

mothermother

Iteration 22, Suburbia

Exhibition on show: Tuesday 2

May - Saturday 3 June

Mothermother is a circular project, a platform, a collective voice and a network. The aim of the project is to make space for exhibiting artists to connect, acknowledge and be seen through a kaupapa of manaakitanga. Each artist who shows in the mothermother network has the opportunity to contribute to the collective knowledge of the group by inviting another artist into a future exhibition.

For Iteration 22 of the curatorial project mothermother, the artists explore the pleasures and anxieties of the sub-urban: what is allowed, what is excluded... and what could be.

Suburbia - a place where most of us live, but the art world often disdains. The first rail-commuter suburbs developed in the late 19th century as a middle-class response to the first and disease of industrialising the city. The low density, car-dependent suburb was the dominant form of post-war cities, from Los Angeles to Auckland. The urban shifts required by decarbonisation, as well as the enforced domesticity of the last few years and the devastation of climate change have snapped our focus to the neighbourhood

NORTHART

REBECCA WALLIS

The safety of my personal space has been threatened this year, not only from the rain falling.

Threats have washed away the security of my edges.

Surfaces have opened up revealing the safety of fundamental structures beneath.

PHILIPPA BLAIR

Holding it together

Piecing together the fragments....

Worn out and starting something new

Graffiti streetcar, sounds of helicopters and sirens, silence

Suburban nights overlooking the port of LA

No harm in dreaming.....

... alternatives....mapping in the night imagination...watching movies....too many freeways....

San Pedro,LA,Ca

MONIQUE LACEY

Suburbia (Urban Dictionary Definition)

1. A great place to raise a White, Protestant, Anglo-Saxon family with an older brother, a younger sister, a dog, and two happily married heterosexual parents.

2. A terrible place to raise a family that does not fit the description in #1.

People moved to the suburbs to purchase their slice of the good life - a spacious home, with a quiet backyard, near a good school. The suburbs represented the ideals of homeownership, education, low crime and complete autonomy. They represented, in other words, insulation from the perceived ills of urban living. Now it is that very insulation, which made them attractive in their early years, that may be sealing their doom.

Far from the social utopias they were meant to be - the suburbs have become ethnic enclaves: white in one pocket, black in another.

Monique's work attempts to speak to these circumstances.

KIRIANA O'CONNELL

The InVISability Cloak | Te Waikoropupū a Tāne
2023. Harakeke, muka, cotton, commercial dye

As an indigenous woman and working artist and mother in suburban Auckland, I have seen firsthand how gender and racial inequality are perpetuated by our capitalist system. Capitalism is built on the exploitation of labour, and as a result, it has historically favoured white, male-dominated power structures while marginalizing women and people of colour. Here in Aotearoa the 1950s policy of 'Pepper Potting' and subsequent urbanisation of young Māori workers has disrupted and changed how we navigate and intersect with those around us. As Ranginui Walker so eloquently states in his 1970 thesis on the Social Adjustment of the Maori to urban living in Auckland

“Urbanism confronts Māori squarely with the possibility of his social, cultural and biological assimilation and he reacts by sharpening his identity as a Māori vis a vis the dominant Pākehā majority”

My goal is to draw on the rich cultural heritage of my whakapapa and seek to create works that challenge the status quo and subvert dominant narratives to encourage audiences to think critically about the world around them. At the same time, I am deeply aware of the challenges that come with confronting entrenched power structures. Gender and racial inequity are systemic issues that are reinforced by institutions and cultural norms, and addressing them requires a sustained and collective effort. I believe that art has a critical role to play in this transformation as a tool for resistance and for the creation of new possibilities.

ROSE MEYER

Suburban transience.

A suburb can mean home, a base, a place to return to, a neighbourhood where the streets feel familiar and memories reside in its landmarks.

I have lived in many.

We moved a lot when I was young, a practice I continued as an adult and it was only recently that I realised that where I live now is the longest I've ever lived in one place.

25 houses, floor plans drawn from my imperfect memory, gather here as a mapping of my experiences. My transitory history through suburb, town, and city and my encounters with homespace, however brief in duration.

KELLY PRETTY

Foraging hyper-locally became a method for reconnecting with nature in the urban environment as well as with the urban unconscious (neglected aspects of urban life, invasive weeds, marginalised corners, all that is out of sight and mind in a neighbourhood). We were outside every day, exploring and observing. Often the plants we collected were introduced species, many considered invasive, harmful weeds, leading us to reflect on New Zealand's colonial past and wonder how these plants arrived. We paid careful attention to the weather, collecting windfall petals and leaves after a storm and checking daily for flowering after rain.

As the world looks at climate action and what we can do on a local level, this evolving project is shared as a case study in urban mending and ecological care. We look to simple everyday acts of attention or mindfulness constituted by foraging, solar dyeing, and hand stitching / knitting as tools in our collective attempts to reimagine a more sustainable and compassionate future.

JANET MAZENIER

Janet Mazenier's paintings engage with a language of realism and abstraction which contribute to an experimental approach to each artwork creation, every layered mark, stroke and daub acting as a portal into the cognitive site of the encounter responsible for its existence. Possibilities are discovered via slow walking, looking and thinking, contemplating what lies beneath, the substrate of our contemporary, urban lives. Her research focuses on what the notion of "home" means as we navigate our way through changes in society in a contemporary world with refugee migration, housing shortages and suburban sprawl.

Mazenier's work peers at the hidden and the unexpected, the landscape seen via a first generation Pakeha New Zealander's lens. Papatuanuku's materiality is at once present, and at the same time invisible. The media she uses speaks to this materiality, with all her work created using a non-toxic beeswax medium (aka cold wax medium), the wax sourced locally, processed by her into a malleable paste that is combined with oil paint and mixed media.

NATALIE TOZER

'Is it a rock, Is it a mirror' is an experimental video work which celebrates a small communal curiosity of community in Ruakaka. Alongside the imagery, Tozer has voiced a poetic text with a group of imagined future archeologists - AI participants Jennifer and Edward.

JANA WOOD

Look at me I am here
No alarm, No surprises
Just me, Up at dawn every day.

Do you see me?
Or are the rows of houses bearing down on you
Has the light gone out?

Do you see me out of your window?
I am all the light you need,
I am all the warmth that penetrates,
I am all the days you choose to ignore.

KAREN RUBADO

Through a subversive, deconstructive process that emphasises ephemerality and fragility, upend the traditional narrative of textiles in our daily lives.

Disassemble. Reconfigure. Recontextualise.

ROBYN WALTON

“We were all inside our mothers’ bodies once. We were all infants once, and then our mothers were huge. We suckled milk from their breasts. We don’t remember any of it, but our motor-sensory, emotional-perceptual learning begins long before our conscious memories. It begins even before birth, and we are shaped by it...”

Siri Hustvedt, *A Woman Looking at Men Looking at Women*

Swaddle, soothe, succour, scream.
Tuck Me In.

MICHELLE MAYN

I'm working on a piece made from Hoheria/Houhere collected from stormfall branch at Onepoto Domain, just over the hill from Northart. Northcote was my neighbourhood growing up and I still think mostly of the pockets of bush, orchards, creeks and mangroves in the area (most still there)....made a great suburb as a kid.

INGA FILLARY

'Mother's Little Helper'

Codeine Tablets

Marijuana

MDMA

Crystals

Broken mirror

Latex Silicone

Glass

Acrylic Varnish

Window Dimensions 510 x 690mm

Hypothetical illness

Diagnosis Neurosis

One night I dreamed all my teeth fell out

JESSICA DOUGLAS

Suburbia is a living, breathing ecosystem, a complex network or interconnected system. Every factor in the ecosystem depends on every other one, either directly or indirectly; Houses, shops, gas stations, Schools, parks and shared spaces.

Abstract painting techniques are used to convey the concept that, while separate, these

make up complex networks that are inextricably interconnected. Transference and transgression of the boundaries which separate each element are expressed with lines and edges which act at once as barriers and as connecting channels and bridges. Lines both separate and bring together, mimicking property boundaries and fences, as well as foot paths and walkways.

LILLIE BALFOUR

Suburbia... feels like waiting for something to happen or watching life happen somewhere else

LUCY BOERMANS

Call and Respond (Echoes of Being)

The premise for the work is an embodied response to observed “points of exchange” between local social and ecological environments. Titled Call and Respond the work connects at the point of “affective ecologies”.

Boermans “calls out” to the local community of Northcote, to their lives and their working routines in the vicinity of NorthArt in the form of a choreographic work that presents daily recordings (created using an Otter app), of “active perception”; to be “released” into the exhibition space over a defined time-period. (to be agreed). They will comprise of (unedited) time-stamps of printed-word, sound data and object-responses.

Boermans practice explores object-based enquiry, video, sound and photography to explore the Metamodern paradigm. Boermans' practice involves acts of participatory exchange that beckon interaction between self and (an)other, to explore interior and exterior space in all its multiplicities. Her practice involves ‘segments’ of creative separation, dialogue, and responsive connection. It is curious, playful, and giving. Call and Respond activates an articulation of space and interaction between interior and exterior space. It is an installation work that explores collective exchange that is guided by a response-driven process. It refuses judgment or planned intent, asking its participants to suspend all preconceived thoughts or outcomes. It is about a “coming-into-being”. A metamodern work is about shedding the self (identity) to realise the value (of process); a realisation that only becomes apparent upon its completion. Call and Respond focuses upon “instances” (of creation), rather than (combined) directions of the individual(s). It displays an acute sensitivity to participatory movement - in this sense, it is performative. Call and Respond disrupts and provokes, creating a final body of work that is dissolved into one (body).

Driven by a fascination of movement, explored within four-fold coordinates: within a relational space, within open dialogue, within physical dialogue and within a space of ludic exploration, Boermans looks to the value of language beyond the visible by encouraging us to consider interpersonal relations on multiple levels (in time, space and in person with others).

SUSAN NELSON

Hestia pulls us home, wherever we are
Our place to unstrap, unwrap, unwind
Insulated from each other by
Freeholds, boundaries, berms and blinds
But near enough to borrow a cup of sugar
Alone, together in Suburbia
Like all the mown blades of grass that make a lawn

Nostalgia-hoods, full of
Fresh laundry smells seeping out of vents
Gleeful shrieks of fenced children playing
Muffled arguments, slammed doors
Right now in Suburbia, someone is sitting with a hot cup of tea in a chipped mug writing
a masterpiece. Or nursing a baby at 2am. Or cutting themselves quietly on a fluffy
comforter.
Keep a tidy garden and everything in the world will be just fine.

NORTHART