

## MEDIA RELEASE



Te Adam  
Pātaka Art  
Toi Gallery

30 June 2015

---

### **Can you see time? Four artists visualise an extended present at the Adam Art Gallery.**

Adam Art Gallery's newest exhibition, *The Specious Present*, which opens on 11 July, brings together four artists whose works address time as their subject.

According to philosophers and psychologists, time is the only dimension humans cannot perceive by sensory means so, says Gallery Director and exhibition curator Christina Barton, the conundrum of 'seeing time' presents a particular problem for visual artists.



David Claerbout, *The Quiet Shore*, 2011, single channel video projection, black & white, silent, 36 min 32 sec, courtesy the artist and galleries Micheline Szwajcer, Brussels; Sean Kelly, New York; Untilthen, Paris

---

Shifting between moving and still photography, sculpture and painting, this exhibition, which launches at 6pm on Friday 10 July, offers four unique but related perspectives on seeing time. It focuses in particular on the concept of the 'specious present'. This is a technical term for that short period of time the mind can grasp that exists between past and future.

"The show takes shape around David Claerbout's video projection, *The Quiet Shore*", says Barton.

“This beautiful installation takes a single moment in time, a beach scene in northern France, and extends it for more than thirty minutes, showing viewers the exact same scene from a myriad different perspectives.”

Claerbout, a well-respected contemporary artist based in Belgium, uses digital technology to interrogate the medium of photography. He scrutinises the instantaneous nature of the photographic image, inviting viewers to imagine they are seeing infinity in a single moment. This will be the first presentation of his work in New Zealand.

British artist Keith Tyson is represented by a playful video from his *Art-Machine* series with the curious subtitle: *Angelmaker Part 1, 15 Seconds Prior to Apocalypse, 100 Views*, (1996–8, Zabłudowicz Collection, London). This is an iteration of a large body of work the artist produced, in which he allowed his artistic decisions to be determined by the logical workings of a ‘machine’ he invented for that task.

To accompany and contrast Claerbout’s installation, the exhibition includes two major works by Colin McCahon: *The Days and Nights in the Wilderness Showing the Constant Flow of Light Passing into a Dark Landscape* (1971, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery) and *Walk (Series C)* (1973, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa).

*Walk (Series C)* is one of McCahon’s most significant multi-part paintings. It is a panoramic beach scene inviting viewers to take a spiritual and physical journey along its length.

The show also features a new body of work commissioned especially for the Adam’s challenging architectural spaces by Auckland-based artist Andrew Beck. Beck’s subject is the interplay between light, time and space.

According to Barton, “His approach is the inverse to that of Claerbout. Instead of a realistic scene rendered spatially complex through the play of light and its reflections, Beck prefers the absorptive qualities of blackness. Ironically, in analogue photography, this is the colour that registers the maximum intensity of light.”

Beck plays with the image of things and the things themselves, carefully placing his two and three-dimensional works into physical space to tease out real and represented time, past and present moments. He says, “Working with time and light is challenging; they both have the propensity to slip through the fingers like mercury.”

Beck will speak about his work in the exhibition at 2pm on Sunday 12 July.

In addition to the works of the four artists, a sound work by Hummel has been composed as a sonic response to the concept of the exhibition. *TIMEX*, 2015, can be streamed or downloaded via the Adam Art Gallery website. It will also be present in the exhibition.

For information about the full public programme associated with this exhibition visit the the Gallery’s website: [www.adamartgallery.org.nz](http://www.adamartgallery.org.nz)

**What:** *The Specious Present:*  
*Andrew Beck, David Claerbout, Colin McCahon, Keith Tyson*

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

**When:** 11 July – 20 September 2015  
Opening 6pm Friday 10 July  
Tuesday–Sunday, 11am–5pm (closed on Monday)  
Free entry

**For further information and images, contact Stephen Cleland on [stephen.cleland@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:stephen.cleland@vuw.ac.nz) or phone (04) 463 5229. For information on the public programme visit <http://www.adamartgallery.org.nz/current-exhibition/>.**

---

Issued by Victoria University of Wellington Communications & Marketing. Katherine Edmond, Communications Manager, can be contacted by emailing [katherine.edmond@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:katherine.edmond@vuw.ac.nz) or phoning (04) 463 6017.

*Victoria University of Wellington: Capital thinking. Globally minded.*

