

(Un)conditional

(Un)conditional IV

Eve Armstrong, John Vea, and Mike Hewson

Exhibition runs: 6 – 31 August, 2018

This exhibition is a partnership between The Ashburton Art Gallery and The Physics Room, Christchurch.

In March, collection items from the Ashburton Art Gallery collection were exhibited alongside work created by Eve Armstrong, John Vea, and Mike Hewson in *(Un)conditional I* at The Physics Room in Christchurch. Now, in August, Armstrong, Vea, and Hewson have made new work responding to the *(Un)conditional* series of exhibitions, which explores the concepts of hosting, being a guest, trade, exchange, reciprocity, utu, and manaakitanga, as well as Ashburton as a particular site.

Earlier this year, Vea travelled to Ashburton to conduct research and talanoa with migrants and newcomers to the area to understand how locals welcomed these groups. A number of factors meant that Vea was unable to reach these communities and as a result the majority of his experiences were with migrant business owners in the town area. Working outwards from the challenges he faced in locating and contacting these communities, Vea has created a suite of rendered property development drawings to propose an international food court for the now vacant iSite building to suggest an environment where a host of social interactions can occur.

This will be the third and final iteration of Armstrong's *Trading Table* as part of the *(Un)conditional* series of exhibitions in 2018. The table now carries trades from The Physics Room in Christchurch (7-9 March) and The Suter Gallery in Nelson (17 & 18 March). These remainders embody the previous interactions and multiple currencies including ideas, information, skills, services, and items. Occurring over two days in Ashburton (4 & 5 August), Armstrong will host the table and solicit exchanges from participants under the tagline "almost everything accepted".

Hewson has been developing his line of hand-painted tiles—the eponymous Hewsonclad—since the beginning of 2018. Designed to be distributed at a price point available to the everyday consumer rather than a small group of art collecting elite, *(Un)conditional IV* showcases three Ashburton palettes—bush, tussock, and alpine—borrowed from a trio of A.A Deans paintings. Endlessly modular, the exhibition provides an opportunity for audiences to imagine Hewsonclad in their homes via a variety of hanging arrangements. It is hoped that eventually Hewsonclad will find a distributor amongst New Zealand's larger hardware and designware chains to fully circumvent the gallery system.

List of Works

Eve Armstrong, *Trading Table*, 2003–ongoing. Taking place at Ashburton Art Gallery, 11am-4pm, 4 August & 12-4pm, 5 August 2018.

John Vea, *If you build it, they will come*, series of digital prints on corflute, 900mm x 600mm, 2018.

Mike Hewson, *Hewsonclad (Ashburton Tile Paintings: A.A Deans Alpine, A.A Deans Mt Peel Bush, and A.A Harper Tussock)*, enamel on board, various dimensions, 2018.

Artist Biographies

Eve Armstrong holds a BFA from Elam School of Fine Arts (2003), and in 2006 was an inaugural recipient of the Arts Foundation of New Zealand New Generation Award. In 2017 Armstrong was the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Visiting Artist. She has exhibited widely throughout NZ including major solo exhibitions at Dunedin Public Art Gallery (2017), The Physics Room, Christchurch (2010), City Gallery Wellington (2007) and Artspace, Auckland (2005-6). She has also presented solo projects in international exhibitions including: The woods that see and hear, NL (2010), 3rd Auckland Triennial (2007), Busan Biennale (2006) and SCAPE (2006). Her ongoing project Trading Table (2003 -) was presented at Spring 1883, Sydney (2017) and at the Auckland Art Fair (2016). Armstrong is represented by Michael Lett, Auckland.

John Vea is a Tāmaki Makaurau based artist who works with sculpture, video, and performance art. Vea works with tropes of migration and gentrification within Moana Nui a Kiwa. By enacting stories that have been collected through everyday interactions with people, both in his home community and abroad with a journalistic sensibility he offers a sometimes humorous and always powerfully symbolic emic viewpoint to the Western meta narrative. He gained a Master of Art and Design at Auckland University of Technology in 2015, where he is currently undertaking his Ph.D. candidature.

Mike Hewson alters civic sites to highlight pressing issues concerning that community. This involves transposing images or materials to cause hesitation and re-fection on the path ahead. He received a Bachelors of [Civil] Engineering with First Class Honours from University of Canterbury and then completed an MFA (2016) from Columbia University. He lives and works between New York and Sydney.

Acknowledgements

Shirin, Nicole, Simone, and Alex at the Ashburton Art Gallery.

The University of Canterbury, Aaron, Trevor, and George for the use of their workshop in the production of Hewsonclad.

Selwyn and Polly Price.

Newcomers to Ashburton.

Ashburton District Council for their co-operation and assistance with the use of the iSite.

James Dann, Dan Watson, and Erin Gallagher.

Fran Carter.

Katie Mills, Andre Hopping, Viv Kepes, Maxine Wilson, & Olivia Taylor.