

ARTBEAT

*A Call to Action. Toi Ōtautahi/Christchurch Arts Policy 2019–2024*²⁰



↑ Glitter Pursuits hosted *Winter Wander* in August 2019 a programme of arts events in Cashel Street's retail spaces, including lunchtime life-drawing outside Ballantynes. Photograph: Jennifer Shields

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Artbeat is a monthly arts newspaper with news, reviews, commentary and listings of exhibitions and events in Ōtautahi Christchurch and Canterbury. We cover all aspects of the visual arts, inform existing audiences for the arts and develop new ones

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Press Play and Start Washing

We definitely live in strange and interesting times. Who could have imagined that washing your hands, the collection of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū and New Zealand poetry would share the same stage? And that the gallery's librarian and archivist, Tim Jones would be responsible for making the connections? *Hand-Washing Verse* is an online exhibition that draws from works in the public gallery's collection by Aotearoa New Zealand artists and links them up with poems of approximately 20 seconds elevating the task of washing your hands into an enlightening and entertaining experience.



↑ Juliet Peter, *North Canterbury Pastoral Scene*. Collection of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū; Judith Willet Ensor bequest, 2006

It is a partnership between art and hygiene about “squashing” Covid-19 that until now could never have been imagined, but Jones had been working on this project prior to the gallery's lockdown. Now he is encouraging staff, family, friends and all who are interested to select an artwork from the gallery's collection and a poem that they associate with their chosen work of art. Jones says that in the period prior to shutdown when the gallery and schools were open, Covid-19 had already begun to shape people's behaviour, cultivating the necessity to wash your hands. ‘There was a lot of stuff on the internet, people singing silly songs, clapping and singing *Happy birthday* twice. Others were putting new words to songs in various attempts to get people to wash their hands. I thought we should do something similar.’

‘It is light-hearted thing. The last couple of weeks we were in the building I photocopied a poem that I liked the look of and blue-tacked it to the mirrors above the wash-basins in the gallery's washrooms. Some people said “that's really nice” or “that's stupid” but it was just a talking point. When the building closed I thought we can carry on doing this online. It just bubbled up from there.’

Poems on the gallery's website include its director, Blair Jackson reading *Dunedin* by Edith Howes for Robert Nettleton Field's *Sand Dunes*, *Dunedin* a seascape of the city's shoreline and a place well-known to him.



↑ Ani O'Neill, *5 Little Piggies*, 2005. Collection of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū

As interest from staff grew to create their own post for the online exhibition, Jones decided to check the question of copyright. He contacted Rupert Glover, son of poet Denis Glover (1912 – 1980) as many of the poems being selected were by him. Jones was pleased to hear that Rupert ‘was tickled pink about the project.’

Jones says that he is also keen to mix it up with responses from all ages, races and gender. ‘I am trying to keep it a bit light. We don’t want poetry about a tortured lover or death or loss. We are trying to keep it mainly uplifting. And yes, sometimes it is profound and sometimes it is not.’

Jones has also thought of poets who have written about works in the gallery’s collection like Jenny Bornholdt, Jane Simpson and John Summers. ‘But I have to emphasise there was no planning or master plan. It has taken on a life of its own.’

Violet Richards, the young daughter of the gallery’s Registrar Gina Irish recites *This Little Piggy Went to Market*, an accompaniment to Ani O’Neill’s *5 Little Piggies*, while writer and literary critic, Dr. Peter Simpson reads James K Baxter’s poem, *There Is Only One Direction*, the poet’s response to Colin McCahon’s painting of the same name.

The gallery’s lead curator, Felicity Milburn and curator Peter Vangioni selected poets whose work had been previously chosen by them as titles for exhibitions they had curated: Milburn’s exhibition of Juliet Peter’s paintings and prints, and Vangioni’s *In the Vast Emptiness*, a survey of Canterbury regionalist painting. The Peter’s exhibition, *Where the Line Leads*, 2019, came from a line in the poem, *What Happens* by Bornholdt who had written a series of poems responding to Peter’s Canterbury landscapes from the 1940s. In the online exhibition Bornholdt reads *What Happens*. For Vangioni’s 2015 survey of regionalism, its title is taken from Basil Dowling’s poem, *In the Vast Emptiness* and is read online by the curator.

'The response has come in from different ways. Sometimes it is me just scanning the *Oxford Book of New Zealand verse* and sometimes someone visiting the website and saying "this poem goes with that." It is a real mixture.' Thomas Benjamin Kennington's *Relaxation*, 1908 has been paired up by Jones with Denis Glover's *Girls in a Factory*. 'Those girls aren't in a factory but I think they probably are thinking about their own futures. It is a way of reading the painting. What are they thinking about and what are their hopes and ambitions?' He was also aware that Christchurch-based poet Jane Simpson had written, *A Student Flat, in a Christchurch Winter*, a poem that responded to Philip Clairmont's *Fireplace*, 1972. 'It was published in an anthology. She may have brought it to our attention, again it seemed too good to resist. And we are trying to keep it vaguely local, a bit New Zealand if we possibly can. Jane was only a phone call away and we thought it was a really great poem.'



↑ Thomas Benjamin Kennington, *Relaxation*. Collection of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū; Robert Bell Bequest.

Hand-Washing Verse has also been a technically easy online exhibition to put together day by day. 'Compared to many digital things it couldn't be easier. I would be very pleased if people start the day by looking at what we are doing online, having a look at what we have posted and thinking about that would be good. It sets a routine in a world that has very little routine. We regularly point to the poem of the day on Facebook and Instagram.'

'With poetry there is also that Christchurch 1930s thing, about contemporary poetry and painting. There are a lot of personal and intellectual links between them. Poems could also be the label beside the works in an exhibition or available as an audio with it. There are other ways of working with the painting /poetry connection that haven't yet been explored. This project may be the spark that ignites such exploration.'

See details: christchurchartgallery.org.nz

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Art in the Age of Closure

WRITER

Reuben Woods

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdown period saw the inevitable closure of cultural institutions. Exhibitions have been kept captive and concerts and performances cancelled or postponed. Of course, there are efforts to digitise experiences, online access to shows and streamed performances providing a proxy encounter from our homes (or bubbles to use the new terminology). The importance of the arts is once again clear in a difficult time; not only in our consumption of films, books, songs and more, but in people busying, distracting or soothing themselves by making things. Much like the post-quake period, this compulsion to make and do has extended to public gestures, with messages appearing on fences and footpaths and with these acts of expression, a reminder of urban art's ability to adapt in new environments.



Dr Suits' large abstract collage paste-up is just one of a number of interventions appearing in the quiet lockdown streets

Not reliant on institutional or interior forums, or even the logistical necessities of large-scale public art projects, graffiti and street art can still thrive, their largely solitary creation a benefit in the time of social distance. Indeed, the quieter streets provide a favourable setting for intrepid guerrilla artists to operate, both in their traditional locations and in new spaces.

Moreover, the ability to participate without invitation is another attraction, compulsion to act the only requirement. While the potential audience may be smaller, public interventions still provide direct engagement; small moments of connection and possibly reflection as people walk, cycle or skate their neighbourhoods.

On my daily walks over the last week I have not only reconnected with existing additions, but discovered the fresh presence of stickers on utility boxes, giant collaged paste-ups on empty buildings, painted slogans and graffiti with a community-minded message alongside its egocentric tradition. Social media has filled in some gaps on what has been found in those enclaves outside of my socially responsible perimeter, but I am left to largely wonder what other people are finding.

Yet, it is not just the practical potential of urban art that has been made clear in this environment. Post-graffiti art has traditionally utilised graphic and conceptual simplicity to communicate ideas, favouring accessibility. While some artists may require more time to navigate the issues created by this period of pandemic and isolation and specific environments in which to present them, urban artists have been quick to respond, stencilling lovers kissing through their respirator masks, depicting heroic health workers or sloganeering about how this may bring about the end of capitalism. Even graffiti writers, so often self-involved have taken to writing COVID-19 in stylised letterforms. There will be more cerebral, more thoughtful and more challenging examples of art produced in response to this experience, but urban art's directness has proven its value in unsettling times and when the lockdown comes to an end it will be exciting to see how the streets have spoken.

The New Brighton Outdoor Art Festival

WRITER

Reuben Woods

A Banksy stencil depicting a piece of graffiti reading 'Follow Your Dreams' plastered with a cancelled sign has had an online resurgence recently. Gavin Fantastic, [Chairperson at New Brighton Charitable Trust] can most definitely relate to the sentiment. Fantastic started working on the idea of an outdoor art festival in New Brighton a year ago. Just weeks before it was due to be staged, doubts about its form amidst the Covid-19 pandemic began to crystallise. Just days before it would have come to life it was postponed indefinitely.

Of course, this is not an isolated occurrence. Almost every event which would have attracted a public audience was impacted by the response to the virus and ultimately doomed by the enforced lockdown. Fantastic, an urban art champion and a resident of the seaside village, conceived of the New Brighton Outdoor Art Festival as a way to support an artistic community and to rejuvenate the suburb's walls. He had gathered a small team to develop the programme, including local graffiti legend Ikarus, and secured support from the Christchurch City Council's *Enliven Places* fund along with various sponsorships. The official festival was scheduled for March 28th with artists painting numerous village walls, live music, guided tours of the new and existing art in New Brighton, interventions such as yarn-bombings and a stencil workshop all planned.

The festival did technically get underway. Three weeks prior to the main event the Fiksate crew produced a massive 'Welcome to Ōrua Paeroa' mural with the help of the local community on a prominent wall visible on the way into the village intended as a very public announcement of what was to come. A week before the festival was to take place, an exhibition of work by participating artists, including Dcypher, Jacob Yikes, Vesil, Jenna Lyn Ingram, Meep One, and Wongi 'Freak' Wilson was hung in the



The Welcome to Ōrua Paeroa mural produced by the Fiksate crew with help from members of the community as part of the NBOAF. Photo: Gavin Fantastic

New Brighton community gallery. It was open for one day.

With the rapidly evolving situation, Fantastic re-imagined the festival as a 'closed door' event, mask and glove wearing artists painting without the public attendance. Fantastic even spent his weekend painting several huge walls grey in preparation. However, it was soon apparent that even this approach was not possible, the country heading into lockdown. While personally disappointed, he recognises the need to act responsibly in the face of the current situation. Fantastic has been assured that the *Enliven Places* funding will be available to stage the festival in some form and he remains optimistic that it will occur in the future. For now, New Brighton has a vibrant new welcome sign and Fantastic is determined to see more large-scale additions realised in the near future.

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NEWS & EVENTS & WORKSHOPS

The Physics Room's Art Not Science monthly podcasts

Artist Luke Shaw broadcasts his sound-work *Metal Body: Ghost Field*, 2020, featured in the exhibition, *Domino Domino*. Recorded inside The Suter Gallery, Te Aratoi O Whakatū *Metal Body: Ghost Field* is an improvised drone performance utilising guitar, overhead projector, effects units and amplifiers.

See: physicsroom.org.nz and to hear *Metal Body*: plainsfm.org.nz

Online Interactive Exhibitions – courtesy of artist Audrey Baldwin

Te Papa - Online jigsaw puzzles. Links to digital jigsaw puzzles using images from their collection or upload your own image to make into a puzzle.

See: tepapa.govt.nz

Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū. Curate and share your own exhibition using the gallery's collection.

See: christchurchartgallery.org.nz

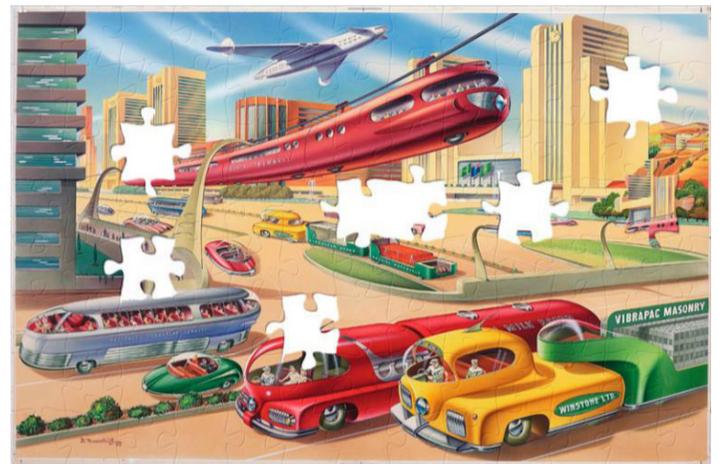
Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Art at Home. For those with little ones, Jen Boland hosts short, sweet videos for kids (and maybe artists in need of inspiration as well), to make artworks.

See: dunedin.art.museum

Online Films by New Zealand Artists

Spheres: An Online Video Project is launched by the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū as a video series featuring the work of 12 New Zealand artists. The Gallery's website will host 6 months of films, commencing Tuesday 6th May with a new work by a different artist released on each of the first 12 days. The line up includes Ronnie van Hout, Xin Cheng, Nova Paul, Matavai Taulangau and Christchurch cinematographer John Chrisstoffels.

See: christchurchartgallery.org.nz



↑ Bernard Roundhill, *Original artwork Auckland 2000*, 1956, airbrushed gouache on paper. Collection of Te Papa Tongarewa.

↓ John Chrisstoffels, *Ritornello*, 2018, digital video



AT THE GALLERIES

↘
Saskia Bunce-Rath, 2019, *the smell of sea air is about*, embroidery thread on calico fabric.

↘↘
Talanoa I Measina - Sharing Our Stories. An immersive exhibition celebrating Pacific Peoples in Ōtautahi Christchurch.

↘↘↘
Dr Suits, *New Boundaries*, 2020, spray-paint on glass. One of several new works on glass *New Boundaries* was made in lockdown.

↘↘↘↘
Jane Barry, *Seachange*, 2020, ink on paper.



People often say things like, ‘Saskia, your art, your writing, it’s a bit creepy, a little bit disturbing.’ I don’t mean for it to be, it’s just what’s coming out... I think when you’re making stuff from your personal life you’re going to be emulating the feeling of your environment and society at the time, no matter how hard you try to avoid it.’

Saskia Bunce-Rath discusses her work in City Art Reader 19. (City Art Depot 96 Disraeli Street)

See: cityart.co.nz

Curated by Nina Oberg-Humphries, *Talanoa I Measina - Sharing Our Stories* is an expression of Pacific identity, cultural belonging and visual talanoa (stories) from Christchurch’s Pacific community. Gathered images, film and objects from the local community and archival material, *Talanoa I Measina* is a visual showcase mirroring a living room that celebrates achievements, people and love for Pacific culture in Ōtautahi.

Te Pito Huarewa / Southbase Gallery, Tūranga

See: christchurchcitylibraries.com

‘I’ve been keeping myself busy and managing to find some time to also get back to my paste-ups and stickers. There don’t seem to be any rules in place about street art. My theory is if you can go for a 40 minute jog for recreation then surely you can go for a 40 minute street art installation.’

Dr Suits on his practice.

See: fiksate.com

Seachange is inspired by water and abstracted aspects of landscape. I like the idea that water is symbolic and a subconscious metaphor for change and the stream of life. Be it the scent of soft falling rain or the sound of the ocean, frantic and looming. (“Upon us all, a little rain must fall,” Led Zeppelin).

Jane Barry details her new work.

See: chambersart.co.nz

↘
John Badcock, *Covid-19*, 2020,
acrylic on loose canvas.



↘↘
Artworks in public spaces are
also gallery spaces. Russell
Clark, *The Family Group*, 1960.



A recently completed portrait by Badcock, ‘one of the leading proponents of “expressionist” art in the country... justly renowned for his mastery of the art of portraiture in all its haunting majesty.’

canvaschamp.co.nz

See: susanbadcockstudio.co.nz

The Family Group is located at the University of Canterbury. Those who are old enough will remember its original location at Church Corner by the entrance to Hay’s Shopping Centre (now gone), commissioned by Hay’s Company whose support for contemporary art in post-war New Zealand was also evident in their establishment of our first contemporary art competition in 1960, The Hays’ Art Award.

See: canterbury.ac.nz

AT THE GALLERIES

DISCOVER

1 Absolution

Honor Roche, *Copper Connectors Traffic Data*, Arts Centre of Christchurch, 2 Worcester Boulevard, CHCH

2 Aigantighe Gallery

49 Wai-Iti Rd, Maori Hill, Timaru

3 Arca Gallery

127a Hackthorne Road, Cashmere, CHCH

4 Art Hole

336 St Asaph Street, CHCH

5 Art on the Quay

176 Williams Street, Kaiapoi

6 Arts in Oxford

Vantage Point, group exhibition curated by Philip Trusttun, until 3 May, Oxford Spinning Group, TBC, Arts in Oxford Gallery, Main Street, Oxford

7 Ashburton Art Gallery

Zonta Ashburton Female Art Award 2020, Melissa MaLeod, *The Trappings of Ghosts*, 327 West St, Ashburton

8 Bryce Gallery

Artists include: Paintings by Don McAra and Clare Wilcox, 84 Vicenza Drive, Ohoka RD2 Kaiapoi

9 Canterbury Museum

Slice of Life: The World Famous Dunedin Study, Ancient New Zealand: Squawkzilla and the Giants, prehistoric New Zealand, until 12 Jul, Rolleston Avenue, CHCH

10 Catalogue

Penny Lane, 430 Colombo Street

11 Chamber Gallery Rangiora

141 Percival Street, Rangiora

12 Chambers Gallery

Leah Marshal and Tony O'Grady, 5 - 23 May, Kim Lowe and Jane Barry, 26 May - 13 Jun, 241 Moorhouse Ave, CHCH

13 Christchurch Art Gallery

Te Puna o Waiwhetū

Frances Hodgkins: *European Journeys*, Fiona Pardington, *Tiki: 'Orphans' of 'Māoriland'*, *Gathering Clouds, Uncomfortable Silence*, cnr Worcester Boulevard and Montreal Street, CHCH

14 City Art Depot

Eve Barlow curates a group exhibition, *Rectify This Painting*, TBC, 96 Disraeli St, Sydenham, CHCH

15 CoCA Toi Moroki

Emma Wallbanks, *Heteroglossia, Westfarbe*, 66 Gloucester Street, CHCH

16 Eastside Gallery

88 Worcester Street, Linwood, CHCH

17 Fiksate

Stock Room Hang, NZ and international artists; prints, sculpture, books, stickers and more, 165 Gloucester Street, CHCH

18 Fo Guang Yuan Art Gallery

Toney Su, *Treasure of Nature Enlighten You*, 2 Harakeke Street, Riccarton, CHCH

19 Form Gallery

Jane McCulla, *Familiar Ground*, 468 Colombo St, Sydenham, CHCH

20 Heart & Soul

Painting, craft and photography, 34 New Regent Street, CHCH

21 Ilam Campus Gallery

Kim Lowe, *The Silence of the Brush*, Fine Arts Lane, off Clyde Rd, Ilam, CHCH

22 Jonathan Smart Gallery

Anne Noble, *a line between two trees*, Julia Morison, *Seque*, John Pule, *new paintings*, 52 Buchan Street, Sydenham, CHCH

23 LEstrange Gallery

Container Artists 8th annual group exhibition includes: Nigel Brown, Alison Erikson, Hamish Allan, 53 Nayland Street, Sumner, Christchurch

24 Little River Gallery

Jacqui Gibbs Chamberlain, *Moment in Time*, Christchurch Akaroa Road

25 McAtamney Gallery

Philippa Wilson, *Into the Great Wide Open*, 40A Talbot Street, Geraldine

26 NMG

Wynn Williams House, 47 Hereford St, CHCH

27 Ng Space

Tim Main, *A Quiet Place*, Level 1/212 Madras St, CHCH

28 Paludal

Exhibition details and hours, 2 Papanui Road, CHCH

29 PGallery192

John Reynolds *'In the street I was lost...'* 192 Bealey Ave, CHCH

30 Pūmanawa

Community Gallery

The Arts Centre Te Matatiki Toi Ora, 2 Worcester Boulevard, CHCH

31 Stoddart Cottage Gallery

Diamond Harbour Camera Club, *Splash of Colour*, 2 Waipapa Ave, Diamond Harbour

32 Studio 125 Gallery

Simon Kaan, Heather Brown, Josh O'Rourke and selected artists, 125 Aikmans Road, Merivale

33 Susan Badcock Gallery

Ongoing: John Badcock, Douglas Badcock, Susan Badcock, 47 Talbot Street, Geraldine 7930

34 Teece Museum

of Classical Antiquities

Fantastic Feasts: dine with the ancients, Arts Centre of Christchurch, 3 Hereford Street, CHCH

35 The Central Art Gallery

Hannah Kidd, *Inheritance*, 7 May - 14 June, Arts Centre of Christchurch, 2 Worcester Boulevard, CHCH

36 The National

What I am Wearing - From Lockdown, 249 Moorhouse Avenue, CHCH

37 The Physics Room

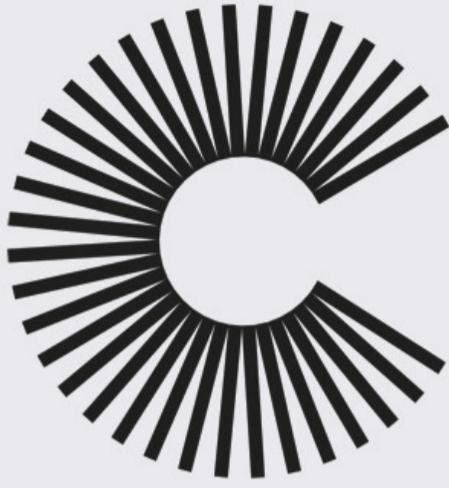
301 Montreal Street, Registry Building, Arts Centre Te Matatiki Toi Ora

38 Tūranga

Robyn Webster, *The Labyrinth*, (harakeke installation), *Talanoa I Measina*, TBC, 60 Cathedral Square, Mon-Fri 8am-8pm Sat-Sun 10-5pm

39 Windsor Gallery

Anneke Bester, *Sister Water*, and Rhonye McLroy, *Stone to Flesh*, 386 St Asaph St, CHCH

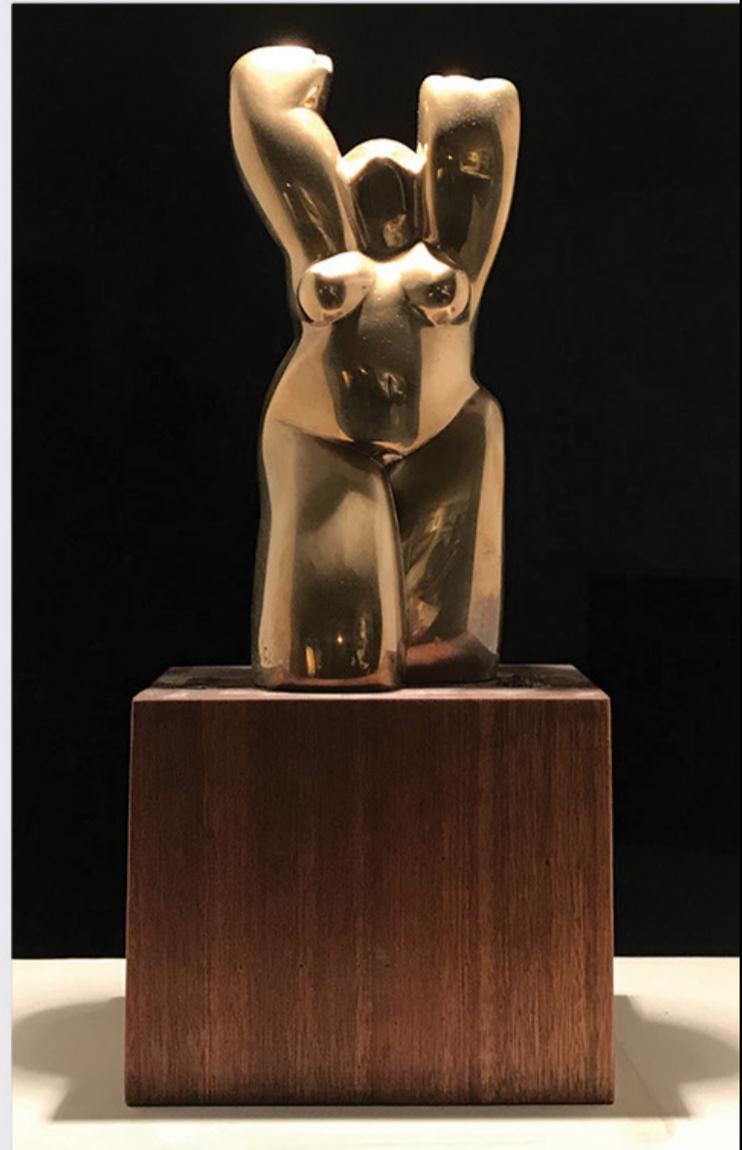


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Tony O'Grady

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Kim Lowe. *If Tao is a River*

The title of Kim Lowe's exhibition at Chambers Gallery is a variation on a quote by contemporary Asian American Taoist, Deng Ming Dao: 'If Tao is a River... it's good to know where the rocks are.' The recipient of the Oliver Spencer Bower Foundation Award in 2019, Lowe's new works relate to Chinese philosopher and writer Lao Tzu and his ideas about life as being like a river.

Lowe's works on paper encompass landscapes and portraits, also principal subjects in Spencer Bower's practise, both artists considering their potential through their chosen medium, Spencer Bower in the 1950s in her response to British Neo-Romanticism's abstracted images of the natural world and Lowe in 2020, utilising aspects of Chinese aesthetics and traditional brush painting. Lowe acknowledges this influence of Olivia's approach of painting portraits and landscapes of the people and land around her.

There is also recognition by Lowe of our attitude to the land in the 21st century. She comments, 'there is something about tourism here, familiar landforms that get photographed and shared by hundreds of thousands of visitors. I have been attempting to paint them from a historical/faux historical point of view and maybe also attempting to fill in the gap between New Zealand Chinese painters from the era of Olivia Spencer Bower.'



↑ Kim Lowe, *South Mountain*, 2019, ink and acrylic on paper

Kim Lowe, *If Tao is a River*
Chambers Gallery, 241 Moorhouse Avenue
See: chambersart.co.nz

Melissa Macleod: *The Trappings of Ghosts* Ensnaring the sea air at Wakanui



↑
Melissa Macleod, *The Trapping of Ghosts*, 2020. Trapping sea air at Wakanui

An interdisciplinary Christchurch-based artist working in sculpture, photography and performance, Melissa Macleod's current solo exhibition as the 2019 recipient of the Zonta Ashburton Female Art Award, *The Trappings of Ghosts* has seen the artist 'bottle' the fresh sea air of Wakanui Beach, east of Ashburton in 48 enormous bags installed in the gallery.

For more than two decades Macleod has conceived and created conceptual works that are socially engaged and accessible in the very broadest sense. Once encountered it is impossible to resist wanting to see and know more, and in the process of doing so, finding yourself challenged, seeking answers to the social, environmental and political contexts that her works frequently represent.

The Trappings of Ghosts is an immersive installation, a response to the Ashburton environment and Wakanui beach. Metaphorically a monumental work, yet at the moment, Macleod's attention is also on current global concerns, considering places where



↑
Melissa Macleod, *The Trapping of Ghosts*, 2020, installation image

exhibitions themselves have been placed in lockdown. She reflects that her room of Wakanui sea air now ‘sits silently in Ashburton,’ a room of air carrying even more meaning as a work that was hours, months, years in the research and making - seen by a handful.

Macleod also accepts that trying to make large installation in Christchurch is an unremitting challenge and it is the moments of sweet passing response that you hold. For anyone who has experienced Macleod’s work in the space of a gallery that feeling of an immediate connection with the objects she creates is a given. Her installation *Deadwood* at the Jonathan Smart Gallery in 2018 was, like all her work, a special experience - a work with a presence that heightened awareness of the very space in the gallery itself. Macleod comments: ‘The problem is I really love and value this temporary/ conceptual/ large scale area of sculptural practice- it is what is exciting. I will no doubt carry on.’

Melissa Macleod
The Trapping of Ghosts
Ashburton Art Gallery
327 West Street
7 March – 19 April
See: ashburtonartgallery.org.nz

A Call for Action.

Toi Ōtautahi/Christchurch Arts Policy 2019–2024

WRITER

Warren Feeney

Towards the end of 2019 Christchurch City Council launched a new arts policy and strategy for the city and its residents. Toi Ōtautahi – Strategy for the Arts and Creativity in Ōtautahi Christchurch replaced its well overdue 2001 predecessor with a well-researched consultative document with attitude.

Toi Ōtautahi/ Christchurch Arts was initiated with a steering group set up in March 2018 that, among others, included City Council staff, Creative New Zealand, the Rātā Foundation (Rātā) and ChristchurchNZ and from July to September 2018 a series of consultative workshops were held with all sections of the arts community. The information gathered was complemented by a working party made up of members from CoCA, the CSO, the Court Theatre, Ōtautahi Creative Spaces, RAD Collective and the Arts Centre.

The policy and strategy document describes itself as ‘a new kind of partnership strategy, developed collaboratively with the arts sector and major funding, advocacy and development agencies.’

This is framed by an acknowledgement that the arts cannot be sustained by City Council on a scale that will adequately support the arts community and that Creative New Zealand, the Rātā Foundation and ChristchurchNZ (the city’s marketing and economic development agency) are to be significant players and supporters.

Toi Ōtautahi/ Christchurch Arts is a well overdue document and once the lockdown is downgraded to the point where social distancing becomes redundant it should be acted upon as an immediate priority for two good reasons. In the first instance, as ChristchurchNZ surmises: As businesses struggle to recover in the central city and 9,000 to 36,500 residents are expected to lose their jobs over the next 12 months, the central city’s recovery and its retailers are among the most vulnerable. The arts represent a point of difference to the suburban shopping mall through events and creative activities capable of attracting returning visitors to the city’s heart.

Secondly, Creative New Zealand’s report on the state of the country’s artists, *A Profile of Creative Professionals* published in May 2019 detailed that the average wage for a New Zealand artist is \$35,800 per annum or 69% of the average wage nationally. Depressingly that % of difference remains close to the average twenty years ago.

Creative New Zealand's 2003 survey, *Portrait of the Artist*, based on research from 1999 detailed a slightly higher average at \$20,700 or 74% of the average wage. In spite of two decades of media releases that claim the arts are valued by New Zealanders our artists remain in an occupation that places them financially at the bottom of an economic ladder.

On both counts Toi Ōtautahi/ Christchurch Arts is a timely document. It states: Christchurch will be a place 'where there is support for local artists and this support provides new employment opportunities in the creative sector,

boosts the local economy and creates a more vibrant city to live in or to visit.' It also acknowledges that the role that the arts have played over the past decade throughout a sustained period of challenges has seen them occupy an active role in shaping a new city identity.

To its credit, there were already examples of collaborations between Council, business and the arts prior to the document's release. In August 2019 Glitterbox Pursuits (artists Audrey Baldwin and Jennifer Shields) were commissioned by ChristchurchNZ to deliver *Winter Wander*, an eight day arts event featuring sixty local artists in exhibitions, installations and lunch-time sketching classes in Cashel Street, the Terrace and The Crossing. This public arts programme featured the group exhibition, *Reverie* in the BNZ Centre, an arts trail of 11 artists' installations in nine retail outlets and a *Lunchtime Sketch Club* in venues that included Scorpio Books and Ballantynes' window display space.

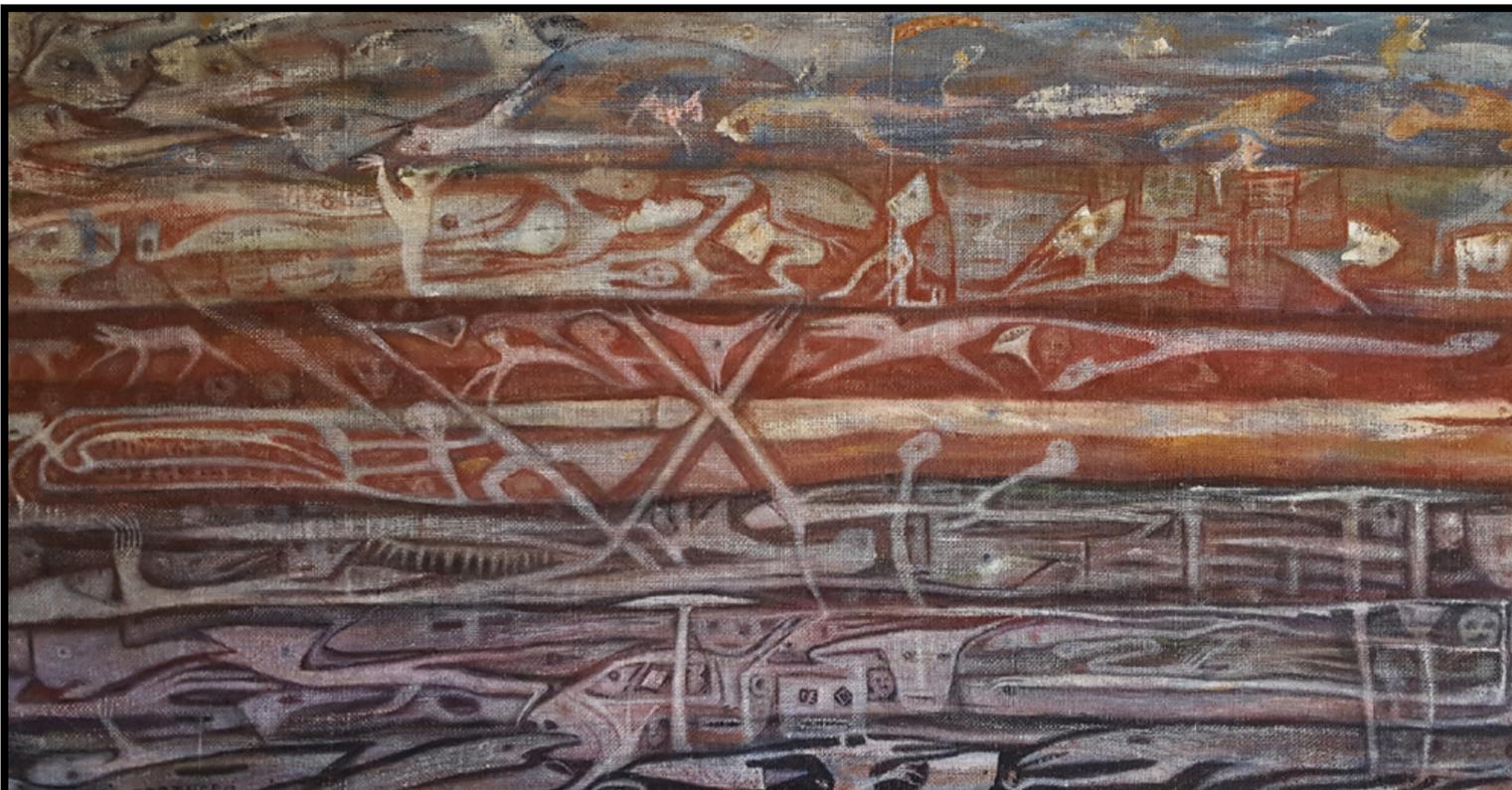
From October to November last year, Terrace developer Antony Gough also provided free rent for theatre producer Michael Bell's Little Andromeda programme of 120 shows, upstairs on the Terrace within a cluster of restaurants and bars.

Toi Ōtautahi/ Christchurch Arts is a document perfectly suited to the needs of artists and the city's further revitalisation. It just needs activating with a light and practical infrastructure that connects artists with businesses. Let's see this happen.



↑ Lunchtime Sketch Club with Constance Mayhem modelling in The Crossing's air bridge: *Winter Wander*, Saturday 3rd August 2019 12pm - 2pm. Photograph by Janneth Gil

See Christchurch City Council's Arts Strategy 2019 – 2024: ccc.govt.nz



The Patriot by Michael Springer. Acrylic on hessian, 2020

Vantage Point

Extended:
21 March - 21 June

Closing event:
3pm Sat 20 June

Rebecca Harris
Marie Le Lievre
Michael Springer
Martin Whitworth
David Woodings

Vantage Point being both a high place providing a good clear outlook and a particular point of view.

We look forward to seeing you again after lockdown.

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NZ Bear Hunt

WRITER

Andrew Paul Wood

It's not overly clear where the phenomenon of teddy bears in windows to cheer up people in their bubbles of pandemic self-isolation came from. It was already popular overseas before the Facebook page "We're Not Scared - NZ Bear Hunt" appeared (it has around 8000 followers) and Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern declared her participation from her Wellington Parliamentary residence.

In many ways it's a nationwide participation in a spontaneous global community artwork as hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of people, intervene in their collective environment to deliver one single, clear, unified message of solidarity in a time of high anxiety, in an effort to distract and entertain children like a treasure hunt, while we are confined to our social bubbles.

Even without getting into Rosalind Krauss' conception of the Expanded Field, where spatially-based visual art expands into spaces between sculpture, architecture and landscape, or Nicolas Bourriaud's idea of Relational Aesthetics where art takes its cue from social context rather than private space, it's fair to say contemporary western art is predicated on three principles defined by three great artists and provocateurs of the twentieth century. Marcel Duchamp's readymades showed that it was intent and environment that defined art, and in fact anything could be art. Joseph Beuys pushed for a democratic view of art making where anyone who felt the urge to create could be an artist. Finally, is Andy Warhol, who conceived of Pop Art as art of the familiar for everybody.

This triumvirate sat at odds with a modernism exemplified by über-critic Clement Greenberg where only a clinical form of abstraction would do, and any sign of figuration or sentiment was to be condemned as kitsch and ultimately ideologically aligned with the propaganda of fascism and communism. Increasingly though, there has been a return of a romantic sensibility that embraces sentiment and sentimentality as legitimate and human existential responses to an overwhelming, infinite and arbitrary universe. COVID-19 certainly fits the bill in deserving such a response, and if anything can be art, anyone can be an artist, and art can be for everybody, then why shouldn't we regard these furry little interlopers in our windows as an artistic act?

Of course, that is probably over-thinking it, although as a mass action it undeniably fits the bill as an artwork. These bears ultimately find their origin in a 1902 political

cartoon in the *Washington Post* depicting President Theodore “Teddy” Roosevelt refusing to shoot a stunned and tied-up black bear for a trophy on the ground of being unsportsmanlike. To us they represent comfort and security, especially for children. To put them in windows at this difficult time is a profound act of kindness, humanity and community, a material sign of our existence and participation at a time in history where life is increasingly led in isolation and mediated by screens and technology. Ours is a culture of display, with a distant echo of Walter Benjamin’s Arcades Project (1927-1940) and the idea of creating a stimulating environment for the flâneur even in the restricted form of the neighbourhood and the household bubble.

As an event, this is possibly the first example of spontaneous art performance produced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and a truly heart-warming moment in this otherwise dark and worrisome time.



↑ Jane Zusters, *Untitled (teddy bear in window)*, 2020

See: In the windows of homes in Ōtautahi and Aotearoa

Uncomfortable Silence

WRITER

Stephanie Beth

How many times have you been to an art exhibition where it becomes evident that art and artists in day jobs distinctly blur lines of focus? It is a theme that comes through in *Uncomfortable Silence*, a group exhibition curated by Holly Best at the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū. It is a clockwise parade of eight artists allocated walls and spaces.

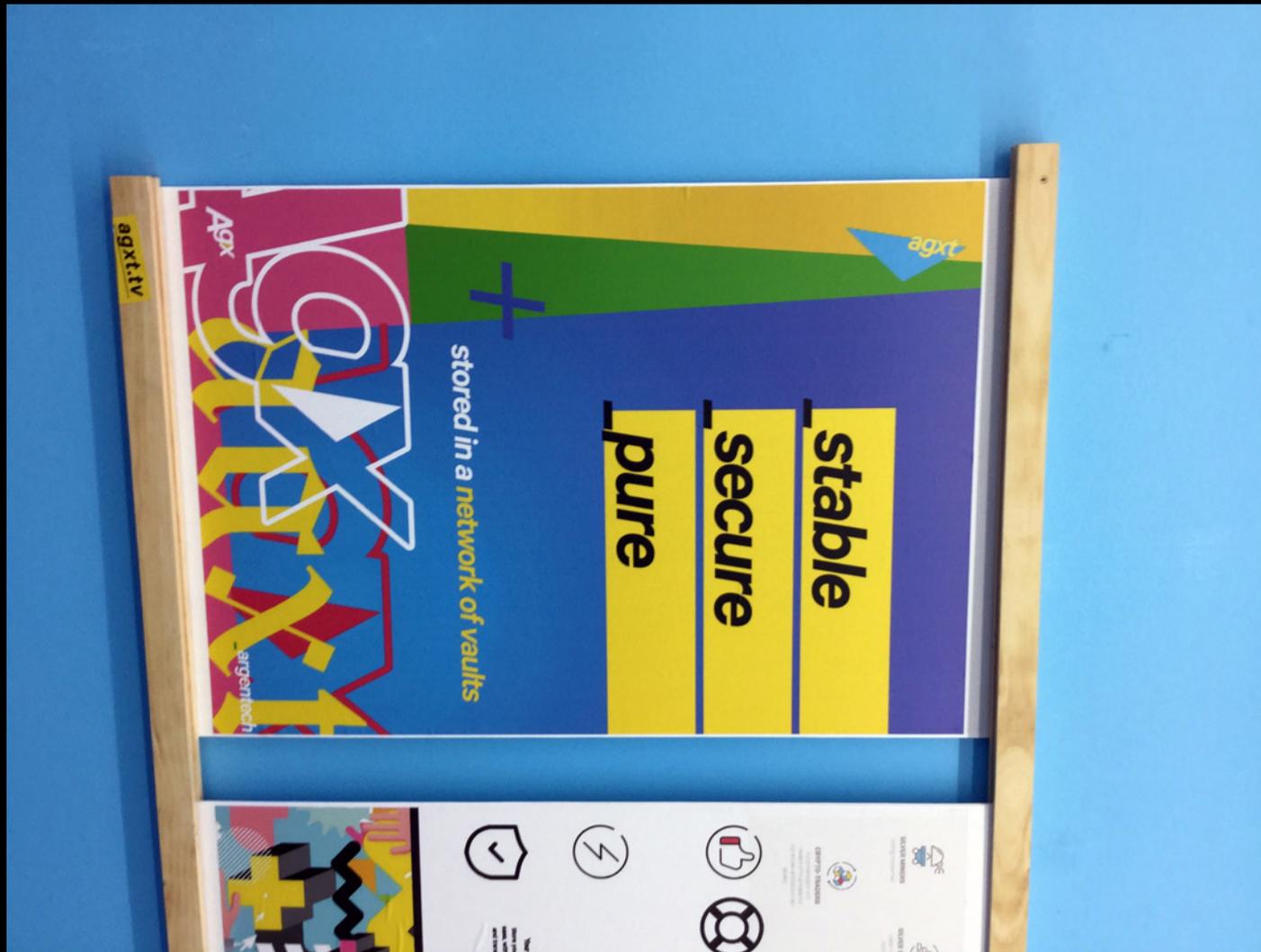
At the entrance is an art intervention. An air-filled plastic statement with a full stop: *GET IT RIGHT* by Elisabeth Pointon. Using air-induced data, Pointon's work was set up in a car dealership in Wellington in 2018. *GET IT RIGHT* in Christchurch sustains a feisty relationship between art and the public. Outdoor public art during the land art movement of the 1960s included a work by Bruce Nauman, *Leave the Earth Alone*. It was physically only readable in an airborne state in 2009 within a circle of the arts fraternity. Is that sculpture Pointon's precursor?

Mark Schroder is quite the comedian, spreading an outrageous installation over three rooms, simulating a world of corporate capital, his assemblage is a fictitious holding Company, *PROXY*.

For Schroder, the world of corporate pitching is not a clinical strategy, the sensation emanating from the work is the misery of waiting for that 'chance.' Schroder is described in the gallery's handout as applying an aesthetic to themes positioned between "aspiration and disappointment" - the intersection between Art and Finance and the "modern notions of success and failure."

Meg Porteous is a photographer with elan. Five equally dimensioned coloured photographs of commissioned portraits of the artist, going about the activity of simply being alive. Such an angle is fresh and intelligent, throwing us all beyond the era of photo realism and into a surprising trustworthiness. Porteous takes us directly to astute questions about image, observation, consideration and subject.

A change in mood – Johanna Mechen shows her child's art making activity, as formal studies once removed. This room is a fluent selection of three of her work, an animation of pencils on one wall captivating in its detail and a large square format video of a sleeping child is a study of the rhythm of the human pulse.



↑ Mark Schroder, *SILVERCITY* (installation view), 2020.

Greet the painterly gestures and dazzle and colour of fluorescence and automotive paint of Jayden Plank. Using a range of laser-cut aluminium, acrylic spray paint, industrial paint and raku clay in a set of, 'hang on the wall' objects, Plank's painting is an embrace of art at a brink of becoming and a 'will-be' of shift.

Some works whisper, some seek awe. Look out for Shiraz Sadikeen, Ammon Ngakuru and Clare Logan. *Uncomfortable Silence* is a wave in time that cannot help but link us into the contemporary. The opening door count on March Saturday 8, 2020, to the Atrium, music and artists live, was four thousand. This site is an event and all are made welcome.

Uncomfortable Silence

Curated by Holly Best

Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetū

7 March – 19 July

Sarah Laing, *The Covid-19 Diaries*

WRITER

Warren Feeney



↑ Sarah Laing, *Untitled (Brave New World)*, 27 March 2020



↑ Sarah Laing, *Untitled (and of course, when it comes to the milk)*, 27 March 2020

Sarah Laing describes herself as a cartoonist, fiction writer, illustrator, graphic designer and mother of three. Her cartoons and comic books are autobiographical, covering all aspects of the days of her life. From 26 March she began *The Covid-19 Diaries*, an online journal with pictures about the lockdown that is informed by its sense of immediacy and regularity, Laing working in ink directly onto the blank page of paper and a commitment to ten panels each day (also making it suitable for Instagram).

The Covid-19 Diaries look like the initial layout for a comic strip, so there is an intimacy and authenticity about it. The pleasure in following the detail of Laing and her family's daily experiences of lockdown is in the familiarity of their circumstances. For example; that once-a-week visit to the supermarket seems more than all too familiar. Laing's daily posting convey such encounters without the overstated affirmations of the television news' nightly coverage of lockdown. Rather, it is in the small details of her life that a bigger picture and sense of the reality of lockdown is revealed.

And *The Covid-19 Diaries* are interactive. At the conclusion of each daily entry, Laing has a short essay providing some context to the day, with feedback from interested readers. Laing's art has an honesty and respect for its readers and *The Covid-19 Diaries* are, indeed, about having sincere and meaningful conversations.

See: sarahelaing.com and Instagram: [sarahelaing](https://www.instagram.com/sarahelaing)

Maurice Askew (1921-2020). Designer, Filmmaker and Teacher

WRITER

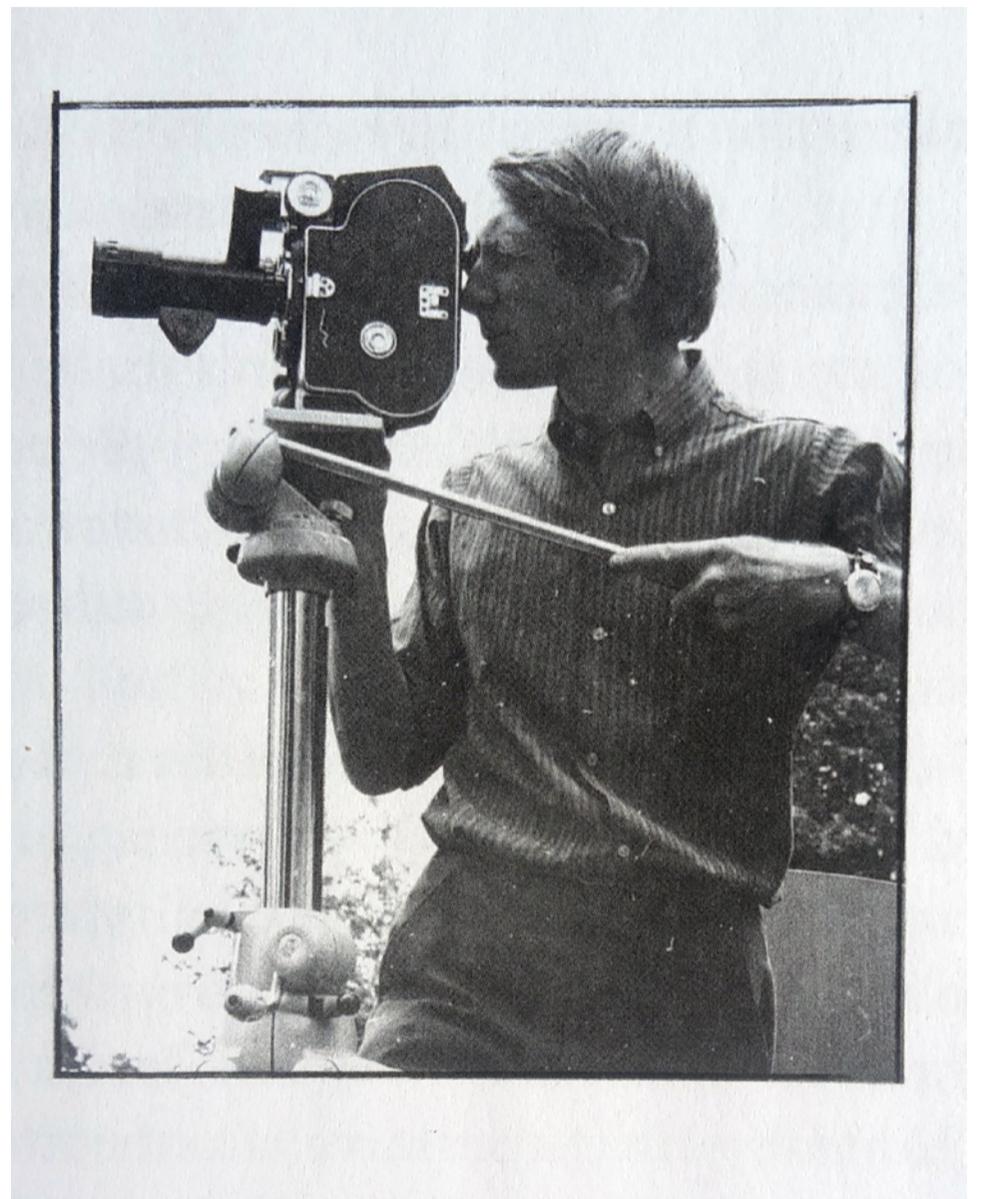
Warren Feeney

Maurice Askew was appointed Lecturer in Design at the University of Canterbury's School of Fine Arts in 1962 by Professor John Simpson who, since his arrival at the SFA three years earlier, was in the process of redesigning its curriculum.

Askew's appointment saw the door finally closing on the influential Arts & Craft Movement, replaced by contemporary principles of British design influenced by the legacy of the Bauhaus. Further appointments included painter Don Peebles in 1965. The remaining remnants of the Victorian era were finally over for the SFA, succeeded by 20th century Modernism. In addition to changes in its design curriculum, Askew also introduced film, animation and photography.

Askew arrived in New Zealand from London with an experience of 20th century art and design matched by few of his contemporaries. He was born in Redditch, Worcestershire in 1921 and prior to his time with the Royal Air Force (RAF) during the Second World War, had studied at Birmingham College of Arts and Craft and as an apprentice at the Argus Advertising Agency.

On his second mission flying over Leipzig in Germany in 1944, the Lancaster Bomber he and his crew were flying was shot down and he became a prisoner of war, returning to England at the end of war. Again a civilian, he married Doris Parr and returned to study at the Birmingham College of Arts and Crafts, graduating in 1951 with a Diploma



↑ Maurice Askew, University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts, c. 1965. Photograph: Maurice Askew, *At Sixties and Seventies*. Christchurch: Selwyn Bridge Press, 2012



↑ Maurice Askew, *Red Admiral Butterfly, Tussock Butterfly*, 1970, New Zealand Post

in Fine Arts and taking up a teaching position in design at the Stoke-on-Trent College of Art. This was followed by time in London, joining the design department at the recently-formed Granada Television Studio where, among his tasks, he created promotion cards for television programmes that included *Wyatt Earp* and *Sir Lancelot*, as well set designs for Granada's *Coronation Street*.

At Granada he also teamed up with fellow graphic artist, Bryan Cosgrove to script

and animate *Canary*, a 15 minute cartoon, among the earliest to emerge in the United Kingdom, following the success of English film animators, John Halas and Joy Batchelor's *Animal Farm* in 1954. *Canary* received international critical acclaim, including a silver medal at the Vienna film festival in 1963.

At the SFA, Askew established friendships and working relationships with artists and teachers sharing his ambitions for the modern movement and its engagement with New Zealand's art and culture. This included, Russell Clark, Richard Lovell-Smith, Doris Lusk, Don Peebles, Trevor Moffit, Tom Taylor and W. A. Sutton.

Askew's influence within this community and environment was critical at this time for New Zealand design and film. Painter and designer, Roy Good describes Askew's influence as highly underrated and its significance can be seen in his series of decimal currency stamps from 1970, the 1974 Commonwealth Games in Christchurch and theatre designs for the Court Theatre:

He was the very first lecturer with real world professional experience at the cutting edge of the development of television in the United Kingdom. [His students at Ilam included] Murray Reece the first graduate in film to come out of a New Zealand art school and of course went on to make the breakthrough film for television, Ian Cross's The God Boy. Mark Cleverly another student of Maurice's in my time was a 'star' graphic designer and made his name in stamp design, dragging the profession into the 20th century in the late '60s and early '70s.

Senior Lecturer in Film at the School of Fine Arts, John Chrisstoffels similarly acknowledges his influence, commenting that by 1975 the demand from Askew's students for film to be a separate studio at Ilam saw it become a reality. 'It remains arguably the oldest film school in the country. Among its early students were Vincent Ward and Gaylene Preston as well as the famous Australian producer Timothy White.'

After almost twenty years of teaching at Ilam, Askew retired and for the next 39 years went on to illustrate children's books, hold numerous exhibitions of his Neo-Romantic

paintings, responding to New Zealand's and Great Britain's land and cityscapes, write and publish two books on his life and times, fundraise for the United Nations' charity for children UNICEF, and rediscovered and exchanged conversations with companions from his RAF war years.

My memories of Maurice were at COCA, the Centre of Contemporary Art in the 1990s and 2000s. I programmed a number of shows, including *I Love Lucy*, an exhibition of his television promotion cards for Granada. I was surprised by his humility and to discover the breadth and depth of his practice. I recently posted on Facebook my thoughts on Maurice, finishing with a quote from John Chrisstoffels: Maurice had an amazing 99 years of life and set a wonderful example as an individual who proved that we can be ambitious and successful and also "kind, gentle and generous."



↑ Maurice Askew, *Colonial Williamsburg*, 1970, work on paper. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwehtū. William A Sutton bequest, 2000

Sarah Anderson: Artist and Teacher in Lockdown



↑ Sarah Anderson's studio in Lincoln

I'm getting into the rhythm of being at home and having time to be in my studio - day after day! It's still frighteningly easy to get distracted, so many books to be read and blockbuster series to watch and news to tune in to. Still there are no excuses. So the studio has been tidied and the work is happening. Self-isolation is a default setting and a pleasure not often available.

My contributions also continue as Vice President of the Friends of the Christchurch Art Gallery - Te Puna o Waiwhetū. The committee are all contributing to the Gallery's on-line/social media programme, planning for a post-covid world is on-going. Who knows when we will be able to congregated in groups again.

Meanwhile I'm focusing on a series started last year which has evolved out of a previous body of work exhibited in 2013, *Botanical Fandango*. Inspired by my collection of treasures from the garden (objects I collect and allow to dehydrate/decompose), I draw out the anthropomorphic characteristics I see in these vegetables, building a narrative sequence. It is a treat to be able to disappear into this part of my brain for a few weeks.

This is a time of strange dichotomies - both fearful and anxious for many as they see their livelihoods disappear, while also presenting great opportunities to slow down, catch-up on many neglected tasks and for me - enjoy uninterrupted creative time.

See: sarahanderson.info and christchurchartgallery.org.nz

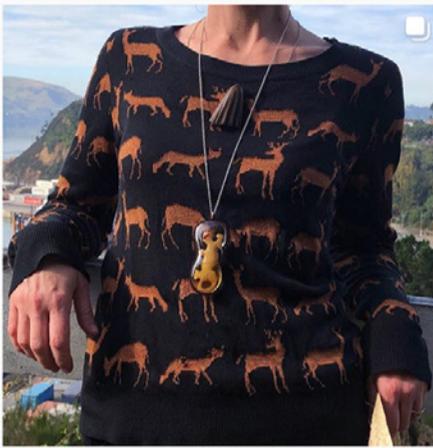
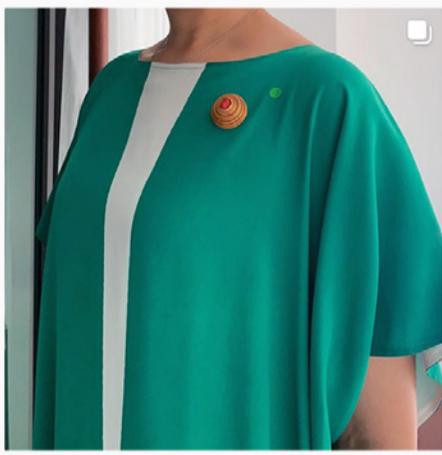
What I'm Wearing in Lockdown



↑ Jane Dodd, *Parekareka III*, 2020, Pendant, dyed bone, sterling silver. Photo: John Collie

Initiated by Caroline Billing director of The National, *What I'm Wearing* is a social media series about wearers of contemporary jewellery. Each day Caroline posts a selfie and a personal story from a wearer, asking the 'essentially non-essential question: "What jewellery are you wearing in confinement?" Lockdown jewels? Even The Queen appears in her lockdown jewels.

Wearers and collectors of contemporary jewellery have stories to tell. It is a very personal form of collecting art and wearing is performative, and though these wearers are serious makers, gallerists, art historians, lecturers and academics on the international stage, they are often brought together by that public element that the medium provides.



↑ Thai gallerist Atty Tantivit, Jacquelyn Greenbank, Queen Elizabeth II, Garth O'Brien, Octavia Cook, Manon van Kouswijk.

Jewellery collector, wearer, and gallerist, Anna Miles kicked-started this social media series reporting from lockdown in Auckland, wearing Jane Dodd's *Parekareka* pendant, photographed by Miles. *Parekareka III* is currently available at The National and features in 'At Home.'

Miles comments: 'I spotted this glowing foot of the spotted shag carved from a piece of cow bone at Jane's 'Bird Brain' Masterworks exhibition in 2018. At the time I was staggered by the University of Auckland's decision to close the Elam Library. Jane Dodd had been a Fine Arts Librarian when I was an Elam student. During the phase between her career as a rock star (Dunedin bands The Chills and The Verlaines & Auckland's The Able Tasmans), and subsequent reinvention as a jeweller, Jane was behind the issues desk. Like all Fine Arts librarians she had the gift of knowing what us students were interested in long before we did.'

'Unhappily my wearing of this wonder did not cause the University to reverse its destructive decision. Pendant over polo neck is a look rich in associations. In particular, it was the leitmotif of Mrs Collins, my brilliant, gravelly voiced 6th form English teacher who had the audacity to instruct a class of teenage girls that *Antony and Cleopatra* is Shakespeare's greatest play because it is about middle-aged love. I am liking the idea that slipping Jane's *Parekareka* over the polo neck connects me not only with spotted shags but audacious English teachers and librarians – a tribe of heroines who amongst other things are good at saving things.'

See: The National on Instagram

Christchurch Art Seen

WRITER

Karin Bathgate

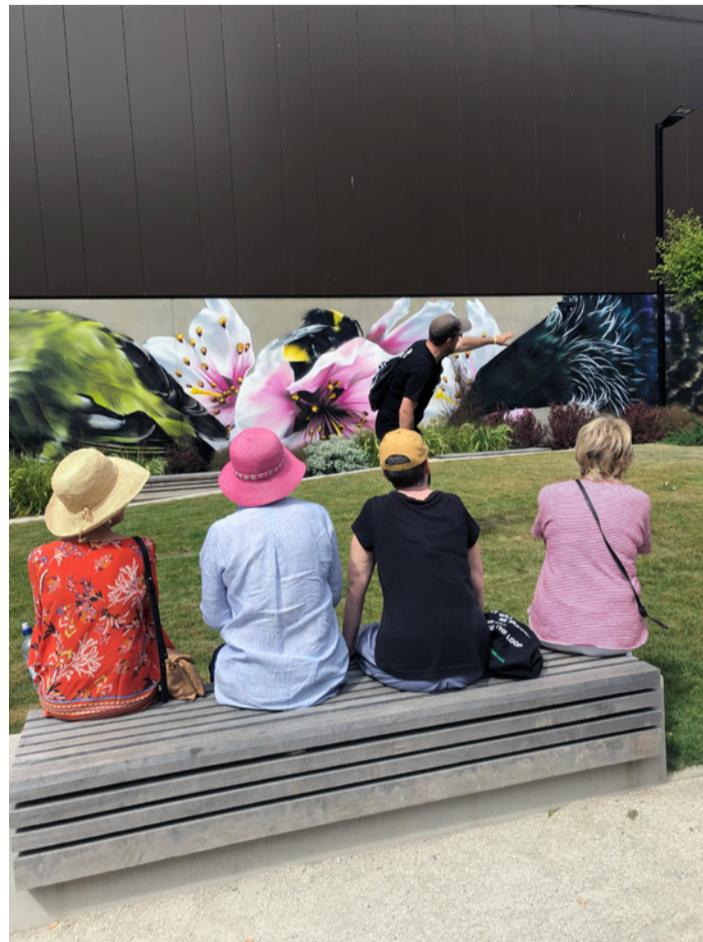
No city in Aotearoa New Zealand knows better than Christchurch that at times of crisis people reach out to the arts. This has happened once more in the Covid-19 lockdown period. What we also see is that the arts reach back into the community. For Christchurch Art Seen this has occurred through continuing weekly emails and updating social media sites, featuring local artists and conversations about their newly created work.

Christchurch Art Seen was established in January 2019 to host guided tours each week to art galleries, artist studios, artist-run spaces and public institutions. Through our walking tours we have been able to highlight what is happening across the arts community in Christchurch and are well-placed to do so again once the city reopens. Over the past year of art touring local people have often walked away surprised to discover something they did not know existed in the city.

The future for our walking tour business is positive. As a small and nimble operation we have already proven agility during our first year of touring. We are in the fortunate position of being able to create new tours the moment galleries open and artists with studios happy to receive us.

Christchurch Art Seen is unique to the city, passionate about the art scene and well placed, with your support, to make local tourism a priority. Once restrictions are lifted and we, the people of Christchurch, are able to move out of our bubbles, local business is going to need our local support and we will be ready to provide our high-value tours again. Christchurch is a strong and active arts city and with our patronage we will see that vibrancy come into prominence once more.

See: Christchurch Art Seen on Instagram or email: Karin



↑ Tour guide Reuben Woods introduces New Zealand street artist Chimp's (AKA Ash Sisson) *Organic Matters* at Christchurch Justice and Emergency Services Precinct, Lichfield Street.