

TELLING TALES

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In this issue of *Scope: Art and Design*, much of the focus is on exhibitions, residencies and experiences that took place in 2019 and early in 2020. The ability to host visiting artists, and for New Zealand artists to undertake residencies and exhibition opportunities in other countries, is something that we all took for granted before the landscape changed with the advent of Covid-19. This issue begins with a grouping of articles related to our residency programme at the Dunedin School of Art and is followed by reports from Dunedin artists involved in exhibition and residency opportunities overseas. Many writers in this issue of *Scope: Art and Design* focus on storytelling as part of their practice. Narratives play out in works that may be deceptive, fragmented and open to multiple interpretations.

The works of visiting artists range from the satirical humour of Mark Braunias' 'Grateful Dead' artists speaking from beyond the grave to the veiled, filmy forms of Barbara Graf's bodies undergoing what Michele Beevors describes as "the invasive gaze of medicine." In an accompanying article, Graf documents an installation practice that explores both external and internal bodily structures expressed through a range of materials and processes that perceive the vulnerabilities of bodies.

In CLINKProject6, Andrew Last documents the experiences of a group of contemporary jewellers taking part in the sixth iteration of the collaboration between Dunedin School of Art and Hungry Creek jewellery programmes. Current and ex-graduates and staff from both schools have been involved in the pop-up interventions that until now have been based in Auckland. CLINK 6 was part of the Radiant Pavilion Jewellery Biennale, where the group responded to work in the Grainger Museum at the University of Melbourne. The jewellers discuss the development of their works and their experiences in the CLINK community in an interview format.

Lastly, in a collection of articles relating to residencies and international exhibition opportunities, Jane Venis and Hannah Joynt talk together about how their collaborative performance practice benefitted in unexpected ways from a recent residency in Portugal.

Art movements have always emerged in times of crisis. The creative response to Covid-19 has seen artists responding to what is now becoming a new art movement. Here in Dunedin, Caro McCaw's article about the Dunedin Dream Brokerage Bubbles introduces a community project where local artists enjoyed an opportunity for their works to be showcased in temporary empty suburban shop windows as businesses were closed during lockdown. The new art audience of suburban walkers had time to slow down and enjoy the works as new relationships were built between artists, designers, businesses and local communities. This is the first of several articles with a focus on storytelling.

Tanea Paterson discusses the formation of the group iNDx Autistic Arts and Culture Aotearoa and the collaboration and support offered by Otago Museum not only to hold an award-winning exhibition of works from the collective, but also to create a space for community korero. Included are iNDx artist profiles and interviews, and a postscript by Rachel Cooper of Otago Museum about her experience and learning from the project and the importance of providing a platform for these artists' voices.

One of the artists involved in the iNDx exhibitions, recent MFA graduate Tom Fox, presents an article about his drawing practice. Fox writes of the freedom he feels in receiving the diagnosis of ASD (autism spectrum disorder). He describes each drawing as “an exorcism of internal distortions delivered by my sensory system.”

Distortions of a different kind underlie Emily Gordon's MFA project comprising dark atmospheric charcoal and pastel drawings. They create a sense of foreboding, drawing from the genre of horror films that builds tension by allowing the viewer to imagine not only what is left out of the frame, but also by provoking a sense of discomfort emanating from the undefined shapes and changing perspectives within. Unnamed fears and unknown terrors are suggested by dense charcoal blacks.

The notion of incomplete narratives also links to the next article by Bronwyn Mohring. *Toys: An Open Narrative* is a celebration of the nostalgic memories that adults have for the lost toys of their past. A childhood photo showing a stuffed toy deer is the starting point for a body of ceramic and printmaking works that invite the viewer into a world of fragmented memories, daydreams and imaginings.

Reconnecting with the past is also the theme of the next article and the work of another ceramic artist and designer: Alumni artist Gabby Malpas has an international table ceramic design practice. *Lost and Found* is the story of her reconnection with the Dunedin School of Art after graduating in 1986. The article, written by Pam McKinlay and Malpas, starts with the arrival of a letter from France for Malpas, c/- the Dunedin School of Art. What follows is an intriguing tale of reconnections.

In Hayley Walmsley's MVA project *Suzie no Friends*, her ironic titling of photographs anthropomorphises discarded furniture and appliances in Dunedin's student quarter. Her work ascribes significance to objects and locations and encourages us to create our own narratives. She uses a wry humour as her objects speak of social issues and the local environment.

Responses to environmental issues is a focus for two artists within their MVA projects. Siau-Jiun Lim critically reflects on the destruction of the environment through both her painting practice and online community projects. She engages deeply with the conundrum of making works about the Anthropocene while questioning the use of materials essential to her painting practice that are not entirely sustainable.

Debbie Fleming's practice is also concerned with a response to the Anthropocene. In *Heavy Luggage*, she sources local experiences and writes of the resilience found in local communities in coming to terms with climate change. She explores the grief associated with climate change through the ceramic pieces of 'luggage' that we all carry forward.

While many articles by artists and designers discuss the 'how' of making and the influences of various artists, designers and theorists relevant to their practices, Giles Panting's *Beauty Utility and Futility: The Art of Craft and Why We Create* is essentially a personal philosophy about the 'why' of making. It discusses the personal motivation and developing understanding of the writer to consider why he creates his complex textile works.

An opportunity for those working in contemporary textiles, the Common Thread Symposium took place in the Suter Gallery in Nelson in September 2019. Stella Lange reviews the conference and writes of her favourite presentations and top 'takeaways' from the conference.

Lastly, we have the end of the narrative arc. Udo Prinsen's article, written from the perspective of a pinhole camera as it tracks the sun's trace in the Arctic, is a poetic exploration of a global photographic project involving 25 Arctic scientists. Presented in a pseudo-diary format, in the accompanying images we see how long exposures allow us to see traces of the sun's journey across an extraordinary part of the world.

Professor Jane Venis is a multi-media artist, musician and writer. She is the co-editor of *Art and Design: History, Theory, Practice* (2017) and the current editor of *Scope: Contemporary Research Topics, Art and Design*. Her practice focuses on the politics of contemporary popular culture expressed through the making of objects, video, sound and performance works. Her current writing is linked to her studio practice and explores the fertile ground between art and design.

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