

Wendelien Bakker, Diva Blair,
Jesse Bowling, Teghan Burt,
Quishile Charan, Sam Clague,
Hikalu Clarke, Claudia Dunes &
Rainer Weston, Fresh and Fruity,
William Linscott, Isabella Loudon,
Theo Macdonald, Annie Mackenzie
& Dave Marshall, Ammon Ngakuru,
Christina Pataialii, Maddy Plimmer,
Deborah Rundle, Christopher
Ulutupu, Tim Wagg, Daegan Wells,
Aliyah Winter, Xun Cao, Yllwbro

Curated by Christina Barton,
Stephen Cleland & Simon Gennard

THE TOMORROW PEOPLE 22.7.17–1.10.17

The Tomorrow People

Artists, just like everyone—and everything—else, are themselves materials that flow through a system in which they are captured, which raises the question of what might be mobilised for the construction of new eddies and countercurrents.

—Sam Lewitt, 2012

The Tomorrow People is an exercise in future-oriented thinking. The exhibition brings together a selection of works by twenty-five artists who offer urgent, resourceful, and playful possibilities for navigating their times.

The title is borrowed from a 1970s' television series about a group of adolescents endowed with special powers to combat the dark forces of their day. Armed with the capacity to read minds, teleport between locations, and use their mental powers to move things, they were tasked with overcoming evil for the good of humanity. Remade and updated twice in subsequent decades, 'The Tomorrow People' is invoked here less as a rubric for re-investing in a cult of youth than as a device for thinking through how a new generation of artists are dealing with the fractured, often-overwhelming world they have inherited. If the TV show used the technologies and special effects available to its makers, then this exhibition canvasses the material and technological tools that are our everyday reality. And if we can speak of 'special powers', then we are interested in the fact that these artists are mostly digital natives, that they proudly embody a diverse set of cultural and gendered perspectives, and that they are resourcefully rethinking how to survive in economically precarious times.

The exhibition populates the spaces of the Adam Art Gallery with clusters of works that variously respond to, comment upon, or inadvertently reflect a nexus of contemporary concerns: from the effects of neoliberal policy and financialised capital, to the technological tools and systems of control that condition our lives; to colonial and historical inheritances that have entrenched differentials of power and privilege, to the cultural frameworks and visual and linguistic regimes within which subjectivities have taken shape. Seamlessly slipping between digital and material realms, shuffling found and appropriated objects and images, resuscitating suppressed and overlooked histories, working together outside the conventional structures of display, these artists ask us to not only dwell on what it means to be alive right now, but they invite us to imagine ways to rewire the system and live creatively, caringly, and sustainably within it.

Christina Barton, Stephen Cleland, Simon Gennard

List of works

Vic Books Window, Kelburn Parade

Diva Blair

Emotion Incarnate, 2016
digital video, sound, 2mins 8secs
courtesy of the artist

Level 3

Hikalu Clarke

All Our Anthems, 2017
audio, 6mins
courtesy of the artist

Fresh and Fruity

Manifesto vol 1: Fresh and Fruity is a sexy new look,
2014/2017
printed poster, vinyl text
courtesy of the artists

Tim Wagg

1991, 2016
digital video, sound, 12mins
produced with support from ARTSPACE, Auckland
and The Chartwell Trust
courtesy of the artist

Wendelien Bakker

Moon Deed in Concrete, 2016
concrete, paper
courtesy of the artist

Swimming Pool, 2015
text printed on paper, framed
courtesy of the artist

Deborah Rundle

What Faith I Have, 2012/2017
vinyl text
courtesy of the artist

Diva Blair

Should I Tell You What It Is Like, 2016
stop-motion video, sound, 2mins 55secs
courtesy of the artist

Teghan Burt

Substitute for Mortals, 2016
fabric, clothes
private collection, Auckland

Xun Cao

Six photographs from *Dick Head* series, 2016–2017
inkjet on paper
courtesy of the artist

Three photographs from *Passion of Cut Sleeves*
series, 2016
inkjet on paper
courtesy of the artist

Theo Macdonald

I Assume David Bowie Has Different Coloured Eyes,
2016
digital video, silent, 9mins 24secs
courtesy of the artist

I Assume David Bowie Runs in the Morning, 2016
digital video, sound, 41mins 21secs
courtesy of the artist

*I Assume David Bowie Eats Spaghetti Every Single
Meal*, 2016
digital video, sound, 4mins 5secs
courtesy of the artist

Isabella Loudon

please water the sculptures, with care, 2017
concrete, sand, glass
courtesy of the artist

Level 2**Hikalu Clarke**

Choke Point, 2017
steel railing
courtesy of the artist

Ammon Ngakuru

A Shelter for Amnesic Relatives, 2017
installation with shelving and five paintings
courtesy of the artist

Paintings from left to right on shelf:

It's choice not chance that determines our destiny,
2017
digital print and boot polish on canvas

*The fear of suffering is far worse than the suffering
itself*, 2017
digital print and boot polish on canvas

*Every new beginning comes from some other
beginning's end*, 2017
digital print and boot polish on canvas

Paintings on wall from left to right:

What is meant to be will always find its way, 2017
digital print and boot polish on canvas

Just believe, 2017
digital print and boot polish on canvas

Aliyah Winter

Danny Boy, 2015
VHS transferred to digital video, sound, 3mins 8secs
courtesy of the artist

Eli Jenkins' Prayer, 2015
VHS transferred to digital video, sound, 2mins, 16secs
courtesy of the artist

Maddy Plimmer

Box, Box, Box, 2017
embroidered overalls
courtesy of the artist

Jesse Bowling

Apple of My Eye, 2017
digital video, silent, 1min 55secs
courtesy of the artist

Sam Clague

From left to right:

Bad, Really Sad, A Great Success, Terrific, 2017
cord, balloon, bog, nails, plaster, silicone, spray paint,
tubing, and wire on calico
courtesy of the artist

Hard Pop, 2016
oil and digitally manipulated photographic insert
on board
courtesy of the artist

Feature Wall (Whole Lotta Love in This House), 2016
oil on board
courtesy of the artist

Sundae Painter, 2016
oil and Duraseal on ply
courtesy of the artist

Claudia Dunes & Rainer Weston

of other spaces (drape), 2017

HD digital video on 32" display, vinyl, c-stand
courtesy of the artists

of other spaces (arch), 2017

HD digital video on 32" display, vinyl, dolly, arm
bracket
courtesy of the artists

William Linscott

XCIII, 2016

HD digital video, two-channel sound, 17mins 28secs
Music by Flinn Gendall
courtesy the artist

Level 1

Christopher Ulutupu

Into the Arms of My Colonizer, 2016

digital video, sound, 16mins 22secs
courtesy of the artist

Christina Pataialii

From left to right:

Bite Fight – Mike Tyson, 2016

acrylic, house paint and spray paint on canvas
courtesy of the artist

California Love – 2Pac, 2016

acrylic, house paint and spray paint on canvas
courtesy of the artist

Black or White – Michael Jackson, 2016

acrylic, house paint and spray paint on canvas
courtesy of the artist

My Cousin – Dwayne Johnson, 2016

acrylic, house paint and spray paint on canvas
courtesy of the artist

Islands in the Stream – Kenny Rogers, 2016

acrylic, house paint and spray paint on canvas
courtesy of the artist

Quishile Charan

Temporary Vanua, 2016

cotton, textile ink, bamboo, rope
courtesy of the artist

Daegan Wells

Bleached Terraces, 2017

Yvonne Rust, *Werewolf Jug*, stoneware; photograph
of Olivia Spencer Bower's home and studio,
Christchurch, 1969, and constructed shelf
courtesy the artist, Robert and Barbara Stewart
Library and Archives, and Christchurch Art Gallery
Te Puna o Waiwhetu

Annie Mackenzie & Dave Marshall

International Foodcourt / Global Classic, 2016

handweaving, pottery, signage, hospitality equipment
courtesy of the artists and private lenders

Yllwbro

Flowers of the Field III, 2017

mixed media
courtesy of the artists and Mokopōpaki, Auckland
*See the additional sheet located in the Lower
Chartwell Gallery for more information.*

Pīpīwharauoa Bird Whare, 2017

plywood, Zinalume, stainless steel screws, panel pin
nails, pine dowel, stainless steel wire, hooks, paint
courtesy of the artists and Mokopōpaki, Auckland

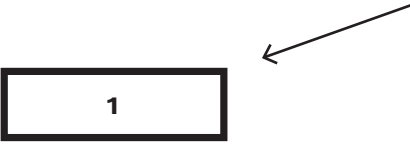
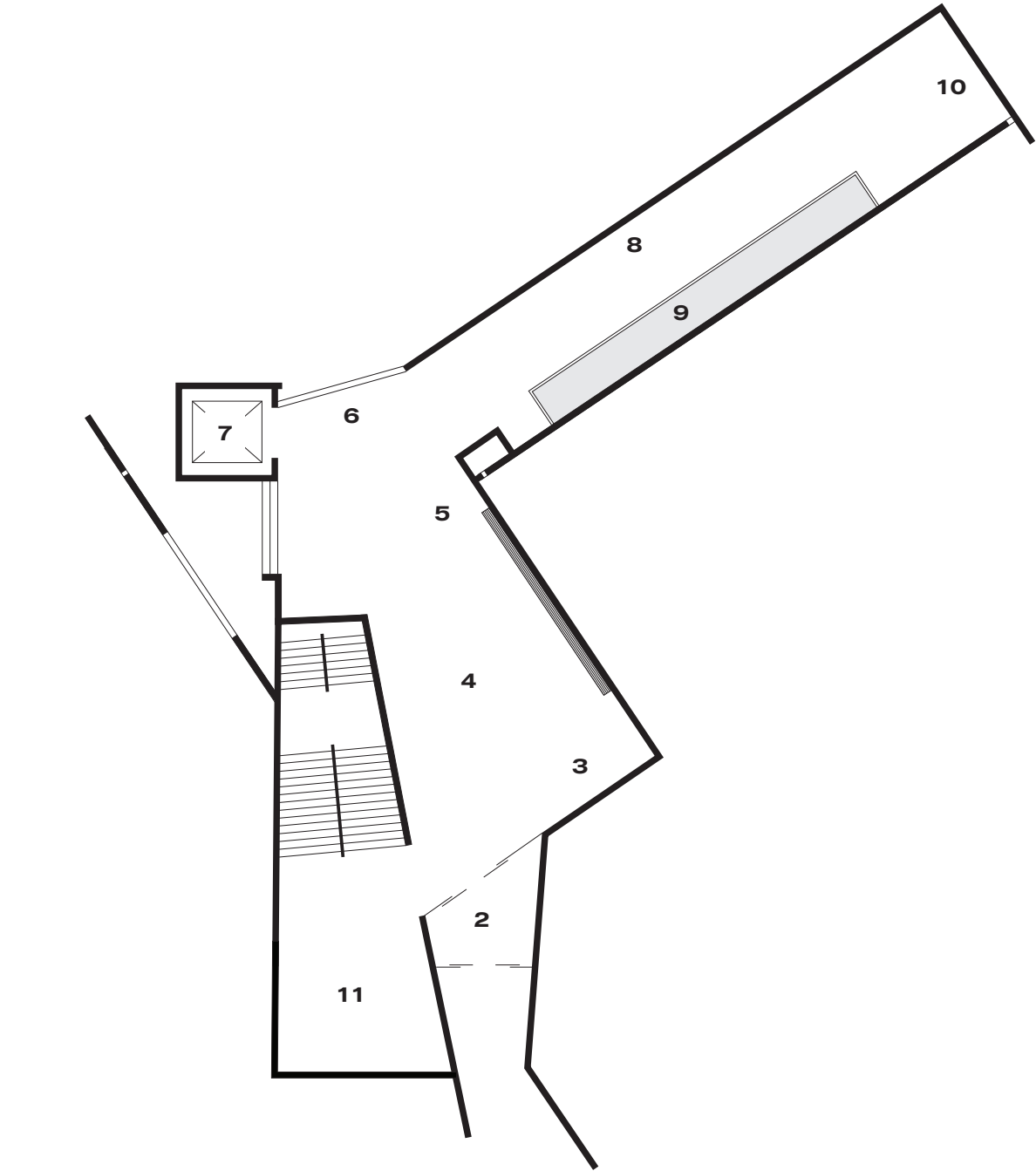
Wētā's Caravan & Mobile Home, 2017

Beehive matchbox, toy wheels, copper wire
courtesy of the artists and Mokopōpaki, Auckland

Commissioned texts

In addition to works in the exhibition, Adam Art
Gallery is publishing three commissioned essays
by **Matilda Fraser**, **Balamohan Shingade**, and
Robyn Maree Pickens each month during the show.
These will be available via our website:
www.adamartgallery.org.nz and in hard copy
from the gallery.

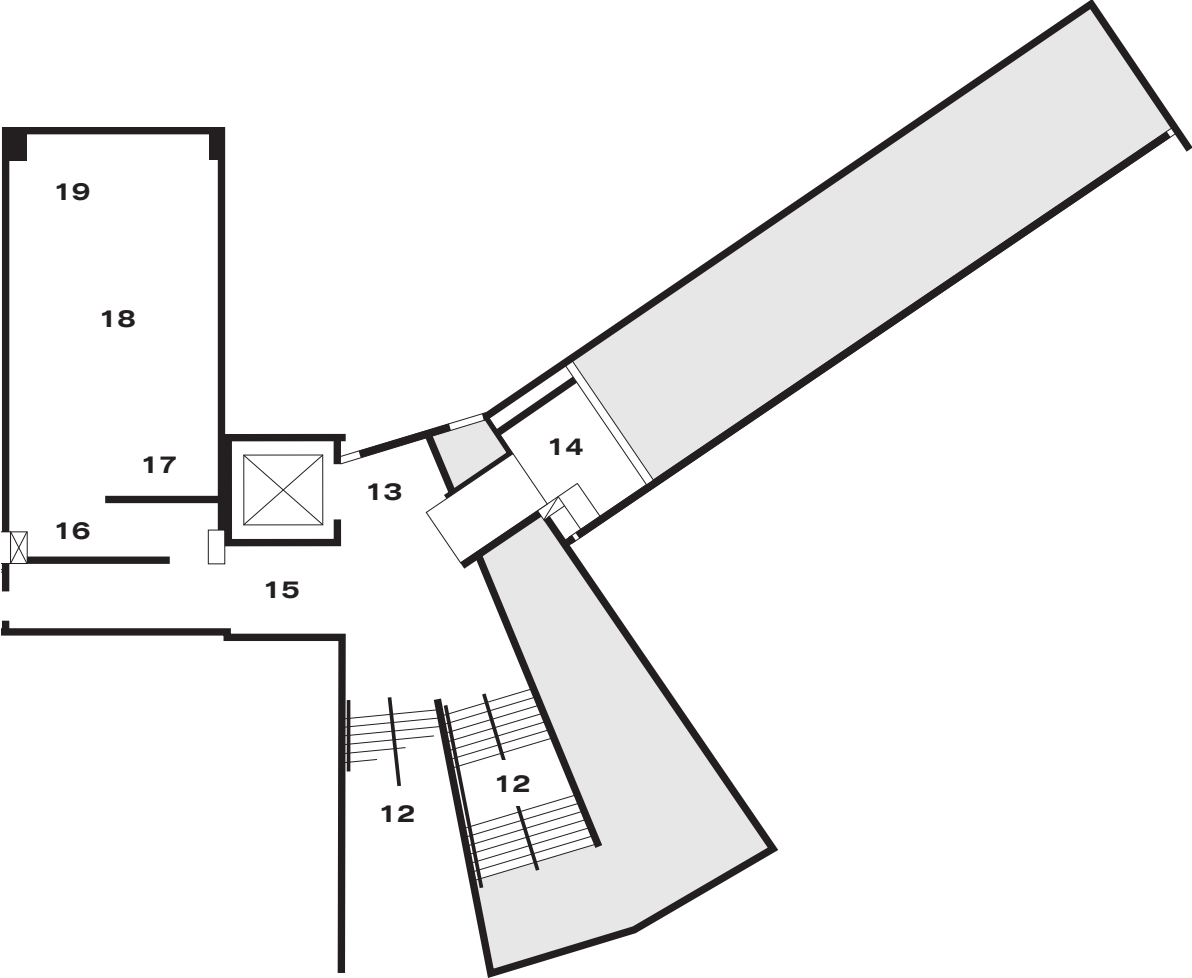
Level 3, Entrance



Vic Books,
Kelburn Parade

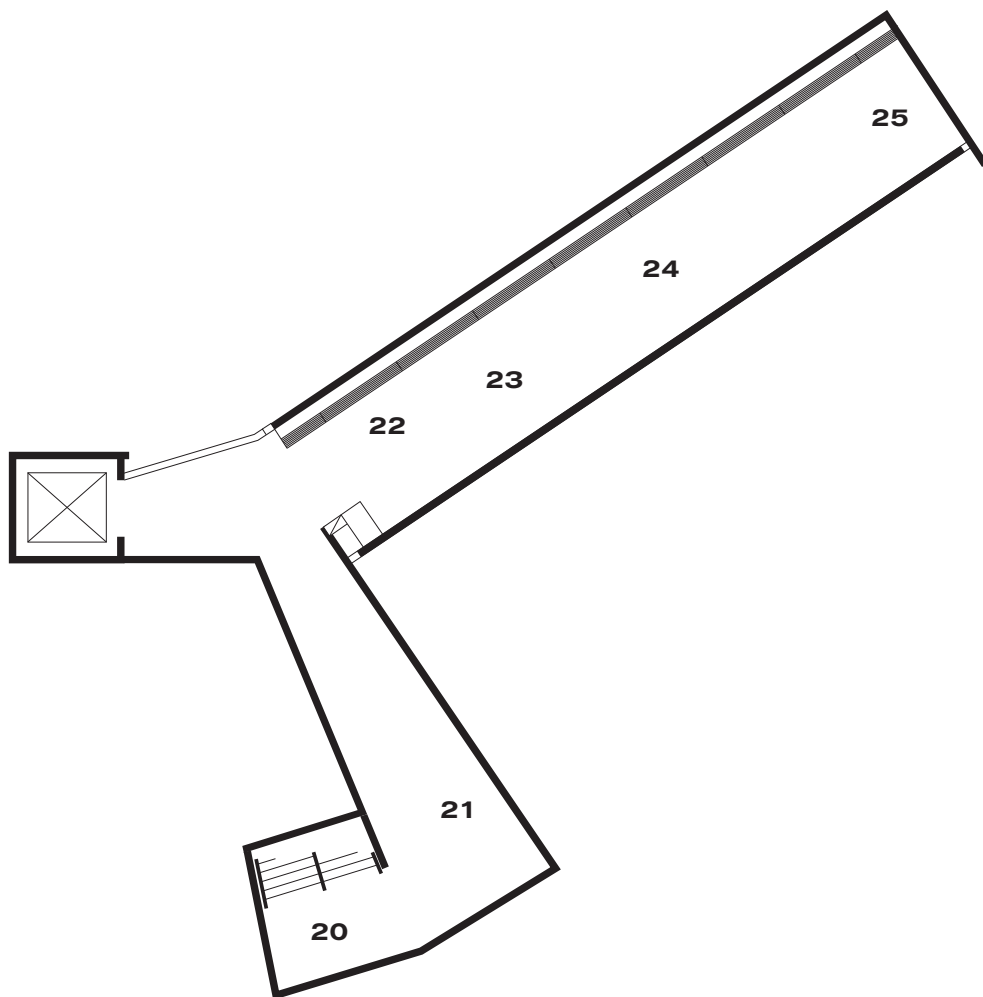
- 1 Diva Blair
- 2 Hikalu Clarke
- 3 Fresh and Fruity
- 4 Tim Wagg
- 5 Wendelien Bakker
- 6 Deborah Rundle
- 7 Diva Blair
- 8 Teghan Burt
- 9 Xun Cao
- 10 Theo Macdonald
- 11 Isabella Loudon

Level 2



- 12 Hikalu Clarke
- 13 Ammon Ngakuru
- 14 Aliyah Winter
- 15 Maddy Plimmer
- 16 Jesse Bowling
- 17 Sam Clague
- 18 Claudia Dunes
& Rainer Weston
- 19 William Linscott

Level 1



- 20 Chris Ulutupu
- 21 Christina Pataialii
- 22 Daegan Wells
- 23 Quishile Charan
- 24 Annie Mackenzie
& Dave Marshall
- 25 Yllwbro

Wendelien Bakker

I've been on Google Maps for hours. I came here looking for Wendelien Bakker's backyard. 'It can't be that hard', I thought, 'just look for the littlest pool in Grey Lynn'. There are more swimming pools than I expected. I didn't realise that from the air trampolines might be confused for pools. Picnic tables are similarly deceiving. The one I'm looking for is small, I know this. I've imagined it about the size of a single mattress.

Bakker began digging in the summer of 2014. That same year, SpaceX announced plans to build a commercial-only launch facility in Brownsville, Texas from where, they hope, the first private passengers will fly into space.

Fifty years ago, the *Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies* was signed into force by the members of the United Nations. It lays the groundwork for an alternative universe: one which serves the interests of all mankind; which is free for exploration by anyone who so chooses; one not subject to national appropriation by claim of sovereignty or any other means; one free of weapons of mass destruction; one in which States are to be held accountable for harmful contamination of the environment. As the companies that sell land on the moon will tell you: while the Treaty stipulates that no government can own extraterrestrial property, it fails to mention individuals and corporations.

That is the loophole within which The Lunar Registry, Moon Estates, and Lunar Land operate. Each claims to be the authoritative celestial real estate agency, prices ranging from \$40 to \$150 NZD per acre. In their imaginings of this new – perhaps our final – frontier, individual ownership of the moon takes on the principles of Manifest Destiny. The last, best hope of Earth rests in outer space. Their mission statements present a vision of an egalitarian universe, which, if not entirely forgetful of the earthly shackles of political, racial, economic and geographic struggle, certainly strives to leave them behind – espousing our inherent right to what is not ours, but should be.

Bakker bought her acre of the moon in 2016, the year that the price of the average home in Auckland topped \$1 million. She submerged her deed in concrete in an attempt to grant it a weight she felt it lacked. In doing so, she made it earthly; gave it a tangible presence. Whether or not the process made her ownership void depends on two things: if the company she bought it from keeps records, and; if this company had, in the first place, the legal right to grant her title.

I never found Bakker's backyard. I wonder whether

it has been captured by Google's satellites; whether the artist herself has looked for and found it. Satellite images have a unique ability to affirm what we know intimately by showing it from an impossible distance, reiterating our existence within the expanse. I thought about how it must be nice, to know you've left a trace on the place you've lived. Then I remembered that when my parents bought the house I grew up in, there was a pool in the backyard. They filled it in; we never swam in it. The land it occupied is grown over now.

–Hanahiva Rose (HRose)

Wendelien Bakker completed her MFA at Elam School of Fine Arts at The University of Auckland in 2016. Using instinct and intuitive responses to her environment her practice evolves into project-based works that are built up on elusive hopes with equal potential for resolution or disappointment. Like most Sisyphian tasks, it is a naïve conquest for the potentially impossible.

Hanahiva Rose (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Toa Rangatira) is an Art History student at Victoria University and the 2017 arts editor of *Salient*. She was a participant in the 2017 Adam Art Gallery Summer Intensive.

Diva Blair

Emotion Incarnate

In Diva's Blair's *Emotion Incarnate* thousand-tonne battleships pound through huge ocean waves, to the backing of Madonna's *Justify My Love*. Raw emotion is made material in this highly sensual work. Through our viewing, we experience the power of the dramatic and sometimes dangerous forces that are greater than us, the boats struggling through the waves in the same way that one must cope with life at the mercy of sometimes tumultuous feeling.

Power is fundamental to *Emotion Incarnate*. That is, power as embodied in the military might these vessels can be said to represent, pitted against the power of nature. But also, the power of our emotions and drives, and power as it plays out in the body when consuming media – which can be seen as tools in their own right, when sounds and images are used to generate an emotional effect, but also when songs and pictures are produced for profit. For example, the lyrics to *Justify My Love* were drawn from a love poem written by Ingrid Chavez to Lenny Kravitz (who contributes the male vocals in the song). Kravitz gave the lyrics to Madonna to use as the basis for the song, leading to a copyright dispute between the artists. Is the song therefore a commercialized thieving or a tool of power? Or is it emotional? Or both? In turn, Blair appropriates *Justify My Love* and the footage to make a new piece. In so doing, she plays with the artist's role as both scavenger and creator in our contemporary time – re-working what has come before to produce a new and critical product.

Should I Tell You What It Is Like

As if rattling through his CV, a patronizing and authoritative male voice dictates to us what art is and the criteria for being an informed and competent artist and viewer. It's not a generous speech, a sharing of experiences or an authentic discussion. He asks, 'Should I tell you?' But never does.

The speaker's views are simplistic and didactic. For example, his discussion of Melbourne graffiti evidences a lack of understanding as regards the aesthetic and philosophical differences between street art and graffiti art. And yet by using his speech, the work raises valuable questions about the nature of quality in art, the elitism that can characterise the art world, and the question of who deserves to have a voice in art spaces. This kind of relationship – between an older, often patriarchal figure and the socially conscious millennial – is also to some extent definitive of our generation's experience in having to deal with unprecedented economic crises, fight against authority and educate older people.

Simultaneously, the speaker's views have a certain poetry to them. Of course, a speech can be both beautiful and wrong. *Should I Tell You What It Is Like* in this way acts as a warning to the viewer to maintain a critical mind no matter how learned or evocative the speech is that they're hearing, or how well-established the individual is who is speaking. Conversely, the use of quotidian images in the background of the text also belies the speaker's claims – art doesn't have to be grand, largescale or old in order to be art. The everyday has its own poetry.

–Kari Schmidt (KS)

Diva Blair is an artist based in Auckland. She lives in the building on Karangahape Road where Terror Management and Terror Internationale staged several shows and events and draws inspiration from K' Road's colourful history as a venue for art spaces alternative to the mainstream. Recent exhibitions include '*Should I tell you what the Sistine Chapel looks like*', RM Gallery, Auckland; *Animidst*, Rockies, Auckland, and *13*, Terror Management, Auckland.

Kari Schmidt has an LLB (Hons) from the University of Otago and a BA (Hons) in Art History from Victoria University of Wellington. She is interested in the nexus between art and the social, public and legal realms, having written her LLB dissertation on the conflict between Copyright Law and Appropriation Art, and her Art History dissertation on art and social change in New Zealand via the strategy of participation. She co-curated the exhibition *Fleshbag* at the Skinroom in Hamilton (2016) and plays an active role as a writer on contemporary art. She currently works in the Local Government & Environment team at Simpson Grierson in Auckland.

Jesse Bowling

A rectangle of white reflects in Bowling's tired eyes. It is burned in. If Bowling was from another time, what would reflect in his eyes before he fell asleep? He may be free to dream, to fall asleep to darkness – like a child clutching a worn sheepskin blanket or soft toy. Although it is easy to over-simplify the pre-device past, it is a complicated relationship, sleeping with a smartphone. Bowling explores this complexity in his performative video work, *Apple of My Eye*. The video is symbolic of the work itself – ironic, confessional and aware.

Despite the video's short length, it is hard to watch. Bowling holds an unseen device, likely a smartphone, up to his face. His eyes shift expectantly back and forth, searching – for meaning, for gratification, for anything to stay connected. His pupils excessively constrict as they adjust to the brightness of the screen. The rest of his face is motionless. Bowling makes the viewer yearn for him to sleep, to let it go. When the screen finally goes dark again, his eyes are still open. We cannot be convinced that he will stop checking his smartphone. It's beside him, always.

Bowling knows he is not an outlier. His connection to the smartphone is the viewer's connection to the smartphone. We sleep in bed or within arm's reach of our devices. They beep, vibrate and blink at us all through the night, yearning for us. Who can resist reciprocating. Has this confrontation disturbed you yet?

Bowling's work reproduces and stimulates late-capitalist consumer anxiety. It is also a recontextualising of John Bowlby's attachment theory to a common, contemporary relationship: the emotional longing we have for our smartphone, or other inanimate, technological devices that provide us instant access to the internet. 'When a child shows significant attachment to their caregiver through checking habits, they can feel comfortable playing at a distance away from their caregiver as long as they can look up from playing from time-to-time and see that the caregiver is nearby,' says Bowling, paraphrasing a Loughborough University Institutional Repository report on smartphones and attachment theory. 'These habits are very similar to a smartphone-user, when they are waiting for a reply or waiting for the "like" count to go up on their beautiful Instagram of a landscape.'

Bowling's video work is part of his wider practice that centers on his relationship to technology. *Apple of My Eye* is the first video in a series of works that will explore the nuances of his relationship with technology. Bowling used Drew Briceford as the filmographer for this work. Outsourcing is a recurring process in Bowling's work and used to raise questions about production, manufacturing and making art within the late capitalist workforce.

Bowling is transparent about his position – he frequently privileges ideas over physical objects; to him, hiring others to make his ideas is the process of making art.

–Eloise Callister-Baker (EC-B)

Jesse Bowling is a Wellington based artist. He graduated from Massey University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Hons) in 2015. Recent group exhibitions include *Caressing the silver rectangle*, Enjoy Public Art Gallery, Wellington, 2017; *Pool Party*, MEANWHILE, Wellington, 2016; *NowNow*, 19 Tory Street, Wellington, 2016; *stay_on.pdf*, 8 Egmont St, Wellington, 2015.

Eloise (Loulou) Callister-Baker graduated with a BA (Visual Culture), LLB and DipLangC (endorsed in Chinese) from the University of Otago in 2016. She currently works at a Chinese law firm in Auckland and freelances in the evenings.

Teghan Burt

Teghan Burt's *Substitute for Mortals* is a monument to the over-stimulated, over-qualified and under-employed. The work indexes a time and place dense with frustration, desperation, and potential; those years following graduation when you and all your friends are smart, talented, cool, and beautiful. The clothes arranged here were scavenged from other people's closets, pinched from friends and lovers, or found abandoned in opshops. They have past lives, stories to tell, but, aside from the odd stain, none of these stories seem to make themselves available to the viewer. Which isn't to say the work is opaque. Rather than sealing the work, Burt's language of intimacy opens up room to consider speculative possibilities for building worlds together.

Substitute for Mortals was first displayed at Terror Internationale, a short-lived artist-run space which operated out of Burt's flat on Karangahape Road, in an exhibition titled *Imaginary Party*. The Imaginary Party is the invention of French anarchist collective Tiqqun. In their text, *This is Not a Program*, the authors attempt to describe a revolutionary subject able to contend with contemporary political conditions. This subject is necessarily plural, expandable. 'Building the Party', Tiqqun write, 'no longer means building a total organisation within which all ethical differences might be set aside for the sake of a common struggle; building the Party means *establishing forms-of-life* in their difference, intensifying, complicating relations between them'.¹ Where the socialist parties of the previous century attempted to turn work into a moral virtue, and to distance themselves from degenerates, agitators, and drunks, The Imaginary Party embraces outcasts. In The Imaginary Party there's room for everyone.

K' Road, then, seems an appropriate place for such a Party. Burt makes no secret of her adoration of the street's less savoury residents. Terror Internationale proudly owed a debt to the heady, chaotic scene that developed around Teststrip in the 1990s, and Burt lists Giovanni Intra among her influences. But Teststrip is now a historical episode. Its energy survives only in documentation of the artists, friends, and lovers who found refuge there.

There's an absence to Burt's work. The clothes that make up *Substitute for Mortals* are missing their owners. If the work is a monument, it might also be read as a memorial to a time and place now passed. Terror Internationale disbanded within a matter of months, disappearing almost as quickly as it sprang up. The work, though, isn't gloomy, or even necessarily nostalgic. The white sheet upon which the clothes are sewn, rather than being read as lack, might be read as potential. The work's empty spaces might simply be waiting to be filled

again, and in doing so, the work asks us to consider the instability, transience, and messiness of the communities art can create around itself not as shortcomings of art or artists, but as a necessary part of being together.

1 Tiqqun, *This is Not a Program*, trans. Joshua David Jordan, *Semiotext(e)*, Los Angeles, 2011, p. 13

—Simon Gennard (SG)

Recent exhibitions featuring **Teghan Burt's** work include *The Bill: For Collective Unconscious*, ARTSPACE, Auckland, 2016; *What Am I Living For?/Dreams Are Free*, Window Gallery, Auckland, 2015; *Little Metonym*, Hapori, 2015; *Probstian Aesthetic*, Blue Oyster Art Project Space, Dunedin, 2014.

Simon Gennard is co-curator of *The Tomorrow People*. He has recently completed his MA in Art History at Victoria University of Wellington. His writing has appeared in *Overland*, *The Pantograph Punch*, and *Turbine*. He is the 2017–18 Blumhardt Foundation/Creative New Zealand curatorial intern at The Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt.

Quishile Charan

What I have learnt over my twenty-two years of living has brought me closer to finding home, to finding self-love and the understanding that my power is in taking back ownership of my histories. I wear it [sari and salwar kameez] with pride because the girmityas birthed me. For years, colonial ideologies have buried lived experiences under the guise of academia, separating people from their own histories in a ploy to forget. The cloth is a form of communication, a grassroots language of grief, pain and healing absorbed into flora and fauna, the environment that has cradled us, given us shelter and protection. Trapped in the memories of haldi-drenched soil, found only in places where temporary space forms itself. Each metre of cloth produced has become an offering, a symbolic mode of labour on my own body to represent the bodies of many. The pounding and rubbing of clay to cloth for hours and days becomes a repetitive action to find myself.

–Quishile Charan

Temporary Vanua, 2016, by Quishile Charan, is thirty-one metres of calico fabric, dyed with clay of Aotearoa and woodcut-printed with images of Fiji's flora and fauna in traditional patterns. In the print's paralinguage, removed from both the weakness of words and the controlled narrative of Western historical perspectives, Quishile creates a site wherein her story can mingle with the stories of her ancestors. On the cloth, historical and emotional facts held deep in cultural memory find tangible external space; the story of a people is reclaimed and cherished. *Temporary Vanua* returns to traditional knowledge systems, ones that hold what words cannot express. In its visual narrative, *Temporary Vanua* locates the past and carries it forward to the present, to tell both one individual's story and a collective history.

Temporary Vanua has been installed in four locations. I have seen it in two spaces. Each time it stretches out to share its story, it considers its environment slightly differently. Each time it finds its feet again. Between these showings, it is rolled up with care and stored away, resting.

–Casey Carsel

This text is an extract from a longer text published for this exhibition. Copies are located with the work in the Lower Chartwell Gallery.

Quishile Charan is an artist of Indo-Fijian heritage living and working in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Charan uses traditional modes of textile making to reflect upon the landscape of Indentured Labour and the on-going post-colonial effects on the Indo-Fijian community. Recent projects include *Namesake* (with Salome Taluvasa) Enjoy Public Art Gallery, Wellington, 2017; *A Turn of the Wheel* (group), Malcolm Smith Gallery, Auckland, 2017; *New Perspectives*, ARTSPACE, Auckland, 2016; and *Samundar and Haldi* at Objectspace, Auckland, 2016. Charan has a BFA (Hons) from Elam School of Fine Arts, The University of Auckland.

Casey Carsel is an artist and writer based in Auckland. Recent projects include *Rather owe you than not pay you*, MEANWHILE, Wellington, 2017, and *cry, without words*, Window Gallery, Auckland, 2016. Carsel holds a BFA(Hons) from Elam School of Fine Arts and will soon begin an MFA at The Art Institute of Chicago.

Sam Clague

Dunedin-based artist Sam Clague mines an array of technologies in order to reflect back on the condition of painting. The plethora of screen-based imagery rendered into his work explores the thresholds through which we encounter information in the Internet Age.

In Feature Wall (Whole Lotta Love in this House), we are confronted by a disturbing third-world scene of a crowd clambering to collect water from a large open well. Any discomfort we experience in contemplating the primitive conditions of this view is immediately subdued through the digital warping that the artist has applied to the image prior to painting it. In addition, Clague repeatedly stacks the stylised words 'FEATURE WALL' overtop, the lettering of which is skilfully rendered in perspective to match the underlying pictorial space. Is Clague's 'feature wall' the site of the monitor which streams images of poverty into our living rooms nightly? Or is he commenting on his own entrapment within his medium – knowing that ultimately if this painting is purchased it will most likely furnish someone's living room?

Clague's *Hard Pop* features an entangled mass of red lines and a substantial field of green laid over a graduated ground. The green field refers back to his earlier *Digiteal* series in which the artist playfully explored explicit online material by substituting the subjects' backgrounds with analogue green-screen effects. In this image however, any sexualised content is obscured to a degree that it no longer represents, but instead functions only as a means to create abstract silhouettes. The discrete image in the centre of the painting is also obscured through his use of the online 'Deep Dream Generator', a tool which allows him to upload images and use chromatic filters to create 'dream-like' effects. While clearly based on a portrait image, this kitsch filter obscures any sense of the identity to a point that the subject is subsumed into the language of the painting.

The title of Clague's most dexterous work to date humorously narrates the artist's reaction to his creation. *Bad, Really Sad, A Great Success, Terrific* is comprised of builder's bog, nails, silicone, tubing, wire and cast plaster hands, all adhered to a single calico support and overlaid with metallic spray paint. A single deflated balloon functions as a sad emoticon in the centre of the work. The painting is a repository of conflicting source material which seems as indebted to the heavy impasto of materials explored by neo-expressionist painters of the 1980s as it is to the post internet artists of today. His emphasis on the provisional nature of the composition, however, suggests a certain optimism that painting can continue to remain vital, even as the amusing manner by which he sets about this task suggests that the irony of

continually channelling digital processes into distinctly analogue ends is not lost.

–Stephen Cleland (SC)

Sam Clague's practice is a swirling and sinister reflection of the ferocious vortices of our contemporary circumstance. The eternal demons and ever compounding hang-ups of the post-late capitalist pleasure park take front stage, with the hint of conspiratorial (and perhaps not quite corporeal) hands quietly moulding our collective destiny. Recent exhibitions include *IMPACT*, Corner Gallery, Auckland, 2017; *Big Spread* (group), NEXT Gallery, Christchurch, 2017; *[sic]* (with Gareth Brighton), Chambers 241, Christchurch, 2016. He has a BFA (first class honours) from Canterbury School of Fine Arts and is based in Dunedin.

Stephen Cleland is the Adam Art Gallery curator and co-curator of *The Tomorrow People* exhibition. Stephen is a curator and writer and has previously been Acting Curator, Contemporary Art at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki; Director, The Physics Room, Christchurch (2010–2012); Curator, Te Tuhi Centre for the Arts, Auckland (2008–2010) and co-founder/ curator of the Window project at The University of Auckland (2002–2007). His second exhibition at the Adam Art Gallery, *Acting Out*, has just closed.

Hikalu Clarke

Auckland artist Hikalu Clarke's first installation is situated on the threshold of the Gallery entrance. As we enter we are confronted with an abrasive sonic texture in the intermediary space between the automated doors. Initially communicating as an unrelenting drone, as we listen further the clamour gradually thins out. Instruments come to the fore – a trumpet, an organ – then choral voices can be heard within massed melodies, each battling for our attention. As the layering of the songs become less dense it is clear that we have been listening to many national anthems—in Clarke's words *All Our Anthems*—simultaneously. As the longest songs reach their conclusion we finally hear the solo Palestinian anthem humbly playing through to its close without interference. Within the arc of experiencing the work, then, Clarke has taken us on a path between chaos to order; from restricting access to welcoming visitors with a cheerful celebration of national pride, all through a simple strategy of redeploying music in an unconventional way.

Clarke is concerned with the way sound, like architecture, can be deployed to establish control of social spaces. His second site-specific work, *Choke Point*, turns its attention to central stairwell of the building itself. Repositioning the central bannisters at peculiar angles, Clarke corrals and funnels gallery visitors into single lines as we transition through the levels. The rails extend too high at the top of the stairs, then they descend too low on another flight, seemingly accommodating for the height of a child rather than an adult. A doubling of the bannisters near level two introduces glitches into the fabric of the architecture, while a single rail installed at the bottom of the building abruptly steers us away from a nearby projection. Clarke's intervention recalls both subtle and overt methods of crowd control: from the stanchions erected to manage queues in airports and banks to the menacing barricades deployed to dissipate large crowds in volatile demonstrations.

In the context of the Adam Art Gallery, Clarke's intervention is all the more intriguing when one considers the longer history of the stairwell, which in fact predates the building's completion in 1999. Working with a modest budget for a complex of its size, Athfield Architects originally sited the free-standing building overtop of an existing pedestrian pathway between facilities perched high on the hill and the lower Hunter Building. Now positioned at the heart of the three-level complex, it is clear that the tapered proportions of this stairwell to a large degree determined the rationale for the new complex: with its contracting and expanding proportions being echoed by the way the building at large dramatically 'shrinks' and 'expands' as we move through it. Clarke's

repurposing of this central feature of the building represents a reappropriation of a space which had already been repurposed by the architects: inserting his own agency to affect change, however temporary, to the larger fabric of the building.

–SC

Hikalu Clarke was born in Japan and grew up in Palmerston North. He graduated with an MFA from Whitecliffe College of Arts and Design in 2016 and was one of the co-developers of Whitecliffe's DEMO project space. His work was included in *New Perspectives* at ARTSPACE in Auckland in 2016.

Claudia Dunes & Rainer Weston

You don't know what you're looking at. In one video assemblage, a reflective strip drapes across the screen with its shifting bronze texture, following the silver c-stand to the floor. Its neighbour is a similar arrangement, except it is horizontal, perched on a dolly, wearing its metallic strip almost like a belt. *of other spaces (arch)* and *(drape)* are deliberately manipulative works designed to tease and displace the idea of the photograph as a definitive and unbiased reproduction.

The works treat fundamental aspects of photography as their conceptual starting points. The images have undergone complicated digital processes that question the photograph's capacity to function as a document. The video-image that appears on both 32-inch screens is a photo-scanned texture of criss-crossing tyre tracks in mud – traces of motion that undermine the apparent permanence of the photograph. The image was purchased from an online vendor that sells specialised imagery used in the production of photo-realistic computer-generated images. The texture is combined within three-dimensional imaging software with a panoramic photograph of a sky just before sunset. The orbiting movement of this environment map creates shifts in lighting, while simulated handy-cam movements allude to the presence of a physical body within the scene.

Strips of mirror-like vinyl disrupt the screens in both works. It is the kind of vinyl used to wrap surfaces in do-it-yourself home renovations, but re-worked here into seductive poses. They fall past the video-images to draw the viewer's attention to the physicality of the works as a whole. This also draws the viewer's attention to the c-stand's and dolly's respective functions. These bring the video-images off the wall to claim their own spaces. They are positioned so that the screens and vinyl either confront the viewer or submit to the viewer's gaze.

The artists use the reflective vinyl to draw the viewer's gaze back out from the screen. The works' titles draw on Michel Foucault's *Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias*, which explores the idea of the mirror – amongst other spaces – as a placeless place. As Foucault suggests, the mirror is both a utopia and a heterotopia; the vinyl therefore is a tangible object, but what its reflective surface contains does not exist. The vinyl affects the way the viewer relates to their own image. The viewer moves around the works watching their face and body distort. The vinyl twists all that it reflects, almost as a parody of the rectangular mirror on our bathroom wall that we naively rely on as a truth-teller. In similar ways, the photograph used in the video works is simultaneously tangible and virtual; it is manipulated to capture the trace of human presence.

The rotating environment maps in the video draw the viewer's gaze and the vinyl reflects a distorted image of that gaze right back. *of other spaces (arch)* and *(drape)* is an exploration of photography's relationship with the digital and the sculptural. The works' most immediate function is about you, the viewer. How will you emerge from this enchanting passive-active power play?

–EC-B

Claudia Dunes & Rainer Weston are based in Auckland. They are recent graduates of Whitecliffe College of Arts and Design.

Claudia Dunes' recent exhibitions include *Soft Architecture*, Malcolm Smith Gallery, Howick, 2016; *A Case of Misdirection*, Morrinsville Art Gallery, Morrinsville, 2016; and *Group Shower*, FUZZYVIBES, Auckland, 2015. Her practice is interdisciplinary, working with a variety of materials and techniques. Her works share a preoccupation with site, space and a sense of material instability. Her current body of work examines the ideological tensions materials possess as both image and objects within cultural hierarchies.

Rainer Weston graduated in 2015 with a BFA majoring in photomedia. His recent exhibitions include *newphotomedia*, DEMO, Auckland, 2017; *The Devil's Blindspot*, Christchurch Art Gallery, Christchurch, 2016; *Being Tween*, Rockies, Auckland, 2016, and *HOTEL DEVON ISLAND*, DEMO, Auckland, 2016. Weston's practice combines pre-existing physical and digital materials together with 3D CGI, digital photography, custom software and AI to create prints, sculptures, moving image works and installations. His current works evoke the technological sublime, the surreal malleability of human perception and the problematics of digital mediation in a post-Snowden world.

Fresh and Fruity

Fresh and Fruity's *Manifesto vol 1: Fresh and Fruity is a sexy new look* is made up of 99 assertions, printed in black comic sans on hot pink paper. Of its 99 points, 53 read 'Fresh and Fruity is a sexy new look'. In lifestyle magazines and tabloids 'sexy new look', often preceded by '[insert name here] debuts a...' can mean one or multiple of many things: weight loss, a new haircut, an outfit that errs on the prudish side of sexy (Kate Middleton) or the sexy side of sexy (Rihanna). Here, the phrase is repeated like a commandment without the same associations of change. Fresh and Fruity is, has been, will be 'a sexy new look'. Established in Ōtepoti in 2014 by Zach Williams and Hana Pera Aoake (Tainui, Ngāti Raukawa), and now run by Aoake and Mya Morrison-Middleton (Ngāi Tahu), Fresh and Fruity exists as an indigenous online art collective. It is named after the yogurt, which was often served – fished out of dumpsters behind the local New World – at openings when the collective worked out of a physical space.

The manifesto was first published in 2015, the same year Gwyneth Paltrow believes she broke the internet. 'When I was announcing my husband and I were separating', she described at a Business of Goop event, 'and we were trying to follow this specific way of doing it, and the philosophy is conscious uncoupling, and we, like, broke the fucking Internet'. Paltrow didn't break the internet, because 'conscious uncoupling' is not nearly a sexy enough headline to do so and the suggestion that she may have – that she *could* have – belies that fact that she is not from here; that she is old, comparatively: older than the internet, older than comic sans, older than the members of Fresh and Fruity. We are the first generation to have never experienced a world in which we did not have the web at our fingers; the first to grow up knowing beauty isn't real, and still believing.

The internet can be more, of course, than I'm allowing it. Point 18: 'Fresh and fruity is facilitated by Pania of the digital reef and doesn't place any value on neo colonial, patriarchal hierarchies because lol'. Fresh and Fruity use the internet as a means of keeping contact with and supporting one another, as well as a way to bridge geographical restrictions and build new connections. It allows them to extend beyond traditional understandings of authorship and ownership as they manifest within the confines of the traditional gallery space towards a collaborative model of practice. Morrison-Middleton described this mode of working in an April 2017 'Online Story' for *Friends are Artists*: 'We have clear communicated boundaries and understand that creative processes can't be tied to genius single author myths. While we respect credit where it is due, we care about

having truly rhizomatic and connective practices. When we are writing things such as manifestos or articles we are literally finishing each others sentences and going in editing each others text'.

When I Skyped Fresh and Fruity recently, Aoake described the pleasure they find in identifying as at once a digital native and as tangata whenua: native to this land. The internet, as the mode of interconnection and communication that Fresh and Fruity treat it, might be thought of as an pertinent and contemporary elaboration on Epeli Hau'ofa's theory that 'there is a world of difference between viewing the Pacific as "islands in a far sea" and as "a sea of islands"... [In the pre-colonial period] boundaries were not imaginary lines in the ocean, but rather points of entry that were constantly negotiated and even contested. The sea was open to anyone who could navigate a way through'.

–HRose

Fresh and Fruity is an indigenous digital art collective based in Aotearoa. Founded in Ōtepoti as a physical space in 2014 it now exists entirely online and is run by Hana Pera Aoake (Tainui, Ngāti Raukawa) and Mya Morrison-Middleton (Ngāi Tahu). Fresh and Fruity's work spans performance, writing, interventions, video, merchandise and curating. Fresh and Fruity's work has been shown and published across Aotearoa, as well as in Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany. Fresh and Fruity is a sexy new look designed to slowly smash the neocolonial heteropatriarchy one sarcastic hashtag at a time #workbitch #liveloughlove

William Linscott

William Linscott's video *XCIII* critically enquires into the political significance of the internet and its platforms and interfaces. While its themes are troubling, it also suggests that a critical re-thinking of the cloud's hidden functions could help alter the current trajectory towards networked totalitarianism.

XCIII is divided into three chapters, which are distinguished by their titles and their use of three additive primary colours: red, green and blue. The structure of each chapter is affirmed by audio-breaks or shifts – a white-noise crescendo, or near silence. (The music throughout was made by Flinn Gendall.)

The first chapter is titled 'To What End'. Its colour is revealed in a subsequent close-up on a series of texts that describe the key tensions of internet governance. These appear in a red hue, under the counter-frameworks of 'Data Empire' and 'Liberation'. Partway through the chapter is an airplane's-eye view of clouds drifting through an expanse of blue sky; deep breathing overlays the soundtrack. It's a subversive moment of tranquility. The clouds appear soft, transparent and ethereal. This is how 'the cloud' is marketed to us, but, as Linscott's work testifies, it is anything but innocent. The internet's mechanics are a huge drain on the world's resources. Corporations like Facebook dictate and mediate how we access and engage with the internet and exploit our personal information and uncompensated labour. Individual users are central to these discourses, but the spectacle of the internet prevents users from fully realising strategies and tactics to recognise and negotiate these platforms.

The viewer is almost overwhelmed with overlaid and interacting text, screen recordings, found images and documentation of production-lines, graphically constructed (sometimes moving) images, from the second chapter, 'Time Travel to the Present', with its clusters of text based on the concepts of 'bias' and 'flow' appearing in a green hue, to the third chapter, 'Don't Forget It's Finite', with phrases such as 'identity ecosystem' and 'anonymity' in blue.

In the third chapter of *XCIII* we are reminded of the technological, material and jurisdictional parameters of the cloud. The internet is celebrated for bringing the world together, but the numerous references in these chapters are used to encourage questions about how certain aspects of the internet might enhance diversity and empower the marginalised individual, or, alternatively, how different aspects of the internet might work to further homogenise society and oppress with advanced surveillance systems.

XCIII casts the internet in different lights. The apparently transparent and ethereal internet is not in fact

structured in an orderly way, but is instead predicated on multiple networks and often chaotic junctions of hardware and software. Linscott's video also reveals the misconception of the natural world as authentic and the online world as inauthentic. There is a lot to find in *XCIII*, but one reigning message is something the artist has said elsewhere: '[...] the fallacy of digital dualism should be acknowledged. Reality is already augmented'.

–EC-B

An extended essay by Callister-Baker on Linscott's *XCIII* appeared on *The Pantograph Punch*: pantograph-punch.com/post/reality-already-augmented-william-linscott-xciii

William Linscott is an artist based in Auckland. He has an MFA from Elam School of Fine Arts, The University of Auckland (2016). Recent exhibitions include *under the shadow of the cloud*, Michael Lett, Auckland, 2017; and *beyond the shadow of the cloud*, Window Gallery, Auckland, 2017. Linscott is currently a member of the Window Gallery curatorial team.

Isabella Loudon

With *please water the sculptures, with care* Isabella Loudon presents us with a set of precariously balanced sculptures. For the works to stay standing, concrete bowls placed atop the plinths and panes of glass must have a precise level of water in them. As the water evaporates, the bowls must be topped up. If this is not done, or the bowls overfilled, the concrete and glass will come crashing to the floor. She has handed over the fate of the work directly to the gallery. Evaporation rates will be affected by humidity, heat, and light, which, to a degree, the gallery can control. Yet, it has no control over the number of bodies in the space, which will also affect the rate of evaporation. So, the artist is initiating a quasi-performance involving the gallery and the audience, confronting each with the works' vulnerability and making them vulnerable in turn. Nobody in particular is responsible for the works' survival; if they are, it is solely by choice.

While interaction with and care of the sculptures is a significant aspect of the work, the materials play a powerful part too. In fact, they are indispensable for the emphasis on risk in Loudon's work. Concrete can withstand compression but is highly susceptible to tension, so its rigidity – the quality that makes it robust – is also what endangers it when it is cast into warped forms. Thus, concrete's strength also becomes its weakness. This effect is aesthetic too. At first glance the bases appear sturdy, made from materials that have been chosen predominantly for structural integrity. Yet closer inspection reveals an almost ornamental fragility. The plinths have a rough, cracked texture that looks as though pieces might dislodge at any moment.

The contradictory exposition of concrete's weakness is even more pronounced with the bowls that rest atop the plinths. We might expect these to be made from clay, which is durable but relatively light. Instead they are also concrete, each unique and unexpectedly cumbersome. Contrasting their density, each delicate pane of glass exacerbates the contradiction of form. They are poised perilously, jutting outwards from a pivot point that is at once balancing and being balanced. Crucially, the works rely on all their elements existing together; each part is defined in relation to the others. Without this mutual construction, with the glass panes as mediator, the components would lose their meaning. *please water the sculptures, with care* is reminding us that, while it is risky and confronting, vulnerability is a relationship. It is a necessary relationship that will only be initiated and sustained when that vulnerability is reciprocated.

–Hugo Robinson (HR)

Isabella Loudon is an artist based in Wellington. Recent exhibitions include *I do not want to be a fool*, Toi Pōneke, Wellington, 2017 and *Honeywell, play_station*, Wellington, 2016. Isabella graduated with a BFA (Hons) from Massey University in 2016.

Hugo Robinson is a writer based in Wellington. He is currently Writing and Publications Intern at Enjoy Public Art Gallery, Wellington.

Theo Macdonald

Theo Macdonald spent three months during 2015 living as David Bowie. The videos exhibited here are documents of this performance. In them, Macdonald tries on Bowie's mannerisms, makes assumptions about Bowie's habits, and attempts to make himself more credible in his costume. In one, Macdonald has swapped the glasses he usually wears for contact lenses. He is seen putting in, and taking out, a blue contact over and over again. By the middle of the nine-minute-long video, Macdonald's eye is red and teary. He's visibly uncomfortable, but he keeps going.

The Bowie we see emulated here is Bowie circa 1983, a period Macdonald refers to as a 'transitional phase' in the musician's career.¹ This phase, and the album *Let's Dance* in particular, are often dismissed by diehard Bowie fans as shallow, polished and commercial. The bleached hair and oversized, canary-coloured suit comprise one of Bowie's most restrained looks. This Bowie assumes no moniker, keeps his face clean-shaven and unpainted, and trades androgynous glam for a slightly awkward masculinity.

Even with this pared back ensemble, Macdonald's imitation fails to convince. His suit is the wrong colour, dark regrowth is visible beneath the artist's dyed blonde hair. There's a clumsiness to Macdonald's gestures, too. Macdonald reenacts the morning runs he imagines Bowie might have taken in a small courtyard, darting back and forth across the frame. He struggles to keep pace, and as the video progresses he seems to spend more and more time out of the frame, catching his breath. Eventually, at around twenty minutes in, he resigns himself to walking.

Macdonald's clumsiness seems to suggest a devotion to his subject more than anything else. These gestures are sincere, unaffected, and take seriously the libidinal investment popular culture elicits. Bowie was a master of self-reinvention. He's remembered as a figure who pushed the boundaries of genre, stardom, and gendered performance. In Macdonald's works, though, Bowie finds himself deflated. Macdonald's unembarrassed attachment suggests that self-reinvention, necessarily, involves an element of inelegance.

–SG

¹ Theo Macdonald's self-published comic, *Go Out Stay In Get Things Done*, provides lucid, tender insight into his impersonation. It is available to read in the gallery's resources area.

Theo Macdonald recently completed a BFA (Hons) at Elam School of Fine Arts, working in the fields of performance, video, and writing. He is based in Auckland, co-hosts the radio show Artbank on 95bFM, and is a member of the bands PISS CANNONN and APPLE MUSIC. The art he makes is mostly concerned with popular narrative structures, hero worship, and the weight of history. His favourite Prince song is 'The Ballad of Dorothy Parker', off the album 'Sign o' the Times'.

Annie Mackenzie & Dave Marshall

Initially shown at The Physics Room, Christchurch, *International Foodcourt/Global Classic* brings together the sculptural practice of Dave Marshall and the textiles of artist Annie Mackenzie. It draws on Marshall's experience working at a central city foodcourt in Wellington, a gathering of food stalls from a range of different cultures, selling cheap fare to a diverse range of local customers. Marshall includes signs he made to advertise various food stalls, many of which are no longer at the market. He also created ceramic pieces based on his interactions at the Wellington Potters Association. Mackenzie produced her handmade tea-towels in a similar fashion by spending time at the foodcourt and talking to the stall workers and owners about the textiles they used as part of their business. Created on a hand loom her carefully made textiles imitate mass-produced products, reversing the industrial process and cheap labour that went into making them. The installation draws attention to what exists around the food instead of the food itself, investing a new kind of artistic value into the everyday utensils, equipment and furniture that are used to produce these cheap consumables.

Mackenzie and Marshall seem to be drawn to this setting because it is a microcosm of the immigrant experience in a country like New Zealand. For the people running the food stalls, who are often immigrants or from immigrant families, running a business here is a way to make a profit from their cultural differences and to offer a sense of home to those who share their background. The food court has a high turnover of stalls, reflecting the challenge of running them as family businesses and the struggle to live on their earnings. Recipes are adjusted to increase profits, decrease cooking time and to cater to Western tastes. Is the food made here local or international, home-made or mass-produced, authentic or alien, or a mixture of these categorisations?

International Foodcourt/Global Classic prompts us to consider what we consume, where it comes from and the luxuriousness of our position to be able to enjoy such myriad tastes from around the world. The way the clay objects and textiles have morphed from their sources suggests how two pākehā New Zealanders have responded to this multicultural hub; their works mirror the processes of change and adaptation that are witnessed in the concessions these stall-holders make in translating their local cuisines for their new environment.

–Dilohana Lekamge (DL)

Annie Mackenzie is an artist and weaver based in Wellington. She graduated with a BFA from Ilam School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury in 2009. Recent exhibitions include *Vanished Delft*, curated by Anna Miles, Pah Homestead, Auckland, 2017; *Beauty is in the Street*, RAMP Gallery, Hamilton, 2017 & Objectspace, Auckland, 2016; *Embedded*, Corban Estate Art Centre, Auckland, 2017; *Sampler*, Masterworks Gallery, Auckland, 2017; *Walking Forwards Backwards*, Enjoy Public Art Gallery, Wellington, 2016. *Who Opens The Door*, Blue Oyster Art Project Space, Dunedin, 2014. Annie was the 2016 recipient of the Creative Fibre New Weavers Award. She collaborated with Dave Marshall for *International Food Court/Global Classic*, The Physics Room, Christchurch, 2016.

Dave Marshall is an artist and potter based in Wellington. He holds a BFA from Ilam School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury. Often collaborative, his work has recently featured in the exhibitions *Mayfield Residence* with Motoko Kikkawa and Matthew Ward at Ashburton Art Gallery, Ashburton and the performance 'Rumours and Inheritance', with Juju for *A Wee Shocial*, XCHC, Christchurch.

Dilohana Lekamge is a writer and artist based in Wellington. She completed her BFA(Hons) at Massey University in 2015. Recent exhibitions include *For any who come to take from here*, Enjoy Public Art Gallery, Wellington, 2016, *Angelwave*, play_station, Wellington, 2016, and *Pool Party*, MEANWHILE, Wellington, 2016.

Ammon Ngakuru

For many, utopia is a matter of renewal. Religious utopias are about rebirth, reincarnation, regeneration. This takes place, not in the current reality, but elsewhere: a place that transcends this one. So too, many political utopias are predicated on revolution, on starting afresh. Each is an ideology that prescribes a different view on the ills of the world. Each proffers their own causes and each has their own remedy. *A Shelter for Amnesic Relatives* examines an extreme case of such an ideology in the very obverse sense. Not one concerned with transcendence to utopia, but one concerned with descendance to dystopia. American survivalist culture, with its preparations for an imminent apocalypse, is an ideology. A response to and an answer for the fear of destruction.

In isolation, it is very intriguing and somewhat surprising that we might consider this culture an ideology. That is, many religious and political ideals are spurred by continuation, by a movement larger than the constituent parts. Yet this destructivist narrative is overwhelmingly individual and discontinuous. We could almost say that survivalist culture is the reaction to matters of legacy: 'Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end! A bet against economies, politics, and ideologies that are appearing to disintegrate in these reckoning times. However, there is a greater and more poignant point being made here. A point that is as much about the past as is it about the future. In fact, it is about a future that does not exist without the past.

The safe room being constructed is not only physical but social and historical. Safety is construed as an escape from the geographical milieu. Because the title and the dislocation of the work are so removed from the material it addresses, *A Shelter for Amnesic Relatives* conveys escape from history. Particularly in Aotearoa's colonial history, the salience of this work is that security is equated with erasure and isolation. The future means annexing ourselves from the past. What emerges from Ngakuru's more severe and literal depiction of this annexing, is that such rhetoric pervades social and political discourse. From Hobson's Pledge to Zionist imperialism in Palestine, to genocide and the refusal to acknowledge West Papuan autonomy, the situation is marked by an erasure of history. Moving forward requires redressing the past, not separating ourselves from it. *A Shelter for Amnesic Relatives* leads to similar questions and sentiments about the ideologies we choose. How do we understand that there will be no utopia? How do we live in and acknowledge such fear and chaos and destruction? And finally, how do we survive with what we already have?

–HR

Ammon Ngakuru lives and works in Auckland. His practice forms in response to questions of misidentification, uncertainty, distance, absence and fragmentation, paying particular attention to the way these issues manifest within shared cultural environments. Recent exhibitions include *A Shelter for Amnesic Relatives*, Blue Oyster Art Project Space, Dunedin, 2017 and *Since 1984 – He aha te ahurea-rua?*, ST PAUL St Gallery, Auckland, 2015.

Christina Pataialii

There are five paintings in Christina Pataialii's *Dream Team*, each a portrait of an icon. The artist began making tribute drawings at the age of five, sat in front of the TV with a pack of Cascade felts and pad of paper. Michael Jackson was the same age when he became the lead singer in the Jackson Five; five when he lost his anonymity forever. It was Jackson's fifth solo album, *Off the Wall*, that established his career as a solo artist in 1979.

It's nice to make these connections, all bound to a number. We might continue: Kenny Rogers has five children, has been married five times. On the night of November 30, 1994, Tupac Amaru Shakur was shot five times and robbed. He survived, that time. Dwayne Johnson has won the WWF Tag Team Championship five times. Mike Tyson has five tattoos: two of communist leaders, one of an AIDS activist, an ex-wife on his forearm. His final and most famous marking is a design which stretches around from the top of his eyebrow to the apple of his cheek.

How did I come to know enough to track the traces of a number through these lives? Consider representation as surveillance: the case of Michael Jackson, for example, whose extreme and prolonged transformation from boy to man to someone other than who it was he imagined he would become, was a point of obsessive interest and revulsion for reporters and their readers. The headlines: 'Wacko Jacko', 'Freak', 'Sicko', 'Scary Poppins'. Paparazzi stationed themselves outside his dermatologist's office as though there was no more natural place for our obsessions to rest. Full-page features compared versions of his face, and invited random experts to weigh in. There is no expert more random, more involved, or more critical than a devoted fan.

Pataialii explores the symbiotic relationship we have with celebrity by presenting the relationship between viewer and subject as marked by extreme proximity and non-negotiable distance. The works are composed of signifiers and codes which depend as much on the viewer's own reading of them as they do the artist's original vision. They ask us to consider who these men are to us and us to them. What role have we played in the construction of their idolatry? Move close enough to the painted surface and it becomes an immersive flurry of brushstrokes and sprayed marks; step back and the abstraction rearranges into something more familiar. The presence of these men is a stage, their sanctity enacted—that much we're used to. But more than being the men they are, or even the men we imagine them to be, the subjects of these paintings are defined by the distance between us.

—HRose

Christina Pataialii is an Auckland-based artist currently completing her MFA at Whitecliffe College of Arts and Design. Pataialii's paintings interrogate traditionally European male-dominated fields of abstraction, whilst injecting more subjective images that perform as codes. Coding, for Pataialii, offers a language formed under dominant structures that employs humour and slippage to evade and destabilise. Pataialii challenges conversations around contemporary painting through the use of her own Pacific body, and proposes new kinds of cultural and pictorial spaces. Recent exhibitions include *INFLUX* at ST PAUL St, Auckland, 2016 and Pātaka Art + Museum, Wellington, 2017; *Rematerialized*, DEMO, Auckland, 2017; *The Tie That Binds*, Whitespace, Auckland, 2016.

Maddy Plimmer

A white jumpsuit is embroidered with the names and logos of various medications and medical creams, covering the suit-like racing emblems. The crisp, sterile material implies medical treatment, yet it is not a hospital gown. Instead, the jumpsuit has a hidden fastening down the front, and emphasizes a specific removal of access to the body: it reads 'impenetrable'.

Embroidery is traditionally thought of as women's art, suited to those with limited social mobility. Within a patriarchal hierarchy, it is perceived as a lesser decorative art opposed to the 'fine' arts. Despite countless feminist artists who have used embroidery as an act of defiance and reclamation, it is still often denied access within the art gallery. By choosing these logos and projecting them onto an 'other' external body-like form, Maddy enables an externalised evaluation of their purpose and practical value. Placing what has been prescribed for her onto something outside of herself, she elects to contemplate these medicines on her own terms.

Although Maddy removes herself physically from the work, the jumpsuit stands in for her body, the legs and sleeves softly hanging. For over a year and a half, she has sought medical treatment for an as-of-yet-undiagnosed medical condition. Refusing to provide her with the necessary referral to a gynaecologist for specialist treatment, a string of doctors has instead elected to prescribe Maddy medication to treat her symptoms, rather than diagnosing or treating the underlying condition. Each medication stitched here has been prescribed; the crowded logos dot the unseen body, medicalisation envisioned at the expense of individual autonomy and identity.

Gatekeeping systematically limits public access to healthcare services in order to reduce demand and cost. A referral from a primary-source healthcare provider is necessary, negating individual autonomy and a authority of knowing oneself. Untreated and undiagnosed gynaecological problems are common; not only because of lack of access to appropriate services and the reluctance to deal with unwanted physical contact during examinations, but also due to the underlying physical symptoms being routinely dismissed as a psychological problem. Relegating painful and uncomfortable symptoms to the status of mere 'symptom moving the priority from essential medical diagnostics and treatment to an individual's responsibility for their own mental health.

One logo, *Ovestin*, displays gendered marketing techniques in pretty, pink cursive script. Although Maddy never asked for it or used it, a doctor prescribed this numbing vaginal lubricant. Encouraged to use it so she was able to have sexual intercourse, it was given on the

basis of a particularly heteronormative assumption that she needed it, prioritising a male partner's pleasure at the expense of her own comfort. Possessing 'female' anatomy, yet not all its functions; her doctors' prescriptions seem driven by a desire to construct a semblance of biological heteronormative usage, seeking to solve her 'female' dysfunctionality rather than finding the cause of the pain.

–Ellie Lee-Duncan (EL-D)

Maddy Plimmer graduated from Massey University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Hons) in 2016. She is a resident artist of the JPEG2000 collective. Based in Wellington, she is currently focussing on post-internet research, specifically how the internet has influenced the dissemination and documentation of corporeal art and the social construction of identities. She probes how the pressure of a stereotype can inform one's living selfhood, based on her own experiences with constructed biological and cultural femininity. Her objects are the result of a performative interaction with traditional crafting and sewing methods.

Ellie Lee-Duncan is a writer and curator based in Hamilton. They are undertaking their MA in Art History at University of Auckland. They were a participant in the 2017 Adam Art Gallery Summer Intensive.

Deborah Rundle

Deborah Rundle's *What Faith I Have* references Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis*, a letter to his former lover written during his time in Reading Gaol. In 1895, Wilde went from living an intellectual life in high society to the confines of a prison cell, undertaking repetitive and arduous labour for eight hours a day. As a result, he was forced to look inward and to examine how one can live a meaningful life. This exercise led to his concept of 'a confraternity of the faithless' – an order for those who cannot believe in religion or other dominant paradigms, but who find their truth internally.

Rundle's work similarly considers interior life, as well as how to think of oneself as an ethical being in the contemporary world. Under the neo-liberal paradigm – the dominant ideology of our time – the individual is celebrated and conceptualised as a productive unit, lauded by the likes of Ruth Richardson as in Tim Wagg's *1991*, which sits below Rundle's work. With its emphasis on personal responsibility, neo-liberalism conceptualises the individual as an inherently competitive entity. Rundle considers an alternative approach in *What Faith I Have*. Her concept of the individual entails facing oneself; having to stand up without clinging to prejudices and dubious preconceptions as a means to obtain control and stability in a chaotic world. A subject with faith generated from within has the ability to act out of love rather than fear and, therefore, to walk through the world with a grounding ethic. The work recalls James Baldwin, writing about racism in America in *The Fire Next Time*, who states:

It is this individual uncertainty on the part of white American men and women, this inability to renew themselves at the fountain of their own lives, that makes the discussion, let alone elucidation, of any conundrum – that is, any reality – so supremely difficult. The person who distrusts himself has no touchstone for reality – for this touchstone can be only oneself. Such a person interposes between himself and reality nothing less than a labyrinth of attitudes. And these attitudes, furthermore, though the person is usually unaware of it (is unaware of so much), are historical and public attitudes. They do not relate to the present any more than they relate to the person.

Rundle's textual work is displayed in all caps, the gold evocative of the religious iconography we traditionally associate with 'faith', the font for signs that sit outside churches. The work in this way acts as both text and image – its colour and scale transforming it into an object that must be negotiated in space. Thus, the form

of the work and the declaration it makes together act as provocations that are experienced both intellectually and physically. It asks, what does 'faith' mean in a secular world? How are we to live spiritually, philosophically and ethically outside of religion? And what are the *other* potentialities latent in our concept of the individual as subjectively experienced? Is this just another form of narcissism and self-interested navel-gazing? Or can one's relationship with oneself, when characterised by a different kind of self-regard, actually lead to heightened openness, connectivity and even social change?

–KS

Deborah Rundle is an artist based in Auckland. Principally utilising text, she investigates the ways in which power plays out in the social and political domain in order to muse on possibilities for change. Refusing to draw utopianism to a close she explores unrealised potential lying within everyday life and suggests a political imagination beyond 'there is no alternative'. Her practice probes the contemporary world, often focusing on slippages within language in order to open up alternative meanings. Deborah is also member of the art collective Public Share, which combines object making and site exploration with social engagement and critique, with a particular focus on workplace rituals.

Christopher Ulutupu

Christopher Ulutupu's *Into the Arms of my Coloniser* is the artist's individual exploration of cultural hybridity and diaspora. The video includes a myriad of different characters: oiled-up muscle men, a lounging well-dressed European couple, a Polynesian family, a trio of female singers and a large white soft toy rabbit. All are placed on a low-lit sandy scene embellished with an indoor plant resembling a palm tree, various beach furniture, a LCD flatscreen, and a microphone placed on a stand into which the women sing. Each scene is introduced by a text that alludes to the cultural betrayal that can occur when someone of a marginalised race dates outside their racial community, or even worse, when the person is from the race of people who colonised their country. However, upon closer inspection of the carefully choreographed scenes, there is more at play than a comment on interracial dating.

When practitioners who are also cultural minorities create it is often expected that their work reflects life in their mother country. Unfortunately, through a Western lens, there is an assumption that these cultures have not developed at the same pace as the Western world. An almost automatic response is to imagine a previously colonised country existing in a bubble exempt from globalisation and other markers of 'progress'. This thought is solidified by the circulation of racial stereotypes and a lack of accurate representations of these cultures in the mainstream media, perpetuating the idea that non-Western cultures are stagnant.

It is a blatant challenge to this misconception that in one scene three Polynesian women sing Britney Spears' *Lucky*, as this early 2000s' teen-pop classic seems out of place on this manufactured 'island' setting. However, given global distribution of Western pop culture, this, in reality, wouldn't be an unlikely scene. Ulutupu challenges this misconception of an out-of-date Polynesian culture by creating multiple scenes that are caricatures of cultural merge.

This work, like many in Ulutupu's practice, investigates the hyphen space between host and homeland community, allowing him to explore how these two lands have informed him as a Samoan New Zealander, where one no more serves as an influence than the other. Ulutupu is concerned with the inevitable consequences of diaspora and migration, yet his approach is to openly allow feelings of disconnect from his homeland; he offers a different approach to the stories of marginalised communities enabling a complexity that many discussions of identity ignore. It is unrealistic to believe that every migrant feels the same level of longing for their homeland and that their place of origin offers

solace where a host country does not. For many, comfort is found in their motherland, but for some it is more difficult to enjoy that sense of belonging that is expected in one place over another, especially when so much that is familiar in fact exists in the land of the coloniser. Ulutupu allows himself to explore his own experience of being a colonised person living in a coloniser's world. He refuses to discuss what is expected of him as a person of colour – shifting the ways in which he and others like him can be represented in Western contexts.

–DL

Christopher Ulutupu is a video artist of Samoan/Niuean/German descent currently residing in Wellington. He recently completed his MFA at Massey University, Wellington and has a Bachelor of Performance Design (Hons) from Massey University and Toi Whakaari. Ulutupu has a background in art direction and set design. Christopher writes, 'My research is about 'othering' or relating to the 'other'. Creating videos, performances and collages that challenge institutions/media/pop culture/racism/terrorism/tourism, I create a pastiche of something new. As an artist I am constantly asking myself, 'if I am considered to be the other – what is then exotic to me?'

Tim Wagg

The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there.

–L. P. Hartley, *The Go-Between* (1953)

Ian Fraser quotes this line in the final episode of the 1996 documentary series *Revolution*, which discusses the free-market reforms instituted by the Fourth Labour and National Governments in the 1980s and early 1990s.¹ In the context of the programme, the quotation evokes the gulf that separates the New Zealand of the earlier 20th century – with its tightly managed economy and relatively high employment, but often stultifying parochialism – and that of 1996 – economically liberal, more outward-looking and competitive, but arguably less equal.

Today, the quotation takes on a new meaning, for the 'revolution' itself now feels remote, the more to someone like me who was born into it, growing up with its effects as the furniture of daily life. And yet, as I have come of political age, I have developed a fascination with New Zealand's liberalisation project, with reforms so enthusiastic and rapid that they overtook those of Thatcherite Britain. I am not alone in my interest. A number of younger writers and artists are exploring the project and its ongoing legacy in this country – Andrew Dean, for instance, in his 2016 book *Ruth, Roger and Me*, Tim Wagg in the present work.

1991 centres on Ruth Richardson, Minister of Finance for the National Government from 1990 to 1993. Its title reflects the year Wagg was born and when Richardson issued her famous 'Mother of All Budgets', which included cuts to social welfare benefits, the tightening up of eligibility criteria for student allowances, and the introduction of new user-pays systems in healthcare. At the same time, the deregulation begun by Roger Douglas and the Labour Government was cemented and extended, perhaps most notably with the creation of the Employment Contracts Act (1991).

In the video, Richardson speaks passionately about her role as a 'disruptor'. She suggests that it was essential that New Zealand transition from a protectionist welfare state to an open and fiscally conservative economy, and reveals her belief in the capacity of the individual to self-determine, the community to self-regulate, and innovation to overcome obstacles – a philosophy reflected in her current work in the private sector. She does not appear on screen. Instead, we see shots of her house and garden, of a biotechnology company with which she is involved, and of a printer producing a 3D version of a weight – representing the New Zealand economy – that features in a Tom Scott cartoon, the original of which she owns.

1991 does not assume an overt position with

respect to Richardson, her actions, or her views. Nor does it deliver its own campaign message. In attempting to comprehend the past, Wagg is less interested in reducing it down than in teasing out its texture, throwing the caricature into relief that we may better appreciate our present and better prepare ourselves for our future.

–Francis McWhannell

¹ The series is available in its entirety on NZ On Screen at <https://www.nzonscreen.com/title/revolution-1996/series>.

Tim Wagg is an Auckland-based artist. Recent exhibitions include: *This Time of Useful Consciousness – Political Ecology Now*, Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt, 2017; *False Paths*, The Engine Room, Wellington, 2017; *By the Laws of Chance*, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin, 2016; *New Perspectives*, ARTSPACE, Auckland, 2016; *Let The Cobbler Stick To His Last*, New York, 2015; *One does not pet a rattlesnake until it has been defanged; only then does one take it on the road so that one and all can marvel at its natural beauty*, The Physics Room, Christchurch, 2014.

Francis McWhannell is a writer and curator based in Auckland.

Daegan Wells

How are we to comprehend the two objects encased here? What relation does this aged photograph and large stoneware jug pose to each other? The two objects speak to a certain time period, location and also to a personal relationship. The photograph shows what appears to be a mid-century modernist home with a scattered planting of tussock in the foreground. The dark brown jug features what resembles a 'green man' but is, in fact, a werewolf emblazoned upon its surface; a bizarre face of an anthropoid that confers upon it characteristics of a folk-art tradition. What are we to make of this pairing of mythos and high modernism? Singled out and brought together as they are, they withhold explication.

Artist, teacher and influential New Zealand potter, Yvonne Rust made this jug. Purchased in 1980, it is the sole example of her artwork in the Christchurch Art Gallery's collection. The house in the photograph belonged to her friend and artist Olivia Spencer Bower. They formed a bond through art making, over time a mutually supportive friendship flourished. For example, it was Rust who travelled to Arthur's Pass in order to dig up some tussock and subsequently plant them in front of Spencer Bower's home in response to Olivia's expressed desire to have these mountain plants in her city garden.¹ This simple gesture of friendship has been acknowledged by Wells by bringing these two artefacts together. They become material stand-ins for a pair of prominent personalities in local art history. We can admire the lines of Spencer Bower's house, photographed on a sunny day in the late 1960s. Likewise, the potter's craft can be appraised in Rust's jug.

What metaphysical motivation lies behind the archival impulse that places these two items in concert? Perhaps, the supernatural figure on the jug takes the role here of a revenant that, were we to think in the manner of Derrida, represents the haunted return to the present of an aspect of misplaced history.² Here we have a *Haunting*. The two objects speak with each other and to anyone who looks. They speak about an irrecoverable past imbued with hopefulness for the future. Their haunting presence in the present makes room for the productive opening of meaning rather than pointing to a secret to be uncovered.³ What possibilities for the future can be discerned through their interlocution? To haunt originally meant to provide with a home. It's definition shares aspects of the 'unheimlich': the familiar and domestic as well as its unhomely double.⁴ The jug is the unhomely counterpoint to the photograph's domesticity.

What further can be made from Wells' intention to contain these objects together, a physical presence under Perspex within the gallery, and what can they tell

us about our present situation or the future? Is there a seeking to redress or instantiate an imbalance: between the archival and the ephemeral; the museological and the gallery system; the material and the intangible? If these objects 'begin by coming back', then what answers can be gleaned to orient ourselves in a time that seems to be increasingly uncertain and "out of joint"?⁵

—James Hope

- 1 Theresa Sjöquist, *Yvonne Rust: Maverick Spirit*, David Ling Publishing Limited, Auckland 2011, p. 83.
- 2 'Hauntology: The Past Inside the Present', *Rouges Foam*, 27 October 2009, rougesfoam.blogspot.co.nz/2009/10/hauntology-past-inside-present.html accessed 4/7/2017.
- 3 Colin Davis, 'Hauntology, spectres and phantoms,' *French Studies* 59:3, July 2005, p. 377.
- 4 'Hauntology now,' *K-Punk*, 17 January 2006, k-punk.abstractdynamics.org/archives/007230.html accessed 8/7/2017.
- 5 Nchamah Miller, 'Hauntology and History in Jacques Derrida's Spectres of Marx,' *Nodo50* www.nodo50.org/cubasigloXXI/taller/miller_100304.pdf accessed 8/7/2017.

Based in Christchurch, **Daegan Wells** is the 2017 recipient of the Olivia Spencer Bower Award. He holds an MFA from the University of Canterbury (2014). Recent exhibitions include; *Contemporary Christchurch*, CoCA Centre of Contemporary Arts, Christchurch, 2016; *Private Lodgings*, Blue Oyster Art Project Space, Dunedin, 2016; *Persistency*, The Physics Room, Christchurch, 2015 and *Kissing The Wall*, North Projects, Christchurch, 2014.

James Hope is a Christchurch-based writer. He is a member of the front-of-house team at Christchurch Art Gallery. He was a participant in the 2017 Adam Art Gallery Summer Intensive.

Aliyah Winter

A figure appears on each screen, lip-syncing to two songs; *Danny Boy* and *Eli Jenkins Prayer*. She appears in a form of abstracted drag, wearing other-worldly makeup and decorations on her face, while her collarbones and neck remain bare. In one, her face is coated in gold leaf and her black hat forms two haloes – one of lace edging, and one a hovering silver buckle. In the other, she wears white face paint with flowers over her forehead, and, like a sonnet, a rose on each cheek.

These almost ritualistic details suggest an elaborate performance – but of what remains elusive. Individual features become muted and mask-like through the make-up. This distancing is increased by her limited facial movements; only her mouth opens and her head just barely tilts from time to time. Here is a conspicuously different reimagining of the body. The ethereal makeup and ornaments act to deflect the gaze from the individual herself. She is transformed from an individual into a tool through which the viewer experiences overlaid sound and story.

A softly lilting tenor sings. The voice belongs to Aliyah's grandfather, Ieuan Evans who, although physically absent, occupies the central presence in these works. *Danny Boy* has a piano accompaniment by her grandmother, Nancy Evans (née Dempsey). We hear other sounds too – chairs creaking, a soft sigh. These unintended inclusions transfer us into another temporality – perhaps into the comfort of a lounge in which it was recorded, as an intimate musical collaboration between a couple. The other song, *Eli Jenkins Prayer*, is a public performance, perhaps when Evans sang at the Royal Albert Hall with the New Zealand National Male Choir.

Recorded on VHS, the videos are overlaid with audio recordings from the original cassette tapes. This archival quality of the work, the graininess of the footage, and the obsolete technology combine to create a tactility to the work. The layered technologies mark the separation of time between Aliyah and her grandfather, yet the technology is also what enables the connection.

Lyrically, both songs are calls, but without a response. *Danny Boy*, an Irish ballad expresses a grief for a loved one, and has been used as a funeral song. The other is a call to God, a prayer sung by the Reverend Jenkins in the play *Under Milk Wood*. The hymn-like quality denotes a grieving and a longing, layered with nostalgia and loss.

The sound from the original recordings suggests a semblance of continual existence. The lower register of Ieuan's voice aligns with Aliyah's lips, note by note. In drag, Aliyah presents as an a-temporal figure, using a single light source and strange ornamentation to create an ambiguity regarding gender. While her elegant features

replicate the soft motions of her grandfather's mouth, no sound from her own lips is emitted.

The non-cisgender individual has a very specific gendered relationship with their voice. Changes in vocal tone and pitch are difficult to control, yet are a complex component in one's gender presentation, as well as in how congruent someone feels it is with their own gender identity. While the viewer may sense the disjunction between the unseen voice and the seen body, they may not initially realise they come from two individuals. On a personal level, this is also a subversive act; by lip-syncing to the singing of her grandfather, Aliyah chooses to, 'put the voice through my queer body, transforming it somehow, without fully knowing the outcome of the performance.'

–EL-D

Aliyah Winter is a Wellington-based artist whose performative work extends across the media of photography, video and performance. Her work is concerned with representation of bodies, histories, gender and sexuality. Recent projects include *No One is Sovereign in Love*, MEANWHILE, Wellington, 2017; *The horror of nothing to see*, MEANWHILE, Wellington, 2016.

Xun Cao

None of Xun Cao's figures meet your gaze. They're caught dancing, or mid-flight. Their faces are covered by leggings, or else obscured by bubble wrap, or hidden beneath wigs. They seem at once not quite of this world and not quite willing to be scrutinised.

Xun writes that his works are about shame. In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Sara Ahmed lays out some of the ways shame writes itself on the body. Shame, for Ahmed, emerges from a break in some relational circuit; when one feels the love of another being withheld, when one knows oneself to be failing the moral, behavioural, or performative expectations placed upon them. Shame prompts a turning inward, a recoiling, or the averting of one's gaze. 'In shame,' Ahmed writes, 'the subject's movement back into itself is simultaneously a turning away from itself. In shame, the subject may have nowhere to turn!'¹

If Xun's figures are caught mid-reflex; caught, that is, turning away from a source of embarrassment, pulling away from a scene of exposure, we might equally be able to say that in turning away, these figures turn towards something else. Shame and queerness are intimately entangled. Queerness is a failure to fall in line with normative expectations of desire, embodiment, and performance. But queerness, in that very failure, gestures towards a radically altered understanding of what bodies are for and what they can do.

Bodies, in Xun's photographs, become a site of play, adornment, and experimentation. Xun quotes the visual language of fashion photography. The harshness of Xun's lighting speaks to a realm of visual culture that trades in excess, glamour, and desire. Where fashion photography relies on manufacturing a barely attainable hyperreality to peddle barely attainable goods, Xun seems to delight in his own failure to overcome the real. A foam mattress is visible in the background of one photo; clothes left hanging on the line appear in others.

These bodies seem oriented towards the synthetic. Nylon leggings constrict but never quite conceal; in these photos leggings manage to obscure facial features, but allow, in places, the Calvin Klein logo to peep through. Everyday furniture seems charged with an erotic thrill – a table, in resting on one figure's extremities, finds itself repurposed for either pleasure, self-punishment, or both. The space of these photographs is a speculative one. These figures, in turning away, in covering their faces, and in refusing to meet the viewer's gaze, treat the body as a site of constant reinvention, and treat the negativity of queerness (and its relation to shame) not as something to be disavowed, but as something to be embraced. These figures gesture towards a model of queerness

that is ecstatic, playful, and always in flight.

–SG

¹ Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2004, p. 104

Xun Cao was born in Jiangxi, China. He graduated with an MFA from Elam School of Fine Arts in 2016 and currently lives and works in Auckland. Recent exhibitions include *I hate you, I hate you, I hate you, because I don't hate you; I love you...* ARTSPACE and Michael Lett, Auckland, 2017; *White Night Arts Festival*, Q Theatre Show, Auckland, 2016; *The Colour of Your Heart is What Matters*, Studio One Gallery, Auckland, 2016; *Queering Ecologies*, Allpress Gallery, Auckland, 2015.

Yllwbro

Tēnā koe Pīpīwharauoa,

Greetings to you, strong-winged traveller from warmer places, whose whistle-waiata is an augury of spring, stealthy trickster in iridescent camouflage, who lays her eggs in the nests of others that they may raise her young as tamariki whāngai!

I write on behalf of Yolo the sister and Blu the brother, together known as Yllwbro. Being shy of disposition, preferring to remain unseen, they send you their representatives, the hot-headed Wētā and the blue-wattled Kōkako – the former travelling in *Tipi Haere: Miss Wētā's All Terrain Caravan & Mobile Home*, to be parked up high amongst the eaves of Te Pātaka Toi; the latter flying himself down, and looking forward to sharing a cuppa with his whanaunga in your new whare, *Te Tohu o Kōanga*.

But I am forgetting to introduce myself! I am a friend of Yllwbro's and a follower of their doings. I was at first more foe than friend, publicly criticising their installation *Flowers of the Field* (2016), which formed part of the group show *New Perspectives* at Artspace in Tāmaki Makaurau. However, even weeks after the exhibition had finished, the work kept playing through my mind, teasing me with its curious combination of earnestness and playful elusiveness. Where, I wondered, did the story end and reality begin with Yllwbro?

Meanwhile, the siblings set about making a new version of *Flowers of the Field*, which appeared at Mokopōpaki, as part of *Other Perspectives*, an exhibition that aimed to expand on the Artspace offering. They wrote a letter addressed to the gallery's namesake, in which they expressed their frustration with my comments. Stumbling across a snippet of the letter, I set off to visit the gallery. There I discovered not only *Flowers of the Field II* (2017), but also two additional works by Yllwbro: a whare owned by Kōkako, not unlike yours, and a matchbox housing Wētā.

I talked to the founder of the space, Jacob Terre, who encouraged me to get in touch with the colourful Yolo and Blu. I sent them a note, acknowledging that I had done them a disservice with my flippancy, failing to extend them a generosity implicit in their work. I was under no illusions that *Flowers of the Field II* had been created for me in particular, but in making it the siblings had certainly offered me a chance to think again! I began to realise that it formed part of a larger project, one that explores the relationships between communities of artists and art institutions, and between communities in Aotearoa and the institution that is New Zealand.

At the same time, it became clear that the question I had been pondering was fundamentally wrong-headed.

Yllwbro's work stands as a reminder that the fictive and the actual are inextricably intertwined, like the braids in *Flowers of the Field III*, like you, dear bird, and the other children of Tāne. Stories distil realities, teasing out common threads, which tie both individuals and groups together across space and through time. Then, too, they are good fun! And where would the world be without a bit of fun? Where would you be, Pīpīwharauoa, if someone took your song?

Nāku noa,

Francis McWhannell

Yllwbro, the sister and brother collaboration, are walking along a road often travelled by others. They left their little studio with all the tools and brushes and unanswered emails, taking with them only gentle smiles on their faces, a substantial packed lunch, some music and the most serious intentions in the world. Previous iterations of *Flowers of the Field* have appeared in *Other Perspectives*, Mokopōpaki, Auckland, 2017; and *New Perspectives*, ARTSPACE, Auckland, 2016.

Public Programme

22 July 2–4pm Saturday

Adam Art Gallery

Exhibition tour

Join several of the artists and curators Christina Barton, Stephen Cleland & Simon Gennard for an introduction to *The Tomorrow People* exhibition.

29 July 4–6pm Saturday

Pyramid Club, 272 Taranaki Street, Wellington

Improbable futures forum I

Post-institutional practices: new collaborations

Walter Langelaar, Netherlands-born, Wellington-based artist and sub-cultural activist chairs the first of three forums in which artists and organisers discuss the potential and challenges of non-institutional artist-led activities that posit new forms of collectivity and new platforms for practice. This forum is a partnership with the Cultivating Creative Capital theme at Victoria University.

12 August 4.30–6.30pm Saturday

Aro Valley Community Centre, 48 Aro Street, Aro Valley

Improbable futures forum II

Beyond left and right? Future citizenship, its forms and responsibilities

Tim Corballis, Wellington-based writer, chairs our second forum where with Morgan Godfery, Laura O'Connell-Rapira, Dylan Taylor, and Faith Wilson, the future of politics is debated. This forum is a partnership with the Cultivating Creative Capital theme at Victoria University.

18 August 12–1pm Friday

Adam Art Gallery

Lunchtime concert

New works by instrumental/vocal composition students in partnership with the New Zealand School of Music.

25 August 12–1pm Friday

Adam Art Gallery

Emerging writers' workshop I

Using *The Tomorrow People* exhibition, Simon Gennard and Hanahiva Rose provide insights into how they approach their critical writing, with a view to enabling new writers to tackle the task of art criticism.

9 September 4–6pm Saturday

Adam Art Gallery

Improbable futures forum III

After criticism: writing now

Artist, writer, and editor-in-chief of *The Pantograph Punch*, Lana Lopesi leads a discussion about the nature of writing now, exploring the platforms and forms of writing that are flourishing in the digital domain and in book publishing. This forum is a partnership with the Cultivating Creative Capital theme at Victoria University.

15 September 12–1pm Friday

Adam Art Gallery

Emerging writers' workshop II

With entries for the Chartwell Student Art Writing Prize due 17 September, join Christina Barton and Stephen Cleland for some practical tips about how to write for a particular context and how to make the most out of your readings of specific art works.

**21–22 September 10–5pm Thursday–Friday,
with an informal presentation at 5pm Friday**

Adam Art Gallery

Shoe School with Louise Clifton

Visit Adam Art Gallery to watch Dunedin-based artist Louise Clifton run her sandal-making workshop. She recently undertook a residency in Japan, where she learnt the art of shoemaking from a Japanese master known for his manufacture of bespoke footwear. At the end of the workshop participants will showcase their results and Louise will introduce how she has adapted her art-school training to running a small craft-based business.

23 September 1–3pm Saturday

Adam Art Gallery

Election day special

Place your vote and then visit the Adam Art Gallery for tea/coffee and snacks to share your thoughts about the election and what you want from a new government.

29 September 7–9pm Friday

Adam Art Gallery

Closing party

Join us for a live gig in *The Tomorrow People* exhibition to mark the final weekend of the exhibition. Cash bar.

Published by the Adam Art Gallery Te Pātaka Toi at Victoria University of Wellington, to accompany the exhibition: *The Tomorrow People*, 22 July–1 October 2017

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Te Adam
Pātaka Art
Toi Gallery

