

Share/ Cheat/ Unite

Gemma Banks, Yu-Cheng Chou, Chim↑Pom, Sasha Huber,
Anibal López (A-153167), Pilvi Takala, & Johnson Witehira

An exhibition developed in conversation between The Physics Room and Te Tuhi

2 September – 8 October 2017

**THE
PHYSICS
ROOM** CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE

te tuhi

Artist Biographies

Gemma Banks is a Christchurch-based multi-disciplinary artist who graduated with a BFA at Ilam School of Fine Art in 2016, where she is now completing her honours in Graphic Design. A prevalent methodology in her work is the questioning of perceived reality and the proposal of alternative realities through multiple narrative and storytelling techniques.

Yu-Cheng Chou (b. 1976, Taipei) studied at the l'Ecole Nationale Superieure des Beaux-arts de Paris, and the research program – La Seine. He specialises in the interplay between aesthetics and society. Chou's artworks take various forms, wherein he often plays the role of the 'intermediary' in contrast to what he considers the main 'body' of his works – the individuals, enterprises, institutions, and organisations – that he negotiates with and for.

Chim↑Pom is an artist collective formed in 2005 in Tokyo with members Ryuta Ushiro, Yasutaka Hayashi, Ellie, Masataka Okada, Motomu Inaoka, and Toshinori Mizuno. Responding instinctively to the "real" of their times, Chim↑Pom has continuously released works that intervene in contemporary society with strong social messages. In addition to participating in exhibitions throughout the world, they develop various independent projects.

Sasha Huber (b. 1975, Zurich) is a visual artist of Swiss-Haitian heritage. She lives and works in Helsinki. Huber's work is primarily concerned with the politics of memory and belonging, particularly in relation to colonial residue left in the environment. Sensitive to the subtle threads connecting history and the present, she uses and responds to archival material within a layered creative practice that encompasses video, photography, collaborations with researchers, and performance-based interventions.

Anibal López (A-153167) (1964 – 2014) Born in Guatemala, Lopez takes the site of Guatemala City as his primary focus. His work considers and questions codes of information and communication. Group exhibitions at the international level include the Bienal de Pontevedra (2010), the biennale in Porto Allegre (2007), the Prague Biennale (2003) and the Venice Biennale (2001), where he was awarded the Golden Lion as Best Young Artist. In 2012, he exhibited in dOCUMENTA (13), Kassel.

Pilvi Takala (b.1981, Helsinki) lives and works in Berlin and Helsinki. Takala uses performative interventions as a means to process social structures and question the normative rules and truths of our behaviour in different cultural contexts. Her works emerge out of research in a certain community and then reach out to a wider audience through different media, including video. Her works clearly show that it is often possible to learn about the implicit rules of a social situation only by its disruption.

Johnson Witehira is an artist and designer of Tamahaki (Ngāti Hinekura), Ngā Puhī (Ngai-tū-te-auru), Ngāti Haua and New Zealand European descent. His interest in Māori visual art led him to Massey University where he completed a doctorate (2013) that explored both the aesthetics and tikanga in customary Māori art. As an artist Witehira's work often explores identity and the space between cultures.

The Physics Room is proud to present Share / Cheat / Unite, an exhibition developed in conversation between The Physics Room and Te Tuhi.

The first iteration of Share / Cheat / Unite was shown at Te Tuhi, 13 August – 23 October 2016.

te tuhi

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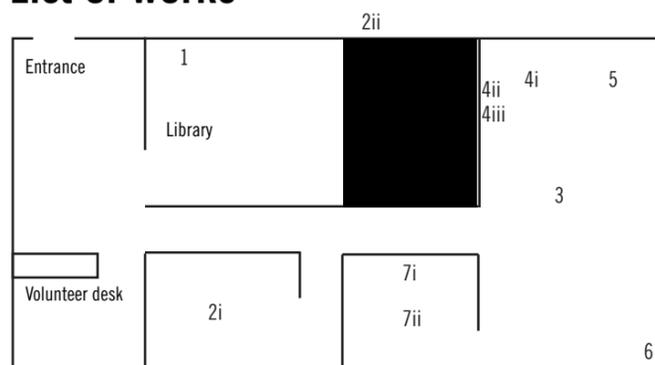
signtech
the signmasters

THE CRATER RIM

three boys

Printing: M/K Press Ltd, 2017

List of works



1. Anibal López (A-1 53167)

Testimonio, 2012, single channel video, 43:39 minutes. Courtesy of Prometeo Gallery, Italy.

2. Gemma Banks

Lola in Orb IP/SP, 2017

(i) single channel video, 7:00 minutes

(ii) single channel video, 7:00 minutes

(iii) Artist page work poster campaign located in the Christchurch Innovation Precinct, 3 September – 8 October.

3. Yu-Cheng Chou

A Working History Lu Chieh-Te, 2012, installation consisting of: booklet (Chinese & English), 130 x 210mm, 210 pages; pattern painted on wooden deck, 2700 x 2700mm. Commissioned by Taipei Contemporary Art Centre in Taipei for the exhibition *Trading Futures*, 2012. Commissioned by Te Tuhi in Auckland for the exhibition *Share / Cheat / Unite*, 2016.

4. Chim↑Pom

(i) *Making the Sky of Hiroshima "PIKA!"*, 2009, single channel video, 5:35 minutes.

(ii) *Untitled*, 2009, paper, pencil, colored pencil, 312 x 201mm.

(iii) *Why Can't We Make the Sky of Hiroshima "PIKA!"?*, 2009, publication.

5. Pilvi Takala

Drive with care, 2013, single channel video, 13:00 minutes. Courtesy of the artist and Helsinki Contemporary.

6. Johnson Witehira

Half-blood, 2016, two channel playable artwork.

7. Sasha Huber

(i) *Karakia – the resetting ceremony*, 2015, single-channel digital video, 5:20 minutes, featuring Jeff Mahuika (Kāti Māhaki, Poutini Kāi Tahu).

(ii) *AGASSIZ DOWN UNDER POSTER*, 2017, Take away poster #3: The Physics Room, Christchurch, NZ, Edition of 100, 420 x 600mm.

Share / Cheat / Unite

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An exhibition developed in conversation between The Physics Room and Te Tuhi

Share / Cheat / Unite is a collaborative exhibition developed between Te Tuhi and The Physics Room. Featuring international and New Zealand-based artists, the exhibition delves into the human psyche to consider how altruism, cheating, and group formation play a key role in shaping society, but not necessarily in the ways we might assume.

First shown at Te Tuhi in Auckland last August, this version of *Share / Cheat / Unite* brings a new selection of artists together to create different inter-work connections and develop aspects of the original exhibition. Three artists remain from Te Tuhi: Anibal López (A-1 53167), Yu-Cheng Chou, and Sasha Huber, and four have been introduced: Gemma Banks, Chim↑Pom, Pilvi Takala, and Johnson Witehira.

This iteration of *Share / Cheat / Unite* focuses on communication strategies and the use of language in the service of persuasion, coercion, and reconciliation. A new commission by Christchurch-based artist Gemma Banks situates these ideas in The Physics Room's immediate environment of the post-quake 'Innovation Precinct'; a model of neo-liberal urban development designed to legitimize and maximize productivity through a language of creativity. Banks' interwoven narratives trace movement through the carefully planned area. Pilvi Takala's *Drive With Care* also takes a heavily controlled environment as its subject. The welcoming signage for an elite private school in the United States where Takala spent time undercover as a teacher, reads 'DRIVE WITH CARE CHILDREN AND DOGS EVERYWHERE', as the work continues we learn that this is just the very beginning of the ruling apparatus that dictates life at the school for teachers and students.

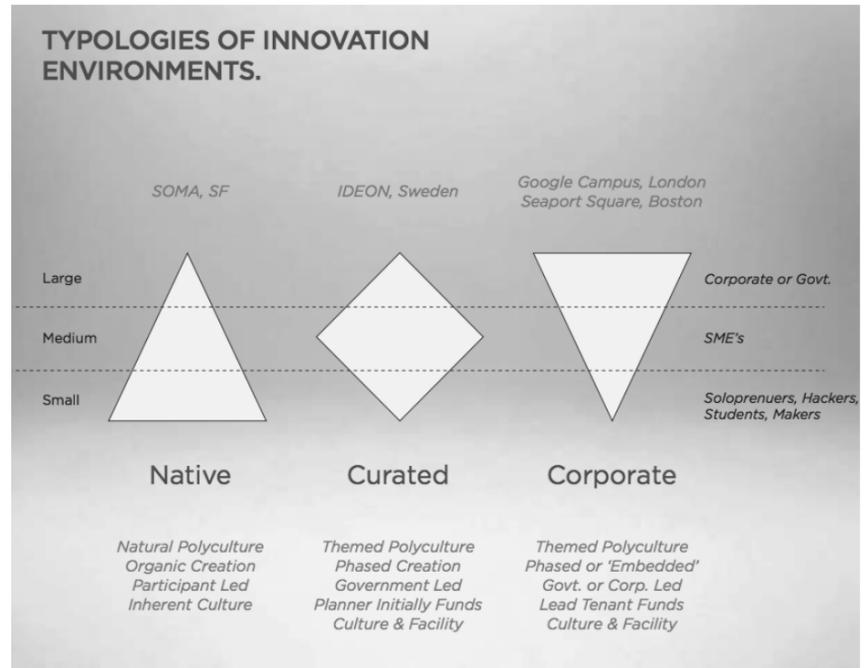
It is the system's Foucauldian reliance on language to uphold its values that the artists of *Share / Cheat / Unite* broadly address. Yu-Cheng Chou, Anibal López (A-1 53167), and Pilvi Takala focus on the human consequences of a market that privileges and valorizes certain forms of labour, while Johnson Witehira, Sasha Huber, and Chim↑Pom challenge the ongoing, and traumatic, effects of language within histories of inequitable power relations. Each artist in *Share / Cheat / Unite* capitalizes on the system's paradoxical relationship to creativity – the artist at once precarious and unusually mobile – to operate with one foot in the sphere of creative practice, and one foot out, employing guerilla tactics to actively share, cheat, and unite.

Yu-Cheng Chou's *A Working History Lu Chieh-Te* focuses on the precarity of labour for a generation of aging workers in Taipei by telling the story of Mr Lu, a man Chou hired via a newspaper advertisement to work on a temporary basis as a gallery worker. The pattern of Mr Lu's signature jersey becomes the pattern for the abstract painting on the stage. Through the biographical publication of Mr Lu's working history and the adaptation of his workaday clothes into an artwork, Chou amplifies the value of the experiences of the often unseen working class. Anibal López (A-1 53167) has also intervened in the market in *Testimonio* by inviting a Guatemalan 'sicario' – a contract killer – to speak about his job in a live question and answer event at dOCUMENTA 13 in Kassel, Germany. The work brings two seemingly disparate worlds together in a room, and on one level raises a number of questions around the flows of 'Art World' financial capital in relation to ethical labour – how is it that a publically funded exhibition is justified in paying for a contract killer to fly to another country to speak about his life? Questions from the audience range from the banal to the spiritual and despite the visibly emotionally affective quality of the experience it cannot be denied that those present are somehow intricately and invisibly complicit.

In *Making the Sky of Hiroshima "PIKA!"*, Chim↑Pom take a similarly direct approach in an attempt to influence dominant discourse. Commissioned by the Hiroshima Museum to create an exhibition in 2008, the Tokyo-based collective hired a plane to skywrite the word 'Pika' [ピカッ] over the Hiroshima Peace Memorial. Pronounced 'p'kah!' – meaning 'flash' – the ethereal white text referenced the atomic attack perpetrated by the United States at the close of World War Two. The public reaction was immediate and irate. The ambush-like appearance of the traumatic word challenged Japanese taboos around the contentious history and as a result the exhibition was cancelled by the museum. In response to the furore, Chim↑Pom actively engaged the survivors of the attack to investigate the trauma involved with the societally closed discussion of the horrific event. The resulting publication, *Why Can't We Make The Sky Pika?* documents this reconciliatory process with the affected communities.

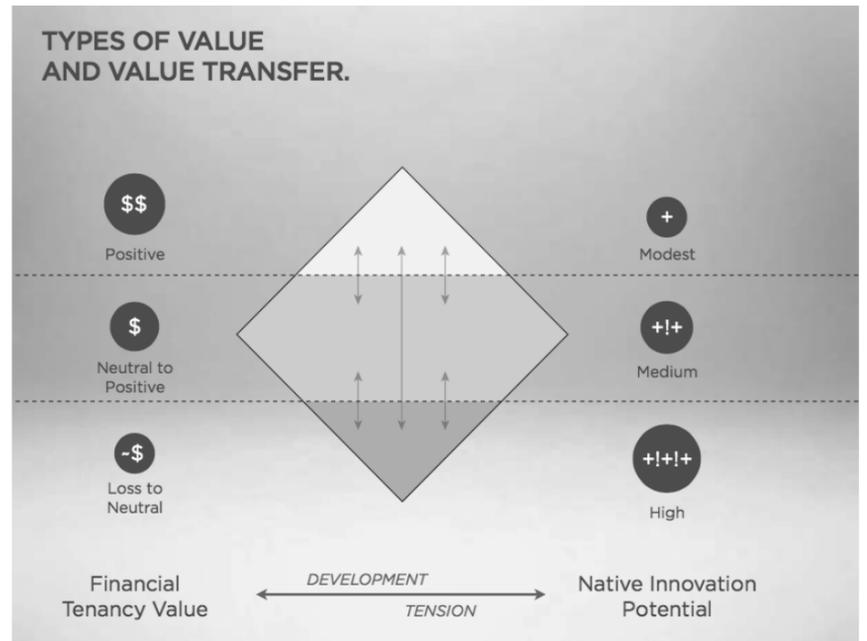
The power of language to hurt and heal is also explored in Sasha Huber's *Karakia: The Resetting Ceremony*. The video is part of a larger continuing project entitled, 'Demounting Louis Agassiz', which consists of Huber travelling around the world to spread awareness of landmarks and monuments named after the racist Swiss geologist. While alive, Agassiz lectured on the scientific duty to establish a hierarchy among the races and promulgated the thesis that Africa had never developed a civilised society.¹ While in Aotearoa, Huber travelled with Ngāi Tahu pounamu carver Jeff Mahuika, to the 'Agassiz Glacier' between Kā Roimata a Hine Hukatere (Franz Josef Glacier) and Te Moeka o Tuawe (Fox Glacier) where Mahuika offered a karakia blessing to symbolically un-name the glacier and free it of its association with Agassiz and his racism. Johnson Witehira's *Half-blood*, based on, and referencing, historical accounts of pre and post contact Aotearoa explores the stories we are told, and the stories we tell ourselves. In one version of the playable artwork, Thomas, a pākeha coloniser, is greeted by Tangata Whenua and the conversation on the shore quickly establishes the priorities of the newly arrived European. Thomas is there to spread the word of God to the 'savages' – in the work the he achieves this by flinging bibles at the indigenous population and absorbing their tongues to sustain his own existence. The player controlling Thomas conducts this violent assimilation of one culture by another by quite literally stealing their means of expression.

¹KARAKIA - THE RESETTING CEREMONY, <http://www.sashahuber.com/?cat=10046>



1.3 Urban Morphology + Character

The Innovation Precinct area had a history that led it to become one of the best parts of urban Christchurch, with a fine grained urban character enlivened by an array of boutique shopping, food and beverage and creative enterprise. It is an area where there has been (and will be) an attraction, a value and a quality of living and working.



1.9 Species of Spaces

Different types of spaces have different amounts of native innovation potential, and will produce different results when grouped in different amounts. The different types of spaces can be thought of as 'The Oak', 'The Friesian', 'The Racehorse' and 'The Falcon'. A species native potential can be augmented through activation.

Species	Form	Behaviour	Example	Native Innovation Potential
'The Oak'	A separate building with a single tenant.	Is large, strong, stays in the same place	Any corporate HQ	+
'The Friesian'	A shared building, individual tenancies	Highly productive, the backbone of our economy but tends to do the same thing, in the same general place.	Any corporate/SME not large enough to occupy an entire building alone	++
'The Racehorse'	A shared building, blended tenancies	Capable of going fast and far. Powerful. Tends to limit itself to proven roads and tracks.	GRID 70	+++
'The Falcon'	Shared Spaces, Blended Tenancies	Can go anywhere in the fastest possible time, point-to-point. Small and agile, but limited carrying power	WeWork	++++

Images from A 'Spatial Framework' for Christchurch's Innovation Precinct (Te Puna Rereketanga), V4, 2014, MBIE. Retrieved from <http://www.mbie.govt.nz/info-services/infrastructure-growth/canterbury-recovery/documents-image-library/spatial-framework.pdf>