conventions and confounding audience expectations. Despite their bodged-up, glued-together appearance and gleefully tacky origins, Walker's works are anything but haphazard—rather they are elevated by her acute sense of colour and composition and healthy sense of irony. The new and recent pieces included in her Christchurch Art Gallery show, *0 + 0 = 0*, explore a range of critical concerns; confronting jewellery-specific preconceptions about wearability and craftsmanship, they also investigate the politics of value, identity and appropriation.

After receiving a traditional jewellery training at Otago Polytechnic, Walker moved to Germany in the mid-1990s to study with influential jeweller Otto Künzli at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. The anarchic approach she honed there has made her jewellery keenly sought-after, both within New Zealand and internationally, and in 2010 she received the Françoise van den Bosch Award—a prestigious international prize given once every two years to a jewellery artist whose work demonstrates outstanding quality and appeals to younger generations. Last year, New Zealand's Arts Foundation honoured Walker with a Laureate Award, citing her originality and the influence of her practice.

While some of Walker's materials are amassed close to home—she once made a necklace from six months' worth of detritus collected from her studio floor—she also ranges more widely, combing the world of the non-precious for idiosyncratic treasures. Together with physical objects, she collects memories and associations, a process made explicit in *Trip to Europe 1973* (2011), a necklace, constructed from the postcards, train tickets, concert programmes and other souvenirs a 'cultured couple' offered for sale on Trade Me. For Walker, having just returned home after fifteen years spent living in Germany, the mementos spoke of New Zealand's complex history of arrivals—including those of Māori and European settlers—and of how cultures are transported, translated and transformed. Recent pieces such as *Pendant* (2016) reflect her interest in (and ambivalence about) exchange and appropriation and especially how these might play out within

Previous page: Lisa Walker
Pendant 2016. Pounamu,
silver. Courtesy of Galerie
Biro, Munich

Opposite: Lisa Walker
Trip to Europe 1973 2011.
Documents, brass, string.
Courtesy of the artist



a New Zealand context. Assembled from pounamu offcuts given to Walker by a sculptor friend, *Pendant* combines varied surfaces cut from several different stones, offering a beautiful, but deliberately problematic, addition to the tradition of Māori taonga.

Despite the irreverence of its title, and the ubiquitous banality of the phallic graffiti that inspired it, another, equally serious, reclamation prompted the creation of *Dick Necklace* (2016).

I live with the challenges of a patriarchal world and [its] hideous anti-women history. I'm intrigued by the online activity of the younger feminists. I was always impressed by Louise Bourgeois's giant bronze cast penis sculpture [Filette (1968)]. Many years ago I saw a postcard of her as a 70-something year old woman, standing next to it with her hand gently, but authoritatively, resting on the giant penis. 'Dick and balls' drawings are a cultural phenomenon; we grow up with these scrawlings everywhere. The penis can be symbolically positive and negative; fertility and love, but also rape, misogyny, imbalance of power. As a feminist I now take, claim, and interpret it for myself, twisting its symbology into something else.

The thorny issue of copying and influence has long fascinated Walker, gaining new relevance as social media allows for the increasingly unrestricted distribution and repurposing of imagery of all kinds. She joined Instagram, the online image-sharing service, in 2015 and describes it as a 'huge hunting ground',² admitting she is now influenced more by what she finds online than by actual, 'real world' objects. A posted shot of *Masturbine* (1984), a well-known work by the renowned contemporary Swiss duo Peter Fischli and David Weiss, prompted her own *Fischli & Weiss Bracelet* (2016), which replaces the original's whorl of expensive leather footwear with budget heels from her local Number One Shoes warehouse. A photograph of a cellphone bound up in the twisted cord of an old-school desk phone, uploaded by the Los Angeles-based artists Mitra Saboury and Derek Paul Boyle under the Instagram nomenclature 'Meatwreck', proved irresistible. Walker recreated it, almost exactly, in the form of an oversized pendant and, though she remains delighted with the piece, doesn't shy away from the questions about ownership and creative license this kind of borrowing provokes. In fact, the discomfort inherent in such appropriation is shared by artist and collectors, since Walker's works are primarily designed not to be displayed politely indoors, but to travel with their wearers out into the wild, wide open of the public domain. 'I learned a long time ago that you don't have to find the answers,' she says, 'it's enough for the works to keep asking the questions.'³

If the eclectic forms of Walker's work reflect the democracy and limitless possibility of our new open-source world, her 'more is more' aesthetic also suggests the sense of chaos and overload it can provoke. With every online image potentially linked to thousands more, how could you ever see it all? Excessive, oversized, popping at the seams with look-at-me impudence, Walker's works draw upon and reflect the unrelenting abundance of modern life. And yet, taken one piece at a time, they're much more than thrown-together clickbait. At its most anarchic, jewellery that is created to be worn still requires its maker to take into account a series of

Opposite: Lisa Walker
Fischli & Weiss Bracelet
2016. Shoes. Courtesy of
the artist



considerations that don't constrain other art forms, like painting or sculpture. As she creates her pieces, often concealing traditional jewellery processes beneath contemporary kitsch, Walker thinks about weight, scale, durability, and how her pieces will relate to the yet-unknown body they are destined to adorn. Having thrown out the rulebooks in her early practice, she now values the technical challenges these self-imposed limits present, enjoying how they slow things down and distil her attention, demanding mindful focus in a fast-moving world. In discussion, it soon becomes apparent that this process fuels, rather than suppresses, Walker's high-voltage imagination. Recalling a project in which she turned an entire building (City Gallery Wellington) into a brooch by clipping a giant mild-steel safety chain to its ceiling and attaching the other end to a wearer via an enormous pin, she mischievously refers to it as only her 'second largest work'. She's not kidding; the scale of that audacious project is effortlessly eclipsed by another one. Existing, so far, in solely conceptual form it features a chain, pinned to its wearer, with planet Earth on the other end.

Felicity Milburn

Curator

Lisa Walker: 0 + 0 = 0 is on display from 16 December 2016 until 2 April 2017.

Notes

1. Lisa Walker, quoted in 'The shapes I used to like', Damian Skinner, *Schmuck: Jewelleries*, Kulturreferat der Landeshauptstadt München, 2007, p.2.
2. Lisa Walker, interview with the author, 2016.
3. Ibid.

Pagework no.31

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.

Hannah Beehre's practice accommodates a range of media, but her current works result from a technique that could be described as 'found drawing'. After preparing her surface with a fluid ink wash, she uses charcoal to uncover the images that reveal themselves through the psychological phenomenon of pareidolia, in which the mind instinctively perceives faces, animals and other familiar forms within otherwise abstract patterns. The Rorschach inkblot test exploits this tendency, gaining insight into a subject's psychological state through their interpretation of ambiguous shapes. Beehre's process also echoes an exercise devised by Leonardo da Vinci, who advised artists to focus on stains on the walls, allowing their minds to fill them with imagined images—'figures in quick movement' and 'strange expressions of faces'—that could later be resolved in painted form.

Beehre's Pagework for this issue—closely related to *Catastrophe*, which won her this year's Parkin Drawing Prize, and *Mures, et Terram*, the epic, seven panel drawing recently exhibited at the University of

Canterbury's School of Fine Arts gallery—prompts a sense of recognition in the viewer too. It's a scene of cataclysmic disaster played out in miniature, as desperate, bedraggled mice are swept along in a violent torrent worthy of van der Velden's *Otira Gorge*. 'The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft agley', wrote Robert Burns, and—perhaps especially in Canterbury—it's hard not to empathise with these tiny, wretched creatures so utterly overwhelmed by forces beyond their control.

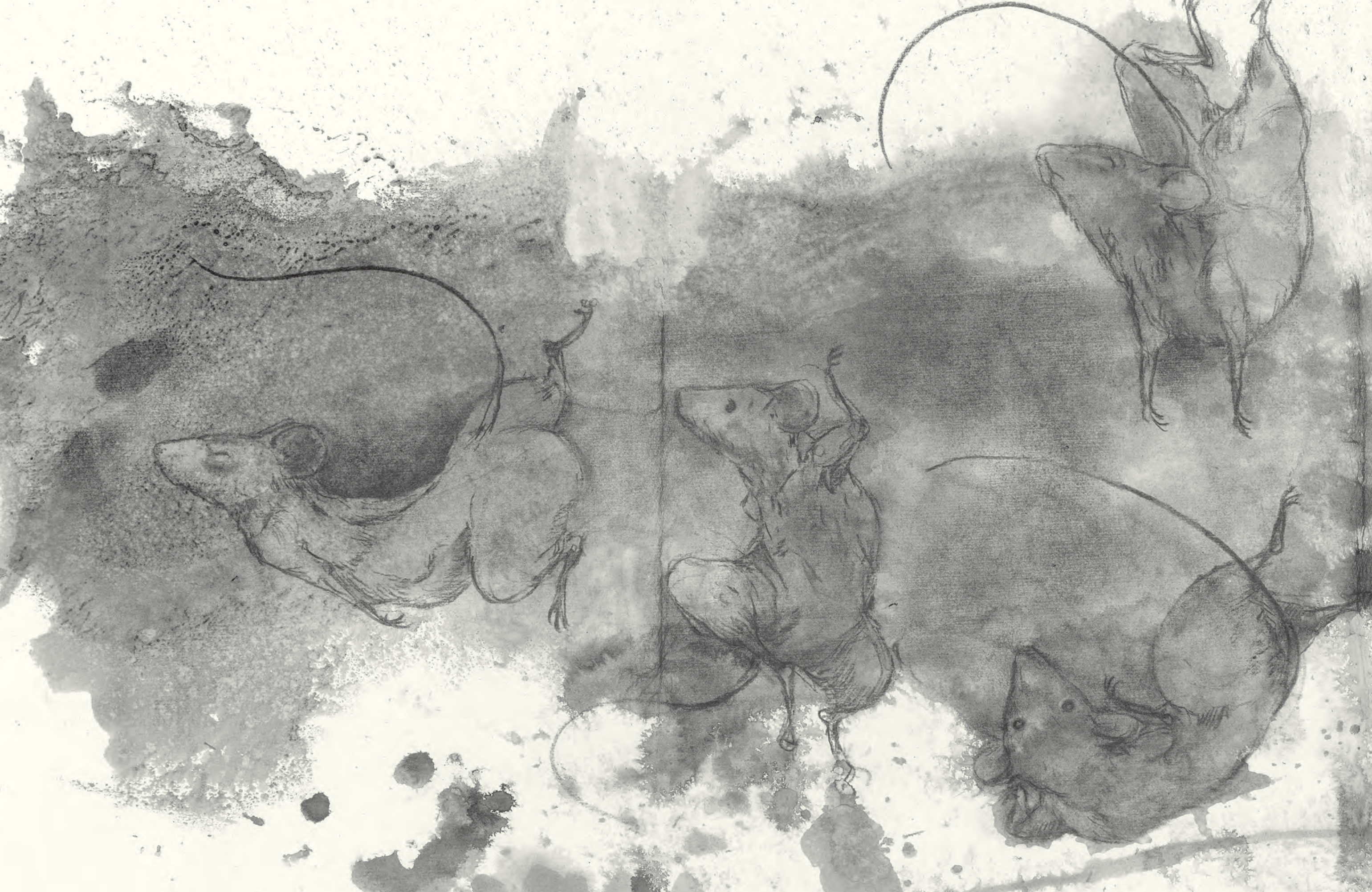
Felicity Milburn

Curator

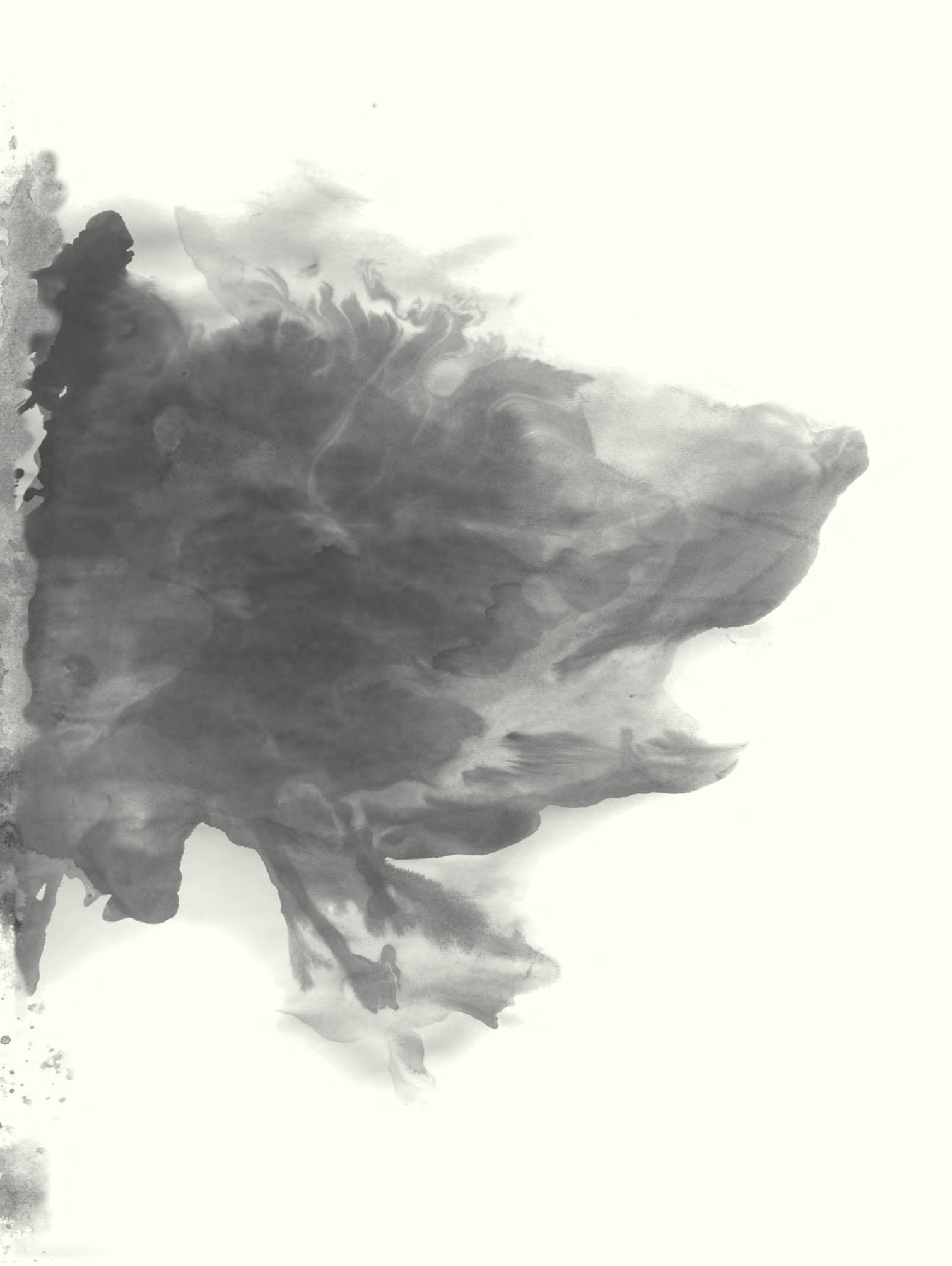
'Pagework' has been generously supported by an anonymous donor.

Hannah Beehre *Klecks Mures* 2016. Indian ink and charcoal









Postcard From...

LIYEN CHONG

Houston, Texas

I learnt a while ago that, at any one time, as many as one in five New Zealanders are overseas—that's one million of us trying to navigate work and life while holding familial and cultural bonds to this island nation. I've been living here in Houston, Texas for the last six months; it will be home for the foreseeable future and, almost inadvertently, I've joined the ranks of New Zealand artists who, after establishing themselves in their home country, have moved overseas, if only for a time.

Since 2012 less than half my time has been spent living in New Zealand. The rest has been taken up by residencies in South Korea and Indonesia, combined with travel in Asia, then onwards to Europe and now the United States. Whether encountering a Félix González-Torres in a subway station in Seoul, unpacking the complex politics behind the contemporary art being produced in Indonesia, or stumbling across a Michael Stevenson in an ethnological museum in the suburbs of Berlin, I realise I'm constantly trying to contextualise art from a New Zealand point of view.

Back when I was a painting student at Ilam, I recall hearing the late Ted Bracey, then head of the art school, mention there was a particularity of being taught art through reproductions in New Zealand. Indeed, the concepts I held in my mind of seminal artworks made elsewhere were so strong that even when I stood squarely in front of a Turner painting at the National Gallery in London years later, it was impossible for me to really be present with the work.

Since being overseas, I've been increasingly aware of my own reaction to the physical experience of colour. Whether it's the intensity of a pure pigment sculpture by

Yves Klein at the Menil Collection, or the ephemerality of atmospheric light in James Turrell's *Twilight Epiphany* at Rice University (both easily accessible to the public here in Houston), I have been amazed at how little I have understood in the past of how colour, a key component in art, impacts us. In downtown Houston just the other day, I drove past what appeared to be a mass of bright red, blue and white flags held by a small group of demonstrators. What at first seemed to me to be a celebration of some sort, turned into a proclamation denying the legitimacy of grievances that the Black Lives Matter movement has sought to address. The bright colours that had caught my attention adorned Confederate flags, a symbol to many of slavery and white supremacy. In a flash, my emotions ran the gamut from curiosity into anger and then fear for my differently coloured body.

Perhaps it's the strong UV light in New Zealand that washes and wears colours out, or the persistent trendiness of a palette of muted greys and blacks in New Zealand fashion, but I hadn't reflected much on the importance of colour before. Or maybe I just needed to be challenged to experience life as an outsider to re-focus and explore what it is in art that is most important to me.

Liyaen Chong's work can be found in prestigious public collections in both New Zealand and Australia. A McCahon House Residency alumni and a previous recipient of Asia New Zealand artist residencies, Chong is currently based in Houston, Texas and is always happy to meet fellow art people from New Zealand.



Liyen Chong *Worn on the Moon*, from *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres* (2016), an Instagram live-feed performance in Houston, broadcast as part of the Auckland Art Fair Projects 2016.

Exhibition Programme

Current

Kōwhaiwhai

Until 6 February 2017
Significant works of modernist and contemporary Māori art informed by traditional Māori architecture.

Ship Songs

Until 6 February 2017
A small, poetic exhibition looking at early European and Māori representations of seafaring vessels.

Reading the Swell

Until 6 February 2017
A collection of maritime paintings, from the safety of the harbour to disaster on the high seas.

From the Sun Deck: McCahon's Titirangi

Until 6 February 2017
An exhibition of Colin McCahon's Titirangi-period paintings.

Energies: Haines & Hinterding

Until 5 March 2017
A major survey show by Australian multimedia artists David Haines and Joyce Hinterding.

The Devil's Blind Spot: Recent Strategies in New Zealand Photography

Until 12 March 2017
Recent photography by an emerging generation of New Zealand artists.

Bad Hair Day

Until 28 May 2017
The wild and wonderful ways of hair, investigated through painting, printmaking, sculpture, photography and video. Shaped with younger audiences in mind.

He Rau Maharataka Whenua: A Memory of Land

Until 23 October 2017
Canterbury modernist landscape painting poignantly revised from within a Kāi Tahu perspective.

Beasts

Ongoing
A generous, multimedia selection of animal-themed works, both lively and thoughtful.

Simon Morris: Yellow Ochre Room

Ongoing
A painted room which offers space and time for contemplation.

Martin Creed: Everything is going to be alright

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

Tony de Lautour: Silent Patterns

Ongoing
An outdoor painting inspired by wartime Dazzle camouflage.

Reuben Paterson: The End

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

Olivia Spencer Bower: Views from the Mainland

Ongoing
A selection of paintings by modernist painter Olivia Spencer Bower.

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

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

No! That's Wrong XXXXXX

Ongoing

Three paintings by Tony Fomison, Philip Clairmont and Allen Maddox, to mark the Gallery's acquisition of Maddox's *No Mail Today*.

Ronnie Van Hout: Quasi

Ongoing

A giant new sculpture on the Gallery roof.

S  raphine Pick:**Untitled (Bathers)**

Ongoing

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

Marie Shannon:**The Aachen Faxes**

Ongoing

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

Coming Soon**Lisa Walker: O + O = O**

16 December 2016 – 2 April 2017

Audaciously imagined new works by an internationally acclaimed New Zealand jeweller.

He waka eke noa

18 February – 23 October 2017

Colonial-era portraits represent a legacy that illuminates the present.

Beneath the Ranges

18 February – 23 October 2017

Mid twentieth-century artists focus on people working in the land.

**Te Tihi o Kahukura /
The Citadel of Kahukura**

18 February 2017 – 23 October 2017

A series of works produced by William Sutton under the mantle *Te Tihi o Kahukura*.

Closing Soon**Treasury: A Generous Legacy**

Until 4 December 2016

Stunning proof of the impact of generosity on the Christchurch collection.

Events

Talks

Covering War: Olivier Weber

7 December / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Olivier Weber discusses war journalism and the challenges we face as a global community in the twenty-first century. Weber has been a war correspondent for twenty-five years and has covered conflicts in Central Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Iraq. He is an assistant professor at the Institut d'études politiques de Paris, president of the Joseph-Kessel Prize and a former ambassador-at-large of France, and has won several national and international literature and journalism awards. Proudly presented in conjunction with the Alliance Française.

George McCulloch: a Life of Ships, Sheep, Silver and Art

14 December / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Author Laurie McCallum presents the fascinating life of Scotsman George McCulloch; his ups and downs across the world, ending with art galleries in Victorian London and an important art collection that was sold at Christie's after his death in 1907. Laurie talks about the paintings in McCulloch's collection and draws parallels with paintings by the same artists in Christchurch Art Gallery's collection.

Reading the Swell

1 February / 6pm / meet at the front desk / free
Join curator Peter Vangioni for a discussion about *Reading the Swell* and discover more about this sea-inspired exhibition.

Scenting Art: Vanessa Scott talks Perfumery

8 February / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Perfume has a fascinating history, from its religious roots thousands of years ago to the great perfumes we now consider classics. But what is its place in the twenty-first-century art gallery? Let's sniff and explore the transformational power of perfume.

Lisa Walker: Artist Talk

15 February / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Artist Lisa Walker's extreme, iconoclastic jewellery has been described as 'the physical manifestation of the mental and virtual baggage of living NOW'. Lisa discusses the evolution of her internationally acclaimed practice in the context of her new Gallery exhibition, *Lisa Walker: 0 + 0 = 0*.

Views from the Mainland

22 February / 6pm / meet at the front desk / free
Art historian and writer Julie King, artist Brenda Nightingale and curator Peter Vangioni discuss the work and life of Olivia Spencer Bower, her time in Christchurch and her lasting influence on New Zealand art.

Family Activities

Santa's Coming!

20 December / 10.30am – 12pm / Education Centre / free

'Tis the season to be jolly so come along to our free kids' Christmas craft morning. Have fun making some last minute Christmas decorations to add to the tree. We will be getting into the spirit with a sleigh-load of glitter as well as Christmas tunes and cookies.

Ages 5–12. No bookings required.

Drop On In

16–27 January / all day / Education Centre / free

Drop in to the Gallery over the last two weeks of January for some creative, hands-on fun. We will be making and creating, and the Imagination Playground will be out.

All ages welcome. No bookings required.

World Buskers Festival 2017

19–29 January / Philip Carter Family Auditorium and Gallery forecourt

We are excited to once again host an exciting collection of shows and performances for the World Buskers Festival.

See worldbuskersfestival.com for more details.

Hair Piece

29 January / 11.30am – 2pm / NZI Foyer / free

We're celebrating hair! Join us for a host of fun activities to do with hair, including making a monster hair collage and wig decorating, all inspired by our *Bad Hair Day* exhibition.

Drop On In

26 February / 11am – 3pm / NZI Foyer / free

Drop in to the Gallery and make a colourful egg-carton flower or create something strange and wonderful with the Imagination Playground.

All ages welcome. No bookings required.

Films

The Nightmare Before Christmas

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

Tim Burton's jolly and macabre family adventure follows Jack Skellington, king of Halloween Town, as he discovers Christmas Town and decides to celebrate the holiday himself.
76 mins

The Human Scale

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

A documentary that questions our assumptions about modernity, exploring what happens when we put people in the centre of our equations. Featuring world-renowned Danish architect Jan Gehl.
77 mins

Special Events

Waitangi Celebrations

6 February / 10am – 5pm / NZI Foyer / free

We will be commemorating Waitangi Day with performances, art and family friendly activities.

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