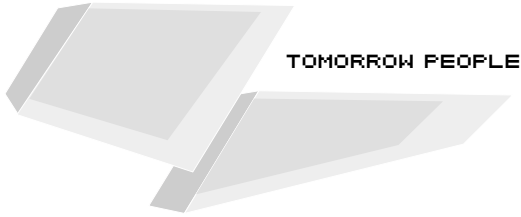


Abstract pink geometric shapes, including triangles and polygons, arranged in a layered, overlapping fashion. The shapes vary in shades of pink, from light to a deeper magenta. They are positioned primarily on the left and bottom of the page, creating a modern, architectural feel.

JOYCE CAMPBELL / VIOLET FAIGAN / GAVIN HIPKINS / SASKIA LEEK / DANIEL MALONE
ANI O'NEILL / RONNIE VAN HOUT // **TOMORROW PEOPLE**



TOMORROW PEOPLE

CURATED BY TESSA LAIRD AND JOYCE CAMPBELL

JOYCE CAMPBELL

VIOLET FAIGAN

GAVIN HIPKINS

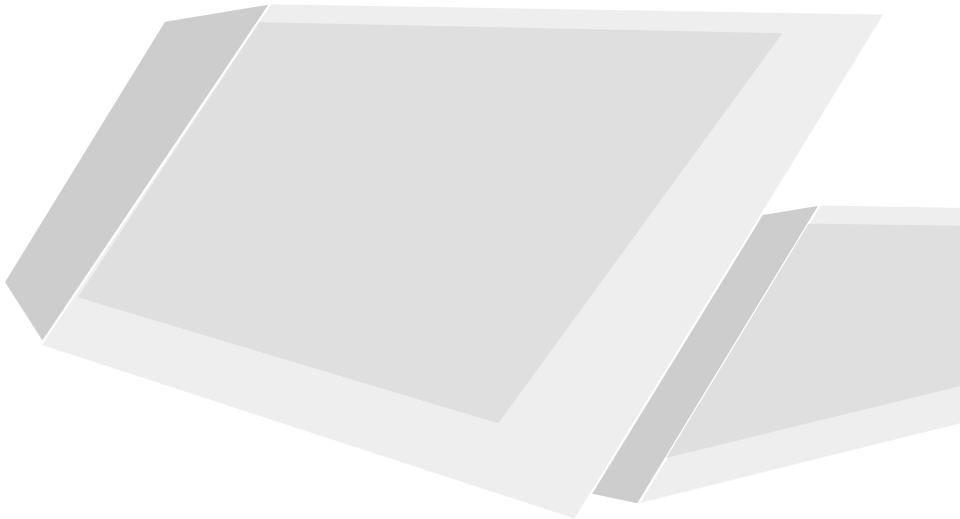
SASKIA LEEK

DANIEL MALONE

ANI O'NEILL

RONNIE VAN HOUT

INTRODUCTION...>



The Tomorrow People have been a long time coming. This exhibition owes its final form to the persistence of managers at the Physics Room in Christchurch, New Zealand and the Lord Mori Gallery in Los Angeles, California, and to the generosity of Creative New Zealand, whose support for this exhibition indicates a broader interest in disseminating the work of New Zealand artists abroad.

The show has its origins in a series of conversations between myself and Anthony Bedard, a San Francisco-based musician and filmmaker, back in 1997. At that time, Anthony and I found ourselves caught in a distended commute between California, USA, and Auckland, New Zealand, both of us fledgling participants in a Trans-Pacific cultural community in which visual artists and musicians cohabited and collaborated, and of which our friendship was a product. We envisioned an exhibition that would bring the fruits of the New Zealand art community to an American audience, already highly receptive to the work of contemporary New Zealand musicians.

Our motivations for initiating an exhibition of contemporary New Zealand art in California were both personal and professional. Anthony was astonished by the energy, humor and irreverence of the visual art he encountered in New Zealand. From my island home I had imagined a world awash with an immense and insurmountably evolved body of contemporary art, an impression fueled by an obligatory diet of *October* and *Artforum*. My move to the US in 1997 had left me newly sensitized to our small community's exceptional productivity and sophisticated critical consciousness.

It was clear that the radical asymmetry of Trans-Pacific cultural exchange had everything to do with the structure of art world distribution systems and absolutely nothing to do with the quality, quantity, or critical resolve of the art produced at either pole. While a healthy underground infrastructure funneled contemporary New Zealand music to a small but deeply committed American public, no such conduit existed to carry contemporary New Zealand visual art across a massive geographic divide. Meanwhile, that which Los Angeles, New York, London, Berlin, Venice and Tokyo transmitted unrelentingly through the international art media, those of us nominally delegated to the cultural periphery consumed and reconstituted with remarkable ingenuity.

We knew that both poles would be enriched if this monologue could be converted into a conversation. We were equally aware that regional surveys are difficult to translate when encountered in an alien location, riveted as they are to the arcane interpersonal logic of their originating art communities. It seemed important that this exhibition be driven largely by the merit of its artist participants, and not by the over-arching logic of a curatorium. What's more, we missed our friends and wanted to join us here, in California as artists rather than tourists.

The Tomorrow People has taken several years to materialize. That it has finally fulfilled its mandate is largely the result of the last minute induction of Tessa Laird, who has also recently repatriated from Auckland to Los Angeles. As a former editor of *LOG Illustrated*, New Zealand's premiere alternative arts publication, Tessa has brought her experience to bear on this publication, which provides a crucial critical context for work largely unfamiliar to a Californian audience. Tessa and I both hope that the audience, whether in New Zealand or the United States, will find the works in this show as rewarding and engaging as we two have.

Joyce Campbell, Los Angeles, September 2001

Wake up you sleepy head
Put on some clothes, shake up your bed
Put another log on the fire for me
I've made some breakfast and coffee
Look out my window and what do I see
A crack in the sky and a hand reaching down to me
All the nightmares came today
And it looks as though they're here to stay



Oh You Pretty Things
Don't you know you're driving your
Mamas and Papas insane
Oh You Pretty Things
Don't you know you're driving your
Mamas and Papas insane
Let me make it plain
You gotta make way for the Homo Superior

Look at your children
See their faces in golden rays
Don't kid yourself they belong to you
They're the start of a coming race
The earth is a bitch
We've finished our news
Homo Sapiens have outgrown their use
All the strangers came today
And it looks as though they're here to stay

**David Bowie, "Oh You Pretty Things,"
from the album *Hunky Dory***

This song was released in 1971, the year I was born. In 1974, the BBC¹ premiered *The Tomorrow People*, a children's science fiction TV show which explored the premise that a new race of people, the Homo Superior, were gradually being born around the world. Set apart from plain wrapper Homo Sapiens by their telepathic abilities, the Tomorrow People formed a small band of undercover heroes, constantly saving the world from alien exploitation. With the help of a supercomputer called TIM, and some technology that was never sufficiently explained, the Tomorrow People were able to teleport simply by grasping their rather fetchingly chunky belts (a friend of mine fashioned one of these out of a matchbox and string when he was a child, back in the days before merchandising, when blowing an egg was considered top-notch juvenile entertainment).

By the time this masterpiece of programming hit New Zealand's screens, most of the artists represented here were at a deeply impressionable age. *The Tomorrow People* boasted a surreal opening credit sequence, featuring super fast (for the day) edits of a fetus, an eye, a flower, and an opening hand, ("A crack in the sky and a hand reaching down to me").² *The Tomorrow People* was every child's favourite spooky show, responsible for both nightmares and daydreams. In particular, the idea that we – the youth – might be "the start of a coming race" was a heady tonic, an antidote to isolation.

¹ Being loyal subjects of Her Majesty, New Zealanders are also subject to the British Broadcasting Service. As time passes, Americanization of our airwaves is (not so) slowly taking over. But there exists a generation in between with an unusual cultural schizophrenia, half-British, half-American, of which the artists represented in *The Tomorrow People* are prime examples.

² Interestingly, Gavin Hipkins superimposed Le Corbusier's sculpture of an open hand with images he took in the Chandigarh rosegardens in *The Trench*, an installation of slides shown at the Physics Room in 1998. Even curiously, the *Tomorrow People*'s title sequence featured two shots of the cross section of a capsicum [trans. bell pepper]. What deeply significant import this had I am not sure, but certainly many of Hipkins' equally random-seeming objects are as likely imbued with deeper symbolism.

There's a sense of loneliness among the Homo Superior of *The Tomorrow People* comparable to the loneliness felt by New Zealand's youth growing up on the world's periphery. The Tomorrow People, like New Zealanders, represent a mere handful of humanity. They have each other, but they are few, so, despite their innate superiority, they are vulnerable. Growing up in New Zealand, where today is tomorrow (New Zealand is a full day ahead of the US and Europe), such delusions of grandeur are normative, a way of coping with geographic distance. We are more uniquely unique, more specially special, than the rest of the world. Our cultural loneliness (90% British colonial, guilt-ridden and flavourless, 10% Maori native, Polynesian and pissed off) is abated by believing that we are somehow ahead of the game. Isolation makes us the bosun in the crow's nest, always the first to sight light or land.

I do not mean to do the artists of this exhibition a disservice by presenting them as a vainglorious bunch of Antipodeans who think that just because they live on the other side of the International Date Line that they encounter new art ideas and movements before the rest of the world.³ But I do suggest that artists the world over posit themselves as some sort of Homo Superior, a consensual collective working daily on memetic, if not genetic, evolution – a tribe of *Macaca fuscata* ("100th monkeys").⁴ Art has always aped telepathy – the attempt to share the contents of your brain with another human being without necessarily resorting to speech. And what could more closely resemble the futuristic notion of teleportation than the peripatetic contemporary artist, forever jaunting around the world on funded junkets?

In fact, "jaunting" is the name given to teleportation in *The Tomorrow People*, which strikes me as a delicious update of Walter Benjamin's flaneurism. The idea of strolling, rambling, inter-dimensionally, appeals to the artist and Homo Superior alike. Daniel Malone based many of his early performance pieces on the idea of the flaneur, exploring the art of losing oneself in the wilderness of a city. Whether this involved breaking in to building sites and taking photographs of his own interventions (usually something very simple, like leaving behind a clutch of boy-blue balloons), or tagging (Malone is now one of Auckland's most sought-after perpetrators of this "crime"), the artist is always tracing a trajectory with action, drawing maps with his feet (a very simian enterprise).⁵

In *A Street Kid Named Desire*, a feature film in progress, Malone maps Auckland, his home city, as a wilderness for immigrants, or rather, makes it a wilderness for its white/polynesian inhabitants by populating it with an all-Asian cast. The film was conceived of at a time when paranoia about Asian immigration in Australasia was rife, reaching its peak with Australia's Pauline Hanson and her blatantly racist "One Nation" party. The only "white" person in the movie is Malone himself, gaining and shedding signifiers (hair, moustache, slanted eyes) faster than globalization. If *Bladerunner* had been directed by Jean-Luc Goddard in Auckland city on a budget of NZ\$5000, it might have looked something like this.

Gavin Hipkins explores a similar territory; desire fraught with fear of change, or, change fraught with fear of desire. Hipkins has been working on series of what he terms "falls" - unedited rolls of film being printed in sequence and left uncut and unedited (apart from in-camera editing). Allowing his camera to linger languidly on the detritus of

³ One of Daniel Malone's early works involved having a stamp made up with the words "It was my idea first" which he then proceeded to apply liberally to various surfaces.

⁴ In this case then, New Zealand operates as a kind of ersatz Koshima Island – a hot bed of hot pools, kumara [trans. yams], and primates with big ideas.

⁵ Feet are also the special province of Picles, which is Malone's sign, and the title for a performance undertaken in the Chung King Road wishing well in 1999, in which two fish were added to the pond with the whimsical hope that at some point, they would swim towards each other from opposite directions, taking the simulacrum of the "Picles" emblem back to its fishy origins.

⁶ Malone is supposedly, infamously, "of Cherokee descent."

everyday living, from light-switch fixtures to pieces of fruit, Hipkins seems to fetishise the simplest, most “innocent” objects. With *The Gulf*, he ups the ante so that there is no mistaking the sexualized yearning of his mise-en-scene: now Internet pornography is interspersed with the achingly irrelevant details of life. Yet, despite Hipkins’ ardently aesthetic co-minglings, reality and fantasy remain separated by an abyss – a gulf – a blue lacuna. The sexualized objects, which are roughly spliced between women-for-sale, serve only to remind and reprove the viewer of the uselessness of their desires. A coiled telephone cord puckers up on the floor, like a Burroughsian orifice demanding succor. It is at once obscene, funny, and sad. Here, Barthes’ famous *punctum* sounds more appropriate in English, it’s the “little prick” that animates every act of voyeurism, haunting every frame of Hipkins’ erotic saga.

If Hipkins is, as critic Robert Leonard has called him, a “poet after Auschwitz,” then Joyce Campbell must be a scientist after Chernobyl. Campbell is a fervent phenomenologist – finding out about the physical properties of matter via photography and film. Or, it could be said that Campbell investigates the physical properties of photography and film via experiments with matter, and it’s just such slippages of perspective that the artist encourages with her ambiguous abstract surfaces. Campbell carefully constructs environments in which she has no control: in the past, she injected microbial matter into sheets of agar, which then grew into delicate, lacy dolies of bacteria. In her most recent series, figures in motion are created by the distribution of colloidal silver off an electrode, creating fiery flares, in counterpoint to the underwater imagery she concurrently pursues. Whether crystallising sodium thiosulphate, dissolving colloidal silver, or deep sea diving,

Campbell attempts to teleport our sensibilities into other realms: chemical, physical, biological, digital, exploring every sphere but the stratosphere, and surely *that’s* just a matter of time. Campbell is the original abstract expressionist, tapping not into her own “subconscious” as a source for lyrical imagery, but into the deeper, primordial urges of the elements themselves.

Ani O’Neill moonwalks backwards into the future. At least, this is how the Maori of Aotearoa/New Zealand see time: you walk backwards into the future because all your past and ancestors are before you. The future is behind your back, and the past is what you have to look forward to. O’Neill, of Rarotongan (Cook Island Maori) and Irish descent, is aware of this responsibility towards the past and also of the nourishment that the past gives to the present. Her art making is informed by traditional practices: *ei katu* (floral wreaths for the head), *tivaevae* (applique bed spreads), and hat and mat weaving. Recently, O’Neill has been concentrating more on the traditions of homecraft, such as crocheted bottle-covers in the shape of dogs, and, for the year of the Snake, cellphone covers in the shape of our slithery friends.

Humor and accessibility motivate this artist to make work that literally touches – or is touched by – the audience. In *Bright Paradise*, the inaugural Triennale of Auckland, O’Neill taught the traditional art of crochet to visitors, constructing a communal work over time. Multi-participant art making, and the concomitant conversation, decentralization of “talent” and dissolving of art world hierarchies, are all part of O’Neill’s practice. Process is as important to the traditional art community as it is for the post-object community, and O’Neill occupies the interstices

7 New Zealand is by no means a topographical desert, but by global standards, it’s somewhat deserted, having a landmass similar to Japan’s, but still less than 4 million inhabitants.

of these two separate movements, bringing them together, creating something with a potential outreach that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Violet Faigan has a similarly redemptive attitude towards the past. Culling thrift stores and opportunity shops with the attitude of a Florence Nightingale rather than an antique dealer, Faigan, like Hipkins, is an undercover animist, rescuing objects from oblivion. Her art, a charitable act of resuscitation, nevertheless feels no pity for the objects that she salvages; pity implies abjection. Rather, Faigan's objects are the carefully preserved remnants of beauty in an abject world. For *The Tomorrow People*, Faigan riffs on the idea of the archivist and the collector, forever constructing "Top Ten Albums Of All Time" lists as an index of personality and worth. Punning on the idea of the "desert island"⁷ as the final resting place for fashion - for what you choose can never change. Wedding archetypal Antipodean isolation with the idea that we are more "specially special", Faigan lets her unique rock 'n' roll smarts shine through in her collection of hand-stitched toweling record covers and her own rendition of The Beach Boys' "In My Room". In a sense, Faigan is the original time traveler, providing access to other eras through a gentle process of combing and styling, creating marvelous tableaux from fashion's amnesia - because on a desert island, nothing ever goes out of style.

Ronnie van Hout knows a thing or two about the past. For a start, he's lived in it longer than any of the other artists in *The Tomorrow People*. Van Hout, though, refuses to grow up. Always the underdog, never the top dog, van Hout's been a sharp-shooter from the periphery of the New Zealand art scene for some twenty years now.

From Elvis and alien abduction, to the rampant eroticisation of potatoes, van Hout's oeuvre has run the gamut from deliciously ridiculous to poignantly pathetic. Van Hout makes sure he laughs at himself before others do, and he always seems to get the last laugh. This self-created role as a kind of art-joker becomes the subject of his lampoons. Van Hout recently dug up an old 1960s *Batman* episode in which Bruce Wayne unwittingly awards an art prize to a chimpanzee that the Joker has entered into a painting competition. Van Hout subsequently made a video of himself painting while wearing a chimp mask, hoping perhaps that in an act of simian simulation his artworld status would be rewarded with a large cash prize. Following a similarly obscure train of thought, the artist dressed up as an ex-alcoholic pooch who discovers the art of sculpting via rehab (thus the character "Sculp D. Dog" is born). Donning a simple dog or chimpanzee mask, van Hout becomes at once sinister and slightly futuristic, promising endless remakes of himself in further guises - Nietzsche's "eternal return" as negotiated via countless *Planet of the Apes* television movies.

Saskia Leek shares some of van Hout's goofy humour, and at least half of his Dutch ancestry.⁸ Leek also eludes the spectre of "growing up", making paintings that fall somewhere between the work of a precocious child and a backwards adult. But while her picture-book vistas of girls and New Zealand native birds on candy-coloured backgrounds appear ingenuous, they are full of subtle references, from B-movie horror, to Moghul-era painting techniques. Resembling nothing more than a series of Ladybird Book illustrations,⁹ only painted while on very strong muscle relaxants, Leek's world exhorts simple pleasures,

⁸ Though she can scarcely be accused of Tulipomania, Leek does dip her hand in the bloempot once or twice, enjoys a liberal smattering of floral imagery, and after gaining notoriety for her sketchy paint application, recently proved to be a dab hand with still lifes and lacquer by the gallon.

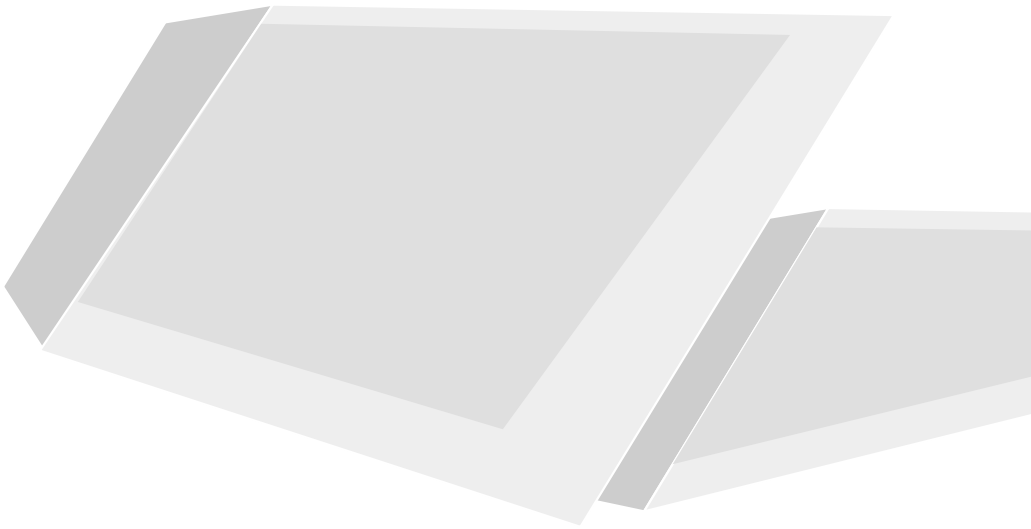
⁹ Remember the Ladybird Books? In which each scene from each fairy tale was painted by perfection seemingly by the same team that work for Komar and Melamid and The Watchtower.

whether your drug of choice happens to be jelly crystals [trans. *Jello crystals*] or Mills and Boon romances.

Leek and the rest of the artists exhibited in The Tomorrow People demonstrate a kind of cultural tenacity, a willingness to re-process and re-present the world around them, as if to train a magnifying glass on their favourite views (even if it means singeing something in the process). While not necessarily the Homo Superior, they are perhaps the first generation of New Zealand artists to have broken through the regionalistic fog which presses down on this island

nation (Aotearoa = "land of the long white cloud"). Jaunting around the globe, this group of artists are settling in pockets here and there: Melbourne, Los Angeles, Vancouver.¹⁰

In each city, they mix with their local counterparts, exhibiting, studying, working, learning how to "pass" as an "international artist." These artists nevertheless share something with each other, a wordless understanding, that does make them subtly different from artists elsewhere. Wherever they go, their internal clocks are ticking one day ahead of time...



¹⁰ "All the nightmares came today/And it looks as though they're here to stay".



JOYCE CAMPBELL

Silver Falling, I, 2001.
8x10 black and white contact photographs.



SASKIA LEEK

Always Beside Me, 2001, watercolour and polyurethane on wood. Photo courtesy Jonathan Smart Gallery, Christchurch.



GAVIN HIPKINS

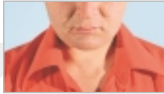
THE GULF(Latina), (detail) 2000-2001, 20 C-type prints.
Number 2 from a series of 7 works.
185 x 205 cm (w x h) installed.
Courtesy Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand



ANI O'NEILL

Polyn8
[The blurriness is just an unavoidable symptom of overloaded interconnecting energy, at least the feet are clear about where they stand!]

IMAGE INDEX...>



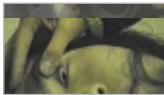
RONNIE VAN HOUT

Self Portrait, Pegasus Print, 2001



VIOLET FAIGAN

The artist in her room, 2001, Photo: Malcolm Deans



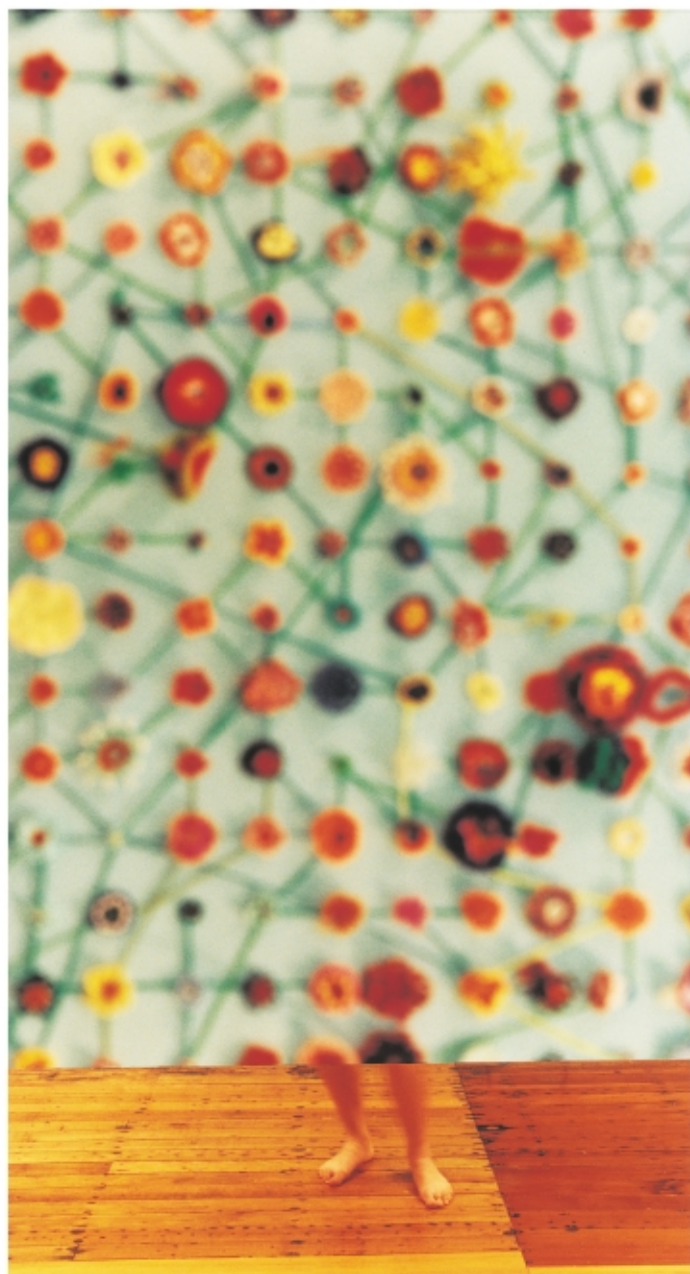
DANIEL MALONE

Stills from a *street kid named Desire* 1996/1998/2001.
Video, various formats, c.90 mins.















DANIEL MALONE

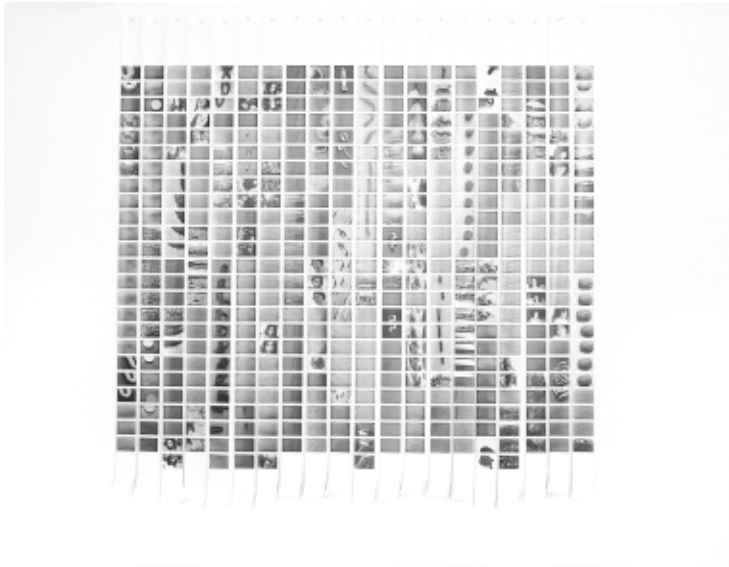
Daniel Malone is Pakeha, born in 1970 in the South Island of Aotearoa. He grew up in Taumarunui in the central North Island and later moved further northward to study in Auckland City. He has degrees in Art History and in Fine Arts from Auckland University and over the past ten years he has exhibited and traveled in various places including Australia, Asia, Europe, Central America and the United States of America, where his father was born of Cherokee descent. He works in any media including performance, sculpture, writing, sound, video, collage and installation. For the last few years he has been teaching at the Manukau Institute of Technology School of Art and Design as the acting Head of Department in Photography. He has enrolled to study at Beijing Culture and Language University in China in 2002.



Stills from a *street kid* named *Desire* 1996/1998/2001. Video, various formats, c.90 mins.

GAVIN HIPKINS

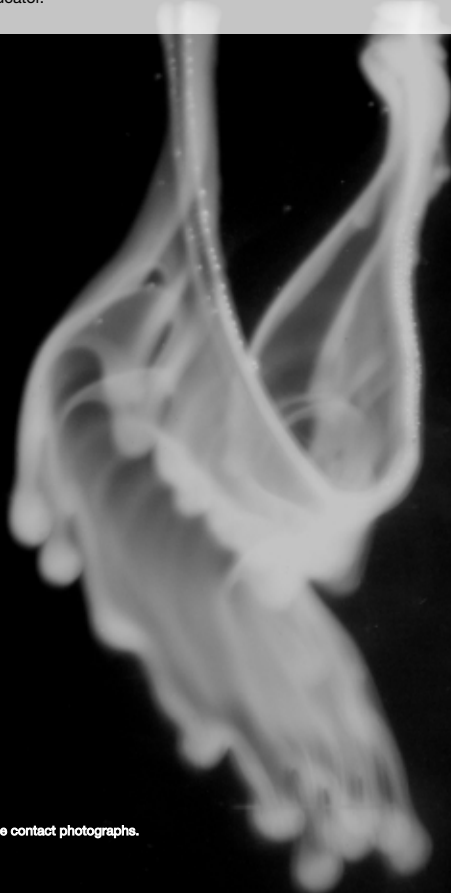
Gavin Hipkins was born in Auckland, New Zealand in 1968. Recent group exhibitions include: *Flight Patterns* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles in 2000; *Arte 2000* at Palazzo Re Rebaudengo, Guarene d' Alba, Italy; Eleventh Biennale of Sydney at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia in 1998; and the first Auckland Triennial at the Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland in 2001. His work has been reviewed in international art magazines including *Artforum*, *Artext*, *Art Journal* and *Creative Camera*. He is currently based in Vancouver working on a series of photographs entitled *The Next Cabin*.



THE GULF(Latina), 2000-2001, 20 C-type prints. Number 2 from a series of 7 works. 185 x 205 cm (w x h) installed. Courtesy Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand

JOYCE CAMPBELL

Joyce Campbell was born in Wairoa in 1971. She has degrees from Ilam, Canterbury University School of Fine Arts, (BFA 1992) and Elam, Auckland University School of Fine Arts, (MFA 1999) with a stint at University of California San Diego. She has shown work in *Art Now* at The Museum of New Zealand in 1994, the Eleventh Biennale of Sydney at the Gallery of New South Wales in 1998, the Asia Pacific Triennial Screen Culture series in 1999, and was the Govert Brewster Artist in Residence in New Plymouth, New Zealand for 2001. Campbell currently resides in Los Angeles and works as an art educator.



Silver Falling, II, 2001. 8x10 black and white contact photographs.

ANI O'NEILL

Ani O'Neill was born in Auckland, NZ in 1971. She is of Cook Islands and Irish descent, and lives and works in Auckland (when she is not stranded in Los Angeles because of acts of terrorism against the United States of America and their pathetic plans to retaliate...).

Her most recent exhibition *Doodles* (not a narrative, a story), chain-stitched especially for politically retarded Los Angeles, might have to come down way early dude, due to more idiotic macho ego / capitalist bollocks. Her final statement? "I wanna go home".

Ani is actually a well respected, competent, compelling, compassionate and style artist in the Asia Pacific region (cf. LA) who wants the world to wake up and smell the love, and not be afraid to surrender to it...who really needs to learn how to crochet now huh?



PolynGNR8 [vibey and zappy and sorta domestic vortex, like a projection interforce area...kinda like pollen generation too aye?]
[the 8 in the titles refer to '4 EVA!!!' there is always a tomorrow...]



VIOLET FAIGAN

Violet Faigan was born in Timaru in 1970. She has been exhibiting since 1994, working mainly in installation and often including sound elements, sometimes the artist's own voice. Traditional woman's craft techniques are often employed and found or pre-used materials are favored. Recent shows include: *mostess*, Room 401, Auckland, 2001, *help*, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 2001, *78 sounds old*, Penthouse and Pavement Gallery, Melbourne, Australia.


Installation detail from *78 sounds old*, 2001, stereo, hand cut acetate picture discs. Photo: Malcolm Deans

SASKIA LEEK

Saskia Leek's finest moments include: winning first prize in the easter bonnet competition at George Street Normal School in 1976; achieving almost a full page photo on the front of the *Otago Daily Times* "using some tortured *Guernica*-style anti-nukes graffiti I'd done to pick up two different boys when I was 16"; and her first ride on the log flume at Rainbow's End.



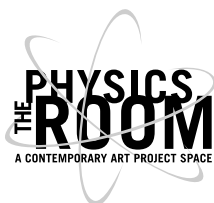
Always Beside Me, (detail) 2001, watercolour and polyurethane on wood. Photo courtesy Jonathan Smart Gallery, Christchurch.



RONNIE VAN HOUT

Ronnie van Hout is a New Zealand-born artist currently living in Melbourne, Australia. His work is represented by Hamish McKay in Wellington, Ivan Anthony in Auckland and Darren Knight in Sydney. His lavish lifestyle is funded from both personal and private means, allowing for an extensive international art profile. This effectively means a lifestyle of constant travel. Between the parties and the flights, he maintains an all day/night contact with the factory-like atmosphere of his studio via the Internet, where his talented and dedicated assistants continue to complete the many projects this artist is undertaking at any one time. His successes are too numerous to mention here.

Sculp D. Dog, Pegasus Print, 2001



ph +64 3 379 5583 / fax +64 3 379 6063
email physicsroom@physicsroom.org.nz / <http://www.physicsroom.org.nz>
2nd Floor, 209 Tuam St / PO Box 22 351, Christchurch, New Zealand

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