

13 February 2013

Victoria's contemporary art collection to the fore



Sriwhana Spong, *Muttnik* 2005. super 8 transferred to DVD, 4:5 ratio, sound, colour, 3 mins 38 sec
Victoria University of Wellington Art Collection, acquired 2011.

Pioneering conceptual, photographic and new media works acquired by Victoria University over the past 10 years are to be the focus of the latest exhibition at the Adam Art Gallery.

'21st-Century Collecting', opening on February 22, showcases the recent direction of the Victoria University of Wellington Art Collection Trust, whose mission is to assemble a representative collection of recent New Zealand art.

"To reflect the diverse works being made by contemporary artists our acquisition strategy has focused on photography, on moving image and on conceptual works—some of which have been specifically commissioned by the Trust," says Adam Art Gallery Director Christina Barton.

The exhibition features John Lake's body of work *The Campus*—the result of his year-long project to document life at Victoria during a sometimes tumultuous period on campus—and Billy Apple's *From the V.U.W Collection*, a site-specific, tailor-made piece by one of New Zealand's most influential living artists.

Works by emerging artists have also been acquired, including Sriwhana Spong's video exploration of identity and ethnography *Muttnik*, pictured above. Another feature is works that reflect Victoria's academic connections, such as senior visual artist Phil Dadson's series of sound and video works *The Polar Projects*, made as a consequence of his residency in Antarctica.

"This exhibition provides a snapshot of contemporary practice in New Zealand at present," says Ms Barton.

Curator Michelle Menzies says '21st-Century Collecting' also seeks to explore the challenges posed to institutions by the acquisition of temporal, performance, and media-based works.

"Our collection strategy attempts to reflect the scope and multiplicity of contemporary art, but this approach poses new kinds of challenges. So this exhibition is also an attempt to draw attention to issues of 21st century custodianship—for example, the question of how institutions are to deal with the long-term care of ephemeral or live works of art, or formulate policies for the ongoing maintenance of constantly refreshing media formats."

'21st-Century Collecting' is complemented by a public programme that explores these issues through public discussions with Victoria alumni, conservators, and artists themselves.

A cornerstone of the public events will be an industry panel discussion to be held on Wednesday 20 March. Te Papa conservator Lissa Mitchell, video and sound artist Phil Dadson and director of CIRCUIT Artist Film and Video Mark Williams will discuss the challenges audiovisual and live works pose to institutional collections, from the point of view of both conservation and exhibition.

In April, Ms Menzies and contemporary art writer and Victoria alumna Megan Dunn will lead a lunchtime tour of works hung in public places throughout the University's Kelburn Campus, including the new Hub complex, focusing on the significance of placing contemporary art in spaces shared with students.

What: 21st-Century Collecting

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

When: 22 February–21 April 2013

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

Free entry

To make an appointment for a preview of the exhibition or to arrange interviews, please contact Michelle Menzies on michelle.menzies@vuw.ac.nz or phone (04) 463 5229.

www.adamartgallery.org.nz

Issued by Victoria University of Wellington Communications & Marketing.

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