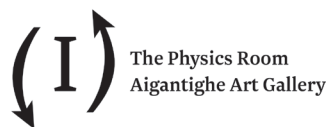


(Un)conditional

Ana Iti
Clara Wells
Kerry Ann Lee
Miranda Parkes
and Tim McLaughlin

9 September - 21 October 2018

**THE
PHYSICS
ROOM** CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE



(Un)conditional V

Ana Iti, Clara Wells, Kerry Ann Lee, Miranda Parkes, Tim McLaughlin

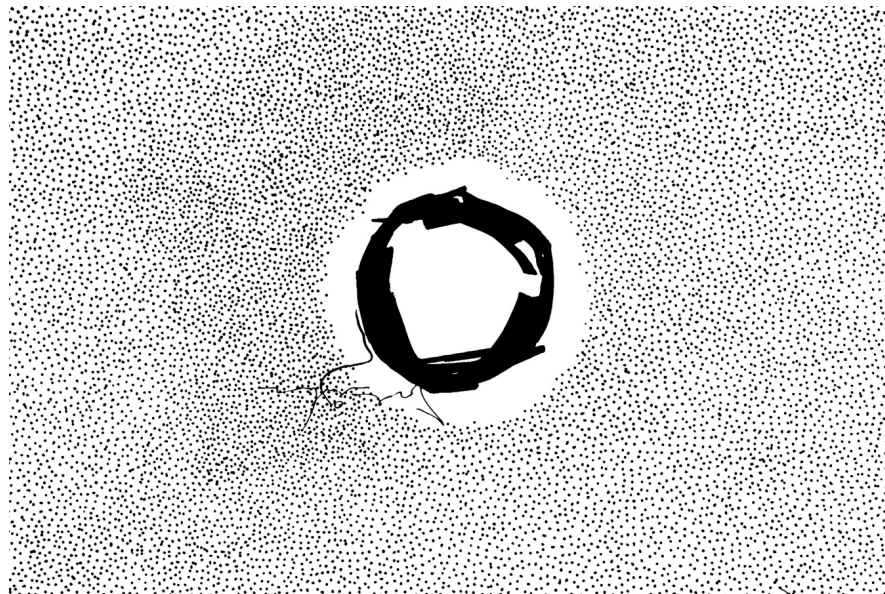
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This exhibition is a partnership between The Physics Room and The Aigantighe Art Gallery.

Acknowledgements:

Thank you to the team at the Aigantighe, staff and volunteers, and to the Friends of the Aigantighe for their support of this exhibition.

Additional thanks to Blue Monday Collective for designing the logo for the (Un)conditional series.



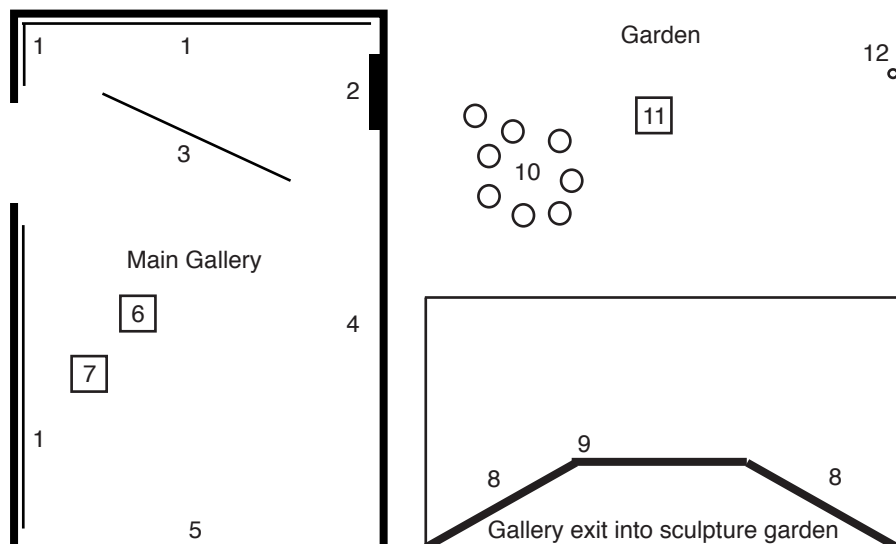
Clara Wells, *Noise Through Spaces* (still), hand drawn animation, 2018.



ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND TOI AOTEAROA

(Un)conditional design by Blue Monday Collective

Works List:



1. Ana Iti, *Dreams of a type of beach*, 2018, text, acrylic, dimensions variable.
2. Kerry Ann Lee, *Caroline Bay Dining Room Menu*, 2018, limited edition printed publication.
3. Kerry Ann Lee, *Same Same, But Different*, 2017, mixed media installation.
4. Miranda Parkes, *the golden hour*, 2018, gold leaf on perspex.
5. Clara Wells, *Noise Through Spaces*, 2018, hand drawn animation (2 min 13 sec).
6. Tim McLaughlin, *Juniper*, 2018, 110 x 185 x 335mm, white stoneware with blushed glaze.
7. Tim McLaughlin, *Marella*, 2018, 160 x 117 x 300mm, white stoneware with blushed glaze.
8. Ana Iti, *Dreams of a type of beach*, 2018, text, acrylic, dimensions variable.
9. Clara Wells, *Noise Through Spaces*, 2018, audio (2 min 13 sec).
10. Miranda Parkes, *daydream catchers*, 2018, 8 pieces, each 230 mm in diameter, gold leaf, silver leaf, mirror leaf and varnish on steel. Daily location may differ.
11. Kerry Ann Lee, *The Bay Hill Times Gazette*, 2018, limited edition printed publication.
12. Tim McLaughlin, *Cora*, 2018, 115mm x 290mm, white stoneware with blushed glaze.

Artist Bios:

Ana Iti (Te Rarawa) is an artist based in Te-Whanganui-a-Tara. Often employing sculpture, video and text, the artist's recent work explores the practice of history-making through shared and personal narratives, attempting to open up space for more subjective experiences and feeling. Iti graduated from Ilam School of Fine Arts with a BFA in 2012 and is currently studying towards a MFA at Massey University Wellington. Recent exhibitions include *The Old and The New*, (2017) SCAPE Public Art Season, Christchurch (group), *All the way to Te Rerenga Wairua*, Mason's Screen, Wellington (solo).

Clara Wells is a Christchurch-based artist working primarily with motion-based mediums. Since graduating from the University of Canterbury with an MFA she has continued with her experimental, method-heavy practice in the form of hand drawn animation and installation art. The work combines traditional animation techniques with the contemporary difficulties of digital media and human nature. In recent years, Clara has had two works selected for the National Contemporary Art Award (*Monochronic*, 2016, *Flux*, 2017) and two more have received merit awards at the Parkin Drawing Prize (*Swarm Frequency*, 2015, *Parramatta Automatic*, 2017).

Kerry Ann Lee is a visual artist, designer and educator from Wellington, New Zealand. With a background in graphic art, Lee uses both traditional and digital media to create installation, print, and image-based works that are expressive and socially engaged. Her art meditates on themes of home, difference, and hybridity through a range of media and locations. She works as a senior lecturer in Design and researcher at Massey University College of Creative Arts in Wellington, New Zealand. Recent exhibitions include *Fruits in the Backwater* at Pātaka Art +Museum, Porirua (2017), *In Praise of Weird Wonders*, Bartley + Company Art, Wellington (2017), and *Foreign Correspondence*, Whitespace Contemporary (2017).

Miranda Parkes has been practicing as a professional artist since graduating with a MFA (Distinction) in painting from the University of Canterbury in 2005. Her diverse practice includes painting, large-scale installation, video, and work in public space. Recent exhibitions include *the merrier*, Hocken Collections, Dunedin (2017), *Pocket Star* at State of Princes, Dunedin (2015), *Stargazer* at Yuill/Crowley, Sydney (2015). Parkes was the Frances Hodgkins Fellow (2016), Olivia Spencer Bower Foundation Art Awardee (2013), Tylee Cottage Fellow, Whanganui (2009) and the William Hodges Fellow, Southland (2007).

Tim McLaughlin is a Christchurch-based artist who completed a BFA in sculpture from the University of Canterbury in 2016. Through his practice, he experiments with objects and materials which mimic the feelings of bodily sensations and play off the desire to touch. His works utilise movements between textures—soft and hard, glossy and matte—to draw on the colours and textures of natural and physical source material.

(Un)conditional V

(Un)conditional V is a continuation of The Physics Room’s itinerant 2018 programme which is based on the establishment of partnerships with a number of public galleries across Te Waipounamu, the South Island to create collaborative exhibitions. Working outside of Ōtautahi Christchurch has led to opportunities to develop new relationships and learn from the expertise of the staff at The Suter Art Gallery (Nelson), Ashburton Art Gallery, and the Aigantighe Art Gallery.

Every *(Un)conditional* exhibition requires us to approach the unique character and audiences of each place. The importance of place and location is underscored by the current situation at the Aigantighe where the historic house gallery has been closed to the public since March 2017. *(Un)conditional V* responds to these spatial practicalities as provocations by inviting each artist to create work for the Aigantighe’s sculpture garden, as well as the main gallery space.

Earlier this year, we invited artists Ana Iti, Clara Wells, Kerry Ann Lee, Miranda Parkes, and Tim McLaughlin to participate in the project by presenting two exhibitions, one in Ōtautahi Christchurch and one in Timaru. For the *(Un)conditional* series we have adopted a mode of working which is intended to be open, we aim to generate access and fold the operational aspects of the collaboration into the curatorial premise. The first *(Un)conditional* exhibition in Ōtautahi brought the Aigantighe’s collection into conversation with works by Iti, Wells, Lee, Parkes, and McLaughlin. In a neat mirroring movement, this exhibition returns new works to the space of the collaboration, the Aigantighe Art Gallery itself, as individual projects converge on the site of the gallery and the garden.

Each artist has followed their own lines of enquiry to develop work for this exhibition and each brings their own approach to the process of presenting work across two spaces: the gallery and the garden. This exhibition-making framework prioritises process by asking the artists involved to respond to the specific site, the collected archive, and the ideas of exchange contained within the *(Un)conditional* premise. As Susan Lowish writes, “the thing about archives is that they are not only documents in institutions, or files in a computer, but they are also deeply personal, for subject, creator and audience; they are sources of pride, celebration and happiness”.¹

In April, for *(Un)conditional I*, Iti selected Marilynn Webb’s *Self Portrait for the Memory of Simon Buis*, a xerox copy of a photograph of Webb taken by Buis, and presented it alongside her own audio work, *Cast measurement aside*. Now, in September, Iti works again from Webb’s self-portrait as source material, presenting a text work which combines multiple types of writing including: text about a famous photo by Simon Buis, information from the Aigantighe’s collection catalogue, and historical records concerning the garden. *Dreams of a type of beach*, the final work, is an assemblage of textual association which combs and harvests written archives for words that resonate as tactile and aesthetic/visual signifiers. Iti presents the work as a linguistic unit but also as a fragmented catalogue of sounds and sensations that evoke material properties such as colour, texture, and surface. Using this language she explores the archive as an embodied experience of familiar sites and spaces.

Iti’s work is presented as a frieze in the gallery space, as well as being applied to the windows facing the garden. A colonial construct in and of itself, the Aigantighe’s public garden is referred to in the text using the reference point of the kahuku or Monarch butterfly who flock together when the air temperature drops and spend their winter in the trees of the garden each year. A self-settler, the kahuku came here on their own and are therefore considered a native species. Experienced across both spaces, the gallery and the garden, the work becomes an unfolding of meaning and memory through written histories which capture physical phenomena.



Ana Iti, *Dreams of a type of beach*, 2018.

For *(Un)conditional V* each artist was invited to approach and negotiate the spaces in a way that resonated with their practice and without instruction. In this spirit, Clara Wells connects the gallery and garden with *Noise Through Spaces* which co-opts the space between the two works to explore communication and context. Wells presents *Noise Through Spaces* in two parts: the visual element in the gallery and the audio element in garden. The works share the same conceit, an exploration of the complex relationship between environment, subject, and information. A key starting point for this project was sound artist Yolande Harris’ critique of scientific studies of whale song which were published in the 1970s. The studies employed a methodology that separated recordings of whale song from the soundscapes they occurred in, thereby privileging the whale song over the ocean context by eliminating ‘background noise’. This separation of text and context created a disjunctive and hierarchical relationship between the forms of communication and its generative environment. Both of Wells’ works draw on a range of communication systems including morse code, asemic writing, and radar; by presenting them across two spaces Wells allows the works to dissociate from one another and define their own environment. Wells invites the viewer to read the works separately or together with an awareness that some part of each experience will be lost by suspending viewership across the physical space of the Aigantighe.

Kerry Ann Lee’s works for the gallery and the garden construct a personal history from a public archive. Together Lee’s works, *Same Same, But Different*, *Caroline Bay Dining Room Menu*, and *The Bay Hill Times Gazette*, assemble a composite image of her father by mining past issues of *The Timaru Herald*, the collection of the South Canterbury Museum, and her father’s own collection of ephemera from his time in Timaru. Lee’s father, a first generation Chinese immigrant and citizen of Timaru between 1967-70, worked at the Caroline Bay Dining Room in Timaru while taking regular trips to Christchurch to buy books and magazines from the Chinese grocers there. Lee’s work in the gallery space re-presents her work *Same Same, But Different* (2017), a series of images from recipe books and stock photo websites hung mobile-like, alongside a reproduction of her father’s copy of the Caroline Bay Dining Room Menu, replete with handwritten corrections (the removal of “Kornies and Fruit”; the addition of “Spring roll and chips”). Likewise, her work for the garden, *The Bay Hill Times Gazette*, is a free publication composed of snippets from *The Timaru Herald* and the South Canterbury Museum’s collection of music ephemera and gig posters between 1967-70, as well as an interview between Lee and her father discussing his time in Timaru. Lee invites the viewer to take a copy of the *Caroline Bay Dining Room Menu* or the newly created *Bay Hill Times Gazette* away—together these works persist with re-publishing and reconstructing the Timaru of her father’s era while offering a carefully composed, hybrid history back into the public domain and into personal archives across Timaru.



Kerry Ann Lee, *The Bay Hill Times Gazette*, 2018.

Miranda Parkes’ *the golden hour* plays with the modernist premise of the grid, building an ebullient square panel of gold leaf applied to 289 coloured, perspex tiles. The tiles are recycled from an earlier public artwork, *Fielder*, installed at three sites around Christchurch for Scape 7 in 2013. *Fielder* was a work made for an outdoor environment, now remade for the gallery. With fully gilded tiles in the centre, Parkes’ work inverts the modernist grid to create a work that suggests a sunrise, building orange and red tiles above blue—playing with catching light and sun while situated in a static gallery space. Parkes’ interest in the unpredictability and beauty of light; the way it arcs and bends in different environmental situations has more in common with impressionist plein air painting than the studio-based abstractionists. Outside, her series of *daydream catchers* are set directly in the garden, the eight polished steel surfaces reflect and distort the changes of the sky, the light, and the viewer’s own gaze. Blurring the line between above and below, inside and out, both works, *the golden hour* and *daydream catchers*, meld the gallery and the garden.

Tim McLaughlin’s works, one planted in the garden and two placed in the gallery, all wear an archive of physical touch. The objects are lined with the strokes and fingerprints of the hands which shaped them into gestural and bodily curves. *Juniper*, *Marella*, and *Cora* take their cues from natural surfaces and sensations, and each work matches a blanched exterior with a rosy, fleshy interior. The forms and surfaces of the garden work, *Cora*, could be the bronchioles of a human lung, the root system of a giant tree, or the udder of a dairy cow. For *(Un)conditional I*, Tim chose Pat Foster’s similarly corporeal *Pink Kiss* from the Aigantighe collection, *Cora* now joins nine of Foster’s works present in the garden; both artists sharing an affinity for the inherently tactile process of sculpting. Tim writes, “working with clay and building only with my hands, for me it creates this desirability in an object, one for it to be held and handled. All of the crevasses and spaces are ones that my fingers have moved through, smoothed out, softened with the grooves in my skin. The spaces and limbs of the clay are ones that all lend themselves to be grabbed, they fit well in the hand”. This emphasis on the relationship between the clay and the body imagines the objects as catalogues of gesture, fired in the kiln to preserve the singularity of each work.

The Timaru District Council website outlines a brief programme and history of the gallery and finishes with the line, “the sculpture garden and grounds are always open”.² Presenting newly commissioned works in the garden creates an opportunity to use a space that is always ‘open’ (in the technical sense of the word) to connect the public with the collection and the other works on display within the building. Embedded within the gallery/garden construction of this exhibition is a nod to Foucault’s conception of the garden as a heterotopia—a site localised and embedded in aspects of our lives, which somehow mirrors and at the same time distorts, unsettles, or inverts other spaces. This recognises the garden as a liminal space, simultaneously beyond and within the gallery where experiences of a different nature can be conceived of, facilitated, or generated.

You can find out more information about the other *(Un)conditional* exhibitions on our website at www.physicsroom.org.nz.

Hope Wilson

¹ Rene Kulitja, Linda Rive, John Dallwitz, & Susan Lowish, 2018. “Singing the Archive: presenting Ara Irititja”. *un Magazine*, 12-1 (May): 10.

² “Aigantighe Art Gallery,” Timaru District Council, <https://www.timaru.govt.nz/tell-us/contact-us/aigantighe-art-gallery>