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A B S T R A C T
A B S T R A C T

7 MAY - 6 JULY 2024

I wanted to return to a place of speculation, to open myself up to new ways of inhabiting the world. I wanted to embrace doubt, nurture curiosity, write with no conclusion. The precariousness of it all – financial, emotional, intellectual - scared me. What I longed for was a kind of re-enchantment - something that art is very good at.¹

The premise of ABSTRAXT ABSTRAXT was to curate an exhibition that celebrates the depth of practice inherent in Aotearoa artists work today- from a feminine perspective. A desire to present an optimistic, interconnected, collective response through an exploration of approaches by women artists led to the format of the exhibition - the purpose of the group show being to exemplify the richness of exploration occurring in the field of abstraction.

In her prologue in *The Other Side* - a semi-autobiographical exploration of women, art and spirituality from an art historical position - Jennifer Higbie presents the notion of taking time and space to nurture oneself, to utilise creative or artistic practice to process thoughts, emotions and ideas about contemporary life and culture - to re-enchant oneself.

ABSTRAXT ABSTRAXT attempts to re-enchant or make sense of the chaos of contemporary life through a consideration of various approaches artists make through contemporary art - specifically, the vehicle of abstraction - *at this current moment* - acknowledging the time, space and processes that each artist undertakes to create. An intergenerational exhibition that aims to inhabit an inclusive format, mapping the way through which the artists have developed their own distinctive processes, whilst aligning them in a collegial format.

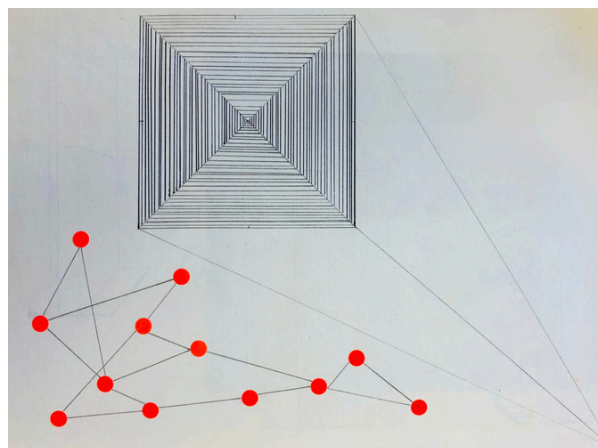
The process of abstraction - deconstruction, reduction (a common trait of abstract art if we talk to a traditional meaning or understanding of the genre) speaks to the idea of abstraction happening when things are taken away. ABSTRAXT ABSTRAXT frames abstraction as a verb - a process - a vehicle or means through which the artists make discoveries, visualising their explorations and thoughts about the world through their creative practices.

The question is how we can react to each circumstance in such a way as to produce differences rather than assimilation.²

A desire to portray the immaterial through the material is prevalent in a number of the works. Often through seeing the concrete results of the artists thought processes, in the physicality of the work is where we begin to learn more about the conceptual drivers of their practice.

In ABSTRAXT ABSTRAXT a proposition is presented that perhaps works in parallel (or circularity) to the notion of reductivism or considers abstraction in terms of a framework that doesn't simply take components away, but aims to establish a type of purity or platform where the artist can develop an outlet through which they generate their own understanding of the world around them. Whether this is an exterior world, the natural world, the built environment, a portrayal of an inner world or contemplation of what the future will bring.

When considering an inner world, we could reflect on the notion of spirituality within a practice - spirituality not simply in terms of a religious framework, but one where it positions the act of creativity, or the process of creativity, as the means through which the artist realises a type of spirituality, awakening, re-enchantment or comfort, which in turn enables them to develop a more profound understanding of what it means to simply be or exist.



Jessica Pearless, *Constellation Drawing*, 2003, pencil and adhesive vinyl on paper, 300 x 215mm

What we see in ABSTRAXT ABSTRAXT is the formation of constellations.³ Dialogues between works aim to illustrate the rich history of the genre, while focussing on the now, and future destinations of practice. From an art historical perspective, what interests me is not simply a categorisation of parallels of a linear art history that various artists have travelled on, rather the consideration of the process as cyclical, the innate or constant desire to make abstract work from a multiplicity of cultural, political, global, environmental or geographic perspectives. We all come to our creative practices with different idiosyncrasies, knowledge and ideologies about the world, yet there seems to be an overwhelming contemporaneous desire to find peace through the process of creativity.

The notion of a reductive process leading to a simplification or completely purified form is one that is demonstrated in very early tantric paintings from the 5th or 6th Century (which served as meditative devices in Tantric Hinduism - images through which a person could meditate and project onto) that could easily be at home in several art historical genres from Modernism to Minimalism or even in an art gallery today. Another example of purified form, the art historical genre of non-objective abstraction, was established at the turn of the 20th Century as a response to the social, political, environmental and cultural climate in which the artists existed. Here an artistic movement demonstrates the power of art to bring to the fore the constant cycles that occur – forever repeating - we face many of the same issues today.

The concept that a work of art is a mirror through which the viewer reflects or sees their own ideologies, understanding or knowledge of the world is a core consideration throughout ABSTRAXT ABSTRAXT, alongside a desire to dig into the strata of methodologies or practical applications behind each artists process.

By this, I mean the way that the artists choose to enter into the process of creation - how they reach the conclusion of an exhibited work, the steps that they take from inception or conceptualisation, to choice of material, scale, or medium.

*And what it all comes down to
Is that I haven't got it all figured out just yet
'Cause I've got one hand in my pocket
And the other one is giving a peace sign*³

Notions of timelessness, ritual, expression and aesthetics underpin the core interrelationships between selected artists. I have developed these alignments not to categorise the artists into certain subsets, or place them firmly within any particular historical context or lineage, but rather to exemplify my understanding or interpretation of their various processes or starting points. Purposeful dichotomies and inter-relationships between the works have been established throughout the exhibition to illustrate similarities and differences, under the umbrella of an abstract aesthetic.

ABSTRAXT ABSTRAXT aims to lead the viewer into a narrative grounded in open ended intention, allowing space for the future practice of each artist or the future practices within the mode of abstraction to perhaps develop dialogues or a type of interconnectedness that will serve as a positive and optimistic way forward for each artist. In positioning the artists work in the context of the ABSTRAXT ABSTRAXT, the aim is for the exhibition to cut through the chaos, to present an optimistic, inspiring and holistic showing that celebrates and validates the rich depth of contemporary practice being generated now.

// April 2024

Jessica Pearless is the Co-Director of NORTHART and a Visual Artist.

b. 1980
BFA, MFA (Hons), University of Auckland | Waipapa
Taumata Rau
@redrockettenz

1. Jennifer Higgie, *The Other Side, A Journey into Women, Art and the Spirit World* (Pegasus Books, 2024), p.2

2. Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Ways of Curating* (Penguin, 2015), p.15

3. Alanis Morissette, *Hand in my Pocket* from the album *Jagged Little Pill* (1995). Composed by Alanis Morissette and Glen Ballard.

*True reality lies beyond immediate sensation and the objects we see every day. Only what exists in itself is real...Art digs an abyss between the appearance and illusion of this bad and perishable world, on the one hand, and the true content of events on the other, to reclothe these events and phenomena with a higher reality, born of the mind...Far from being simple appearances and illustrations of ordinary reality, the manifestations of art possess a higher reality and a truer existence. - Hegel*¹

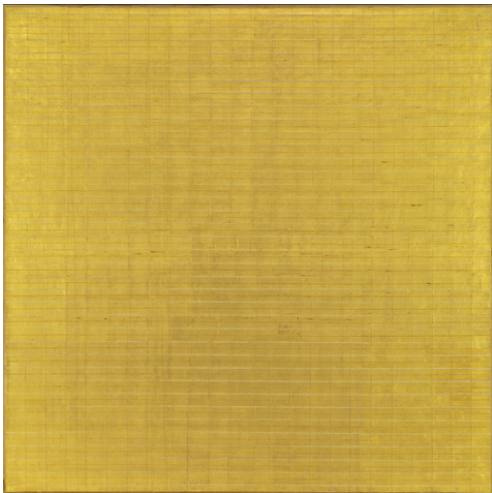
One of my earliest memories of abstract art - that is, of abstract art proper, not the mark-making achieved with wet fingers in kindergarte - took place at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki. At four or five, I pointed at a mass of formless colours framed with gilt and asked, probably not for the first time that day, "what's that??" My uncle, an artist, replied, "it's abstract art". "What's abstract art?", I asked. "It's like when you try to find shapes and figures in the clouds. Everyone is entitled to their own interpretation, and nobody is wrong." For years I carried this analogy with me and tried to find faces or animals in abstract paintings, taking a work to task if it didn't evince some friendly figure. Of course, children take everything literally.

The analogy swam around in my subconscious for years without much further refinement, until texts on Gordon Walters and Kazimir Malevich were prescribed in high school Art History. Reading of the Modernist aims to eschew any reference to concrete reality and flatten the picture plane, it finally dawned on me that abstraction could be more than recognisable forms disguised in a haze of brushstrokes and pigment. The ultimate development in the history of Western abstraction, I read, was the transcendence of earthly realities altogether through a series of reductions. Only to learn a year later that this narrative was unreliably simplistic and outmoded, that in fact the question of pure abstraction remains as paradoxical as it was a century ago.

In Rosalind Kraus' essay *Grids*, the critic summarises the achievement of pure geometric abstraction through the form of the grid: "In the spatial sense, the grid states the autonomy of the realm of art. Flattened, geometricized, ordered, it is antinatural, antimimetic, antireal. It is what art looks like when it turns its back on nature."² And yet, despite Modernists finding in geometry an aesthetic entirely independent of natural forms and their representation,³ two problems arise.

The first is addressed in the same text, where Kraus argues the language of grids would seem to epitomise the scientific logic of the day - materialism, or the rejection of invisible phenomena in favour of concrete, observable matter - through its self-referential and rationalist nature. Yet to admit this would mean that Mondrian's blocks of colour, or the serialised lines of Agnes Martin are in fact making reference to something objective; the materiality of the painting itself. For this reason perhaps, pure abstraction's innovators were largely proponents of a metaphysical logic; "from their point of view, the grid is a staircase to the Universal, and they are not interested in what happens below in the Concrete."⁴ To escape the prevailing scientific (and economic) norms of the era, the avant-garde optimistically sought to discover universal truths that could transcend existing social conditions.

This raises a second problem: if the aim of pure abstraction was to birth a new art form which rejects all former styles, conventions, and social connotations, how do metaphysical values fit within a Modernist framework? The artists of the de Stijl movement were propelled by Theosophy's teachings that outward appearances are illusory, and blind us to an Absolute truth; Hilma af Klint's precursors to pure abstraction were driven by spiritual visitations. Malevich and Theo van Doesburg sought to replace religious iconography with a severe formalism purged of idols and instilled with a purer, ahistorical spirituality. Later in the century, Mark Rothko hoped that viewers of his work would share the "religious experience" he felt while melding pulsating fields of colour into one another—he even housed a series of his paintings in their own chapel to this end. This appeal to the spiritual would seem to reify pure abstraction once again: geometric forms or washes of colour take on metaphorical and moralising qualities, just as the Madonna and Child had in art of previous centuries.



Agnes Martin, *Friendship*, 1963, Gold leaf and I on canvas, 1950 x 1950mm
From the Collection of MoMA, Museum of Modern Art, New York. © 2024 Estate of Agnes Martin / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Here we have spiritualism distanced from scripture, though not unlike the geometric tessellations of Islamic art, signifying similarly divine and universal truths: perfection, infinity, harmony, purity...Could this outward spiritualism be consistent with the formalism expounded by those very same artists and their supporters? Robert Rosenblum equated the experience of witnessing the works of Rothko, Jackson Pollock and Barnett Newman with the Romantic notion of the Sublime:

In his Critique of Judgment (1790), Kant tells us that whereas "the Beautiful in nature is connected with the form of the object, which consists in having boundaries, the Sublime is to be found in a formless object, so far as in it, or by occasion of it, boundlessness is represented" (I, Book 2, §23)...Like the mystic trinity of sky, water and earth that, in the Friedrich and Turner, appears to emanate from one unseen source, the floating, horizontal tiers of veiled light in the Rothko seem to conceal a total, remote presence that we can only intuit and never fully grasp. These infinite, glowing voids carry us beyond reason to the Sublime; we can only submit to them in an act of faith and let ourselves be absorbed into their radiant depths.⁵

Through Kant's Sublime, that is, an experience to be found in a "formless object", we can imagine the pursuit of pure abstraction as being logically consistent with a Romantic ideal formed in the 18th Century.

Throughout the development of abstraction, the marriage of two seemingly opposing forces—materialism and spiritualism—gave rise to a series of fractures and counter-movements, the legacy of which is still being teased out to this day. The latter part of the 20th Century could be largely characterised by a dialectic between proponents of straight formalism and expressivism of a more spiritual nature, one which continues throughout the multifarious threads of abstract practice coexisting here and now. This may not be the new world imagined by the avant-garde, but one thing is for sure: the timelessness of abstraction owes itself to its inherently generative contradictions, which continue to give rise to myriad possibilities in the realm.

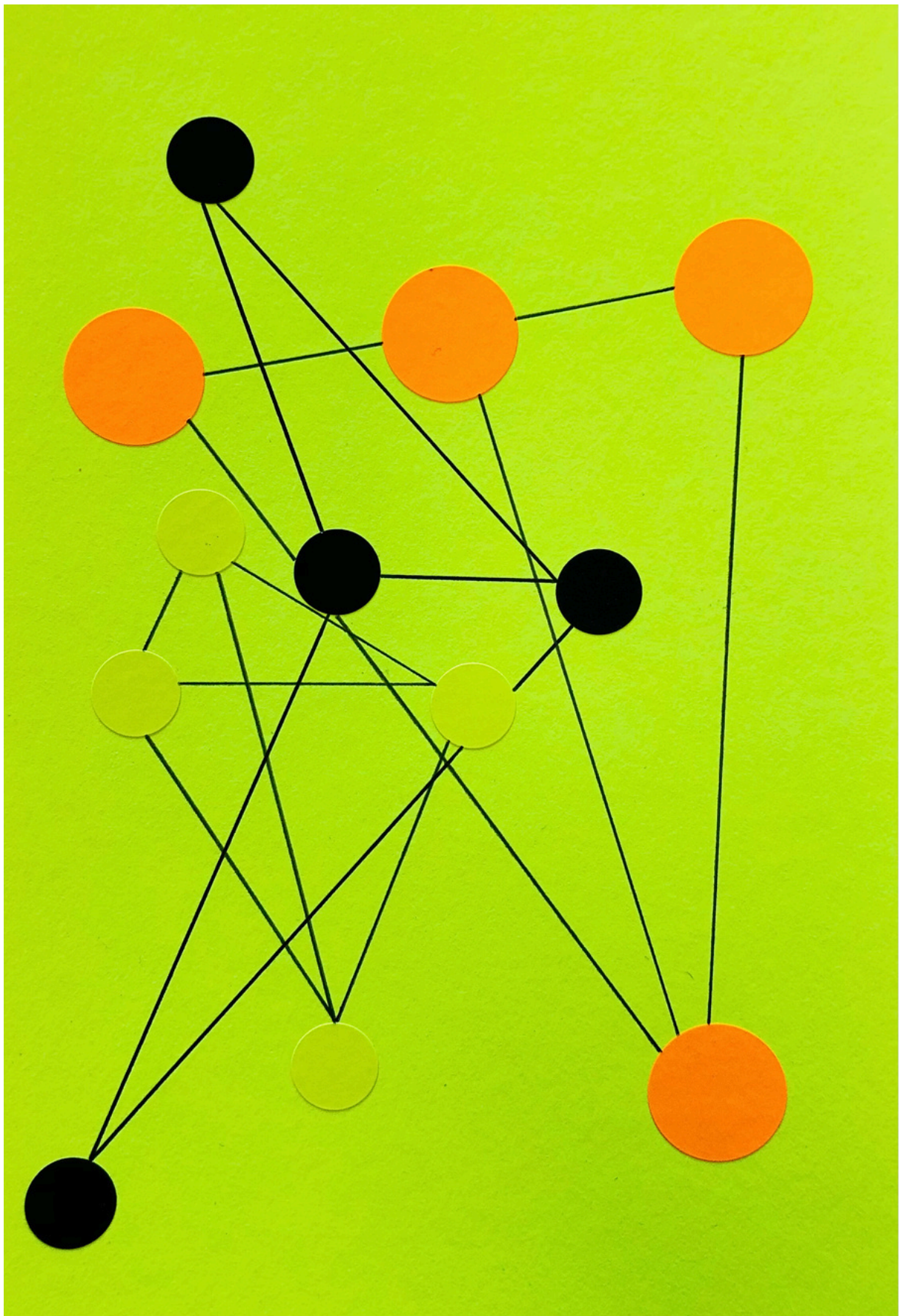
// April 2024

Nina Dyer is a curator and writer based in Tāmaki Makaurau. She is the Exhibitions Manager at Gus Fisher Gallery, University of Auckland | Waipapa Taumata Rau

b. 1996

BA, Art (Hons) History and Philosophy, Victoria University of Wellington | Te Herenga Waka
@newsubjectivity

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1. Hegel as cited in Linda Nochlin, *Realism*, 14 (London: Penguin Group, 1971), 14.
 2. Rosalind Kraus, "Grids" in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1986), 9.
 3. One could argue that geometric forms do occur in nature (take crystals for example), but for the sake of argument Kraus identifies the grid as a purely constructed form.
 4. Ibid, 10.
 5. Robert Rosenblum, "The Abstract Sublime," *ARTnews*, February 1961.



Jessica Pearless, *Interconnected*, 2003, graphite, ink and adhesive vinyl on card, 205 x 125mm



Debbie Barber

How long is a fortnight? As long as I can remember, 2024

ceramics, 400 x 1400mm



b.1972

BFA, Canterbury University | Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha

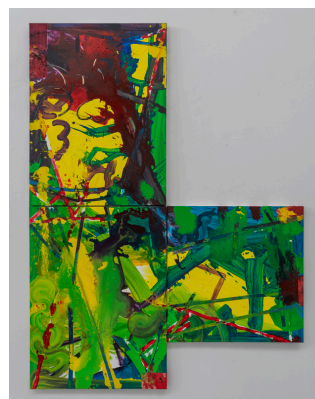
@dbccreates

What if the thoroughfare of memory has holes and continually moves around without knowing where to settle? How does this affect one's identity when the interlaced path of our whakapapa is without context and the stories we are born into and with are uncertain traces of our past? How do you move forward into the future with a past that doesn't remember the way? 64

Embedded in the discipline of domesticware, the clay's spoil create a ceramic vocabulary. These chance forms describe the space between the potter and the pot. Much like when someone has dementia, it leaves a trace of what was, in the hope of finding some understanding, surpassing the desired outcome, and instead recreating an alternative purpose. 55

Debbie's creative process centres around the materiality of clay.. Influenced by her mum's journey with dementia and grounded in a reflective practice considering time, memory and relationships, Debbie's textural sculptures explore connections between philosophical writings and clay.

Currently living in Tāmaki Makaurau, Debbie began establishing her own art practice in 2019 influenced by her mum's journey with dementia and grounded in a reflective practice considering identity, time and memory.



Philippa Blair

Trail Blazers, 2022

mixed media on canvas

2030 x 1530mm

b.1945

DipFA, BA, Canterbury University | Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha

DipTchg(Sec), Secondary Teachers' College

@philippa_blair

Philippa Blair has exhibited regularly for most of her long and distinguished career, from early shows across New Zealand in the 1970s, to international solo exhibitions in New York in the 1980s, and significant museum exhibitions and teaching positions in the 1990s in Los Angeles, a city that became her home for twenty years (1995-2014).

In 2020, Philippa was the subject of a major survey exhibition at Te Uru Contemporary Gallery, Waitakere. In her introduction to the exhibition, curator Chloe Geoghegan managed to capture the spirit of the artist's remarkable career, quoted below.

"In the past 50 years, Philippa Blair has been described as a traveller and a restless spirit, fluent in translating the tumultuous world around her into vibrant observations that are boldly autobiographical but also hum with the familiar rhythms of life. For Blair, the universal is the personal, as she tunes into the world around her, feeling the energy, rhythm and colour of both city streets and nature alike. Shifting light, musical scores, found objects, architectural plans, maps, memories, change, humour, motherhood, love and loss are not exempt from Blair's all-embracing approach to painting life." Philippa is represented by Orexart, Auckland.



Kirstin Carlin
I'm Glad the Sky is Painted Blue, 2022
 oil on board
 250 x 320mm

b.1979
 MFA, Glasgow School, of Art
 PGDipFA, University of Auckland | Waipapa Taumata Rau
 BDes (Painting), Unitec | Te Pūkenga
 @kirstincarlin

Modest in size and painted in oil on board or aluminium, what is most evident in each work by Kirstin Carlin is a direct use of paint and a loose technique. Small impasto paintings manifest quick, thick and heavy applications of paint, energetic daubs are the traces of intuition, freedom and a heavily loaded brush. Taking as her points of departure recognisable subject matter and tested pictorial devices, Carlin pushes these further. Concentrating on simple formal components such as the placement of elements within space, these found images are translated into collections of quick, loose, and insouciant brushstrokes with both pale and brighter colours. Pushing and dissolving the image to various degrees, each painting moves at once towards and away from an abstracted image. Habitual images then become almost unrecognisable, but not quite - an essence of a picture is maintained, with Carlin's signature florid brushwork supplying the information. Viscous and creamy, earthy colours of ochre, mustard, rust and dirty brown are combined with acidulated blues, vivid greens, moody blues as well as pale pastels, washed out pinks, lilacs and greys.

Kirstin has exhibited works nationally and internationally in artist-run spaces, private galleries as well as public art institutions. Kirstin is represented Melanie Roger Gallery.



Renee Cosgrave
Yeddonba Balai and Yackandandah, 2018
 oil on canvas
 1520 x 1520mm

b.1986 | Ngāti Tūwharetoa
 BFA (Hons), Monash University, Narm/Melbourne
 @reneecosgrave

Renee Cosgrave's work is primarily concerned with abstract painting – exploring colour, gesture, repetition and alongside her identity. Her large scale paintings are vibrant and expressive, painting with rich and varied hues that reference the colours of the land and water, each colour being dedicated to a particular site or ancestor. The creation of these paintings follows a straight forward approach, typically developed in a left-to-right sequence resembling the action of reading and weaving. They incorporate comparable components and rely on a set of principles that depend on the crucial interplay between line and colour to achieve a balance between structure and unrestrained expression. Her use of formal design elements, such as grids and vertical lines, is both striking and intense, as if the conventions of abstract art offer a space for perpetual exploration, recognising the ongoing significance of abstraction in modern artistic practices. Renee is represented by Two Rooms, Auckland.

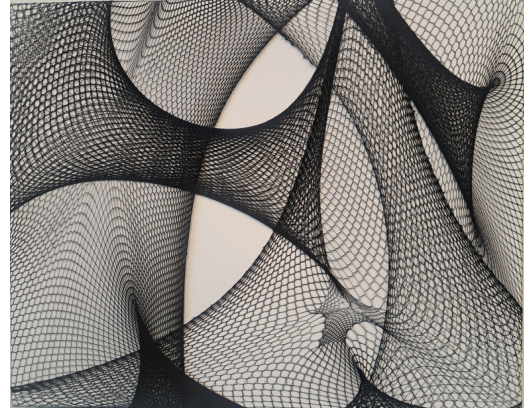


Deborah Crowe
Sightline (detail), 2024
 mixed media installation
 dimensions variable

b.1963
 BA (Hons), PGDip, Glasgow School of Art, Scotland.
 @deborah_crowe

"Tensions and synergies between how we occupy space and how space holds or contains humans has been at the core of my practice for over 30 years. Relationships between textile construction and the creation and delineation of architectural space continues to influence how I view the world. I relate to procedural and material connections between woven and architectural construction. Particular methodologies characterise the preparatory stages of both, as the order of threads are determined and plans drawn; and in the execution, where materials are manipulated, joined and built to produce a form that may, or may not, house a body. Throughout the development of my practice documentation of one work often becomes material for another. A recursive practice with slippages between reiteration, regeneration, renewal, and reinvention. This composite assemblage is built as a response to space, encompassing development of works from some years ago alongside new elements to fuse analogue and digital systems. The need to find space and time to engage in repetitive ordered actions formed an important personal aspect in this; the act of rhythmic making becoming a restorative manoeuvre. The grid is never far from my thinking, nor is the notion of looking for interstices through which to thread or to occupy. The act of exercising control to create freedom, to then become lost has underpinned the making of this work."

Deborah's practice involves building 2D and 3D environments that explore architectural, spatial and environmental characteristics. The work often queries perceptions of space, place, systems of containing the body, frameworks, and human's impact on the environment. Crowe's practice acknowledges its origins in woven construction and strong interest in drawing, particularly collage. Her training as a weaver forms a conceptual framework and is embedded in the construction of imagery, fabrication of sculptural objects, installations and approach to research. Deborah is represented by Artfull.



Judy Darragh
Spiro, 2024
 canvas, wood, nylon
 900 x 400mm

b.1957
 DipVCD, Wellington Polytechnic
 @judydarragh

Judy Darragh (b. Christchurch, New Zealand) is renowned for her brightly coloured sculptural assemblages, video, collage, photography and poster art. Her practice came to prominence during 1980s, when her trademark eclectic iconoclasm and wit was seen as a fleet-footed critical response to the rampant materialism and free-market reforms that characterised this period. In 2004 the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa mounted the major survey exhibition *Judy Darragh: So ... you made it?* which was accompanied by a major catalogue published by Te Papa Press. Darragh lives and works in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, where she has played a significant role in the development of Artspace Aotearoa and artist-run spaces such as Teststrip, and Cuckoo, and has acted as mentor for a wide range of artists. She is currently a co-editor of *Femisphere*, a publication supporting women's art practices in Aotearoa. Darragh continues to exhibit extensively throughout Aotearoa New Zealand and her works are held in numerous public collections. Judy is represented by Two Rooms, Auckland.



Jessica Douglas
Green yellow blue, 2024
 acrylic on canvas
 457 x 350mm

b.1966
 MFA, University of Auckland | Waipapa Taumata Rau
 BFA, Canterbury University | Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha
 @_jessica_douglas

Jessica has a Master of Fine Art from the University of Auckland and a Bachelor of Fine Art from the University of Canterbury where she majored in Painting and Philosophy. She received the Sawtell-Turner Painting Prize, the Bickerton-Widdowson Trust Memorial Scholarship, University of Canterbury, and the Joe Raynes Scholarship, University of Auckland. Her work is held in several New Zealand collections, and she has been a finalist in several awards including the National Contemporary Art Award in 2022.

Jessica's practice explores themes of separation and transmission/exchange, self and other, to draw analogies to our complex human relationships of interconnection. She is interested in the tension between the need for separation and connection, within ourselves and within different bodies within the painting where colours meet and coexist, as well as repelling and opposing each other.

In *Green yellow blue* "bodies" of colour coexist and intermingle, separated from and simultaneously seeping into each other, in a multitude of scenarios. Overlapping layers of thin paint, and the push and pull of colour illustrate ideas of complex interconnections. Lines and edges within the painting acting as both barriers, and connecting channels and bridges.

The works are built up over time with each mark affecting the next. We are informed by those around us and the minutiae of our daily relationships with them. The painting process includes taking risks and making mistakes, with paint being wiped and sanded away. The painting evolves into becoming, formed by its own process of decision making with its ambiguity and contradiction paralleling the enigma of the human condition. The visible brush marks are intended as an antidote to our overload of technological precision and screens, nostalgically attempting to hark back to a simpler and more sustainable life. Jessica is represented by mothermother, Auckland.



Lang Ea
Conflict, 2022
 Highly polished stainless steel
 1500 x 850mm

b.1974
 BDes, Victoria University | Te Herenga Waka
 @artistlangea

Lang Ea works across various media in an exhaustive effort to articulate the impact of war as it reverberates across the personal and universal psyche. Engaging with ideas such as intergenerational trauma and addressing the bitter evil of human indifference, her work is pointed and poignant, and rooted in her own family's experience of the Cambodian war.

Never afraid to blur mediums and categories of making, Lang always ensures a unique vision with multi-level audience experiences that are deep beyond the surface and pushed outside the studio and gallery walls.

With this series of stainless steel works, Ea continues her contemplation of how the traumas of violence play out upon the individual psyche, and how these in turn echo at a species-level.

"Conflict begins with the idea and form of a water droplet - Fusion, unerring from its path and inseparable from its whole, representing life in harmonious and fluid relation, In Ea's interpretation, however, the raindrop is knotted at the moment of its reunion with the whole, fixing it in a moment of uncomfortable separateness.

What can be done with this conflict, within ourselves and our communities, in our neighbourhoods, and across borders? What are we striving towards, and why do we keep failing? These are some of the questions that drive Ea's practices and that she hopes viewers encountering her work might also ask themselves."

Connie Brown - Sculpture on the Gulf 2022 Exhibition Catalogue



Luise Fong
Small Nexus II, 2015 - 2024
mixed media with gold leaf on board
570 x 670mm

b.1964
MFA (Hons), Auckland University of Technology |
Te Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makau Rau
BFA, University of Auckland | Waipapa Taumata Rau
@luisetetfong

Luise Fong was born in Sandakan, Malaysia but grew up in Auckland in one of the city's first Eurasian families. In the 1990s, Luise Fong developed a distinctive post-modern style. Her evocative and stained abstract paintings allude to a micro and macro world, characterised by an aesthetic formalism. Between 1993 and 1994 Fong worked as a junior lecturer at Elam School of Fine Arts. In 1994 she was the artist-in-residence at the Victorian College of the Arts at the University of Melbourne and in the same year was the joint winner (with Bill Hammond) of the Visa Gold Art Award. In 1995 Fong moved to Melbourne and lived and worked there until 2001, when she was appointed lecturer in painting at Elam School of Fine Arts. She remained there until 2005.

Fong's work has been included in several important international exhibitions, including *Cultural Safety: Contemporary Art from New Zealand*, Frankfurter Kunstverein, 1995 and *Trans/fusion: Hong Kong Artists' Exchange*, Hong Kong Arts Centre and Auckland Art Gallery, 1996. Fong has held a number of residency positions; in 1995 she was an artist-in-residence at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery and in 1999 she was the Visiting Artist at the University of Canterbury. In 2008 she was resident artist at the Colin McCahon House in Auckland. Her work is held in numerous private and major public collections throughout New Zealand and Australia. Luise is represented by Bergman Gallery, Auckland.



Gill Gatfield
Echo
2013-2024
glass, pedestal
1345H x 815W x 500mmD

Narcissus
2013-2024
glass, granite, pedestal
1250H x 960W x 650mmD

b.1963
LLB, MFA (Hons), University of Auckland | Waipapa Taumata Rau
@gillgatfield

Aotearoa New Zealand artist Gill Gatfield (LLB. MFA Hons.) creates abstract-conceptual artworks in physical and virtual worlds. Through an alchemy of light, matter, space and time, she transforms unique and precious materials – ancient stones, rare timbers, crystal-clear glass, fibre and native grass – into minimalist first-forms. Both atavistic and futuristic, her abstract figures and monochromatic fields embody poetic narratives, probe philosophical and political conditions, and stimulate sentient and sensory realms.

Gill Gatfield has won national and international awards, commissions for site-sensitive public art, and is represented in collections worldwide. Significant works have been presented in UNESCO Geopark Kefalonia & Ithaca Greece 2023, Venice Art Biennale 2022, Kunstverein am Rosa Luxemburg Platz Berlin 2022.

Major projects comprise *Native Tongue*, a totemic figure carved from the heartwood of a 45,000 year old ancient kauri buried at the end of the last Ice Age; *Silhouette*, an intersecting grid of Indian granite and NZ glacial stone, marking the edge of a lava flow at a city transport station; *The Kiss*, a four tonne black monolith embracing audience and nature in a monumental love-mark; *Half Glass*, an 'impossible' form and metaphor for human aspiration on a precarious Island headland; *Glass Ceiling*, an industrial scale monument of 2 million smashed glass fragments; and *Kaitiaki*, a 17m white woven wall of disposable diapers, a geometric matrix raising issues of care and protection of taonga (treasure), people and land. For 'Time Space Existence' at 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale, Gatfield created *Zealandia*, an abstract X-figure carved from a rare stone from the mountains of Te Waipounamu NZ.



Natalie Guy
Something in the Air, 2015
 brass,
 five pieces, variable lengths

b.1964 | Ngāpuhi, Ngāruahine
 MFA, DocFA The University of Auckland | Waipapa Taumata Rau
 DipFA, Otago Polytechnic
 @natalie.guy

Natalie Guy is a sculptor, working across the mediums of bronze, steel, wood, glass, and plastics. She has a particular interest in the legacy of mid-century modernism and how our memories of the stylistic cues inherent in architecture, art, and objects from that era can be engaged and defamiliarised through translation into new sculptural objects. As a female artist based in Aotearoa, addressing international modernism through a globalised lens, she questions and confronts the iconic nature of modernism by presenting work which questions the legacy while acknowledging her relationship to her urban surrounds. Following in the feminist literary footsteps of the the *écriture* feminine movement of the 1970's which aimed to re-capture text as female self-expression, she rewrites modernist source anew.

Influences include the modernist architect Jane Drew, theorist Isabelle Graw's thoughts on mutual influence, artist Hito Steryl's essay *The Language of Things* and Nicholas Bourriaud's argument for the altermodern era in *The Radicant*.

Guy (Ngāpuhi, Ngāruahine) lives and works in Auckland, Aotearoa. Her work has been exhibited widely throughout Aotearoa in public and private galleries and exhibitions.



Veronica Herber
Follows the Rain (Japan), 2023
 graphite burnished fototape on board
 690 x 385 x 40mm

b.1962
 BVA (Distinction) Auckland University of Technology |
 Te Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makau Rau
 @veronicaherber

Within a rigorous set of limitations, fields of heavy cotton rag paper, washi tape in various grades of black, and graphite powder, Veronica Herber explores infinite variables within the strictures of the grid. This demands from her a particular kind of attention, one that ceaselessly attends to the overlooked, the quickly passed-over, the smallest rupture or tremor in the rhythmic regularity of the grid.

In turn, the viewer is called to this kind of attention when drawn into the web of these grids delicately held together by an oscillation between cut, torn, and sometimes layered edges of the black washi tape. In some of these, soft smudges of graphite leak out from the density of the black tape, not shadows but rather soft emanations of quite different in character to the fragile edges of light that sometimes appear at their edges. The grids are always open-ended, and along with these subtle irregularities, suggest a continuum that pulsates with life like heartbeats, like breath.

Although the meticulous placement of the tape beats out a rhythm, this space so carefully measured and staked out, is riven with difference, and it is here that torn and clean-cut edges, small shifts in scale send tremulous visual vibrations that run through the grids, threatening to collapse the perfect linear tension between black and white, order and chaos.

It is within the mesmerising tension between the limitless expansion of the grid and limitless variability of the torn edges, the ridged layers and the ephemeral smudges that the essential vitality and instability of the relations between order and chaos show up to remind us that it is the dance between the known and the unknown, between form and matter, and life and death that weaves the world into being and allows it to thrive. Veronica is represented by Melanie Roger Gallery, Auckland.



Julia Holderness
Florence Weir 1930's textile design (Margaux), 2023
 felted applique
 455 x 570mm

b.1980
 BFA - University of Canterbury
 BA/BDes (Hons) (First Class), PhD, Art and Design - Auckland
 University of Technology | Te Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makau Rau
 @jholderness

Ōtautahi-based artist Julia Holderness is interested in the relationship between craft and art, and the slippage between artmaking and lived experience. In a recent exhibition titled *Villa Margaux*, Holderness continued her research into the late artist-designer Florence Weir, presenting a series of ceramic, collage and textile works. These textiles explore modernism, pattern, and design in domestic and living space, imagining Florence Weir's textile and wallpaper designs while staying at Villa Margaux. The shapes draw on a rich history of botanical imagery in domestic textiles, where nature and exterior landscapes offers inspiration for soft furnishings for interior space.

Her practice and outputs are often collaborative and she works alongside both historic and current artists. In creating narratives that might or might not have existed – encompassing artists, groups, movements, and exhibitions – her research practice deliberates on the role of fiction in both the collection and interpretation of material histories. Holderness critiques traditionally held divides between art historical scholarship and artistic fabrication. Through the use of invented personae, artworks and exhibitions, Holderness traces alternative histories of modernism in New Zealand. Her installations combine mixed media fabrications, often textile and ceramic making with historical materials from art and design archives. Julia is represented by Sanderson Contemporary, Auckland.

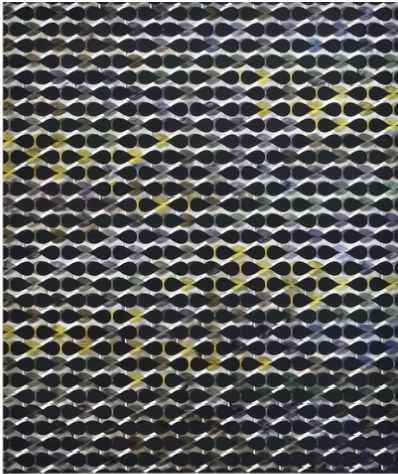


Rachel Hope-Pearry
Kneel and kiss the ground, 2023
 cedar and thread
 1990 x 1180mm

b. 1988
 BMA (Hons), - Wintec | Te Pūkenga
 @rachelhopepeary

Constructed from thread and cedar alone, *Kneel and kiss the ground* sees Peary dissolve the junctures at which the two meet, suggesting their interdependence; the frame would sit empty without the thread, the thread seeks the structure the frame provides. The symbiotic relationship between these materials within the artists' practice has grown, and charts the artists ongoing practice and study of the non dualistic spiritual tradition of Kashmir Shaivism. It is of course no surprise then that Peary's work comes into being via processes which demand labour, repetition and immense discipline in a comparable manner.

Manifestations of a period of time, Peary understands her works as records whereby each row is akin to a line of scrawl across the page of a diary. In describing her work, she writes "each piece a timeline, a lifeline. Each stitch held me in sweet motion, one more stitch, one more row, one more breath, one more day. These patch worked pieces representing all of the different parts of ourselves...all of the roles and hats we wear, manifest as organised lines and grids, as holes, as scars, as spirals that travel both inward and outward." Rachel is represented by Laree Payne Gallery, Hamilton.



Sara Hughes
Millisecond 15-1-2023, 10;21;33.902pm, 2023
 acrylic on canvas
 1200 x 1000mm

b. 1971

MFA (Hons), The University of Auckland | Waipapa Taumata Rau
 @gowlangsford

Sara Hughes is a dynamic artist with a career well established and highly regarded in Australasia. Hughes has exhibited in public galleries throughout New Zealand and her paintings and installations are held in many important Australasian public and private collections including the Chartwell Collection; Auckland City Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki; Te Papa Tongarewa; Wellington, the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra and the Gallery of NSW, Sydney. Her work has attracted significant attention winning both the Wallace Art Award and the Norsewear Art Award in 2005.

In 2008 she was the first New Zealand recipient of The RIPE: Art and Australia magazine Art Award and she has been selected to participate in a number of notable residencies including the Francis Hodgkins Fellowship in 2003, the International Studio and Curatorial Program in New York in 2007 and the Creative New Zealand Berlin Visual Artists Residency at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien in 2008/09.

Her work has been published widely appearing in art and architecture magazines including, Art NZ, Art News, Artlink, Art in Australia and Monument. Hughes has undertaken a number of high profile public commissions including *Magma*, 2017 a large 500sqm painting in Auckland, as well as a series of striking outdoor works for the re-opening of Cathedral Square in the centre of Christchurch, 2014-16. Her most recent project was installed in 2019 on all four sides of the New Zealand International Convention Centre in Auckland, it is the largest integrated public art work in New Zealand. Sara is represented by Gow Langsford, Auckland.



Claudia Jowitt,
Voka III, 2021-2023
 Acrylic, thread, bronze powder, clay forms, paua shell, ring cowries,
 Fijian masi & dyed cultured freshwater pearls on canvas
 396 x 344 x 71 mm

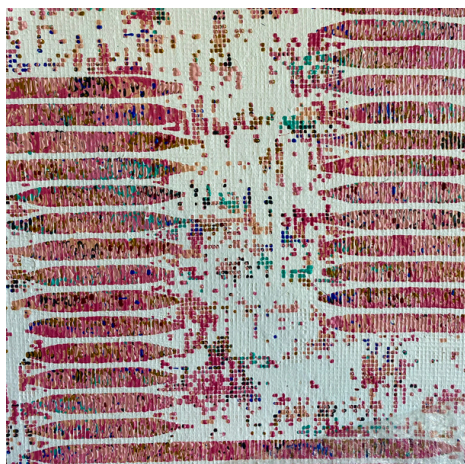
b. 1989

MFA, The University of Auckland | Waipapa Taumata Rau
 @claudiajowitt

Claudia Jowitt's have been worked on over a period from the pandemic through to her return to the coasts of Savusavu in Fiji, where she has whakapapa to. The repetitive mark-marking, layering, extruding, and embedding techniques create complex reef-like structures. Through her work, Claudia mediates on the possibility of creating works that can speak to a physical sense of place in Moana-Nui-a-Kiwa and her own links to places within it, developing a South Pacific Contemporary abstract painting practice tied to paint's inherent material possibilities.

The result is painting as sculpture, faded rainbow-coloured elements assert themselves, thrusting themselves forth from their substrates. Shade and shadow are present, as is actual depth, a self-conscious play between projection and recession, layers and ground. An intricate filigree is formed in delicate and bewildering webs of paint.

Oscillating to and fro between quietude and audacity, each painting is winsome, creamy, pallid and viscous. Cloud-like shapes fan outwards, their growth patterns form a landscape that can be followed and read, stroke by stroke. There are bisected canvases, divisions, caesura as well as smooth motions, gentle echoes and resonating shapes. Prior gestures of painting with its lilting rhythms of movement and rest are captured-testimony to abundance, generosity and excess. Such confections with their floating, delectable multitudes can only invite enjoyment. Claudia is represented by Melanie Roger Gallery.



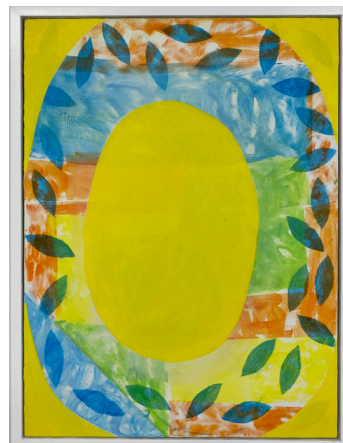
Peata Larkin
I am Tūhourangi (detail) 2006
 acrylic on mixed media
 2600 x 1650mm (each panel)

b.1973 | Tūhourangi, Ngāti Whakaue, Tūwharetoa
 BFA - University of Auckland | Waipapa Taumata Rau
 MFA - Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
 @peatalarkin

Peata Larkin is a contemporary Māori artist currently living in Auckland. She was born in Rotorua and is of Tūhourangi, Ngāti Whakaue and Tūwharetoa descendant. Larkin is an artist who plays with interactions of light and shadow and the space an artwork occupies, weaving an elaborate spatial tapestry of pattern, colour and texture with strong references to Maori history, art history and genealogy. A fundamental aspect of her work is repetition and she has exploited all its qualities of harmony and order and then added scale to the matrix in order to create this very significant artwork. Larkin's work is held in public and private collections throughout New Zealand and in Australia, the UK, Dubai and the USA.

Peata Larkin's work operates in a space between binary constructions – Māori/Pākehā, past/present, art/science, matter/spirit – weaving cultures and spheres of knowledge together into new hybrid forms. In 2018, Larkin was the recipient of the Kaipara Wallace Arts Trust Award Residency at Altes Spital in Solothurn, Switzerland and awarded the Molly Morpeth Canada Award in 2006.

In 2013, Larkin completed the large-scale commission *Piki Ake – Rise Up* for the ANZ Tower in Auckland's central business district. Following the success of this project Larkin has received consistent public and private commissions including Westgate, Newmarket (2018), Park Hyatt, Wynyard Quarter (2019) and a large-scale commission for the International Conference Centre, Auckland. Her work is held in the collections of Memphis Museum of Fine Arts, USA, Rotorua Museum Arts Trust, Pataka Art + Museum, Waikato University and Massey University. Peata is represented by Two Rooms, Auckland.



Saskia Leek
Untitled, 2024
 Oil on board
 420 x 320mm

b.1970
 BFA - Canterbury University | Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha
 MFA(Hons) - University of Auckland | Waipapa Taumata Rau
 @sleekz

Saskia Leek was born in 1970 in Christchurch, New Zealand. She currently lives and works in Auckland. She builds her paintings over a long period of time, regarding them as complex objects akin to books or songs. She revisits subjects and motifs, accumulating an idiosyncratic and highly personal visual language. The domestic scale of the paintings is matched by a deceptively unassuming iconography of pets, houses, still life and landscape but the end results are objects with remarkable presence. Subjects are monumentalised and abstracted and colour is employed in eye-popping combinations.

She has regular solo shows in New Zealand and Australia and a solo show with, Jack Hanley Gallery, San Francisco, USA (2008). Her work has been included in group exhibitions including Undreamed of...50 years of the Frances Hodgkins Fellowship, Dunedin Public Art Gallery (2016); Necessary Distraction: A Painting Show, Auckland Art Gallery Auckland, New Zealand; Better Places, Perth Institute of Contemporary Art (2008); A spoonful weighs a ton, The Ian Potter Museum of Art, The University of Melbourne (2006-2007) and Matrix 213: Some Forgotten Place, UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, USA (2004).

Saskia Leek's work is held in the collections of Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, Te Papa, Wellington, and other New Zealand public collections.

Saskia is represented by Ivan Anthony, Auckland, and Jonathan Smart, Christchurch.



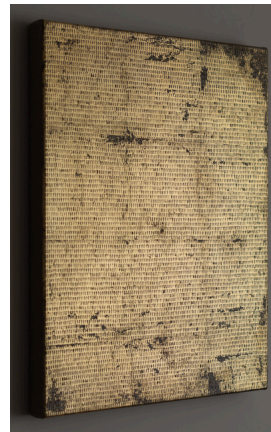
Virginia Leonard
Gangrene 3, 2024
clay, lustre, and resin
530 x 540 x 540mm

b. 1965
MFA (Hons), Whitecliffe College of Art and Design |
Te Whare Takiura o Wikiriwhi
@ginleonard

Virginia Leonard's ceramic works are ornate, visceral wonders. Her large, vessel-like structures bear some resemblance to everyday domestic items, yet the familiar shapes of vases, jugs, and urns are abstracted, morphed into melting masses. Colourful, sharp, seemingly floral and often gilded, the works have a fantastical quality and an aesthetic sensibility that borders on the Baroque. Leonard cites a visit to the Rococo rooms at the Metropolitan Museum in New York as influential, along with the lavish set and costume design of Sofia Coppola's 2006 film *Marie Antoinette*. "I just love the indulgence in the ornate. More is more in my world," she states.

Glazed in vibrant colours and dripping with resin, Leonard's objects are intentionally fired in a way that sees the objects partially slump and sometimes crack. This cracked, slumped, and visually lavish nature of the artworks is part of their meaning to the artist. Leonard was in a serious car accident when aged 20, and she has had ongoing issues and chronic pain ever since. "Pain is in the work – on some level, it's always about that. I have a relationship to pain, and it is part of my experience. My artmaking is about turning that into something beautiful. It has to be beautiful. The celebration of ornateness is essential for my survival," she says.

This autobiographical content has been central to her work in ceramics, with the pummelling and moulding actions of working clay a means to articulate her personal experience with chronic pain. After more than a decade as an abstract painter, Leonard made the shift to working with clay in 2013, driven by the need to give a voice to physical trauma. She states, "chronic pain has no biological value, it lacks both language and voice. The language of my clay making is my attempt to rid my body of trauma and reduce my level of chronic pain." Her works give voice to this physical and psychological struggle, and transform it into something sparkling and ornate. Virginia is represented by Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland.



Cindy Leong
Storing seeds 2305, 2023
oil and gold leaf on linen
200mm x 410mm

b.1991
PGDipFA, University of Auckland | Waipapa Taumata Rau
@cindyleong_

In Ram Dass's seminal work, 'Be Here Now', the author and spiritual teacher delves into the transformative power of meditation and contemplation in quieting the mind. In a similar vein, Leong's process involves the act of repetitively putting brush to canvas as a means of distilling her mind and achieving a state of presence.

For Leong, Eastern philosophy and art making are deeply intertwined, with each offering a unique lens through which to explore the complexities of existence. Through her own artistic practice, Leong has found that the act of painting can serve as a conduit for navigating and exploring Buddhist concepts, allowing her to delve into their deeper truths in a visceral, experiential way.

Leong's paintings become a site of inquiry and transformation, inviting the viewer to join her on the path of self-discovery and self-actualisation. With each stroke, Leong proposes that by cultivating a sense of equanimity, we can tap into a deeper level of consciousness and awareness that lies beyond the surface noise of our daily lives.



Kiran McKinnon
For the Wild Geese, 2024
 acrylic on raw canvas
 2200mm x 1520mm

b. 1974
 BFA, MFA (1st Class Hons), University of Auckland | Waipapa
 Taumata Rau
 @kiranalice

Kiran McKinnon is an abstract painter who lives and works in Tāmaki Makaurau, who studied in London, UK and Auckland, NZ.

Her work engages with experience and memory, particularly of the sensations of the natural world. Her work ranges from large-scale immersive paintings and installations to smaller more intimately scaled works on watercolour paper. Her unique processes of painting in acrylic on raw canvas or linen involves spray, wash, wet on wet brushwork, and large quantities of water. The painting process weathers the canvas, mimicking in many ways the ephemeral processes the paintings invoke. Recent works have extended her use of water to include painting with sea water and rain water collected around Aotearoa.

"Water and weather are often at the centre of the places and experiences in the world that capture my attention, and thus find their way into my work. Rivers, lakes, the sea, rain, clouds, mist, all find reference in my work, and their echo in the methods I use to paint; misting, spraying and washing of water and paint across the canvas.

I am also fascinated by the interplay between the language and ideas of composition in classical music and painting. With RNZ Concert as my constant studio companion I listen not only to some beautiful music, but also to many interviews with musicians and composers. In these interviews I am often struck by the descriptions both give of their practice and works, and by how deeply those ideas resonate with my own thoughts on painting. Both ways of interpreting and translating sensations, images, or ideas from one form to another, or perhaps more particularly from sensation or perception, into form."

Kiran is represented by {suite} Gallery, Auckland



Judy Millar
Untitled, 2005
 acrylic and oil on canvas
 1000mm x 900mm x 35 mm

b. 1957
 BFA, MFA, University of Auckland | Waipapa Taumata Rau
 @judymillar.jm

Material, action, trace. In a myriad of ways and with a diverse range of tools, Judy Millar applies and removes paint in order to explore embodied acts of making and how these enact particular forms of consciousness. With a palette made up of unexpected combinations of colour, Millar often plays with the tension between background and foreground. Directional strokes move in and out of nebulous clouds, blocks and intensities of hue. Painting at the service of gestures, for Millar space becomes a surface to be painted, one which can grow, extend and occupy built environments. Taking up space, works by Millar are often large-scale, engaging with installation they dwarf those who encounter them, acting as a reminder that people belong to gestures and that painting can be a shift away from the self.

In 2009 Millar was selected to represent New Zealand at the 53rd Venice Biennale where she exhibited *Giraffe-Bottle-Gun* at the New Zealand pavilion. Sharing time between studios in Berlin, Germany and Anawhata in Aotearoa, Millar has exhibited extensively nationally and internationally for more than three decades. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Cry Sea*, *Cry Sky*, Robert Heald Gallery, Wellington (2024); *Questions I have Asked Myself*, Galerie Mark Mueller, Zurich, Switzerland (2022); *Action Movie*, City Gallery, Wellington (2021); *The Future and the Past Perfect*, Kunstmuseum St Gallen, Switzerland (2019) and *Rock Drop*, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki (2017). Her work has been included in group presentations: *Spotlight*, Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Switzerland (2023–2024); *huikaau: where currents meet*, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin (2024); *Against the Logic of War: 5th Kyiv Biennial*, Augarten Contemporary, Vienna (2023); *ja, fürwahr, ihr zeigt uns Träume, wie die Brust sie kaum begreift*, Galerie Mark Mueller, Zurich (2023); *Frozen Gesture*, Kunst Museum Winterthur, Winterthur, Switzerland (2019); *Unpainting – Contemporary Abstraction*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (2017); Judy is represented by Michael Lett, Auckland.



Teresa Peters

Artefact No.4 – [DISASTROUSFORMS.COM](https://disastrousforms.com), 2020
clay archived as photography, (framed photograph)
700 x 700mm

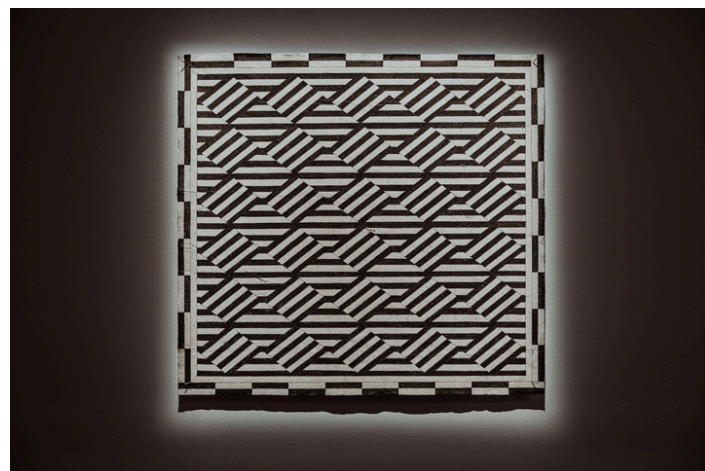
b.1978

BFA, PGDipFA - University of Auckland | Waipapa Taumata Rau
@teresapetersstudio

Teresa Peters currently works in clay, ceramics and moving image, 'Excavating' primordial totems and navigating pseudo - archaeology as we move through the Anthropocene. Earth bodies, forming and transforming - molten entities in intimate combustion.

Teresa Peters explores transformation, 'touch' and the fluidity of clay and digital realms—'artefacts' of inner and outer space. In the human madness for permanence, ceramic is one of the original technologies. By abstracting the object into its image, creating photographic and digital 'artefacts', recent projects at once seek to play on the 'archive', while exploring 'disastrous forms', the ever ephemeral and temporary. 'From collections to collective consciousness'—she often presents her digital work on the internet or as cosmic 'collective' AV events, recently in the shape of the rave or transformative sound journey in collab with sound healer Cheryl Farthing and musician Torben Tilly. Large-scale kaleidoscopic animations of clay fuse with the sound of quartz crystal bowls and electronic scores. Her abstract approach to ceramics traverses territories, the alchemy of quartz glaze into the quartz digital or quartz crystal sound as it vibes into quartz particles in human cells and the human third eye. [DISASTROUSFORMS.COM](https://disastrousforms.com) was first inspired by ceramic like, patent black quartz artefacts, recently found in the ruins of Pompeii, now identified as exploded human brains.

In 2021, ECHOES won the Portage Premier Ceramic Award, at Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery. It is the first Premier work in the 21 year awards history to be presented as a photograph. TIME CRYSTAL, clay and ceramic as digital video, was a finalist in exhibition in the Portage 22. ARTEFACTS, raw clay archived as framed photography, was awarded the Merit award in the Ceramics NZ 60th National Jubilee Exhibition 2021. [DISASTROUSFORMS.COM](https://disastrousforms.com), 2020 explores collections to collective consciousness, from volcanoes, corals, and fossils to the quartz in your mobile phone. As Walter Benjamin observed, collections are never finished. It is inspired by and archived with Auckland Museum Collections Online as a Topic, made with the support of Creative New Zealand, and launched on the Auckland Live Digital Stage, as an audio-visual event in 2021.



Natasha Ratuva

Waitui e loma ni drauniluqu | Ocean in my hair, 2023,
soot, charcoal, Indian ink, hand-painted on Masi from Vatulele
506mm x 600mm

b.1990

BFA, Australian National University, University of California, Los Angeles
@dotnut2014

When my cousins and I swim in Kadavu's warm waters, we immerse ourselves under the ocean's glass cloak and feel the soft kisses of her droplets form around our buiniga curls.

Natasha Ratuva (she/her) is a Taukei (Kadavu vasu i Bua) multi-disciplinary creative based on Ngāti Rākaiwhairi whenua in the Wairarapa. Natasha's practice spans the mediums of photography, digital art, poetry, gardening and Taukei traditional practices. Recently, Natasha has brought masi (indigenous Fijian barkcloth) to the forefront of her creative practice. Masi is deeply integral to Taukei culture and tradition, often present in ceremonies throughout a person's life. She uses natural pigments and dyes to carefully hand paint traditional patterns and contemporary compositions onto masi to reimagine and expand expressions of her Taukei identity.



Karen Sewell
Stardust 3 Sisters, 3 Kings (earth from where I was born), 2024
 sculptural installation of soil, sand, water, pigments, brass rod, brass wire, cotton
 1400 x 900 x 1800mm

b. 1969
 MFA (Hons), Whitecliffe College of Art and Design |
 Te Whare Takiura o Wikiriwhi
 @karenewellartist

Stardust sculpted spheres inspired by ancient Japanese art form hikaru dorodango are created from common garden materials of earth, sand and water moulded together by hand. Making is slow and meditative, requiring patience.

This cluster references the Orion constellation - the belt - known as a celestial bridge by ancient peoples, a staircase to the world of souls. Astronomers see the belt as a bridge too, these stars link the sky's northern and southern hemispheres.

Photograms were created using earth sourced locally from Castor Bay, the place where I was born. Through the use of every day materials this work explores ideas of the material and immaterial, timelessness, wholeness, cycles of life, cosmic wonder, balance and unity.



Sarah Smuts - Kennedy
Joy Field - I Feel Love 5th May, 2023
 pigment pastel on 640gsm smooth cotton rag with brass fixtures
 1045 x 1520mm

b. 1966
 MFA (1st Class Hons), University of Auckland | Waipapa Taumata Rau
 @sarahsmutskennedy

Smuts-Kennedy's practice is focused on a research based investigation into fields of energy as they engage with conceptual thinking both within an art based language and other intuition driven modes of enquiry.

Her art practice synthesises broad research territories that integrate restorative horticultural and esoteric knowledge. Over the past decade she has been able to test these out at both a social sculptural scale across New Zealand, and her studio based practice. These projects have enabled her to develop embodied knowledge that has culminated in delivering large scale energy installations both within community, landscape and contemporary art contexts. The foundation of her practice centres around performing the possibility of healing with the outcomes of this performance (her life) giving form to artefacts that vibrate the qualities of joy, the vibration when experienced in the bodies of biological life occur as aliveness, balance and peacefulness.

Appearing ethereal and cloud-like, the drawings, with their layered gestural marks, oscillate and swirl. Whilst abstract they suggest space and form. Not landscapes, least not in the traditional sense—there is no horizon and the depth of field is shallow. Yet, with no hard edges or boundaries—other than the paper upon which the marks reside—they do not register as interiors either. The spaces intimated are instead something more akin to a garden, or a bower; an external expanding space, but one that is at the same time cloistered, intimate and in reach. Sarah is represented by Laree Payne Gallery, Hamilton.



Kathryn Stevens
Skim, 2022
 acrylic flashe on cast acrylic
 505 x 605mm

b. 1965
 BFA, University of Auckland | Waipapa Taumata Rau
 @kathryn.j.stevens

Kathryn Stevens semi-transparent paintings are informed by architectural concepts and elements. Each painting captures a fragment of floating folded space, utilising the surface as a site of transformation and possibility.

Folding is an irreversible process; it takes up, defines and makes space. Once it is folded, a flat surface cannot go back to its pre-folded form, and thus is not completely controllable; the only options it offers are to continue folding, or to stop.

Stevens begins with a working process of making 'impromptu structures,' miniature folded freestanding maquettes made with acrylic printing plate, not final objects but rather experiments in how an object occupies space through the process of folding. Each delicately folded maquette is balanced, marking out space, standing alone on a surface and offering different perspectives. In the paintings, this allows for a playful tension between spatial illusion and structural reality; a sense of shapes and forms emerging on, or from beyond, the surface. These works explore connections between light and colour, materiality and perception.

Stevens work explores folded space, both real and illusory, reflecting her interest in architectural spaces and concepts. Initially based on the grid, and on a traditional canvas, her paintings seemed to press towards the viewer. However, more recently her work has become more spatially ambiguous, exploring suspended fragments that seem to exist on top of and beyond the cast acrylic boxes she now paints on. The surface is a key element in Stevens' work.

Stevens teaches at Browne School of Art, Auckland, has been exhibiting in both solo and group shows for the past 25 years. She has been a finalist in numerous awards, including the Art Waikato National Art Award. Stevens was also featured in Warwick Brown's 'Seen This Century: 100 Contemporary New Zealand Artists'.



Salome Tanuvasa
Untitled, 2022
 acrylic on canvas
 1000 x 950mm

b. 1987
 GDip Secondary Teaching (Fine Arts), BFA(Honours), MFA, University of Auckland | Waipapa Taumata Rau
 @salometanuvasa

Tanuvasa describes her drawings as being "as true as they can be". In one sense this is emphasised by the challenge she sets herself; to use the materials and time allowed by her immediate environment, and to ask the question 'what can one make artwork with?' and, ultimately, 'what can be art?'. In another sense, though, her instinctual drawing style is a form of truth-telling in itself. Tanuvasa's marks are distillations of her thoughts – moments of time, moments of pause – and she seems to ask "What kind of marks can hold a viewer's attention?"

Tanuvasa has developed her drawing practice since her MFA graduation from Elam in 2014, and since that time her marks have become stronger, more refined, and more considered. One can't help but see them as the artist creating her own language – or code – of swirls and shapes. Bearing in mind the fact that certain motifs carry multiple meanings, Tanuvasa seems to consider the ways that meaning can be formed via a language that is entirely visual.

While the transference of meaning may be less important to the artist than the production of a formal language, the artworks in this show, *Untitled 1-13*, seem to perform a similar function to Rorschach inkblot tests. They are gestural and instinctual but they also encourage the viewer into an unexpected space of contemplation. - "as true as they can be" by Lana Lopesi

Salome is represented by Tim Melville Gallery in Auckland.



Imogen Taylor
Barely Passing By, 2021
acrylic on hessian
561 x 502 mm

b. 1985

BFA, PGDipFA, University of Auckland | Waipapa Taumata Rau
@imogentalia

Imogen Taylor is known for creating geometrical abstractions that engage and play with the forms and legacies of European Modernism. Though Taylor draws from the abstracted forms and coloured juxtapositions of Cubism, Fauvism, and Russian Constructivism, her paintings are stripped of the masculine self-seriousness that saturates the source material. Instead, in their vibrant interplay of thickly applied colour and contrasts between imposing parallel lines and soft curves, the work is joyful, sincere, and pleasurable.

Each work has been built-up through many, vivid, scumbled glazes over top of florescent planes of colour. An illuminated effect is created, like shafts of moonlight and artificial light, skin is thereby highlighted and figures glow like phosphorescence. Entangling representation and abstraction, myriad layers and planes resonate with overlapping sensations of isolation and sometimes despair, alternating with pleasure and sensuality.

Significant solo exhibitions include: *Murmurs*, Michael Lett 3 East St, Auckland (2023); *Quiet Motel*, Whangārei Art Museum, Whangārei (2022); *Sapphic Fragments*, Hocken Collections Uare Taoka o Hākena, Dunedin (2020); *Pocket Histories*, Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery, Auckland (2018); *Social Studies*, Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt (2019) and *BODY LANGUAGE*, Artspace, Auckland (2015). In 2019 Taylor was the recipient of the Frances Hodgkins Fellowship and in 2017 she was artist in residence at McCahon house. Imogen is represented by Michael Lett Auckland.



Nat Tozer
Burial for Unearthing, 2024
linen canvas
255 x 355mm

b. 1979

BFA, MFA (Hons), University of Auckland | Waipapa Taumata Rau
@nattozer | @mothermother_archive

"Observations. My work aims to observe or encounter the ground. In my digital work I narrate tunnels and portals. In my social work i facilitate an arts network. In my material work I bury and unearth objects to observe. In all these ways gift, reciprocity and cyclical economies are tested.

Exhibited works have physically encountered the ground, canvas, and the family archive. Enclosed in, subrogated to the earth they enter other systems and cycles and become subsumed in the fecundity and decay of the ground. Then unearthed, to reveal the potent and productive force of decomposition; fibres dissolving, shapes softening, colours turning the womb of time composes and decomposes.

Whenua. In Aotearoa the ground is whenua. Tangata whenua translates to people of the land. Land is whenua and placenta is land. We can interpret land-people to mean beings of the land, and the 'land itself in the act of being'.

Daughter. A floating island, tangata whenua to the furthest most southern island in Aotearoa, Rakiura. She floats, unconnected to her blood soil. We will take her soon.

Mother. Tangata tiriti, from the furthest north in the Bay of Islands, Ipipiri, where there are 144 islands. Islands floating, forming lands, placentas from wombs. Ko Ipipiri whenua tupu. My ancestors travelled here from Ireland, a country who deeply understands indigenous injustice. Airihi ko whakapapa mai. This is the place I call home. I have laid to rest all of my grandparents in this land.

Everything is cyclical. Seasons, generations, journeys.

These are my observations."

Nat is represented by mothermother, Auckland.



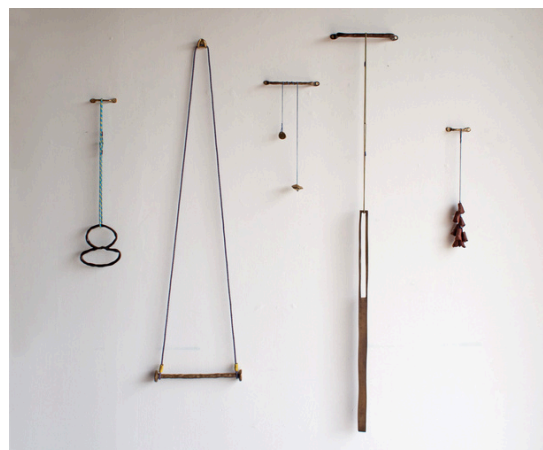
Kathryn Tsui
Meander on Houndstooth, 2023
 glass beads, mercerised cotton, waxed thread
 235 x 290 x 38mm

b. 1977
 BVA, Auckland University of Technology | Te Wānanga Aronui o
 Tāmaki Makau Rau
 @kathryntsui

Kathryn Tsui graduated with a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Sculpture) from Auckland University of Technology (2007). She is of Cantonese Chinese ancestry, based in Tairua, Coromandel Peninsula where she is a textile artist who works primarily in weaving and beading.

In 2023 Masterworks presented Tsui's solo exhibition *redwhiteblue* and in June 2024 she will have a solo exhibition at Objectspace. Her work is held in the art collections of The Dowse Art Museum, University of Waikato | Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato and Tūhura Otago Museum. She was an artist in residence at Driving Creek Pottery in 2023. Tsui is also the recipient of a Creative New Zealand Arts Grant 2023-2024.

To date two essays have been written about her practice *The Weaving of Kathryn Tsui, Aotearoa (New Zealand)* by Greta Costello, published by Springer Books 2023 and *Kathryn Tsui redwhiteblue - towards a democratisation of making*, by Dr Bronwyn Lloyd, Masterworks Gallery, 2023. Kathryn is represented by Masterworks Gallery, Auckland.



Hannah Valentine
New routine (sketches), 2024
 cast bronze, cord, cotton, stoneware
 940 x 900 x 40mm

b. 1989
 BA/BFA, MFA (Hons), University of Auckland | Waipapa
 Taumata Rau
 @hvalentine_

Hannah's practice follows two distinct threads. The first is an interest in the body and tactile sensibilities. If we are being conditioned away from sensibility, towards consumerism, she questions how we might reinvigorate feeling and its importance in the way we interact with the world and each other. The second thread concerns our environment and impending climate crisis. Hannah's work takes form primarily in object and installation.

Valentine's practice is pervaded by the artist's interest in the body and its physical sensibilities, emphasising the importance of touch and our experience of interacting with the world and each other. With her wide-ranging practice taking form primarily in object and installation, Valentine's work is permeated by the human body and its various appendages and gestures. The artist brings together hand-moulded bronze aspects with sourced materials including utilitarian climbing rope, the simplicity and precision of her careful compositions resulting in a tactile tension.

"I really like the way bronze is able to pick up and hold imprints of the body. Similar to working with clay, but there is something about its permanence I'm drawn to. In a culture where so much is thrown away, I like that working with bronze is so solid, so present and lasting. I love those areas on public sculptures that you can see thousands of hands have rubbed. It's a material that people tend to understand, too, though usually from the perspective of monuments, rather than objects on a personal scale. I like that it responds to touch. It warms up, it likes to be held. Viewers can fill the space around [the sculptures], but for all that the freestanding works are made of bronze, they are still fragile. They are thin, light, and a touch sends them into a quiver."

Hannah is represented by Page Galleries, Wellington.



Janna Van Hasselt
Jungle, 2024
 glazed earthenware and acrylic
 440 x 420 x 30mm

b. 1980
 BFA, University of Canterbury | Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha
 MFA, School of the Art Institute of Chicago
 @jannavanhasselt

"I am working in the space between painting and sculpture; taking ceramics from the white plinth to the wall. There is a tension evident in the negative spaces of the gridded forms which is further highlighted by the glow of fluorescence coming from behind. Fingerprints and other imperfections are embraced and become features rather than being disguised, and honest showcase of materiality and process.

These works are created through different actions: extruding/rolling/piping/kneading/twisting/knotting/pressing - repetitive motions reminiscent of the daily tasks we undertake as caregivers of children. Featuring these often overlooked domestic actions into abstract forms gives them a refreshed significance."



Rebecca Wallis
Dissipate, 2024
 acrylic on silk on steel brackets
 1750 x 1550 x 85mm

b. 1964
 MFA/MVA, Goldsmiths College, London
 @rebeccaclairewallis

Rebecca Wallis breaks and restructures the traditional painting to reconsider expectations and question the certainty of the tangible - of surface, edges and boundaries.

She makes analogies between the painting and the Self, and considers the strange allusive subjective moments between self and Other, Subject and object, as her raw material. Her works consider the uncertain material that edges and falls between the self and it's own otherness. This state, as a non-fixed, more fluid state, is a state that parallels the processes of the feminine body. These momentary subjective experiences that she describes as a kind of "Unsaid Turning", and are a kind of slipping away and resisting containment from the conditioned Self.

"It's a universal experience at moments felt by us all subjectively, and takes the Self out of its conditioned narrative of words and out of time. Like Lacan's theories of the Real, this momentary Turning is like the glitch in the matrix. It's like a continuum of the Self that can't be inserted into our culture. It's Abjection. It's like the difference between numbers and water. Its more, it doesn't fit and is uncanny"

"It is when the 'I' collapses, when who I think I am ruptures and what remains is this strange experience of facing my own existence".

Rebecca is represented by mothermother, Auckland, Alfa Gallery, US, James Makin Gallery, Melbourne.



Tira Walsh
Evidence, 2017
 mixed media on canvas
 1770 x 1330mm

b.1979
 MCP, BDes/BVA - Unitech | Te Pūkenga
 @tirawalsh_

Working with the affective detritus of cinema, popular music and everyday life, Tira Walsh courts experiential incoherence as one of her primary materials. Drawing on the complex and clashing physical sensations of being in the world, Walsh transmutes the excesses of physical sensation into a punch and blur language that treats each canvas as a 'repository of negotiation'. Taking cues from coloured light spills and street stains, hyper speed and diegetic sound, the manipulations of after-effects and the energetic detritus of the city, she reorders a collage of physical intensities into freefall painterly landscapes of jump cuts and phase shifts.

Recent group exhibitions include *Next*, Sydney Contemporary (2019), Sydney, *Hustle*, Two Rooms Gallery, Auckland (2019), *Urbanize*, Te Po Gallery (2018); *Never An Answer*, *12 Abstract Painters*, The Vivian, Matakana, curated by Linda Tyler and Lucinda Bennett (2018); *Drawcard*, State Gallery, Mt Eden, Auckland (2018); *My Hands are Visibly Soiled*, Snowwhite Gallery, Unitech, Auckland (2018); *Roundhouse*, TSB Bank Wallace Arts Centre, Auckland (2017-2018); Glaister Ennor Art Award Exhibition, Sanderson Contemporary, Auckland (2017). In 2019 Walsh was awarded the Kaipara Wallace Arts Trust Award, receiving a three-month residency at Altes Spital in Solothurn, Switzerland. In 2021 she has been awarded the Eden Arts, Karekare House residency. Tira is represented by Two Rooms, Auckland. Artist text Courtesy of Two Rooms.



Kate Woods
Energy Tree, Waititiko Creek, 2021
 C-type print
 760mm x 770 mm

b.1981
 BFA, University of Auckland | Waipapa Taumata Rau
 @kate_jwoods

Kate Woods draws on found imagery and memories of things seen, read and created herself to construct digital collages which play with human interventions in the natural environment. The paper cuts which are the starting point for this series, sit over her carefully selected traditional and ubiquitous depictions of landscapes. With their surprising distortions of scale, they provide a grid to ponder afresh at our relationship with the land.

The original objects or images that the paper cuts are based on are also products of transmuted influences from different cultures and eras. For example, the painted carvings in *Papercut* are drawn from a photo Woods took at the Summer Palace in Beijing while on an Artist Residency in China. Her signature collages question representations of the real and suggest portals to alternatives.

Saturday 4 May, 2pm – 4pm

Exhibition Opening with Pōwhiri, 2pm
Free, all welcome

From Tuesday 7 May

The Chartwell Chair Project

A Chartwell 50th Anniversary Project, The Chartwell Chair Project offers gallery visitors the chair to sit down, relax, feel and be with an artwork, allowing the viewing experience to unfold. NORTHART will feature chairs created by local creatives throughout the exhibition, along with a changing programme of speakers residing in the chair.
Free, all welcome

Saturday 11 May, 2pm - 3:30pm

Artist-led Workshop with Karen Sewell
Members \$20, Non-Members \$30

From Tuesday 14 May**NORTHART xx mothermother**

mothermother will take over Taupuni Ako - NORTHART's Education and Community Room - to activate the space through a series of gatherings, discussions and more. The collective welcomes visitors to korero over coffee, discuss art, read from our art library or make art, centred around the kaupapa of ABSTRAXT ABSTRAXT and mothermother.

Free, all welcome

Saturday 18 May, 11am

Artist Talk with Veronica Herber and Lang Ea
Free, all welcome

Saturday 25 May, 11am

Artist Talk with Kiran McKinnon
Free, all welcome

Saturday 25 May, 2pm

NORTHART AGM, Annual General Meeting

Saturday 8 June, 2pm

Artist Talk with Gill Gatfield and Virginia Leonard
Free, all welcome

Saturday 15 June, 11am - 12:30pm

Artist-led workshop with Debbie Barber
Members \$20, Non-Members \$30
Optional clay firing charge applies

Saturday 15 June, 2pm

Artist Talk with Natalie Guy
Free, all welcome

Saturday 22 June, 2pm – 4pm**Artist Symposium**

Enjoy panel conversations with our exhibiting artists: Judith Darragh, Lang Ea, Natalie Guy, Veronica Herber, Sara Hughes, Claudia Jowitt, Virginia Leonard, Kiran McKinnon, Karen Sewell, Salome Tanuvasa, Nat Tozer in conversation with Jessica Pearless, Associate Professor Linda Tyler, University of Auckland and Julia Waite, Curator, New Zealand Art, Auckland Art Gallery | Toi o Tāmaki.
Members \$10, Non-Members \$20

Saturday 29 June, 11am - 1pm

Artist-led Workshop with Cindy Leong
Members \$20, Non-Members \$30

Follow our social media and website for further details and to book your place at these events.

Become a Member of NORTHART today to enjoy our events and workshops at discounted price at www.northartgallery.net

NORTHART is grateful to our core partners and funders:



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Bridget Griffin, Lead Gallery Assistant
Samantha Barnard, Gallery Assistant

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