

# scope

*Contemporary Research Topics*

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**Scope: Contemporary Research Topics (Art & Design)** is peer-reviewed and published annually in November by Otago Polytechnic/Te Kura Matatini ki Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand.

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

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I hope you enjoy this new issue of *Scope Art and Design*. We have included a range of articles, reviews, residency reports and artist pages selected from local, national and international submissions.

This issue opens with a review of “*Four*,” new works by Dunedin contemporary artists. They are: *The Clearing* by Kim Pieters, *Deep Time* by Charlotte Parallel, *A quiet corner where we can talk* by Megan Brady and *Cascade* by Aroha Novak. “*Four*” was curated by Lauren Gutsell and was shown in the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 25 August – 18 November, 2018. Reviewer Brendon Jon Philip noted the curator’s light touch in the presentation of “*Four*” that “allows each creator to bring a distinct and discrete project to fruition, letting associations between each emerge through spectator engagement.”<sup>1</sup> This review is not only evocative of the works’ presence but also provides a solid theoretical base from which to tussle with underlying concepts and formal aspects.

Spectator engagement is also at the forefront of Cyndy McKenzie’s practice. In her article *Constructing Spatiality and Dimension* she explores her interactive exhibition *Construing Space* in which she asks a key question “What does looking feel like?”<sup>2</sup> She describes the experience of entering her work as her work as “an indeterminate, fluctuating space that solidifies, liquefies and de-emphasises boundaries, while simultaneously dislocating both body and space.”<sup>3</sup>

While McKenzie’s filmy textiles create a maze of ever-changing images, sculptor Arati Kushwaha focuses on the printed motif and its meaning. Her deployment of the hand printed traditional Indian fabric kalamkari in her sculptural work *Monster* was a well-considered choice for an artist concerned with the empowerment of women. Her article *Kalamkari: A Powerful Medium in the Field of Fashion and Art* traces the history of this textile design and speaks of the ambivalence in using a material that not only “reflected the story of customary cultural limitations in India”<sup>4</sup> but also notes that the “spirit embodied in these forms challenges these notions in its slowly danced celebration of strength and liberation, of allure and triumph – as in the story of the goddess Durga”<sup>5</sup>

The power of textiles as a medium for storytelling is also at the heart of Pam McKinlay and Anna Kluibenschedl’s *Coraline (G)reef*, a tapestry created as part of Ōku Moana (My Oceans) at the International New Zealand Science Festival, 2018. Kluibenschedl’s research into the effects of ocean acidification was the starting point for works that “were dedicated to our understanding and celebration of the ocean.”<sup>6</sup>

Hope Duncan in her article *XBD* considers the value placed on the craft object. Handwoven panels playing homage to the common wool bale were ‘elevated’ into a formal gallery space alongside a hand-tufted carpet. Her work pays homage to the wool industry and critiques the unsustainability of synthetic carpets, a major source of microfibre pollution.

Hannah Joynt and Gavin O’Brien’s collaborative *Tussock Butterfly Project* also has an environmental focus. Enid Hunter’s 1970s stamp series featuring moths and butterflies from New Zealand, described by O’Brien as “a forgotten gem of New Zealand graphic design,”<sup>7</sup> have been reprised in 3D form to raise awareness that their habitat is under threat. The laser cut run of kiwiana influenced tussock butterflies also referenced the popularity of decorative wooden butterfly motifs displayed on New Zealand houses in the 1960’s.

Likewise, raising awareness of the increasing threat to endemic fauna is a concern for Michelle Wilkinson, a contemporary jeweller; whose project surrounding biodiversity loss exists in the tension between art and science. Using the theoretical framework of participatory art as an agent for change, she engages with the public throughout the research, development and exhibition of works that are "hovering somewhere between natural history and the imagination."<sup>8</sup>

Clink Project 5 was also a participatory contemporary jewellery project, part of an ongoing series that creates unannounced pop-up interventions in Auckland city. Collaborative making, public interaction and collective publication are key drivers in this series since its inception in 2014.

In this issue the section on contemporary jewellery features four Artists' Pages that introduce the practices of Macarena Bernal, Andrea Muggeridge, Simon Swale and Antonia Boyle, artists for whom materiality is a key concern. In *Material Thinking* Paul Carter discusses how ideas are turned into art objects<sup>9</sup>, a process at the heart of both Muggeridge and Bernal's very different practices. Bernal's creates wearable archives from her 'new' material ROM, melted CD's that hold the potential to spill all their memories if only some future technology could 'read' the objects. Conversely, in her work *Muggeridgian Solids* the artist playfully references concepts from our distant past, that of Platonic and Archimedean solids – that refer to elements of the earth's creation. While her colourful geometric works appear to be solid, they yield to the touch yet speak of the intangible, as they refer to emotions that are anything but solid.

Simon Swale's practice encompasses both jewellery and the making of small objects and speak of the everyday; in this case, a piece of urban 'non-landscape,' between a road edge and a busy working port. One must walk to encounter this easy to-ignore spot where small pieces of detritus became source materials or inspiration for small works. They are objects that tell stories of other walkers who have passed through this 'no man's land, leaving traces of journeys from other shores.

A journey, both physical and philosophical is also the focus of Elizabeth Wildling's text. She tracks her personal journey into "an expanded knowledge and understanding of intercultural and transcultural approaches to art and philosophy"<sup>10</sup> and their effect on her practice while travelling in New Zealand and India during 2017 -2018.

Antonia Boyle's article *Growth after Loss* is a personal journey through grief, exploring the motivation and methodology of her MFA project *Bloom*. As part of her passion for mental health advocacy, she articulates how the power of jewellery and small wearable art pieces can "enact physical experiences in the wearers."<sup>11</sup> A palpable feeling of loss is also provoked by Rachel Hope Allan's *What Happens When All we are Left with are the Inbred and Spoonfed?* Allan's describes her photographs as located within the 'in-between-states' of pleasure and depression, she explores her relationship with animals and the horror of many of their lives when imprisoned.

Loss in yet another context is imbued in an artefact. Marion Wassenaar's *Dreamwork*, the bottled charcoal remains of Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*, evokes the dark history of book burning. It also opens a discussion on the provenance of an art object and the multiple stories that become attached to it – depending on the context in which it is placed.

Di Moffat is another artist working with experimental materials and processes. In *Interference Paint* she focuses on her studio methodology, in particular her use of crumpled aluminium foil as a ground to experiment with newly developed paint products which interfere with the transmission of light on her gridded surfaces.

This issue of *Scope Art and Design* concludes with a section of Artist in Resident Reports and a Fulbright Scholar's insight into art teaching practice in Aotearoa New Zealand.

British painter and teacher Tom Voyce explores the context of place in his residency. He arrived with a body of drawings and colour studies developed while slowly transiting through Canada, USA, Fiji and finally Dunedin, his destination for a five week residency. He discusses the development of his work and his community of practice, in particular the influences of Edward Hopper and Richard Diebenkorn. However, his experience of making a new body of work within a short timeframe is the key focus of his report.

Chilean artist Max Sepulveda introduces his textile and ceramic practice with an emphasis on collaborative community projects undertaken in Tagua Tagua, Chile. His report concludes with his experiments with new processes and materials undertaken here and the sharing of his skills through a series of public workshops at the Dunedin School of Art.

A collection of four articles focuses on the collaborative practice of Frank Fu and Yves Gore. Firstly, Michele Beevors writes warmly of the passion that Fu and Gore brought to their residency, involving many students who were caught up in their irrepressible energy. She talks of their hype and social media presence and how the 'Cosmic Twins' motivated the most sluggish of students. Even though they are vehemently anti-institution they certainly appear to be an institution in themselves. Ralph Paine, in his article *Cosmic Twins* invites us into the lives of Fu and Gore through the making of their film *Orange Confucius* a contemporary dadaesque high-octane "crazy quilt adventure."<sup>12</sup> Fu's *An Online Chat Between Frank Fu and Mr Bald* is truly hilarious. We become part of a performative text that critiques the construction of fame, it yet also invites us in as voyeur /groupies of the 'famous performance artist.' This is a text that made me laugh out loud. In direct contrast to this approach is the challenging text of Yves Gore. This is a very honest exploration of her daily life in the residency. She is very open about her battle with mental illness and writes of the challenge of making the most of her residency. She discusses her performances and the motivation behind them in detail, in particular her work surrounding depression. Importantly her experience at the Dunedin School of Art has been life-affirming.

Lastly, we enter a residency of a different kind. Courtnee Bennett from Albuquerque, New Mexico, is the recipient of the Fulbright Distinguished Award in Teaching and has been in Aotearoa NZ to conduct art education research. In her article she tracks how her teaching practice is informed by her experiences in art teaching contexts here; in particular, the richness of differing cultural perspectives that visiting artists bring to groups of students.

This concept is mirrored in this issue of *Scope Art and Design*, whereby the reader enters into artworks, studios, and exhibitions that offer differing cultural, academic and political perspectives.

**Professor Jane Venis** is an Academic Leader in the School of Design and teaches in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the College of Art and Design and Architecture. She has a Master of Fine Arts from the Dunedin School of Art and a PhD in Fine Arts from Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Australia.

- 1 Brendon John Philip. "Four" Scope: Art and Design 18, page 10
- 2 Cyndy Mckenzie. "Constructing Spatiality and Dimension" Scope: Art and Design 18, 17.
- 3 Ibid, 23.
- 4 Arati Kushwaha, Kalamkari: "A Powerful Medium in the Field of Fashion and Art" Scope: Art and Design 18, 24.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Pam McKinlay with Anna Kluibenschedl. "Coralline (G)Reef" Scope: Art and Design 18, 32 .
- 7 Gavin O'Brien and Hannah Joynt. "Tussock Butterfly Project" Scope: Art and Design 18, 39.
- 8 Michelle Wilkinson. "The Sixth: A Jeweller's Exploration of Extinction and Biodiversity Loss in New Zealand" Scope: Art and Design 18, 44.
- 9 Paul Carter. *Material Thinking: The Theory and Practice of Creative Research*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press. 2004.
- 10 Elizabeth Wilding. "Coincidencies, Correlations, Thoughts, Processes: A Journey from Space to Silence and Back" Scope: Art and Design 18, 115.
- 11 Antonia Boyle. "Growth after Loss" Scope: Art and Design 18, 81.
- 12 Ralph Paine. "Of Cosmic Twins" Scope: Art and Design 18, 144.

“FOUR”<sup>1</sup>

Brendan Jon Philip

As part of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery's exhibition programme platforming local practitioners, “Four” (2108) presents a cross-section of arts production across various modes of inquiry and activity. Rather than synthesising a narrative connectivity between these artists or prescribing a thematic agenda, curator Lauren Gutsell instead allows each creator to bring a distinct and discrete project to fruition, letting associations between each emerge through spectator engagement. While broad areas of philosophical enquiry are held in common, each artist's distinct aesthetic mode and locus of investigation maintain these linkages as an approach to universals.

The greater text underlying “Four” suggests encounters through time and the malleable interface between temporal and spatial experience. Each artist appears aware of her work in the phenomenological structure of the gallery as an instance of aesthetic encounter and speaks to a different context of time, culture and place in negotiation with that framework. The conversation is a flowing one – like any negotiation, full of statements and refutations, moving from Novak's historiographical document to Brady's timeless liminal non-space, to Parallel's geological weight of fundamental time, and finally to Pieters' crafted and lyrical immediatism.

Kim Pieters' *The Clearing* presents two suites of signature works representing the twin pillars of her practice – painting and drawing, as articulated through seasonal phases of working. Pieters paints through spring and summer, focusing on the slightly more intimate discipline of drawing in the closer seasons of autumn and winter:

Determinedly non-representational, as distinct from abstracted, Pieters is concerned not with what the expressive gesture can suggest, but what that gesture can say in and particularly of itself. Immanence and transcendence are both accurately immaterial in these works, as the unpremeditated gesture emerges through the determinedly structured cyclic phases of working patterns.

The suite of coloured ink drawings shown here, collectively named *The Clearing*, are primarily a negotiation of aesthetic forms. Lines are thick and deliberate, assuming places on the page more than exploring or describing; at most, they are functional, providing visual linkages between clusters of discretely coloured shapes.

The paintings, four of six from the series *Notes Towards a Supreme Fiction*, invite an interplay between form and field due to their larger scale. Through the use of pink and yellow, earthy pastels negotiate for space in the picture plane, maintaining a sense of dynamism but not necessarily tension.

Pieters describes her work as “vital formalism,” an expression of the experience of life in a philosophically essential state, built solidly upon the ordered history of Western thought. With her practice notably structured by time, moving through seasonal shifts between media, the days codified into a process of production, Pieters finds a fluid liberty of experience – in much the same way as one of her literary touchstones, Fernando Pessoa, swam in the dizziness of freedom around the anchor of his clerical desk.

The edifice of thinking that underlies this emergent praxis is suggested by her long titles, often borrowed from a deep habit of reading, that provide a counterpoint of conceptual engagement to the visual works. Indeed, the “clearing” that Pieters proposes is in the space between the linguistically dense titles, bound to the heart of culture,



Kim Pieters, *The Clearing*, from *Four*; curated by Lauren Gutsell, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 2018.

and the unlanguage, non-symbolic image which is at the boundary of human expression. The work exists to instigate this clearing, activate a moment between moments – a position between actuality and potentiality – and create a pause in the forest of stories that we take as the landscape of the real in order to reveal a truer terrain.

From Pieters' material documents of immediatism, Charlotte Parallel's *Deep Time* offers a line of enquiry that reaches across 36 million years. Concerned with mapping the invisible structures, systems and fields that underlie place and our conception of it, Parallel seeks out data points from field recordings, transduced magnetic fields, sonorised seismology. The presentation of sampled data as audio is the crux of this practice.

Several rows of thin concrete pillars, rising to shoulder height, cradle telephone receivers playing back the data gathered from various points around the Dunedin volcano. Links are made between the pre-quaternary substrate of the region and the use of this geological base, basalt rock, in the fundamental infrastructure of the human-built environment.

The gallery–institution and art–product provide an axis between our immediate human experience, engaged in the sensorial process of looking and listening, and the unimaginable scope of the forces and time that have shaped the landscape where our process take place.

Quarry sites are sourced here, blasting free basalt for use in roading, or “winning the resource” as they say in the trade. Basalt that has also made its way into Parallel's concrete, along with material referencing the site, along with copper sulphate which oxidises, staining the pillars through the course of the exhibition.

Whereas Pieters negotiates both the material and philosophical presence of an elusive moment, Parallel's span of deep time serves the purpose of placing the spectator firmly in the present by contrast to the alienating vastness of years that become place. Geological time is still a process of flux and change, a process that we in our human processes are witness to.

Clearing as site of encounter is explicit in the title of Megan Brady's *A quiet corner where we can talk*. A subtle yet profound environmental intervention, the work simultaneously invokes and negates the nullity of institutional space; or perhaps it could be considered that negating nullity is itself the process of invocation.



Charlotte Parallel, *Deep Time*, from *Four*, curated by Lauren Gutsell, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 2018.



Megan Brady, *A quiet corner where we can talk*, from *Four*, curated by Lauren Gutsell, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 2018.

Brady has covered the 94-square-metre floor of the irregularly shaped exhibition space with a hand-crafted carpet comprising a rhythmic pattern of squares and a repeated geometric motif which is the outline of the floorspace. Accompanying this installation is a composed ambient soundtrack that emulates the bland aural background of Muzak that haunts waiting rooms, transit lounges, foyers and hallways – what Brady refers to as “transitory public spaces.”

Addressing the human experience of these liminal spaces in official places, *A quiet corner where we can talk* mutes the blank-slate austerity of the arts institution, softening the sound of footsteps and easing the viewer's tread. At the exhibition opening attendees gathered in this particular space, removed their shoes and sat and lay about on the floor; the project's title taken as instruction.

In the rigidly codified public spaces of the kind that Brady has observed in relation to this work, there is an alienation from the experience of the space, a push to keep you in transit to where you're supposed to be. Brady marks this transient space as a communal space as our communal engagement with public spaces is diminished through forces of privatisation, surveillance and other dynamics of power.

There is something solid and comforting in the weight of the labour expended in the many hours spent hefting a pneumatic tufting gun and several hundred kilogrammes of donated wool. This immediate aura of labour and the sense of the creator's hand is evident in the materiality of the installed carpet. A sense of the human is present in this labour; and this provides an access point for the human expression of enjoying the product of that labour.

The emergence of such a spontaneous community activity, as on the evening of the opening, speaks to the success of Brady's reordering this particular transitory space.

An equally evocative and engaging environment is proposed in Aroha Novak's *Cascade*, a response to a very specific historical document: William Hodges' 1775 painting [*Cascade Cove*], *Dusky Bay*. Novak abstracts the painting's romanticised landscape into a sculptural installation recreating Hodges' waterfall, with water run through pipes along the ceiling and dropping down into a black plastic-lined pool ringed with potted plants. The walls are painted a pastel blue that infuses the strong natural light from the wall of windows that overlook the Octagon and its immigrant London plane trees.

Created under appointment to the British Admiralty during James Cook's second voyage to the Southern Ocean, Hodges' painting is an idealised colonial vision of an exotic South Pacific. Rather than resting on an easy critique of this propagandist lens, Novak embraces her fascination with the romance of the image, which evokes Hodges' sense of colour in the gentle mist of her falling water.

Moving through an indeterminate space between propaganda and actuality results in the layering of loops of semiotics that fold back on each other, creating a space that is as reflective as it is reflexive. Curved in the shape of the prow of a boat extending into the gallery room, the pool is a vessel in several senses – both as a container and also in alluding to the journey of transition in the cleansing and catharsis that water can symbolise.

While the living plants surrounding the pool are tended and sung to by gallery staff, they had to be fumigated as part of the labyrinthine health and safety discussions involved in bringing such a project into public space. The natural world that Hodges documented and glamorised continues to be quantified and controlled by the same bureaucratic impulses that dispatched the English painter across the world towards his encounter with the sublime. An echo of this sense of the sublime survives in Novak's emulation, and again we find a clearing, a quiet corner and a space to contemplate our place in time.



Aroha Novak, *Cascade*, from *Four*, curated by Lauren Gutsell, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 2018.

**Brendan Jon Philip** is an artist, writer and musician based in Dunedin. Drawing these distinct practices into a syncretic whole, he has exhibited, published and performed throughout New Zealand. He studied at Whitecliffe College of Art and Design and Elam School of Fine Arts, as well as receiving distinction in film and media studies at the University of Otago.

- I The exhibition "Four" brought together works by four artists: *The Clearing* by Kim Pieters, *Deep Time* by Charlotte Parallel, *A quiet corner where we can talk* by Megan Brady and *Cascade* by Aroha Novak. "Four" was curated by Lauren Gutsell and was shown in the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 25 August – 18 November, 2018.

## CONSTRUCTING SPATIALITY AND DIMENSION

Cyndy McKenzie

Larger issues of space and time increasingly affect people all over the planet, in both built and natural environments. In drawing attention to spaces and places, artists ask people to consider multiple aspects of space. They create both shared and independent experiences of space and time, where the visitor's act of being there consolidates the artwork.

My installation explores illusions of space and dimension. In *Installation Art: A Critical History*, Claire Bishop talks of installation as "the type of art into which the viewer enters and which is often described as 'theatrical,' 'immersive,' or 'experiential.'"<sup>1</sup> My work engages with perceptions of and notions about assembling and constructing spatiality. In the making of my work *Construing Space*, I borrow from Len Lye's analogue film-making processes and discuss this further below. Len Lye (1901-80) was a New Zealand-born modernist and a pioneer in his field whose lifetime endeavour was to make motion tangible.

*Construing Space* asks the question, "What does looking feel like?" while also exploring how to express invisibility within the visible, volume without mass, and invisibility through presence. Adopting the perspective of active looking, I discuss British artist Bridget Riley's approach in the context of *Construing Space*. In addition, I discuss connections between *Construing Space* and the work of Alison Sholtz, a Brooklyn-based artist whose work investigates modes of perception and experiential boundaries while highlighting the relationship and interactions between art spaces and the viewer. Furthermore, my work considers how an installation can provide a participatory social space through interpersonal active engagement.

### SPACE, DIMENSION AND IMMERSION IN *CONSTRUING SPACE*

*Construing Space* was exhibited in the Dunedin School of Art Gallery. The building has an industrial feel, with a grey polished concrete floor that reflects and catches light. The grey-painted steel structural elements are used to anchor false ceilings of white-textured linear panels. Constructed in lengths that float intermittently in three sections to cover half the architectural space, these panels create a ceiling that lowers the height of the structural ceiling above.

Visitors enter the gallery directly into the installation, where a suggested pathway guides them into a space created specifically to offer viewers time to allow their eyes to adjust to the light and to familiarise themselves with the environment that simultaneously surrounds and immerses them.

*Construing Space* is a three-dimensional kinetic installation constructed as a labyrinth, with a suspended diaphanous mesh surface. The architectural elements utilised explore the boundaries of fluidity and solidity to create instability and to amplify the effect of movement and displacement. A place where projection, motion and illusory space converge and interact through the material and the immaterial, the virtual and the real. The relationships between the multiple projected image, space and surface establish the illusion of space and dimension, of being in space, of space being palpable, tangible and intangible.

Spatial boundaries and visual effects disrupt space and the visitor's experience of space. Projectors operating both on horizontal and vertical planes and white animated line images engage in reflection and refraction that produces

white light, a vivid green colour and purple at varying viewing points. Navigating the installation activates numerous viewing points, revealing the moving image and colours that catch on surface and space, while others simply disappear:

Interference patterns are produced by fibreglass mesh, which is woven in a grid of grey opaque fibre with transparent gaps. During the installation process, I overlaid these in relationships designed to interact throughout the created space. The installation creates spatial distortion in a similar way to the work of Shotz, whose work generates many interesting dialogues which explore spatial distortion. She does this by creating fluctuating focus, often through captured light and shifting shadows, surface and dimension. Shotz adds volume to surface and surface to three dimensions as she draws on the ways that light affects objects. The capture of reflection, light refraction, changes the immediate physical environment. The ever-changing light, ambience and temporal conditions within a space contribute to the experience and active engagement of the viewer.

Art critic Elisabeth Blennow writes of Shotz's work: "Reflective materials add further dimension, allowing pieces to come to life through what they reflect, and therefore existing in a continuous state of flux. They take on a kaleidoscopic quality in which reality is defragmented and reassembled with every new glance, toying with the eye of the observer. Sculptures often seem static, yet hers endlessly shift."<sup>2</sup>

Like Shotz's installations, *Construing Space* distorts the visitor's visual and sensory perception of surface and space through illusory movement, light, space and multiplicity in order to create spatial ambiguity through manipulating foreground, background and the in-between space. Perspective and the use of the physical mesh material create illusions of shifting surface and optical effects that mimic Shotz's optical perception of fluctuating focus distorting space.

The work asks its viewers to reflect while they are within the space and to engage in shadow play. It introduces social and participatory elements, to be experienced either solo or in conjunction with other visitors. Positioned between both the screens and one another, viewers move carefully through the installation; the projected image is caught on their bodies, while their shadows are cast into and onto multiple surfaces. As a participatory, collective space, there is a sense of presence as others experience the same thing somewhere else in the space. There can also be uncertainty about whether the perceived presence is a physical presence or an illusion of others in the space.

Depending on whether the viewer is inside or outside the installation, the work can be experienced as an immersive



Figure 1. Cyndy McKenzie, *Construing Space*, 2018, immersive installation. Dunedin School of Art Gallery.

three-dimensional experience or as a visual two-dimensional surface, where the viewer watches the artwork and the other visitors' contributions to it as they traverse the installation. There is a symbiotic relationship in Riley's work which explores the pleasures of sight as the work engages the viewer and the viewer engages the illusory aspect imbedded in the work itself, so that these elements come together in unison. The viewer's individual experience of visual perception and the optical effects within the work itself activate each other to encapsulate Riley's intention – the moment when the painting comes to realisation.

Art critic Adrian Searle writes of Bridget Riley: "[O]ne of the things that really happens in her work is that you don't really just look at it, you watch it, and one of the things you're watching is your own perceptions at work ... and you become super aware of the act of looking, and for me that's something completely magical."<sup>13</sup> The important thing is being there. Through the active engagement of looking with all your senses, you watch your perception and you live the perception. This is what Riley means when she speaks of art as a social act and that "her work is completed by the viewer."<sup>14</sup>

People are asked to take time to engage with these aspects of the work; there is no definite time limit involved and viewers may move freely between two very different experiences. Multiple aspects of space are explored through the embodiment involved in immersion and the objectified viewpoint of both watching the installation and what other viewers are doing, while analysing how and what is happening.

## CONSTRUCTION, MATERIAL AND SPATIAL DISTORTION

Sixty light-grey fibreglass mesh screens, 90 cm wide and of varying lengths, were suspended from steel wires. Some were hung individually, while others connected physically as t-intersections, right angles, overlaps and other angular relationships, achieved through an interdependent process that engages the projection throughout the installation. Furthermore, because it is material, one can sculpt it; it can be twisted, drawn out and elongated, then anchored to the floor. Some of the screens were suspended to touch the floor, curling at their ends – the material has a memory, as it has come off a roll. Other screens floated suspended above the floor surface of polished concrete as they influenced and affected the projected image they momentarily caught, fractured and multiplied to create an un-grounding of space.

Consideration of distance and span in relation to the required space was essential for the projectors to fill the space with multiple moving images. Both the projection and the distance of the 'throw' introduce scale – the closer the projector is to the mesh screens, the smaller the moving image; conversely, the further away, the larger the moving image. A fine line needed to be trod with regard to the distance of the throw in order to keep a crisp focus and intensity of colour saturation, as the larger the image gets, the more diffused it becomes. The projection placement fills the architectural



Figure 2. Cyndy McKenzie, *Constructing Space*, 2018, immersive installation. Dunedin School of Art Gallery.



Figure 3. Cyndy McKenzie, *Construing Space*, 2018, immersive installation. Dunedin School of Art Gallery.

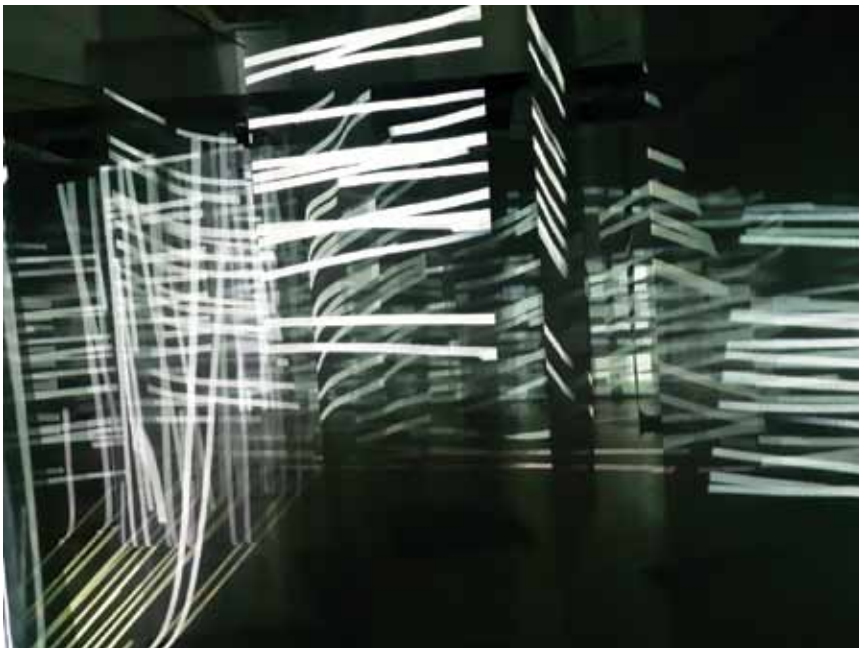


Figure 4. Cyndy McKenzie, *Construing Space*, 2018, immersive installation. Dunedin School of Art Gallery.

space and the visitor's visual field. The depth of the throw reaches through the spatial field to include the back wall, while partially expanding onto the side walls from within the space.

The mesh has an inanimate and yet diaphanous aspect that combines transparency and opacity. It catches and holds light with an illuminous quality; it both reflects and refracts light and throws textual shadows. When layered, it has an optical effect of moiré. Depending on the angles and directions layered, it offers numerous moiré effects – otherwise known as the interference factor, which amplify the effects of movement and displacement. The appearance of the fibreglass mesh is deceptive, as it looks soft but is quite hard to the touch. Furthermore, the mesh is a woven material and has a warp and a weft; fibreglass offers longevity, is non-static and so does not hold dust. As with paper, you can cut it while it holds its form and structure.

## IMAGE, MOTION AND ILLUSION

The moving line image was conceived initially through a direct analogue process – three varying lengths of white electrical tape were applied to a black wall in a darkened space and captured by a hand-held video device. The hand action, moving from left to right, embedded kinetic movement. There is a sense of spatial ambiguity generated through blending foreground and background, rhythm and movement to suggest that the tape was floating. I link my practice of capturing images with Lye's direct film process in what I call a direct-analogue method. Editing the captured images allowed me to explore spatial perspective through scale and multiplicity, positive and negative space and the mirror image. I recall Lye's fascination with working with something magical – what he calls "the felt experience of zizz."<sup>5</sup> When I work, I intuitively seek to embody an immersive, constant and mesmerising felt experience. Lye's work captures motion so intensely that it is palpable and seems almost tangible.

Comparably, the shifting illusory surface and spatial aspect of my work becomes palpable through intense sensory engagement. Movement through multiple projections captures the visitor's and viewer's sensorium, both through the mesmerising effects of the immersive installation and through their active engagement in watching it.



Figure 5. Cyndy McKenzie, *Construing Space*, 2018, immersive installation. Dunedin School of Art Gallery.

The animated linear image travels vertically and horizontally over and through the mesh screens, layering textural shadows and reflections upon the architectural margins of floor and walls. The image moves through the fabric's weave of warp and weft, undulating through layered silhouettes. They criss-cross in linear overlays and superimpose themselves on each other; in dialogue with surface and space. The grid-like structures and the fractured projected moving image create an illusion of depth. While the mesh screens can be transparent or opaque, the viewer perceives a diaphanous quality that simultaneously defines, dissolves and shifts their interaction with space, creating an uncertain traverse for those moving across the installation. Hidden spaces generate encounters between people where others merge or emerge. Visitors traverse the unknown, questioning what is in front or behind them within this labyrinthine space.

Optical and physical illusion is a paramount element in British artist Bridget Riley's work. In the 1960s, Riley was a leader of the Op Art movement, which produced optical paintings of disturbing geometric abstractions in black and white. Riley's work continues to explore surface and space distortion. She creates surface illusion using geometric form, line and colour. Her works simulate movement, producing optical undulations of surface and space that materialise and dematerialise.

When Riley first moved into colour, she used a soft pointillist technique, resembling that of Seurat, to capture the energy of light, haze and a shimmer that generated its own movement.

Riley creates unstable colour rhythms through her use of stripes. Her shifting surfaces express movement, and she creates areas that challenge the viewer's visual perception through embedded tremors or vaporising. Her large painted canvas surfaces vibrate, pulsate and oscillate energetically through juxtapositions of colour and the use of line. For instance, she places both wavy and straight lines next to one another so that they seem to move with and through each other across the surface. As Riley explains:

Sight is the activity of looking; the eye feels movement and senses energy, while focus experiences the sense of space. Rhythm and repetition are at the root of movement; repetition acts as an amplifier; which rhythm must live through – it must expand and contract, go faster; go slower; it needs to breathe. The eye looks for rhythm and repetition in its search for pattern to gain perspective of what it sees and feels. ... Paintings generate their own space, their own light, emitting the sensation of atmosphere, of invented space, an illusory space.<sup>6</sup>



Figure 6. Cyndy McKenzie, *Construing Space*, 2018, immersive installation. Dunedin School of Art Gallery.

The sheer scale of *Construing Space* engages the peripheral vision, creating the sensation of physical presence. This “illusory space”<sup>7</sup> suggests numerous pathways guiding the visitor through a labyrinth of surface and space and then into the space outside the installation, where they can continue their progress as a more passive viewer.

## CONCLUSION

Through *Construing Space*, I have built understandings around the question, “What does looking feel like?” and also explored notions of how can we express volume without mass and presence through absence. The work emerges as an indeterminate, fluctuating space that solidifies, liquefies and de-emphasises boundaries, while simultaneously dislocating both body and space. Experiential art asks people to take time to explore space and surface as a sensory experience. The work highlights the relationships and interactions between art spaces and the viewer by investigating modes of perception.



Figure 7. Cyndy McKenzie, *Construing Space*, 2018, immersive installation. Dunedin School of Art Gallery. Photograph: John Kidson.

**Cyndy McKenzie** is a fashion academic with a strong focus on textile art and design, the possibilities inherent in materials and critical inquiry. She is a long-term lecturer in the fashion programme at the School of Design in the College of Art, Design and Architecture at Otago Polytechnic. Cyndy completed a Master of Visual Arts in 2018, where her practice evolved and became defined as immersive installation artworks designed to challenge and explore space and the body, experience and perception.

- 1 Claire Bishop, *Installation Art: A Critical History* (London: Tate Publishing, 2011), 6.
- 2 Alyson Shotz, “Fundamental Forces,” Stockholm, August 25 - October 2, 2011, <https://www.gsa.se/artists/alyson-shotz/exhibition-2011-sthlm/>.
- 3 Bridget Riley’s *Circles Run Rings around us at the National Gallery*, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3oWkuVDyKMg>; The Guardian, 28 June 2013.
- 4 Bridget Riley, <https://www.theartstory.org/artist-riley-bridget.htm>.
- 5 Len Lye, *Zizz! The Life and Art of Len Lye in his own Words*, ed. Roger Horrocks (Wellington: Awa Press, 2015), 132.
- 6 *OP ART: Bridget Riley*, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vg4GE-7QoV8>.
- 7 Ibid.

## KALAMKARI: A POWERFUL MEDIUM IN THE FIELD OF FASHION AND ART

Arati Kushwaha

### INTRODUCTION

The inspiration for my art derives from ancient Indian tradition. I am fascinated by the artform known as kalamkari. The type of fabric I used in my artwork *Monster* (2017)<sup>1</sup> is Machilipatnam (produced at Pedana, a town near Machilipatnam in the Krishna district of the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh), which is associated with block-printed floral designs using vegetable dyes. My artwork embodied the traditional story of a strong woman challenging the world. The fabric itself reflected the story of customary cultural limitations in India. The spirit embodied in these forms challenges these notions in its slowly danced celebration of strength and liberation, of allure and triumph – as in the story of the goddess Durga.

In her 2010 book *Goddess Durgā and Sacred Female Power*,<sup>2</sup> Laura Amazzone explores how, in all human societies, an empowered model of the divine and fearless female is absent. Traditional depictions of Durga show a warrior woman with eight hands. Her sacred female power reflects duality: on the one hand, she is fertile and warm-hearted; on the other hand, she is aggressive, a fearless destroyer who offers an alternative model of female potential and empowerment and a willingness to unleash her anger against wrongdoing, using violence as a means of liberation.

Kalamkari textiles represent both the feminist ethos and the traditional essence of Indian culture, both in the images depicted on them and in the history of their makers. Kalamkari is an ancient art form involving hand drawing and painting on cotton fabric. The term originates from Persian, in which *kalam* means pen and *kari* means craft. (The English called it chintz,<sup>3</sup> the Dutch called it *sitz*, the Portuguese *pintado* – over time, all cloth with patterns came to be known as chintz.) In this article I explore the history of this traditional form of textile art, from sacred art to patronage by royalty through to its decline and revival in India today.



Figure 1. Arati Kushwaha, *Monster*, 2017, steel, chicken wire, dacron, kalamkari fabric, papier-mâché.

## TRADITION AND PLACE

In the annals of textile history, kalamkari represents the traditional and cultural essence of India. This is particularly evident in the villages of Machilipatnam<sup>4</sup> and Srikalahasti in Andhra Pradesh, which are recognised as the major centres of kalamkari painting, where the designs are block-printed or drawn by hand using vegetable dye.

Indian craftspeople have been expert in the use of vegetable dyes from ancient times. Complex mordants to hold fast the dyes or resists were traditionally used to create patterns by revealing or selectively shielding the dye from touching the cloth. Such fabrics were sought after in many countries, and the resulting patronage influenced the patterns created. In Srikalahasti,<sup>5</sup> under Hindu rulers, kalamkari manufacture flourished under the patronage of Hindu temples, with its distinctive figure drawing and narrative depictions of mythological stories. In the early seventeenth century, when Golconda (near Hyderabad) came under Muslim rule, the designs produced in Machilipatnam catered to Persian taste.

The term kalamkari first appeared when the sultans of Golconda named the craftsmen *qalamkars*, those who create artwork using a pen or brush. In the nineteenth century, the art form was practised in several states including Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Orissa and Rajasthan.<sup>6</sup>

The Srikalahasti (or Kalahasti) kalamkaris had an almost exclusively religious character; scenes from Hindu epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*<sup>7</sup> were made for temples and included Indian mythological themes. These hangings were completely hand-worked. Later under the British, they became a flourishing item of trade and were much sought after abroad.

As a celebrated form of textile workmanship, kalamkari dominated the European and French markets during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. From as early as the fifteenth century, block-printed resist-dyed textiles from Gujarat and the Deccan could be found adorning Europeans and their homes. As a result, a flourishing trade in vegetable-dyed textiles existed between India and Persia for centuries. Although Persians also had knowledge of vegetable dyeing, large quantities of Indian printed material were exported to that country. The influence was reciprocal, so that the Persian trade broadened the Indian colour palette.

## THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF A FABRIC

The sources available for the study of traditional cloth painting include archaeological remains from the civilisation of the Indus Valley. Spices and textiles were the principal commodities imported from India to Arabia, Africa and Persia. High-quality textiles were part of a brisk trade that included Gujarat, the Coromandel coast under the Golconda sultanate and Bengal. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Bengal became a significant centre for cloth-making. Gujarat had long been a vibrant textile centre, as evidenced by samples found at Fustat or old Cairo in Egypt. The cloth fragment in Figure 2, decorated with typical motifs, was found in a tomb at Fustat. It is made of unbleached cotton cloth, with resist printing in two shades of blue. It has a circular design with a liana pattern curving inwards, a hand-fan-shaped leaf, a circular band in lighter blue and an outer decorative border band.



Figure 2. Indian textile fragment, 12th–13th centuries, cotton, resist-printed on plain weave, 14 x 16 cm. Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, New York.

The small fragment of textile depicted in Figure 3 was also found at Fustat, where dry conditions helped to preserve these fragile items. Its design is Indian in origin. The Fustat fragments show either blue or red dyes. The technique used to dye was known as block and brush. The fabric is immersed in a dye which the mordant helps to fix – the mordant in the red areas was most probably painted with a brush. The patterns on these printed textiles show square blocking forming the quarter circles, with a star shape in the middle.



Figure 3. Textile fragment (Attributed to India. Islamic) 13th-14th century, cotton, block-printed and resist-dyed, 16.8 x 25.4 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Under the patronage of the Mughal and Golconda sultanates, Indian textiles received considerable Islamic influence. In addition, during the same period, the Hindu rulers of the Coromandel region encouraged kalamkari artisans to paint hangings for their temples. By the end of the sixteenth century, Khandesh had become a prominent centre for decorative cloth production, where textile motifs included flower heads and other elements either block-printed or drawn by hand.

From the seventeenth century onwards, figurative designs became the favoured motif for artisans. As in Figure 4, the designs in the central field typically focused on musical performance, the interaction between two figures or mundane activities. Such textiles, called *rumals*, were used as face wipes or cushion covers.

The Dutch and English, too, came to exercise influence over kalamkari design when European demand for the cloth became common – a situation that continues today. During the late seventeenth century, hand-drawn resist-dyed and mordant-dyed textiles from southern India were made for the Western market, where they were known as chintz. Later, chintz was largely used in dresses; at first, some garments were made from furnishing fabrics, despite their inappropriate large-scale design. From the eighteenth century, beautiful elegant designs, which were much more refined than these early prototypes, became popular for dresses. Men's clothing was also influenced by the chintz fashion craze, particularly a type of garment called a banyan.



Figure 4. Kalamkari *rumal* (Golconda), 1640-50, cotton, plain weave, mordant painted and dyed, resist-dyed, 61 x 91.4 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Figure 5. Kalamkari wall hanging, scene from the *Mahabharata* showing Lord Krishna and Arjuna, Kalahasti, early 20th century. Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad, India.

After 1700 the Coromandel coast became the main source of supply for the European market. During the eighteenth century, there was a decrease in demand for hand-painted and hand-printed fabrics as machine-made cloth entered the market. However, the Persians continued to patronise the craft throughout the eighteenth century. During this period the term palampore, from Hindi-Persian *palang posh* meaning bedcover, emerged among rich patrons in England and France who preferred kalamkari.

Under Kalahasti patronage, scenes from the great Indian epics – the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and other mythological tales – were often depicted as borders on fabrics. The subjects were mainly gods such as Ganesh, Shiva and Parvathi, Durga and Brahma. Figure 5 shows part of a large kalamkari hanging depicting an episode from the Indian epic *Mahabharata* – Lord Krishna is shown as the charioteer of the Pandava prince Arjuna as they join in heated conversation on their impending combat with the Kurus.

In the late eighteenth century, kalamkari underwent a decline due to the flooding of the market by cheap (imitation) prints. A major revival of artisan-made fabric in fashion couture was led in 1955 by Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay.<sup>8</sup> The Indian fashion industry came together to help the artisans of Andhra Pradesh re-establish their practice of this traditional art. More recently, veteran designer Ritu Kumar<sup>9</sup> has also been active in reviving kalamkari textiles. Several Indian and international fashion designers are also showing beautiful kalamkari sarees in their collections and on the runway. Kalamkari sarees, dresses and blouses have once more become a huge fashion trend in India and further afield. Kalamkari is preferred by people of all generations and all over the world. There is also a thriving trade in the production of art fabrics for furnishings made from kalamkari prints.

## THE TECHNIQUE OF KALAMKARI

The printing of kalamkari fabric is a drawn-out process and can take many weeks. First, the design is drawn by hand with a very basic tool called a *kalam*, literally a pen. The *kalam* is made of bamboo, with string wrapped around part of its length. The outline is drawn in mordant using the *kalam*. The mordants used are naturally occurring chemicals which make the dyes fast. The next step is the drawing of the red design elements, which requires the use of alum mordant which is aluminium-based, another naturally occurring mineral – this reacts with the red and fixes red dye where it is required. Then the red dye is rinsed out and wherever the alum mordant has not been applied the cloth's natural colour is retained.



Figure 6. Hand drawing a kalamkari design.

The same sequence follows with the application of blue. The entire textile, except for those parts to receive colour, is shielded by covering with a wax resist for the next stage, dyeing with indigo. Only the blue areas are exposed and immersed in the dye. Then the wax is removed with boiling water. In the final stage, yellow and green are added by hand-painting, followed by several rounds of washing and supplementary dyeing.

## CONCLUSION

The kalamkari technique has been admired around the globe for centuries for its mastery of intricate and aesthetically pleasing design. The product of highly skilled workmanship, kalamkari is practised in the form of block prints as well as hand-painted textiles. Still popular with women in India, it dominated the European and French markets during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the form of prized furnishing textiles and wall hangings. Women have historically had a fascination for kalamkari as a fabric, leading to its popular use in clothing. The strong relationship between women and this textile type is seen in the way its designs embody the story of women's status in India through the centuries, and also the story of strong women in a challenging world. In this article I have traced the journey of kalamkari through its long history, techniques, motifs and designs. It continues to serve religious, decorative and utilitarian purposes. Nevertheless, kalamkari faces challenging times in the future from the growth of machine printing, digital printing and mass production. However, it is my hope that the hand-made will always be valued.

Born in India in 1982, **Arati Kushwaha** is a visual artist who completed a Master of Visual Arts at the Dunedin School of Art in 2018 with a dissertation entitled "Slow Decay: Gender Discrimination in the Indian Context." Her sculptural practice is intended to raise awareness about discrimination against women.

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- 2 Laura Amazzone, *Goddess Durgā and Sacred Female Power* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Plymouth, UK: Hamilton Books, 2010).
- 3 Suresh Jayaram, "What You See When You See: Art Unbound," *Bangalore Mirror*, 14 November 2015, <https://bangaloremirror.indiatimes.com/bangalore/others/what-you-see-when-you-see-art-unbound/articleshow/49772112.cms>.
- 4 JBS Umanadh, "Pedanda Kalamkari Made of Natural Colours Gets GI Tag," *Deccan Herald*, 10 November 2013, <https://www.deccanherald.com/content/368021/pedana-kalamkari-made-natural-colours.html>.
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- 6 Kausalya Santhanam, "Hues from Nature," Special issue with the Sunday Magazine, *The Hindu*, 20 June 1999, <https://www.thehindu.com/folio/fo9906/99060320.htm>.
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- 8 Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay was an Indian social reformer and freedom fighter and the driving force behind the renaissance of Indian handicrafts, hand looms, and theatre in independent India. "Remembering Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, the unsung feminist freedom fighter," *India Today*, 3 April 2018, <https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/gk-current-affairs/story/why-google-remembers-kamaladevi-chattopadhyay-the-unsung-feminist-freedom-fighter-1203511-2018-04-03>.
- 9 Ritu Kumar is an Indian fashion designer specialising in one-off designs made from unique fabrics. <https://www.ritukumar.com/company-history>.

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## CORALLINE (G)REEF

Pam McKinlay with Anna Kluibenschedl



Figure 1. A glass jar in the entrance tank at the Portobello Aquarium, Dunedin.

Rocks, glass and slow-moving molluscs. Such objects in the Portobello Aquarium tanks are all commonly cloaked in a vibrant pink covering, which I discovered last year was coralline algae. Coralline algae is the intermediary between rock and life. In the sea, coralline algae form a cloak over the rocks and other substrate such as slow-growing paua, or detritus in the ocean such as glass and other introduced objects (as in Figure 1). The connection between rock and (marine) life is recognised in whakataukī and whakapapa in Te Ao Māori. In Māori lore, shellfish and all forms of seaweed are said to cling to their foster parents, Rakahore and Tuamata, rock and stones, in order to provide shelter for the other offspring of Hinemoana (the ocean), which are listed as the many shellfish.<sup>1</sup>

In conversation with Anna Kluibenschedl, one of the scientists taking part in the Art + Science Project – Oceans 2018,<sup>2</sup> I learned about the importance of coralline algae in the ocean.

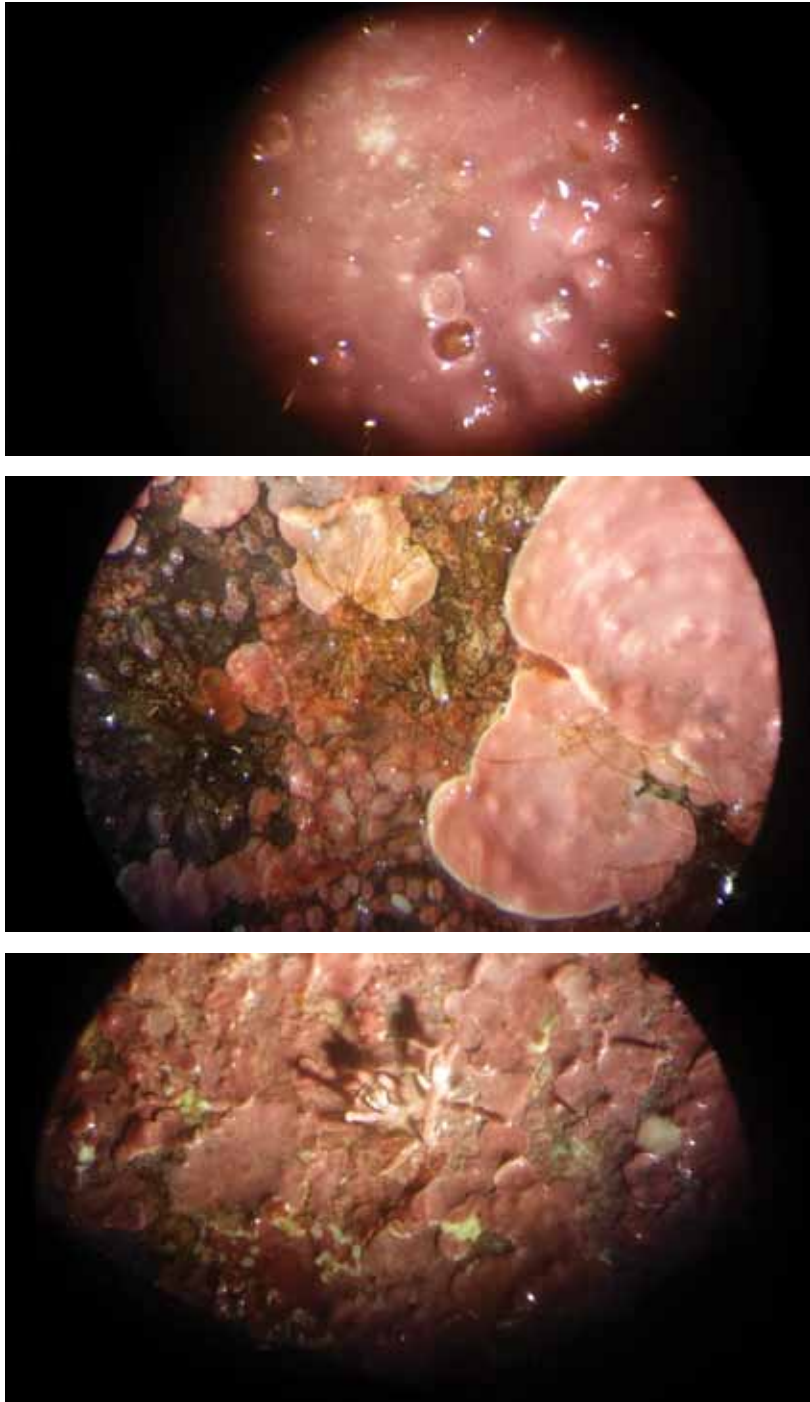


Figure 2. Composite image of Anna Kluibenschedl's microscope images of coralline algae.

*New Zealand has some amazing algae. Most algae are somewhat soft or at least leathery, but coralline algae are different. They are hard and have a carbonate skeleton like snails or mussels.*

*All coralline algae are pink and form either crusts or tufts that grow on rocks. The pink colour comes from a pigment they use for photosynthesis,<sup>3</sup> which means that they need light to produce energy. Coralline algae are divided into two groups. The ones that form tufts are called geniculate-type, which means jointed. They have carbonate-free joints, making them flexible so they can sway with the water movement. The crust-forming ones are called crustose and they can resist the water motion by clinging to the rocks. Sometimes they are also called the glue of the reef, as they hold the reef together.*

*Coralline algae are found in every ocean from the poles to the tropics. They grow quite slowly, but form stable structures that can protect coral reefs from the impact of waves. The deepest algae, found at 270m, is a crustose form.<sup>4</sup> It is extraordinary that they can exist so deep, because at this depth there is almost no light left for them to photosynthesise.*

*Many animals in the sea start their life as swimming larvae, drifting through the ocean. When it is time for them to find a place to settle down, many of them will attach and never move again, such as barnacles and sponges. Crustose coralline algae give off chemical signals that help guide some larvae, such as paua and sea urchin larvae, to suitable habitat. These larvae have a much higher success and survival rate when they settle on coralline algae.<sup>5</sup>*

*From many experiments, it is clear that the changes that are happening as a result of ocean warming and ocean acidification (OA) are producing problems for coralline algae. In future, they might have a much harder time forming their carbonate skeletons. While these species are not doing so well, other algae might be doing much better and outgrow them. Being weaker and growing even more slowly, coralline algae might not be able to provide the same services as they used to.*

*Anna Kluibenschedl*

Many of the climate effects we are observing today were caused by actions carried out three to five decades ago. We are becoming increasingly familiar with the results of the burning of fossil fuels in the loading of the atmosphere with excess carbon emissions; the increased frequency and severity of extreme weather; and rising sea levels. But there are other effects caused by carbon dioxide dissolving in the ocean. This causes an increase in the acidity of the sea, which in turn affects ocean bicarbonate chemistry in a process called ocean acidification. Ocean acidification, often called the “evil twin” of climate change, affects the availability of carbonate ions, essential for the formation of hardened structures such as corals and shells.

The *Coralline (G)Reef* tapestry started as an idea for a participatory weaving project in the exhibition “Ōku Moana” (My Oceans) at the International New Zealand Science Festival, 2018.<sup>6</sup> Weaving is a metaphor for life. One of the joys of taking part in community weaving projects is that when people are weaving alongside each other, there is always talking, helping and sharing. It’s a great time for story-telling for all ages. Each piece is unique to the time and place and community in which it was conceived, with the result being reflective of the creative process. The pieces we worked on in “Ōku Moana (My Oceans)” were dedicated to our understanding and celebration of the ocean. As we wove, we had the time to discuss the shapes and meaning of the artworks which were emerging. We were also able to emphasise the importance of coralline algae and other stories from our oceans, such as the impacts of plastic on fish populations, in two further weavings which arose from our conversations: *Blue Planet III* (a reference to Sir David Attenborough’s *Blue Planet* series) and *Tragic Plastic with an Armageddon Sunset* (woven under the guiding hand of Vivien Dwyer).

*Coralline (G)Reef* is reminiscent of Anna’s microscope research. The design is an interpretation of the growth rates and forms of CCA (crustose coralline algae) grown on an artificial substrate, a black disc, seen under magnification. In the foreground section, the composition follows the curve of one of the ambient discs. In the lab, the discs grown

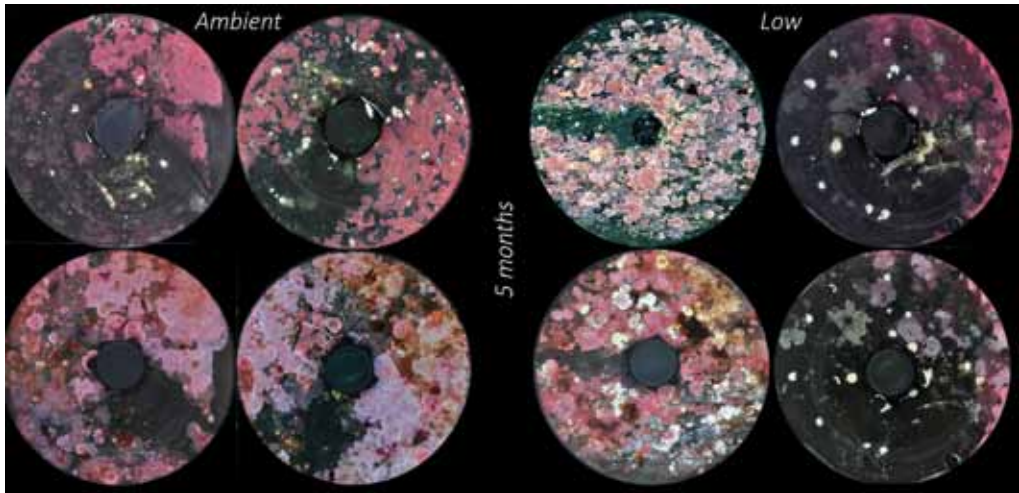


Figure 3. Anna Kluibenschedl's experimental discs for the growth of crustose coralline algae in ambient conditions and at elevated CO<sub>2</sub>.

under 'normal' ambient conditions thrive with pink life. The life cycle is represented here in the tapestry. With high population densities and greater coralline algae cover; there is competition in the surrounding environment, but the coralline algae are abundant in this "ambient" section.

The top part of the weaving is a response to the discs which were grown under simulated conditions of increased ocean acidification at future projected levels, which are predicted to occur if carbon emissions are not curbed in the next 50 years. Here the recruitment (offspring) of new algae seems impacted, with less coralline growth establishing. This part of the tapestry represents the encroaching effects of ocean acidification and adverse conditions where coralline algae are being outcompeted by other species of algae or simply not establishing at all, with reduced growth rates for those that are successful. The spacing of the warps and bulk of the mixed yarns created a third dimensionality in the woven algal growth areas. Extra texture was added through the introduction of feathery yarns and bulky browns, representing areas where non-crustose-type and non-pink-pigment-type algae were competing with CCA, and proving more successful.

The palette of pinks and other colours was derived from photographs of the lab discs used by Anna. The pinks were collected from various sources and were dyed and then assembled by rewinding several lengths of yarn into small balls for each alga. This created 'natural' variation among the tapestry algae. Very few of these balls of yarn were comprised of exactly the same combination of the mixed wools, reflecting the natural diversity and colour variation found on the wild ocean floor.



Figure 4. Anna Kluibenschedl and Dr Ro Allen in front of the weaving shown at the "Öku Moana (My Oceans)" exhibition and community art-science workshops.



Figure 5. Completed weaving shown at "Ōku Moana (My Oceans) II," 2019, displayed at Knox Church community halls; detail.

The final element in the tapestry involved the conscious use of wool to embed the idea that we need to move away from synthetic textiles, which shed microfibres into the waterways and oceans. Wool degrades in salt water, should it find itself there.

In summary, coralline algae are the colourful and strong stuff that holds our reefs together and provide a safe spot for seaweed and shellfish to settle. It is not only home and fortress, but the nursery of reef ecosystems and fisheries. Tapestry is a traditional way of conveying knowledge. Throughout history, textiles have used visual symbols and/or abstract design to portray both the known and the unknown or unseen. Projects such as this can bring a sensory awareness and reality to the impacts of climate change in the ocean by creating visual and tactile talking points and by offering new metaphors for thinking about the issues facing the marine world. In this case, the woven tapestry on its frame literally became a walking+talking post, appearing in unlikely public places such as the Octagon and in pop-ups by the peace pole in the Otago Museum Reserve. The project's colourful content and unusual context (a roving storyteller with a large rack loom as a prop) made for engaging conversation starters involving ocean acidification issues – starting with the pink wonderland under the ocean, the existence of which many remain unaware.



Figure 6. The walking loom.

**Pam McKinlay** has a background in applied science and the history of art. She works predominantly in sculpture, weaving, ceramic and photography, in collaboration with other artists locally and nationally, in community outreach and education projects on the theme of climate change, sustainability and biodiversity. She works part-time in the Research and Postgraduate Office and Dunedin School of Art at Otago Polytechnic.

**Anna Kluibenschedl** is a PhD candidate in the Department of Marine Science at the University of Otago.

- 1 Elsdon Best, *Māori Religion and Mythology, Being An Account of the Cosmogony, Anthropogeny, Religious Beliefs and Rites, Magic and Folk Lore of the Māori Folk of New Zealand, Part 2*, Dominion Museum Bulletin No. 11 (Wellington: PD Hasselberg, Government Printer, 1982) 253-6.
- 2 The Art + Oceans Project 2018 was the sixth in the ongoing 'Art + Science' Project series, where artists collaborate with scientists individually, or in pairs, to develop artworks for public exhibition relating to science interpreted in a broad context. For the exhibition catalogue, see [https://issuu.com/dunedinschoolofart/docs/art\\_oceans\\_catalogue](https://issuu.com/dunedinschoolofart/docs/art_oceans_catalogue) (accessed 5 September 2018).
- 3 WJ Woelkerling, "An Introduction," in *Biology of the Red Algae*, eds Kathleen M Cole and Robert G Sheath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 517. The colour is the result of the photosynthetic pigment Phycoerythrin.
- 4 MM Littler, DS Littler, SM Blair and JN Norris, "Deepest Known Plant Life Discovered on an Uncharted Seamount," *Science*, 227:4682 (1985), 57-9. doi:10.1126/science.227.4682.57.
- 5 WA Nelson, "Calcified Macroalgae – Critical to Coastal Ecosystems and Vulnerable to Change: A Review," *Marine and Freshwater Research*, 60:8 (2009), 787-801. doi:10.1071/MF08335.
- 6 The satellite exhibition "Ōku Moana (My Oceans)" was part of the International NZ Science Festival, July 2018, held at the Community Gallery, Dunedin. <http://www.scifest.org.nz/events/ku-moana> (accessed 5 September 2018).

**XBD****Hope Duncan**

The value we place on crafted items can be changed by elevating the functional aspects of an artwork. Echoes of the design ethos in my woven work can be found in weaving by the Bauhaus women weavers of the 1920s and '30s.

My work *XBD* consists of three formalist woven works and a tufted wool carpet. The series is a homage to the wool industry and comprises works which encourage the viewer to think about the importance of using renewable natural fibres in home furnishings, such as crossbred wool, a type of wool formerly used throughout the carpet industry.<sup>1</sup> Plastic synthetics, which have largely displaced natural wool in the carpet and furnishing industries as a cheaper alternative, make a product that is not long-lasting. These cheap, low-wearing carpets are also a major source of textile pollution in landfill and micro-fibre plastic pollution in waterways and the ocean.

Howard Risatti<sup>2</sup> discusses the value we place on crafted objects based on their purpose and suggests that one way of viewing purpose is through the utilitarianism of the object. A second way is to examine what the object is trying to do. I wanted to make a weaving which was evocative of a functional, traditional New Zealand textile found in every wool shed across the country, a fadge, and strip everything back to the essential textures and textile elements that would convey the essence of its "fadgeness."<sup>3</sup>

Why a fadge? In the New Zealand wool industry, wool is transported wholesale in large packages or bales. These come in standard sizes for ease of handling, known as a fadge. My works are woven snapshots of the journey of use over the lifespan of a fadge within the wool industry, from new to used – the point where the fadge is starting to disintegrate from puncture holes made by wool hooks and general abrasion from heavy wear and tear: — Some of the woven pieces in my panels had tufts of discarded and raw wool as random surface texture; this happens in wool bales which get pierced with use, resulting in the fleeces poking out.



Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figures 3 and 4.

*Golden Locks and the Three Fades* consists of three handwoven woollen fabrics. While the weaving mimics the fabric of wool-bale fades, I made the works as hanging textile panels. To each one I added the exterior symbols which in the wool trade convey essential information about the value of each bale's contents on the label. Each of my fades had a distinctive screen-printed silk label attached, and a scale replica of the stencil markings also found on wool-bale labels. The stencils explain where the wool came from – in this case Otago – and that it is crossbred wool. In the labels I used my name in place of the producer. The contents were 'backs' (from the back of a sheep fleece) and the classing was done by a Famer – 'F'. During the research for the project, I undertook wool-classing training to fully appreciate the wool cycle, from clip to carpet.

I drew inspiration from the women of the Bauhaus for my weaving. Colour, line and texture are the foremost design elements in the work of weavers Anni Albers, Gunta Stolzl, Gertrud Arndt and Otti Berger.<sup>4</sup> These women led the way for women in textiles and were influential in the story of Bauhaus weaving. They produced textiles that were simple in structure and celebrated natural fibre in their designs. The panels I produced were minimalist and their neutral tones evoked their farm-gate heritage.

The fourth piece, *Careful Where You Tread!*, is a hand-tufted woollen rug. The colour composition was inspired by artist Alexandrake Kehayoglou,<sup>5</sup> who tufts her native Argentine landscapes with irregular lengths of wool. My rug is hand-tufted using Axminster carpet wool. Axminster was an icon of the carpet industry before it went into liquidation due to substitution of synthetics for wool.<sup>6</sup> However, wool is starting to make a come-back through fibre innovation, as well as an appreciation for some of the unique qualities of New Zealand wool such as its whiteness and capacity to hold colour: "Genetically, our key crossbred breeds here (romney and perendale) have been bred over many generations to be free of coloured fibre, whereas most UK breeds contain black fibre, which cannot be dyed any other colour, and therefore stands out as a fault in the finished carpet."<sup>7</sup>



Figure 5.

*Careful Where You Tread!* sits on a plinth designed to elevate it from the floor and remove it from a state where it could be seen as a utilitarian object. The plinth is hand-carved from Expol underfloor insulation, which is made from polystyrene, another plastic used in the flooring industry and another reminder to consider what is under our floorings. According to Helen Edwards of the Australian-based Sustainable Home Hub,

There are so many things to consider and so many aspects of your home which can impact the environment. From the ground up, carpet and rugs have a huge impact and Cavalier Bremworth are a company who are aiming to lead the industry in reducing carpet's impact on the environment. Their wool carpet has a good head start using sustainable 100% New Zealand wool.<sup>8</sup>

Carpet manufacturers are starting to realise that their industry needs to have a sustainable focus and have rediscovered wool as a premium fibre for use in carpet manufacture, and with the capacity to be recycled in products such as carpet backing. Not only is wool a renewable resource, but its 'second life' use potentially removes tonnes of textile waste from landfill. And once it is past its use-by-date as fibre, it can be used as weed mat in gardens.

XBD set out to ask us to consider the value of wool in the home furnishings industry by elevating the status of the common wool bale. The humble fadge is used to transport wool from farm gate to sale house, and then to the factory. Fadges are used and reused over and over again in the service of the wool industry. XBD is a series of fine-art hand weavings, using a coarse wool fibre usually reserved for the floor; and a hand-made rug. The hand-tufted carpet is reminiscent of the heyday of Axminster carpets, the brand itself being well known for the high-quality carpets found in many households. A return to good-quality wool carpet flooring is necessary as we face a mountain of textile waste in the current flood of fast fashion flooring.

**Hope Duncan** is a contemporary fibre artist who uses natural fibres, mainly wools, in combination with traditional and experimental weaving, spinning and tufting techniques to create works that respond to social, environmental and national issues. Duncan creates pieces that require the viewer to look closer and spend time 'reading' her work and then begin conversations outside the works.

- 1 Paul Charman, "Low Financial Returns Have New Zealand's Crossbred Wool Industry in a Crisis," *NZ Herald*, 18 January 2018, [https://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=3&objectid=11976852](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=11976852).
- 2 H Risatti, *A Theory Of Craft: Function and Aesthetic Expression* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1943).
- 3 The amount of wool that will fit into a large wool-bale bag or fadge typically weighs less than 100 kilograms.
- 4 U Muller, *Bauhaus Women: Art, Handicraft, Design* (Paris: Flammarion; London: Thames & Hudson, 1953).
- 5 *Alexandrate Kehayoglou: Biography*, <https://alexandratekehayoglou.com/Biography>.
- 6 Harry Wallop, "Pulling the Rug on Axminster carpets," *The Telegraph*, 21 February 2013, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/retailandconsumer/9885985/Pulling-the-rug-on-Axminster-carpets.html>.
- 7 Pat Deavoll, "New Zealand wool making the difference for innovative Danish carpet manufacturer," *Stuff*, 26 January 2019, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/farming/110098674/new-zealand-wool-making-the-difference-for-innovative-danish-carpet-manufacturer>.
- 8 Helen Edwards, "Flashbac recycled carpet backing a world first for Cavalier Bremworth," 11 February 2014, <https://www.sustainablehomehub.com/flashbac-recycled-carpet-backing-world-first-cavalier-bremworth/>.

## TUSSOCK BUTTERFLY PROJECT

Gavin O'Brien and Hannah Joynt

### INTRODUCTION

This collaborative design project is the work of two senior lecturers from the Otago Polytechnic College of Art, Design and Architecture, Hannah Joynt and Gavin O'Brien. Together they developed a saleable design product – a reproducible Kiwiana-like<sup>1</sup> piece of art based on a 1970s New Zealand stamp that features a tussock butterfly. The product not only celebrated the original iconic stamp, but also sought to engage with and contribute to environmental conservation efforts aimed at native New Zealand moths and butterflies. A proportion of the profits from the sale of the product were contributed to conservation project Ahi Pepe | MothNet. This report presents the development and progress of the authors' project.

### PROCESS

Our collaboration began from a casual 'hallway' conversation. We found ourselves discussing a shared interest in a 50-year-old New Zealand postage stamp that we both regard as a somewhat forgotten gem of New Zealand graphic design. After excitedly bouncing ideas around on how we might resurrect something of the stamp's former mana, we soon realised that we share similar creative philosophies, interests in environmental conservation and complementary skill sets. We figured that, by working together, we could learn from each other and enjoy continuing discussions that would develop our individual and collaborative creative beliefs and values.

Out of our discussions sprang the question: rather than making art that might 'raise awareness' about an environmental issue, how could we use our art and design practices to contribute more directly to environmental conservation efforts and engage with communities beyond our familiar art and design field? How could our art become a conservation action with a significant ripple effect? From this cocoon of thinking, the Tussock Butterfly project emerged.

The image that sparked it all off was the 1970 New Zealand postage stamp which depicted the tussock butterfly in a stylised modernist manner common to the period.



Figure 1. Enid Hunter 1970s stamp, designed for New Zealand Post.

The stamp's design was the work of an English immigrant, Enid Hunter, who won the commission as one of a suite of three designs in a 1969 competition run by New Zealand Post. The other two designs in the competition were the one-cent red admiral butterfly stamp and the half-cent stamp depicting the copper glade butterfly.

Our initial intention was simply to translate Hunter's tussock butterfly image into another medium, plywood. We would increase the scale to make it suitable for household display, in a manner that recalled the popular decorative butterfly motif found on the exterior of many New Zealand homes and baches of the 1960s. However, further research on the butterfly's significance – it is endemic to the eastern South Island of New Zealand, with a stronghold in our local coastal Otago area – led us to connect with the conservation project AhiPepe | Mothnet and New Zealand Post. AhiPepe | Mothnet is a citizen science project that aims to engage teachers, students and whanau with moths, and through moths with nature and science.<sup>2</sup> As part of this agenda, the project attempted to raise public appreciation of moths and explore their potential to act as ecological indicators of the health of our natural world. From the outset of this association, we both gained an in-depth understanding of our subject: in particular, we learned that the 'tussock butterfly' is in fact a moth.

With copyright permission from New Zealand Post, we developed a saleable, limited-edition series of 'Tussock Butterflies' based on the stamp design. The product was made with sustainably produced bamboo ply, hand-painted with environmentally friendly paints, and packaged in a custom-made brown cardboard box, together with a brief insert explaining the project. Ten percent of each sale was donated to the AhiPepe | Mothnet project. We have presented the project as a conference paper for the 2019 ITP Whanaungatanga Research Symposium and we are continuing to work with New Zealand Post, with the intention of creating similar designs based on the other two stamps of the series.

We see this design product as an object that braids together many threads: a way for us to use design to contribute and engage with the community and environmental conservation; a celebration of an iconic piece of New Zealand design; a nod to the dwindling hobby of stamp collecting; and a cipher for the changing significance of the postage stamp in the digital age – but also as a powerful way to share the stories signified by our work.

Special thanks are due to Ron Bull, Tumumaki Whakaako, and Barabara Anderson of the AhiPepe | Mothnet project for their assistance with this work.



Figure 2. Installed Tussock Butterfly image in context.  
Image: Gavin O'Brien.



Figure 3. The finished product. Image: Hannah Joynt.



Figure 4. Tussock Butterfly (detail). Image: Hannah Joynt.

**Gavin O'Brien** is a senior lecturer at Otago Polytechnic College of Art, Design and Architecture. He holds graduate degrees in art, architecture, and applied science and has worked in the fields of architecture and education as well as exhibiting as an artist/designer, where his work explores the common turf between art and design.

**Hannah Joynt** is a contemporary artist and senior lecturer. She has been teaching at Otago Polytechnic College of Art, Design and Architecture since 2007. Her studio-based art practice is focused on engaging with the landscape and the environment through drawing. She works collaboratively on creative projects that extend her practice into new territories and communities of practice.

- 1 The term *Kiwiana* refers to certain items relating to New Zealand's cultural heritage, especially from the mid-twentieth century, that are seen as encapsulating iconic New Zealand or Kiwi elements. These "quirky things that contribute to a sense of nationhood" include both genuine cultural icons and kitsch. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kiwiana> (accessed 20 July 2019).
- 2 <https://mothnet.org/> (accessed 20 July 2019).

# THE SIXTH: A JEWELLER'S EXPLORATION OF EXTINCTION AND BIODIVERSITY LOSS IN NEW ZEALAND

Michelle Wilkinson

## ABSTRACT

Contemporary jewellery can encourage people to learn more about our environment through the body, the jewellery object itself and the conscious act of wearing and interacting with it. This calls for a move towards an approach based on social interaction.

My research examines how jewellery can act as a form of communication and an agent for change. It argues that the framework of contemporary jewellery has great potential to speak to issues relevant to society and the environment.

In exploring these ideas, I consider how jewellery can assist in communicating the latest scientific knowledge on the state of the environment in New Zealand. I place jewellery within the context of the history of art and science, working together in order to reveal the ability of contemporary jewellery to function as a teller of these stories.

## INTRODUCTION

Contemporary jewellery can be used to address the complex questions facing both society and the environment. My research shows, through a study of art/science approaches and case studies, that jewellery can do this by illustrating and augmenting scientific theories, discoveries and questions. Concepts of extinction, biodiversity loss, and the biological effects of the Anthropocene are brought together with natural history theories and discoveries and with contemporary jewellery.

I investigated different ways of seeking public engagement, curiosity and participation within an art inquiry that challenges the viewer to question beyond what they see and to think more deeply about the anthropogenic effects that shape our contemporary world. My work has a critical function – it quietly questions our role as a keystone species and the effect we are having on our environment, referencing the tools and techniques of both art and science.

The jewellery objects do this by enabling us to look at traces, what is left behind – shadows, ashes, and impressions – and by combining this with the scientific practices of literature and field research, taxonomy and classification, I present scientific information and observations in a new way.

## THE RESEARCH: AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

My aim was to create and present a series of work rooted in the theoretical framework of participatory art<sup>1</sup> and open-ended action research.<sup>2</sup> Public interaction with the pieces at various stages of their making and exhibiting life cycle was intrinsic to my aims.

This approach was informed by the growing range of platforms employed by art practitioners in order to engage a wider audience. I believe that my research demonstrates the value of a contemporary practice that moves away from the autonomy of the contemporary jewellery object and focuses instead on the relational processes and social interactions involved in the making, wearing, touching and viewing of that object.

Each artwork presented was built on empirically robust scientific research. While the resulting pieces were not exact facsimiles of the scientific data, they were made with the objective of communicating the scientists' story. Their purpose was to kindle appreciation, to foster an interest in the issues, to communicate research findings and questions of public interest, to become conversation starters and to act as triggers for further research and personal behavioural change.

## SETTING THE SCENE

Author Richard Louv has talked about a growing "nature-deficit disorder" among youth and adults resulting from an increasing disconnect from experience of the natural world.<sup>3</sup> The result is a widespread lack of understanding of ecosystems, other organisms and even ourselves, as part of a living community. We are fast losing our connection to nature. In my work I try to engage audiences physically, emotionally and intellectually through personal participation.

Over the last half billion years, there have been five mass extinction events on Earth.<sup>4</sup> Scientists around the world are now monitoring another, considered to be the result of human impact, which is predicted to be the most devastating extinction since the asteroid impact wiped out the dinosaurs along with 80 percent of animal and plant species.<sup>5</sup> The anthropologist Richard Leakey has warned that "*Homo sapiens* might not only be the agent of the sixth extinction, but also risks being one of its victims."<sup>6</sup>

The archipelago of New Zealand, with its well documented human history and wealth of recent fossils, has the dubious distinction of being one of the best places to research the causes of extinction and the effects of humans on the environment.<sup>7</sup>

New Zealand's destiny is intimately tied to that of its celebrated natural environment. But this environment continues to be under extraordinary pressure from introduced pests and human activity, ranging from development and pollution to climate change and tourism.

Over the past 800 years, humans and their accompanying pests have brought about the extinction of at least 32 percent of indigenous land and freshwater birds, 18 percent of endemic seabirds, three of seven native frogs, at least 12 invertebrates, possibly 11 plants, a fish, a bat and at least three known reptiles. Today, around 1000 animal, plant and fungi species are considered threatened, and it is likely that many unknown species are also threatened.<sup>8</sup>

Increasingly, our changing climate is looking set to add another element to biodiversity decline, either directly, through warmer temperatures making existing habitat unsuitable, which may already be occurring in some alpine and marine ecosystems, or indirectly – for example, through the increasing frequency of tree-seeding events swelling the impact of rodents and stoats in our forest ecosystems. A changing climate, bringing wind-borne spores of plant pathogens such as myrtle rust to New Zealand's shores, is also putting increasing pressure on at-risk plants such as the iconic Bartlett's rata and kauri.

Together, these global environmental stressors mean that we need to pay much more attention to the decline of biodiversity. There is a need to raise awareness and public support for the concept of kaitiakitanga, or guardianship of biodiversity, because when local and regional governments see that their constituents value biodiversity, they are more likely to respond. Unless we can raise awareness of our biodiversity decline and provide people with opportunities to do something in their local area, local species will continue to slide towards extinction.

## CONTEMPORARY JEWELLERY AS A PARTICIPATORY FORM OF COMMUNICATION

From the origins of humanity, jewellery has played a connecting role through symbolic representation. Its logical connection to the body gives it the potential to speak of important issues within society.<sup>9</sup>

By its very nature, contemporary jewellery incorporates social participation. It can bring awareness to, or start a discussion of, themes or topics relevant to society.<sup>10</sup> Conversely, due to its scale and placement, jewellery can also be a quiet, almost private, statement. It orientates its face towards the social environment, while holding part of itself back, interacting with the wearer alone.

But can jewellery also be an effective agent for change?

Jack Cunningham's research into what he calls "narrative jewellery" identified a triangular relationship between maker, wearer and viewer.<sup>11</sup> For Cunningham, a piece of jewellery is the conduit through which this relationship unfurls. By putting on the object, the wearer adds new meaning, which she or he can then communicate to the viewer.

As a way of connecting people, jewellery can be a powerful means of mobilising change.<sup>12</sup> Once attached to a human host, jewellery has great potential for impact. The conscious use of the brooch as a subtle means of communication was demonstrated by former US foreign minister Madeleine Albright, who used her brooches to show her attitude to diplomatic talks.<sup>13</sup>

## LOCATING MY RESEARCH: THE BROOCH AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL EMISSARY

Brooches and necklaces are often seen as the most confronting pieces of jewellery, because they are generally worn on the chest and directly address the outside world.<sup>14</sup>

A brooch can act as a tiny canvas where ideas may be expressed. Apart from some flexible restrictions around wearability in terms of size and weight, there are no limitations with brooches, the pin on the rear side giving the wearer the choice to fasten it in whatever position they want.

In my case studies, the wearer and viewer were of paramount importance, and their interests were thoroughly considered in the designing and making of the pieces. Each of the brooches became a mobile narrator of a science story, hovering somewhere between natural history and the imagination.

The three projects outlined below were based on comprehensive personal research. In many cases, I found that information was in a continual state of flux, with species classifications changing as genetic techniques improve and new discoveries are made. Taxonomic species revisions usually reflect progress in the understanding of New Zealand fauna and their relationships with other species worldwide. The better we understand these interactions, the greater the likelihood that we can preserve what is left of the world's biodiversity.

As components of a larger, ongoing project, I undertook extensive research into three groups of animals that have been significantly affected by anthropogenic environmental change in New Zealand: birds, bats and freshwater fish.

## THE REVENANT BIRD PROJECT

For this body of work, I developed a series of brooches depicting the 61 species of New Zealand native birds that have become extinct since human arrival.<sup>15</sup> In their form, the brooches resembles a Victorian silhouette mourning brooch, worn in memory of someone who has died. Each brooch contains an image, a shadow, a trace of a bird now missing from New Zealand's biota (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Two brooches by Michelle Wilkinson depicting extinct New Zealand birds: MW2016-01-03 *Chatham Island Duck* (left) and MW2016-01-57 *Waitaha Penguin*, brass, gypsum plaster, pigment, resin, steel pin, 60 x 70 mm.

The purpose of this series was to illustrate the large number of species that are now missing from our unique, previously bird-dominated, environment. The reasons for their extinction are wide-ranging: from hunting by humans for food, feathers and taxidermy to predation and competition from introduced species such as cats, rats and mustelids, as well as the loss of habitats and environmental modification.

All these species were unique to New Zealand, and, following their demise, other plant and animal species have either been lost or are now on the brink. Individually, these brooches mark their passing and collectively form a memorial and tribute to them.

Some of the images captured in the brooches are more cryptic and ambiguous than others (Figure 1), reflecting the mercurial process involved with the production of these images. These esoteric forms invite inquiry and closer examination, reflecting the work of palaeontologists and taxonomists in uncovering historical biological evidence.

How can a viewer who sees someone wearing such a brooch possibly understand what it means at a glance? Much of its narrative stays hidden. It invites a conversation and engagement with the wearer, leading to the passing on of the story behind the piece.

As part of the larger participatory *Revenant Bird Project*, each brooch was sent out to a volunteer, along with a background information sheet containing natural history information about that bird. The wearer was asked to 'escort' the brooch to the region where the bird once lived and take a photograph of themselves wearing or holding it, or of it installed in the environment.

When these works were taken out into the world, they carried and spread their stories in a different way than a display in a gallery or museum could achieve. The intimate relationship and emotional engagement that comes with possession, touch, interaction and ownership was likely to leave a different kind of impression.

Public participation in the project was integral to the aim of information-transfer and the engagement of the participants (and viewers) in the story of New Zealand's avifauna. This approach falls into the category known as a relational aesthetic project, with the brooches becoming facilitators of data exchange.

The taking of photographs was also intended to provide visual evidence of the brooches returning to where the birds depicted on them once called home, tying each brooch to a place (Figure 2). Many of these areas are now highly modified, having become farmland, suburban or urban areas. The brooches did not have to be taken to pristine environments; a photograph of the contemporary environment was what was needed. This 'returning' of the birds to their former habitats was intended as a form of mourning, a cathartic means of connection to other species, both living and lost.



Figure 2. Two of Michelle Wilkinson's bird brooches in situ: MW2016-01-36 North Island Raven, Auckland Northern Motorway (left) and MW2016-01-25 New Zealand Little Bittern, Lake Wakatipu.

The collating of these photographs into a book (Figure 3) provided an interesting insight into the New Zealand environment. Images of farms, living rooms and beaches combine to create a snapshot of how and where we live, and with a little imagination it is possible to reinsert these missing species into the pictures.

Some participants found the whole process dispiriting, while others said that it provided a happy reconnection of the bird with the environment. Most commented on their excitement in being part of the project and noted that a connection had formed between themselves and their bird species, enabling them to become champions of their extinct bird. Some participants said that they now had a renewed interest in the environment and were taking a greater interest in endangered species as a result.



Figure 3. Michelle Wilkinson, Bird Books, installation image. Front: *Book of the Dead*; back: *Background Information Sheets*.

## A BAT FORSAKEN

The greater short-tailed bat (*Mystacina robusta*) was once found all over New Zealand. With the arrival of rats, their numbers seriously declined until the species was only known to survive only on a single offshore island, Big South Cape Island, south-west of Stewart Island. When ship rats were accidentally introduced to the island in 1963 much of the bird life was decimated, resulting in the extinction of two bird species.

At the time, the greater short-tailed bat was not recognised as a separate species from its closely related cousin, the lesser short-tailed bat, and not considered a priority for conservation effort. Consequently, when the wildlife service translocated bird species to save them, they left the bat behind. The last confirmed sighting of the bat was in 1965. No further confirmed sightings have been recorded despite numerous surveys.<sup>16</sup>

This idea of representing something that is now removed from our living biota led me to consider museum collections and the way they are stored, which eventually directed me to create pieces in the negative, referencing the carved-out conservation foam and beaten-up archive boxes in which precious specimens are often held.

When the brooch elements are placed together, the image of the bat is apparent. However, when examined individually, the focus falls on the discrete parts of the animal – the feet, the clawed wings and the large ears. Displaying the fragmented pieces as a collection encourages the viewer to make connections between each element, visually putting them back together and thus establishing a narrative that focuses on the object's form.

As well as being visual representations, the bat brooches asked to be touched. Naked fingers traced the impressions of a creature that is now absent, following the ridges and valleys that make up the imprint of its body. This physical involvement with the material surface of the brooches encourages a build-up of a surface patina, at the same time as blurring the brooch face. The emphasis on permanence and preservation that is part of the tradition of gallery and collection spaces is turned on its head with the invitation to interact with the pieces. As theoretical considerations of patina suggest, the materiality and imagery of the brooches will inevitably alter over time.



Figure 4. Michelle Wilkinson, brooch series from the "A Bat Forsaken", depicting the greater short-tailed bat, MW2017-03-01 – MW2017-03-08, sterling silver, polyurethane resin, steel pin, sizes range from 55 x 54 x 20 mm to 95 x 35 x 20 mm.

## GRAYLING DRAUGHT

In recent decades, an estimated 20 percent of the world's freshwater fish species have become threatened, endangered or extinct.<sup>17</sup> Extinction rates in fresh water are higher than in terrestrial and marine environments.<sup>18</sup> But New Zealand's only extinct freshwater fish – the grayling or upokororo – was probably long gone before the current wave of species extinctions.

Once the most common freshwater fish in New Zealand, the grayling appeared to disappear almost overnight. As early as the 1870s a decline was suspected.<sup>19</sup> There were reports of the fish's disappearance from the Waikato River as early as 1874, and from the Buller district in 1884. Both areas had previously had very high populations.<sup>20</sup>

Ironically, by the time legislative protection was granted in 1952 the fish was probably extinct. New Zealand's foremost freshwater fisheries scientist at the time, Gerald Stokell, wrote of grayling as illustrative of "the indifference with which many natural resources of this country have been treated."<sup>21</sup> He advised that anyone knowing the location of grayling should keep it a profound secret.

In 1992 the World Conservation Monitoring Centre included grayling on its list of extinct taxa, but noted there was still a chance that the fish survived. But in 1996 the *Red List of Threatened Species*, compiled by IUCN, categorised the grayling as extinct.<sup>22</sup>

The "Grayling Draught" exhibition was made with the purpose of casting shadows rather than light in order to create a feeling of immersion. It was made up of individual grayling brooches, or pins, attached to a frame that slowly turns, reflecting the reported habit of the species of disappearing and reappearing in a ghostly fashion, which was probably a reflection of its migration and spawning habits.

The individual fish pins had their own unique markings and patterns, just like the morphological variations seen within the species. Each was designed to be worn as an individual piece, as well as being a component of the larger artwork. The brooches were etched using the designs drawn by school-aged participants in a grayling design workshop held during school holidays (Figure 5). As part of the workshop, the participants learnt about the grayling's story and about the importance of preserving our native species.



Figure 5. Grayling design workshop participant decorating the individual fish forms in preparation for etching.



Figure 6. Michelle Wilkinson, "Grayling Draught" exhibition, Dunedin, 2019. Installation image.

When set up in a darkened room, "Grayling Draught" created a feeling of sadness and melancholy. As the shadows moved through the light, they gave the impression of circling the vortex of a drain (Figure 6).

For this piece, participation was passively sought. While explanatory text about the work was available, the emphasis was on discovery rather than statement. The work sought to engage the viewer's attention through contemplation, without offering conclusions; simply watching the shadows or examining the tactility of the pins was encouraged, leaving the viewer to add their own interpretation to the experience.

The pins could then be removed from the turntable, taken away and worn by gallery visitors, allowing the shoal to slowly decrease, until they were all gone.

## INTERACTIVE EXHIBITION DESIGN

The inherent quality of jewellery as wearable becomes secondary once displayed in an exhibition space, shedding the role of the wearer and reshaping the maker/wearer/viewer discourse. If the work is appraised off the body, then the relationship between maker/wearer/viewer and the jewellery object becomes fragmented and abstracted through the absence of the wearer's tactile engagement with the work, but also through the absence of the role of jewellery as the conduit between wearer and viewer. As a result, the object can usually only be deciphered visually.

Galleries and museums most commonly serve as places for the display of contemporary jewellery. This alienates it from the everyday, as the gallery scene tends to be restricted to a self-selecting elite. According to Liesbeth den Besten, these venues of display generate a separation between contemporary jewellery, the body, the viewer and the wearer.<sup>23</sup>

While the initial intention for my pieces was that they be worn and experienced, for the purpose of a final exhibition they were displayed in a museological way, referencing the traditional display mechanisms and furniture of collection repositories. In this way, the uniformity of the display case permitted the viewer time and space to contemplate each object in succession, as well as collectively, allowing for engagement with the material content and aesthetic detail of each object while observing their differences and removing the awkwardness inherent in staring at someone's chest for an extended period of time.

By placing the pieces in these traditional vitrines they became autonomous objects, with the act of being worn removed from them. However, for the purposes of this exhibition, the conventional protective glass and velvet ropes were absent.

The Bat Forsaken brooches were intended to be picked up and touched by gallery visitors, *without* the traditional white gloves (Figure 7). The patina that comes with touch was, in this case, desirable. As jewellery belongs to a class of objects where understanding is contingent on touch, preventing this direct access to the object denies complete knowledge of it – a restriction which goes against what these brooches are designed for; the physical acknowledgement of absence.



Figure 7. Michelle Wilkinson, "A Bat Forsaken", Dunedin 2019. Installation image.

The turning of the "Grayling Draught" could be interrupted, and the brooch components removed and pinned on the viewer before it was restarted (Figure 8). This removal of the objects on display emulated the removal of individual fish from the greater gene pool, eventually leaving nothing behind but the display structure itself. The purposeful removal of objects challenged traditional gallery etiquette.

The Revenant Bird brooches, sorted by geographical location, were displayed in simplified, oversized museum drawers, referencing the concepts of classification, collecting and preservation, as well as alluding to jewellery storage drawers, both public and private (Figure 9). As a space, the drawer offers an intermediate form of exhibition, but can also indicate potential: objects-in-waiting. The presence of the book, *Revenant Birds: Book of the Dead* (Figure 3), suggested the possibility of the brooches as objects once worn. The book contained an image of each brooch returning to the place where the bird it represented had once lived. The brooch in the drawer was dislocated from its origins as a worn object, but could be reunited with its provenance through the associated photograph.



Figure 8. Michelle Wilkinson, "Grayling Draught" exhibition, Dunedin, 2019. Installation image.



Figure 9. Michelle Wilkinson, "Revenant Birds" exhibition, Dunedin, 2019. Installation image.

Figure 10. Michelle Wilkinson,  
"Revenant Birds" exhibition,  
Dunedin, 2019. Installation image.



## RESEARCH SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

This project, the contemporary jewellery objects themselves and the accompanying exhibition illustrated a range of methods used in art/science investigations. Together, they demonstrated the ability of the art object to transcend empirical science research and knowledge barriers and deliver accessible narrative works.

In answer to my original research question which set out to consider if contemporary jewellery, as objects and as an art practice, can disseminate, inform and question scientific research and discoveries, I have shown that indeed it can. But contemporary jewellery can do much more than that – it also has the ability to connect people; to become a mobile storyteller; to raise questions; be either intimate or public in its outlook; to speak of the past, present and future; and to rise above the limitations of culture and language.

Maker and writer David Watkins claimed that the emotive qualities embedded in the handmade, and the social importance of the jewellery object, allows it to become “a testing ground for questions, provocations, emotions and allegory.”<sup>24</sup> Dormer and Turner describe jewellery as “a shrewd monitor; reflecting the ups and downs not only of money and fashion, but also of political, social and cultural change.”<sup>25</sup> These interpretations identify a structural shift from the ornamental interests of the traditional jeweller to the exploratory concerns of the contemporary maker, and a desire to challenge and extend preconceptions of what jewellery can be.

This relatively new, socially led approach to contemporary jewellery suggests how the wearing of, or engagement with, an object can influence how the body behaves and functions. It also illustrates the choices that can be made by an individual, and the personal, bodily experience of wearing or using an object. The body becomes a platform for artistic contemplation that aims to question, challenge and provoke.

The size and weight limitations imposed on each piece in the project, in terms of wearability, mean that they beg closer inspection, which in turn leads to conversations. Material choices, image reproduction and mechanisms of display also demand viewer investigation, prompting further discourse.

While such communication is widely acknowledged and encouraged within the contemporary jewellery and arts communities, the communities themselves are relatively small. The sphere of influence in terms of a wider audience is limited. By taking these jewellery objects outside of the usual arts arenas, such as galleries and museums, and letting them loose in the countryside (the Revenant Birds project), encouraging touch (the Bat Forsaken project) and participation (the Grayling Draught project), I sought to engage a wider audience and expand the boundaries of influence.

The science research material investigated and embodied in the artworks was often multi-layered and complicated. The art objects broke these elements down into a more accessible, digestible format, allowing viewers and participants to translate this information and make emotional connections with it. This interpretation of the specialised scientific data allowed for ownership of the information to be passed on, liberating the research content so it could be understood through the jewellery objects themselves, with little or no background knowledge being necessary.

The interaction and social participation aspects of these works, and the research project itself, help to reinforce the stories they tell. It is a well-recognised phenomenon that as soon as something comes into your hands, by touching it, interacting with it, absorbing it, the recall and understanding of that object or subject increases and it sparks a deeper interest. Such interactions expand the level of engagement with a subject. If you get to interact with the object and its story – whether it be at the beginning (its inception and creation – the making of the individual grayling); becoming part of the story itself (bird volunteers and inclusion in the book); or in the final display (the handling of the bat brooches and the removal of the fish from the “Grayling Draught”) – the understanding and impact of the objects and their story becomes etched so much deeper into the minds of the participants.

Hands-on experiences also allow for passive learning. Having been engaged by art objects, people end up with experiences and stories that are more likely to be retained and retold. This information transfer – from the maker, the wearer and the observer – was fundamental to this project, which aimed to spread the story of New Zealand's anthropogenic biodiversity loss and to inspire ownership and governance of the future.

The exhibition was designed to allow as much hands-on interaction as possible, while still referencing the museological displays it was based on. The bird brooches were displayed like specimens in a museum, grouped and ordered based on geographical location, with cards representing the spaces reserved for new objects (Figure 9). The accompanying book illustrated the brooches' adventures in the real world (Figure 3). The fragmented bat brooches were set up like a protective specimen bed in a box, vacant, awaiting its object (Figure 7). The public was encouraged to pick up the brooches, to touch, to disassemble and reassemble the pieces like a jigsaw puzzle. Being lifesize and based on a bat specimen held deep within the Auckland Museum collections (the only complete specimen of this species in existence), the observer could visualise an extinct species that we will never get to see in the wild and are unlikely to see on public display. The immersive “Grayling Draught” display, with its ever-decreasing school of fish, could be halted and the brooches removed to be taken away (Figure 8). While this removal of objects on display goes against usual gallery and museum protocols, it allows for mementos to be taken home. Removing the brooches is analogous to the removal of the fish from our rivers and streams.

By combining art and science and producing artworks that demystify and inform, it is possible to take a conservation message beyond scientific circles and allow the narrative to become part of the vernacular.

**Michelle Wilkinson** graduated with a BSc (tech) from Waikato University in 1994, and a PGDip Sci (Environmental Science) in 2000. She worked in Marine and Environmental Science for many years before retraining in Contemporary Jewellery, and has recently been awarded a Master of Fine Arts (distinction) from the Dunedin School of Art.

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## CLINKPROJECT5: LOST & FOUND

### CLINK Collective

*CLINKProject5: Lost & Found* was focused on the action of collaborative making by participants from the Dunedin School of Art at Otago Polytechnic and Hungry Creek Art and Craft School, Auckland. The topical issue of plastic bag use and the experience of the Auckland waterfront, a current and historical site of food gathering and sharing, sparked the use of 'the bag' as a key motif. *CLINKProject5* makers placed artworks either discretely or explicitly in the vicinity of the Viaduct Harbour for audiences to find and keep. The joy of discovery was intended to draw attention to ideas about resources, consumerism and kaitiakitanga.

Since its inception in 2014, the CLINK collective's projects have played with the experience of 'disruption' or 'intervention' in the form of unannounced pop-up exhibitions in the centre of Auckland. Key driving aspects developed by the group are collaborative making, public interaction and collective publication in the journal *Scope: Contemporary Research Topics* (thescope.org).

Enticed by the motto "Come, look and see what you might find," audiences were invited to engage with *CLINKProject5: Lost & Found* on Tuesday 14 August 2018, at the Auckland Viaduct from 12pm onwards.

#### Participants:

Johanna Zellmer, Gou Yuying, Anataia Wong, Michelle Wilkinson, Emma Webster, Susan Videler, Metiria Turei, Yulia Sarandov, Amelia Rothwell, Haonan Ran, Rachel O'Connell, Andrea Muggeridge, Andrew Last, Eilish Jowett, Lissy Hunt, Shane Hartdegen, Log Grigg, Andrea Daly, Yeonjoo Chung and Victoria Bell.

#### LOCATION SCOUTING

##### Andrew

Participants met as a full group for the first time at Objectspace, a Ponsonby gallery and organisation supporting the craft/object sector. To theoretically frame our aim to foster audience interaction, the group read and discussed an article by Benjamin Lignel about jewellery as a social relational practice.<sup>1</sup> A jeweller and curator, Lignel writes about contemporary jewellery's connectedness to human interaction through the processes of making, wearing and giving.

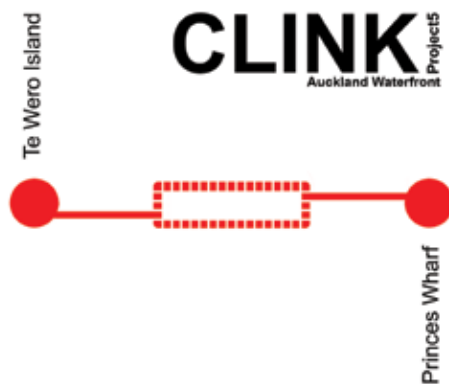


Figure 1. Clink Project 5 logo.



Figure 2. CLINKers scouting.

That afternoon we travelled en masse to our site, Auckland's Viaduct waterfront. The mission was to walk the length of the site from Silo Park to The Cloud, thinking about how we could make work in response to the site and how the public could interact with the location.

Familiar with the site from previous CLINK events, I had walked to the waterfront early in the mornings to get exercise and thinking time. I have been around boats and water all my life.

Ideas from scouting:

Elements in common between the Auckland waterfront and Port Chalmers in Dunedin – for example, the use of jarrah timbers, basalt stone and the boats that travel between the two ports

The contrast between superyachts and working boats

The contrast between the built and natural environments.

The key moment for me was spotting a classic wooden yacht with a sequence of marine code flags flying from mast to bow.

### **Metiria**

We had seen a waterfront promotional video the previous day in which the importance of the fishing industry alongside the wharf development was mentioned. My attention was caught by the facade of a building near the fish market which resembled a school of fish. Yet there was no evidence of the fishing industry that brings fresh fish from wharf to market. I saw no nets or pots and only one boat that may have been a commercial fishing vessel. The absence of nets began to formulate a making plan – the net as a huge bag to carry food.

## *Eilish*

I was immediately interested in the empty playground and colourful, whimsical chalk drawings strewn across the pavement. I wanted to make a connection between the empty playground's inviting play areas and the colourful and odd chalk drawings. Materially, I was drawn to a broken teddy bear soft toy and colourful yarn. I took inspiration from the empty playground, imagining it to be the bottom of the ocean, with objects lost on the seafloor being taken over by sea creatures, anemones and coral.

The waterfront stimulated a conceptual exploration of ideas about food gathering (the fishing industry active at the wharves), a consequential conversation about pollution of waterways and the food chain, and topical news stories about the withdrawal of single-use plastic bags in New Zealand and Australia. The majority of CLINKers therefore decided to make artworks referencing single-use plastic bags and to place these pieces throughout the Viaduct for audiences to find.

Distinctive to *CLINKProject5* was the notion of gifting. When placed on location, each artwork had a swing-tag inviting the finder to keep the work and link to the project's Facebook page for further information. As a group, we decided on the strategy of passively inviting an audience to participate via social media promotion and then offering them a means of engagement, either face-to-face on the event day or remotely via Facebook. In past CLINK events, gathering a live audience during a pop-up exhibit had provided challenges for both audience and participants.

By gifting artworks that called on rethinking our use of plastic, as well as the interconnectivity of our actions on our communities, environment and planet, these sombre themes were presented with hope. The prospective action of the gift provoked delight and optimism.

## **PIN-SWAP**

An enduring tradition enacted when jewellers gather for conferences or meetings is the pin-swap. Each jeweller makes and anonymously wraps a brooch which is deposited in a lucky-dip container during a social event. The container is taken through the crowd and each person randomly selects a package.

## *Log*

The day after the location scouting, the *ClinkProject5* collective met at Hungry Creek Art and Craft School with the aim of creating pins within a three-hour period using found materials, and responding to the theme 'seams.' Although the time limit generated a sense of urgency, we were all back in the realms of the familiar – making jewellery in a workshop environment. The range of techniques and materials used produced a wide range of unique objects, each with its own story and meaning.

The collective sense of achievement generated by a group-making session was an important strategy designed to mitigate the anxiety produced by the as-yet unknown parameters of the greater project.

Since 2014 Whau Studio, located in Point Chevalier, has been hosting annual pin-swaps, an event which brings together art and community. A jewellery studio established in 2014, Whau is run by partners Ilse Marie Erl, Dorothy de Lautour and Laura Jer. The studio's name is derived from the plant species, *Entelea arborescens*, and the local river, connecting it with the history and development of the community.

There was literally the warmest of welcomes from the Whau collective when we walked in from the freezing evening winds to the toasty workshop. We gathered and chatted, exploring the workshop while we waited in anticipation for the main event.

At 6pm, the pizzas arrived. Five metres of pure joy. The sharing of food solidified the importance of community and mutual care.

With a bellow, the room hushed as the vessel containing our work was raised into the air. Excitement rippled through the room as the first pin was pulled. In turn, we took our prize and found each maker, taking the opportunity to discuss the work and get to know the maker.

## MAKING

Making unfolded over two (long!) days at the Hungry Creek workshops – once again, a relief from the difficulties of group work resolving strategies for presentation, promotion and audience interaction for the project.

As artists, we wanted to communicate our concerns about plastic waste and the 750 million single-use plastic bags used in NZ every year.<sup>2</sup> Our acute awareness of the impact of plastic waste on the ocean was fed by the sea of plastic material we observed in our regular walks from Hungry Creek Art and Craft School to the local bakery.

On one side of the school was a not-for-profit recycling depot with piles of white bags of plastic rubbish awaiting removal to some distant country. On the other side, a rope manufacturer had plastic mussel-growing socks dangling pink and furry from great black sacks in their driveway. And in every car park was a huge bin full of waste wood, plastic and wrapping.



Figure 3. Sharing pizzas at Whau Studio:  
"Five metres of pure joy."



Figure 4. Pin-swap lucky dip.



Figure 5. CLINKers making at  
Hungry Creek Art and Craft School.

The makers of *Fishing Net*, *Plastic Bag Backpack*, *Bag yourself a Box* and *Kete Kuku* all used waste plastic from businesses within walking distance of the school, while the makers of *Synthetic Swarm* and *STOP!Poverty* used waste plastic from the wider area. The CLINK makers chose to highlight the environmental impact of waste on the ocean, to transform the waste material from a useless state to a useful one and to acknowledge the history of the waterfront as a place for food gathering.



Figure 6. Rachel, *Plastic Bag Backpack*, skip-sourced polypropylene fabric and cord.



Figure 7. Metiria, Kete Kuku, mussel farm rope.



Figure 8. Michelle, *Synthetic Swarm*, single-use shopping bags and wire.

The plantings along the Auckland waterfront have been selected to act as 'life rafts' for species arriving on the urbanised coast. Two New Zealand butterflies are being encouraged to settle here, the common copper and the New Zealand red admiral, to help promote ecological and biodiversity values across the Wynyard Quarter and the wider waterfront.

### Lissy

My first approach to the project was to unwind any mounting pressure to produce an exquisite object in a limited amount of time by stepping back and observing the group until they were no longer strangers to me.

With one making day, I set out to create a small, precious, vessel using a cage-like structure already familiar in my studio work. To manage existing employment commitments with the fast pace of CLINK, I was encouraged to collaborate on artworks already underway by Johanna. This resulted in the series *Resonant Chambers*, a collection of egg-like objects with wire constructions protruding from the forms. Our dialogue through shared making developed the works forward from both our original intentions to become a fabulous and curious set of works. This first-time maker's collaboration for me was exciting.



Figure 9. Johanna Zellmer and Lissy Hunt, *Resonant Chambers*.

**Andrea M**

My first time working within the CLINK collaboration was an exciting experience, exchanging the comfort of repetition, order and the pre-planned development of ideas and materials for designing an object out of an assortment of materials never seen before, using whatever I had in front of me. An assortment of boxes were placed on a table and my heart skipped a beat at the concept of rummaging through boxes I had never seen before to find a variety of materials and treasures. I found some old boxes, various chains, beads and plastic-like materials covering the table in front of me and I admired all the sparkly metallic things that I could put together. Quietly developing my own interpretation of the bag, I considered what materials I could put together to create some unique bags – objects that weave intriguing ideas, but also appear as one-of-a-kind.

## EVENT DAY (LOST AND FOUND)

**Rachel**

I think it would be fair to say that the day began with a certain degree of apprehension within the group. The weather forecast was telling us that we were destined to end up as drowned rats, and we were uncertain how the exhibiting was going to pan out. Thankfully, these concerns quickly subsided when passers-by were delighted to stumble upon some treasures, which brightened up their day. The joy generated from giving and receiving rippled through the group. Personally, I was delighted to hear that the man who had earlier fueled us with some of the best bacon butties ever scored my *Plastic Bag Backpack*. Apparently, he was gifting it on to a friend, but I had faith that it was going to be used and treasured. Job done.

**Eilish**

The day of the Lost and Found *CLINKProject5* event, I walked around looking for a suitable place for my *Merbaby* work to reside while it waited to find its forever home. I felt nervous about leaving *Merbaby* exposed to the elements of wind and rain, tucked into the corner of a green planter box, covered in shell segments down by the Auckland Waterfront Viaduct. After leaving *Merbaby* and hoping that the public would interact with our Lost and Found objects, I



Figure 10. Andrea.



Figure 11. Rachel, *Plastic Bag Backpack*, skip-sourced polypropylene fabric and cord.

spotted a young boy carrying *Merbaby* away with his father. In a hurry, I called out that I had made the piece and was so excited someone wanted to take *Merbaby* home with them. I was delighted to hear that the young boy was taking the piece home for his little sister. My heart felt so full – I had created something to gift to the public and they had accepted it and given *Merbaby* a home. The story of *Merbaby* and the *CLINKProject5* collective will continue on in the lives of those who found our lost objects.

### Haonan

*CLINKProject5* was my second time participating in CLINK, and it was very different to the last time. The event-day theme was 'plastic-free.' It was rather windy, so unfortunately my project was damaged while I was venturing along the waterfront, but I fixed it and then later relocated it to a more favourable location. To begin with, I asked international audiences to sign "Plastic-free" in their own language on my project. In the end, I collected six languages – Chinese, Russian, English, German, French and Korean. I hung up my project on a big blue umbrella and some people appeared very interested in it. The materials I used meant the work was very fragile and not really suitable for being outside in the inclement weather. Therefore, I decided to move my project inside the library and display it there for the rest of the day with the intention of encouraging more people to stop using plastic. I hid another object, *A Glue Handbag*, in the ferry ticket office. A commuter found it when he was going on a work trip and took it with him as he said it would make a lovely gift for his child.

### Andrew

In the five days since the scouting mission, the group had resolved a scheme to make work in response to the site and ways to bring that work to an audience of visitors to the Viaduct.

Everybody placed or hid their work somewhere on site. We generated an audience via Facebook promotion, but also hoped that random visitors might notice the work, look at the attached ID tag and take the work away as new finders and keepers.

Arriving on site on the day, I was relieved to find the weather less catastrophic than the forecast.

I made a linked set of eight full-size maritime flags that could also function as reusable shopping bags. The coded flags spelled out the message "Stop Poverty." My ideal was to hoist the flags up the mast of a superyacht. I targeted *Global M*, a \$50 million Euro ketch. I approached the yacht's engineer who was sympathetic, but wanted me to speak to the captain, Marcus. While waiting for that opportunity, I tied the flags to the railing nearest to the yacht.



Figure 12. Eilish, *Merbaby*.



Figure 13. Haonan, *Plastic-free*.



Figure 14. Andrew, *Stop Poverty*.

They worked beautifully, adorning the site with colourful flags fitting right in with the maritime environment. The ironic message was only able to be read by marine professionals – a sailor on a nearby yacht asked me what L-POVERTY meant. He later gave me a printed sheet of parody codes taking the piss out of the real meanings.

Eventually, Rosie, a traveler from the UK found and claimed my flags. Rosie became aware of CLINK when she met the Clink crew staying at the same backpacker accommodation. I was fortunate to meet Rosie and swap stories. She told me she would send the flags home to her mum in Jersey. Rosie was stoked – me too.

## WRITING

The final activity of the CLINK project was a day devoted to writing with the aim of generating this collated journal report. Participants formed subgroups and followed a similar methodology (individual/ collaborative/collective work) to the making event to generate a resource of text. We brought the project full circle by gathering again at Objectspace in Ponsonby.

### Yulia

From the outset of *CLINKProject5*, all the participants significantly valued the collaboration and active experience involved in working in a group. The inclusion of all our voices through each 'step' of the project was important. It allowed for decision making to be arrived at collectively. The voice of each member of the group, whether student or staff, in the space of *CLINKProject5* was heard, bringing together a multitude of experiences. This space, both inside and outside the educational system, provided a real-world art experience.



Figure 15. Andrew and Rosie, who eventually claimed Andrew's maritime flags.

Secondly, the development of relationships between the public and artists was of equal value to the experience of shared making. Connecting with the audience – stating that we are here and that we care – was an experience that stayed with me after *Lost & Found* was shown.

### **Anataia**

*CLINKProject5* was my second time experiencing the collaboration between the Dunedin School of Art and the Hungry Creek Art and Craft School.

The continuation of past relationships between the experienced CLINKers, and the new relationships formed with the first-timers, was an awesome outcome which led to the collaborative making process becoming a very relaxed and fun experience. The enormous amount of laughter and chatting involved helped with many stressful moments. As for my making process, it was a slow and tedious job, but the quality chatter and cheeky bakery breaks helped with the long hours of winding and stitching materials.

### **Yeonjoo**

People gathering to create pieces to speak to the public of Auckland. The studio busy and bustling; looking and sharing; hands moving and eyes focused. As more hands become busy, the more pieces of work are born. It's not just the pieces that are made, but the relationships between the makers, feeding each other with ideas and suggestions, with comments and compliments. Making as a single person, but working as collective, all creating for a single goal: to communicate and interact with the public.

There was comradeship between the people from Dunedin and the people from Hungry Creek. While some were first-timers in CLINK and others for the *n*th time, everyone was in the same situation and under the same pressure to create in the time given – to create their own voice within their piece. It was not just the pressure that brought the creators together; but also the down time, opportunities to gather and share food and thoughts and get to know one another:

- For more on *CLINKProject5*, see <https://www.facebook.com/clinkproject/>
- Instagram: ClinkProject5
- <https://www.op.ac.nz/study/creative/art/>
- <https://hungrycreek.ac.nz/>
- #plasticfree
- Look for *CLINKProject6* at Radiant Pavilion, Grainger Museum, Melbourne, 12-15 September 2019.

- 1 Benjamin Lignel, "Made Together: Thrills and Pangs of Participatory Jewelry," *Art Jewelry Forum*, 28 June 2016, <https://artjewelryforum.org/made-together>.
- 2 Ministry for the Environment, *Proposed Mandatory Phase out of Single-use Plastic Shopping Bags: Consultation Document*, 2018, <https://www.mfe.govt.nz/sites/default/files/media/Waste/plastic-bags-consultation-doc.pdf>.

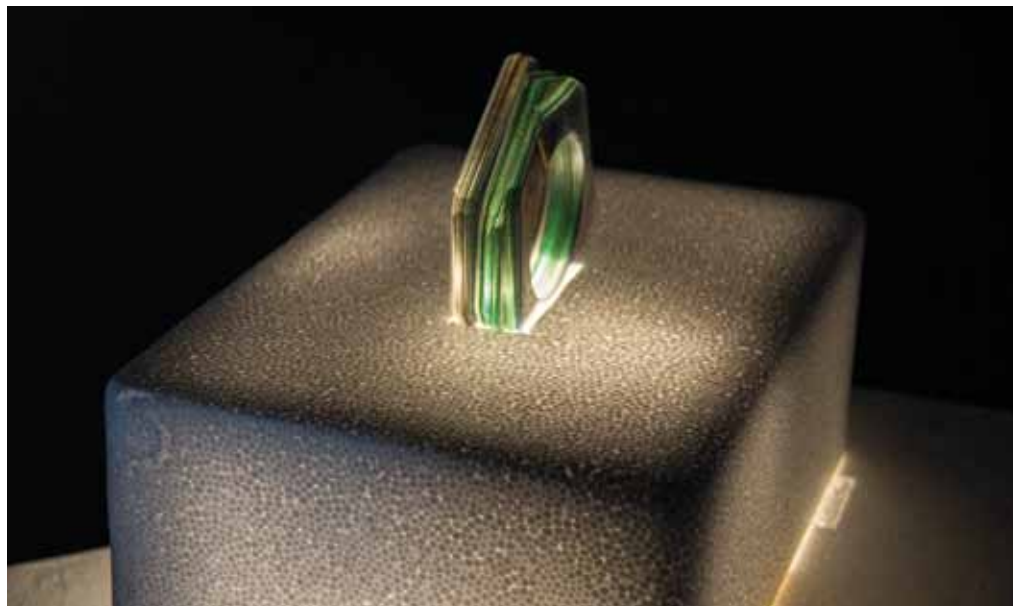
**ROM: READ ONLY MEMORY****Macarena Bernal**

Figure 1. Macarena Bernal, *Rom: Read Only Memory*, 2019, installation view.

Contemporary jewellery, being a young branch of the applied arts, has the difficult task of attracting an audience. Bearing the weight of history on its shoulders, this young artistic movement capitalises on its seductive nature – a distinctive conceptual tendency in which materials and skills are placed at the service of ideas.

Possibly the reason why I find it so attractive is that it offers me, an established jeweller, the chance to rebel. Owning this, I can demonstrate that I do not conform to the indoctrinating norms that a large portion of society ascribes to, and that I'm willing to see beyond the pre-existing hierarchy of materials and their affixed economic value.

Studying the physical characteristics that determine value in a material became a focal point for the research behind *Rom: read only memory*, my Master of Visual Arts project.

Rom is the name I gave a material I invented to capture and express my ideas in the form of contemporary jewellery and artifacts. It sits at the core of a speculative narrative I have generated about the preservation of information in the form of wearables and, most importantly, it purports to signify a new form of value. Not necessarily economic value, but more the divine kind because of its capacity to reflect and contain splendour, satisfying my personal urge to hold things that shine – which can be viewed as a consequence of my cultural formation as a Latin American woman brought up in the 1980s and '90s in Chile.



Figure 2. Macarena Bernal, *Rom: Read Only Memory*, 2019, installation view.



Figure 3. Macarena Bernal, *Rom: Read Only Memory*, 2019, installation view.

Rom as a material originates from the amalgamation of discarded CD-ROMs, various other obsolete technologies, epoxy resin, and precious and semiprecious metals. Purportedly because of the high-value information contained within Rom, jewellery made from it could be considered *wearable archives*. Thus, the possibility of such information being recovered by researchers in a distant future, if the right technology was made available, could theoretically be plausible.

Early on, I resorted to using discarded packaging as moulds for some of the bracelets and earrings in the project, allowing me to imprint them with the appearance of techy artifacts. This led me to the idea of capitalising on the close relationship between jewellery and techy artifacts for the exhibition, devising a display system made from polystyrene packaging retrieved from electronics stores' waste bins. For me it was another example of imprinted memory. The negative spaces pre-formed on the polystyrene read as clues to an artefact's prior life, complementing the narrative for a series of contemporary jewellery pieces and artifacts that turned out to be something of a personal archive of memories, thus emphasising the title of the exhibition, "*Rom: read only memory.*"



Figure 4. Macarena Bernal, *Rom: Read Only Memory*, 2019, installation view.



Figure 5. Macarena Bernal, *Rom: Read Only Memory*, 2019, installation view.

A Chilean national, **Macarena Bernal** has been a New Zealand citizen since 2018. She has a bachelor's degree in visual arts from Finis Terrae University in Santiago, Chile, an advanced diploma in jewellery practice from MIT, and now a Master of Visual Arts from the Dunedin School of Arts in New Zealand. Her research focuses on preservation and responsibility, passing on valuable information to future generations, and dealing with relevant issues like communication, obsolete technology and archiving necessary for the survival of cultures.

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## MUGGERIDGIAN SOLIDS: COLOUR, TEXTURE, FACETS

Andrea Muggeridge

Throughout 2018 I explored many concepts relating to paper – stacking, colour, texture and facets – and, in an attempt to stay true to the concept of three-dimensional shapes and paying attention to the sides, edges and angles, I created my own three-dimensional shapes which I call the Muggeridgian Solids. These three-dimensional shapes, along with the use of different colours and textures, allowed me to represent different feelings and emotions. When these different shapes are strung together, they create a combination of emotions that may seem contradictory – but this relates to my everyday life and what I experience. These conflicting feelings and emotions create constant stress and anxiety in everything I do on a daily basis. In order for me to minimise the damage involved in combating these feelings, I take pleasure in repetition, folding paper and braiding.

The Platonic Solids are based on the elements that make up the earth, and together they represent the earth's creation. There are five Platonic Solids and 13 Archimedean Solids, and I worked with a selection of shapes from both categories. It was the Greek philosopher Plato (427-347 BCE) who established a theory that there are five significant solid shapes and that they each symbolise an element of the universe.

Early examples of the Platonic Solids are the five Neolithic carved sandstone balls,<sup>1</sup> carved in stone and displayed at the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford. They are believed to have been created around 2000 years ago and have given rise to a host of theories surrounding their use. Some believe they were created for elite members of Neolithic society as a demonstration of wealth,<sup>2</sup> while others believe they are the earliest examples of the Platonic Solids. The balls are all spherical in shape and most have patterns of nodules on their surface. These nodules appear to have been placed strategically, providing a recognisable depiction of the five solids that these balls represent. Some commentators believe the nodules were not randomly placed, as they match the mathematical geometric structure of the Platonic Solids.<sup>3</sup>



Figure 1. Andrea Muggeridge, *Clustered Emotions*, 2019, wallpaper, silicone glue, rice, beans, lentils, beanbag beans, pillow stuffing, cut packaging sponge, popcorn kernels, polyester fiber, black waxed cord, square brass tube, various dimensions.



Figure 2. Andrea Muggeridge (L-R), *Support, Reassurance, Encouragement, Enjoyment*, 2019, wallpaper; silicone glue, Resene house paint, black waxed cord, embroidery thread, rice, beanbag beans, popcorn kernels, beans, various dimensions.

Plato suggests that each solid symbolises an element of the universe: the tetrahedron reflects fire, the octahedron air; the icosahedron water; the cube reflects the earth and the dodecahedron "is the shape of the universe as a whole."<sup>14</sup> Later, however, Aristotle modified Plato's theory, suggesting that the fifth element was actually "space-filling ether"<sup>15</sup> and made the dodecahedron the fifth element in its place.<sup>6</sup>

In my project, I wanted to take a similar approach with the Muggeridgian Solids and make the shapes I created represent different emotions rather than physical elements. At the same time I felt that these shapes could be interactive; I want them to be able to be squeezed, touched and held, and played with in a tactile sense. Different colours and materials were used to create the shapes, and when the element of texture was added using Resene wallpaper samples, it gave the objects more tactile properties. I revisited the concept of fidget toys – things you could hold, touch, play with and manipulate, objects which assist observation and concentration, as well as relieving anxiety for the user. I like the idea of being able to hold an emotion or feeling in the hand.

The selection of work that I created was intended to adorn the body – to be worn around the neck. The three-dimensional shapes were created to be held, touched, squeezed and to be played with. I asked: Would the viewer be able to imagine wearing the pieces, and imagine the tactile aspects of the pieces when displayed?

I didn't see these questions being an issue for my work – each piece is bright, colourful and inviting. In the past, viewers have seen these works and have felt the impulse to hold, touch and play with them, feeling nostalgia, relief, joy or a sense of comfort. One piece was titled *Comfort*, which invokes this notion in the viewer's imagination. I never intended my jewellery to fit a particular gender: When I chose colours for my pieces, I give reign to my natural intuition about colours and which colours work together. I want people to feel the freedom to choose pieces that appeal to them without the restrictions of gender labels.

The jewellery I have created is both ornamental and functional. The functional element is the tactile quality which can help de-stress and aid the wearer in high-anxiety situations. Fidget toys and puzzles have the same functional properties, as they allow the user to focus and relieve their tensions and anxieties. Being able to hold, touch and play with my jewellery pieces creates a natural process of repetition. Repetition is also a key part of my creative process. For instance, making the braids involves constant repetition, which is obvious to the viewer on close inspection. Even from a distance, the repeated elements are visible in the use of different-coloured threads. The cutting and



Figure 3. Andrea Muggeridge, *Empathy*, 2019, wallpaper, silicone glue, pillow stuffing, black waxed cord, various dimensions.



Figure 4. Andrea Muggeridge, *Relief*, 2018, wallpaper; Resene house paint, silicone glue, beanbag beans, popcorn kernels, lentils, embroidery thread, various dimensions.

the folding of the Muggeridgian Solids are further examples of the repetitive crafting process that marks my work. Visually, I want people to be able to see the crafting process involved.

When it came to naming each piece, I wanted each shape to reflect a distinctive feeling or emotion. By filling each shape with specific materials, such as beanbag beans, rice and stuffing, I endowed the pieces with different weights and textures which allowed each one to become an attractive tactile object for the owner. This led me to create specific names for each piece that reflect these feelings and emotions, like a lucky charm creating talismanic properties. Reassurance, Warmth, Relief and Comfort are among the names chosen. These names will hopefully remind viewers of their own positive experiences associated with the particular word and emotion that each piece represents or symbolises.



Figure 5. Andrea Muggeridge, *Strung Paint dipped beads*. 2017. beech wood, white nylon cord, brass tube, resene house paint.

In creating the Muggeridgian Solids from the wallpaper samples, I took the three-dimensional shapes I had created and photocopied each shape as a template, making sure to print each template in various sizes. This allowed me to choose the sizes of the shapes and the colour combinations to put together on each braid. I added tabs onto each edge of the template so that, when folded, there was a spot for the glue to adhere to and hold the shape together. This gave a tidy edge to the folded shape.

After the shapes in the wallpaper were cut out, I needed to decide where I would have the holes in order for the pieces to become wearable and strung on cord. I used an eyelet punch which had been passed on to me by my grandma. I punched the holes in strategic spots on the template. I wanted the shapes to connect together face-by-face, but I also wanted the holes to be made in unpredictable places on the shapes. I folded all of the shapes, leaving one of the faces on each solid not glued down, so that I could thread the shapes onto the cord before filling. For filling, I used a variety of materials that had a certain texture and/or weight to them. I used rice, popcorn, beanbag beans, pillow stuffing and plastic beans that had been cut up, filling each shape and gluing it shut. I tied a knot on each end of the braid, allowing each necklace to be placed over the head and eliminating the use of hooks or clasps.

Over the last few years, I have experimented extensively with braiding, using various materials and colours and adjusting the number of strands. With this body of work, I wanted to provide a very clear visual representation of this experimentation by creating braids using embroidery thread and black waxed cord.

As a final touch, I also added Resene house paints to add more texture. I like to syringe, dip and pour paint. This method allows the paint to move and create both thick and thin layers on the surface of the material. It creates dried drips on the surface and a soft malleable surface that invites you to touch. However, this unpredictable application method had its disadvantages. For instance, when I placed an object in a tray to dry, the paint could transfer onto other surfaces, places on the shapes where I didn't plan to have paint, and or smudge the braid. This creates a mess and slowed down the making process.

Over the last two years, I have researched various aspects of three-dimensional shapes – their sides, edges and angles – and explored the many elements that fall within sacred geometry, such as the golden ratio, the Archimedean Solids and the Platonic Solids, which represent the elements that make up the world we live in.

My making process allows me to reconnect with craft through spool knitting and braiding, as well as my experimentation with materials such as clay, wood, metal, paper and paint. This has allowed me to develop my own unique, three-dimensional shapes – the Muggeridgian Solids.



Figure 6. Andrea Muggeridge, *Golden Venture Neckpiece Purple*, 2016, paper, Resene house paint, embroidery thread, copper, various dimensions.

**Andrea Muggeridge** graduated with a Master of Visual Arts from the Dunedin School of Art in 2018. Her practice is centred on jewellery and paint as well as mixed media. She pushes the boundaries of traditional materials, adding her own unique contemporary interpretation. She is a practicing artist in Dunedin.

- 1 Frank Wilczek, "Beautiful Losers: Plato's Geometry of Elements," *PBS Online*, 30 December 2011, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/blogs/physics/2011/12/beautiful-losers-platos-geometry-of-elements/> (accessed 16 June 2017).
- 2 Alex Whitaker, "Carved Sandstone Balls," *Ancient Wisdom Foundation*, April 2012, <http://www.ancient-wisdom.com/scotlandballs.htm> (accessed 29 July 2017).
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Wilczek, "Beautiful Losers."
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.

## REFLECTIONS OF AN URBAN SPACE: FROM WALKING TO MAKING

Simon Swale

### INTRODUCTION

This artist's page contextualises my recent studio practice of jewellery and small object making.

This studio work is framed by various discourses relating to a general consideration of the contemporary urban environment, particularly as experienced in everyday life. This includes the reflection that urban experiences may be both understood by, and performed through, various forms of material culture that we encounter in our day-to-day lives, often encountered through the act of walking. Thus, for me walking has become part of a critical practice of experiencing and 'learning' the city, especially the environment and neighbourhood in which I live: Port Chalmers, Dunedin.

As a working port, Port Chalmers operates as a gateway for the entry and exit of material goods around the world. Many traces of these goods can be found strewn across the landscape near the port: rubbish, empty and discarded packaging, as well as detritus from the port such as barcoded dockets and other tagging systems, and rope and tape and other securing materials. It is examples such as these which I gather and reflect upon, reinterpreting these forms in metal – brass and stainless steel. These objects may then be worn or carried on the body, extending the narrative of travel, hopefully bringing the owner to reflect on both the landscape from whence they originated and the discourses of globalisation of which material culture is symptomatic.

### WALKING

For me, walking had been a simple act – a means of connecting A to B. At some point walking became more than walking. Walking became a process and, while my work is not about walking, it is work that could not have happened without walking. Walking connected me to the landscape from which I drew both inspiration and materials. Walking became part of my reflective practice. Walking has forced me to consider space and the movement of both people and commodities. In exploring the minutiae of daily life, I began to extrapolate outwards, exploring the human effects of globalisation. This was an unintended but significant development: "knowing the world through the body and the body through the world ... the experience by which we understand our body in relationship to the world."<sup>1</sup> It was not simply my own body I was now considering, however, but the lives and bodies of others involved in the flows of globalisation, and the human stories behind the flow of material culture.

Walking now underpins how I conceive, negotiate, discuss and formulate my studio practice, which responds directly to the detritus I find while walking through various urban spaces.



Figure 1. Beach Street / Peninsula–Beach Road,  
Port Chalmers, 2018.

## SPACE

Many of the material inspirations, indeed some of the materials used in my work, come from a stretch of land between the township of Port Chalmers and the nearby yacht club. This corridor is positioned tightly between the fence line of Port Otago, on one side, and an eroding cliff face on the other – the result of previous excavation and expansion carried out by Port Otago (Figure 1).

In many ways, it is a hard landscape to make sense of; it is at once a pedestrian pathway, a road and a railway track, facilitating travel utilising various means, various subjects and various objects. As a passage of transience it is hard to define, and the lack of continuity of its many functions further problematises this environment. Railway tracks, for instance, recessed in the bitumen, track with the road before veering off behind a Port Otago fence (Figure 2). Behind this fence, logs pile high in steel bays that resemble



Figure 2. Walkway/railway/road, Port Chalmers, 2018.

monstrous bookends. The footpath stops abruptly as erosion lays its claim, and shipping containers, laid end to end, act as breakers. Between cliff and containers – dirt, rubble, rock. Between containers and fence – windswept detritus. Logging tickets, barcodes, industrial packing wrap, the lids of disposable coffee cups, chewing gum and cigarette packets ... Pedestrians are forced onto a narrow pathway on the road, demarcated by a repetition of low concrete girders – scanty protection from the oncoming logging trucks which sweep around the corner ...

There is a lack of clear topographical references (maps show this passage labelled 'Beach Street' at one end and 'Peninsula–Beach Road' at another – but where does one space end and another begin?). For me, this reinforces this landscape's uniquely transitory nature, a space approaching Marc Augé's concept of 'Non Place.' For Augé, Non Place is a distinctly postmodern phenomenon involving "considerable physical modifications: urban connections, movements of population,"<sup>12</sup> typified by spaces such as refugee camps, airports and motorways. Thus it is not just the objects found within this space that speaks of the postmodern condition, but the very spaces in which they are found. As a passage of transit, this narrow corridor of space is increasingly delocalised and disconnected from its history and culture. I wonder whether my interventions into this space and the work I make in consequence can transform the discourse of this space?

## OBJECTS

I fossick in the dirt and under bushes, behind fences, searching for memories, traces and visitations. I find cigarette packets from around the world, empty and wet and muddy. Sodden, broken, ephemeral. These are traces of travel and movement – of tourists, sailors, port workers, locals, the kinds of "authentic fragments of daily life" that Walter Benjamin believed "say more than a painting."<sup>13</sup> The reclamation of found objects from the urban environment allows us to consider "its entire past, whether this concerns the origin and objective characteristics of the thing or the details of its ostensibly external history: previous owners, price of purchase, current value and so on ... All of these ... come together ... to form a whole magical encyclopaedia, a world order."<sup>14</sup> To me, these discarded cigarette packets exemplify the global cultural economy,<sup>5</sup> emblematic of the constant flow of labour, technology and capital across geographical boundaries. Cigarette packets present narratives and conversations concerning real or imagined worlds.



Figure 3. Simon Swale, *Insignificant Artefact I*, 2018, stainless steel.



Figure 4. Simon Swale, *Insignificant Artefact II*, 2018, spray-painted stainless steel.



Figure 5. Simon Swale, *Insignificant Artefact III*, 2018, stainless steel.



Figure 6. Simon Swale, *Insignificant Artefact IV*, 2018, spray-painted stainless steel.

In an attempt to know, to decode, to understand, I recreate discarded cigarette boxes and other ephemera in stainless steel and brass. Memorialising, rarefying, recontextualising – a consideration of the stories of these objects and the people who have held them. In the recreation of the ephemeral in the durable a narrative is entered into. But it is a narrative whose beginnings we can only imagine – the histories of objects we encounter in the practice of our everyday lives preface our own experiences of them.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have outlined the conceptual foundation of my current practice as a Master of Fine Art candidate in jewellery and metalwork at the Dunedin School of Art. This work is grounded in a critical and reflective practice that has engaged with a specific urban site near Port Otago in Port Chalmers, Dunedin. Walking has become part of my methodology, both as part of my reflective practice and also as a means of direct engagement with that physical space. I have sought to conceive of this space critically and conceptually through the lens of urban theory, correlating it with a discourse of the global cultural economy and of contemporary material culture. These combined perspectives have informed my ongoing studio work as I seek to develop my practice in direct relationship to the spaces that have informed it.



Figure 7. Simon Swale, *Insignificant Artefact V*, 2018, spray-painted stainless steel.

**Simon Swale** is a senior lecturer at the School of Design where he works on the Fashion programme. His research interests include dress and identity and identity and visual culture. His previous research on power relationships in street-style fashion blogs led to his current interest in urban theory and subsequent explorations of jewellery and metalwork. Simon is a Master of Fine Arts candidate in jewellery and metalwork at the Dunedin School of Art.

- 1 Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (London: Granta, 2014), 29.
- 2 Augé, Marc, *Non-Places: An Introduction to Supermodernity*, trans. John Howe (London and New York: Verso, 2008), 34.
- 3 Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer," in his *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978).
- 4 Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 207.
- 5 See Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Culture Economy," in his *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation* (Minneapolis, MN and London: University of Minnesota, 1996), 27-47.

## GROWTH AFTER LOSS

Antonia Boyle

Loss is an event that we will all face in some form or another; whether it be the loss of a life, a relationship, an animal, a home or even a tooth. This loss creates an empty space where the thing we once loved and was part of us used to exist. What becomes of this gaping space that often feels like a hole in the heart? We grow into it.

The growth that occurs after a loss can often propel us into being a better person than we were before. Growth after loss is a phenomenon I discovered during the completion of my Master of Fine Arts. I arrived at this theme through my personal journey and transformation following the loss of my mother. So much of my identity was wrapped up in my mother and her illness. After her death, I found my sense of stability in life was completely gone. This caused me to take note of the things remaining in my life that stabilise and support me, my roots.

For me, a large part of my healing came through my love of gardening, where I observed the plant life cycle of loss feeding growth, and the growth then developing and dying off, returning to the ground to feed future growth. I considered how this idea of cyclical loss and growth could be applied to the human experience of loss.

Having my hands in the dirt, literally grounding myself, I pondered the function of roots. In plants, roots not only process nutrients in the soil to nourish the plant, they also provide stability, connecting themselves firmly to the ground. This stability and nourishment is what allows the plant to grow, to blossom and then go on to reproduce and continue the cycle. So many of these ideas can be applied to our own lives. Think about your own growth – where would you be without your roots? Your support system? Would you have bloomed into who you are now? It is not only the function of roots that we can apply to our own lives, but also the life cycle of the whole plant.

I start where my encounter with this idea began – death. The losses we face are ultimately a form of death, whether literal or figurative. In the physical world, what follows after death is decay. While we think of decay as “mainly associated with things that are rotten, have a bad smell and are generally symptomatic of death,”<sup>1</sup> in nature decay plays a vital role in the cycle:

Decomposition and decay are the yin to the yang of growth, and together they form two halves of the whole that is the closed-loop cycle of natural ecosystems. Everything dies, and without the processes of decomposition and decay the world would quickly become not only overflowing with the remains of dead plants and animals, but also would experience a decline in new growth, due to a shortage of nutrients, that would be locked up and unavailable in the dead forms.<sup>2</sup>

Essentially this decay (only occurring after a loss) is what allows the new life to grow; for the cycle to continue, there must be a death.

Life and death do not exist as mere opposites, but they are entwined together; inseparable. “Within itself, life is already carrying death, which is just waiting for the door to open to it.”<sup>3</sup> We are surrounded by these opposing forces at all times, the light and the dark, life and death. One cannot exist without the other; our lives are a constant balance of these opposing forces. With this in mind, the negative space that comes about through a loss (death) must be filled with the opposing force, growth (life).

Growth is a relative term that has many expressions; in my Masters degree I applied the concept of psychological growth in a physical manner through the jewellery works I created. If we look at how most plants grow, they follow a pattern that is rather simple. A seed falls to the ground, and if the ground has enough moisture and there is enough light and the temperature is right, the seed will start to sprout. Initially, there is a single root that sprouts into the ground, anchoring the seed in its place and also allowing the seed to feed from the nutrients in the soil. Once the seed is secure in the soil and feeding from the nutrients, a shoot breaks free from the soil towards the sky. As the roots begin to spread underground, anchoring and feeding the growing plant, the shoot grows leaves, allowing the plant to photosynthesise.

"The plant develops its reproductive organs which is also known as the flowering stage. After the process of pollination is completed, the plant begins to produce fruits. These fruits contain seeds, which mature on the parent plant and fall to the ground thus starting its own life cycle."<sup>4</sup>



Figure 1. Antonia Boyle, *R.E Pohutukawa Slide*, 2019, thermoplastic, human tooth, sterling silver.

Through my research I came across the term "post-traumatic growth." Post-traumatic growth (PTG) refers to "what can happen when someone who has difficulty bouncing back experiences a traumatic event that challenges his or her core beliefs, endures psychological struggle (even a mental illness such as post-traumatic stress disorder), and then ultimately finds a sense of personal growth."<sup>5</sup>

The death of my mother was a life-altering loss that challenged the way I viewed the world and myself. It is fair to say that I am person who has found certain life events difficult to deal with, especially when they triggered episodes of depression and anxiety. However, I believe that I needed to fully lose a part of myself in order to grow stronger. I feel that using my grief and experiences of life as inspiration for this project has helped me process what I have gone through in a positive way. "PTG encompasses several domains, including greater appreciation for life, development of meaningful interpersonal relationships and a greater personal strength."<sup>6</sup> I find myself looking retrospectively at how I dealt with the loss of my mother; initially retreating and then looking for help, finding myself now in a distinctly different place than I was last year (both physically and mentally). "We plant the seeds of resilience in the ways we process negative events."<sup>7</sup> I find myself growing more like a plant, reaching out under the surface, unconsciously growing my roots to ground me and growing my shoots and flowers to enjoy life after living in illness and loss for so long.

The jewellery pieces I made for my Masters embodied this theory, that death is not the end, but a space for a new beginning, for growth. My work was shown under the title "Bloom" and exhibited at the Robert Piggott Gallery, Dunedin, in February 2019.

Each of the 12 pieces expressed the idea of loss feeding growth in physical form. The cycle begins at the point of loss, which for my work was human teeth (a loss we can all understand), in my case wisdom teeth. Surrounding the loss, appearing to grow from the tooth (or teeth, in some cases) are roots, and these roots spread across the body, seeming to grow into the wearer. The third part of the cycle is the outwards growth. In my work, growth is represented by 12 different New Zealand native flowers which appear to be sprouting forth from the point of loss, the tooth.



Figure 2. Antonia Boyle, *H.H Kowhai Brooch*, 2019, thermoplastic, polymer clay, human tooth, stainless steel.

The 12 native plants I chose to replicate in my work were taurepo, Chatham Islands forget-me-not, harakeke, kaka beak, wineberry, pohutukawa, Mount Cook buttercup, kowhai, raupeka, mānuka, houhere and poroporo. It was important to me to show both well-known natives and lesser known species, as well as a variety of sizes and colours. I wanted to express the vast diversity in our native plants. The reasons for my choosing native plants rather than introduced species, or even a mix, was to express my New Zealand identity. I was born and have lived in New Zealand my whole life and I have a strong connection to our land through its plants.

The 12 works are in various sizes and comprise brooches, slides and neck pieces. Each plant is replicated as closely as possible by my own two hands in a thermoplastic material. The size of each piece was dictated by the size of the plant in its natural form; the plants that have larger leaves thus lent themselves to being larger forms, as seen in the *A.M Chatham Islands Forget-me-not Neckpiece*. Smaller leafed plants with smaller flowers lent themselves to being smaller jewellery pieces, as seen in the *T.E Mānuka Slide*.



Figure 3. Antonia Boyle, A.M *Chatham Islands Forget-me-not Neckpiece*, 2019, thermoplastic, polymer clay, human teeth.

The pieces all sit on the chest or around the neck of the wearer. I chose to make pieces for this part of the body, as I feel it is an intimate space, close to the heart, close to our centre. When a piece is worn, it extends the space that that person occupies. In the midst of a depressed or anxious state, the sufferer wants to fade into the background and go unnoticed; however, standing tall and believing in your right to occupy space can be an empowering way of beginning a change to a more positive lifestyle. My jewellery pieces require people to stand tall – the larger pieces make the wearer physically more present and noticeable in a positive way. This physical extension of the body portrays the unseen psychological growth that can occur after a period of loss. It can also give a sense of growth to a person who is yet to experience it, giving them insight into how it feels to stand tall and be present.



Figure 4. Antonia Boyle, T.E *Mānuka Slide*, 2019, thermoplastic, polymer clay, human teeth, sterling silver.

Once worn, the wearer sees and feels how the pieces are formed around the body's curves, appearing to grow naturally around the bodies they are intended for. At the show, viewers were encouraged to try on the works and experience the sensation they produced on their body. Once they either saw other people taking the pieces down or heard that it was okay to do so, visitors became excited at the prospect of getting a closer look at the pieces and feeling them on their bodies, truly bringing them to life as they are intended to be.

Following my experience of loss and the subsequent trauma, and finally growth, I looked towards the things that gave me pleasure in life – making being one of them. The jewellery I make is made to be worn and, when this happens, it presents a different perspective to the wearer: By wearing my pieces, feeling them on your body, becoming aware of how they are blooming around the body, extending the body's occupied space, you are presented with a more positive outlook on life, growing towards the future. When you look more closely and find that this growth is centred on loss, you begin to understand the message. If this concept can speak to someone and help bring them out of the dark part of loss and introduce the idea of loss as an opportunity for a new beginning, for growth, then my work has truly fulfilled its purpose.

The contemporary jewellery exhibition "Bloom" completed **Antonia Boyle's** work for her Master of Fine Arts at the Dunedin School of Art. Antonia fell in love with jewellery as an art form during her studies at art school over the past seven years. Through these wearable art pieces, Antonia is able to express her passion for mental health advocacy, due to their ability to enact physical experiences in the wearers.

- 1 Alan Watson Featherstone, "Decomposition and Decay", *Trees For Life*, <https://treesforlife.org.uk/forest/forest-ecology/decomposition-and-decay/> (accessed 23 July 2018)
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Andreas Weber, *Matter and Desire: An Erotic Ecology*, trans. Rory Bradley (Hartford, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2017), 55.
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- 6 Kristen A Louiselle et al., "Posttraumatic Growth Associated with a Relative's Serious Illness," *Families, Systems & Health*, 26:1 (2011), 64-72.
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## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN ALL WE ARE LEFT WITH ARE THE INBRED AND SPOONFED?

Rachel Hope Allan



Figure 1. Rachel Allan, *Inbred & Spoonfed*, 2018, archival print on Moab Slickrock Metallic paper 300gsm, 1000 x 3000 mm.

The following text and images explore the motivation behind the exhibition “inbred & spoonfed” that was held at Robert Piggott Art Gallery in 2018. The works in this show developed from the research and photographs that figured in the exhibition and subsequent publication, “coke & popcorn” in 2015-16.

Animals have appeared in art for millennia as decorative motifs, objects of wonder and symbols of human triumphs and foibles. From the invention of photography through to the internet age, animals have been a frequent subject of the camera's lens, from portraits of beloved pets and exotic creatures to the documentation of human cruelty against them. Photographers are drawn to animal subjects, spanning the range from Count de Montizon's 1852 albumen print *Hippopotamus at the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park* to Craigie Horsfield's colossal zoo photo-tapestries made from video stills (2007). More recently, Gucci's Wooster Street store in New York hosted an exhibition by photographer Paige Powell and Dashwood Books celebrating her life and work with a limited-edition book that included a volume dedicated solely to animals.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, in Gucci's fall/winter 2018 fashion show, models were seen cradling lifelike models of Sphynx cats as they sashayed down the runway.

It is undeniable that we as a species have a fascinating relationship with animals. We share our homes with them and we cage them, we view them as entertainment and we consume them. In his book *The Psychopath Test*, Jon Ronson states that one of the stranger characteristics of psychopaths is their choice of pets. They are almost never cat people. “Because cats are willful.”<sup>2</sup>

I believe that our childhood relationship with animals plays a major role in how we view them as adults. I spent the first eight years of my life in Feilding (in the Manawatu District of the North Island) and vividly recall school visits to the local meatworks and the sides of beef stamped ‘NOT FOR EXPORT’ in bright red ink. I remember the first time I saw a Skeptics<sup>3</sup> music video set in a meatworks on the late-night TV music show *Radio with Pictures*, and the subsequent uproar when mainstream media got hold of it. According to Stuart Page, who directed, shot and edited the video, the “song was written purely about some guys who ‘pack meat’ and the video was made in that light – not wanting to cast any aspersions on the workers in the meat trade – but to document the ‘process’ of a sheep's life in contemporary NZ.”<sup>4</sup>

These formative experiences heavily influenced my relationship with animals and how I regarded them. Like many kids from Feilding, I had pet lambs growing up. They would appear in the backyard with a ribbon tied around their necks and for months they would be my closest companion, sleeping in my Wendy house, walking with me to school, until the day would arrive when they were no longer a pet lamb, but a sheep. I was always told that you never name your food. To this day I can recite off by heart all of my lambies' names, and I swear that none of them ended up in my belly.

Most of my childhood friends were lucky enough to have some kind of a pet growing up, and some of them even a horse. One of my most traumatic animal-related experiences (I have had a few) has to do with a horse, or more specifically a pony. I don't know quite where to start this story – I could ease you into it with descriptions of the driveway, the colour of the house, the breed of the yapping dog at my ankles, but I won't. All of that information isn't as important as the white pony. The white pony with a button where his eye should be. The shiny red button, tacked on as a placeholder – that shiny cherry-red button blanket stitched to his eyelid. That button has haunted me. As has the specific moment when I realised that I couldn't take him home, that I couldn't give him an eye patch or, at the very least, provide him with some superior suturing.

Based on Susan Sontag's proposition that "[p]hotographs cannot create a moral position, but they can reinforce one – and can help build a nascent one,"<sup>5</sup> the images in "inbred & spoonfed" are positioned somewhere between the snapshot and studio image. "inbred & spoonfed" tells a story. It is an ode to all my creatures – the ones tattooed on my body, those that share my home, haunt my dreams, inhabit this earth and have buttons for eyes. Challenging preconceived and outdated notions of photography and the ghettoisation of digital, I place photographic works that are framed and unframed, printed on photographic and non-photographic materials, captured on iPhone and film camera beside each other, allowing the image to do all the work.

Like so many things, photography has become nonhuman, and although it has moved away from the human-centric view of its creation, it consistently reminds me of my inevitable death and the death of those I cherish and my inability to escape the datum that death and photography are inextricably linked. "inbred and spoonfed" is caught in that in-between place of pleasure and depression. The photographs have blacks so thick they get stuck in your back teeth; they explore notions of loss and the fetishisation of processes, animals and objects. They are the evidence of a practice that is drenched in nostalgia.



Figure 2. Rachel Allan, *Sex, Death & Jerry-lee Lewis*, 2018, archival print on Moab Slickrock Metallic paper 300gsm, 1000 x 1000 mm.



Figure 3. Rachel Allan, *Ribbons & Combs*, 2018, archival print on Moab Slickrock Metallic paper 300gsm, 1000 x 1000 mm.

Contained within a thick black frame is my imaginarium, where empty enclosures morph with institutional objects and creatures both alive and dead pose for the camera. Printed on metallic silver paper, the images reveal the eerie spectre of the viewer that echoes the detached, manicured and sterile way in which we now view these creatures. The tableau featuring the man-sized skinned badgers and headless quarantined specimens asks what will be left if our species continues to consume and crop at our present alarming rate. The scale of the works, some over one metre high by three metres long, dwarfs the viewer, placing them literally face to face with the dead, dying and detained. The images force you to recall childhood trips to the zoo and the eyes of that lonely, hot polar bear living out its days in an artificial environment. Your hands become sticky and you can almost smell the urine-soaked hay and hear the quiet cooing of the ever-present pigeon. You swear you can taste formaldehyde in the air as you are forced into pressing your nose up to the glass.



Figure 4. Rachel Allan, *Bahnhof Zoo*, 2018, archival print on Moab Slickrock Metallic paper 300gsm, 500 x 500 mm.



Figure 5. Rachel Allan, *Behind the Glass*, 2016, archival print on Moab Slickrock Metallic paper 300gsm, 500 x 500 mm.



Figure 6. Rachel Allan, *Not Quite Gowanus Canal*, 2017, archival print on Moab Slickrock Metallic paper 300gsm, 500 x 500 mm.



Figure 7. Rachel Allan, *Tears Before Bed*, 2017, archival print on Moab Slickrock Metallic paper 300gsm, 500 x 500 mm.

As a child, my aunty used to tell me stories about how she used to ride the horses that were destined for the lion's dinner. She would jump the fences behind the zoo and break into the enclosures where the zoo kept the animals that were fated to be the apex predator's next meal. She would reminisce about using her cardigan as reins and would relay the anguish she felt when each week she would return, a horse would be missing, and how each time she wished she could save them. I have often thought of this story and sometimes lie in bed at night making lists of the creatures I would save if I couldn't save them all. According to the Centre for Biological Diversity, "We're currently experiencing the worst spate of species die-offs since the loss of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago."<sup>6</sup> Each day our news media are filled with alarming statistics or horrific stories demonstrating our inevitable demise. Sudan, the last male northern white rhino, died in March 2018.<sup>7</sup> If humans do indeed see animals as surrogates of themselves, as proposed by Arnold Arluke and Clinton R. Sanders in their book *Regarding Animals*,<sup>8</sup> what does that say about us?



Figure 8. Rachel Allan, *2 Trains and a Monorail*, 2017, archival print on Moab Slickrock Metallic paper 300gsm, 1000 x 1000 mm.



Figure 9. Rachel Allan, *Smudge*, 2017, archival print on Moab Slickrock Metallic paper 300gsm, 1000 x 1000 mm.

Over the past three years I have visited enclosed animals in Amsterdam, Japan, Germany, France, the United Kingdom and the US. I have hidden from mountain lions at the old abandoned Los Angeles Zoo and surreptitiously photographed specimens at the world's leading parasite museum. I have stood where Sugimoto famously performed his long exposures at the Natural History Museum in New York, and spent a snowy Christmas Day in the world's oldest zoo. I witnessed the aftermath of the great fire of 2017 at the penguin enclosure at London Zoo, and sat palm to palm with the oldest orangutan in captivity.

In order to complete this series of photographs, I had to become somewhat detached. I was both repulsed and compelled by what I saw and quite often had to shoot while tears ran down my cheeks and fogged up my glasses. You see, I was kind of stuck. I found myself paying entrance fees and financially supporting institutions that I detested, hoping that my admission fee was being reinvested in the captives' welfare – fingers crossed and all that. Marianne Macdonald of SAFE (Save Animals from Exploitation) believes people should boycott zoos: "I think people need to seriously question whether that's what they want to do with their money. ... Zoos are definitely something that needs to be consigned to the history books. The treatment of animals in zoos is not outright abuse, but in a lot of cases, particularly for the larger animals, they cause extreme deprivation because they are in such a restricted environment."<sup>9</sup> Somehow, on the date of my birth, I found myself in an aquarium<sup>10</sup> on top of a 60-story building in Ikebukuro, Tokyo, face to face with a seal. The site, Sunshine City, is billed as a city within a city and is ironically built on land once occupied by a prison.

Ultimately children and adults always find themselves dissatisfied by viewing animals sitting listlessly in enclosures. I have heard the question "Is he dead?" being uttered in many languages, because underneath all the flash conservation talk zoos are all the same. Zoos are depressing places. They are museums of living corpses; some species only exist in the gilded cages we have constructed, catalogued and barcoded – classified confirmation of our feast of destruction. And then there are the museums, packed full of carcasses – the marble tombs that hold the evidence of our perceived dominance. Then also the supermarkets with over-stuffed fridges. The pet stores with dying stock that deliver corroboration of our inability to recognise that the reservoir is running dry and the biodiversity of this planet is shrinking at an alarming rate.

According to Jesse Golden of New Zealand's Hamilton Zoo: "The animals we have in our zoo and the other zoos we work with are creating an insurance population, so that one day when things do improve we could potentially help their range countries with their conservation work and maybe bring that wildlife back and assist them with that."<sup>11</sup> But he also reveals what we all fear is true: "There's not much of a future for them right now, things are looking quite bleak for them out in the wild."<sup>12</sup>

Humanity has wiped out 60 percent of wild animal populations since 1970 and we are facing a mass extinction. According to *Taranaki Daily News* journalist Helen Harvey, "while zoo advocates believe modern, or progressive, zoos are important for conservation, research and education, others think zoos should be consigned to history. And actually, Auckland Zoo director Kevin Buley partly agrees with that sentiment. He reckons 95 per cent of the world's zoos should be shut down tomorrow."<sup>13</sup> "Inbred & spoonfed" is a lens on what happens when we do no more than comment on posts by trophy hunters and press sad face when Grumpy Cat 'passes away.' When we watch documentaries about pit bulls being rehabilitated by prison inmates, but won't donate to Dunedin Dog Rescue. The bees continue to die and I prepare baths for my inbred/purebred Sphynx cats and take extra care of Miss Myrtle with her one eye.



Figure 10. Rachel Allan, サンシャインシティ, archival print on Moab Slickrock Metallic paper 300gsm, 1000 × 1000 mm.



Figure 11. Rachel Allan, *No Need for Buttons*, 2019, archival print on Moab Slickrock Metallic paper 300gsm, 500 × 500 mm.



Figure 12. Rachel Allan, *Tokyo Hands*, 2018, archival print on Moab Slickrock Metallic paper 300gsm, 500 × 500 mm.

**Rachel Hope Allan** holds a Master of Fine Arts (with distinction) from Dunedin School of Art, New Zealand where she currently lectures in photography and electronic arts. She has exhibited both locally and internationally most recently at The Jarvis Dooney Galerie, Berlin, Germany (2019 & 2018), Wallplay, New York, USA (2017), The Yu Gallery, Shanghai (2017), The Tokyo International Art Fair, Tokyo (2018 & 2017), The Dunedin Public Art Gallery (2016) and Getty Images Gallery, London (2016). Her published artist-books are held in The Angela Morton Collection, Auckland City Library, The National Library of New Zealand, The University of Otago, Hocken Collections, The University of Canterbury and The Reminders Photography Stronghold, Tokyo, Japan.

Her research practice is wide-ranging, extends from traditional, darkroom-based processes through to digital and alternative liquid photography. Dealing with restraint, curiosity and mimicry, she is interested in using her work to challenge perceptions of reality, and to explore the fetishisation of processes and objects.

- 1 Steff Yotka, "Gucci Celebrates Photographer Paige Powell with an In-store Installation," *Vogue*, 19 April 2019, <https://www.vogue.com/article/gucci-photographer-paige-powell>; Paige Powell, *Paige Powell*, 4 vols (New York: Dashwood Books, 2019).
- 2 Jon Ronson, *The Psychopath Test: A Journey Through the Madness Industry* (London: Picador, 2011).
- 3 The Skeptics were a New Zealand post-punk band active between 1979 and 1990. The music video I refer to here is *AFFCO*, which was partially filmed in a meatworks. The lead singer spends most of the video wrapped in clingfilm covered in blood. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjvGtQdt2k>.
- 4 Stuart Page, "The Truth about the Skeptics' A.F.F.C.O Video," <http://vital.org.nz/stu.html>.
- 5 Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin, 1977), 17.
- 6 Doyle Rice, "These Species Went Extinct in 2018. More May be Doomed to Follow in 2019," *USA Today*, 31 December 2018, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2018/12/31/extinct-species-these-animals-were-lost-forever-2018/2450121002/>.
- 7 Sarah Gibbens, "Last Male Northern White Rhino Sudan Remembered in Ceremony," *National Geographic*, 31 March 2018, <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2018/03/sudan-last-male-northern-white-rhino-extinct-spd/>.
- 8 Arnold Arluke and Clinton R Sanders, *Regarding Animals* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1996).
- 9 Helen Harvey, "To Go or not to Go to the Zoo Tomorrow," *Taranaki Daily News*, 30 November 2018, [https://www.stuff.co.nz/taranaki-daily-news/news/108862906/to-go-or-not-to-go-to-the-zoo-tomorrow?fbclid=IwAR0r\\_BjRIFB7KgEA5mOZsSxZzIviHDn5IwTbel5beeRIDg94cnpPFe0NCss](https://www.stuff.co.nz/taranaki-daily-news/news/108862906/to-go-or-not-to-go-to-the-zoo-tomorrow?fbclid=IwAR0r_BjRIFB7KgEA5mOZsSxZzIviHDn5IwTbel5beeRIDg94cnpPFe0NCss).
- 10 Sunshine Aquarium, <https://sunshinecity.jp/en/aquarium/>.
- 11 RNZ, "Work with Endangered Animals is Insurance Policy for Future, Zoo Says," *MSN News*, 20 April 2019, <https://www.msn.com/en-nz/news/national/work-with-endangered-animals-is-insurance-policy-for-future-zoo-says/ar-BBVW8psT>.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Harvey, "To Go or not to Go to the Zoo Tomorrow."

## ENCOUNTERS: REFLECTING ON THE TRAJECTORY OF AN ART OBJECT

Marion Wassenaar

This essay explores how the meaning of an art object can be altered depending on the context in which the object is represented and encountered. By detailing the provenance of the object, I am able to describe the multiple stories attributed to the object through a material culture framework. The item selected for this study is an artwork titled *Dreamwork*. The work, as art, and its provenance provide documentation to support a historical, symbolic and environmental perspective that explores how the setting for an object affects perception. I present through a personal lens, as artist-maker, a dialogue on my subjective relationship with this object.

The art object in question takes the form of an unconventional artist book consisting of the carbonised remains of a copy of Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*, stored in a reagent bottle with the book's title laser-engraved onto the glass surface. The book, in its original, tatty form, was a 1921 edition translated into English by AA Brill and published by George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London. My copy became available for purchase through a secondhand auction website on the Internet.

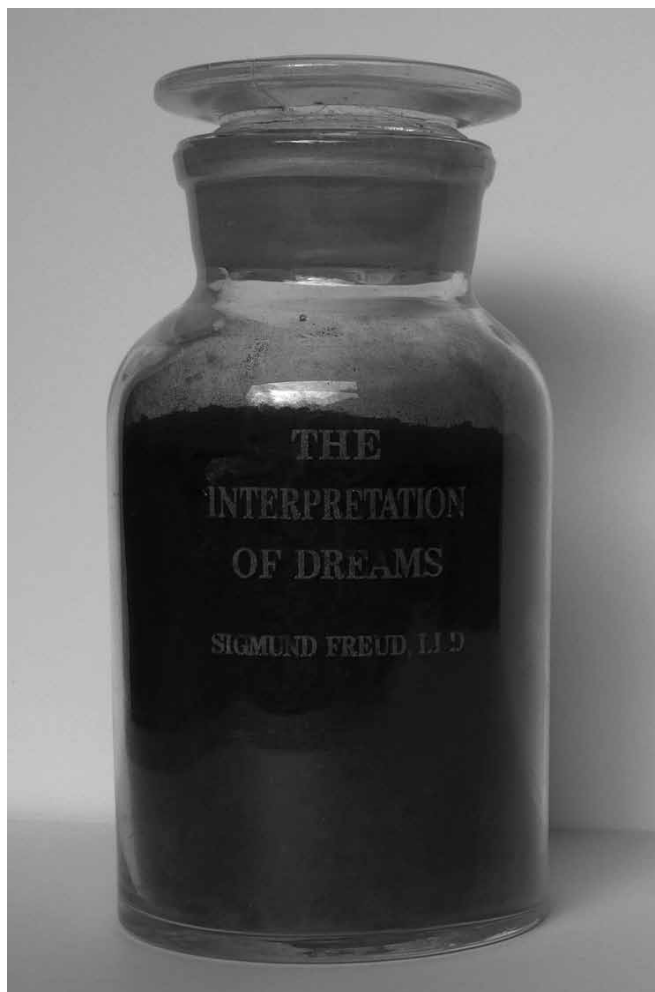


Figure 1. M Wassenaar, *Dreamwork*, 2014,  
carbonised paper and glass,  
170 x 93mm.

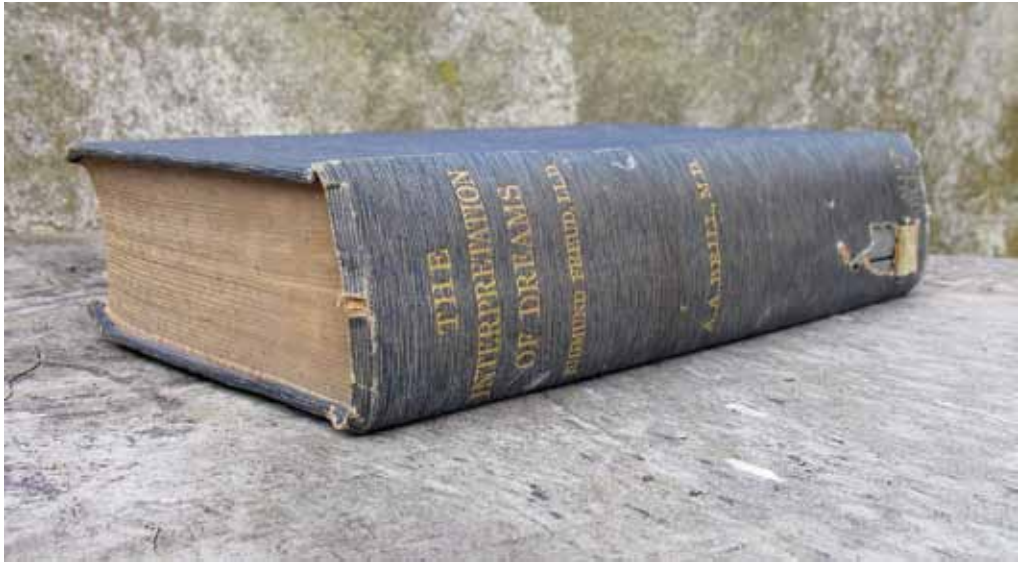


Figure 2.

Prior to acquisition, no data is available on the almost one hundred-year provenance of my copy of the book, from its journey from the publisher to New Zealand, or the possible number of readers influenced by this copy. The book was transformed into charcoal in a home woodburner. Once combusted, ink residue on the burnt pages makes the text barely discernible.

There is no ash contaminating the charcoal, nor is there any smell of incineration. The carbonized residue of the pages is crushed into small flakes and powder. The charcoal remains of the book including the cloth cover almost fill the bottle. The clear glass 500ml reagent bottle I used, with a wide neck and glass stopper, can be purchased as standard laboratory equipment. A text stating the bottle's storage capacity of 500ml is moulded into the top of the stopper. There is no seal making the lid easy to remove. Where the stopper and neck make contact, an etched surface is visible. Laser-etched text on the exterior of the bottle simulates the stamped text that appeared on the spine of the book, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, and includes the author's name and the letters LLD (Doctor of Laws). The text is scaled up from its original size.

## CONTEXT

I accept that book lovers may dread the thought of book burning, not only as a crime against culture but also as a symbolic loss of knowledge. I do not condone the deliberate and violent destruction of books because of war, prejudice or censorship. I employ the burnt book in my art practice in a cyclic transformation of organic form in order to engage in altered perceptions of the context in which the book was originally set. I also acknowledge the many uncharred books sourced in my research, and personally prefer to choose the tactility of handling the physical object as opposed to onscreen reading. Turning the pages of a new book, with the smell of the fresh ink escaping from each page, gives as much pleasure as rummaging through shelves of secondhand books in opportunity shops. The fact remains that we are a product of the world we live in, at nature's mercy, in a world predicated warfare over welfare and devastation over conservation. I question what insight society has actually achieved over many centuries and what humanity has gained from this prior knowledge. Earlier this year, news unfolded of the unprecedented massacre of innocent men, women and children in Christchurch, with the loss of many lives. On 15 March 2019 Aotearoa, our long white cloud, darkened.



Figure 3.

This dark tragedy prompts me to contemplate earlier horrors that include censorship and book burning during the Second World War 2, in particular the publications of Sigmund Freud, widely known as the father of psychoanalysis. *The Interpretation of Dreams* is a classic work by Freud that sets out his theories on dreams and the unconscious. In choosing to burn his book, I reflect on humankind's negative actions, either through carelessness or intentional destruction, and the fragility of knowledge from the past that passes into our technologically driven future.



Figure 4.

Elaine Gurian, a consultant and advisor to museums, questions the power of the object, asking what is real and whether the object is the image or the story attached to it. Of the many items available to be collected in our mass-production culture, she notes: "Which of these objects to collect often depends not on the object itself but on the associated story that may render one of them unique or important."<sup>1</sup>

The same can be said for the multiple copies, editions and formats of Freud's book, whether they exist in hard copy or are available for download. The book itself, while nearly a century old, is not a first edition and was acquired over the Internet on an auction website. Does the transformation into its carbon state then make the object any less or more important and, in this transformed state, can it still be referred to as a book? In what follows I seek to demonstrate the book's significance in its current carbonised state.

## PROVENANCE

*Dreamwork* was originally exhibited in a group show at Fresh and Fruity Gallery, George Street, Dunedin, as part of the White Night Gallery Crawl, an event in the Otago University Student Association's Art Week, in July 2014. The gallery space was set up in the entry foyer to several artists' studios, so was restricted in size. With seven artists represented, the brief for the exhibition was to respond in some way to the term 'compact.'

The artists' statements in the exhibition catalogue explained their response to 'compact.' For *Dreamwork*, I saw the concept of condensation as informing the work. I first listed a number of dictionary definitions: *compact* –



Figure 5.

"to make more dense; compress; condense;" *condensation*: "Psychology – The process by which a single symbol or word is associated with the emotional content of several, not necessarily related ideas, feelings, memories, or impulses, especially as expressed in dreams." These definitions were followed by a sentence stating: "The reagent bottle containing the charcoal remains of Sigmund Freud's book symbolises suppressed hopes and dreams."

The work sat on an old fold-up desk with a reading lamp shining on the bottle, and was positioned in a small alcove in the entry foyer.

*Dreamwork* showed again in "Les morgue des ouvres" (The book morgue), an exhibition looking at the book as art object, curated by second-year students from the Print Studio, Dunedin School of Art, at Dutybound bookbindery, Dunedin, in October 2014. The space houses large printing and bookbinding machinery. The exhibition displayed book works sitting on a yellow shelf suspended from yellow cords in the centre of the public shop space. *Dreamwork* sat on this hanging shelf with a number of other artist books.

The exhibition coincided with the Art + Book symposium held at the Dunedin School of Art to support Dunedin's bid for recognition as a UNESCO City of Literature, held in conjunction with the Otago Arts Festival. The artist presented a paper at the Art + Book symposium titled "The Burnt Book as Art Object" which was later submitted as a chapter in *Art and Book*, edited by Peter Stupples and published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing. The book chapter includes a reference to *Dreamwork*.<sup>2</sup>

The Museum of Prehistory and Archaeology of Cantabria (MUPAC) in Santander, Spain, was host to the most recent viewing of *Dreamwork*. The work was submitted by proposal for the Artists' Book exhibitions included in the Impact 10 International Print Conference held 1-9 September 2018. The theme of the conference was 'Encounters.' The curators selected my work for exhibition in MUPAC due to the historic reference of the book. The work travelled with me on my journey to attend the conference and returned to New Zealand by post.

MUPAC is located in the centre of the city, beneath Santander's Mercado del Este indoor market. The museum houses a collection of art dating from the Upper Palaeolithic era, with the oldest pieces, retrieved from the El Castillo Cave, more than 100,000 years old. Material from Cantabria is highlighted in the collections, including several giant discoidal Cantabrian stelae. *Dreamwork* sat on a plinth within a glass case in the central space of the museum overlooking the stelae.

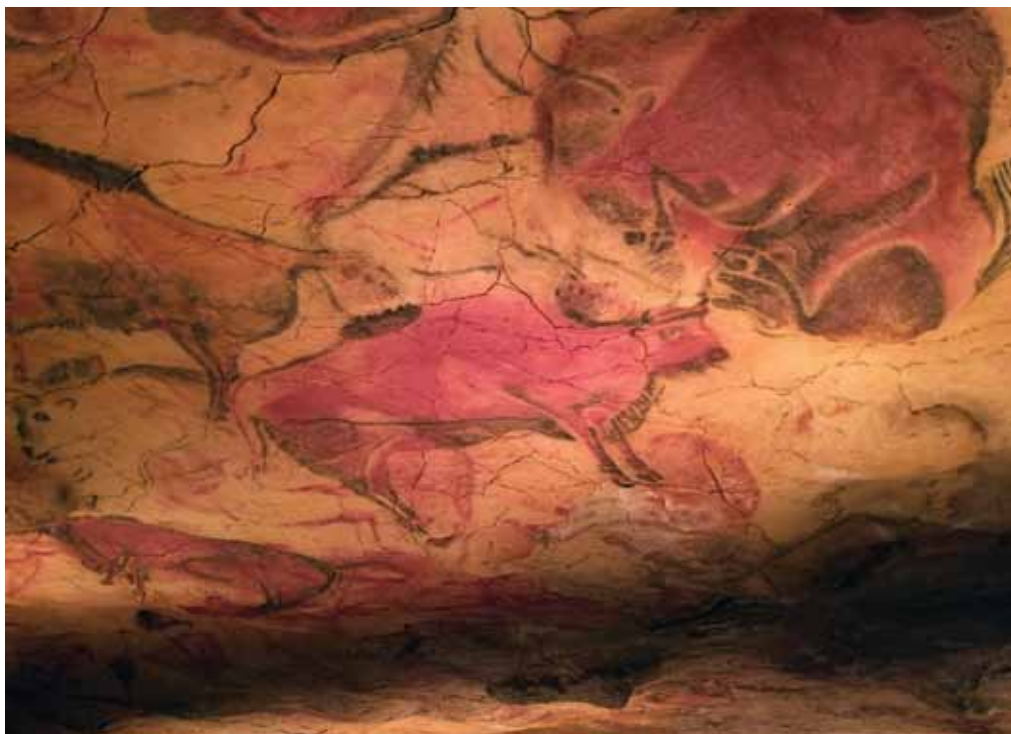


Figure 6.

## SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT

Working with the burnt book has allowed me to engage in a transformation that exposes the cyclic, organic nature of sustainable materials. Although published in 1921, the book's provenance includes my purchase in 2013, proving that this particular copy escaped the 'biblioclasm' that occurred during the Second World War. The etched inscription on the reagent bottle reproduces the title of the book taken from the spine; this provides the only clue that the charcoal within the reagent bottle relates to Freud's text. In the first exhibition at Fresh and Fruity Gallery, the work was displayed on a desk with a reading light illuminating the object, suggesting a psychoanalytic reading – as if the contents were under scrutiny, ready to express the unconscious in a symbolic gesture.

The book takes on a new form and meaning in its compacted or condensed state. In a transference of meaning, the reagent bottle containing the charcoal remains of Freud's book conjures suppressed potentials. Living in the Anthropocene, climate change and carbon emissions are at the forefront of our political and environmental agendas. The book, processed into charcoal, demonstrates that ongoing carbon emissions into the atmosphere are not inevitable, thus giving some hope for an optimistic future. In its context in the group show of artists' books at Dutybound, *Dreamwork* reveals a situation where there is no turning back.

Kazimir Malevich's essay "On The Museum," written in 1919, proposes, perhaps somewhat ironically from an avant-gardist standpoint, the notion of the pharmacy as a solution to the impending destruction of Russian museums and art collections by civil, political and economic unrest. Malevich's pharmacy contains the incinerated remains of history, stored in apothecary bottles on a chemist's shelf, in what appears as a radical archive. Malevich suggests that these remains will incite the creation of progressive ideas, hypothesising a vitalising agency in the transformative character of the burnt book as art object.<sup>3</sup>

The book, as organic matter, has the potential for transformation into charcoal, almost pure carbon, through the process of pyrolysis or gasification. This involves controlled incineration in the absence of oxygen. Charcoal has the capacity to convey intimate connections between being and decay, and birth and death. While Malevich was referencing the impact of political unrest in relation to his pharmacy, I use the notion of the pharmacy as a way of responding to the effects of climate change in order to contextualise a framework in material culture that can be utilised to consider long-term sustainability.

With the object situated in MUPAC, displayed among artefacts dating from the Upper Paleolithic and the Iron Age, the burnt organic matter of charcoal is a reminder of mortality. The book in charcoal form conveys the futility of existence, raising the question of the uncertainty of the planet's continuing existence following the demands placed on natural resources by human activity. Near Santander is the Cave of Altamira where Paleolithic polychrome cave art, created using charcoal, ochre and hematite and dating from 35,000 to 11,000BC, has been relatively well preserved. The cave was rediscovered in 1868 but, over time and with increasing public viewing, the artworks sustained damage. In 1977 the cave was closed to the public, with a replica 'neo' cave opening in 2001. Visiting the neo cave as part of the conference and seeing the reproductions of bison and other animals in charcoal and other materials, I am reminded of the cyclic nature of charcoal and the immense duration of time that this art has endured. Could *Dreamwork* possibly survive 11,000 years?

**Marion Wasseenaar** holds a Master in Fine Arts from the Dunedin School of Art and specialises in print practices. Her research focuses on the collision between humans and their environment. She lectures in the Print Studio at the Dunedin School of Art and is collections coordinator of the Otago Polytechnic art collection. She is currently undertaking a Postgraduate Diploma in Museum Studies.

- 1 Elaine Gurian, "What is the Object of the Exercise?," in her *Civilizing the Museum: The Collected Writings of Elaine Heumann Gurian* (London: Routledge, 2006), 33-47, at 38.
- 2 Peter Stupples, ed., *Art and Book* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016).
- 3 Kazimir Malevich, "On the Museum," in his *Essays on Art 1915-1933*, trans. Troels Andersen (London: Rapp & Whiting, 1971), 68-72, at 70.

## INTERFERENCE PAINT

Dii Moffat

### INTRODUCTION

I am a painter, a colourist and a maker of lyrical and semi-mathematical shapes on flat surfaces. Currently, my work is painstaking. It is through my chosen processes that I convey a certain lightness of expression, which I realise is paradoxical, but that's how it works for me. The most important thing I learned at school is the importance of hard work and slogging on. There are so many times when making work that you wonder why the hell you ever thought you could be an artist, but things either resolve themselves and/or you learn from your attempts.

### THE WORK – PRACTICAL ASPECTS

My work is conducted by gluing crumpled aluminium foil onto a canvas, 'embossing' lines into the foil with blunt tools of various types and then painting on the foil.

I use a wide variety of acrylic paints, some of which are new products which produce effects that go beyond a 'flat' effect. Some of these paints have become available only in recent times (such as aluminium-based, interference and beaded-medium paints), although similar effects could be obtained using expensive foils and metallic glazes. These materials allow a type of optical dimensionality to be expressed, in my case in a series of paintings with a determinedly flat effect on a textured base. I work using these 'new' paints. Their properties include transparency, reflection and refraction. Learning how to utilise the new media within my developing practice has been both challenging and invigorating, requiring fresh judgements as to their suitability and how they fit in with my personal taste.

Painters use different materials and layers to express depth of surface and shadows and perspectival devices to show depth of field. The new materials I use achieve these effects in a different way. Differential colouring allowed our ancestors to distinguish between possible foods and poisons. Colours enrich our understanding of the lived-in landscape in ways that simply keep us alive and also add a level of appreciation which we understand as beauty.



Figure 1. Dii Moffat in studio.

## Other paints and effects

My paintings have to do with layering. With ordinary paint, there is a limit to how far from the physical canvas dimensionality be expressed, unless the artist does something clever with optical illusions or constructs three-dimensional bases. While I am using textured canvases as a base, I want to be able to bring that 'something more' to the painterliness of the surfaces.

The first new material I tried was aluminium paint. At first I chose to use it because of the intensity of colour. You can buy the base and tint it to obtain a better range of colours than are commercially available. It needs to be well sealed to avoid oxidation over time. Aluminium paint adds a dimensionality to paintings without the need to be illustrative.

Glass-bead textured gel gives a similar dimensional effect on a different scale. Originally used to produce glow-in-the-dark effects for road signs, this product is commercially available. This substance requires specific lighting conditions to be seen to full effect, but adds a slight glimmer even in low lighting. The beads are transparent, bringing tiny colour areas forward.

## Interference paint

While interference paints can be mixed with coloured acrylics, I choose to use them as a wash. There was a need to conduct experiments with these products, as the effect of these paints is strikingly different over different painted surfaces. They add their own story to flat paint colours and pull the surface toward the viewer. Interference paints change in their colour effect depending on the viewing angle, especially on a textured surface. The effect is the result of the use of pulverised mica with thin layers of various metals. Golden Paints also use iron oxide.

According to the Golden Paint Company, "The property at work in the Interference Colors is known as light interference, most commonly seen in the rainbow effect created by a thin layer of oil on the surface of water. Thomas Young identified this phenomenon in 1801 in a series of investigations that were eventually instrumental in advancing the theory for the wave-like nature of light. Whenever light strikes a boundary between two materials of different densities, the light will either be reflected or refracted. If the refracted light encounters yet another boundary between materials of different densities, this light will again either be reflected or refracted. This process continues every time a new phase is encountered."<sup>1</sup>



Figure 2. Dii Moffat in studio.

## Metal paints

Many companies make paints with a metal look. Gold and silver leaf, where the precious metals are beaten to form an extremely fine layer, have been used in paintings for centuries and were, of course, extremely expensive. Modern paint manufacturers such as Golden Paints use varieties of mica and metallic flakes ground to a variety of sizes in their products. Pearlised paints are in the same family, but have a different appearance. Many companies make pearlised paint, but they all look different, so experimentation is needed in order to get the desired result.

## THE WORK – PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECTS

The work I create interrogates the various aspects of what Timothy Morton calls “hyperobjects” – “objects which have a vitality to them, but you can’t touch them, like race or class, or climate change.”<sup>2</sup> Natural forces such as tectonic movement may also be seen as hyperobjects.

My paintings use a sort of grid. The grid as an element embodying direction and movement is implicit in my work, in a way that the use of an alternative term such as net, nexus or matrix might illustrate better. “The grid announces modern art’s will to silence, its hostility to literature, to narrative, to discourse – the grid declares the *modernity of modern art*.” (Rosalind Krauss)<sup>3</sup>

The grid fits well in many painters’ consciousness as a framework for thinking, generating differing expressions and understandings of the device. It can take a multiplicity of forms and individual expressions, especially when colour is involved – or, conversely, not involved – as a reflection of the individual’s thoughts and feelings.

I aspire to make grids that do not turn their backs on nature, as nature is an important theme in much of my work in this time of climate change. Grids exist in nature, but are *acted on* by any number of forces and disruptions. Krauss’s grids are mathematical abstractions, but grids are found throughout nature and human endeavour. While one can choose to ignore one or the other; to do so is to make an artificial distinction. At base, everything is mathematical including nature.



Figure 3. Dii Moffat, *Night Time in the City in the time of the Hyperobject*.  
Nexus Exhibition 2019.

I choose to challenge the straightness of the line and the uniformity and mathematical precision of the grid. As much as we would like to convince ourselves of the mathematical perfection of our lines and our grids, there are always imperfections in their manufacture, as well as elements of the unexpected which are a part of the nature of reality. The Christchurch earthquakes taught me this. I don't think this is either a good or a bad thing – but I do think it is something that is overlooked in our desire to see things as perfect simulacra of our imagining.

Agnes Martin saw this point clearly: “The minimalists clear their minds of their personal problems ... they don't even leave *themselves* there! They prefer being absolutely pure, which is a very valid expression of involvement with reality. But I just can't. I rather regretted that I wasn't really a minimalist. It's possible to regret that you're not something else. You see, my paintings are not cool!”<sup>4</sup>



Figure 4. Dii Moffat, *Ocean Moves*. Nexus Exhibition 2019.

The grid can be an organising principle, but can also be a place from which to launch further thinking. It asks the question – what lies beyond the artist's way of seeing and thinking? Having a place to start from is good. Having a place to go to is better.

A mesh consists of links and of gaps between the links. These links and gaps are what enable causality to happen... The meshwork that each object demonstrates is common to less perforated sets of links and less regular ones too. It is precisely the gaps between and within things that enable entities to grip them, like the syncromesh in the manual transmission system of a car: Mesh means the threads and the holes between the threads.<sup>5</sup>

Woven fabric is usually composed of a (warp and weft) grid. The grid formed in fabric and other forms of work that feature fabric informs my work, both overtly and subconsciously. This has, over time and influenced by my reading, led to an understanding of the metaphorical power of the grid and complicating factors involving colour.

Assessing the elements of a painted work in terms of its constituent elements, American artist Jack Whitten spoke about an experimental method of creation. I am interested in his ideas about seeing a painting as the sum of its parts, in a way that also focusses on its individual elements as semi-atomic elements. He argues that the makeup

of an individual artwork is hugely nuanced – something worthy of more than a glancing interest. The spaces between the grid lines are a secondary focus which draws the viewer in and enriches the works, adding depth, colour and texture to the viewing process. As a mosaic, Whitten's grids utilise both the positive and negative spaces created as positive forces. Whitten's grid format has nothing to do with minimalism – if anything it is a sort of inclusive maximalism. He wants to express everything he can about his subjects and the spaces they inhabit.

Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama's work is based on similar principles: "Kusama's gestures are unpretentious and repetitive, without relinquishing their individuality; yet, collectively, they build and generate energy latent in the material paint and capture (remember, these are nets) light. *The Infinity Nets* shift from pictorialism, in which a painting suggests a vicarious experience, to a more direct perceptual experience. This process draws the infinite into the imminent."<sup>6</sup>



Figure 5. Dii Moffat, *Big Yellow*. Nexus Exhibition 2019.

The grid is just one of many possible structures within an artistic language, and colour further informs our understanding of what the artist is expressing within that structure. All grids are not created equal – if indeed the artist considers the form being utilised to be a grid. It may be a net, a mapping system, a mosaic or any number of forms that form a grid-like structure. Our works arise from our learnings and experiences. Although I initially adopted the grid from my experience of working with fabric, its use has expanded into a general frame of reference. As time goes on, the grid varies in form and now seems to be receding to some degree. What is happening with the colours within the lines becomes of increasing interest to me. The grid structure in my work is ambivalent and ambiguous – it can be used for any number of purposes.

The effects produced by colour and paint generate both emotive and dimensional meanings which go beyond purely categorical definitions. For Rosalind Krauss, the grid was impervious to change. A circle is impervious to change only in that it is always circular – but it can represent any number of different things, from a sunflower to an atom. The grid is part of an artist's vocabulary – it is the way it is used and manipulated that gives it a specific meaning. It is open to a multitude of interpretations, which makes it a useful structure on which to base a practice. The grid can always be undone and pushed in new directions. We live in a time of climatic uncertainty. My own experience of the Christchurch earthquakes has made me aware of the uncertainty of stability, as can be seen in the dialogue between movement and stability in my work. In this context, colour provides both dimensionality and emotion.

My paintings currently follow a sort of pattern which comprises the 'forces,' the 'grid' and the 'crossing bars.' As I continue, I push these elements around and add other structures. Some paintings are based on specific events or bodies of thought, while some are meditations on abstract concepts. I intend them all to have a level of complexity that will attract and to reward the viewer's continued attention. I have finally arrived at a place where I have discovered a form of painting which is allowing me to learn and grow and sustain an ongoing interest – and this is a great delight.



Figure 6. Dii Moffat, *Earth Moves Red*. Nexus Exhibition 2019.

**Dii Moffatt** recently obtained her Master in Fine Arts at the respectable age of 57, having first attended Dunedin School of Art in the 1980s. A great deal has changed in that time. There is a stronger focus on intellectual rigour, which I feel is a damn good thing.

(Photographs from 'Nexus' Exhibition, by Pam McKinlay)

- 1 Golden Artist Colors, *Product Information Sheet: Interference And Iridescent Acrylics*, [https://www.goldenpaints.com/technicalinfo\\_iridint](https://www.goldenpaints.com/technicalinfo_iridint) (accessed 16 October 2018).
- 2 Timothy Morton, *The Ecological Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 130.
- 3 Rosalind Krauss, "Grids," *October*, 9 (Summer 1979), 50-64.
- 4 John Gruen, "'What We Make, is What We Feel': Agnes Martin on her Meditative Practice, in 1976," *ARTnews*, 31 July 2015, <http://www.artnews.com/2015/07/31/what-we-make-is-what-we-feel-agnes-martin-on-her-meditative-practice-in-1976/> (accessed 18 June 2018).
- 5 Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 83.
- 6 James Romaine, "Yayoi Kusama's Infinity Nets: Sublime or Spectacle?," *Comment*, 5 June 2009, <https://www.cardus.ca/comment/article/yayoi-kusamas-infinity-nets-sublime-or-spectacle/> (accessed 25 November 2018).

## IN TRANSIT: SEARCHING FOR A SENSE OF 'PLACE'

Tom Voyce



Figure 1. Tom Voyce, *High Street, Dunedin*, 2018, oil on board, 40 x 27 cm.

In this report, I present an overview of my artistic process and my residency at the Dunedin School of Art in September and October 2018. Seeking to build on previous bodies of work that explore the subject of place, I arrived in Dunedin, having travelled from the UK via Canada, the US and Fiji. Over the course of five weeks' travel, I had built up a body of preparatory drawings, colour studies, written notes and photographs that recorded my transition from place to place. I would go on to use this information to inform my studio practice on arrival in Dunedin. While the great contrast of landscapes, cityscapes and skyscapes all excited my artistic eye, I always found myself drawn to certain fundamental concerns that, in recent years, have become essential features of my artistic approach: perspective, composition and a contrast of light.

## BEGINNINGS

While an undergraduate student, I became intrigued with the work of the mid-twentieth-century painter Edward Hopper. His atmospheric, cinematic scenes caught my imagination. His uneasy

yet beautiful and insightful compositions made me appreciate colour and the beauty of light. His work supplemented an already growing interest in mid-twentieth-century American history around the time of the Great Depression and the lead-up to the Second World War. It seemed an age of innocence, yet intense hardship. The cinematic appeal of his work reflects a sense of unease and loneliness, the feeling that something unsaid is happening.<sup>1</sup> Hopper's work went on to influence many artists and creative people – for example, filmmaker Alfred Hitchcock and New Zealand landscape painter Graham Sydney.

Despite refusing to allow his work to be categorised as part of the new popular movement associated with the abstract expressionists in the 1940s and '50s, there is a clear nod to a sense of the abstract in some of Hopper's later paintings. I often found myself transcribing his pieces in order to understand the sense of silent tension and intrigue that they convey, but then also begin to abstract them. This was the first time that I found myself exploring the boundaries around this genre of painting.



Figure 2. Tom Voyce, *Bay Area Street View*, 2016, oil on board, 13 x 9.7 cm.



Figure 3. Tom Voyce, *View of the Bay, San Francisco*, 2019,  
oil on board, 80 x 55 cm.

foundations of modern art as it was taken up by a new generation of artists who began to demonstrate how painting could become the subject itself, believing that artistic expression is “drawn from an inborn feeling for form; the ideal lies in the spontaneity, simplicity and directness of children.”<sup>3</sup>

Richard Diebenkorn (1920-1993), a contemporary of these abstract expressionists, was a modern painter of extraordinary intelligence and sensitivity who quietly constructed a place for himself in the history of twentieth century art with his singular vision and powerful commitment to the idea of practicing both figuration and abstraction.<sup>4</sup> Informed mostly by the landscape of California and the West Coast, but also by interiors and in some cases the human form, Diebenkorn was a painter of uncommon stature who was situated firmly within the ethos of American modernism.<sup>5</sup> But for the first seven years of his professional life, Diebenkorn’s practice reflected the same vocabulary as his peers – abstraction. Thus many observers were shocked when, in 1955, he made a sudden shift to a representational mode.<sup>6</sup>

Modern abstraction began in the nineteenth century with artists such as JMW Turner and James McNeil Whistler, and expanded later with the impressionists, but it was Henri Matisse who demonstrated how painting could depict the essence of a place while also pushing the boundaries between composition, shape and colour, as shown in his *French Window at Collioure*, 1914.<sup>2</sup>

Decades later, throughout the 1940s and ‘50s a large number of artists began to change the path of modern art as New York overtook Paris in the postwar years to lead the way in artistic trends. Abstract expressionism, as it became known, has since been seen as a quintessentially American movement, but arguably the artists at its centre came to the United States from across the oceans, predominantly from an increasingly troubled Europe. Artists such as Mark Rothko brought with them a wealth of new ideas and beliefs including the aesthetic of a new, purer way of mark-making that defined a whole new era of painting. This movement shook the

Diebenkorn's influences hark back to the founders of what became modernism in painting, in particular Matisse. He was, however, also drawn to the work of Edward Hopper by his teacher Daniel Mendelowitz and, after graduating from the California school of Fine Arts (CSFA) in San Francisco (now known as the San Francisco Art Institute), Diebenkorn developed a rigorous abstract style influenced by the likes of Clifford Still and Wilhem de Kooning. He began teaching and then returned to the Bay Area, where he worked in a more representational style alongside other artists, becoming part of what was later known as the Bay Area Figurative Movement. His subject matter at the time included interiors, still lifes, landscapes and the human form.

This style persisted for much of the 1950's and 60's as Diebenkorn explored places where he worked or visited, such as Albuquerque and Berkeley. But after seeing a Matisse show in Los Angeles in 1966, his work took a massive shift back to abstraction. It is difficult not to ascribe enormous weight to this experience for the direction his work took from then on.<sup>7</sup> A year later he began his famous *Ocean Park* series.<sup>8</sup>

It was my own interest in the depiction and exploration of place that originally drew me to Diebenkorn's work. I was not initially appreciative of his later *Ocean Park* series, preferring his earlier figurative studies from around the Bay Area, in particular *Cityscape I*.<sup>9</sup> It was at my Bachelors degree show that I produced a series of oil-on-canvas works based on a single location, a small housing estate in my university town of Aberystwyth, an estate that reminded me greatly of my home, both having been built in the 1970s in the same style. They seemed to hold the warm light of evening – a feature that I always noticed, but which was never apparent in my own work from this period. The focus on the 'silent theatre' of a composition in my work reflected my interest in Edward Hopper, whose work had a powerful hold over me at that time and with whom 'picture after picture portrays that inescapable silence.'<sup>10</sup>

During my Master's degree, I continued to explore the subject of place – often areas void of people, featuring hard-edged, human structures which were built into the landscape. My *Dovey Junction* series explored the isolation of both the artist and the subject matter of an image. The junction is an isolated place, a platform that seemed to serve no purpose, visited only so often by a train, with people never getting off or on and the train disappearing into the distance. Hopper's works portraying lonely figures – paintings and etchings of both landscapes and urban areas – are equally powerful when the human element is removed.

I have always had an interest in travel and journeys. I have explored this often in smaller projects in the past and it has continued to be a element that has influenced my work. I decided to use this subject as the basis for a body of work for my Master's show. My aim was to produce small, semi-abstract studies in watercolour while travelling, which I could then refer to when back in the studio. Influenced by Diebenkorn, these paintings would show a balance between the abstract and the figurative and were done at speed in order to retain the energetic brushwork that I found to be exciting. When back in the studio, these studies would be used as the basis for larger paintings.

However, on larger-scale canvases, I found that I struggled to replicate the energetic brushwork of the smaller studies and, as a result, my work has stayed at a smaller scale. My painting has also been manipulated by a new mark-making tool – my painting wedge. This tool has two hard edges and fits neatly in the palm of the hand. I use it alongside a variety of filbert brushes, and sometimes an etching needle used to score the surface with a sgraffito effect. With these processes combined, I have begun to produce my 'signature' style of painting.

Working small also lends itself well to building up a whole series of artworks that relate to each other in terms of their origins. Using oils means that drying time can sometimes be a problem, but by working with thin layers and diluting the paint with small amounts of turpentine, and by working on up to ten pieces at once, I have developed a way of working that has enabled these paintings not only to share the same subject matter, but also to share the same history in terms of their colour palette, mark-making and general process.

After art school, I continued to develop my artistic process while making the most of the facilities available to me. Having only a small garden shed as a studio, I retained the small scale of my paintings while looking to push and pull the boundaries between abstraction and figuration. I also began to work full time as a secondary school art teacher, which broadened my horizons when it came to exploring and experimenting with other working methods.

## THE BIG OPPORTUNITY

In 2017 my work was selected for an national landscape painting competition that was also shown as part of a television series on the UK digital platform, Sky Arts. *Landscape Artist of the Year* was formatted so that I would be competing against other artists, both professional and amateur, who would be rendering a given scene in a limited time of four hours. My practice lent itself well to these constraints, and I worked on four studies at once, developing the more successful pieces until I was left with two to choose from at the end. I made my way through the competition and eventually won the final. The prize was a £10,000 commission to paint the house that had once belonged to the famous British playwright Noël Coward in Jamaica.

The unprecedented publicity that came with winning the competition allowed my work to be seen by a large audience across the world. I was approached by art galleries and collectors, taking my art practice overnight from being a part-time, out-of-hours occupation to a totally different place. 2018 proved to be a life-changing year for me as an emerging artist. I had a small solo show in February that featured most of my recent work, including paintings completed on location in Jamaica and those from the *Landscape Artist of the Year* series. This exhibition was incredibly successful, and I later had a second exhibition in Nottingham.

I wanted to make the most of the opportunity I had been given while also continuing to develop my artistic practice. As a result, I began looking into art residencies in order to find ways in which I could become more focused on my work, but also develop professionally by meeting other artists. Combining teaching with my artistic practice is also something that I wanted to continue.

## IN TRANSIT

Bags packed, I started on my journey from the UK to Canada, where I travelled from Calgary to Vancouver through the Canadian Rockies. When travelling, I found that the contrast in the light between the sun casting shadows on the mountains and the linear shadows of the power lines on the roads was visually attractive in terms of composition. In fact, compositionally, Canada lent itself perfectly to my work. The long straight roads leading the eye away to a distant point were complemented by the flash of yellow from the central double lines, while in the towns, the graphic quality of power lines combined with railway lines, or broken up by manmade objects, inspired my work. I began to document my journey with drawings and sketchbook studies supported by photographs. However, forest fires often caused the light to become diffused and flat, so I had to decide whether to depict the landscape as it was or to use my artistic licence to create a more enticing study.

After experiencing the sights and sounds of Vancouver, I travelled to Victoria on Vancouver Island to give a talk to the Victoria Arts Society. Following this, I made my way down to San Francisco via Seattle, all the time making drawing and colour studies and visiting numerous galleries and museums.

San Francisco in particular became an artistic pilgrimage for me. As the location for much of Diebenkorn's shown work in MOMA, and for his practice, I found myself enticed by every view, especially the lofty streets and crystal-clear light. Wayne Thiebaud, another artist whose work also plays with the urban landscape, and who aligned himself with Diebenkorn and the Bay Area Figurative Movement, also featured in many of the city's galleries. I later went on to begin a body of work influenced by my time in this part of California, work that is still in progress.

Eventually, after a short stopover in Fiji, I arrived in New Zealand.

## DUNEDIN

My residency at the Dunedin School of Art began on day one with introductions to the various members of the department, and then setting up my temporary work space in the school's new O Block. Fantastic light bathed the 'studio,' and lots of working space was made available as many students had started their exams. With the aid of the technicians, I cut up pieces of MDF into boards and prepared them with four-times primed gesso. I had plenty of boards to prepare, a task that was made much easier by the use of the departmental workshop and its circular saw – thanks to technician Colin Howes.

Once sanded and made smooth, the boards were ready for painting. In the meantime I explored the city – most days were bathed in beautiful spring light that made for excellent compositions. For the first few days, I divided my time between drawing in the long shadows cast by the morning and evening light and painting in the studio at midday and during the evenings. Adapting to a new space takes time, especially when a large body of primary work (drawings, photographs and written work) has been collected – then the time arrives to transcribe them into 'finished' paintings. Suddenly I felt under an immense amount of pressure to 'produce.' Fortunately for me, my style lends itself to work on large bodies of work simultaneously and at speed, but I failed to take account of the mental health problems that I would face during the residency.

With only five weeks in the space, I was acutely aware that "every minute counted." Having enjoyed the luxury of time in the past, and then facing the reality of managing my creative time with jobs and other 'real life' commitments, to have the luxury of five weeks dedicated to my work was slightly overwhelming. Over the first two weeks I did manage to overcome this self-imposed stress by giving myself time to step away, read, spend time outside and, most importantly, speak to other artists and practitioners within the department. This is a huge part of doing an art residency and is one of the biggest benefits of becoming part of a group of fellow artists, even if it is only for a short time. The Masters students in particular were very useful to talk to and discuss practical problems with, as were the painting tutors and technicians. I was able to deliver a short presentation and a practical workshop related my process, which also opened up discussions and questions. This also allowed me to reflect on my own artistic process.



Figure 4. Tom Joyce, *Baldwin Street 2*, 2018, oil on board, 47 x 34 cm.



Figure 5. Tom Voyce, *Art School Interior*, 2018, oil on board, 21 x 14 cm.

During my time in Dunedin my work developed in unexpected ways. A discussion with a technician regarding surfaces enabled me to experiment with aluminium, a material used by many students within the department. After being sanded and primed, the surface performs as well as the familiar MDF board and is superior in the long term (MDF degrades over time if primed incorrectly and can be easily damaged in damp conditions). I also began to treat my surfaces more rigorously with sealer and gesso as a result of these technical conversations.

Changes in my painting process also began to take place during my residency at the school of art. I was keen to use the time to experiment not only with surfaces, but also with techniques and palette choice. When 'sketching out' and underpainting during the first stage of a painting, I had always used a traditional, darker colour such as a sienna, umber or phthalo blue. After conversations with painting students and with technician/artist Steev Peyroux, I played around with some livelier colours, settling on a cadmium red. This base layer continues to

show through as my work builds up – I feel that these bright colours really make the overall image 'pop'.

Over the weeks, a body of work started to come together, taken from drawings and images of Dunedin and Otago. By working on many works at once, sometimes ten at a time, I attempted to rotate each artwork using the same palette and marks so that the paintings have a shared history. I find this approach is beneficial when a body of works explores the same place or location. This process also allows me to be less attached to a piece of work, enabling more risks to be taken, with a sense of energy in the brushwork. Dunedin seemed somehow familiar to me – the architecture, the streets and surroundings – perhaps reflecting the town's Scottish/ British foundations.

I was also keen to make the most of my time by drawing and taking photographs of places around me. I made a short trip south to Invercargill and on into Central Otago where the flat, barren landscape reminded me much of the work of Edward Hopper – but of course this place is intrinsically linked to the native-born Graham Sydney, whose inspiration seemed to be on show everywhere!

It was here too that I began to explore the use of strong perspective in almost every piece that I was producing. The long straight roads that recede into the distance draw the eye; they suggest movement or perhaps 'transit.' My aim was to still maintain a sense of the abstract, so working within areas of little or no detail allowed my frantic brushstrokes and the layering of colours to create interest in the ordinary. I also had one eye on the compositional elements that made Richard Diebenkorn's work so successful. The *Ocean Park* works, despite being non-figurative, are all about place and somehow they capture that. The way I divide up a composition – with vertical and horizontal lines rendered from shadows, pavements, buildings or even brushstrokes or marks – are a nod to this way of working.

During my final few days in Dunedin I began to 'resolve' a number of works that I felt were successful, but regrettably there are always works that don't make the grade for one reason or another. As a result of my working process I have allowed for this, and indeed I want this to happen. It is a learning process, and my hope is that I can build on the positive elements in successful works to make stronger paintings. Experimental pieces often fail. This was the case with some of my larger pieces, where the brushes that I had available were poor substitutes for those that had proved so effective on a smaller scale – these works were less lively, more 'tight' and lacked much of the energy seen in the smaller pieces.

I learned a lot during my short stay at the art school. Adapting to the space available and working as a disciplined, full-time artist is surprisingly challenging and, despite having the luxurious freedom to experiment and develop, the pressure that came from within was certainly something that I didn't anticipate. Working with the amazing staff and students at the Dunedin School of Art was a great experience – something that an artist lacks when painting alone in a studio. It was great being part of a creative community and I feel that this is one of the major lessons that I will take away from my time there.

Art residencies can be a very rewarding and rich experience and can teach you a lot about yourself as an artist. I can thoroughly recommend anyone who is interested in this creative challenge to give it a go, especially at the Dunedin School of Art. My thanks go to the staff and students at for their friendliness and support during my short stay.

**Tom Voyce** is a British artist and teacher based in the UK. He received a Master of Fine Arts from Aberystwyth University School of Art. Tom won the Sky Arts Landscape Artist of the Year competition in 2017, which was also made into a television series that was screened around the world. He has completed residencies at the Ecologica Artist Residency, Andalucía, Spain; Corban Estates in Auckland; and the Caselberg Trust, Dunedin. He is represented by two galleries in the UK and The Artist's Room in Dunedin.

- 1 Edward Hopper, *Gas*, 1940, oil on board, 66.7 x 102.2 cm. MOMA, New York. Image: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/80000>.
- 2 Henri Matisse, *French Window at Collioure*, 1914, oil on canvas, 116.5 x 88 cm. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris. Image: <https://curiator.com/art/henri-matisse/french-window-at-collioure>.
- 3 J Baal-Teshuva, *Rothko* (New York: Taschen, 2013), 24.
- 4 David A Ross, "Foreword," in J Livingston, *The Art of Richard Diebenkorn* (New York: Whitney Museum of Modern Art, 1997), 11.
- 5 Livingston, *The Art of Richard Diebenkorn*, 17.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid., 62.
- 8 Richard Diebenkorn, *Ocean Park #79*, 1975, oil on canvas, 236.2 x 205.7cm. Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. Image: <https://www.themodern.org/ocean-park-79>.
- 9 Richard Diebenkorn, *Cityscape I*, 1963, oil on canvas, 153.4 x 128.3cm. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), San Francisco. Image: <https://collection.diebenkorn.org/objects/378/cityscape-1?ctx=3d5d6342-d7f7-4310-9396-cb2d49727a3c&idx=2>.
- 10 W Wells, *Silent Theatre: The Art of Edward Hopper* (London: Phaidon, 2008), 10.

## TEXTILES AND POTTERY OF TAGUA TAGUA

Max Sepulveda

### INTRODUCTION

During the 18 years of my career, I have worked in many places in Chile and Latin America, researching and depicting in textiles, pottery, murals and audiovisuals the sociocultural themes, the natural and cultural heritage of the land and its communities, and generating in this way a narrative, a creation, and a collective as well as collaborative generation of artistic processes.

As a specialist in collaborative art, a kind of contemporary art linked to social work, I use the methodology of active-participative work whereby I produce artistic work with the community, inspired by the processes of collective social reflection on questions of context, reality and issues relating to land. Such projects are potentially very significant for the community and, conversely, local practices can be reconfigured as a source of inspiration for experimental artworks.

Working together with the community in a horizontal fashion generates moments of reflection about the reality of the land and its communities. My main strategy is to develop knowledge exchange, role-playing and collective cooperation, the facilitation of a humanising experience where love, respect and mutual support is fundamental. Dialogues with the community occur through a process of social thinking, encompassing issues such as respect, empathy, solidarity and cooperativism, and the willingness to address problems of coexistence in community, among other things. In this way the community can open up about their shortcomings, dreams, hopes, socio-environmental conflicts, the onslaughts of nature, support networks, future projects, heritage issues, characteristics and history, among other themes related to the land, via the participative project. In turn, they also become a source of inspiration for a variety of collective artworks. Through the various processes of creation and collaborative production involved, this practice aims to raise awareness of the importance of social organisation, empowerment, critique and the collective assessment of the experiences, processes and results involved.



Figure 1. Traditional embroidered designs.



Figure 2. Composite panel made from many smaller embroidered pieces.



Figure 3. Detail of composite panel made from many smaller embroidered pieces.



Figure 4. Circular embroideries.



Figure 5. Embroidered scene.



Figure 6. Batik scene.

## CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE “TEXTILES AND POTTERY EXHIBITION OF TAGUA TAGUA”

The textile exhibition was made up of creations by the author plus a selection of collaborative creations inspired by the characteristics and natural and cultural patrimony of the commune of San Vicente de Tagua Tagua in Central Chile. The collaborative works were created with the community, following processes involving collective reflection and experimentation with drawing, painting and textile techniques with a group of more than 120 people. The textile techniques that were applied in these ornamental and utilitarian creations were batik, embroidery, macramé, Mapuche loom and Mayan loom.

For the exhibition, the textile symbols of the Mapuche native people and their cosmogonic meanings were recreated in weaves and embroideries. The Lukütüwe is an anthropomorphic symbol that symbolises the human being in an attitude of prayer to the god Ngenechén (Fig. 1). The Chakana symbol of power is used by the Lonko or head of a tribe (Fig. 2). The Nge Nge is a symbol representing a pair of eyes that scrutinise the soul (Fig. 3). The symbol of the Wangülen represents the southern cross star cluster that guides voyagers (Fig. 4). The design known as the Añümka represents a medicinal plant (Fig. 5). The Maññimin represents the tribal unit of the Mapuche communities (Fig. 6). The design known as Pichikemenküe represents the conservation of food in jars of clay (Fig. 7). The design called Willodmawe Ñimin symbolises the creation of the world through the strife between two sacred serpents, Tren Tren Vilú and Cai Cai Vilú (Fig. 8).

In addition to the textile exhibition, pieces of ancestral style pottery were exhibited. These were inspired by pre-Columbian pottery found in the Cachapoal River basin of Central Chile. The found pieces dated from the early pottery period (800 BC to 900 AD). At least three cultural units have been defined within this period: the initial pottery communities of Bato and Lolloe and, later, the Aconcagua cultural complex. Throughout the Cachapoal River basin we find fascinating archaeological remains of pottery showing the influence of the Mapuche, Diaguita, Inca, Atacama and Viluco peoples from the eastern slope of the Los Andes mountain range, native peoples who coexisted and visited Central Chile before the arrival of the Spaniards. Their figures spanned the range from anthropomorphic, zoomorphic and fitomorphic forms, with simple decorations that remind us of the minimalism of rock art, to the geometric and other complex forms that represent the worldview of the peoples responsible.

The archaeological vestiges of pottery from the Cachapoal basin include utilitarian objects as well as magico-religious objects and ceremonial offerings. The Chakana, a millenary symbol, is a synthesis of the Andean worldview, as well as an astronomical concept linked to the seasons of the year and a philosophical and scientific conception, drawn on by all the pre-Columbian cultures that inhabited the region from Mexico to Chile – not only in pottery, but also in textiles, basketry, goldsmithing and architectural decoration.

A fundamental part of my artist residency was conducting experiments in the Ceramic Studio at the School of Art, an opportunity that allowed me to explore a new way of decorating my pottery production, using minimalist and traditional modes. At the beginning of the process of experimenting with traditional modeling techniques, I was influenced by the shapes and decorations of the pre-Columbian vessels of my homeland, the ceremonial pipes and the bowls or plates. Later, after learning of the death of my ex-partner in Argentina, my work was dedicated to his memory, inspiring me to create a series of two two-dimensional works and a three-dimensional one.

The works created during my residency underwent different processes of burnishing and decoration, some on damp and semi-dry clay using relief, glaze paint and glaze techniques, as well as decoration with dyes oxides or enamels applied by immersion on cooked ceramics; in other cases, I used sgraffito of the slip on the semi-dry clay. For these processes of ceramic experimentation I was guided by the students in the Ceramic Studio, allowing me to create for the first time a polychromed and brilliant piece that reflects the influence of the Latin American colour palette, mingled with emotions, memories and personal experiences, as well as a mix of traditional pottery techniques with ceramic technology. A significant portion of the works created during my residency will soon be exhibited in my home region of Chile, crowning my enriching experience of working at the Dunedin School of Art, on the other side of the Pacific Ocean.



Figure 7. Composite image of traditional Mapuche designs

from top left:

- (1) Lukütüwe
- (2) Chakana
- (3) Nge Nge
- (4) Wangülen
- (5) Añümka
- (6) Maññimin
- (7) Pichikemenküe
- (8) Willodmawe Ñimin.

My creations in clay are thin-walled, sometimes very polished, sometimes with unpolished contrasts. I use both the form-up and the form-down techniques to decorate, as well as mamelons, grips and ears. The forms I use are somewhat asymmetrical, sometimes minimalist, sometimes more recharged. The most common incisions I use are straight lines and curves; sometimes the polishing is smooth or combined with simple prints of round objects. My pottery is very organic and made with basic stone, wood and metal tools, so that one can see the traces of what was handmade – and inspired by the original pieces of pre-Columbian pottery from the Cachapoal River basin of Central Chile.

#### **PUBLIC WORKSHOPS ON ANCESTRAL POTTERY AT THE DUNEDIN SCHOOL OF ART AND THE HUB AT OTAGO POLYTECHNIC**

As part of my residency, public workshops at the Dunedin School of Art were offered in ancestral pottery using the Mapuche method, which is characterised by the use of coils in the creation of the pieces and hand modeling with basic tools, followed by the firing of the pieces with cow and horse dung in a campfire. More than 30 people participated in this event, which was held in the ceramics workshop at the Art School and in the Hub at Otago Polytechnic. It involved art students and staff, and students from other fields who were keen to try this pottery method. This was an opportunity to have an experience where we connected through artistic practices to share, create a collective pedagogy, socialise, meet new people, experience new cultures, generate spaces for dialogue, contribute to social cohesion, and enjoy the therapeutic qualities of pottery by connecting with the four elements of nature: earth, water, air and fire.



Figure 8. Installation view of hand built ceramics from Exhibition.



Figure 9. Public workshops were offered in ancestral pottery using the Mapuche method, hand modeling with basic tools.

For me, the artist residency offered a great opportunity to share my knowledge and to help raise participants' self-esteem by teaching them new skills and utilising this type of artistic intervention to contribute to social transformation through art. Working in distant latitudes was an opportunity to create a cultural diffusion of contemporary Chilean handicrafts and above all a great opportunity to acquire new knowledge of the world of ceramic technology. I really appreciated the community that makes up the School of Art in Dunedin who gave me this huge opportunity to grow as a visual artist and as a person.

**Max Sepulveda** is a prolific cross-disciplinary artist in the fields of audio-visual, pottery, textiles, printmaking and mural painting. Initially training in Chile, Argentina and Mexico, he studied Textile Design at the Iberoamerican University in Mexico City, where he also presented workshops and seminars. As an active practitioner for 20 years, he has worked with communities in different Chilean regions, Costa Rica, Mexico, Colombia and Uruguay. He conceives community art as a powerful tool for social transformation, therapy and nourishment. His work is inspired by place and embodies its natural and cultural heritage in order to visualize, appreciate, protect and revitalize local identity.



Max Sepulveda at work in the ceramics studio  
Dunedin School of Art.

# COINCIDENCES, CORRELATIONS, THOUGHTS, PROCESSES: A JOURNEY FROM SPACE TO SILENCE AND BACK

Elisabeth Wildling

## INTRODUCTION

In this review I present some insights on my artistic and philosophical studies, showing their impact on the works and processes with which I was engaged during my travels to and within New Zealand and India in 2017 and 2018.<sup>1</sup>

### Space–Silence–Bridging–Subject

Space and silence are subjects that unite my areas of research and which in hindsight gave me a thread that links my findings. Silence became seminal for me in approaching India and New Zealand, and for fleshing out my artistic processes. This project review draws on my thoughts, processes, and research questions formulated in India which again influenced me on my research stay back in New Zealand at the Dunedin School of Arts.

### Artistic Practices

On the one hand, my research outcomes include expanded practices derived from my immediate artistic investigations such as life drawing and photography. On the other hand, my artistic research interests moved towards an expanded knowledge and understanding of intercultural and transcultural approaches to art and philosophy.

### Imagination and space

What does space mean for an artistic practice? How can one think and go beyond the three-dimensional perspective of space in order to spatialise inner-temporal states, as well as to address the questions of time, thought, emptiness and states in between.

## SPACE AND IMAGINATION

In *The Poetics of Space*,<sup>2</sup> the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard presents an approach to understanding the impact of space on aesthetic practices through imagination. Bachelard uses the concept of “poetic imagination” to move towards a new, non-Euclidian understanding of space. According to Bachelard,



Figure 1. Elisabeth Wildling, *Untitled*, 2017. Life drawing made at the Dunedin School of Art.



Figure 2. Elisabeth Wildling, pre-photographic images (2018).



Figure 3. Elisabeth Wildling, *Assembled*, 2018. Being immersed in the land.  
Crossing the lines of an imaginary landscape on non-selected areas of this montage.

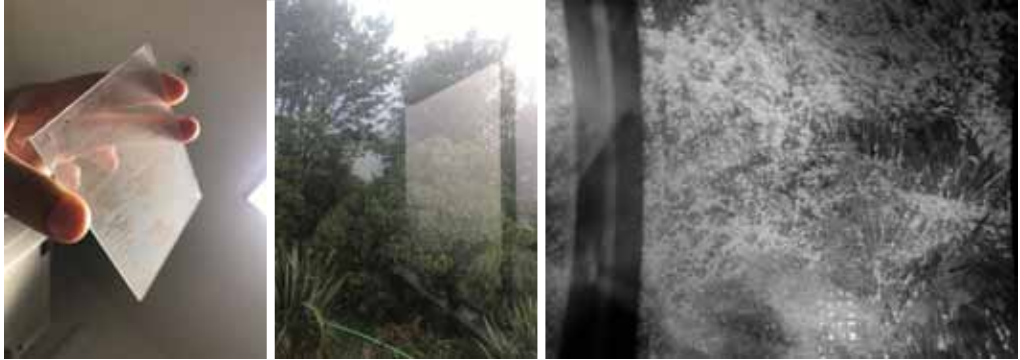


Figure 4. Elisabeth Wildling, *Untitled*, 2018, analogue photographic techniques, physautotype, coating glass.  
Field studies, Department of Photography and Electronic Arts, DSA.

space is to be sensed via the power of imagination – he understands space as something to be perceived in all its phenomenological and perceptual complexity. Therefore, due to imagination, spaces and places become zones of perceivable vastness.

Following Bachelard, the “poetic image” is not to be seen as an image that derives from thinking, reconstructing or recollecting. On the contrary, it is a new image that has never before existed or been constructed.

Through what he calls reverberation – the opposite of causality – Bachelard believes that the real nature of a poetic image can be found. “In this reverberation, the poetic image will have a sonority of being. The poet speaks on the threshold of being. [...] In the resonance we hear the poem, in reverberation we speak it, it is our own.”<sup>3</sup>

Ideas about imaginary space and the spatial potential of a point or a line can be found in the work of Russian artist, designer and theorist El Lissitzky, who talks about the correlation between space and object. In addition to the act of perceiving a static object, Lissitzky suggests the concept of movement. So, for example, a material point can form a line when being moved. The movement of a material line produces an impression of an area and a body. When an inert material is moved, it forms an entirely new object as long as the movement lasts and is therefore imaginary. El Lissitzky also “saw vast potential for new expressions of space through the unlimited discovery of photographic means.”<sup>4</sup> The term “imaginary space” is also related to a phrase used by El Lissitzky and developed in his famous essay “A. and Pangeometry,” first published in Germany in 1925.<sup>5</sup>

Josef Albers (Germany/America, Bauhaus) expanded the notion of the viewing space creating structural constellations and geometrical depictions of two-dimensional space, resulting in polymorphic possibilities. Here, the direction of possible movements was changeable; a single contour belonged to more than one layer; and the axonometric image was reversible.



Figure 5. Elisabeth Wildling, *Untitled*, 2018, photograms. Light, Time, Space.

Space and imagination are also central issues for life drawing. The artist sees and creates marks by depicting light and shadows on paper, using charcoal or pencil. During this process, the fingers build a structure with the pencil providing the model with perspective and distance, focusing on it and observing it – a finger-pencil assemblage, as Deleuze would put it.

If phenomena are descriptions of things as one experiences them, this description includes experiences of both what is actual and what is virtual. In measuring the dimensions of a situation, imagination may envision what is not present. The images and field studies of my work as reproduced here can be seen as an artistic response inspired by the concept of an imaginative space – discovering the virtual dimension amid actual perceptions and drawings.

## THE UNITY OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

I participated with ten other artistic researchers in a residency in South India in early 2018 called “In a Silent Way.”<sup>6</sup> Besides preparing for a field performance in Delhi, we practiced yoga, which included reading, discussing and reciting the Yoga Sutras – short phrases containing the essence of the path of yoga, written down by Patanjali around 200 BC. In India, because there is a strong oral tradition, primary theoretical texts are often short and concise in order to be learned and recalled by heart. In practice, reciting these short texts induces a calming and meditative state.

In non-dualist Kashmir Shaivism (the basis of contemporary Tantrism) there is no separation between object and subject. Our inner essence is not believed to be different from the essence of the world. Hinduism and Buddhism share strong similarities when it comes to realising that the individual is not a separate entity. Kashmir Shaivism



Figure 6. Indian housekeeper drawing a kolam, Kodaikanal, India (2018). Her posture reflects deep concentration and presence within body and mind, representing the formation of silence. Photograph: Elisabeth Wildling.

provides a 'theory' of the relationship between tension and vibration where things oscillate and are in relationship to other things. It emphasises that it is the relationships between objects that make us understand the world. As a result, it questions whether things are isolated in reality. This 'theory' instead suggests that things are vibrating states which we cannot isolate completely from other things.<sup>7</sup>

In the Indian context, philosophy does not just mean theory but also practice, bodily labor; including practices like thinking, reading, writing, questioning, arguing. Thinking is not separated from aesthetic or bodily experiences. There is no separation between body and mind, nor between theory and practice.

At the residency house in Tamil Nadu, the housekeeper; was drawing her weekly *kolams*<sup>8</sup> on the floor; which was made of compacted cow dung. Her body was in a stable and grounded position while she constructed the patterns, and she was in a state of deep concentration. Her whole body was in a state of "reflective awareness."<sup>9</sup> Making a big jump to Western philosophy, I seek to connect these reflections with Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concept of the "machine désirante" in *Anti-Oedipus*.<sup>10</sup> There are good reasons for understanding yoga in the sense of a union of a multitude, a synthetic unity achieved through stable conjunction. Yoga literally means "a process of yoking, union."<sup>11</sup>

The relationship between the posture and the immersive concentration of the Indian housekeeper and observational drawing now becomes evident. There is a parallel between her unified state and between silent presence and bodily awareness in life drawing.

## SILENCE AND SELF-EMPTYING

What is silence? What can silence add to one's own artistic practice? Imagining silence as a place full of potentialities for understanding and enabling sensitive contact for an aesthetic, material reality are the second emphases of this project report. I address the question of being receptive to the meaning of sensitive emptiness as the highest form of receptivity.

The concept of *nirodha*, introduced in the second Yoga Sutra and a central motif in Indian culture and philosophy, helps us understand the qualities of silence and emptiness. *Yogas-citta-vrtti-nirodhah* – "Yoga is [meant] to still the patterning of consciousness."<sup>12</sup>

"One has to learn to imitate the silence on the bottom of the sea, with one's own body, to experience *nirodha*. One has to realize it bodily, becoming silent, as if one were dead before one is actually dead."<sup>13</sup> In the context of yogic theory, philosophical practice aims exactly at this sensual transformation of our bodily existence. "Only when we realize the innermost core of the world within our own bodies will silence happen."<sup>14</sup>

The cessation of the mind can also happen when we breathe out and when an empty space arises in the stomach: "At the dead point of the breath, which lies between the breathing in and out, we can experience a form of nothing. *Nirodha*, a silent joy, empties us of ourselves."<sup>15</sup>

## SILENCE AND TOUCH

As I mentioned above, when reflecting on the relationship between subject and object, according to the intercultural and transcultural philosophy of Indian aesthetics, all bodies are considered to be vibration centres, resonating with all other bodies, beings or things in the universe. Bodies are always already in touch with their surroundings.

When two objects encounter each other, that is a form of touch. Can one be touched by doing nothing more than watching leaves on a tree, objects which are slowly and spontaneously being moved?

My work *Touching Silence, Still* (Figure 7) addresses the immanent relationship between object and space, the light-likeness of objects and their being affected by the forces of wind and sunlight in an immediate but often subtle, silent way.

*What kind of space is this, which has yet been provided?*

*What if we raise our awareness, if we sensitise ourselves?*

*A mutual connection of touching,*

*Thinking in terms of interrelationships.*

*The stillness of a tree,*

*the gentle moving of the leaves,*

*silently touching something within myself.*

Watching the leaves and experiencing this process of encountering – this might become a sensual, embodied experience. What moves me to silence and happiness is an atmosphere created by moving elements in nature, things which are not moved by human intention. Leaves, branches, trees, nature, all being moved by the wind and touched by the sun. Things being moved unpredictably intensifies our sense of the unforeseen and the ability *not* to know what will happen and the way in which something will be moved. This underlines the idea that space is filled with vibration and that everything is connected in some way.



Figure 7. Elisabeth Wildling, *Touching Silence, Still*, 2018, 2-channel video projection.  
Shown at the Philosophy Unbound – DETEXT festival, New Delhi, India, 2018.

**Elisabeth Wildling** is a multi-disciplinary artist from Vienna, -Austria, where she works both as an artistic and scientific associate at the University of Applied Arts and as a lecturer at a college of higher technical institution in Vienna. She is engaged in research in philosophy and art and is currently undertaking a PhD at the University of Applied Arts Vienna.

- 1 As a staff member at the University of Applied Arts Vienna and at the same time undertaking a PhD, I took up the post of visiting research scholar at the Dunedin School of Art, Otago Polytechnic. Following this exchange, I spent three months in India as part of a collaborative residency program called "On the Significance of Silence in the Arts, Philosophy and Contemporary Forms of Life," which resulted in some work that I completed on my return to Dunedin in 2018.
- 2 Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1994 [1964]), xix.
- 3 Ibid, xvi.
- 4 *Poetics of Space: A Critical Photographic Anthology*, ed. Steve Yates (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 64.
- 5 El Lissitzky, "A. and Pangeometry," in *Europa-Almanach*, eds Carl Einstein and Paul Westheim (Potsdam: Gustav Kiepenheuer Verlag, 1925), 103-13.
- 6 "In a Silent Way," Artistic Research and Arts-based-Philosophy Residency, Tamil Nadu, India, 2018.
- 7 *The Stanzas on Vibration*, ed. Mark SG Dyczkowski (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992).
- 8 *Kolams* are a ritual form of drawing constructed patterns with dried rice flour or powdered white stone. Women in Tamil Nadu draw these designs each morning on the floor, or in front of the house, in order to welcome the goddess Lakshmi into the house. <http://indian-heritage.org/alangaram/kolams/kolams.htm> (accessed 5 August 2019).
- 9 *The Stanzas on Vibration*, 43.
- 10 <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Yoga-philosophy> (accessed 5 August 2019).
- 11 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).
- 12 Chip Hartranft, *The Yoga-Sutra of Patanjali* (Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications, 2003).
- 13 See Jacques Derrida, *As if I were Dead/ Als ob ich tot wäre* (Vienna: Passagen, 2000).
- 14 Arno Böhler, "Kunst und Philosophie im Zwischen der Kulturen," *Polylog: Zeitschrift für interkulturelles Philosophieren*, 35 (2016), 16 (email conversation).
- 15 Arno Böhler, "Dem Werden der Natur entgegenkommen: Ein Interview von Stefanie Haller mit Arno Böhler über die Yoga-Sutren von Patañjali," *u: scholar*, <https://uscholar.univie.ac.at/view/o:683303> (accessed 5 August 2019). Böhler's article "Meditation in the Context of Indian Philosophy: Patañjali's Yoga-Sutras" formed the basis of this interview.

## FU YOU: FU INSTITUTION INTERVENTION

Michele Beevors

A visiting artist is an interesting proposition for art schools worldwide. For the students, it is significant because they have the opportunity to experience another artist at work and hear other ways of doing business; for the academic staff, a visiting artist provides the opportunity for networking and collegiality; for the institution as a whole, it's better to be busy than not.

When Frank Fu and Yves Gore visited Dunedin School of Art in October 2018, one would be forgiven for thinking that it was business as usual. From day one of the six-week residency, the dynamic duo made themselves known to everyone in an act of open friendliness – they paraded around the school introducing themselves to everyone. You would have had to be hiding under a rock to have missed their arrival (as some students inevitably did). The minute they arrived, their self-promotion machine kicked in. The pair were armed with an A4 schedule of events, seminars, performances and film screenings, with mobile phone always at the ready for a selfie.

There is a lot of hoopla in the South Island about the idea of 'doing it for yourself,' and this was their chosen strategy for engagement. By the end of the first week, they knew everyone by name and they had turned over even the darkest rocks and dragged the students out ... Selfies with the artists abounded and became part of a feedback loop that fed their machine through Instagram. I wondered, as I still do – when exactly did they have any down time when they were not performing their role of entrepreneurial performances artists and publicity machines? For the most part, it was jolly good fun. The students became engaged in the frenzied activities, hullabaloo and selfie formula.

I think the success of the visit was derived from the fact that Gore and Fu were genuinely interested in the collaborative side of what sometimes feels like a one-sided affair. Most other visits by artists are a lot more low-key and are aimed at the benefit of the artist in question and not really at student engagement ... Sometimes in fact, a visiting artist will go out of their way to avoid the entanglements of coming into contact with the students, stealthily sneaking into the art school under cover of darkness, making a mess and causing havoc at night. This seems to happen quite often – not being bothered seems to be the preferred strategy.

So what does one make of the wilfully engaged duo? If you see the real benefit for the artists in a residency as a way of collecting and cultivating a fan base that is then iterated through visiting as many different art schools on the tour as possible, and boosted a thousand-fold through social media, then you might be able to get close to understanding the whirlwind that hovered over the Dunedin School of Art in October. I found myself swept up in the storm. I was somehow reluctantly talked into writing this piece on the first day of the New Year ...

Their strategy is simply to say 'YES,' to remain positive, to be polite and to follow through with 'thank yous.' This strategy was the focus of the first seminar presentation by Gore, a motivational speech, for sure – "How to get ahead in the art world." It could have been written by the king of Instagram, Jerry Saltz, and in fact it was. In a Christmas post Jerry gives advice for artists – "don't think too much."

Their films *Orange Confucius* and *Whiskey Tango Forest* provide real insight into the private lives of performance artists. In these semi-documentary-style films, the hand-held camera, pace and intimate moments, with little in

the way of a story line, leads one to confuse the actors with Frank and Yves (the filmmakers). Yet, in some of the more mysterious scenes and the doubling of shots from one film to the other, their films are shot with a nod to filmmakers such as Jim Jarmusch and David Lynch. The films offer a bare-all exposé of the things that have been largely accepted as art, but not in mainstream cinema. This has to do with both the exhibitionism of Gore and a willingness to commit to film all of the ins and outs and the dumbfounding ordinariness of sex, shitting, pissing, menstruating and masturbating.

The question of downtime resurfaces in the films, because nothing is left out that hasn't already been examined by this film genre including a long sequence of Yves crying in a bathtub, where the camera is a fly on the wall. This is repeated in the second film in a similar bathtub sequence where the main character (a middle-aged male artist) is in the tub. I kept asking myself, was this real or is it film? Boredom is also a familiar presence in the films, because there is nothing as boring for an audience as watching other people get stoned. It is the equivalent of watching grass grow or waiting for paint to peel and flake to the floor.

While *Orange Confucius* focuses on the female protagonist and her journey including a trip to the gynaecologist's office, *Whiskey Tango Forest* focuses on an older male artist and his futile ramblings about not making it as far as he would have liked. The latter film contains a sequence where an argument is held over dinner, referencing *That '70s Show* or *The Big Bang Theory*. The viewer becomes another dinner guest and is privileged to overhear the inane conversations of artists – really things they should keep to themselves. However, some of the sequences in these films were very beautiful in a mundane way – ducks and random old people shuffling by provide a little relief and are beautifully shot. And somehow this is what holds the films together as art and not life, drawing attention to the formal qualities sometimes found in everyday living.

The carefully scheduled live performances were another matter altogether. Fu's loud and brash in-your-face confrontations with bogus authority figures and his shouty manner were challenged by Gore's quiet, empathetic and highly charged performances, which were personal, intimate and confronting. Fu's seminar performance gave clues about the mechanisms he was using. Protesting was a big part of his strategy. And it seemed to me that he was protesting '(no) place in the Auckland art world' via megaphone and booming voice. Being in Dunedin, we could all empathise, as we too have no voice in the New Zealand art world. It was a bit like preaching to the converted – the New Zealand art world rarely reaches as far down as the South Island.

For me, some of his interventions in other spaces were more interesting, such as his performance at the Venice Biennale involving forced shared intimacy, and I wondered how it would feel to confront your fear of public intimacy, like sleeping with a stranger in front of other strangers. Or the very interesting coupling staged at the Guggenheim in front of famous works of art. A performance where Frank and his partner (not Yves) were cocooned together in a white stretchy suit that vaguely resembled strands of cell division as they posed or performed mirrored movements in front of famous artworks – in the process interrupting their reception. What is the word for that? Is it culture jamming?

While at the Dunedin School of Art, Fu attempted to get the students involved in institutional critique through a number of daily performances. The first day involved disrupting regular classes, along with an eruption of energy and more shouting. With paper megaphone in hand, Frank urged the students to confront the academic staff about the things they were disgruntled about. "No more InDesign," they chanted, "more life drawing." However, this institution has two things going for it. The first is that the staff actively try to give the students what they want, and the second is that there seems to be 'no one looking,' so we have some freedom to act as we see fit. If the students ask for more life drawing, we tend to give it to them. So what Fu's institutional critique turned up was the fact that this institution was largely benign, that our students did not really have to struggle to achieve the freedom that others do. Shocking, I know.

After the 'confrontation,' the students and Frank wrote their demands on a large piece of paper and taped it to the big window at the front of the art school – a pale reflection of Luther's 95 Theses. The daily performances were cancelled due to lack of interest. The students' good humour quickly turned to irritation as they tried to get their own work done.

Gore's performances were altogether different, and were structured around her own (prone) naked body. In a series of performances delivered on a single day, *Comb Her Hair*, *Flower Her* and *Make Her Wear Something*, students were asked to bring things to help them participate. This time Fu, in hushed tones, ushered in groups and individuals to address, dress and perform intimate acts of giving, whispered secrets and gifts to Gore – who for her part did not respond or move. The whole thing was confronting in its ritual around death, again marked by an awkward, forced intimacy.

The other notable thing about the pair's visit was their engagement with almost every department in the school. In sculpture, the cosmic twins came to group critiques and gave feedback to students that was quite rigorous and genuinely felt – a positive thing. The students lucky enough to have been scheduled for their critique sessions felt grateful.

In printmaking, their support was manifested in a group project – a screen-printed sign for the Fu Institute a meter wide. The takeover was completed with a series of banners in which the sculpture and print students were involved, reading "The Fu Institute." The print didn't quite work out the first time so they did it again, on a different wall that they had asked permission to use in the first place. Although this seemed more like a flag-raising ceremony and less like a coup, it suggested some other, more positive extra-curricula outcomes. Temporarily leaving the newly founded institute, Fu decided to engage in some art school promotion at the local farmers market, taking with him my whiteboard which had some idle scribbles left over from a lecture. Frank tried, but largely failed, to recruit and enlighten local Dunedin marketers about art school issues.



Figure 1.

Fu and his crew joined local artists at a performance event to mark the equinox, where The Yellow Men, the legendary Adrian Hall and We Will not be Broken (Megan Brady, Ed Duncan and Rata Scott) performed around Dunedin to kick off the festival. The Yellow Men watched the tides go in and out all day, dressed in yellow raincoats and matching buckets. Megan, Ed and Rata stretched out in the carpark and Adrian created an elaborate cricket pitch with four bags of cement as stumps and proceeded to watch a pot of ice melt. Fu, bull horn in hand, yelled at passers-by.

The duo's intervention in the art school as a whole was, I think, a complete success. Simply because the Fu Institute took every outcome as a positive one (this is what it means to have a practice), regardless of aesthetics, they mirrored 'priority number one' for me. They were great at motivating sluggish students into action, heedless of failure ... their energy was boundless and they were very, very serious.



Figure 2.

**Michele Beevors** is an Australian artist and a principal lecturer at Dunedin School of Art. She holds a Master of Fine Arts degree from Columbia University, a Master of Visual Arts from the Australian National University School of Art & Design and has exhibited in the United States, Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

## AN ONLINE CHAT BETWEEN FRANK FU AND MR BALD

Frank Fu

Wake up and open the curtain. It's another cloudy wet day in LA.

What's going on? Shit!

Strapping on my Soviet-looking Zodiac Astrographic Blue Edition watch, I turn on the Huawei P30 Pro and start flipping through @zenmasterfu on Instagram.

It's been two years since I did "Sleep with Frank Fu," a project at the 2017 Venice Biennale. Had a fantastic time there with my multi-cosmic entourage, not to mention spending a lot of time with my dear friend, Tehching Hsieh.

Ding! A message pops up on the screen:

**Mr Bald:** Frank! Are you at Venice this year?

**FU:** Yes, but not physically.

**Mr Bald:** What do you mean?

**FU:** My project at Venice this year is called "What is Venice Biennale when Frank Fu is Absent?"

**Mr Bald:** Are you really absent? Seems to me you're somehow still here.

**FU:** Yeah, too much sleeping around in Venice last time.

**Mr Bald:** Mmm ... I guess what happens in Venice stays in Venice.

**FU:** Congrats again on being the Top 100 Most Powerful People in the Art World.

**Mr Bald:** Thanks Frank! So what have you been *really* up to?

**FU:** It's been four days since I came back from my Scandi Tour – The *Curator's Buttplug* gig in Norway was sexy-sublime! Been eight months since the artist residency gig with my cosmic twin collaborator Yves Gore at Dunedin School of Art in New Zealand. In between, when I don't have my hands full with FU Institute, I showed a couple of my films at some dark 'n' edgy film clubs in Jakarta and Bali, performed *Art NOT Fair* in LA, and gave a lecture called *FLUXFU* at University of Southern California.

**Mr Bald:** *Scheisse!* What a live-running CV from hell. What's going on in your head, Frank?! I'd say it's from a rather over-inflated ego getting in the way, big time.

**FU:** But, that's what I do as a contemporary artist. Perform, make films, give lectures, travel, have artist residencies, so on and so forth, plus constantly getting messages from Facebook and Instagram.

Ding! Here we go, another notification pops up on my screen. D... E... L... E... T... E...

**Mr Bald:** Are you insinuating hard work with a heavy dose of smart-arsed stupidity is the answer?!

**FU:** Shit! My Zodiac stops working again. I thought Swiss-made things are supposed to last forever. Even my Dita glasses have passed the ten-year mark! And it's not even Swiss.

**Mr Bald:** What am I, a watchmaker? How'd I know?

**FU:** Aren't you Swiss?

**Mr Bald:** Let's get back to your Scandi Tour in Sweden. What were you doing there?

**FU:** From Gothenburg to Stockholm; from street market, shopping mall to galleries; from one tram to another; from homeless, to police to royal guards; from destruction to reconstruction, and from your saliva to mine.

**Mr Bald:** Mmm ... but why Sweden?

**FU:** Under the global extremely difficult and troubling gig economy, it's much cheaper to fly from LA to Sweden via Norwegian Airlines.

**Mr Bald:** Right.

**FU:** I was also looking for that Neo-Nazi, so called Nordic Resistance Movement. They usually form a human circle on the streets of Stockholm and I wanted to put myself in the middle of them, and start reading *Deleuze and the City*.

**Mr Bald:** Did you do it?

**FU:** Couldn't find them! My friend saw them though. He took a picture of them at a square in Stockholm. I'm thinking maybe Yves could photoshop me reading the book standing among those fascists.

**Mr Bald:** Photoshop, some kind of digital intervention? I love it!

**FU:** Yeah, just like how Kardashian got her big butt. You know, it looks quite real.

**Mr Bald:** What was your budget this time? Still scooping ice-creams for six months?

**FU:** It's getting harder and harder to scoop ice-creams these days, with the US–China trade war happening. You think I should become a dog-walker? Lots of dogs around my neighbourhood. Good money! Though they do piss and shit a lot.

**Mr Bald:** What happened to FU Institute? I thought you're making enough bucks from it.

**FU:** What about your Brutally Early Club? You must be getting big bucks from it too. Since it's brutally early, people must be getting blue balls, and having to wear strap-ons just to show how enthusiastic they are about your club.

**Mr Bald:** You know Frank I'm over 50, so I don't think that way anymore. I usually just find a way to deal with it when Mr Bland comes home.

**FU:** Or, maybe, you just need some Rhino suction.

**Mr Bald:** I'm too busy for that shit.

**FU:** Me too.

**Mr Bald:** Somehow I think the purpose of FU Institute's actions around the world functions like a fan-gathering machine. Don't you agree?

**FU:** Mac, Huawei, Dita, Ecco. For Cultural Purposes Only, No Commercial Value. Human gathering, animal gathering, dialoguing, discussing, interacting, communicating, caring, supporting, hugging, touching, kissing, sexing. You can find out more about the FU movement through @fuinstitute on Facebook and Instagram, especially my Finnish–Swedish–Norwegian sweater with three nipples. Love it!

**Mr Bald:** Scheisse. Gotta make tracks ... Ciao bello!

**FU:** Bella Ciao!

The Zodiac is still not working. I get up from my chair, open a drawer, take out my limited edition Swatch – printed with Franz Marc's *The Dream* painting – and strap it on! A sense of time rises. Thanks for the birthday present Yves! It's punctual, accurate, yet it ticks so fucking loud.

FUCK ME.

Born in Inner Mongolia, China, **Frank Fu** is a contemporary artist. His work challenges the white box settings of galleries and museums, and his endurance performances and interventions examine his identity as an artist, often commenting on the politics of the art world. His work has been shown at the Venice Biennale, Documenta, the Sydney Biennale, Asian Contemporary Art Fair (New York), Asian Contemporary Art Week (New York), Rubin Museum of Art (New York), Centre Pompidou (Paris), Locarno Film Festival, Vision Du Réel (Switzerland) and Transcinema (Peru). Frank Fu has also been featured on networks and publications such as NHK (Japan), CCTV4 (China), ARTCO (Taiwan), *The National Business Review*, the *New Zealand Herald*, the *New Zealand Listener*, *Frieze* and *TateShots*. Frank Fu is the founder and head of school at FU INSTITUTE. He currently lives and works in Los Angeles.



Figure 1. Frank Fu and his three nipples.

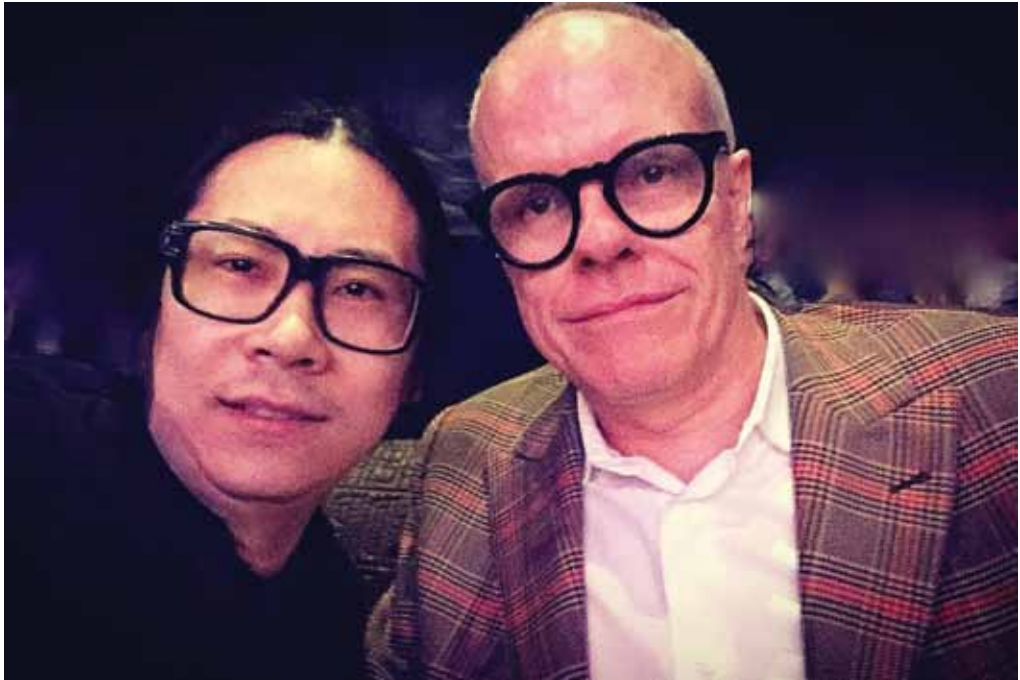


Figure 2. What Happens in Venice stays in Venice.



Figure 3. Long Life Your Milk.



Figure 4. Curators Buttplug.



Figure 5. In Memory of Contemporary Art, Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand.



Figure 6. I Love Venice Biennale and Venice Biennale Loves Me, 52nd Venice Biennale.



Figure 7. Frank Fu Pompidou 1968 2008, Centre Pompidou, Paris.



Figure 8. Sleep with Frank Fu, 57th Venice Biennale.

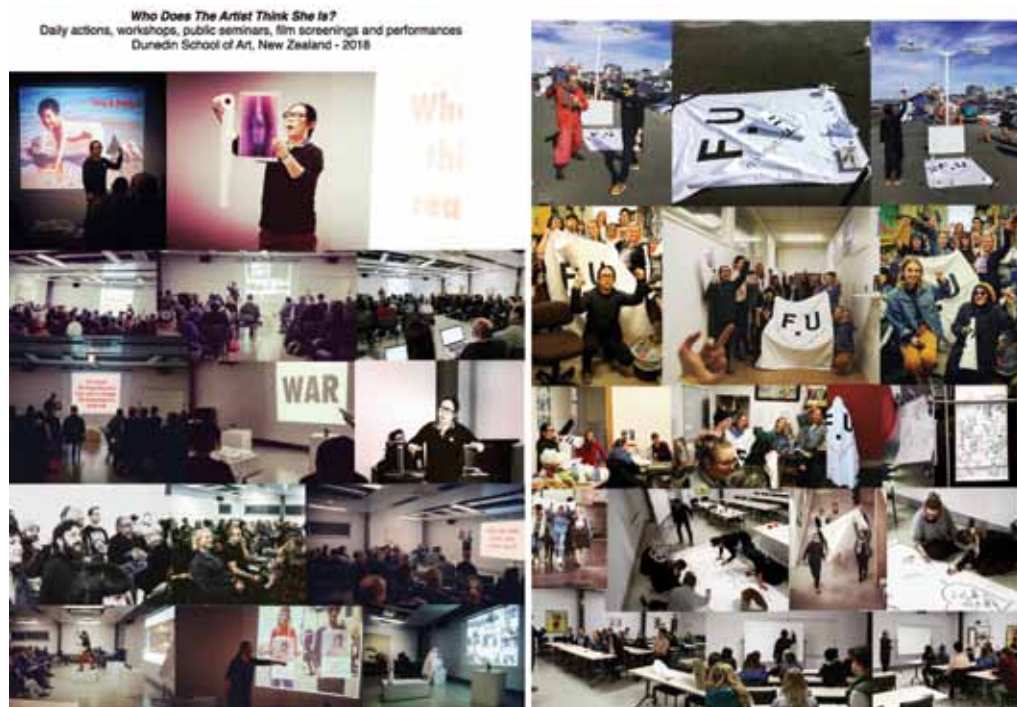


Figure 9. Who Does The Artist Think She Is? Dunedin School of Art, New Zealand.



Figure 10. Deleuze and the City, Sweden.

## LIFE VS. PERFORMANCE: DECONSTRUCTING DEPRESSION, GRIEF AND SUICIDAL IDEATION

Yves Gore

I found Dunedin meditative and heartbreakingly beautiful.

Having just lost my older sister a year ago to cancer, the mysterious darkness of the city was mothering my wounds. The brokenness in me doesn't stop hurting, but the Gothic arcs of Otago's Victorian-era architecture were like a timeless affinity to my melancholy. The age of the buildings encapsulates memories of people over the centuries who lived and died in the city. Somehow this transitory energy normalises my grief and made me okay with it.

With the darkness of the city having my back, this made my residency at Dunedin School of Art a highly relevant period in my personal and creative journey. The history of the town has a way of suspending depression and suicidal ideation from my mind, and allowed me to study them with some distance and humour, even when I hit the lowest point every now and then.



Figure 1. Yves Gore at Toitū Otago Settlers Museum, studying the faces of Dunedin's past residents. Image: Frank Fu.

One of the features of clinical depression is that, if you aren't feeling suicidal or overly obsessed about someone or something, you can become extremely apathetic and unmotivated. Whether your life is perfect or a mess, whether you are working or on holiday, healthy or ill, depression doesn't care. It hits you when it wants to.

So, during the six weeks of my art residency, I was prepared to not let the first or the last symptom get to me. Because if I had killed myself at the school's Art House, that would be an unfair mess for my long-time collaborator/



Figure 2. A slide from Yves Gore's public seminar at Dunedin School of Art. Seeing a photograph of herself in a bathtub in a suicidal and debilitating state transformed her relationship with the illness. Image: Frank Fu.

husband/co-residency artist, Frank Fu, to clean up. It would also be unfair to the students and staff for me to become an awful reminder of such gruesomeness, every time they get to school to begin a normal day, not to mention the inconsolable pain my grieving family and friends will have to go through again.

Also, if I had gone onto the other spectrum by becoming extremely unmotivated, six weeks could go by in a snap and that would be an irresponsible waste of time, resources and economic investment, which the school had decided to make in me when they chose to have me as an artist in residence.

With this line of thinking, depressed or not, I decided to prove to Dunedin School of Art that they've made the best decision by having me. My first priority was to have our visit make a difference to the student and staff experience. What could Frank and I offer which could make a positive impact on the students' perspectives on their own creative journey, present and future?

From my previous experiences of hanging out with fellow artists from various backgrounds, the questions that often come up are things like: how does one manage his or her problems in life and still practice art? What tools are available in the contemporary era that we can utilise to help our art become discoverable and find like-minded peers unrestricted by geography? With these points of reference, I realised that my position as a performance artist working in Los Angeles, with some international creative collaboration and exhibition experience, was an insightful angle I could share and discuss with the students. So I decided to give my compulsory seminar on "Artist with Issues," a lecture focusing on issue management surrounding my depression and career management, and Frank decided to give his lecture on "Who Does the Artist Think She Is?," which focuses on his journey as a performance artist, and how he found his identity as a creator who couldn't stay away from themes like intervention and the politics of the art world.

We also programmed additional events for our residency. This included film screenings of *Orange Confucius* and *Whiskey Tango Forest*, directed by Frank Fu, with myself and artist Ralph Paine as the main subjects for each film; daily performances at the school which the students and staff could participate in if they liked; and lastly, two performance art events, one each from Frank and myself.

Frank scheduled his performance, *FLUXFU*, during a global performative festival in Dunedin called Equinox. *FLUXFU* is a Fluxus' movement with a FU twist, where Frank brings his actions from museums and galleries into public spaces for a general audience to experience and participate in. Often, he deals with themes like the politics of the art world, and *FLUXFU* is a continuous world happening across different time zones and locations.<sup>1</sup>

For my performance however; it took some personal exploration for me to come to the clarity I needed to decide on what to perform. I started by considering the emotional discomforts in my life at that time and recalled three instances: the shame of being viewed as a bad daughter; the shame arising from looking disheveled during heavy depression; and lastly, the taboo of dying young.



Figure 3. Lobby card of Dunedin School of Art x F.U. Institute, with details of Yves Gore and Frank Fu's residency events at the school. Poster: Yves Gore.



Figure 4. Yves Gore's performance poster for *MAKE HER WEAR SOMETHING / COMB HER HAIR / FLOWER HER*.

Image: Frank Fu. Poster: Yves Gore.

With this in mind, I decided to use performance art to transcend these emotions, firstly for myself, and bonus points if others got something from it too. I came up with a three-hour performance, in three parts, titled *MAKE HER WEAR SOMETHING / COMB HER HAIR / FLOWER HER* (Fig. 4)

I decided on a ritualistic, ceremonial vibe and asked Frank to dress in a dark-coloured onesie, his long hair tied back, wearing the rose-tinted glasses that I usually wear, to mirror me in real life and emphasise the gist of our Cosmic Twins energy.

At the beginning of the performance, he'd ring the bell and then ring it again at the end of every hour. Along with the ringing, Frank would chant a self-composed gothic and ritualistic prayer. Frank also found a dark space called the Black Box Room and we thought it was perfect for the performance.

The first part, "MAKE HER WEAR SOMETHING" (Fig. 5), is inspired by my penchant for nudity in both real life and performance. In the film *Orange Confucius*, directed by Frank Fu, I appeared nude, and after it screened at film festivals my relatives and friends learned by word of mouth that I was having sex on screen and not wearing very much. They were appalled by my actions and started telling my parents to "make her wear something."

Although it doesn't bother my parents that I do nude art, conventional body politics whereby women cannot display their genitals or sexuality to the public made me feel like an abnormal child who has let her parents down for doing 'shameful' things. I still relish the freedom of nudity, and I still believe our private parts can be public, but at that point in time, I couldn't get rid of this shadow at the back of my mind that I am a bad daughter.

How does this performance help? First, I titled it "MAKE HER WEAR SOMETHING" to frame the shame inherent in the statement and attempt to invert it into a joke. I left instructions for participants on a sign, letting them know that they could bring anything they like for me to wear. This included clothing, artworks, trash, to any random trinkets they desired.

At the end, even by the third act of the performance, the Kiwi audience did surprise me! Because they didn't cover me up very much. And even better, they made me look fashionable, and this transcended my shame, turning it into a form of empowerment. From a wool cape to toilet paper and period pads, to the pill packaging from antidepressants, I was pleasantly surprised by the artful, humorous getup I was wearing when I opened my eyes after finishing the performance.

I also heard someone yell, "Wow! She's really naked!" As if our bodies have become so censored in society that it becomes unreal to see a nude person.

The second part of my performance was titled "COMB HER HAIR" (Figs 6-7). This piece stemmed from a memory I had growing up, where I had long, unruly, tangled hair; as a kid. Being born with depression, if no one brushed my hair that day, I wasn't like other little girls who would proactively make their own hair neat and tidy. I would leave it the way it was – tangled. Even when I was a teen, people would yell at me, ordering some adults close by to "comb her hair!"



Figure 5. Yves Gore performing in "MAKE HER WEAR SOMETHING;" Image credits: Michael Greaves (left); Carlos Cabrera (centre and right).



Figure 6. Yves Gore performing in "COMB HER HAIR," with (top to bottom) Nona Shackleton, Chey Webster, Andrea Muggeridge and Phoebe Storr. Images: Carlos Cabrera.

Sometimes I would try my best to brush my own hair; but it wouldn't be anywhere as tidy as the others. Despite my efforts, relatives would still point at me and yell the same statement, "COMB HER HAIR!"

Again, framing this shame in a title, I invited the audience to do anything they wished with my hair. The subtext was: anything they do to my hair will be better than whatever I could do to it.

To make it truly realistic, in depression-fashion, I left my hair untouched for five days, and by the time I did the performance my locks were fully knotted up and the participants would need to work through it hard in order to really comb my hair. Barely any of the participants had patience for this task – most would spend around a minute on my hair, give up and exit the performance space.

But then there were a few special individuals – Chey, Andrea, Phoebe, Nona (Fig.6) – who each spent a decent amount of time patiently untangling my hair, making beautiful braids out of it.

After the performance, I asked them what made them take their time. They talked about their encounters with depression, with Phoebe in particular mentioning that she recognised it from my unruly hair. She wished that when she couldn't groom herself or do her daily chores, that someone would pick up where she had left off without a word. That simple thing would have made her feel better; and she wanted to do it for me.

This is an insight that came out of the performance. That someone without the illness would be impatient when a depressed person is slow, unproductive or not cleaning up after themselves, and would label this behaviour as lazy. Most of the time, it takes someone with the same illness or experience to empathise with the other and take the time to help them.

Another moving thing that came out of the performance related to an artist named Deb Fleming, who had brought two ceramic needles she had made specifically for the performance and put them in my hair (Fig. 7).

After the performance, I managed to track Debbie down for a one-on-one conversation at her studio.

I asked, why needles? She told me that needles are a symbol of repairing what is broken, that we can move on. She also added that she had a son who died by suicide, so depression is a subject close to home for her. Knowing that I have the illness, she said she hoped that the ceramic needles she made for me would be there to mend my emotional wounds. Strangely, that statement in itself is very healing for me, and till today I have kept the needles close.

Also, during the week after the performance, an artist came up to me and said that she had overheard a debate at her studio the day before, when a fellow artist had called my performance bullshit because he believed depression is bullshit and doesn't actually exist. This sparked an argument with another artist who told him that she would have been dead if she didn't take her antidepressants, so how can depression be bullshit?



Figure 7. Yves Gore performing in "FLOWER HER," with Deb Fleming putting ceramic needles in Yves's hair. Images: Carlos Cabrera.

This made me feel that despite the struggles and uncertainty I felt while executing this performance, it was worthwhile because after it someone had managed to stand up firmly and say that her depression does exist and let her experience be known to others oblivious to it. Because depression is such an invisible illness, so often it is dismissed by those who don't feel it. When a friend kills himself or herself, I would so frequently hear the statement, "But he/she doesn't look depressed!"

If we can keep having an open conversation about our feelings, and not be dismissive of things we aren't experiencing ourselves, maybe there will be better social support for depression. So we wouldn't have to wait till our loved ones killed themselves to find out that they'd been suffering all this time in silence.

The third part of my performance was called "FLOWER HER" (Figs 8-9). The idea for this performance first came to me when I was organising my late sister's funeral. The cost of

the wake was NZ\$30,000 and I'd never seen so many of our friends and family all gather in one place, so many of them saying nice things about my sister; things she probably would have appreciated very much if she were still alive to hear them. The funeral – like all funerals around the world – seemed like it was for the living to mend their broken hearts and console each other; not really for my dead sister.

Although her Kiwisaver covered the funeral costs, the experience left me wondering how we would experience our lives differently if we had our funerals while we were alive. We could share what we feel and think more deliberately with each other; instead of waiting until one of us is dead.

I wanted to hear things about me uncensored, and to feel my own funeral and death. Even more, I hope to break the taboo and fear of dying, for myself.

Those attending this part of the performance were free to bring an offering in the form of flowers, which could be natural or artificial, and say anything to me, positive or negative, uncensored. Since most of the participants were artists, they went as far as using the materials they make art their with to make the flowers, including cement, fabric, ceramics and latex (Fig. 10).

Death has greeted me every morning for as long as I have lived, taunting me each day with the possibility of which loved ones he might take from me. However, never have I been so close to Death as when I was lying on a coffin-like platform, with Frank chanting a funeral chant.



Figure 8. Yves Gore performing in "FLOWER HER." Images: Carlos Cabrera.



Figure 9. Yves Gore performing in "FLOWER HER."  
Image: Carlos Cabrera.

At the beginning of the performance, I felt a sense of fear and sadness, as if I had actually died but my senses were still engaged. I could hear, feel and see the yellowish vibe of the room, and when the first bouquet of wild picked flowers touched my skin, I felt a sense of warmth. The voice that followed this asked "Yves, are you in there?"

I found out later that an artist called Caleb said these words. He told me that he thought I had really died for the performance, because he felt the morbidity of the space when he walked in and it didn't look like I was breathing. He had to ask to make sure I was okay, and said when he saw me blink through the gap in the toilet paper around my eyes, that was a sign of relief for him.

Do we have a biological instinct to fear all things that look dead? Or is that a socially instilled safety barrier, passed down through the generations, whereby we refrain from being too close to someone who has died, so that the disease or animal that killed them will not kill us too?

Another instance that moved me during the performance was when a dear friend, Alyss, came up to my ear and said in a sweet whisper that grew into a shout, "Yves, you are lovely, but sometimes you are too fucking loud for me!"

That honesty made me smile. And when Alyss's fiancée, Thomas♀, came over and said to me, "Here's a flower made out of rubbish" (Alyss makes planes out of repurposed styrofoam), I thought how lucky am I to hear such witty sarcasm at my own 'funeral.'

During this performance, the moment that was most difficult for me was when Frank came over with his fully fledged eulogy and knelt beside me. His shaky voice broke my heart, especially when he said it would be difficult for him to move on, that he had enjoyed our journey together very much, and that he is proud of what I have become and for me to rest well. We were both quietly sobbing by that point. One of the rules for this performance was that I wouldn't speak or move, so all the internalised emotions were even more strongly felt and strangely affective and hyperreal.



Figure 10. Flowers contributed to Yves Gore's performance in *MAKE HER WEAR SOMETHING / COMB HER HAIR / FLOWER HER*.  
Image: Yves Gore.

When the performance ended, it was as if the fear of dying had left me. Like I had reached the other side of existence, post-death. There was a sense of liberty, as if a rite of passage we used to dread had now come and gone, so that I can now live beyond the boundaries of death, as if death doesn't have command over me anymore.

When I opened my eyes to see the amazing creativity and love bestowed on this performance, I felt blessed to have such a truly curious and engaged group of participants. I wouldn't have been able to transcend these dark emotions if it were not for everyone putting their heart into being part of it. For the feedback and responses I've shared in this contribution, thank you all for giving me permission to share them.

I'm also grateful for the friendships that extend beyond Dunedin. We still keep in close contact, and I am also collaborating on a comic book project with one of the artists. In hindsight, it was wonderful how we could find family in the most unexpected places. I discovered that depression was one of the uniting factors with my peers. Because many of us suffer from it, somehow we ended up being on the same wavelength and having the same artistic vision, and bonded together stronger.

Many times, a student and her mother whom we befriended at school, Hope and Beth, would frequently beckon us into their car to whisk us away to cool places in the middle of the night.

One evening, they took us to the infamous giant tooth sculpture, *Harbour Mouth Molars*, by Wellington artist Regan Gentry, which apparently many Dunedin residents hated (Fig. 11, bottom left). Quite the contrary for me, however – I truly feel for all things toothy and loved those tooth sculptures very much. I thought the work gave Mother Earth a set of teeth so that she could be more relatable to us, including how we are burning her up alive.



Figure 11. F.U. Institute x Dunedin School of Art in a nutshell.

The night ended strangely however, as amid our laughter, Hope's mother, Beth, sensitive to something wrong in the air, started walking towards a car parked by the shore, with a whimpering sound coming from it. We stopped laughing. Worried about her safety, we followed her to find a woman and a man in the car, her door open. Beth courageously walked up to her and hugged her. We watched silently for the next half hour as Beth got the upset woman to finally speak. I turned out that she was suicidal as her husband, the man beside her, had been with another woman, and she wanted to kill herself that night.

Beth, being the sensitive but tough woman that she is, decided that we should accompany the woman and her husband to the hospital psychiatric department to get medical help. We followed her lead, and she stayed in the car with the woman while the husband drove, and I was in the front seat. Hope and Frank took her mom's car and followed from behind. As soon as we reached the hospital, the staff told Beth that she couldn't stay with the woman who needed her support, as she wasn't directly related to her. So we left the woman with her husband as she gazed at Beth one last time as she walked away.

This was close to home for me. I have therapy sessions with my psychologist and psychiatrist, and also group therapy, but I have never been to a psychiatric ward before, so I asked Beth why she had displayed such a strong instinct to take the woman to ER. Beth wrinkled her eyebrows and said that many people have killed themselves, as her son's former girlfriend had done just last week. Suicidal thoughts can be as serious as a heart attack, yet New Zealand and the rest of the world has yet to recognise this. We all learned how to recognise it that night, in ourselves and others, from Beth's sensitivity, and also the need to be there for each other and to act on our instincts.

Last month, I did a performance as part of my residency in Norway, called *LOVE HATE*. A young man came up to me after the performance ended and, coincidentally enough, we talked about suicide and my experience of depression. I told him that I still struggled with it daily, but had made a deal with myself – that I could make art or I could kill myself and never live to know these interesting experiences in life and in art.

I wouldn't have come to this conclusion if not for my time in Dunedin. I was at the end of the world, full of darkness, but because of art and the people I met on this journey, I know it's worth hanging in there. Keep our sense of wonder, keep our eyes peeled! Because some gifts in life are hidden, waiting for us to discover them – if only we can resist the spells that our emotions can sometimes cast over us, spells that deprive us of sight, and learn to see through them.

**Yves Gore** is a performance artist and sci-fi-horror writer. She was born on Borneo Island, grew up in Auckland and is based in Los Angeles. She has an eternal fascination with death, non-binary gender, ecological preservation, undead creatures and nu-metal music. She can be found living in goth communities, not fitting in but happy to be herself and ending up finding companionship with others in exile.

I "Art Term – FLUXUS," <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/f/fluxus> (accessed 13 July 2019).

**Editor's Note:** I acknowledge that many artists struggle with suicide and other mental health issues and that this article talks openly about this. Reading this may trigger a strong response in some people and so we are including the following national help line number: **0800 543 354 or text "help" to 4357**

## OF COSMIC TWINS

Ralph Paine

*Difference ... only blooms to its full conceptual power when it becomes as slight as can be: like the difference between twins.*

Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *Cannibal Metaphysics*<sup>1</sup>

*In this fleeting world where no dewdrop can linger in the autumn wind, why imagine us to be unlike the bending grasses?*

Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*<sup>2</sup>

Why the back-loop? Why return to school – any school whatever? Robert Smithson once remarked that “no matter how far out you go, you are always thrown back on your point of origin.”<sup>3</sup> Yet he forgot to add: being-thrown-back always alters the origin. I'm figuring that this is what Frank and Yves had in mind with *The Cosmic Twins*, to alter the point of origin. Yet nothing grand or sweeping was going to be required, just an uncomplicated return gesture; a minimal shift of emphasis away from pedagogy toward initiation. When everything becomes a rite, a ritual, a performance, we learn in a different way. When a lesson becomes an almost whimsical fabulation or a workshop turns strangely therapeutic, we find ourselves in an ever-so-slightly altered realm of apprenticeship; a place that's not so reliant on established norms, codes, rules, measures, protocols; a place where learning becomes intuitive and procedural, one's gestures a little more like sorcery.

I couldn't make it to Dunedin during Yves and Frank's residency, so when they asked me to write something for this issue of *Scope* I decided to remain a little distant on it, re-jigging their title *The Cosmic Twins* into Cosmic Twins and reshaping it as the name of something way more theoretical and diagrammatic: a conceptual flourish, patterning, position, arrangement. In what follows, then, Cosmic Twins is not the occasion of the residency, and nor are Frank and Yves identified as *the* Cosmic Twins.

As if taken from a list of *qi* (positions) in an ancient Chinese sex manual, the name Cosmic Twins evokes a certain configuration of latent intensities. The name itself is efficacious, as if coiled within it reside all those magic flows and powers of which one can barely speak: lifelines of the Formless, of almost imperceptible reality; virtual paths of Air; Sensation, Awareness; flux of intangible potentiality ... To enact Cosmic Twins will in this sense be to uncoil a variation of these flows, but vitally, always as potentials. Always, that is to say, as a channelling of the position's latent intensities without dissipation or dissolution, thus allowing them to travel and circulate *continuously*. At any rate, such is the *cosmic* dimension of Cosmic Twins: the continuous, the One All.

As the one of all its virtual paths, Cosmic Twins is affirmative, a generic positivity. How then, and without introducing the negative, to allow for its provision as two, the Twins? Already we noted a coiled–uncoiled modulation at play. When enacted, a version of the position's multiple intensities unfurl and re-furl, unfold and refold, untwist and re-twist. The intensities, in other words, become manifest energies, qualities, yet always to furl, fold and twist back into the position and thus in some new way preserve its intensities. This in itself is a twinned operation, a doubled and doubling movement (of disequilibrium and asymmetry) whereby zones, voids and rhythms begin to form and transform, constantly rearranging their innate complicity with the One All.

Thus, Air becomes breathing in–breathing out. Sound resounds, echoing across the voids. Shadow and colour now accompany light along curves of the folding-unfolding. Waves of the body electric pass through entwined tissue, cresting and falling, simultaneously pulsed and superposed. Around dripping folds and hollows, scents waft and wane. Touch touches upon, continuous-contiguous, surface to surface, sliding, undulating, quivering, hold and release, thrust and withdrawal. Taste blooms. Awareness becomes aware of itself, as other; *ātman–aham*, the possibility of two selves, two faces, looking-eyes/looked-at-eyes, interfaces, condition of I-othering, of possible inside–outsides, a potential-actual entanglement, diffusion, and decentring of the I, the twin, the twin's twin, the twin's twin's twin ... And the names are legion: spirit-mask, persona, @, genius, demon, id, profile, tag, jinn, agent, number; simulacrum, password, replicant, selfie, bot, mediator; spectre, geist, signature, image, avatar ... Sometimes the I-othering uncoils–recoils via the machinic being of devices. Sometimes Cosmic Twins itself appears as if a device: *My World is the Model and I am Cypher – Scatter the Code!*

To study Cosmic Twins is to study the I; and to study the I is to diffuse the I; and to diffuse the I is to be inspired/infected by others: the co-arising of I and collective ... An emptying out–filling up of both I and collective as correlational performativity – and at the same time, as correlational counter-performativity (resistance, suspension) internal to the co-arising. Considered now in temporal mode, whereas the potentially infinite cosmic dimension subsists as *pure duration*, the provision of the Twins interleaves a multiply doubled or collective awareness of *individuated times* – loops of time, knots of time, pockets of time – a differentiated/differentiating awareness, that is to say, whereby pure duration is in some new manner both performed and counter-performed and thus felt or registered-in-passing as finite existence: proliferating localised durations, encounters, zone-bound pulses, tempos, rhythms, clusters of speed and slowness, vibe, *suchness*. Relayed throughout and at all levels of the enactment, awareness now touches itself along fractal interfaces of time, becoming-other via affectively bonded yet open past-futures of the One All.

Because reducible to neither its twinned operation nor its cosmic dimension, enacting Cosmic Twins expresses *the virtuosity of between*. We say 'virtuosity' because this between keeps things moving, resonating, in-touch, infectious. Everything remains trans-active and in play between a cosmic dimension and the provision of the Twins ... Between differing and shifting zones, rhythms, and localised relations ... Between breathing in–breathing out, folding–unfolding, potential–actual, inside–outside, etc., and so nothing gets entirely jammed and isolated on either side or in any region of the play. Example: the dual term (binomial) pleasure-pain. Etymologically, 'passion' and 'suffering' are correlated, not opposed. Hence, to enact Cosmic Twins is to suffer its constant I-othering as a form-of-passion, a suffering and a passion both whereby pain opens up to pleasure and pleasure to pain, as if everything's moving to and fro between dissimilar poles of attraction. Yet even while remaining a singular possibility, it's not that masochism is inescapable here. Rather, it's that enacting the position entails inexorable and almost complete exposure to a sensuous, lived experience and thus to the possibilities of fatigue and renewal, rupture and healing, sadness and joy – in other words, that the event (and the sense) always arises in the middle of these – and myriad other – dual terms. In which case, fatigue, rupture and sadness should not be regarded as the respective negations of renewal, healing and joy. When before we said that Cosmic Twins is "affirmative, a generic positivity," what we meant is that *amor fati* traverses all zones and speeds of the position. *Myriad throws cannot entice / The answer from a tumbling dice / A love of fate enflames the world / My streaming cunt, your cock unfurled*. Enacting Cosmic Twins is thus to be equal to what is happening, to accept, a being-consigned – or sometimes, more like a *being-carried* into the celestial lightness of the position's mobility.

Cosmic Twins is not a project, a program, a platform, a methodology ... Rather, it's a position, *qi*, conceptual flourish, configuration for the Common. Possessing all the magical powers of use value but none of the geocidal qualities of capitalist exchange value and production, it nevertheless remains to some extent vulnerable, open, mutable, and thus may be forced in a self-destructive manner to adhere to the bio-political, economic, legal, psychological, aesthetic, etc. powers and alliances operational within its zone(s) of enactment ... On the other hand, it may be enhanced and empowered in new ways. We say "to some extent" because despite its openness and mutability, that is to say, its ability to I-other via enactment and thus be affected, the position retains its latent cosmic dimension, holds on to its withdrawn and resistant kernel or the transcendental (contra transcendent) idea of itself as *this*

position/potentiality rather than any other position/potentiality. Thus, any person, pairing, group, milieu, organisation, institution, biosocial multiplicity whatever may adopt the position, but they cannot, without apocalyptic-type malice and violence, annihilate either its desire to be or its desire to be what it is *in-itself*.

We call those entities enacting the position *users*. Each user has a *username*. Our usernames include but are not limited to: Frank Fu, Yves Gore, Fu–Gore, Ralph Paine, Tiepolis, Zen Master Fu, Frank Fu Art, Cinema Irritating, Background Boy, F.U. Institute, and Yum Cha Club.

Cosmic Twins has no *instrumental* aims; it obliges no work, no productivity as such. Yet our use of the position – our *procedural* use – entails making artworks. Our desire, in other words, lies in the conducting of ritual, performance and intervention, in delivering talks and workshops, in conjuring social media content, producing films, making paintings, drawings, sculpture ... These, however, are not completed manifestations of Cosmic Twins. Nothing of its innate potentiality is used up in the works, nothing terminated. On the contrary, we consider them evocations or traces of the position's use, and thus of new uses which the future makes possible.

With the film *Orange Confucius* (2015) we set out to tell a myth of Cosmic Twins. We were interested in *using* the position to relay a theory-karma of the position. Given that cinema encompasses a whole automated anti-history of time and movement, we thought making a film a good way to go. And just as any telling of a myth is not a copy of an original telling but always a variation (there are *only* variations), the making of *Orange Confucius* would entail a cinematic putting-into-variation of the position. *Director's Note: ALWAYS RELAY THE CONTINUOUS BY WAY OF MUTATION, THE ADOPTIVE BY WAY OF ADAPTION*. Part documentary, part imaginary tale, the film tracks a real journey and a real love affair; yet it does this via a becoming-myth in which the documentary sequences and the imaginary sequences interact and mutate to the point of being more or less undistinguishable. In this regard, however, *Orange Confucius* does not unify its two procedures, but rather constructs compounds of two dissimilar types of sensation, uncoiling-coiling between twinned cinematic techniques – the Fanciful superposed on the Documentary Real. Aided and inspired by myriad indigenous ontologies, for us the logic-karma of a myth is always a becoming-One All of a Two, and vice versa.

Making *Orange Confucius* sometimes felt like a crazy-quilt adventure into the inland empire of free indirect discourse. The *modus operandi*: limit scripted dialogue, let the characters speak, let them express themselves, improvise. But also, let as many languages, types of enunciation, accents and dialects as possible be expressed: standard languages and minor ones, twittering and squawking bird languages, elephant calls, rat snufflings, refrains of street-food merchants, spectral voices, voices folded within voices, a sudden announcement in Russian, Fijian singing, Mandarin philosophising, expressions of New Age mysticism; even one of the cameras becomes a character, speaking in whirrs and clicks. So rather than purely discourse, there was an entire free indirect style of cinema at play, a style *à la* Pasolini whereby we mixed vulgarity with the scared, pornography with the

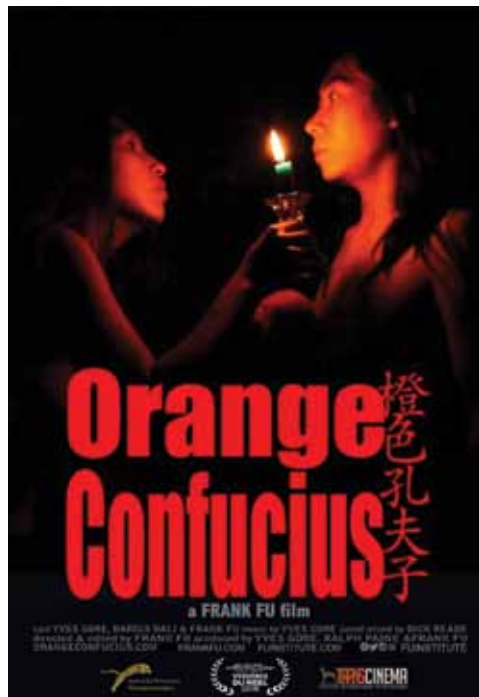


Figure 1. A poster of the film, *Orange Confucius*, directed by Frank Fu, with cast: Yves Gore and Frank Fu, produced by Ralph Paine.

gynaecological, tourism with shamanism, grace with absolute and complete revulsion. And all this falling together of high and low, as it were, enhanced to the max by the use of different quality cameras and microphones, hand-held shots and extremely controlled set-ups, old-school special effects and state-of-the art ones. A machinic and self-reflexive awareness tracked its way into the wild interior of every technical-magical fold. The film touched itself.

*Seed, weapon, massage ball / Some kind of fucking artwork!* At times the lovers seem to travel as if magic twins, yet for the Woman their earthbound wandering brings on recurring melancholia, a muddle of distraction, perceived ill health, indifference and exhaustion. Inasmuch as the word 'treatment' signifies both cure and rendering, we wanted to *treat* the Woman's melancholia, to heal it by rendering it visible-sonorous. Reminiscent of Albrecht Dürer's famously weirded-out engraving *Melencolia I*, where a brooding and palpably down angel sits and waits in a world overflowing with obscure, chaotic and confused symbolism, *Orange Confucius* sees the Woman moving without guidance, no direction home, seemingly aimless through landscapes, interiors and urban spaces all overabundant in every form of obscure guidance imaginable, from esoteric object-signs (the Confucius head, the orange, dragonflies, the wolf-skin pants, etc.) to a reunion in the desert with her shaman-double; from cryptic wisdom offered by companions and strangers alike to the surreal non-sense of dreams; from a puzzling and voyeuristic fascination for her Mexican house cleaner (which she shares with a group of axolotls) to a book on relationships glimpsed lying on a sofa. She endures an intense medical check-up. She seeks various cures – cupping, acupuncture, massage. She gets angry. She masturbates while drinking alone in an LA bar. She *suffers* the camera.

In the conceptual world I've sketched briefly here, making art is a figuring-forth of Cosmic Twins. So it's always the configuration of a configuration, a fresh use, rebirthing – over and over. The process is extreme close-up and intimate, but it's an intimacy of the outside, an immanent outside, possibility of the other; potent vision of another world. By travelling this intimacy we release ourselves to the transformative, shape-shifting powers of everything encountered along the way ... *On solitary paths of abandonment / The ties that bind.*

**Ralph Paine** is an artist and a member of Yum Cha Club who lives in Auckland. He has been on many art-life adventures with Yves and Frank.

- 1 Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *Cannibal Metaphysics: For a Post-Structural Anthropology*, trans. Peter Skafish (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2014), 59.
- 2 Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*, trans. Royall Tyler (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 759.
- 3 Robert Smithson, *The Writings of Robert Smithson*, ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 192.

## MULTICULTURAL ART EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: WHAT AN AMERICAN TEACHER LEARNED FROM NEW ZEALAND ART EDUCATORS AND ARTISTS

Courtnee Bennett

I am a visual arts secondary school teacher from Albuquerque, New Mexico, who received a Fulbright Distinguished Awards in Teaching grant to conduct art education research in New Zealand. In this comparative case study, I write about my observations of the two countries.

Manzano High School, where I teach, has a very diverse student population. I feel I cannot teach in-depth lessons about all the different cultures of my students, due to time constraints and mandated state standards. Therefore, I tend to create what I now understand as superficial cultural activities, like making sugar skulls for the Day of the Dead to include Mexican culture. A couple years ago, a student expressed boredom and frustration over creating sugar skulls because he made them every year in art classes and this activity fails to explore actual Mexican culture.

This experience made me realise that I needed to learn how to teach multicultural perspectives that honour students and promote learning.<sup>1</sup> I want my students to feel that their heritage is respected and appreciated, and everyone to become knowledgeable about all the different cultures represented in our class. Moreover, exposing my students to a variety of cultural artwork makes them more tolerant, empathetic and accepting of differences they find in the broader world.<sup>2</sup>

In order to deepen and extend my teaching skills and knowledge and move beyond superficial cultural activities to more sophisticated, nuanced and less stereotypical representations, I needed more meaningful professional development experiences aimed at exploring how to engage students from a variety of cultures in one classroom. Additionally, I wanted to learn how to support the students in my classes who want to become professional artists. Learning how artists retain and explore their culture in a commercial setting will help me figure out the guiding principles I need to instill in my students so they can continue reflecting upon their culture and how and where they fit into the complicated world we live in.

The only pathway I currently know of is to attend university – but the university track does not support practitioners in art fields such as muralists or street artists, tattoo artists, welders, and many more. Therefore, the two questions I sought to answer as an educator were:

How can art educators create engaging, meaningful lessons that center on multicultural perspectives and culturally sustaining pedagogy?

What support do professional artists receive on their pathway to become established, practising artists?

To discover the answers to these questions, I needed to see this inquiry in a new context, which led me to look outside of the American education system. The Fulbright Distinguished Awards in Teaching grant offers professional

development research in numerous countries around the world. I discovered that the United States and New Zealand had similar beginnings to their education systems, but that New Zealand had approached diversity differently in more recent years.

Both countries' art education programs developed from economically relevant technical drawing classes drawn from Britain's education system. Both countries shifted to student-centered approaches that focused on art for creative purposes and supported child development.<sup>3</sup> The Treaty of Waitangi (1840) created the foundation for the inclusion of Māori culture in the New Zealand education system. Therefore New Zealand's art curriculum included Māori arts and crafts before focusing on Māori culture, beliefs and ethnic perspectives.<sup>4</sup> New Zealand's education vision stresses the importance of having a strong sense of national and cultural identity. According to the New Zealand Education Curriculum, "The curriculum reflects New Zealand's cultural diversity and values the histories and traditions of all its people." Cultural diversity is one of eight principles that schools use when making decisions.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, American art education's short-lived emphasis on multicultural concepts was unclear and took place in response to the dominance of White culture rather than developing a full understanding of the different heritages in the nation and their societal views.<sup>6</sup> I feel as a teacher, and also as a student who went through the American education system, that the United States has so many ethnicities and cultures that it would be unfair to single one out and only teach a Westernised view of education. At the moment, we are basically ignoring all the other cultures except for the White Eurocentric dominant culture.

This trend of White dominance is evident throughout the American education system. In the United States, education policies and regulations are the responsibilities of each state. Each school is part of a district – an educational body governing many schools in a large geographical area that is managed by a single superintendent, his/her personnel, and the elected officials of the school board. Although school board members are supposed to reflect the diversity within the local community, according to GreatSchools investigators who surveyed 44 American school boards, approximately 70 percent of the members are White.<sup>7</sup> The Albuquerque Public Schools district where I work includes a wide range of racially, ethnically and culturally diverse students, but the seven members of the school board are White and Hispanic. At Manzano High School, the student population is 48 percent Hispanic/Latino, 34 percent Caucasian (White), 6 percent Native American (Indigenous), 6 percent Asian and/or Pacific Islander, and 6 percent Black and African American.<sup>8</sup> Within the indigenous communities, there are multiple tribes and pueblos (permanent towns) with different languages, traditions and customs. Yet the White and Hispanic school board members ultimately influence educational content insofar as they hire the superintendent who runs the district and coordinates the student learning and teaching best-practices with the schools' principals.

American schools tend to operate hierarchically, with decisions about professional development made by district personnel in which teachers are mandated to participate. At Manzano High School, our principals choose specific teachers to create workshop sessions that all teachers attend, but the school itself has very little autonomy over the content presented. As an art educator, I have found that many of these workshops are not relevant as they involve core subjects such as reading, writing, social studies, math, and science, or classroom management styles geared for classes where students listen to the teachers teach and then quietly work from a textbook, or work in small groups for short periods. Art classes are much less structured, as students move around the classroom to source supplies, create individually inspired artwork and talk with their classmates while creating art.

Thus it is difficult to tailor mainstreamed professional development workshops to the different ethnic and cultural student populations attending the schools in my region. Manzano High School is one of the most diverse high schools in the Albuquerque Public Schools district, and when I asked my students last Fall what cultures they identified with, they mentioned a total of 27 different cultures. These included: American; New Mexican; Hispanic, both from Spain and Central America; Native American, from tribes and pueblos such as Apache, Zuni, Navajo, Hopi and Santa Domingo; European cultures including French, Dutch, Italian, German, Irish and Serbian; Mexican and Mexican American; Southern; Arabian; Asian cultures such as Chinese, Filipino and Vietnamese; Catholic; Black, African, and African-American; Cuban; and White and Caucasian.

When I asked if the students felt their culture was respected at school, some said 'yes' and some said 'no,' but many could not articulate why they felt that way. Those that could specified that people respected and liked cultural foods, such as burritos and green chile; some home languages, such as Spanish and Navajo, were taught at school; and there were some activities for Native Americans, such as the extracurricular Indigenous Club. One student said that minority stereotypes still existed and were foisted on them. Many students replied that culture is not discussed at school – which to me signifies that non-White culture is repressed in the American, Westernised education system. At my school, I feel that we hardly include or celebrate the vast diversity of our cultures, except during our multicultural assembly where students perform cultural songs and dances.

Is culture repressed because of the racial and cultural demographics of American teachers? I do not believe this is a major contributing factor to cultural repression in United States. It is true that most American teachers are White and have succeeded in the Western education system, with 47 percent of them obtaining a Master's degree after the required Bachelor's degree.<sup>9</sup> But New Zealand shares this characteristic, as most of their teachers are of European ethnicity. Dr Jill Smith determined that in New Zealand schools race did not affect students' learning and lesson outcomes, but that the teacher's disposition was the main factor when embracing the students' ethnic and cultural diversity.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, it is *my* teaching disposition that will reflect how my students embrace culture in my classroom. I am White and can effectively implement cultural competence in my classroom by learning how New Zealand teachers learn about their students' cultural perspectives, create lesson plans related to their heritage, and help students become proud of their ethnicities.

While in New Zealand, I spoke with art educators, teachers and artists and learned about Māori culture. One of the main concepts I observed is storytelling. Stories are everywhere, something which I do not feel is a primary focus in American education and the culture in general. In art education, stories were essential. Students in mainstream schools in Years 11, 12 and 13 create portfolios that center on a narrative that students explore all year long. Students choose an in-depth topic of great interest to them, whether it be their heritage or family background, an important relationship in their life, or a social or environmental issue such as climate change. The artists I interviewed specified that their artwork centered on narratives, and some stated that people bought their artwork because of the story it told. In the schools where I have taught, the art curriculum only has one class, Advance Placement Art, that explores a particular theme. The other classes allow students some freedom to choose the subject matter when teaching a technique. For example, when I teach facial proportions, students draw a self-portrait in charcoal. I take a photograph of them or they choose one of themselves that was taken previously as a selfie or by a friend. Sometimes the self-portrait reflects their personality, essentially telling the story of the student's character; but at other times it can be devoid of expression.

Another aspect I noticed in New Zealand is communal discussions involving decolonisation. For example, I attended the Barbarian Productions staging of *Captain Cook Thinks Again*, produced by Jo Randerson and performed by Tom Clarke, that aimed to educate people and reflect on the British colonisation of the country and how we can rectify the repressive past with more progressive thoughts, conversations and actions. This was done in a creative oral story format.

Not all the communal discussions I participated in were as creative as this one, but they were still implemented in institutional settings and at the personal level. At Victoria University in Wellington, students constructively critiqued their course and professor midway through the term. Students met during class and gave feedback about the course content and instruction and the elected class representatives discussed this with the professor, creating an open dialogue that benefited both parties and ideally improved the class. This type of communal discussion does not happen at either primary, secondary or tertiary level in the United States.

Oral history, storytelling and communal discussions are common aspects of many of the students' cultures at Manzano High School, and one of our current initiatives is to include students' families more in the school community. But our educational content does not include these cultural aspects – rather, it is dictated and mandated by people

who are not part of and who do not understand our community. I believe that if we want more community involvement, we need to listen to what our community values and incorporate those things into the school environment and educational curriculum. One way I can start this process is to begin combining historical, traditional and contemporary attributes of neighbourhood cultures into the art education curriculum in my classroom.

I have observed the blending of traditional and modern elements throughout New Zealand culture in many different aspects of community life. During the Te Matatini Festival in Wellington, dances included the traditional kapa haka dance styles, but portrayed current, relevant topics affecting the iwi, such as one community's struggle with cancer. To welcome Māori participants to Wellington, seven street pedestrian crossing lights depicting haka and poi figure poses were installed,<sup>11</sup> infusing Māori images into mainstream everyday activities such as crossing the street. At a ballet performance I attended, the barefoot dancers performed a variety of contemporary dances including one exploring Māori mythology, while another featured moving light designs while two dancers were physically connected through their clothing. During the Chinese New Year festivities in Wellington, a performance I watched focused on Westernised contemporary dance fused with traditional styles of the East. I attended a Passover Seder where the family had created their own Hagaddah, the Passover service booklet, which was continually updated so that it contained relevant information. They related historical events relating to the enslavement of the Jews along with current events including people around the world enduring war, starving as the result of famine, and the unfortunate events motivated by hatred that happened in Christchurch.

While learning about the Mataatua Wharehenui of the Ngāti Awa people in the Bay of Plenty, I witnessed a light show documenting the story of local Māori and saw examples of wood carving from 1870 made using obsidian tools and others dating from 2000 that had been carved using contemporary metal chisels. The fact that so many marae around New Zealand are available for people to experience, engage with and learn about the customs, values and knowledge of local iwi is inspirational. Some marae are more traditional, while others are more contemporary, representing many iwi from around New Zealand in their carvings with the aim of being inclusive. They often depict modern images of historical events and stories, and host members of different iwi. I visited five marae where I learned more about Māori culture than I have experienced and learned about the Indigenous communities surrounding my home city.

Around Albuquerque, only the Acoma Pueblo allows tours of their 'Sky City' and when asked about different aspects of their culture, such as their religion, local tour guides say they cannot discuss it. My Indigenous students have mentioned the same thing when we are discussing their identities and I have learned not to ask questions, even though I am truly interested in learning about their customs, traditions, heritage and culture. I have observed the combination of historical and contemporary elements in Indigenous artwork, such as in Santa Domingo Pueblo Native American Ricardo Caté's cartoons that are published in the Santa Fe New Mexican newspaper in the "Without Reservations" section. The Indian Pueblo Cultural Center and National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque both exhibit artists and hold performances related to their cultural interests. Native American pueblos have feast days that include traditional dances, cultural activities, foods, and arts and crafts and are open to the public, but all of these events are not as visible as they are in New Zealand. Even two annual cultural events that are supported by the city are not well known to many locals, especially my students. These are the Marigold Day of the Dead parade that happens in Albuquerque at the beginning of November and the burning of the Zozobra, a large flammable marionette, marking the start of La Fiesta de Santa Fe, a celebration commemorating the defeat of the local Indigenous pueblos and Spanish resettlement of the city of Santa Fe.

Despite all the many cultural activities and programs that exist, the integration of Native American and Hispanic cultures is not particularly visible in the daily lives of locals living within Albuquerque. I feel I have to make a conscious effort to find and attend cultural events that happen around town. This is in stark contrast to the Māori culture that is more apparent in New Zealand.

From what I have observed, New Zealand is institutionally bicultural, not multicultural. The Treaty of Waitangi created

a political agreement focusing on principles between the British and the Māori to establish a nation and build a government,<sup>12</sup> creating the foundation for biculturalism that is especially evident in the education system. According to Michele Coxhead, teachers are including the Treaty principles of partnership, participation and protection into the classroom as they work together with Māori communities; protect Māori knowledge, values, interests and possessions; and emphasise Māori involvement at all levels of education.<sup>13</sup> Locals from all over New Zealand speak some words and phrases of Te Reo and students learn Te Reo and about Māori stories, dances, art and other culturally significant information in school.

The country's population is multicultural while the education system is bicultural. According to the 2013 census, 74 percent of the New Zealanders identify as European, 15 percent identify as Māori, 12 percent as Asian, 7 percent as Pasifika, and 1 percent as Middle Eastern, Latin American, or African, with the Asian, Middle Eastern, Latin American and African populations growing the fastest.<sup>14</sup> When talking casually with art educators about students incorporating cultural aspects related to their heritage and family backgrounds into their artwork, I discovered that those students who have strong cultural and ethnic identities at home include them more often in their art. Formally, only Māori culture is included in the classroom, along with Western art techniques, making the education system bicultural.

The New Zealand Education Curriculum states that the 'principle of cultural diversity calls for schools and teachers to affirm students' different cultural identities, and incorporate their cultural contexts into teaching and learning programmes.'<sup>15</sup> However, I found that cultures other than Māori and Pākehā were not addressed. I spoke informally about this with ten teachers both in primary and secondary schools, mostly in the North Island. Their responses to questions about including other cultures besides Māori and Pākehā ranged from not feeling comfortable teaching about cultures they did not know to not being required to teach anything but Māori culture so therefore they did not, even though their school was 39 percent Asian. One elementary school teacher adorned her classroom with Māori art only, while another taught children Māori designs. Two teachers said that because the students were raised in the New Zealand education system learning about Māori culture, that was also their culture and they did not need to incorporate those students' heritage or family backgrounds into their curriculum. Another teacher said she did not want to offend students by teaching cultures she was not familiar with, while another said she had never thought of incorporating the Asian and Filipino cultures of her students into her teaching.

These responses lead me to hypothesise that, unlike my university program in the US, university teacher preparation programs in New Zealand do not teach their graduates how to incorporate all students' cultural identities in the classroom. My teacher licensure program included a class devoted to multiculturalism in the art classroom, with material on how to respond to particular cultures. Only one art educator in my informal survey was concerned to incorporate all of his students' cultures by creating opportunities for students to focus on their connection to the land and their journey to where they were currently living. He spoke of giving the students the opportunity to research and figure out why particular things were important to them, such as hip hop. His students did not have to focus solely on Māori or Pākehā elements.

For the second part of my research, I formally interviewed six professional artists to learn what kind of support they had received on their pathway to become established, practicing artists. Two were Māori, one was Chinese and three were Pākehā. Their art fields consisted of special effects, body art, jade and bone carving, woodcarving, painting and street art. While pursuing their professions, they had enjoyed support from artists in their fields, whether this came from friends who taught them the medium or a teacher, mentor or tutor who helped guide them, especially at the beginning of their careers. The common factor I identified in their becoming artists was that they had all had a very positive, influential experience of art that sparked their interest in pursuing it throughout their lives. These experiences were very different, and included having an art specialist come into the classroom to conduct an art project; taking art classes in primary school or community college and loving them; having a mother who taught them a variety of art techniques and media after school; coming home to find a tattoo artist tattooing a family member's leg and being exposed to a variety of art books and magazines; and creating stickers, stencils, t-shirts, and graffiti art with friends on weekends.

In order to find out how these artists retained and explored their culture in a commercial setting, I asked how they incorporated their heritage or family backgrounds into their artwork – something which they all felt they did. This element ranged from artwork being 'happy' as a way of escaping the harsh reality of life, and including traditional Chinese and Western elements in his paintings that reflected the cultural duality of growing up in Hong Kong; focusing on fantastical creatures after visiting a theme park in Europe and seeing the movie *Labyrinth*; and including in their artwork traditional and contemporary Māori elements that they had been exposed to throughout their lives. One artist felt that his life experience of working with a bulldozer and chainsaw had influenced his decision to become a sculptor; rather than his heritage or family background. When I asked if they felt their heritage and family backgrounds had influenced their decision to become artists, they either said that it had not or that it had guided them in making their decision, but was not the main reason they had chosen this profession.

When speaking with these artists about emerging artists, one Māori artist gave me a whole new perspective on the labels applied to artists and the Western perspective on pricing and selling art. He said that labeling people as emerging, professional or practicing artists is a Pākehā concept. Such labels manipulate a system that deals solely with financial control, and art produced for money is a colonising idea. He felt strongly that art should be used to develop the individual. I agree that art should help develop a person as a whole, but had never considered the Western concept of controlling the value of art in financial terms and labeling artists in this way. He explained that in the Māori world, art is created to make reference to, give respect for, and create records of the ancestors and to record human observation of the world, both past and present. It is a means of communication and an everyday practice. Art is gifted, rather than bought and sold, and it involves a reciprocation process, which can be activated years later. He feels that he straddles the two worlds of the koha system and the pricing of paintings to sell. The notions of pricing and selling art versus gifting it, as well as it being a means to explore one's identity, will fuel conversations I will have with my students.

Within my classroom, I plan to change my lessons so that they focus on storytelling. I will still teach a variety of art mediums and techniques, but will focus on the story lines within the work. More narratives from the cultures of my students will be included to help inspire them to collect and record their own stories. Including different cultural symbols and designs to represent flora and fauna in the students' artwork, for example, can enhance the storytelling elements. Traditional Chinese art always includes a word or phrase explaining the message underlying the artwork, so if there are Chinese students in the classroom, this aspect can be incorporated. If a culture has a name for a specific concept we are discussing, I will include that word in the art language as a way of promoting different home languages and sparking an interest in students learning the languages specific to their cultures. Another way of including students' languages, making them feel welcome and accepted, and raising awareness of all the different cultures in the classroom is simply to say 'hello' in the home languages of the students.

In order to expose students to a variety of art fields, I intend to bring more artists into the classroom to speak with the students about the narrative elements in their art and how their culture is expressed in their work. This will help students learn different methods of expressing their stories, culture, heritage and family backgrounds through creative processes. Hopefully, these guest artists will become part of an artist registry I am planning to create for students interested in pursuing art-related careers to access. Ideally, a paid internship or mentorship program would be set up for the artists and students involved. This scheme will take a while to establish, but will hopefully be completed in the near future.

Conducting art education research was a valuable professional development experience. Learning the importance of storytelling and communal discussions, and how some New Zealand artists include their heritage and family backgrounds in their artwork will change the way I structure my classes to engage my multicultural students. I yearn for my students to embrace their cultures, integrate them into their artwork, increase their cultural competence, and become prolific artists in their communities.

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