STAFF COMPENDIUM 03:

THE QUEER COMPENDIUM

COMPILED BY AUDREY BALDWIN
ACCESS CO-ORDINATOR

The Queer Compendium

This compendium brings together a selection of exhibitions which have taken place at The Physics Room Contemporary Art Space led by or featuring artists or curators who identify as LGBTQIA+. These twelve shows stood out to my eye as having a conspicuous queerness to them in some way. The compendium has been drawn together through archive sleuthing, personal relationships, artist bios and my own broad definition of queerness—which sometimes goes beyond sexuality or gender and into how one approaches the hetero-patraichal hegemony in which we live.

This is by no means a definitive list of LGBTQIA+ artists that The Physics Room has worked with. Many queer artists work within a variety of other contexts, and any broad generalisation about what constiutes queer practice will never adequately speak for the community. However, in this brief survey of past projects, it's possible to identify some connections between practices by artists, makers, and collectives who incorporate queerness into their modes of operation and value systems. Among these, key themes include collaboration, looking back to reimagine or re-write ourselves into histories, archives, and consequently, into the future, and connecting with communities.

What prompted this list, aside from lockdown 2.0? Why now? Aside from making explicit what we already know—that the queer commuity are and always have been a core part of the arts community—current events make it timely to acknowledge and celebrate this. The recent bill to ban conversion therapy has seen people coming forward to assert the right of queer folk to exist without being 'fixed'.

Queer artists often act as initiators of sorts—bringing with them their friends, family, communities and politics into a space to transform it from a potentially hostile one into a more receptive one. There are also parallels between approaches by indigenous artists and queer artists—Khye Hitchcock points out that both BIPOC and queer artists often push to create spaces which are welcoming because we value the queering of institutional spaces that are often unwelcoming to marginalised folks.

The projects *Embodying the archive* and *Spontaneous Intentionality* look at once backward, and forward, through collecting stories and conversations. Tuafale Tanoa'i's works in *Spontaneous Intentionality* brought together a variety of video works from her ongoing archive. She showcased intimate yet casual interviews with the people around her: musicians, film makers, photographers, DJs and VJs, poets, artists and activists, largely from within the Māori and Pasifika community. The exhibition brought together documentation from road trips, gigs, parties, and past projects. *Embodying the archive* hosted discussions covering the history of performance art, critical newspaper readings, and challenged the authoritative status of the so-called objective archive.

In their respective projects, Christopher Ulutupu, Tanu Gago, and Hannah Brontë

work to reimagine narratives, and insert brown bodies within these—as powerful, desirable, seen AND heard. There is a lot of reframing, re-imagining and reworking taking place in each of these exhibitions.

In *The Romantic Picturesque* and *Phage*, Christopher Ulutupu and Mary Flanagan convey a sense of writing-over or editing—sampling, referencing and layering information, images and ideas—be these ballads about heartbreak or HTML code.

Poignant memories about loss and legacy were also brought to the surface in Zac Langdon Pole's *Meine Bilder*. The show includes the re-authoring of a poem written by his uncle into 297 photographs of illuminated manuscript letters.The interplay of mourning and a canary's heartbeat suggests how those most marginalised are cared for is an indicator of the greater health of a society.

There are moments of joy and resistance in every one of these shows. All the Cunning Stunts took colourful posters to the streets, while works in *Passionate Instincts* brought memories of the streets and of burnt down doors of gay bars into the gallery. Also in *Passionate Instincts*, val smith created a one-person gay disco behind the GIB wall of the gallery, inviting the viewer to reach into their world and hold hands. There are strong parallels between vals's piece and Olga Kraus' *This ain't no disco* performance at *Still, like air, I rise*, which saw the artist letting blood and dancing for the duration of the opening, in front of a tent, which symbolised "protection from the conventions Western art, holding ground in the gallery". The abstracted fabric sections from Emma Fitts' installation, *Sports Jacket for Marlow Moss* is beautiful, but also suggests the potential dissection and pulling apart of an identity seen as not adhering to the norm.

Showcasing collective and collaborative practice, Ōtautahi Kōrerotia and FANTASING used the gallery as a space for conversation, incubation and working through ideas. They both highlight the way that art work is still work, labour. FANTASING's 'employee of the month' mugs were a tongue in cheek reference to this, whereas *Are you being looked after*? hosted a variety of wānanga kōrero about the industry with local and visiting artists.

For me, the cohesive thread that connects all of these exhibitions is a determination not to be erased—to stand our ground and reassert ourselves in ways that are gentle and supple, and that weave into, under and between existing narratives or traditions. Collectively, there is a will to create something different for the future: to leave a space with more depth and hope than may have been there before.

Audrey Baldwin
Access Co-ordinator

Spontaneous Intentionality by Tuafale Tanoa'i

11 July – 4 August 2019

Image: Tuafale Tanoa'i, *Spontaneous Intentionality* (installation view), 2019. Photo: Janneth Gil.

EXHIBITION TEXT:

A little piece of me. Beautiful people. Can't change me. Delicious groove. Expand your mind. Four women. Give me the reason. How high the moon. In the neighbourhood. Just my imagination. Kai kōrero. Little things. Maranga mai. Necessary. Open your eyes. Poly fonk. Queen of my heart. Red sunset. Simple timeless. That's the way of the world. Use me. Visions. Xxx. You. Zoom.

Spontaneous Intentionality includes new and existing work by Tuafale Tanoa'i, the 2019 University of Canterbury Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies Artist in Residence, supported by Creative New Zealand. The exhibition centres around interviews made during her residency with Pacific women in Ōtautahi Christchurch. These local works will be presented alongside a selection of archival work to tell stories from Pacific communities all over Aotearoa New Zealand.

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Tuafale Tanoa'i, aka Linda.T, is a Samoan-heritage artist based in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. Using video, photography and DJ-ing, her practice documents and shares community stories, generating a living archive. Her kaupapa has been described as one that is based on koha—often made with and gifted back to the communities she engages. Tanoa'i received a Masters in Art and Design from AUT University after establishing a career in local radio, TV and short film. Tanoa'i is widely recognised for her contributions to small communities in Aotearoa through her rigorous and uncompromising chronology as a documenter since the early 1980s.

WORK LIST
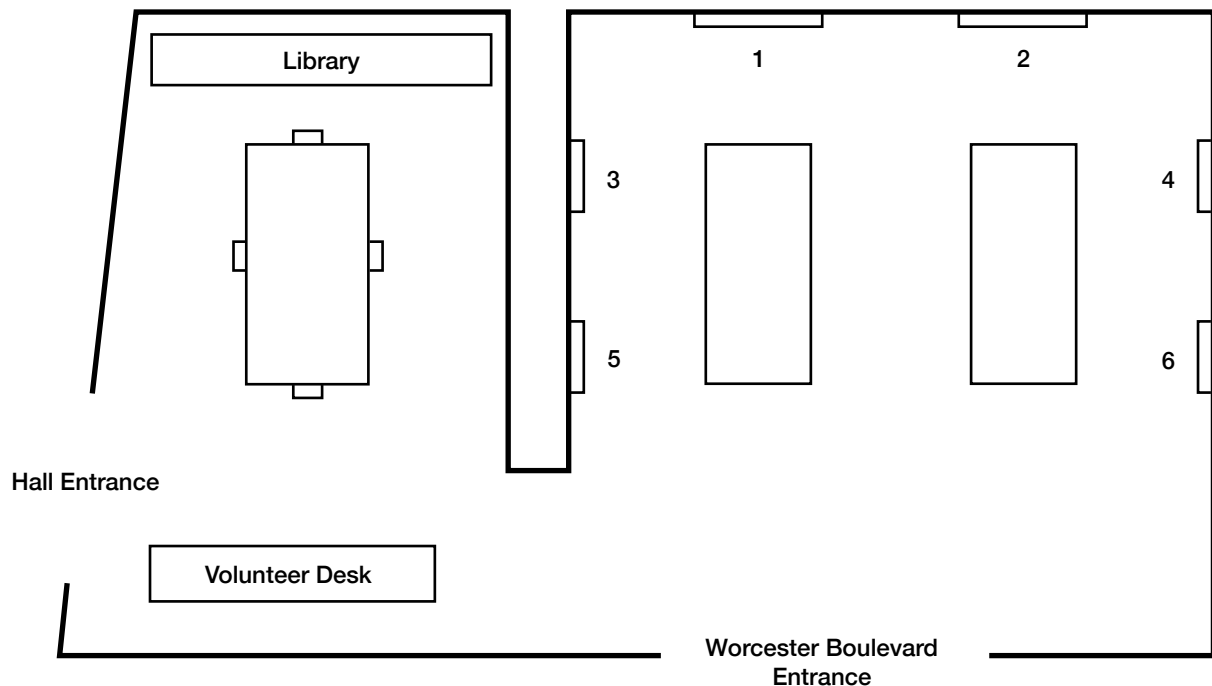
Screen 1:   Ashalyna Noa, 10:06 min.
Karlyn Tekulu, 8:48 min.
Louisa Tipene-Opetaia, 4:32 min.
Faaosofia Daly, 9:44 min.

Screen 2:   Pauline Luafutu-Simpson, 5:04 min.
Sam Uta'I, 6:11 min.
Tanya Muagututia, 7:19 min and 6:29 min.

Screen 3:   Memories of Merata Mita:

Dr Ella Henry, 2:32 min and 2:08 min.
Reikura Kahi, 4:57min.
Sima Urale and Ioana Gordon-Smith, 12:35 min.

Screen 4:   Gloria Rolando, 2006, 28:30 min.
(Credit to Jade Tang-Taylor for 100s of images of her visit to Cuba
and to Gloria Rolando for allowing access to her website images)
Kari Kururangi, 17:18 min.
Kiana Rivera, 8:10 min.
Tiana Henderson, 6:31 min.

Screen 5:   Capt. Ema Siope, 8:25 min.
Jaimie Waititi, 8:24 min.
Louisa Tipene-Opetaia, 3:30 min.
Splore Music Festival 2019, 2:04 and 0:58 min.

Screen 6:   Chasing Chaka 2018 with Linda T. and Robyn Tauroa, 31:18 min.
Samantha NY Korea, 13:58 min.

SAVAGE IN THE GARDEN
by Tanu Gago

4 April – 12 May 2019

Image: Tanu Gago, *SAVAGE IN THE GARDEN*, 2019, with lighting assistance from Pati Solomona Tyrell, makeup & styling by Elyssia Wilson Heti, and model Tapuaki Helu.

EXHIBITION TEXT:

The power of the colonial gaze continues to deprive everyday Indigenous people of sovereign representations of their own bodies and life experiences. Complex portrayals of Pacific men as emotionally sophisticated are, in 2019, still positioned as cultural anomalies. What Pacific men want to see of themselves is also deeply entrenched in the same colonial codes of traditional Western masculinity.

Toxic masculinity is currently under a global audit from all corners of society amidst intensified discourse around systemic gender inequality. The question of what it means to be a man in this contemporary context is complex and intersects with an endless shopping list of cultural and social variants—some of which are too vast to attempt to address in a singular creative journey. So, consider this exhibition an entry point.

SAVAGE IN THE GARDEN presents a series of images and audio recordings responding to provocations about what it means to be a Queer Pacific Island

man and centres queerness as a site for exploration and a pressure point for open social discussion. The intention of the recordings is to provide intimate and personable insights from Pacific men discussing their experiences with masculinity. The recordings are sourced from the public domain and have been mixed with interviews conducted last year, as well as a selection of essays collected from artists from the FAFSWAG arts collective.

Developed during Gago's time as the Pacific Artist in residence at the Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies at the University of Canterbury in 2018, this exhibition is a collaboration with a small community of Pacific Island men from around Aotearoa. The exhibition features Tongan model Tapuaki Helu and members of the FAFSWAG Arts Collective and extended creative whanau.
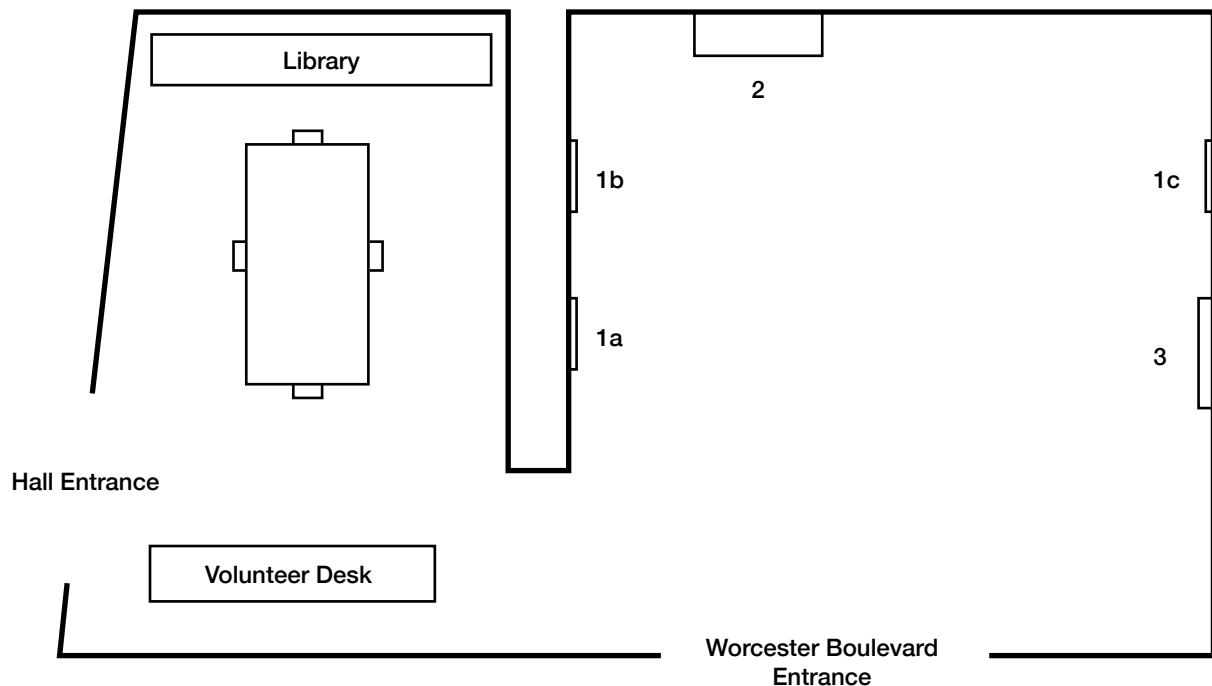
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Tanu Gago is an interdisciplinary artist and award-winning photographer of Samoan heritage. Born in Samoa and raised in Mangere. Gago works predominantly in new media with a portfolio of work that includes staged portraiture, moving image, and film. His practice is collaborative and examines cultural framing, decolonization, social politics, queer activism, and gender and sexually diverse narratives.

Gago is the cofounder and creative director of Pacific LGBT Arts Collective entitled FAFSWAG. Under Gago's direction FAFSWAG have carved out credible cultural space within the contemporary arts scene within Auckland. The work achieved by this collective of artists spans over five years. Check out their recent collaborative interactive documentary with Taika Waititi's film production company PIKI FILMS and award-winning digital design agency RESN: fafswagvogue.com

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Listen to the artist talk here:
http://physicsroom.org.nz/events/art-not-science-episode

WORK LIST

Library

2

1b   1c

1a   3

Hall Entrance

Volunteer Desk

Worcester Boulevard
Entrance

1   Tanu Gago, *SAVAGE IN THE GARDEN*, 2019
        With lighting assistance from Pati Solomona Tyrell, makeup & styling by Elyssia
        Wilson Heti, and model Tapuaki Helu

2   Tanu Gago, *Savage in the Garden*, 2019
        Series of interviews, podcasts, and group discussions about queer practice and
        Pacific masculinity. Mp3, 60.00 min.

3   Tanu Gago, *APPARATUS*, 2019
        Digital video, 19.21 min.

        APPARATUS Film Production Credits:

        Camera: Ralph Brown
        Styling: Jasper Powell
        Sound & Editing: Tanu Gago
        Choreography: Jacob Tamata, Cypris Afakasi
        Adornments: Rosanna Raymond, Pati Solomona Tyrell
        Featuring: Reuben Tomasi, Tavake Akau, Zion McCormick, Morris Gago, Solomon
        Gago, Simone Akau, Mia Gago, Fili Tapa, Tapuaki Helu, Jacob Tamata, Cypris
        Afakasi, Gabriel Halatoa, Ponifasio Junior Ah Tani, Benji Timu, Sione Monu, Jermaine
        Dean, Hela Ikimotu, Esera Ieti, So'omalo Iteni, Mika Tomasi, Ioane Ioane.
        Special thanks to: FRANCMARIE, COVEN, Dru Douglas, Pati solomona Tyrell,
        Rosana Raymond, James Waititi, Manu Ha'apai Vaea Tangitau, Guilherme Taccetti,
        FAFSWAG.

        *'Power of 3' BIONICA 2018 appears courtesy of Jacob Tamata and the COVEN
        Collective*

The Romantic Picturesque: The Postcard Trilogy by Christopher Ulutupu

1 November – 25 November 2018

Image: Christopher Ulutupu, *Leia* (still), 2018.

EXHIBITION TEXT:

The Romantic Picturesque: The Postcard Trilogy comprises three video works—*Into The Arms Of My Coloniser* (2016), *Do You Still Need Me?* (2017), and the newly created *Lelia* (2018)—by Christopher Ulutupu, presented together for the first time as a single-channel cinematic experience.

Ulutupu's video / performance art practice explores landscape, photography, and the construction of colonial narratives. Responding to early 1900s landscape photography and 'postcard' tourism, Ulutupu's earlier work looked at exoticised depictions of Pacific people disseminated throughout the western world. His practice seeks to re-contextualise these stereotypes and re-imagine them through video and performance, offering new ways of exploring the effects of colonisation and diaspora.

The trilogy contains a collision of ideas and references elements of traditional and modern indigeneity to create a performance both critical and humorous. The three works approach the conversation around hybridity in a way that looks forward and asks, 'Who do I want to be?' rather than fixating on 'Who am I?' Viewed together the works can be seen to address different stages of development in what

can only be termed a love affair between Coloniser and Indigenous person(s). In his new work *Lelia*, Ulutupu continues to stage performances within 'picturesque' landscapes, this time in a Cantabrian alpine resort scenario. The work mingles excess with the everyday with Ulutupu casting friends and family members as core characters and takes stylistic inspiration from an ELLE Magazine article about a notorious photoshoot that appeared in the 1977 winter issue of Vogue.

The Romantic Picturesque: The Postcard Trilogy is presented in partnership with SCAPE Public Art.

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Christopher Ulutupu is an artist of Samoan/Niuean/German descent currently residing in Wellington. He recently completed his MFA at Massey University, Wellington and has a Bachelor of Performance Design (Hons) from Massey University and Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School. Ulutupu has a background in art direction and set design. Ulutupu mounted a solo exhibition at play_station, Wellington in 2018 and participated in the inaugural Hobart Biennale in 2017.

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WORK LIST:

Christopher Ulutupu and Kevin Cartwright (Cinematographer)
The Romantic Picturesque: The Postcard Trilogy
HD moving image (16:9) and sound, 1 hour 1 min

Part 1: *Into the arms of my coloniser*, 2016
Part 2: *Do you still need me?*, 2017
Part 3: *Lelia*, 2018

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Listen to the artist talk here: http://www.physicsroom.org.nz/exhibitions/christopher-ulutupu-the-romantic-picturesque-the-p

Love in vain: readings about heartbreak

As a public programme event to accompany Christopher Ulutupu's exhibition, *The Romantic Picturesque: The Postcard Trilogy*, The Physics Room presented *Love in Vain*—a night showcasing a selection of readings by poets, artists, musicians, academics and writers and lovers interested in heartbreak. The title of the event is taken from the song quoted at the beginning of each part of *Lelia* (2018)—*All Cried Out*, written by Lisa Lisa and Cult Jam in 1985 and made more famous after being covered by R&B band Allure in 1997.

Download the accompanying zine here: http://www.physicsroom.org.nz/media/uploads/2019_01/The_very_last_version_of_LOVE_IN_VAIN_ZINE.pdf

World-Making and The Romantic Picturesque by Robbie Hancock

A response to T*he Romantic Picturesque: The Postcard Trilogy*

Image: Christopher Ulutupu, *Leia* (still), 2018.

In 1977, a New York fashion crew travelled to the Andes Mountain to shoot a catalogue of furs for the luxury department store Neiman Marcus. The crew, which included a young Jerry Hall fresh off her first Paris runway, were led by the photographer's escalating demands to realise his vision for the shoot. They braved increasingly difficult conditions, driving to the edge of mountain cliffs and shooting in severe snow storms. They were then snowed in and trapped at their lodge for several days unable to contact the outside world. Christopher Ulutupu's *Lelia*, the last work in *The Romantic Picturesque: The Postcard Trilogy*, takes many of its stylistic cues from the resulting imagery.

An ELLE Magazine article in 2016 refers to the story sensationally as a "drug-fuelled, multimillion-dollar supermodel snowpocalypse", focusing in particular on the cocaine, drinking, gambling, and sex that went on during the crew's time trapped at their lodge. In *Lelia*, Ulutupu re-stages this shoot in a Southern Aotearoa setting with his own cast of friends and family. It goes beyond the the visual lushness of the fashion aesthetic and draws on the salacious behind-the-scenes exemplar of Caucasian excess to ultimately tell a story of heartbreak.

In one vignette, a lone figure crosses the frame of a snowy backdrop. She details a break up from her husband, describing the hurtful realisation that after years of

making him a cup of tea every day he had never returned the favour. The story is left untranslated, available in the first instance only to those who speak Samoan. Like much of Ulutupu's work, he throws 'foreignness' back on to the audience. The scene is visually enticing, but the audience must do the work to retrieve their own translation if they want access. Subverting the lifestyle advertising of the Neiman Marcus furs catalogue and its inaccessible luxury brand, Ulutupu works to create an indigenous experience that is glamorous and enamouring, but largely inaccessible to white audiences.

The Romantic Picturesque: The Postcard Trilogy is an exercise in Ulutupu's world-making abilities. Vignettes or scenarios are regularly set against striking landscapes, contending with the assumed affinity between exotic-nature and exotic-person and the inadequacy of this to describe contemporary indigenous experience. In *Lelia*, what could be more foreign to the tropical islands of Samoa than ski fields? *In Into the arms of my coloniser*, the sandy backdrop is studio-shot, referencing beaches and islands but never allowing the association to be fully realised. Connection to nature is upended, never to be presumed.

Ulutupu's fictionalised characters tell loose narratives based on personal stories where the relationship between indigeneity and coloniser is always at the fore. At times, some of his characters seem to play into sterotypical expectations of brown bodies. They perform indigeneity; singing, dancing, and entertaining an unknown audience. However, pop culture references and humour punctuate performances in a way that winks to the audience. Much like artist Shigeyuki Kihara's work to decolonise the gaze, Ulutupu plays with the power dynamic between audience and artist, his presence always felt in each scene.

While Kihara inserts herself into historic representations in order to interrogate popular western imagery, Ulutupu's restagings seek to imagine entirely new realities of contemporary indigenous experience. Ulutupu's work doesn't seek to re-tell or 'fix' past wrongs, he creates an alternative logic for ways of being in the world. *The Romantic Picturesque* offers up these alternatives as something entirely more speculative and ultimately much more imaginative.

Are you being looked after?
by Ōtautahi Kōrerotia

28 May – 24 June 2018

Image: Ōtautahi Kōrerotia, *Are you being looked after?*, 2018. Photo: Mitchell Bright.

EXBIHITION TEXT:

Four weeks of institutional housewarming by Ōtautahi Kōrerotia and collaborators (invited and unexpected) to imagine the gallery space as another place; a cave; a wharenui. This utu will bring the space and people who gather there into kōrero with others more knowledgeable than ourselves, while re-directing resources towards material tools for accessibility. A week of kaupapa-building will be followed by a hui and five wānanga kōrero to generate purpose and activities for the space given to us by The Physics Room.

The Gallery will be open 12:00-13:00 in the first week, and 11:00-16:00 (or 21:00 on Wednesdays) and closed Mondays for the remainder of the project.

Kaupapa
Week starting Monday 28 May, 12:00-13:00 every day

We want to set up some groundwork and a support structure. Come along to kōrero over our lunch break.

Whakanohonoho
June 3, 12:00-15:00ish

We want to gather together a group of people in the space to generate a direction, collaborators and activities for us to carry out over the remaining weeks. See the event page [-->Whakanohonoho] to register to participate.

Wānanga kōrero with Nina Oberg-Alaifea
June 5, 14:00-15:00ish
Venue: Ilam School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury

Working through the navigation of Art Institutions, Education, and Whānau. Non-students welcome.

Wānanga kōrero with Jennifer Shields and Khye Hitchcock
June 9, 14:00-15:00ish

Working through safety and accessibility in the institution.

A space to create
June 15, 13:00 - 15:00ish

A facilitated, creative space for the public, hosted by Negin Dastgheib.

Wānanga kōrero with Ayesha Green
June 17, 14:00 - 15:00ish

Working through artist organising, agency and relationships.

Endangered species?
June 20, 17:00 - 21:00

As part of *Are you being looked after?* Ōtautahi Kōrerotia and Charlotte Filipov host a bunch of young musical energy in the space. A cause to gather! We will have GF/DF home-baking, tea, coffee, hot blackcurrant, cranberry and ginger, and maybe some sweet soda to keep everyone warm, well fed and energised.

17:00 - ARKC
18:00 - Esther
18:30 - Kill
19:00 - Motte
20:00 - Witches

Wānanga kōrero with Cora-Allan Wickliffe
June 24, 14:00-17:30ish
Venue: Avon Loop Community Cottage

Working through artistic relationships and relational knowledge.

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be responsible for the energy you bring into this space

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The Avon Loop Community Cottage has ramp access but limited accessibility to the bathroom, which is for all genders. The Physics Room has limited access for those with limited mobility via Montreal St and the CAG Design Store, but easy access to all-gender bathrooms in the Christchurch Art Gallery. We are happy to help with any accessibility needs—just message us here or email: otautahi.korerotia@gmail.com if we can help. See our page and The Physics Room's page for Public Transport info.

Our events are All Ages and Drug-Free.

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Whakakapia te hau o Tāwhiri-mātea te whenua nei.
Ngā kete wānanga e toru.
Ngā mokopuna o Āoraki hoki.
Kei te noho mātou ki tēnei wāhi, e ora ana kei raro i te manaakitanga me te mana o ēnei tikanga

~

The breath of Tāwhiri-mātea fills this space alongside the three kete of knowledge and the descendents of Āoraki.

When we occupy this place, we operate in respect of, and are guided by, these generous bodies.

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Ōtautahi Kōrerotia is Māia Abraham, Caitlin Clarke and Hamish Petersen; three people organising artist projects in and around the Avon Loop Community Cottage in central Ōtautahi. We have organised exhibitions and other projects in, near, and from the Cottage, helping local and Aotearoa artists to hold exhibitions, participatory and educational projects, experimental theatre and publications.

www.facebook.com/okcommunityarts
www.otautahikorerotia.tumblr.com

Still, like air, I rise
Hannah Brontë, Skawennati, Esther Ige, Lisa Reihana, Salote Tawale, Leafa Wilson & Olga Krause

22 July – 27 August 2017

Image: Hannah Brontë, *Still I Rise* (trial visual), 2015. Image courtesy of the artist.

EXHIBTION ESSAY:

There is an element of triumph in every gesture of defance. "But still, like air, I'll rise" wrote Maya Angelou in 1978. Writing of resilience under oppression, she is speaking for her race and gender in an address of historical and structural oppression of Black Americans. Angelou's is a "confdent voice of strength that recognizes its own power and will no longer be pushed into passivity."[1] It's an attitude of powerful dissent that the works in this exhibition have in common. The title is twice borrowed; from Angelou and from Hannah Brontë, whose work *Still I Rise* (2016) imagines an Indigenous women of colour parliament in Australia, through a rap music video. Brontë's and the other works in this exhibition have no patience for generalising rhetoric around 'making change'. Rather each attends to its specifc social-political context, and the gestures are direct.

Lisa Reihana's *Wog Features* (1990) was made at a time when identity politics were in the foreground of contemporary art. This was also a time when biculturalism was prominent in political discussions around nationhood in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Wog Features* was made between 1988 and 1990, in Australia and Aotearoa, a period in which the Australian Bicentenary (1988) and the Sesquicentenary (1990) in Aotearoa were commemorated, generating many acts of protest against colonisation and its legacies, as well as feel-good celebrations of nationhood.

These events amplifed tensions and discussions around settler colonialism and Indigenous rights in both countries. Reihana has spoken of the continuing currency of many of the concerns raised in the work, racism primary among these. Revisiting *Wog Features* 27 years after it was made, and taking the work as a starting point, this exhibition acknowledges the tone of defance surfacing again in a series of contemporary works, and sets out to amplify this by bringing these voices together.

The works in *Still, Like Air, I'll Rise* do not revise history; they remember it differently and at times set propositions for alternative futures into action. Skawennati's *TimeTraveller™* (2008-2013) appropriates the forms of virtual reality game Second Life and those of the contemporary museum industry. Set in 2121, *TimeTraveller™* offers viewers the opportunity to 'embody' the narratives of First Nations history, at the same time as participating in a form of world making that looks to the future. Skawennati writes, "I was thinking about native people and our presence [in cyberspace], and our lack of presence in the future and how people don't see us in the future. Even we native people don't seem to see ourselves in the future."[2] Here the 'history industry', which often fetishises the stories of colonial domination, is adopted and set on an alternate course.

Also future oriented, Hannah Brontë's *Still I Rise* addresses her question "how do we keep fghting if we can't envision victory?"[3] For Brontë, there is a link between how the Australian government treats the land and how it treats Indigenous women: "The mining, the ploughing, farming, drilling and poisoning is continual and is metaphorically and literally linked to Indigenous women." Envisioning victory involves its materialisation, performance and embodiment; Brontë "trickles dreamstates and alternative universes into reality" though her work and organised events like the allfemale hip hop dance parties Fempre$$.[4]

Representation is reclaimed in these works. Salote Tawale's videos *Sometimes you make me nervous* (2012) and *Pocari Sweat* (2014) draw on essentialising stereotypes, reproducing them as self-portraits in direct confrontation with colonist representations. Her body is at the centre of both works, while they also exist in solidarity with numerous others whose self-representation has been taken out of their control.

Working with specifc moments in history, including popular culture sources, Esther Ige's work in photography, installation and video engages with the racism that she identifes is still in the 'blood stream' of the system now. She writes, "There has been and there is normalisation of racism and of racial stereotypes in the media, and in popular culture past and present. Through my practice I look to bring about a discussion around the racist stereotypes that have been attached to black people, addressing topics such as criminalisation and the mockery of the black body, fear of black people and the immediate association of violence with the black body. I am interested in the political journey and the mapping of this journey through symbolic expression, gesture and stance: from declaration, to resistance, to defance, to protest."[5] *Unprotected #1: This ain't no disco*, by Leafa Wilson & Olga Krause, was (in the context of the ST PAUL St Gallery iteration of this exhibition) the first in a series

of built and inhabited structures that establish protection from the conventions Western art, holding ground in the gallery. Wilson & Krause's work often takes place in institutional spaces, and in this sense is directly responsive to the structural inequities that often exist there, and to the need as artists and curators to find habitable positions 'within' such institutional systems. Reference to intellectual battle fatigue and grief is implicit and constant in the breadth of their work; they write, "Tired of everything. Tired of the white cube culture wars, tired of fighting for causes, tired of art."[6] The work's title refers to Talking Heads' lyrics, from *Life During Wartime* (1979) "this aint' no party, this ain't no disco, this ain't no fooling around. No time for dancing, or lovey dovey, I ain't got time for that now." As the artist asserts, "[We] are one person but the performative use of legal and married names extends this resistance: the black body of Leafa Wilson colonises the German name Olga Krause, always claiming her piece of 'white space'."

There is a second image in Angelou's refrain: 'Still, like dust, I'll rise.' Dust rises after dancing, or a fght. It doesn't go away easily but rather lingers as grit in the eyes of those who either consciously or unconsciously maintain a broken system and its violent inequalities. Dust is infnitely widely dispersed; it rises, rises, rises.

Still, Like Air, I'll Rise was developed by ST PAUL St Gallery, AUT and curated by Abby Cunnane and Charlotte Huddleston. First shown at ST PAUL St Gallery, AUT 24 February 2017 – 31 March 2017.

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[1]   Carol Neubauer 'Maya Angelou: Self and a Song of Freedom in the Southern Tradition' in *Southern Women Writers: The New Generation*, Tonette Bond Inge, ed. Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press (1990) pp. 1–12.

[2]   http://www.cbc.ca/newsblogs/arts/the-buzz/2013/10/machinima-art-series-revisits-oka-crisis-moments-in-native-history.html

[3]   Email correspondence with the artist September 2016.

[4]   Ibid.

[5]   Email correspondence with the artist October 2016.

[6]   Email correspondence with the artist September 2016.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Hannah Brontë is a multi-disciplinary artist based in Brisbane, Australia. Working across film, performance, fashion and photography Brontë's work is often politically charged exploring issues of indigeneity and feminism. Employing the aesthetics and slang of hip-hop, Brontë's *Still I Rise* explores forms of resistance practiced by women and First Nations people around the world. The video work's debut was as part of the Next Wave Festival in 2016.

Skawennati Fragnito, born in Kahnawake Mohawk Territory, lives and works in Montreal, Canada. Best known for new media projects, her work addresses history, the future and change particularly as they relate to indigenous cultures. Skawennati is one of the first recipients of the First People's Curatorial Residency grant, established in 1997 by the Canada Council for the Arts. In 2015, she represented Canada at the Biennial of the Americas.
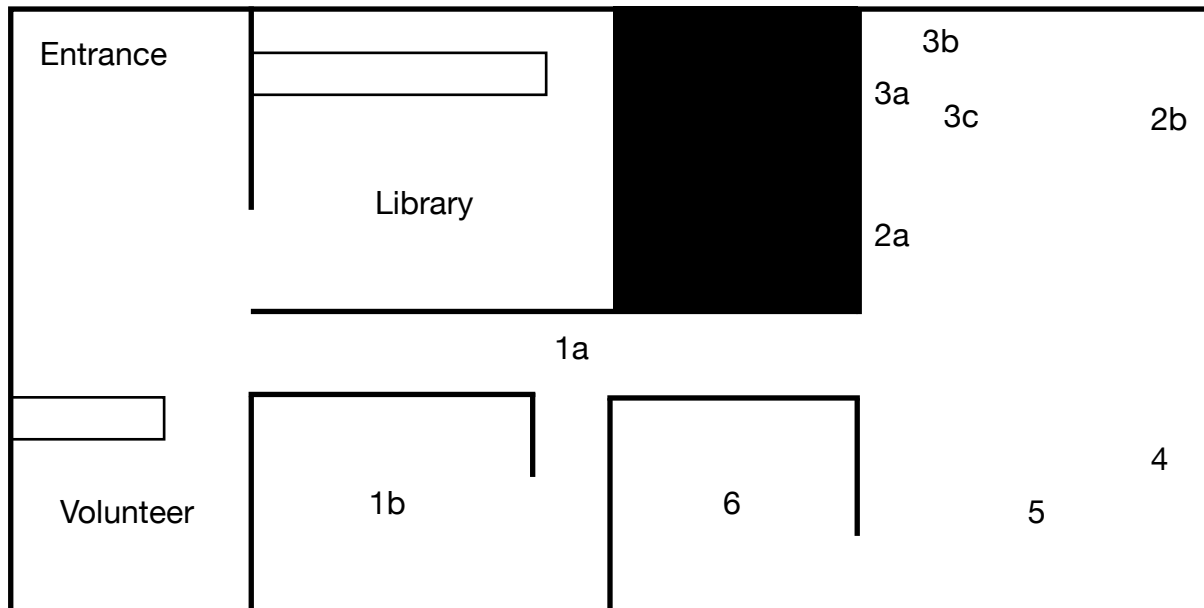
Lisa Reihana (Ngāpuhi, Ngati Hine, Ngāi Tu) works primarily in photography and film and has exhibited in significant national and international exhibitions including the Havana Biennale, the Brooklyn Museum, the Liverpool Biennale, the Noumea Biennale, the 12th Biennale of Sydney, and the Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Brisbane. Reihana was made an Arts Laureate by the New Zealand Arts Foundation in 2014. She was nominated for the 2016 Walters Prize and is representing New Zealand at the 2017 Venice Biennale.

Salote Tawale was born in Suva, Fiji and now lives and works in Sydney, Australia. Tawale's creative practice explores identity and cultural values whereby the self is represented through the performance of archetypal and stereotypical signifiers from popular-culture. Her works generally take the form of video, photography, installation, drawing and performance. Tawale was awarded the Arts NSW Visual Artists Fellowship in 2017.

Esther Ige has just completed her Bachelor of Visual Arts from AUT University in 2016. Incorporating archival video footage, photography and installation Ige exposes the realities of racism in modern society.

Leafa Wilson & Olga Krause is a performance artist based in Kirikiriroa, Hamilton. Offering her body as a contested site, and through a combination of multimedia installation and performance, Wilson & Krause explore identity politics as both the colonised and the coloniser. She has exhibited widely in solo and group exhibitions and held artist residencies at the University of Queensland Brisbane in 2006 and the Burke Museum, Washington D.C. in 2005.

WORK LIST

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1a   Hannah Brontë, *Welcome to the matriarchy*, 2016, velvet and organza
1b   Hannah Brontë, *Still I Rise*, 2016, single-channel digital video, 3:53 mins

2a   Salote Tawale, *Pocari Sweat*, 2014, single-channel digital video, 4:46 mins
2b   Salote Tawale, *Sometimes you make me nervous and then i know we are supposed to sit together for a long time*, 2017, video installation, 10:00 mins

3   Esther Ige, *Even though*, 2017

3a   Digital video: 3:10 minutes
3b   Selma to Montgomery March archival recording (March 1965): 1:09 mins
3c   Courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration
        Manila rope, 8 metres

4   Lisa Reihana, *Wog Features*, 1990, single-channel video, 7:50 mins
        Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki purchased 2005

5   Leafa Wilson & Olga Krause, *Unprotected #2: This ain't no disco*, 2017
        Mixed media

6   Skawennati, *TimeTraveller™*, 2008–2013,
        Machinima single-channel video, 75:00 mins
        (comprised of nine episodes playing consecutively)

Passionate Instincts

Alexis Hunter, Shahriar Asdollah-Zadeh, Darcell Apelu, Ana Iti, Joanna Neumegen, val smith, Jaimee Stockman-Young

8 October — 12 November 2016

Image: val smith, *formations for reciprocal justice and further sad attempts to punish you or make some kind of a difference i.Making the club gay again ii.Ensuring no pride is a positive outcome of the protest*, 2016. Photo: Daegan Wells.

EXHIBITION TEXT:

Passionate Instincts is an exhibition curated by Henry Davidson, Khye Hitchcock, Emma Ng and Ted Whitaker. With this act of collective curating as a working method, *Passionate Instincts* explores the tension between a desire for individual identity—specifically the desire for a radical selfhood – and the wish to construct, be located within, and contribute to a community that strives for the betterment of everyone.

Included in this show is a painting by Alexis Hunter, which acts as a provocation for the other participating artists. Hunter's 1984-5 work *Passionate Instincts XIII* depicts a ferocious, feline-like creature amidst a smoggy tempest of brushwork. Baring her teeth within the storm that threatens to envelop her, she is poised to move; on the brink of attack. Transfixed by this image, this painting has been adopted as a talisman, harnessing its galvanising force. In a moment of uncertainty we choose to approach boldly. Though a torrent of information muddles our way, we step forward with Hunter's agent of courage as our compass.

We are all navigating our own selves. In fact, this activity has begun to define our generation, although this is often understood negatively, as vanity. But where do we situate our politics, our ethics, without first making sense of the self? Here in Aotearoa New Zealand we also seek to enact decolonising methodologies, negotiating this struggle alongside or within our own identity politics. *Passionate Instincts* explores the paralysis that is often the result of these conflicting desires, through a shifting whakapapa of alliances and interjections; a tangle of intra-generational connections. The artists in this exhibition resurface forgotten histories, untether conditioned bodies, and express freights of emotional power; exposing fear and anger as forces that both produce and limit us.

How can our quests for self-hood become the foundation for necessary collective social change? On uncertain terrain, what hope do we have except to begin by erecting our own campaign tents? *Passionate Instincts* is presented as one outcome of the Emerging Curators Programme 2015/16 facilitated by The Physics Room and The Blue Oyster Art Project Space and funded by Creative New Zealand's Sector Development Incentive Fund.

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CURATOR BIOGRAPHIES

Henry Davidson is a curator currently based in Berlin. He was the Artspace Curatorial Assistant in 2015 and the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Curatorial Intern in 2013-14. He was also a member of the Auckland gallery Gloria Knight and has a Master of Arts in Visual and Material Culture from Massey University, Wellington.

Khye Hitchcock is a curator and artist currently based in Ōtautahi, Christchurch. Their practice is research based, socio-political and often collaborative; research interests include exploring the efficacy of art as a catalyst for social change, identity politic—particularly queer and feminist—and performance practices. Khye has a MFA from Elam School of Fine Art, University of Auckland. In 2012-13 they contributed as artist and Research Associate on the Pornography in the Public Eye project, Psychology Department, University of Auckland. Khye was Curatorial Assistant at Artspace, Auckland 2013-14, SCAPE Public Art, Christchurch 2015, and is currently Curator at CoCA Centre of Contemporary Art Toi Moroki.

Emma Ng is a writer and curator from Aotearoa New Zealand. She has recently left Enjoy Public Art Gallery in Wellington, where she was Manager/Curator from 2014-16. Emma is currently undertaking an MA in Design Research, Writing and Criticism at the School of Visual Arts in New York City.

Ted Whitaker is a Dunedin-based curator, artist and filmmaker. Recent curatorial projects include: *The False Demographic*, Blue Oyster (co-curated with Chloe Geoghegan, 2015) and various projects at BRUCE and V-Space. He has recently completed an MFA at the Dunedin School of Art (2016). He is co-chair of the Aotearoa Digital Arts Network (ADA) and a trustee of the Blue Oyster Art Project Space.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Alexis Hunter was born in New Zealand and graduated from Elam, though she spent much of her life in London. She was a painter, writer, and printmaker, but is most well-known for her photography, which emerged out of and contributed to the feminist art movement of the 1970s. In the past decade her work has been included in several notable international exhibitions such as *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* at LACMA in 2007. Her photography is currently being exhibited in a solo showing at Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand.

Shahriar Asdollah-Zadeh is an Auckland artist of Iranian/Filipino descent, born in the Philippines and raised in New Zealand. Within his art practice, he works with design-based large scale sculpture, installation, and the moving image. Asdollah-Zadeh's research and work has mainly focused on diaspora, migration and place/displacement. He graduated from Elam in 2010 and his work has been included in recent exhibitions at galleries such as Te Tuhi, Mangere Arts Centre, The Film Archive (Auckland), Enjoy Public Art Gallery and the Whangarei Art Museum.

Ana Iti (Ngāpuhi) is an artist who until recently was based in Christchurch. She graduated from Ilam with a BFA (Sculpture) in 2012 and her practice explores the speculative possibilities of 'drawing' using sculpture and installation along with physical and social architectures. She was the 2016 Blue Oyster Art Project Space summer resident, and her project there explored the sea wall of the Otago Peninsula as a man made drawing that embodies a fraught and mysterious part of Ōtepoti Dunedin's history.

Jaimee Stockman-Young is an Auckland based artist who graduated with an MFA from Elam in 2015. Her practice is interested in local queer genealogies and makes use of archival material. In negotiating a terrain of Queer history and considering the manifestation of this community in Aotearoa, she is interested in the way in which this community forms, convening or collecting in spaces together, utilising archival materials, architectural materials and environmental installations to construct museums of socio-sexual history.

Joanna Neumegen is an Auckland based artist and a recent BFA (Hons) graduate of Elam School of Fine Arts. She works across video, writing and painting, often fusing different mediums together. Her practice is largely interdisciplinary and is currently focussed on representations of mental illness and death in canonical fictional novels. She seeks to unearth common threads between these themes in both non fictional and fictional histories forging seemingly disparate connections to create new narratives.

val smith is a choreographic artist and dance educator based in Auckland, NZ whose work investigates the body as a politically complex network. Their practice involves experimentation with perception, affect and participation, challenging the conventions of spectatorship. Queer, feminist and post structuralist theories underpin choreographic tests in a fluid relation with collaboration, somatic pedagogies and site-oriented practices.

Darcell Apelu is of Nieuan and New Zealand European descent. Her art practice involves moving image, sound, performance and installation, often informed by her experiences as an afakasi (mixed race) female. The body plays an important role in her work as she explores perceptions of the Pacific body, identity and of 'being other' within the social climate of New Zealand. Darcell completed her Master of Art and Design from Auckland University of Technology in 2013 and currently teaches within the certificate of art and design and the bachelor of creative industries at the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic.

WORK LIST

Entrance

Library

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1a   2a

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3a

3c

4b
4c

3d

7

3b
4a
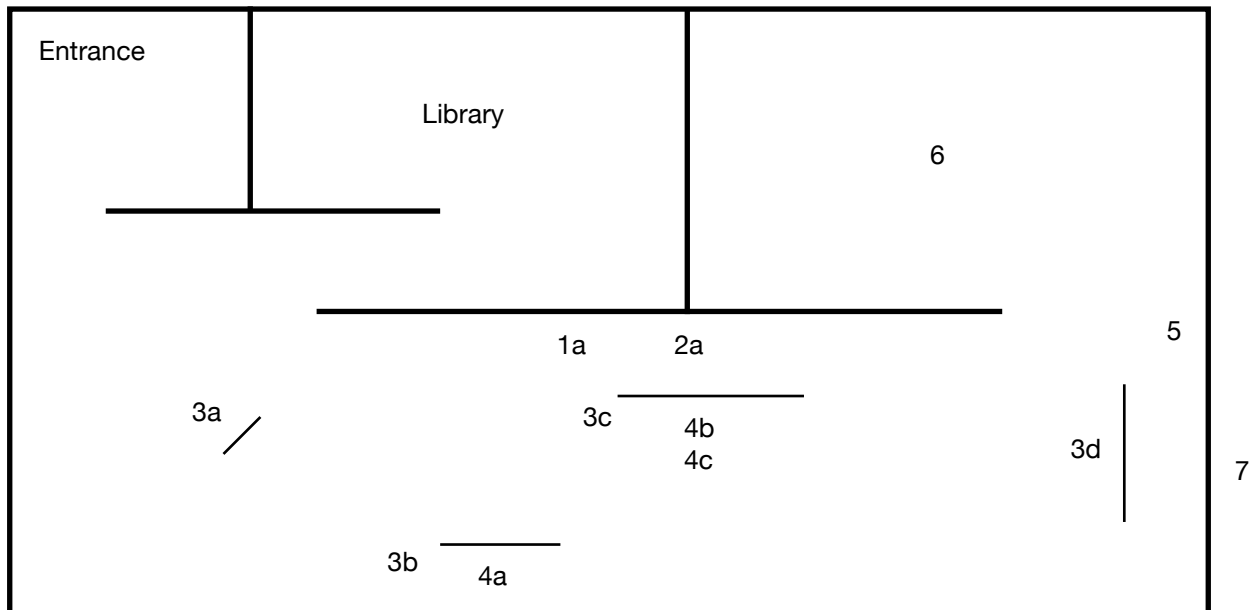
1a   Shahriar Asdollah-Zadeh, *Fear Performance: The Myth of Sisyphus*, 2013

1b   Shahriar Asdollah-Zadeh, *Fear*, 2013

2a   Darcell Apelu, *Brown Girl in the ring (Tra la la la la)*, 2016

2b   Darcell Apelu, *Brown Girl in the ring (Tra la la la la)*, 2016, performance

3a   Jaimee Stockman-Young, *Spectres of Violence (4)a*, 2016

3b   Jaimee Stockman-Young, *Spectres of Violence (4)b*, 2016

3c   Jaimee Stockman-Young, *Spectres of Violence (4)c*, 2016

3d   Jaimee Stockman-Young, *Spectres of Violence (4)d*, 2016

4a   Joanna Neumegen, *Thanks mather 4 my life*, 2016

4c   Joanna Neumegen, *im getting really tired of these broken promithes promithes*, 2016

5   Joanna Neumegen, *of becoming*, 2016

6   Alexis Hunter, *Passionate Instincts XIII*, 1984-5

7   Ana Iti, *Treasures Left by Our Ancestors*, 2016

       val smith, *formations for reciprocal justice and further sad attempts to punish you or make some kind of a difference*
i. Making the club gay again
ii. Ensuring no pride is a positive outcome of the protest, 2016

A response to *Passionate Instincts* by Andrea Bell

Image: *Passionate Instincts* (installation view). Photo: Daegan Wells.

These days we do everything in groups. Recent years have seen an excess of exhibitions conceived by curatorial panels, curatorial consortiums, curatoriums or curatorial attachés. This pluralist approach has become de rigueur in contemporary practice—based on an assumption that the more curators are involved, the more intellectually rigorous the exhibition outcome.

UK-based artist and writer Liam Gillick has described this trend towards group-based practice:

> A discursive model of praxis has developed within the critical art context over the last twenty years. It is the offspring of critical theory and improvised, self-organized structures. It is the basis of art that involves the dissemination of information. It plays with social models and presents speculative constructs both within and beyond traditional gallery spaces. It is indebted to conceptual art's reframing of relationships, and it requires decentered and revised histories in order to evolve.[1]

Curatorial voices are everywhere—at conferences, symposia, hui, workshops, intensives and retreats. But talk is cheap, which is why curators favour more

academic words such as Discourse. Discursive. Dialogue. In the realm of art, inanimate objects are often described as being in conversation or in dialogue with each other. Since the relational turn, conversation has become a valid form of artistic production, in and of itself. As Berlin and Rotterdam-based writer and editor Monika Szewczyk explains: 'In an information economy, the power of discourse to shape the world gives conversation ever more complex and concrete potential. And the question becomes how to employ conversation as a medium.'[2] At best, conversation offers multiple and diverse perspectives. At worst, a single privileged perspective dominates the discussion. But group dynamics are key to measuring the success or failure of conversation as a relational art form.

In 1965 American Behavioural Psychologist Bruce Tuckman identified four stages of group development relating to 'patterns of interpersonal relationships'.[3] These stages became known as 'forming, storming, norming and performing'[4]—a model that (at a stretch) could be applied to the process of group curating, and in this instance, applied to the collective curation of *Passionate Instincts*.

According to Tuckman, the 'forming' stage is 'a time of orientation, testing and dependence'. This likely took place during the five-day Curatorial Intensive at Aoraki Mt Cook in November 2015, when the curators of *Passionate Instinct*s were first introduced to each other—and to the idea of a group curatorial project as an outcome of the programme.

'Storming' manifests through: 'intragroup conflicts' and presents as an 'emotional response to task demands'. The phrase 'Battle Royale' was frequently used during the exhibition's opening weekend when recounting the method for artist selection and an overarching theme. As I sat in the audience at the *Passionate Instincts* Artists and Curators in Discussion public programme event, I couldn't help but wonder… who threw the biggest punches? Who got knocked out?

Tuckman suggests that 'norming' (a term that feels slightly out of place here) is when the group begins to be effective: 'ingroup feeling and cohesiveness develop; new standards evolve and new roles are adopted'. This was the stage for finalising artist lists and connecting threads between the works.

'Performing' is when 'roles become flexible and functional; structural issues have been resolved and the group structure can support task performance'. This is the actual doing bit: organising freight, finalising the exhibition design, writing text and installing the show.

Tuckman later added a fifth stage, sometimes referred to as 'adjourning' or 'mourning', which brings feelings of 'anxiety about separation and termination', 'sadness' and 'self-evaluation'. It is a stage that may not be publicly witnessed, but is a familiar end to any curatorial project nonetheless.

Somehow, despite this set of (hypothetical) conditions, *Passionate Instincts* successfully delivered a series of self- and site-responsive works that shared a common vision irrespective of individual differences—to be discussed below.

Alexis Hunter's *Passionate Instincts XIII* (1984–85), loaned from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, served as a catalyst and the exhibition's namesake. Hunter's work was framed as a 'provocation' for the exhibition—a point to begin the conversation.[5] The feral cat depicted in the painting appeared as a metaphorical self-portrait, keeping at a safe distance whilst flashing its teeth. The artist's biography informed the exhibition too. Born in New Zealand, Hunter (1948–2014) was best known for her photography, film and text-based works; although mid-career she returned to painting to experiment with the political constraints associated with the medium, using it to address psychology and fantasy from a feminist viewpoint.[6] Not long after moving to London in the early 1970s, Hunter joined the Women's Workshop of the Artists Union, finding that it was 'too hard' to be a feminist artist working alone.[7] In the decades that followed, Hunter produced works that highlighted issues of inequality and identity politics—a legacy that was acknowledged in *Passionate Instincts.*

Beyond this tribute to Hunter, a set of historic events and concerns set the stage for the artists and curators of *Passionate Instincts* to represent themselves and their politics. In 1986 the Homosexual Law Reform Act removed what was previously regarded as a form of criminal behaviour (consensual sex between men aged over sixteen) from the 1961 Crimes Act. This change in legislation was a landmark decision in New Zealand's human rights' history. The Dorian Society was a driving force behind the Reform, campaigning since the early 1960s.[8] However, some members of the public were slow to accept the change, with several suspected arson attacks targeting gay rights clubs and organisations around the country the year of the Reform.[9] One casualty of the arson attacks was a popular gay bar on Cashel Street in Christchurch, similarly named The Dorian, and which had on at least one occasion been promoted in the bi-monthly gay and lesbian magazine Out! as 'a place to go'.[10]

Thirty years after this act of vandalism, The Dorian was remembered through a combination of architectural interventions and selected image reproductions in Jaimee Stockman-Young's *Spectres of Violence* (2016), presented as part of the *Passionate Instincts* exhibition. Using salvaged materials such as plasterboard, melamine, galvanised chain and timber off-cuts the artist divided the body of the gallery into segregated parts. In the context of post-quake Christchurch, Stockman-Young's roughly crafted homage brought to mind the loss of other gay spaces such as Colombo Sauna, Menfriends, Ministry/Cruz/G-spot on Lichfield Street and the Manchester Street Car Park building's men's toilets. The acceleration of social media has also led to an infiltration of hook-up apps such as grindr that have also impacted on the cultural landscape of gay spaces around the city.[11] Stockman-Young's interest in queer spaces ventured beyond the re-creation of a site, addressing the importance of spaces that have been 'occupied, desecrated or subjected to trauma'.[12] Her use of archival material has given voice to queer histories and the collaborative community ideology connected with the multiplicity of LGBTQI+ identities.

Artist val smith similarly sought to 'queer' the gallery space in *Passionate Instincts*, though using different methods to Stockman-Young. Neoliberalism has led to an increased number of public/private partnerships in control of public space. This politics goes hand-in-hand with the reinforcement of heteronormative,

capitalist power structures. For this exhibition, the gallery space was viewed as an exception—described by one of the *Passionate Instincts* curators during the artists and curators discussion as 'a place of civic commons, a place of refuge'.[13] As a dance educator and choreographic artist interested in queer politics, smith offered a somatic and improvisational approach to interacting with objects, people and the gallery space. The work was titled:

formations for reciprocal justice and further sad attempts to punish you or make some kind of a difference
i. Making the club gay again
ii. Ensuring no pride is a positive outcome of the protest (2016)

Performance and installation was used as an invitational gesture, symbolically creating a 'safe space' for The Dorian to return. Handmade cardboard cuffs included in the exhibition were designed to be worn by at least two people, holding hands: a private/public display simultaneously hiding and drawing attention to an otherwise everyday behaviour. During the exhibition opening a large group wore the cuffs and held hands in the gallery—creating a chain as if standing together in solidarity. This performance introduced a protective element to the exhibition whilst also encouraging new ways of experiencing the gallery and the artworks that it contained. Formations also tested the boundaries between spectatorship and participation—seeing and being seen—via a series of peepholes punched through the rear wall. This apparent act of violence was softened by the welcoming space awash with mirror balls and refracted coloured lights that lay in wait behind the wall.

Reflecting on our relationship with the past similarly provided inspiration for Ana Iti (Ngāpuhi), whose work *Treasures Left by Our Ancestors* (2016) was filmed at the Canterbury Museum. In her fifteen-minute video, Iti actively engaged with a number of exhibits in the 'First Settlers of Aotearoa, tangata whenua' display. With an awareness of her heritage and the politics of the gaze, she turned away from the camera, facing the life-sized ethnographic kitsch dioramas. Crouching, out of respect, Iti lowered herself to the height of the seated Māori figures. Through this action Iti rejected the museological construction of the 'other' while visitors (presumably tourists), unaware of her cause, passed by. Unlike German artist Thomas Struth's static photographs of people viewing art, the museum visitors in *Treasures Left by Our Ancestors* were secondary. Iti's use of the moving image added a durational layer to the work, transforming it into a performance of endurance (so too, for the viewer) and a peaceful protest via the interruption of space.

Darcell Apelu's *Brown Girl in the ring (Tra la la la la)* (2016) video and live performance also engaged with the perceptions of the 'Other'. Apelu's experience as an afakasi female informs her practice as an artist of Niuean and New Zealand European descent. Through her work she challenges cultural and gender stereotypes relating specifically to views regarding the female Pacific body—refusing conventional beauty ideals and the western male gaze. In the 'safe space' of the gallery, Apelu made her debut fully naked performance—in a sense, 'coming out' in her own words as 'brown, hairy and fat'[14]—with only a white towel left behind as a trace of a residual performance.

Shahriar Asdollah-Zadeh's *Fear Performance: The Myth of Sisyphus* and *Fear* (both 2013) coupled performance documentation with sculpture as a remnant or artefact. The works recalled the story of Sisyphus, who was burdened with the futile task of rolling a rock to the top of a mountain, only for it to roll back down again. In Asdollah-Zadeh's nine-minute video the artist labours over the task of literally pulling the weight of 'fear' (a sculpture made with wood and polystyrene also displayed in the exhibition) up the black sand dunes near Te Henga in the Waitakere Ranges. Whether or not it made for compelling viewing was beside the point. The work drew on Albert Camus' reading of Sisyphus' struggle to symbolise the hopelessness of the human condition. Asdollah-Zadeh situated this view as a metaphor for the issues in our political climate such as the economic crisis, rise in unemployment and displacement.[15]

A personal sense of narrative continued in the work of Joanna Neumegen, whose paintings offered a diaristic approach to matters such as mental illness, femininity and self-help. Using biro pen, paint, graphite and resin, her works *Thanks mather 4 my life*, *im getting really tired of these broken promithes promithes* and *of becoming* (all 2016) divulged a series of uncomfortable sentiments and symptoms of psychological distress. Body, image and eating disorders have featured as subjects in Neumegen's previous works, whereby fictional personas engage with (and via) social media as a form of self-expression/self-destruction, performing for a broad, unknown audience, or perhaps more importantly, for themselves.

For an exhibition with such a high curatorial headcount *Passionate Instincts* had the potential to turn into a cacophonous racket of me, me, me! Instead, the curators presented a unified approach and provided a generous amount of thought and space to each artwork, enabling room to breathe. For all the talk of collective practice and community, the gallery context limited the potential for *Passionate Instincts* to reach a broader demographic. In spite of this, the exhibition's strength was its engagement with politics outside the gallery. The concept of conversation extended to the artworks themselves, which interacted with each other and put forward a non-linear set of dialogues relating to art as a catalyst for social change. Similarly, Tuckman's stages of group development paralleled the artworks as autonomous subjects—speaking to their own politics the artworks collectively formed, stormed, normed and performed. As a 'fragmented self-portrait',[16] *Passionate Instincts* provided a platform for the artists and curators to put forward a selection of perspectives and revised histories representative of a generation of changing demographics, which advanced the conversation beyond curatorial rhetoric.

1   Liam Gillick, "Maybe it would be better if we worked in groups of three? Part 1 of 2: The Discursive", *e-flux Journal* 2 (January 2009). Link here.

2   Monica Szewczyk, "Art of Conversation, Part 2", *e-flux Journal* 7 (June 2009). Link here.

3   Bruce Tuckman, "Developmental Sequence in Small Groups", *Group Facilitation: A Research and Applications Journal* 3 (Spiring 2001). Also see M.K. Smith, "Bruce W. Tuckman – forming, storming morning and performing in groups", *The Encyclopedia of Informal Education* (2005). Link here.

4   The following discussion of those terms—forming, storming, norming, performing and adjorning or mourning—is based on Tuckman's analysis.

5   *Passionate Instincts*, curatorial statement/room sheet, The Physics Room, Christchurch (8 Octover – 12 November 2016).

6   Lisa Sabbage and Alexis Hunter, "Fears, dreams, and desires", *Broadsheet* 172 (Oct 1989): 20.

7   Lynda Morris, "Alexis Hunter Obituary", *The Guardian* (12 March 2014). Link here.

8   Ministry for Culture and Heritage, "Homosexual Law Reform: Setting the Scene" (updated 1 July 2014). Link here.

9   Such as the Lesbian and Gay Rights Resource Centre (LGRRC) in Wellington and The Dorian in Christchurch. See Phil Parkison and Chris Parkin, "Out of the Ashes", *Friends of LAGANZ Newsletter* 13 (December 1996). Link here.

10   Jay Bennie, "My Life before Law Reform", *Gay NZ* (3 April 2016).

11   Jay Bennie, "The Gaping Holes in Gay Christchurch History", *Gay NZ* (3 April 2016).

12   Jaimee Stockman-Young, stated during *Passionate Instincts* Artists and Curators in discussion, The Physics Room, Christchurch (8 October 2016).

13   Ted Whitaker, *Passionate Instincts* Artists and Curators in Discussion.

14   Darcell Apelu, quoted in *Passionate Instincts* curatorial statement/room sheet, The Physics Room, Christchurch (8 Octover – 12 November 2016).

15   See Zara Sigglekow, "Fear Performance: The Myth of Sisyphus", excerpt published by *CIRCUIT Artist Film and Video Aotearoa New Zealand* (October 2013). Link here.

16   Emma Ng, curatorial statement read by Amelia Hitchcock, *Passionate Instincts* Artists and Curators in Discussion.

Woahmanchester (A Road Movie of Intrepid Dimensions) by All the Cunning Stunts

24 March — 23 April

Image: All the Cunning Stunts, *Woahmanchester (A Road Movie of Intrepid Dimensions)*, 2016, Health and Awareness Centre fence, cnr Bealey Avenue & Manchester Street. Photo: Daegan Wells.

Woahmanchester (A Road Movie of Intrepid Dimensions) is a new public image series by All the Cunning Stunts that is visible at various locations along Manchester Street in Ōtautahi Christchurch, between The Physics Room and North Projects.

Woahmanchester continues the Stunts' intrepid and glitter-inflected journey to locate a Leading Lxdy for their upcoming debut film. As the Stunts are not entirely sure whether this Lxdy already exists or is simply yet to be imagined, they are using their extensive media relations for the Woahmanchester image series to speculate on their Leading Lxdy's career, and search for this elusive celebrity's multiple dimensions.

The diverse community uses and multiple queer stories of Manchester Street and the surrounding area have influenced the visual and textual development of the *Woahmanchester* series, which happens in the Stunts' behind-the-scenes digital studio. Interested passers-by and talent scouts alike can expect back stage passes, so stay tuned!

A [blog](#) of the production process will be live from the opening onwards.

Coming Soon! *Woahmanchester (A Road Movie of Intrepid Dimensions)* will be partnered with an upcoming contribution to *Girls Like Us* magazine, titled *F+ (A Family Genre Comedy)*.

———————————

All the Cunning Stunts is a collective comprising of artists Liz Allan, Clare Noonan, Rachel O'Neill and Marnie Slater, who have been working together since 2010. Their work uses humour, an invitational tone and plenty of innuendo to experiment with alternative ways to imagine attraction, relationships and positionality, as well as to address mainstream representations of queer desire in popular culture and other commercial contexts.

Meine Bilder
by Zac Langdon-Pole

5 December 2015 — 30 January 2016

Image: Zac Langdon-Pole, *Pieces of 8*, single channel HD digital film (still), 2015.

EXHIBITION TEXT:

The exhibition *Meine Bilder* by Zac Langdon-Pole features two new projects—a poem and a film—that together weave and unfold ideas of inheritance and recognition. They test the seduction of images and the limits of memory and language, as well as forms of collective and individual agency in the face of loss, destruction and impasse.

The installation *My Body… (Brendan Pole)*, consists of a poem that has been re-authored by the artist based on the recollection and testimony of his mother, Cathy Pole, regarding a poem that was only ever conveyed verbally by her brother Brendan Pole shortly before he passed away in 1991 due to complications caused by AIDS. Having reworked the poem over the course of a year through continuous dialogue and reflection, the words offer an open-ended meditation on a number of unresolved issues that centre on Brendan's identity, desires, beliefs and doubts when confronted with his passing. Adding further complexity to the project, Langdon-Pole has chosen to portray the poem through a series of 297 photographs

that constitute the individual letters of the poem and depict an historical overview of ornamental and illuminated typographies largely from religious texts.
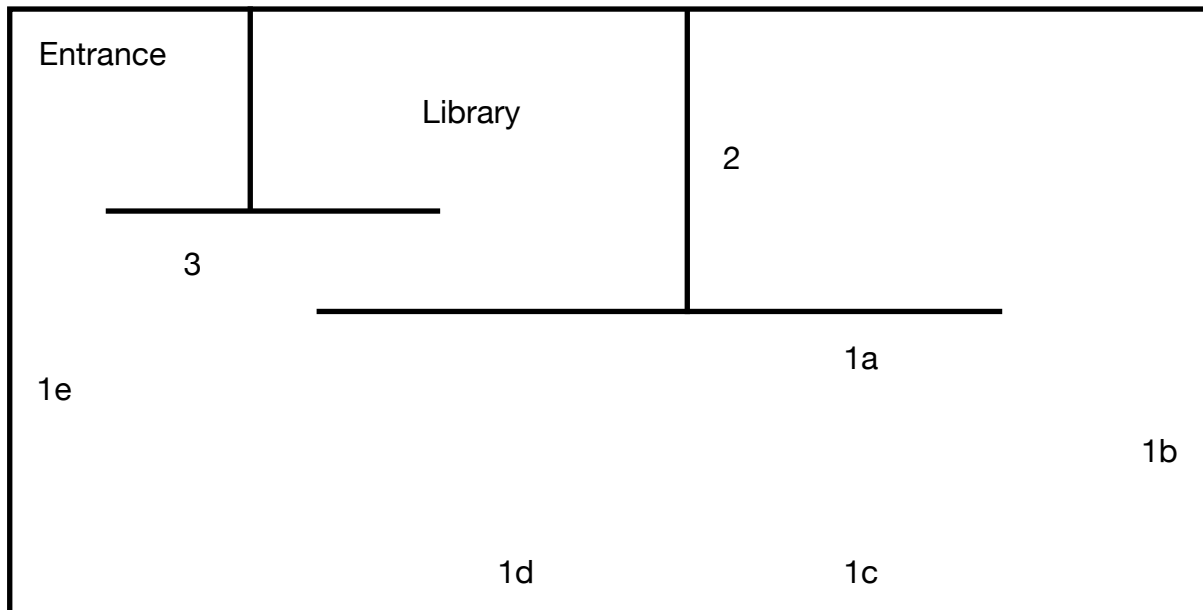
The film *Pieces of 8*, depicts a yellow canary bird in a cage. It references the historical usage of canaries in mining, where they would accompany miners in a small cage, their death serving as a warning signal if conditions became unsafe. This can be extrapolated to consider broader notions of danger or anxiety. In a formal logic that deals with the very mechanics of film itself and our perception of moving images, Langdon-Pole has in postproduction synced the frame rate of the film to the heart rate of the bird. While the average resting heart-rate of a canary sits at around 1000 beats per-minute, when broken down to beats per second (16.6) this is approximate to the least number of frames per-second that the human eye can recognise as a smooth and continuous moving image. Throughout the film we see the frame rate fluctuate as the bird shows increasing signs of 'distress'*.

*It must be noted that no animals were harmed in the making of this film. The film is a performance both on the part of the bird and the artist's manipulation of the apparatus of representation. The film is offered as a testing ground for our capacity to believe in images particularly in moments of crisis and emergency.

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Zac Langdon-Pole (b.1988, Auckland) completed a BFA (Hons) at Elam School of Fine Arts in 2010 and recently graduated with the award of Meisterschüler from the class of Willem de Rooij at Städelschule, Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste, in Frankfurt am Main, 2015. Some recent exhibitions include *Parked like Serious Oysters* (Städelschule Graduate Exhibition), Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt, 2015; *Windows Hung With Shutters*, (group exhibition), *Raeber von Stenglin*, *Zürich, 2015-16; [sic]*, Blue Oyster Art Project Space, Dunedin, 2014; *Pale Ideas*, at Michael Lett, Auckland, 2013.

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Check out more documentation from the exhibition [here](#).

WORK LIST

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1   Zac Langdon-Pole, *My Body… (Brendan Pole)*, 2015
         297 individual digital photographs, each photograph 15 x 10cm,
         overall dimensions variable

a   Stanza one, *My Body… (Brendan Pole)*, 2015
b   Stanza two, *My Body… (Brendan Pole)*, 2015
c   Stanza three, *My Body… (Brendan Pole)*, 2015
d   Stanza four, *My Body… (Brendan Pole)*, 2015
e   Stanza five, *My Body… (Brendan Pole)*, 2015

2   Zac Langdon-Pole, *Pieces of 8*, 2015
         HD single channel digital film (5' 17")

3   In the library: *Open Book*, artist books by twelve photographers,
         coordinated by Shelley Jacobson

Zac Langdon-Pole 'My Body… (Brendan Pole)' in Meine Bilder at The Physics Room by Catherine Dale

A response to *Meine Bilder*

There are two works in Zac Langdon-Pole's show *Meine Bilder*: *Pieces of Eight*, a film and *My Body... (Brendon Pole)*, a text work. The latter, which is the focus here, is a re-inscription and adaptation of a poem by the artist's deceased uncle, whose name makes up part of the title.[i]

The poem's five stanzas are pasted across the walls in 297 photographs, one for each individual letter. In her essay, *Where Our Bodies Begin and End*, Langdon-Pole's sister Georgina Pole discusses her brother's artwork and recounts the life of their uncle. Pole also describes the poem's genealogy and its influence, "by speaking at length with our mother [Cathy Pole] about Brendan's life, his identity, struggles living with HIV and AIDS, and his death, Zac's subsequent reconstruction and re-authoring of the poem tests the limits of intergenerational memory".[ii] Shortly before he died in 1991, Brendon Pole recited his poem to Cathy Pole, who relayed it to her son Langdon-Pole, who revisions, (re)inscribes, and installs it as a series of almost 300 photographs of elaborate medieval fonts.

While Langdon-Pole's work is 'of' a poem and even functions momentarily as a poem, it is not only, or even really, a poem. When you take the work home you will not find a poem but a collection of 297 photographs, each 100mm x 150mm. The poem becomes a pile of images to be put up, packed away, and put up somewhere else. This formal disappearance of the poem into a stack of photographs also reflects the artist's wider practice of 'montage, transposition, [time] travelling, testimony, reinterpretation, collaboration and appropriation […].'[iii] Not only has the poem time-travelled, it has also been reinterpreted, appropriated, collaborated with via testimony, and then 're-membered,' and so made into something else.
Cathy Pole said her brother Brendon was afraid he would not be remembered.[iv] He was right to worry. In less than a hundred years most of the adults you know will be forgotten, or remembered only in fragments that are passed on by people who are themselves aging, changing, and forgetting. This year on my mother's birthday, I wondered who else remembered that it's been eighteen months since she died. Although we leave behind objects, pictures, and poems, the surplus of family photographs that appear in auction houses and charity shops demonstrates what happens if no one is interested in the objects that remain, that is, if there is no one (left) to be interested in us.

. . .

The letters are in medieval manuscript, and Langdon-Pole uses mostly the

decorative and pictorial ones, the kind used to start a new passage of scripture.[v] Georgina Pole describes the way these letters portray the 'seductive and alluring details' of Christian typography, and she points to Langdon-Pole's use of them to convey a non-heterosexual life and desire that the scripts' religion condemns. While they may seduce, the ornamental and difficult-to-read letters also invoke the distance and displacement that language produces as well as its tacit promise to make experience proximate. The medieval font is irregular because the artist has taken from different styles from across the centuries. The poem is dominated by these letters and they jostle for attention. This means you cannot see the whole picture or read the text without stepping back once or twice. We are not used to reading poetry like this, but then again, this is not a poem.

In this way, the text work highlights the automatic process of reading, of simultaneously looking at letters and reading them. In front of the text, and unsure of what to concentrate on, I become lost in interpretation. I imagine there is a secret in the words, which I want to glean, and an aesthetic to the letters that I want to appreciate. When I step even farther back I see something else, too. Some of the stanzas might form letters of their own. Is that a 'W' and is that an 'E'? I am reminded of Paul Auster's *City of Glass* in which a deranged detective storywriter follows an elderly man around the city. Tracing the man's daily walks into his notebook, the fiction writer observes the formation of large scale letters. He expects that the old man's steps will eventually reveal a secret message. Similarly, in the poem on the wall I see shapes that I fancy bear a concealed message. By stepping back to read around these words and lines, I am also trying to read between them. Looking at the work I have a strong desire for extra meaning, perhaps this is because the poem is about dying and disappearing. So, I search for hidden formulae that might tell me how to live. The title of the work *My Body …. (Brendon Pole)* contains the first two words of the poem and then an ellipsis '. . .'. I follow the dots (the points) that connect the artist and the poet. I follow the inhale and exhale of the poet (as I have followed the breath of every person I have watched die). I trace the dots from title to poem to work to story. I step across them carefully because there is also always the danger of falling through, and of missing the point. Of falling, I would like to be less afraid.

. . .

In much of the poetry I have read, like the art I have viewed, substance is not given head on, or given at all. If something substantial is suggested it is invariably off to the side by which I mean I can feel its presence only by its absence. This something which evades a poem or an artwork is conceivably a second life, a life that is private even from ourselves. The philosopher Jean-François Lyotard writes about a second life, which he describes by way of what he calls "the general line."[vi]

> The "general line" is not the line of life in general, of life "such as it is." The second existence is nonetheless sweet in relation to "the life everyone sees." It dwells within it from time to time and sweeps it away, but without one knowing anything about it. The second existence does not really wrong the first one; it opens parentheses within it.[vii]

Perhaps it is these brackets that hold Brendon Pole in *My Body …. (Brendon Pole)*. Lyotard explains,

> You grant your hours of solitude to that existence because you have a need not to know more. That's how it is that you can encounter what you are unaware of. However, you wait for it. And you can try to make it come. You read, you drink, you love, you make music, you give yourself over to the ritual of your little obsessions, you write.[viii]

Disappearance. Appearance.

An account of one of Brendon Pole's last days also serves as a description of how we resist and then negotiate disappearance by expressing it in the very moments that we and it are disappearing. In their beaten-up old van, Cathy Pole and her husband drive twenty-eight-year old Brendon to Auckland's west coast. He is physically weak so they put a mattress in the back. They reverse the van to look over the water from a cliff. There's Brendon looking out at the sea, which is framed by the rusty sides of the van's back door. It's here that Brendon delivers his poem. Georgina Pole writes, "[i]n his journey towards death, language seemed to become a space where he could resist what had been enacted upon him."[ix] When I picture this scene there is a fierce wind that carries his words 'writ large' out toward the roaring surf. Into the van, out to sea.

. . .

Langdon-Pole's work, both at The Physics Room and elsewhere, makes something of disappearance, and so keeps disappearance in mind, alive, and in play.[x]

The poem and the work are also acts of mourning. Brendon Pole mourns his future, his body, his life while Zac Langdon-Pole mourns his uncle, his uncle's past, his uncle's life. *My Body . . . (Brendon Pole)* retraces our links with one another, with objects, and with language. Near the end of *Where Our Bodies Begin and End*, Georgina Pole asks, "How can the living resound stories suppressed and untold? How do we become companions of the dead?" Langdon-Pole's *My Body . . (Brendon Pole)* is a perfect answer.

REFERENCES

i   Georgina Pole, "Where Our Bodies Begin and End," *The Pantograph Punch* (2016), accessed April 21st, 2016.
     http://pantograph-punch.com/post/where-our-bodies-begin-and-end-brendan-pole-my-body

ii   Ibid.

iii "Artist-in-Residence," NTU Center for Contemporary Art Singapore, accessed May 1, 2016,
     http://ntu.ccasingapore.org/residencies/zac-langdon-pole/

iv   Pole. "Where Our Bodies Begin and End."

v   Langdon-Pole's work is not unknown to decoration. In 2012, he exhibited works of floral patterned fabric that Cathy Pole had made into clothes. John Hurrell,"Patterned Paintings from Textile Offcuts," review of *Nothing By Itself*, by Zac Langdon-Pole at Michael Lett 18 May-23rd June 2012, Eyecontact, http://www.eyecontactsite.com/2012/06/patterned-paintings-using-textile-offcuts?external=true

vi   Jean-Francois Lyotard "The General Line" *Postmodern Fables* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 115-122.

vii Ibid., 118.

viii Jeremy Luke Hill, "Lyotard and the Secret Self," *From Word to Word*, April 11, 2008,
     https://jeremylukehill.wordpress.com/2008/04/11/lyotard-and-the-secret-self/

ix   Pole. "Where Our Bodies Begin and End."

x   The objects and processes that Langdon-Pole employs sometimes end up taking over his works. The idea of making a work that is only partly your own and of sharing the making of work with others appears in Langdon-Pole's *'[Sic],'* a show at The Blue Oyster Art Space 22 January – 22 February, 2014. The artist arranged for the removal of all the lights, fixtures, and other light-generating devices from the household of an unknown author's house and used them to light the gallery. As with the words from his uncle's story, the lights are transferred from their home to light the gallery. http://www.blueoyster.org.nz/exhibitions/zac-langdon-pole/ accessed April 20th, 2016. Additionally, in *Pale Ideas* shown at Michael Lett 29 May – 11 August, 2013, sun-faded curtain fabric is stretched over frames. Just as he has Brendon Pole do the work of the poem, here Langdon-Pole lets the sun do some of the work. During the gradual process of drawing colour from fabric, the sun makes dark and light stripes adding something new to the disappearing colour. http://michaellett.com/exhibition/zac-langdon-pole-pale-ideas/ accessed May 15, 2016.

Embodying the archive

Brown Council, Emma Fitts, Alex Martinis Roe, Newspaper Reading Club, curated by Anneke Jaspers and Melanie Oliver
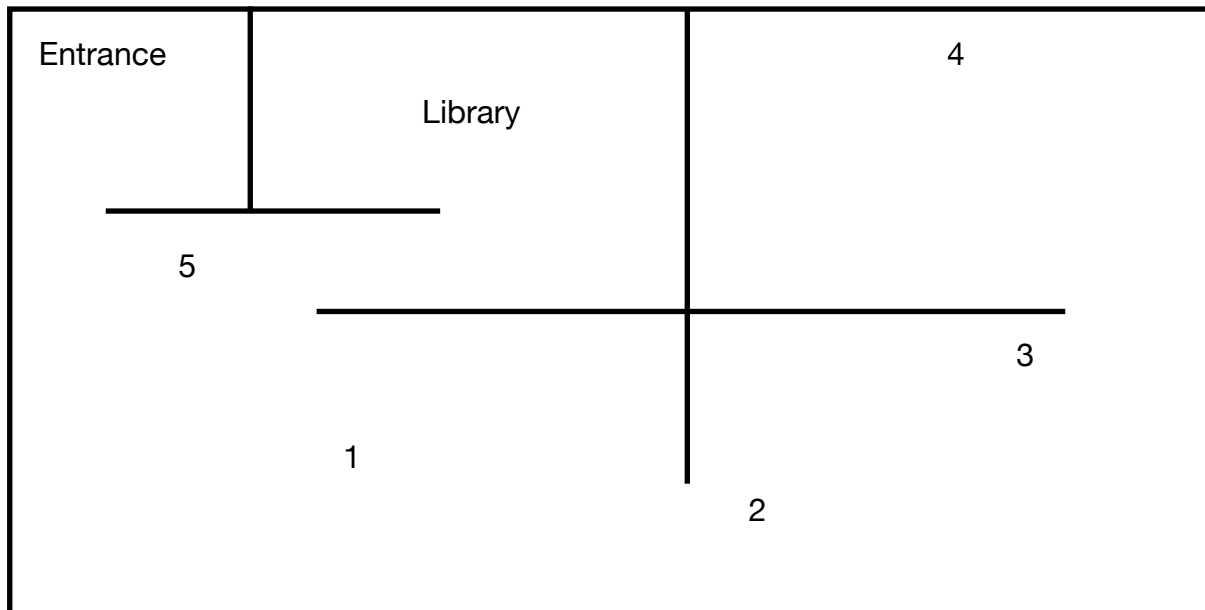
5 September — 10 October

Image: Alex Martinis Roe, *It was an unusual way of doing politics: there were friendships, loves, gossip, tears, flowers...*, Super 8 transferred to digital and HD video (10:43), 2014.

EXHIBITION TEXT:

Embodying the archive explores history mediated through the body. Rather than reproducing archival structures or trafficking in readymade historical traces, the artists work with performance, narration and tactile forms to approach questions of historicity and expose the fluidity of the archive. In dialogue with real and imagined figures, they draw out relations between past and present to address a range of themes, among them feminist genealogies, the knowledge economy and the afterlives of ephemeral practices.

In the wake of the so-called 'archival turn', and against a backdrop of proliferating re-enactments and renewed modes of appropriation, the logics at work here resist such straight alignments. Instead, the exhibition charts a spectrum of responses to the gaps and crossovers among these tendencies, from reflections on the dynamic between embodied subject and archival object, to experiments with embodying the archive and articulations of the body as an archive.

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1   Alex Martinis Roe
        It was an unusual way of doing politics: there were friendships, loves,
        gossip, tears, flowers...
        Super 8 transferred to digital and HD video (10:43)
        2014

2   Emma Fitts
        Where did feeling come from?
        Velvet, interfacing, ribbing, vinyl text, *Spinster* novel by Sylvia
        Ashton-Warner, silk scarf
        2015

3   Brown Council
        Remembering Barbara Cleveland
        Single channel HD video, sound (10:33)
        2011

4   Brown Council
        This is Barbara Cleveland
        Single channel HD video, sound (16:42)
        2013

5   Newspaper Reading Club
        Sign up sheet for site-specific performances, various locations
        around the city
        2015

Alex Martinis Roe
It was an unusual way of doing politics: there were friendships, loves, gossip, tears, flowers...
Super 8 transferred to digital and HD video (10:43), 2014

It was an unusual way of doing politics: there were friendships, loves, gossip, tears, flowers... traces the legacy of a weeklong meeting of political groups in France in 1972. Among the participants were women from the French feminist 'current' Psychanalyse et Politique and others who later formed the Milan Women's Bookstore Collective, which have been the subject of Martinis Roe's ongoing research into feminist genealogies. More than forty years later, Martinis Roe's two-channel film revisits the sites of the meeting at La Tranche-sur-Mer and of some of Psychanalyse et Politique's gatherings in Paris. The present realities of these contexts frame her reflection on the significance of the groups' encounter and its potential to inform future ways of 'doing politics'.

Martinis Roe's work is explicitly about relations: between subjects, ideologies, cultural contexts and generations. Building on her longstanding practice of using art to generate spaces for exchange, this work proceeds from dialogues with women who attended the 1972 event, as well as a group of contemporary Nantes-based interlocutors with a shared interest in feminist political practices. In the film, the latter take on the role of performers, embodying the story of the original gathering. A second group of collaborators narrates a script written by Martinis Roe, which weaves together different perspectives on the event. In the gallery, two further layers foreground trans-subjectivity: a library of texts that address key ideas explored in the film, and a workshop which invites practical experimentation by a local audience with the theories and practices advanced by Psychanalyse et Politique.

At its crux, *It was an unusual way of doing politics…* is an exercise in storytelling, one that foregrounds layers of mediation and of authorship, and privileges multiple speaking positions. The temporal and vocal fragmentation that underscores the narrative is echoed in the accompanying footage, which splits across screens and also across mediums. Martinis Roe's mimicry of archival documentation in the use of Super 8 points to the constructed nature of all historical accounts – including the one encompassed by the work – but it also renders the intergenerational dimension of her project in visual terms, aestheticising the imbrication of past and present, and the way events ramify across time.

See documentation from the exhibition here.

Emma Fitts
Where did feeling come from?, 2015, velvet, interfacing, ribbing, vinyl text,
Spinster novel by Sylvia Ashton-Warner, silk scarf

Emma Fitts often uses literary figures, narrative and biography to expose the social dimension of archives. In this installation she channels New Zealand writer, artist and educator Sylvia Ashton-Warner (1908-1984), an unconventional and spirited personality, best known for the pioneering teaching scheme that she developed and wrote about. Through working in a succession of rural schools with Māori and Pakeha students, she established an alternative approach to pedagogy based on the idea that the difficult experiences and destructive energy of children could be redirected towards their learning through placing a strong emphasis on creativity in the classroom. In 1955-56, her teaching methods were published as *The Maori Infant Room—Organic Reading and the Key Vocabulary*, and she went on to have international success despite her personal peculiarities.

Ashton-Warner's first novel *Spinster* was highly acclaimed in literary and educational communities when it was published in 1958. The story focuses on Anna, an artist and innovative teacher who is attempting a radical bicultural education model at a small school in a remote New Zealand town. While *Spinster* is a work of fiction, the ideas on education that are presented here are Ashton-Warner's own, and many other details similarly express personal reflections, experiences or desires. Anna's immediate surroundings are described with great care and particular attention is paid to clothing, including an unusual artist's smock that she wears for her teaching duties.

In reference to both her biography and writing, *Where did feeling come from?* features the garment pattern for an artist's smock, as worn by Ashton-Warner. With a darkly serious colour palette for the billowing shapes made of velvet and interfacing, the hanging materialises and accommodates the life of its subject. Fitts subtly invokes the aura that accrues to clothing based on contiguity with its wearer, as well as the muscle memory that derives from daily rituals and sensations. The idea that clothes house (and distinguish) bodies mirrors the classical notion of the archive as a form of architecture for social memory.

See documentation from the exhibition here.

Brown Council
Frances Barrett, Kate Blackmore, Kelly Doley, Diana Smith

Remembering Barbara Cleveland, 2011, single channel HD video, sound (10:33)

This is Barbara Cleveland, 2013, single channel HD video, sound (16:42)

The History of Performance, 2015, live participatory performance
Saturday 5 September, 2 – 4pm

Brown Council's ongoing cycle of works about Barbara Cleveland pays tribute to the life and creative output of this mythic Australian artist. During a brief period from the late 1970s to the early 1980s, Cleveland is said to have produced a series of provocative, implicitly feminist performances before disappearing under mysterious circumstances. Brown Council ostensibly reconstructs works from Cleveland's 'lost' oeuvre, based on archival fragments recently discovered by the artists. Doubly consigned to the margins of history, Cleveland's story becomes a cipher for exploring a series of broader themes: the legacies of ephemeral art and feminist histories, the complex status of the performance trace, and questions of authorship and authenticity.

The members of Brown Council adopt the figure of Cleveland interchangeably, their drag persona self-consciously referencing stereotypes about 1970s body art: its association with pain, nudity, ritual and a dogmatic spirit of intent. In addition, the aesthetic of performance documentation from the era is a key point of reference. By working across different registers of filmmaking (and speech), incorporating still photography and exploiting the evocative power of sound, the artists playfully deconstruct how the means by which we encounter the past shapes our present perspective. A further and crucial element is their consideration of the performativity of language, overtly addressed through the script for both works.

The History of Performance takes up related enquiries within the domain of live performance. Where the Barbara Cleveland works foreground historical distance through the mediating effects of documentation, *The History of Performance* explores the lingering presence of performances in embodied knowledge. Members of the audience are invited to join the artists in collectively authoring an account of art history based on personal recollections. By embracing the partial and idiosyncratic character of memory, this process highlights the complexities that haunt the writing of any history, but particularly one grounded in momentary actions and invisible affects.

See documentation from the exhibition [here](#).

Newspaper Reading Club
Fiona Connor & Michala Paludan

Participatory performances and urban interventions, 2015

Established in 2011, Newspaper Reading Club is an ongoing collaborative project that takes form variously as performances, posters, radio broadcasts and publications.

Operating in a different register to the works presented in The Physics Room galleries, the project considers how people access the news and engage with current affairs: perhaps the most immediate and pervasive means by which we encounter—and are implicated in—'history-making' in daily life. With burgeoning online news forums (both official and grassroots platforms), and the decline of long-form investigative journalism in New Zealand, it is timely to consider the state of the news within our knowledge-based economy.

For this iteration of Newspaper Reading Club, Connor and Paludan will undertake a month long residency at The Physics Room (8 September – 8 October). Using this opportunity to respond to the specific environment of Christchurch, they will develop a project and invite participants to meet and read from the newspaper in order to articulate the familiar process of skimming, commenting and editing that occurs when reading the news. Like never before, reading the news in Christchurch is critically important for understanding the politics and power relationships shaping the rebuild, an undertaking which reflexively moderates between the past and potential future of the city, and which highlights the dominant role that written documents play in structuring knowledge and discourse.

Join the Newspaper Reading Club mailing list in The Physics Room library to recieve details about how to participate in this project as it evolves.

See documentation from the exhibition [here](#).

Stars Rocked by FANTASING

13 December 2014 — 15 February 2015

Image: Alex Martinis Roe, *It was an unusual way of doing politics: there were friendships, loves, gossip, tears, flowers...*, Super 8 transferred to digital and HD video (10:43), 2014.

EXHIBITION TEXT:

Blending grandiose dreams and the heroically mundane, FANTASING aspire to the ego and adoration of the rock star fantasy combined with the ecstatic amateurism of SingStar. For the band practice/exhibition Stars Rocked, FANTASING members Bek Coogan, Claire Harris, Sarah Jane Parton and Gemma Syme will inhabit The Physics Room over the summer: doing things, making things and generally hanging out. Simultaneously workshop, office space, band room, exhibition and stage, the residue of their occupancy will remain in the space as objects, drawings, photographs and video.

There will be ad hoc performances and audience participation, but also reflection on how a collective practice and personality is constructed, documented and represented. FANTASING will thrash out notions of contemporary identity and ideology, both authentic and mediated, testing what it means to be humans together through a collaborative endeavor that is humorous, narcissistic and open to failure. Issues of gender and sexuality, the interrelationship of art, music and life, practice and process, will inspire the ultimate fan art: the cosmic fantasy that is *Stars Rocked*.

See documentation from the exhibition here.

A response to *Stars Rocked*
by Harriet Maher

The members of art collective FANTASING sing about wanting to go on "an instant fantasy", which is exactly what the viewer is invited to experience in their show at The Physics Room, *Stars Rocked*. FANTASING's collaborative art practice, the vehicle for this fantasy, spans music, video works, sculpture and even Instagram.

Collaborative practice remains popular in the contemporary art world, as it allows artists to resist artistic autonomy and engage socially with other artists as well as with the audience. Collaboration has its roots in the Dada and Surrealist movements, and was also especially important to 1970s and '80s feminist art practice, which hailed collaborative process as a key outlet for female and feminist creativity. The work of Bek Coogan, Claire Harris, Sarah Jane Parton and Gemma Syme as artist collective FANTASING is positioned within the history of feminist artist collectives, and yet responds to this kind of practice in a uniquely 21st century manner.

The group's collaboration takes the form of what they call, with tongue firmly in cheek, an "internet potato"—an online rhizome that has no central point, but exists instead as a network of connections. Parton says their relationship is, "like the universe. You can't say where it starts or where it ends, or what's the most important bit. The central point is where you are at the moment, but it's also where somebody else is at that moment, and we just kind of connect the dots. It's the same with the way we work through ideas, it's both informed and intuitive."[1]

The members of FANTASING met when they were invited to participate in an exhibition curated by Bryce Galloway for the NZ Film Archive in Wellington. Also, they all studied at Massey University at some point, and both Syme and Parton agree that they share a common view of what they want FANTASING to achieve. On the appeal of the collaborative aspect of their art practice, Parton says, "It's so much easier. I always wanted to be in an art band … with my own practice I'm the director of everything, whether it's making a music video, or a performance, or an installation, and then when we're together it's our thing, and none of us are in charge, although we do all seem to have the right of veto, and we say 'no! not that!'"

In any collaboration, disagreements and dissent are inevitable, but this can also make the work stronger. With a base in dialogue, the work becomes more complex and nuanced, as a product of discussion and, sometimes, tension. Rather than reflecting one artist's vision, FANTASING's projects comprise four different voices, approaches and ideas. However, the artists themselves say that they usually agree on where they want the work to go, and there have been few instances of intense disagreement.

Due to geographical distance and numerous commitments outside of FANTASING, the artists are not always able to communicate and collaborate in the traditional sense, such as in a studio or gallery space. However, the ubiquity of the internet

means that they are able to communicate remotely, in real time. Skype is a useful enabler for their collaborative practice, allowing the artists to overcome temporal and geographic separation. For example, it allowed Parton to be present at FANTASING's opening performance at The Physics Room, despite the fact that she was confined to her bed due to an injury.

This form of communication is indicative of new possibilities for artistic projects and speaks to a unique interconnectedness of the world via the internet which was not available to artists even a decade ago. This shift in artistic practice between generations sometimes manifests within their group as well. As Parton observes, "I think the fact that we span three decades (means) we've all had these different lived experiences."[2]

Not only is the internet an enabler for FANTASING's collaborative process, but it also forms a kind of aesthetic base for the group. In their music video for 'Instant Fantasy' on Youtube, technology and the internet make their mark visually through the use of screens, Skype or Facetime platforms, 'selfie' angles and Facebook notifications. The notion of an instant fantasy is a kind of embodiment of the internet itself – endless fantasies are available online with just one click. The artists also maintain a strong online presence – throughout the duration of their show at The Physics Room, they utilized the hashtag #artisttakeover to post images to the gallery's Instagram account, from Employee of the Month portraits (which also appeared in the gallery) to videos and live updates of their artistic process. Their music is released online through the platform Bandcamp, and their presence also comes through, of course, on their Facebook and Youtube accounts.

Syme adds that the performance and musical aspect of their collaboration is "a vehicle for the art… everything's so oblique, so music is a good solid base for things." Music has also been used as a vehicle for art by female collective Chicks on Speed, who combine performance, music, graphic design and fashion. Like Chicks on Speed, FANTASING's music goes hand in hand with their art, not simply as 'another way' of expressing ideas, but as a central creative outlet.
When they began to think about producing work in Christchurch, FANTASING were wary of taking a patronising attitude towards the quake-struck city.

"We didn't want to make a show about the earthquake, but we knew that we needed to acknowledge the changing environment of this area of Canterbury." Parton says. "I think it was Claire and Gemma just working through motifs, like cranes and seagulls and mounds of rubble, and Shag Rock becoming Shag Pile." Syme adds, "I wanted to be pretty careful not be the pity-party for Christchurch."

However, they felt they could not ignore the devastation and ongoing construction that surrounds The Physics Room gallery, pervasive in its emptiness and explicit in its progress towards rebuilding. The motifs of this landscape were translated into the gallery space, with Shag Rock (now the collapsed 'Shag Pile' in Sumner), appearing as a textured carpet on the floor, and as mounds of grey-foam rocks, which also make an appearance in their music video. These mounds, Syme says, also have a feminine and sexual connotations, another way in which the context of second-wave feminist art continues to influence contemporary artists addressing issues of sexuality and gender.

Particularly pressing for these four female artists is the notion of work, and how this is so often measured by a male-devised standard. Parton says, "Sometimes we're like oh my god, we haven't made enough art, we're so bad, we haven't done enough! And then we go no, no, we worked really hard!"[3] The artists seem to be caught between an awareness of the fact that they are working to patriarchal standards of production and measuring their value against this standard, and genuine concern over whether their work is "enough".

Being a collective that juggles their work as FANTASING with other jobs and personal commitments such as family, a sense of "amateurism" seems to hover over the group. Here again, the concepts of success and failure comes into play, and these are often measured in very narrow terms such as financial success or critical praise. There is more to FANTASING's work than this, however, and their success can be thought of in terms of the artists' ability to continue to produce challenging, interesting and innovative work despite conflicting commitments.

The nature of work—and office work in particular—is referenced in the 'Employee of the Month' display in the gallery, which includes framed photos of each artist and idiosyncratic mugs on raised plinths. This serves as a reminder, perhaps to the artists as much to the audience, that the project which FANTASING undertook in the gallery was, in fact, work. There is also the presence of a whiteboard, a desk and chair, and post-it notes attached to the wall, creating a hybrid office/gallery space in which notions of work, particularly 'traditional' work, are subtly challenged.

The same self-doubt over whether they have produced enough work seems to pervade the artists' feelings about the work they do produce. While discussing the show with me in the space, Parton questions whether things are too much, too silly, and whether she would remove things from the space if given more time. This is one of the successes of the show, that it does not show the work in a fixed state of being 'finished.' Things have changed throughout FANTASING's presence in the gallery, and might have continued to change should the show be installed for longer. The flexible, fluid nature of the gallery space and of FANTASING's creative process resists finality, suggesting that a work is always in a process of becoming.

Particularly in an internet age, art and images are always transitive, leading to something else, creating a 'rhizome' network of images, hyperlinks and text. FANTASING's collaborative work in *Stars Rocked* reflects this interconnectedness, with their music video, work in the gallery, music and online endeavours all forming an "internet potato" of creative production.

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[1] In conversation with the artist, 11 February 2015.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

Sports Jacket for Marlow Moss
by Emma Fitts

15 February – 18 April 2020

Image: Emma Fitts, *Sports Jacket for Marlow Moss*, silk and wool, 2014.

EXHIBITION TEXT:

From a series of garment patterns that includes *Bomber Jacket for Marilyn Waring*, *Anorak for Rowena Cade*, and *Fishing Vest Pockets for Olivia Spencer Bower.*

See the accompanying blog with research here:
https://whatwasishappening.tumblr.com/

[phage]
by Mary Flanagan

17 July – 10 August 2002
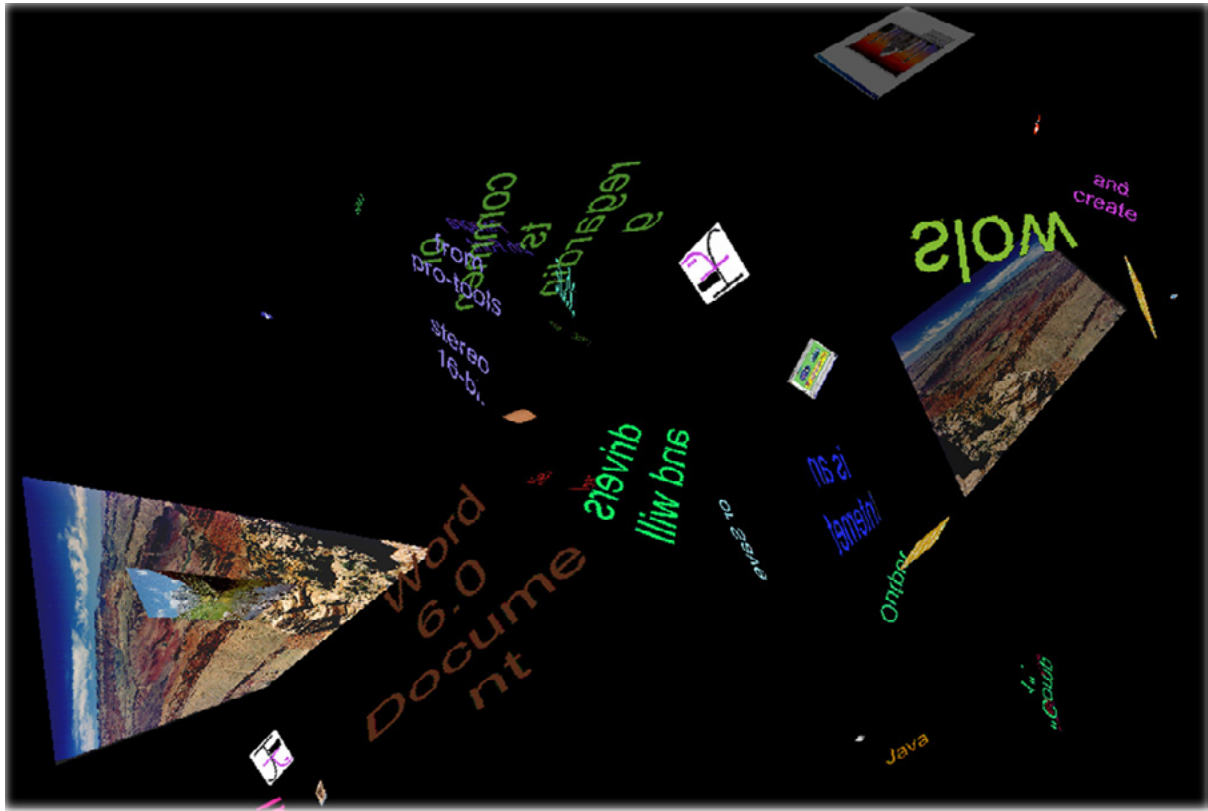
Image: Mary Flanagan, *[Phage]* (still), 2002.

EXHIBITION TEXT:

Digital artist Mary Flanagan is currently an Associate Professor of Art at the University of Oregon, where she teaches about gender and technology, cyberculture, interactive media, and sound design. She was recently chosen to exhibit her internet work [collection] as part of the prestigious 2002 Whitney Biennial in New York. This was only the second Whitney Biennial to include any internet based artworks. Mary Flanagan has also worked in the commercial field of computer software production, and has co-edited Reload, an anthology of essays exploring issues of gender and cyberculture. Flanagan's art practice is primarily concerned with exploring issues of identity, gender, memory and culture in virtual spaces. Her works also investigate the relationship between individuals, communities and the technologies we use.

[phage], her project for The Physics Room, is a computer virus created by the artist which explores the architecture of the computer it invades. Here, Flanagan's own laptop is being explored: random pieces of text, sound and image are pulled

up from the computer's hard drive, creating a dreamlike web of floating exerts of data—at times appearing as nonsensical gibberish, and at other points revealing personal information. In *[phage]* the machine becomes not just a tool to be used, but a palimpset of experiences and memory. Flanagan has created the necessary code, but the computer now drives the artwork as a dynamic artificial life form.

***[phage]* and other works by Mary Flanagan can also be viewed here:** [www. maryflanagan.com](www.maryflanagan.com)

[phage]: a feminist poetics of the machine by Mary Flanagan

An accompanying essay by the artist

A computer can be seen as an instrument on which many types and layers of writings have occurred. For example, many of us think of writing text on the computer, corresponding with friends or conducting business; we also inscribe multiple versions of a file. When a file is deleted from the hard drive—unwritten, in a way-- it is not immediately destroyed. Only the literal link to the file is deleted, and perhaps our awareness of the file is also lost; the actual data, however, remains in its proper block and sector until written over with new data. Even then, some fragments exist in between the written-over bits. New files mix with the layers of old, unwanted data. Thus the computer is a storehouse of artifacts: fragmented, coveted, corrupt, or precious; it holds diverse layers beneath its seamless, trustworthy user interface.

The computer is more than a diary; in a technology-infused culture it records the bulk of a person or groups of person's work and becomes a witness and recorder of that work. If we manipulate the data inside the computer as a space, we can expose the computer as our virtual palimpsest on which more than one text has been "written" with the earlier writing incompletely erased; the place where the residues and actions of our lives are kept, partly recorded, erased. What kinds of language other than the technical can we use to describe this area so elusive to cultural and artistic study? One approach is to use the metaphor of poetics to tap into a humanistic way of thinking about data which has both inherent organizing principles.

The theory and practice of poetry, namely the area of poetics, is concerned with such fundamental questions as what poetry is, how it is read, and how it is composed and "written." This project concerns the poetics of the computer—how form is transmutable, how tasks are multiple and fluid, and how the machine's design and use establishes its own brand of poetics in its writing of files: order, of space, and of power. Thinking deeper into the architecture of the computer itself will allow us to consider the structure of the computer using the mechanism of a computer virus. My goals are to establish a poetics of and for the computer workstation in order to examine the user's relation to this poetic system.

* * *

Following on popular fascination and revulsion of human-created life-forms that Mary Shelley brought forth in Frankenstein, or the obsession with ebola or the flesh-eating virus in the media, viruses have become an important focus of fiction, urban legends, hoaxes, popular media, and lawsuits. Etymologically speaking, "virus," from the Latin virus, means, "poison." The politics of computing are at a fevered pitch as struggles over personal identity and privacy issues peak. We are engulfed

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in a culmination of complex obsessions founded on the fear of the computer: as our confidant, we have a wary trust, knowing our machine can turn on us, selling our browsing habits or address books. Friend, diary, tattler, perhaps even malevolent agent.... At the pinnacle of this fear lies the computer virus.

Computer viruses have played an important role in the development of this climate through their uncanny bodily metaphor. The word "virus" immediately conjures up a biological equivalent for the phenomenon of computer viruses. (Louw and Duffy 34). Much of their popularity seems to be based in one of two camps: one which fears for the self or host and the other which roots enthusiastically for the interruption or destruction of cyber-smooth workings of mega-national companies. Attached to a deep-seated biological analogy, computer viruses replicate by attaching themselves to a host (a program or computer instead of a biological cell) and co-opt the host's resources to continue existence. Behaviorally, viruses are executable, self-sustaining programs; they effect or change data; and they replicate.

Why are computer viruses so frightening? Viruses place us at a kind of periphery: between the natural, bodily virus and the unnatural virus of the machine; between the unintentional "natural" causes of viruses to the malevolent and intentional, between ideas of the uncontrolled and the controlled. These opposites balance in a constant state of tension in virus discourse. As contagion, they erase our data. But further, they invade and destroy proof: proof that we have worked, proof that we have been entertained, proof that we have remembered a history. Computer viruses recall such a profound fear because they cause users to face the fear of impermanence; along with our data our memory, experiences, the proof of our existence in our technoculture can be irretrievably destroyed.

* * *

A virus, by form or function, is not inherently harmful (Fites 7). Humans live with several strains of viri in the body without consequence. Like their biological counterpart, computer viruses do not need to be destructive. Biology in fact presents us with a constructive virus type: bacteriophages, viruses used for healing, do not harm the human body but can destroy other bacteria. Since the early in the 1900s, the capital of the republic of Georgia, T'blisi, has been the center of phage research. Georgians use phage tablets, medications, and creams to combat illness. Phages developed at T'blisi can treat illnesses to which modern antibiotics have become immune.

A digital equivalent to this "constructive virus" can be created. To determine how we can come to an understanding of our relationship to our data, we need to not only examine its content but the technical framework which creates and stores it. One way to do this is through utilizing the imaginary of this discourse to explore the material of the system to show us something unexpected. In response to the positive image of the bacteriophage in the wake of contagion fears brought by computer viruses, I created the program [phage] with graduate student Chris Egert as technical director. [phage] is an application with viral behaviors which explores a workstation's architecture and creates a poetics of the computer as an autonomous

object, with host data as materialfor creative fodder. [phage], referring to the constructive bacteriophage, from the Greek phagein, meaning "to eat."

Like biological viruses, [phage] exists in two distinct states. When not in contact with a host cell (or computer), the virus remains dormant in a non-living state. When the application comes into contact with the appropriate host, it activates. Biological viruses cannot "live" or reproduce without getting inside some living cell, nor can the computer virus [phage] exist without a host hard drive. When [phage] is ready to act, it opens, filters through all available material on a specified workstation, and visualizes it in a 3D space. [phage] places a user's experiences in an alternate context—a visible, audible, and moving 3D computer world, where the rules of what is shown, for how long, and why are created by the virus itself instead of the user.

* * *

The material conditions for creating virtual space—computer hardware and software--need to be taken into account when examining our relationship to it. Let us examine the "space" of the machine in two parts: one as a social construction of space, and one as a technically created space.

The social space of the computer is one of individuality, a private space which presupposes a certain intimate relationship with the user. Of course, stating this calls up a wider discourse about spatial structuring, especially evoking feminist geography in the separation between public and private. These external/internal practices are deeply rooted in cultural ideologies, architectures, law, and popular discourse, subject to cultural interpretations—interpretations embedded inside the cultural reading, in our case, the technocultural reading. Geographer Nancy Duncan see instances of privatized public space (the gated community, the shopping mall) as institutionalized, accepted, apolitical spaces by their very virtue of being private (128). With technology, this could be equated with members-only chat rooms or member shopping sites. More recently, the reverse has happened—publicized private space has developed and grown in various forms. Family/gay web-cams in the home, email, which is actually public communication masked as interpersonal, web browsing monitors in the workplace, or street surveillance can be seen as sites which destabilize the assumptions of what acts or information is private.

Because [phage] explores data in a visual display, it models and exposes the representation of the private relationship with the computer to the public—even if no one serves as spectator to these private experiences "gone public." As privacy occupies a position considered "a-political" and infused with ideologies of control and intimacy, the very act of allowing the computer control over the experience creates, like a surveillance act, a blurred site for exploration.

* * *

We now need examine how the space is technically created. The hard drive could be conceptualized very much like a physical space. Or, perhaps, it could be considered like one of the virtual 3D worlds created by artists or the entertainment

industry. Instead of XYZ planes, however, hard drives are gridded into divisions called sectors and can be mapped, explored, and imagined. Like an Alphaworld, Onlive! Traveller, VRML performance, or a 3D action game like Tomb Raider or Unreal, the "space" of the hard drive can be mapped, explored, and imagined. What happens when one types a text document or creates a graphic and saves it? The operating system chooses an appropriate sector of the hard drive on which to write the data. Unlike the typical 3D game experience, the maneuverings inside the "world" of the hard drive are supposed to be entirely masked to the user. One cannot seem to avoid using metaphors of space to describe computer activities.

Even the term "cyberspace" renders an absolute connection, associating digital experiences with spatial descriptors. Programming languages suggest specialization as an operating mode within code. For example, we ask in the Basic language for the computer to "run,"(not process) and commands such as "goto" and "get" or, in Lingo, "put" or "place" (rather than compute, display, or calculate input). Such descriptions using the language of geography must be carefully considered given linguistic ties to a historic use of geography as a site of male power. And more broadly, in daily life as well as in feminist discourse, there has been an adoption of such spatial metaphors in language such as "working at the margins" at the "site" of one, singular point, and suggesting that "recentering" is a way to critique status quo tropes--these refer to space as a place for strategic and political action.

A related question to the discussion of space and meaning is, "Do 3D worlds alter the relationship between the body and knowledge?" 3D modeling and animation applications and the images they create are useful for a variety of purposes. They can be used to model difficult to understand scientific principles, such as chemical reactions or the workings of jet propulsion. Three-dimensional models and animations-- human-made virtual objects—can be used as "proof" in legal cases (eg. modeling a car accident to prove that the engineering of a road is misaligned) or provide "proof of concept" in architecture. Through the simultaneity and variety of perspectives, the software packages used to create virtual worlds and characters evoke complete and total omniscience. Indeed, this "design from nowhere" aspect is prevalent not only in 3D games but in the broader scope of information technology..

Women in the sciences and in the arts investigate space in different ways using categories that may vary from the traditions in their fields. Women have not historically been privileged to define fields such as geography or architecture; and second, women have not been the primary designers of the computational architecture of virtual spaces. Yet the construction of virtual environments is coded in ways which strongly affect the creation of knowledge in these environments. Virtual environments are mathematically based cohesive, seamless systems which create the sense a unified order of knowledge. The construction of 3D spaces reincapsulates traditional epistemologic tropes of reason and objectivity by being unsituated, outside of the body or encapsulating the virtual body. Graphics in three dimensions are meant to provide objectivity and omniscience. If, therefore, graphics in cyberspace set up this relationship of objectivity and omniscience, we as users assume this relationship unquestioningly in our complicity to user the systems we use.

The role of the body in relation to human viruses and computer viruses cannot be overlooked. The body serves as a referent to ideas not only of control but of knowledge as well. The body not only represents a cultural force but has also regulated men's and women's relationship to knowledge. This relationship to knowledge has a particular importance when using the computer to manifest 3D space. When we use the materials of a given episemologic condition but remove the important element of control to remap, reprioritize and display the computer architecture, we are able to find a gap in which rethink underlying power and information structures on the very machines we record our memories, experiences, and knowledges. Thus the virus project [phage] creates a visual, audible, and temporal metaphor for our experiences with the computer. [phage] sits at the axis of virtual space, public space, private space, and assumptions about control.

* * *

[phage] is a type of artificial life form, a computer virus, which explores a workstation's architecture and creates a poetics of the computer. [phage] possesses its own organizational parameters for the mapping of virtual space, and thus works to reorient the user to the computer. [phage] exhibits viral behavior by scouring the drive, then manipulates and creates, or births, the data into a visible and audible 3D environment. Using [phage], participants experience the computer in an exceptional way through the architecture of the computer; it becomes a space for examining digital cultural creation and the structures behind the myths of digital space and identity. [phage] has only the lifespan of a computer application: it can run for days or months, or it could crash quickly. Much depends on what it discovers on the hard drive.

Let us return to the question of space. Why is it important that we think of the hard drive as a space, and how does spatialized thinking have significance? If we see the computer as a palimpsest, we can give control over these layers to the creative force of the virus. [phage] breaks down virtual space's hierarchy by displaying information in a differently organized 3D space, granting random and many times unknown pieces of data trajectories, lifetimes, and the power of random movement. The computer in this context acts as its own creator and its own enactor of memory. Like University of California at San Diego Art professor Harold Cohen's computer program Aaron which uses artificial intelligence to create drawings and paintings, [phage] exhibits a large degree of autonomy in its selection and display of media on the computer. In other words, it is a recorder and a creator as well by re-creating our experience on the computer with different rules. [phage] functions similar to video art or other critical media works which use the medium and format to call a critique on itself. It calls a geographic critique of virtual space.

The bodily metaphor is intentionally significant in this project. More than simply an equative function between computer and human viruses, the body represents a significant location in power struggles and meaning in gendered terms. [phage] seeks to manifest an Irigarayian critique and counteract traditionally masculine paradigms of the technological age. In effect, the work could be thought of as an extension of Irigaray's work. She asserts that masculinist hierarchies regulate

language and material relationships, especially in regard to the body. Computers, like the body, are permeable, and this permeability is dangerous as it allows contagion as well as content to enter; the contagion, like physical or computer viruses, might consume our histories and our knowledges. Irigaray notes that the human body, with its essential need for penetration, is not easily regulated in conventional masculinist power paradigms; this "feminine" permeability must be controlled through the objectification of woman, or, extending this critique to the computer, the objectification of the machine. Permeation without consent (hackers and viruses representing this danger) threatens the historic use of the computer in a command |control relationship inherited from military uses. This relationship is reinforced through the fear of the uncontrolled—viruses and hackers in fact work to validate and fortify power metaphors in computer culture. But for another type of structure to "be," for women in cyberculture to have authorship and subjectivity, power paradigms must be altered, questioned, and reworked.

Through its inherent critical approach to a user's relationship with the computer, the creation and organization of [phage] can counteract traditionally masculine paradigms of the technological age. Cornelia Brunner notes that while men tend to see technology as a means to an end, women often view technology as a way to communicate or experience the world around them differently; and Sandra Harding points out, "All scientific knowledge is always in every respect, socially situated"(1991, 11). The knowledge on which virtual space is created is based on modernist epistemology: a masculinist valued rationality upon which Western assumptions of hierarchy from Enlightenment to the present are based. Through its non-hierarchical organization and its divorce of creative control from the user to the machine, [phage] is an attempt to alter this epistemology by creating a feminist map of the machine. By allowing our communications and artifacts to be both the means and the ends of the work, [phage] allows us to become aware of our relationship with the computer, enter into the machine's design, and examine its own brand of poetics in its writing of files, of order, and of space. Most software and art projects tell stories or provide experiences, but few are about the viewer or user. With [phage], the story is about you, the user, but told to you in a meaningful play of subjectivities.

In this case, our environment contains our own artifacts, separated from our own ordering power. [phage] allows the user to experience his or her computer memory as a palimpsest of life experiences rather than experience the computer as simply a tool for daily use. By mapping a user's unique encounters—through images, downloads, web sites visited, emails—it creates spatial memory maps that not only reflect the user's interactions, but to a larger degree the user's redefinition of self within in technoculture.

Next steps? We need to encourage this virus to spread via email and establish itself (but only by the consent of the host). In a few months, material dredged up in [phage] will be sent to a server site and become part of a collective computational unconsciousness.

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