

18 October 2010

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## Our new modern heritage



Mladen Bizumic, *From Cube To Ball (Chapter 2)* 2010

‘Modern’ architecture and visual material from post-war New Zealand are explored in various forms in the latest Adam Art Gallery exhibition *Designs for Living*.

The exhibition has been developed around The University of Auckland Gus Fisher Gallery’s touring exhibition *Long Live the Modern: New Zealand’s New Architecture, 1904-1984*, comprised of architectural models, drawings and photographic documentation of buildings recognised as ‘modern architecture’.

“Some of what we call ‘modern’ in architecture is now considered ‘heritage’,” says *Long Live the Modern* curator Julia Gatley.

“It is characterised by its simplified structure and lack of ornament—such as Massey House on Lambton Quay, the Dixon Street flats and the Hannah Playhouse also known as Downstage on the corner of Cambridge Terrace and Courtenay Place.”

“*Long Live the Modern* uses the word ‘modern’ in a broad way, pursuing twentieth-century architectural initiatives concerned with the ‘new’—new technologies, new materials, new forms, new building types, new ways of living.

“It was believed that the ‘new’ would change lives in positive ways at a time when the nation was in a process of rebuilding itself in pursuit of a better life.”

To complement *Long Live the Modern*, three New Zealand artists have been invited to present new works that are part of their ongoing research into the visual history of the modern: Vienna/New Zealand based artist Mladen Bizumic, and Auckland-based artists Lisa Crowley and Louise Menzies.

**Bizumic** presents a purpose-built installation that fills an entire room of the Adam Art Gallery in tribute to the modernist designs of Austrian-born architect Ernst Plischke.

“Plischke moved to New Zealand during the German occupation in 1939 and worked on various projects, including town planning projects in the Wellington suburbs of Naenae and Trentham,” says Christina Barton, Director of the Adam Art Gallery.

“Bizumic’s installation of sculptural forms and photographic collages translates Plischke’s architecture to produce a new physical and sensory experience at the gallery.”

**Crowley** presents the first instalment of her photographic series *National Projects*. With a careful eye, Crowley revisits the collective ideals of mid-twentieth century modernism. Her photographs capture the intimate interiors of the State Housing project in various locations around New Zealand. These sit alongside an immersive image of the Maraetai dam on the Waikato River, which illustrates the immensity of New Zealand’s dam-building programme.

**Menzies’** contribution is based on her research of archival material held by Victoria University’s J. C. Beaglehole Room produced by the School of Radiant Living. Founded by Herbert Sutcliffe, the School was a mid-twentieth-century spiritual movement based in Havelock North that taught holistic philosophy, spirituality and physical health. It attracted a large following, including Edmund Hillary and his family and founding member Thomas Edmonds of baking powder and cookbook fame.

Menzies’ installation includes a short film that shows a performance of exercises straight from the Radiant Living manual, a textile banner and a book project. All evoke Radiant Living’s modernist vision of achieving individual wellbeing by bringing mind and body into better and healthier alignment.

“*Designs for Living* reminds us how much the ‘modern’ movement has influenced us and continues to do so,” says Ms Barton.

“It will undoubtedly make you look differently at the buildings we live in and the ways we live in them.”

**What: Designs for Living**

This project includes:

*Long Live the Modern: New Zealand’s New Architecture, 1904-1984*

Mladen Bizumic *From Cube To Ball (Chapter 2)*

Lisa Crowley *National Projects*

Louise Menzies *Letters to Students of the Radiant Life*

**Where:** Adam Art Gallery, Victoria University, Gate 3, Kelburn Parade

**When:** 23 October-17 December 2010 and 25 January-6 March 2011

OPEN Tuesday – Sunday, 11am - 5pm (closed only on Monday)

FREE ENTRY

**Opening event (media welcome): Friday 22 October, 6pm**

Jonathan Mane-Wheoki, Professor of Fine Arts and Head of Elam School of Fine Arts, National Institute of Creative Arts and Industries, The University of Auckland will open the exhibitions.

The winner of the 2010 Chartwell Trust Student Art Writing Prize will also be announced.

A public programme of symposia, artist talks, and tours has been designed to provide a platform for critical discussion and enhance engagement with the exhibition. Check <http://www.adamartgallery.org.nz/calendar/>

**Special media previews of the exhibition will be available during the day on Friday 22 October by appointment only. The artists will also be available for interviews.**

**To make an appointment for a preview of the exhibition or to arrange interviews please contact Laura Preston on [laura.preston@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:laura.preston@vuw.ac.nz) or phone (04) 463 5229.**

**Adam Art Gallery**

**Victoria University of Wellington**

Gate 3, Kelburn Parade

PO Box 600, Wellington 6140

New Zealand

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