

17 February 2017

***Out of Site* exhibition of rarely seen New Zealand art**

Adam Art Gallery brings rarely seen artworks from Victoria University of Wellington’s art collection into view in its latest exhibition.

The exhibition presents a selection of works that were displaced due to a cluster of relocations in 2016 following the November earthquake, Karori campus closure, an upgrade of the Collection storeroom and redevelopment work on Victoria’s other campuses.

As a result, over half the University’s 576-piece collection had to be relocated, providing an opportunity for the Gallery to develop the exhibition.

Gallery director Christina Barton says: “*Out of Site: Works from the Victoria University of Wellington Art Collection* allows audiences to see works that are normally hard to find or seldom seen together. Victoria’s Art Collection is always displayed in areas of the University’s campuses that are open to the community, but this exhibition offers the chance to see works placed in relation to the Gallery’s architecture.”



A section from John Reynolds *Looking west, late afternoon, low water* (2007), Victoria University of Wellington Art Collection.

Gallery curator Stephen Cleland says *Out of Site* raises questions about how artists respond to notions of place, and in particular to the University itself.

“The works are specifically chosen for the stories they draw out, the way they relate to their environs through historical association, symbolic allusion, photographic documentation and by site-specific intention.”

The exhibition includes material relating to the Gallery’s custodial role in managing the Collection, putting on show documents that reveal ‘back-of-house’ workings. An example is an array of items relating to *Flying Steps*, a sculpture that previously hung over the Hunter courtyard on the Kelburn campus.

The artist, Neil Dawson, was commissioned by art patrons Sir Roderick and Lady Gillian Deane to create a work that symbolises the journey of gaining higher education, and they

gifted *Flying Steps* to the University in 2000. The sculpture was decommissioned in 2013 after structural issues made it impractical to repair.

Stephen says the inclusion of this material also documents the creation of Dawson's replacement sculpture *Toss*, which currently hangs above the courtyard.

John Reynolds' *Looking West, late afternoon, low water* (2007) is an installation made up of 1,174 canvas tiles, each inscribed with a Māori word or phrase from the Dictionary of New Zealand English (1997), authored by Victoria academic Harry Orsman. Orsman's dictionary is a major work of local scholarship, which reveals how language develops in relation to place. Reynolds arranges his stack of words and expressions into the shape of a whale, resulting in a large-scale painting that reinforces the connection between Māori language and a locale.

Collection manager Sophie Thorn states: "We are still working to find a permanent location for this work. It takes around a week to install, so this is one of the many challenges we face in putting such an expansive artwork on long-term display."

The exhibition also includes a selection drawn from works that had to be relocated from Pipitea campus during the post-earthquake clean up. This grouping of artworks has been curated by students of the new [Summer Intensive workshop](#), run by Christina Barton, which teaches the skills of researching, writing and curating.

What: *Out of Site: Works from the Victoria University of Wellington Art Collection*

When: 18 February – 23 April

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

Cost: Free

www.adamartgallery.org.nz

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