

2 June 2020

Suite of new exhibitions reopens Adam Art Gallery after lockdown

A contemporary of composer John Cage and artist Joseph Beuys in the 1960s and 70s Fluxus movement features in a suite of new exhibitions to mark the reopening of Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington’s Adam Art Gallery Te Pātaka Toi.

The Gallery was closed during COVID-19 alert levels 3 and 4.



Ken Friedman was the youngest member of Fluxus, joining the international laboratory for experimental art, architecture, design and music in 1966 and going on to collaborate with Cage, Beuys and other key figures in the movement.

92 Events presents his works spanning four decades, with each event having instructional text to be enacted by whoever reads it—from cleaning a sculpture to making a performance out of paying the bill at a bar.

The texts are “a welcome respite in this current moment, providing a fitting model for new ways of envisaging how art might function as a mental game where the imagination can roam even if our bodies can’t”, says Adam Art Gallery Director Christina Barton.

92 Events is one of four exhibitions in the new show that incorporate language, letters, documents or data.

Dane Mitchell’s *Letters and Documents* creates a new context for the screeds of paper printouts that cascaded from a tower structure during the seven months of his multi-part installation *Post Hoc* representing New Zealand at last year’s 58th Venice Biennale.

In addition to this remainder and reminder of *Post Hoc*'s meditation on loss and retrieval, *Letters and Documents* features early Mitchell works produced between 1998 and 2005 and never before shown together.

Precursors of the themes in *Post Hoc*, the works include drawings, printed documents, vinyl records and photographic documentation to reflect on how information and knowledge is conveyed, exchanged, withheld, remembered and forgotten.

Initiated in the wake of last year's Christchurch shootings, the exhibition *Violent Legalities* presents new interactive maps developed by a team of researchers to visualise violent events in New Zealand's history and track these against a chronology of background legislative changes. The project includes a map narrating the events that led to the 2007 armed police raids on Tūhoe in Te Urewera.

The complex collaborative project, which explores more than 500 incidents and events, supported by hundreds of sources, is ongoing and brings together contributors spanning anthropology, architecture, art and web development.

The fourth exhibition is Julia Morison's *Head[case]*. Organised by Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū and toured with support from Objectspace Auckland, the striking installation, which features 114 unique ceramic heads on a bespoke shelving system and a sound work by John Christoffels, has been reconceived for the Adam Art Gallery.

Welcoming the Adam's reopening, Christina Barton says: "We were fortunate to close our previous exhibitions as planned on Sunday 22 March, and since then we have been working to reschedule our year's programme. Sometimes it pays to belong to a close-knit community, and we are immensely grateful to our lenders, colleagues, artists and collaborators for working with us so graciously and patiently through these stressful times.

"Lockdown created the conditions for reflection. We are coming out of levels 3 and 4 with a renewed commitment to making great exhibitions for people to visit. There is nothing quite like seeing works in the flesh that have been thoughtfully placed together.

"But now we are also working to capitalise on our growing facility in communicating online, bringing content together with watchers, listeners and readers to deepen and extend, reach out and connect. You won't see radical changes to what we do, just subtle shifts as we work to present a public programme designed to be delivered virtually."

During alert level 2, the Gallery will open the reduced hours of Tuesday–Friday, 11 am–5 pm. Access to the Gallery is through Kelburn campus's Gates 3 and 7 and the Mount Street Path. Visitors will not be able to pass through other university buildings unless they have swipe-card access.

Image: Dane Mitchell, Installation view of *Post Hoc*, Venice Biennale, 2019, courtesy of the artist and Mossman, Wellington.

Dane Mitchell: Letters and Documents

Ken Friedman: 92 Events

Fraser Crichton, Mariachiara Ficarelli, Lachlan Kermode, Bhaveeka Madagammana, Davide Mangano, Karamia Müller: Violent Legalities

Julia Morison: Head[case]

2 June–16 August

Free entry

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Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington



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