

Julia Morison:  
Head[case]

02.06.20 - 16.08.20

Christchurch-based artist Julia Morison is a leading figure in New Zealand art. Over the past three decades she has built a significant body of works which draw on a range of esoteric knowledge systems, including the Jewish Kabbalah, number symbolism, Hermeticism and Surrealism. From these eclectic reference points, she devises methods of ordering and combining materials, images and symbols to recode their various connotations.

This new installation, *Head[case]*, comprises 114 unique ceramic heads made by the artist since 2011. Each sculpture is modelled on a hat-maker's block and demonstrates Morison's skilful deployment of a range of raw materials and firing processes, from glazed porcelain and clay to oxidised stoneware. Each head is adjusted by incorporating unconventional materials such as artificial hair, rope, pins, chains, rusted springs, glass and wire, and those orifices we recognise as eyes, nose, mouth and ears are treated to a panoply of adjustments. These additions and alterations accentuate and transform the sensory portals through which we mediate our relations with the world and with each other. The effects range from comic to unnerving. In colloquial terms a 'headcase' is someone who has 'lost it' mentally or who is consciously behaving strangely. These aberrant objects suggest altered mental states and transformed modes of communication, they reach out to connect with others by visceral and mutant means. Morison's collection ransacks a range of visual sources from cartoon illustration, to phrenological diagram, to surrealist assemblage, generating responses that are equally diverse. Fascinated, repulsed, amused, we find ourselves in a bizarre 'mental' landscape, an alternative universe of human-to-human relations.

Morison's glazed and painted heads are placed on a large self-supporting shelving system which forms a series of hexagonal 'rooms', configured to the gallery space. As with other bodies of work, Morison utilises the structure of the Sefirothic Tree, a diagram drawn from the Jewish Kabbalah which she has described as 'a conceptual paradigm for understanding everything'. She goes on to suggest: 'Putting that at the core of my practice gives me freedom to admit everything and anything, micro and macro, metaphysical and corporeal, as legitimate content.' This structure requires her to group objects into idiosyncratic families based on colour, materials, shapes and their symbolic associations. Set out in this long narrow space, the installation choreographs our experience, leading us through a maze of timber shelves and stainless-steel rods, forcing us to bend and peer to come face to face with her objects.

Signs, symbols and overarching structural frameworks repeat throughout Morison's work. The head is a potent form that has recurred in other series, such as *Accessories for a Soft Machine – Apertures 1–4* (1987), *Quiddities* (1990) and *100 Headless Woman*

(1995). In *Head[case]* the head is a disembodied vessel, a solid form that is perforated to generate a play between concealment and exposure. Each object, in its unique way, gives physical form to the tension between an inner state of being and a corporeal condition.

**Julia Morison** (1952, Pahiatua) studied at the Wellington Polytechnic, graduating in 1972 with a diploma in graphic design, and went on to gain an honours degree from the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts in 1975. Since then, Morison has exhibited nationally and internationally and been awarded numerous grants and awards, including the Frances Hodgkins Fellowship in 1989, and the prestigious New Zealand Moët & Chandon Fellowship in 1990, which allowed her to travel to France for a year's residency. She chose to make France her base for the following 10 years, returning to take up an appointment as senior lecturer of painting at the University of Canterbury (1999–2007). Morison became a New Zealand Arts Foundation Laureate in 2005. In 2018 she was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM). She lives and works in Christchurch and is represented by Two Rooms, Auckland, and Jonathan Smart Gallery, Christchurch.

L2 Mezzanine

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*Sybil Dreams*, 2018  
Glazed porcelain  
330 × 170 × 195mm

Shelf 1



*Shut up!* 2015  
Glazed stoneware,  
paint, tacks  
320 × 160mm



*Senses interrupted*  
2014  
Glazed stoneware,  
rubber corks  
300 × 150 × 150mm



*Probe* 2015  
Glazed stoneware,  
enamel  
300 × 170 × 170mm

Shelf 2



*Me and mini-me* 2015  
Glazed stoneware  
(2 parts)  
185 × 145 × 160mm;  
small head: 105 ×  
60mm



*Sabre head* 2014  
Glazed stoneware &  
porcelain  
295 × 160 × 210mm



*Trapped in here* 2018  
Glazed stoneware  
275 × 150mm



*Foursight* 2015  
Glazed stoneware, ink,  
varnish  
295 × 150 × 180mm



*360 degrees* 2015  
Glazed stoneware, tin  
paint, ink, varnish  
295 × 250 × 180mm;  
Eyeballs: 55 × 60mm



*Double-header* 2018  
Glazed porcelain  
300 × 140 × 170 mm

Shelf 2 [continued]



*Basket case* 2018  
Glazed stoneware  
300 × 180mm



*Phenological excursion*  
2015  
Glazed ceramics,  
metal screws  
290 × 150mm



*In process...* 2018  
Glazed stoneware  
290 × 160mm

Shelf 3



*Eyes abreast* 2018  
Glazed stoneware  
300 × 130mm



*Antique amphora* 2018  
Glazed stoneware and  
oxidized iron paint  
330 × 170mm

Shelf 4



*Well hung in black*  
2018  
Glazed stoneware  
290 × 180mm



*Well hung* 2018  
Glazed stoneware  
320 × 160mm



*Indigo revolt* 2014  
Glazed stoneware,  
silver leaf  
295 × 160 × 170mm



*Poor, poor sniffer* 2015  
Glazed stoneware  
290 × 145 × 220mm



*Sometimes a pipe is not a pipe* 2015  
Glazed stoneware  
Head: 290 × 150;  
extra part with bell:  
180 × 65; extra part:  
125 × 20mm



*Bridle patch* 2018  
Glazed stoneware  
300 × 130mm



*Space catcher* 2018  
Glazed porcelain,  
vintage castors  
300 × 130mm



*Whimsy on wheels*  
2018  
Glazed porcelain,  
vintage castors  
330 × 135mm



*Red Scream* 2018  
Glazed stoneware  
300 × 185mm



*Punctuation by an inverse* 2018  
Glazed stoneware  
290 × 140 × 175mm



*I may be gone some time* 2014  
Glazed stoneware,  
tin paint, enamel  
290 × 190mm



*Cyclops' choker* 2018  
Glazed stoneware  
290 × 150mm



*An eye for an eye* 2018  
Glazed stoneware,  
glass eye  
340 × 180mm



*Diving into the wreck*  
2017  
Glazed stoneware  
320 × 170 × 190mm



*Cinderhead* 2018  
Glazed stoneware  
270 × 165mm



*Here's looking at you*  
2018  
Glazed stoneware,  
metallic beads  
280 × 220mm



*Snake oil* 2017  
Glazed stoneware  
300 × 150 × 200mm



*Headcheese, lashes*  
2018  
Porcelain, fake hair,  
horse hair, bristles  
500 × 125 × 125mm



*Headcheese, moustache*  
2018  
Porcelain, fake hair,  
horse hair, bristles  
500 × 125 × 125mm



*Headcheese, nosehair*  
2018  
Porcelain, fake hair,  
horse hair, bristles  
500 × 125 × 125mm



*Headcheese, ear hair*  
2018  
Porcelain, fake hair,  
horse hair, bristles  
500 × 125 × 125mm

Bay 1



*Bell pull* 2018  
Glazed oxidised  
stoneware, red cord  
300 × 240mm



*Whirling dervish* 2018  
Glazed stoneware  
280 × 260mm

Bay 2



*The veil of Leah* 2018  
Glazed porcelain  
285 × 160mm



*Blindfold-in-waiting*  
2018  
Glazed porcelain  
285 × 160mm



*Mufflehead* 2018  
Glazed porcelain  
280 × 140mm



*We have an issue* 2018  
Glazed porcelain  
290 × 145mm



*Ruined chalice* 2018  
Glazed stoneware,  
wire, glass  
360 × 165mm



*Headdress* 2018  
Glazed porcelain  
370 × 145mm



*The Changeling* 2018  
Glazed stoneware,  
bristles, horse hair  
315 × 110mm



*Dreamer* 2018  
Glazed porcelain;  
paint  
285 × 150mm

Bay 3



*Sipperupperer* 2018  
Glazed porcelain,  
silk clay, resin  
280 × 190mm; trunk:  
810 × 50mm (has 51  
spheres and one snake  
head)

Bay 4



*Tenderness* 2018  
Glazed porcelain  
280 × 140mm (both  
the same)

Bay 5



*Aslant and sly* 2018  
Glazed porcelain,  
glass eyes  
280 × 155mm



*A mouthful of teeth*  
2018  
Glazed porcelain, tiger  
tail  
290 × 150 × 160mm



*Debutante* 2015  
Glazed porcelain  
315 × 165 × 180mm



*Tearful in rose* 2018  
Glazed stoneware &  
synthetic hair  
280 × 140mm



*Night stand* 2018  
Glazed porcelain  
300 × 125 × 125mm



*Even the walls have  
ears* 2018  
Glazed porcelain,  
cord, tassel  
280 × 195mm



*Corset for a blue lady*  
2018  
Glazed porcelain  
280 × 150mm



*The favourite* 2018  
Glazed porcelain  
300 × 165mm



*Here is the church,  
here is the steeple, open  
the door, here come the  
people* 2018  
Glazed porcelain  
250 × 280mm



*Innards* 2018  
Glazed porcelain  
315 × 190mm



*Gravity's rainbow*  
2018  
Glazed porcelain  
305 × 80mm



*Shame* 2018  
Glazed porcelain  
310 × 150mm



*Cross purpose* 2017  
Glazed porcelain  
300 × 170 × 170mm



*Capital visions* 2015  
Glazed porcelain  
295 × 180mm



*Deadhead* 2018  
Glazed porcelain,  
pennies  
300 × 140 × 180mm



*Dreaming in  
Quatrefoil* 2018  
Glazed porcelain  
240 × 145mm



*Favoured spot* 2018  
Glazed porcelain  
340 x 240mm

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Bay 1



*Flipping the bird* 2018  
Glazed stoneware,  
rubber hose, glass pins  
295 x 230mm  
Trunk: 1600 x 40mm



*The seductions of sonority* 2018  
Glazed porcelain, tin  
paint, metal springs,  
silk clay  
Large: 290 x 650mm  
Small: 470 x 150mm



*Feedback hybrid*™  
2015  
Glazed porcelain, tin  
paint rubber tubing  
290 x 160mm;  
70 x 660mm



*The silver sound of dragees* 2018  
Glazed porcelain, tin  
paint, silver leaf, lead  
300 x 210 x 140mm;  
Shells: 90 x 120mm



*Sound trumpets* 2015  
Glazed porcelain, tin  
paint, wire  
290 x 160mm  
Horns:  
50 x 280mm x 2



*Double blind snout*  
2014  
Glazed stoneware,  
oxidised iron filings  
300 x 160 x 240mm



*Sound pod* 2014  
Glazed stoneware, tin  
paint, horse hair  
300 x 230 x 180mm +  
90 x 500 x 90mm

Bay 3?



*Sliphead* 2018  
Glazed and oxidised  
porcelain  
280 x 180mm



*Headspace* 2018  
Glazed and oxidised  
stoneware  
280 x 170mm

Bay 3 [continued]



*Blue suture* 2018  
Glazed stoneware  
300 × 140mm

Bay 4



*Olfactory whispers*  
2015  
Glazed stoneware,  
rope, wool  
300 × 170 × 170mm



*Rabelais deshabille*  
2018  
Glazed porcelain  
290 × 130 × 210mm



*Royal snot* 2018  
Glazed and oxidised  
stoneware, porcelain,  
chain  
320 × 240mm;  
40 × 40mm

Bay 5



*A nun's face is very like  
a hand mirror* 2018  
Glazed oxidised  
stoneware  
270 × 150mm



*Electric shock* 2018  
Glazed stoneware,  
copper wire  
410 × 450mm



*Tiara for a juvenile  
Medusa* 2018  
Glazed stoneware  
330 × 180 × 120mm



*I have dredged the  
ocean of its tears* 2014  
Glazed stoneware,  
porcelain, wire  
300 × 155 × 195mm



*Vessel for an off-world  
pbrenology* 2018  
Glazed stoneware  
320 × 190mm



*Saline reticulation*  
2018  
Glazed stoneware, tiger  
tail, resin  
285 × 120mm



*Hirsute, auris* 2018  
Glazed porcelain,  
horse hair  
305 × 160mm



*Hirsute, nares* 2018  
Glazed porcelain,  
horse hair  
290 × 170mm



*Hirsute, rictus* 2018  
Glazed porcelain,  
horse hair  
290 × 170mm



*Hirsute, oculi* 2018  
Glazed porcelain,  
horse hair  
290 × 170mm



*Ena & Min* 2014  
Glazed stoneware &  
cat fur felt  
290 × 160mm

Bay 1



*Loose lips sink ships*  
2017  
Glazed and oxidised  
stoneware  
300 × 300 × 190mm



*Clairaudience* 2018  
Glazed and oxidised  
stoneware, wire  
305 × 75 × 850mm

Bay 2



*Stairway to heaven*  
2018  
Glazed and oxidised  
stoneware  
350 × 175 × 135mm



*Weary of screaming*  
2018  
Glazed and oxidised  
stoneware  
280 × 180mm



*Hestia* 2015  
Glazed and oxidised  
stoneware  
300 × 170 × 170mm



*Trapped, by the Old  
Woman* 2014  
Glazed stoneware,  
oxidised iron paint and  
wire  
380 × 340 × 145mm



*Salvage from mortal  
engines* 2018  
Glazed stoneware and  
oxidized iron paint  
295 × 170mm

Bay 3



*Pretty please* 2018  
Glazed and oxidised  
stoneware  
350 × 180mm



*Tongue tasting* 2014  
Glazed stoneware,  
rubber hose and corks  
300 × 230 × 25mm



*If you want it, here  
it is, come and get it*  
2018  
Glazed and oxidised  
stoneware (2 parts)  
275 × 135 × 230mm



*Beans in your ears*  
2018  
Glazed and oxidised  
stoneware, brass, silk  
clay  
260 × 150mm



*Mother has her reasons*  
2018  
Glazed and oxidised  
stoneware  
310 × 280mm

Bay 4



*Intimate consort* 2014  
Glazed and oxidised  
stoneware  
350 × 280mm



*Crowning glory* 2018  
Glazed stoneware,  
air plant [different  
plant to image]  
305 × 145mm

Bay 5



*Difficult passage* 2018  
Glazed stoneware  
310 × 220mm



*Reconstructing Golem*  
2018  
Glazed and oxidised  
stoneware, porcelain,  
chain  
330 × 240mm

Bay 5 [continued]



*Alien life pods* 2018  
Glazed stoneware,  
silk clay  
280 × 210 × 130mm



*Worm eyes* 2018  
Glazed stoneware  
300 × 120mm



*Sound a retreat* 2018  
Glazed stoneware  
300 × 190mm



*Crimping your pie*  
2018  
Glazed stoneware, wire  
305 × 140mm

Bay 6



*Substanceexchange*  
2014  
Glazed stoneware,  
rubber hose and corks  
296 × 3150 × 250mm



*Gawper* 2018  
Glazed porcelain  
260 × 270mm



*Yabbadabba* 2018  
Glazed porcelain  
300 × 120mm



*You cheeky imp, you  
nondescript imp* 2018  
Glazed stoneware,  
bristles  
430 × 130mm



*Noseyparker* 2018  
Glazed stoneware,  
synthetic fibre  
290 × 220mm





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## O B J E C T S P A C E

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Te Adam  
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