

## VISUAL ARTS PRACTICES

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This issue of *Scope: Contemporary Research Topics (Art & Design)* demonstrates the wide range of ways in which artists, writers and theorists engage with the visual in the Dunedin School of Art and its networks.

George Petelin explores practice-based research in the visual arts and questions assumptions about what may constitute research as process rather than outcome. Jane Venis demonstrates research process through a practice report focusing on a current public exhibition of her work. Jenni Lauwrens explains how visual arts practices have challenged the boundaries of art history as a discipline and how visual culture studies have opened up new avenues for teaching. Peter Stupples questions Eurocentric notions of aesthetics and argues for openness to other ways of coding visual conventions.

A second set of contributions to the current issue involves responses to the visual arts practices of others. Kura Puke writes about encounters with the work of Warwick McLeod; Jane Davidson responds to three particular encounters with images of the female body; and David Green interacts with the images and words collected through interviewing and filming the work of Māori and Pasifika artists in Aotearoa.

A next group of items include practice perspectives contributed by artists Peter Belton and Hannah Joynt. Belton responds to an image by William Hodges in which a Māori figure is outlined against a landscape. The conventions of anthropomorphism through shadow play find resonance in his own work. Joynt generously shares her studio process with the reader, while thinking through the concerns which interest her in this process: the roles of intuition and the unconscious.

Creative writing processes concern Maxine Alterio where she reflects on how her novels come into being and how specific locations with their familiar visual imagery have played into this process. Narrative plays an important part of her work as a writer, as it also does for Rachel Byars, who explains the format of the meal menu as a carrier of narrative about location, ambience and culinary traditions.

A fifth set of contributions roams further afield. Lily Hibberd's response to a project by Pat HOFFIE and Stefan Purcell explores the role of water and its representations within the histories of the Australian continent. Neil Emmerson contextualises an image of torture at Abu Ghraib within the 'pathos formula' through which images of victims become carriers of ecstatic martyrdom. Rekha Rana Shailaj explains how her art fashion practice harks back to conventions of making and wearing in her first country, India.

Kerry Ann Lee considers travelling as an artist-in-residence from small cities in New Zealand to immensely large Shanghai and responds to questions in an interview about what can be managed within the short timeframe of a residency. Michael Greaves reports on his experience of travelling and seeing famous art works for the first time in situ. Anita DeSoto shares her experiences of being an artist-in-residence in Leipzig.

Qassim Saad writes about his travel to his first country, Iraq, after the recent war there. His disorientation concerning changes in design – for example to the architecture of family homes — shines through in the writing. Peter Stupples's article on early twentieth-century ceramics in Russia also transports the reader to other times and other places; we can identify with the trials and tribulations of artists far away from our own zone.

A sixth set of contributions consider teaching and learning within particular settings. Sudhir Kumar Dupatti argues for an integrated curriculum in schools and points out how much this initiative can learn from arts practices in India and Africa. Kathryn Mitchell explores the museum as a "holy shop" and shares her critical views of how the functions of the museum and public gallery in New Zealand have shifted from education to consumerist concerns and a struggle for financial survival. David Bell is more optimistic where he considers learning outside the classroom within museum and public gallery spaces after research undertaken in New Zealand and in the United States of America.

The penultimate pair of contribution responds to the recent 54th Venice Biennale. Rebecca Hamid provides information about the event and writes about highlights, concluding with critical questions regarding the New Zealand exhibition featuring work by Michael Parekowhai. In contrast, Rachel Gillies lauds the work of this artist in Venice and points out how her experience amongst his pieces extended her understanding.

A final pair of contributions focus on the work of sculptor Scott Eady. Michele Beevors provides perspectives on his work from the point of view of a colleague who sees his work take shape directly next to her in the Dunedin School of Art Sculpture Studio. Rebecca Hamid speaks from the position of a gallery owner who has presented the work of Scott Eady in Nelson.

This issue of *Scope (Art & Design)* ends with a short contribution by Christine Keller. She writes about an application for a visual arts position at an institution in Europe which shall remain unnamed. While still a member of the Dunedin School of Art at Otago Polytechnic, Keller responded with a formal letter critiquing the ways in which that – other – institution treats applicants for positions. The letter suggests that there are better ways to go about relations with staff. This contribution forms part of institutional critique as recently evidenced in Keller's writing.

*Scope: Contemporary Research Topics (Art & Design)* is likely to become themed in future. At present, the editorial team for this issue hopes that readers will enjoy the far-ranging and eclectic content within the pages to follow. Many practices, views and responses come forward within the context of an art school, with even more contributed by colleagues within our networks. I hope that a vibrancy of ideas – some still partly in the making – shine through in this issue.