In the field of traditional rock instrumentation (guitar, bass, drums and vocals), the War Metal subgenre offers perhaps the most hair-raising crystallisation thus far. The tempos are usually unrelenting and flammable, the riffs unabashedly monotonous, the vocals ragged, demented and demonic and the cumulative effect is intoxicating and transcendental. Despite its repulsive name, the subgenre is probably the closest to free jazz within the extreme metal community – in terms of energy and pure sonic sublimity. This isn't to say that the imagery of War Metal is overflowing with originality. Witness some band names beginning with G: Goat Piss, Goat Semen, Goatblood, Goatchrist, Goatchrist666, Goathex, Goatlord, Goatsmegma and Goatpenis. The majority of War Metal album and demo covers feature a riff on subgenre pioneers Blasphemy's early releases: blood-red text over a pitch-black background with an often childlike, loosely satanic drawing in white. The Spanish group Proclamation mastered this form of deification through appropriation, but in doing so spawned a haemorrhage of lesser acts whose unimaginative contributions to the movement are dubious at best.

One of my first published pieces of writing was a Jason Greig essay/interview for Erin Kimber's short-lived Cheap Thrills zine. My father introduced me to Jason when I was approximately eleven years old as he was a friend of Mark Whyte, drummer of Christchurch's premier dinosaur rock curmudgeons Into the Void, for whom Jason performs guitar duties. The band had just completed one of their legendarily alcohol-fuelled, early-90s rehearsals, and I remember Jason cornering me once I'd made it clear that I had a burgeoning fixation on the grandeur of heavy metal. He suggested I listen to Flotsam and Jetsam and Zodiac Mindwarp (I would later encounter the latter band's vocalist in a pub in Camden), but found them a bit soft, slow and traditional. Gradually I became more interested in the slow-motion mechanics of doom metal, which synched tastily with Into the Void's paleolithic approach to riffage.

I once visited Jason at his home, maybe fifteen years later, and lent him a book on The Melvins, who pioneered the Sludge subgenre (itself a blurring of Doom and Hardcore). I fondly recall him churning out prints on this balmy Sunday afternoon, as this was before he had earnestly begun what I view as one of New Zealand's most crucial contributions to figurative painting. As we nodded our heads to Celtic Frost's Monotheist album (a rare example of a comeback record that actually works big time) at thunderous volume, I noticed a worn, lonesome print of a witch with an elongated finger, mysteriously pointing at something deliciously outside the confines of the frame. I told Jason I loved it and recognised it from Burzum's debut self-titled album cover and he asked if I wanted it. It was originally intended for Bill Hammond and includes a message to him on the reverse: "'There's your witch' Bill. N.B. Keep this matt! [get rid of the grim(me), but not the horizontal/vertical marks. I do believe my home is infested with Japanese Ka]". It 's still one of my favourite things to look at and regularly transports me to dimensions unknown to humankind (in much the same way as the best War Metal).

Greig finally has a proper book (the 2010 Brett McDowell-published The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde is wonderful, but not exclusively a Jason project) coming out next month called Blood is Thicker, written by Chelsea Nichols and Aaron Lister, and it's about bloody time. The book accompanies a huge, travelling retrospective of Jason's work, which conveniently and gleefully opens in Ōtautahi on Halloween. Mischief is an important ingredient in Greig's visual and musical pursuits, and at an artist talk for his recent Chambers solo show he naughtily pointed at one of his works and proclaimed, "That's a ghoul!"

Just as Jason would likely detest this piece of writing (historically, he seems to dislike, or at least be apathetic towards, any kind of interpretation of his work), he would probably find War Metal a bit overpowering and unmusical. Greig's metal tastes veer towards the doomy and riff-heavy, though what Into the Void and War Metal share is a pummelling, caveman-like approach to sound. War Metal has furnished me with an almost ecstatic or mystical form of inspiration that has been very fruitful in extending my own creative process. It has forced me into

situations I wouldn't usually consider governable and has encouraged me to think more in terms of texture and landscape when writing, painting and performing music. Some of the metal bands who've had the greatest impact on me creatively (many of whom are considered War Metal, or are at least precursors to the movement) are Mystifier, Sarcofago, Bethlehem, Perverted Ceremony, Caveman Cult, Prehistoric War Cult, Sadistic Intent, Revenge, Diocletian, Blasphemy, Black Witchery, Proclamation, Obituary, Demoncy, Sadistik Exekution, Phantasm, Masacre, Bestial Warlust, Abysmal Lord, Order From Chaos, Incantation, Angelcorpse, Mayhem, Burzum, Ride For Revenge, Morbid Angel, Immolation, Grief, Corrupted, Corneus, Beherit, Bathory, Abruptum.

Many of the personalities concocting this material have rather ghastly ideological beliefs that I'm diametrically opposed to, but I've never been particularly interested in the lyrical themes or imagery of a lot of metal. I take what I need from it (i.e., sound) and discard the rest, allowing it to exist on its own terms. Like the subgenre tag itself, a band like Revenge has an undeviating, monochromatic obsession with the imagery of battle, but their sound is one of the most radical examples of the rock format being dragged into the sunlight. Genesis P-Orridge once complained that punk was too traditional, and I wholeheartedly agree. Similarly, I find that War Metal is often too married to genre specifics, yet it also seems desperate to break free from any sort of constraints, so I'm very excited to see what this subgenre offers in the future.

I'm planning on writing and recording my own War Metal demo over the coming summer months and am travelling to Japan in April of 2027 to witness a festival lineup that has been appropriately referred to online as "Coachella for the mentally ill". Bands such as Blasphemy, Revenge, Abruptum, Diocletian (hailing from Auckland), Whitehouse, Corrupted, C.C.C.C. and Pentagram from Chile will be igniting the stage in Osaka and I still can't believe I'll be witnessing this onslaught in person! There are certainly connections between the Dark Romantic tradition and War Metal, but I'm honestly writing this because no one seems to be interested in talking about extreme metal with me. Jason, if for some bizarre reason you happen to read this and haven't checked them out already, please listen to the compilation of early Corrupted material called Collection 1995–2002, as I hear a lot of overlap with things you've told me you love in the past.

**Nick Harte**, That's a Ghoul: Jason Greig and the benefits of War Metal

Dear B.

Apologies for the delay in response – three months is a new record for both of us. I'm hoping not to break the record going forward.

Yesterday I finally went to Cass Field Station to attend the opening for Those Days of Clear Blue Green Skies. The show's title was taken from Rita Angus's description of Cass in a letter. Lily Rose drove us out.

The comment you made on my photo, calling it 'lush', is exactly how I would describe the drive out to the station. Fields full of sheep and lambs, a couple of horses too, spread right out to the mountain range, nearing Arthur's Pass, paired by fittingly clear blue skies. Summer is definitely on its way, leaving from a sizzling day in Ōtautahi towards a slightly cooler day from the breeze given off surrounding mountains.

I'm familiar with the roads, from Dad packing me and my sisters up into his car on weekends and going in a direction from Rolleston, often to find a random cafe or spot to eat a packed lunch. I haven't been out towards Arthur's Pass in years, maybe even a decade? It's funny how you can remember a place even though so much time has passed. It was nice to be with Lily. I loved reexperiencing that part of Waitaha with her fresh eyes.

Seeing the Cass station in person was a real trip. I felt like a true art nerd – the mandatory picture was taken immediately. Stepping back, I tried to conjure Rita's painting in my head. I hadn't seen it in a while, but you didn't have to use too much imagination to remember it; the landscape remains mostly the same, save for some more trees... and the camping ground mini-golf course nearby.

Past the station, over the railway tracks and up a little path was the Cass Research Station, and the two buildings where the exhibition was held. The surrounding landscape was insane, vast, surrounded by mountains and hills, tall grass and little spikey bushes.

The historical significance of the site was embodied quietly through the art and material thoughtfully collected and curated for the show by Lydia Baxendell. The first building we entered, Cass cottage, was the original research base, where Rita Angus, Louise Henderson and Julia Scarvell would've stayed during their painting trips back in the day. Louise Palmer and Raewyn Martyn's work that occupied this building seemed to camouflage with the surrounding environment; both had pieces I completely missed on the first walk through!

In the bunkhouse Raewyn made camping paintings of bioplastic that curled around posts; and some involved pigments sourced from Cass, like soot from the kitchen range. Paintings on canvas were stretched over stools dotted around the buildings; and paintings made up the fly of a tent pitched a little ways away. It was a real blend of the research station's history of art and biology studies.

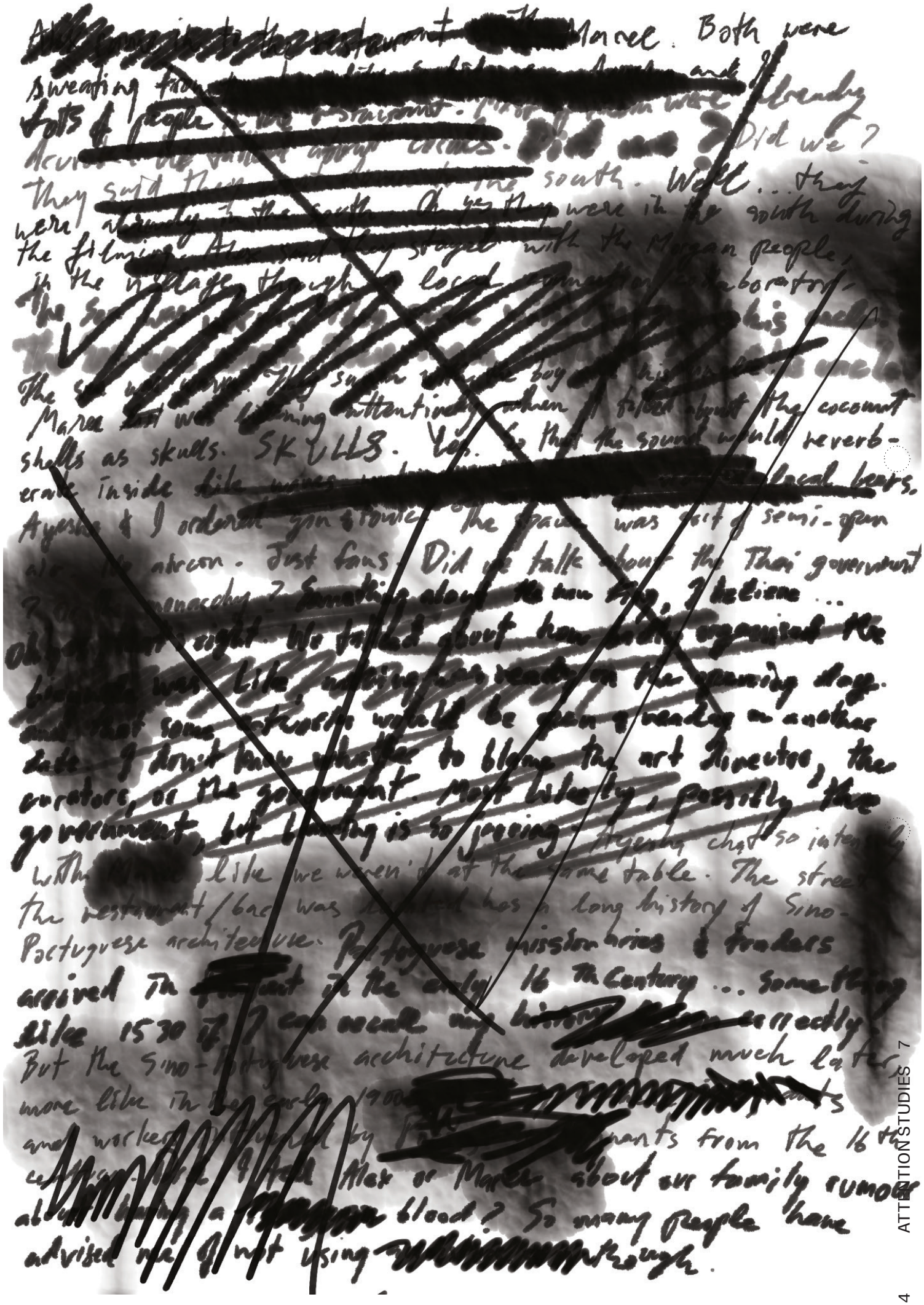
Louise had made a cast-bronze plaque inscribed with the names Julia, Rita, Louise. She also had made a two-channel video work from footage she had taken from a trip to Cass in 2008 depicting the surrounding landscape of Cass, with an interest in the clouds and the wind. It made me think of time passing and the continued legacy of the site.

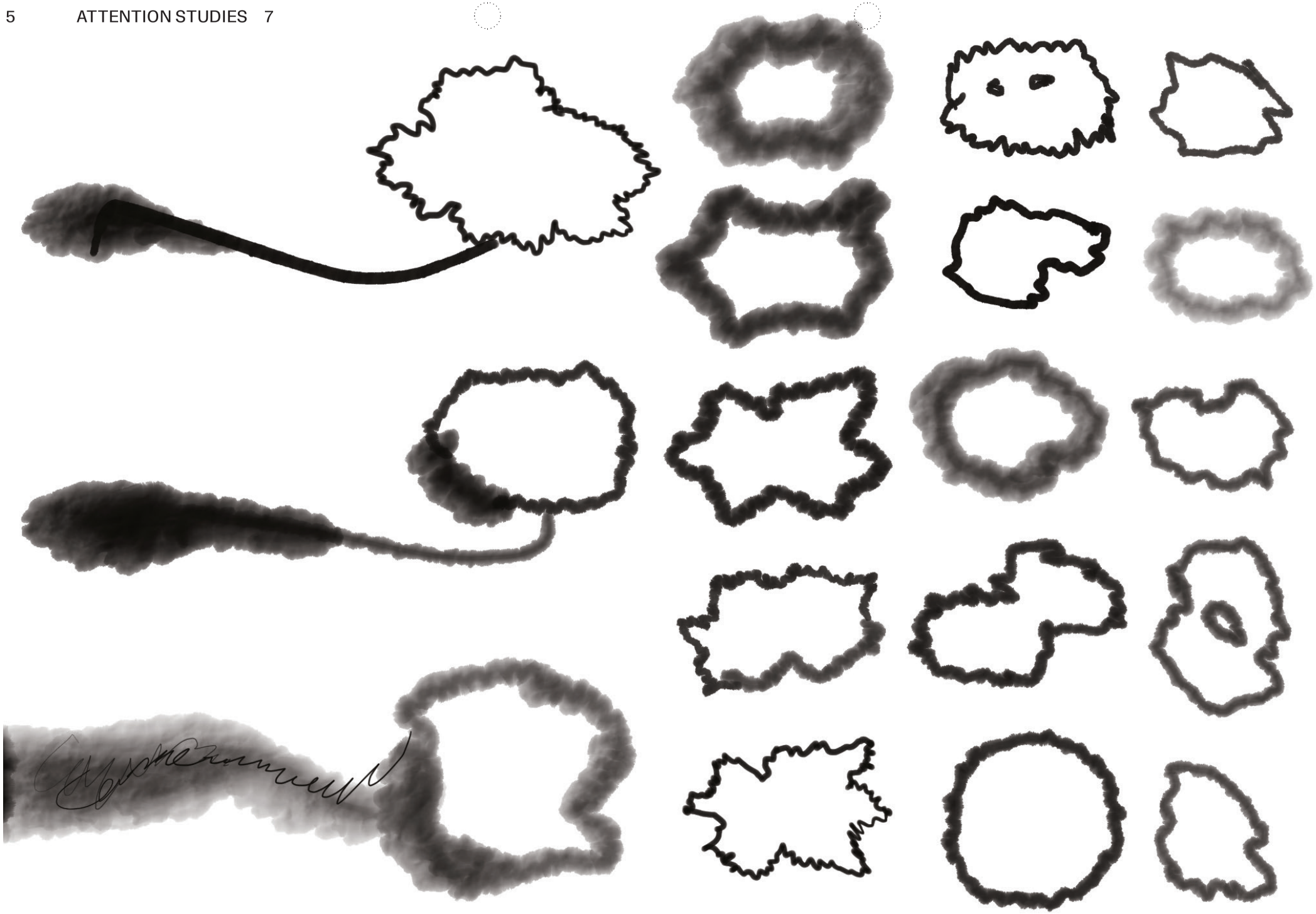
As most exhibitions do, this opening had cheese and nibbles. In the building where people gathered for food, Emily Howden's work Ruha hung in the middle of the space, a poem and accompanying audio work that acted as a reflection on their time at the Cass base. People would stand and read the poem and sit near it as they ate kai and spoke about the exhibition or just caught up. I felt like it acted as an anchor point for the experience as a whole.

In one of the rooms, they had pictures from past groups of uni students and teachers that had stayed at the research centre. I will not lie, the number of times me and Lily talked about the Cass trip that could've been was probably in the double digits. If only the weather had been better for it, I think our little sculpture and painting mix would have really enjoyed it and gotten a lot out of the experience.

We spoke a lot about how much you would've liked the place too. I thought of you while we sat outside the research station on the spikey grass. I thought of you while writing this letter, of our time in art school and in the flat; of how much I miss you, the third piece of our puzzle. When you come back, B, the trip back out that way is compulsory. We'll pack a lunch and make a day of it – go for a drive under those clear blue green skies.

**Cherry Mitchell** / Raewyn Martyn, Louise Palmer and Emily Howard, *Those Days of Clear Blue Green Skies*, curated by Lydia Baxendell, Cass Field Station, October 2026





**Sorawit Songsataya**, end diagram after Alex and Maree

“A manual for surviving evil.”

That is how the poet Ariana Reines described Fanny Howe’s 2020 book Night Philosophy. It is a rather superlative statement, but one that gets close to something essential in Howe’s work, which throughout her life was concerned with how to remain alive to the world without becoming reconciled to its violence.

Fanny Howe died in July 2025, aged eighty-four. She left behind an extraordinarily large and heterogeneous body of work: twenty-five books of poetry, twelve novels, essays and short stories, writing for young people and six short films, five of which we are screening this afternoon. But the scale of the bibliography is almost misleading, because Howe’s work repeatedly returns to a small number of difficult questions. What does it mean to live ethically? How do we recognise injustice when it has become ordinary? What can faith mean in the absence of certainty? And how might we resist the demand to become the kind of person that the world has already decided we should be?

Howe was born in Buffalo, New York, in 1940, and grew up in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Her mother, Mary Manning, was an Irish playwright and novelist and her father, Mark DeWolfe Howe, was a legal historian and Harvard professor. Her older sister was the poet Susan Howe; her younger sister, Helen Howe Braider, is a sculptor and painter.

In another of her books, London-rose: Beauty Will Save the World, a lyrical, fragmented essay written around the turn of the century, Howe toils between meaningless office work and the poetics of filmmaking, between dreary small towns across England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, between theology and its “revelation derived from experience” and “the open-endedness of philosophy, where it hovers and suffers, inconsolable with doubts.”[1]

In the text, Howe describes her upbringing to her psychoanalyst, a frosty Freudian: “I spoke therapy in the shade of her face,” she writes. “[A] charmed outdoorsy childhood shaded by the war in Europe. Hatred of grownups. Hatred of school and rules. Hatred of injustice. Breakdown, assassination, grief over father dying, obsessive interest in indifference. To be and to come: experience. Character versus personality is like spirit versus soul, or is it the reverse?”[2]

Howe’s adult life was marked by movement and instability. She lived in and around New York, Massachusetts and California, moving house perhaps thirty times over six decades while teaching and raising three children. The experience of motherhood, particularly motherhood under conditions of economic and social precarity, is an important pressure within her fiction.

She became a practising Catholic later in life, and her faith was profoundly shaped by Liberation theology, a tradition that understands religious commitment as inseparable from material and political questions of justice. The French philosopher and mystic Simone Weil was another key figure for her. Howe’s books present a way of thinking about spirituality and of asking sprawling metaphysical questions about the self that are never detached from a rigorous collective politic and a probing study of structural injustice. Again, from London-rose: “Dead philosophers of the pre- and post-war period in Europe—they were still my mentors. I could not get past them and their concerns. Could you be both a Communist and struggle for the dignity of a soul, a solitary identity?”[3]

At its core, her work explores how language is embodied and carried by voices, shaped by ideologies and power, yet always capable of generating new ways of inhabiting and expressing the world. It is full of collisions between things that conventional hierarchies would keep apart: theology and politics; childhood and philosophy; poverty and beauty; scripture and popular culture; domestic life and structural violence. Her writing can move from a metaphysical question to an

1
Fanny Howe, *London-rose, Beauty Will Save the World*. Brussels: Divided Publishing, 2022, p. 5.

2
Ibid., p. 15.

3
Ibid., pp. 29–30.

4
Fanny Howe quoted by Fiona Alison Duncan, ‘Interview with Fanny Howe,’ *The White Review*, issue 29, October 2020, https://www.thewhitereview.org/feature/interview-with-fanny-howe/. The essay ‘Bewilderment’ is included in both *The Wedding Dress: Meditations on Word and Life* (University of California Press, 2003) and *Night Philosophy* (Divided Publishing, 2020).

5
Fanny Howe, *Night Philosophy*, Brussels: Divided Publishing, 2020, p. 103.

6
Howe, *London-rose*, pp. 31–32.

observation about a cloud, a dream, a sheep, a child. Nothing is too ordinary to carry an ethical or philosophical charge. And a similarly searching gaze drives Howe's films.

These are not films in the conventional sense. Howe described them as "hand-made, home-made" and they carry something of the provisionality and intimacy of her writing. They are fractured, associative, playful and sometimes difficult. Images and ideas accumulate rather than resolve. The films belong to the same expansive, restless practice that produced the poems and novels and also retain their at once intensely literary and imagistic qualities—moving through quotation, association, digression, recurrence.

One of Howe's most enduring concepts—bewilderment—resonates with these films. She describes it as "an enchantment that follows a complete collapse of reference and reconcilability. It cracks open the dialectic and sees myriads all at once. The old debate over beauty—between absolute and relative—is ruined by this experience of being completely lost by choice! … Bewilderment circumambulates, believing that at the centre of errant or circular movement is the axis of reality."[4]

Howe proposes bewilderment as "a poetics and an ethics."[5] Its decentring of the ego—its capacity to hold multiple, irreconcilable perspectives—might enable both poetry and the kind of taking care that speaks to her broader project: both forms of attention that resist certainty. Bewilderment also offers another way of understanding Howe's recurrent narratives of vulnerability. This is not the same thing as ignorance, but a kind of knowing refusal: "lost by choice" rather than simply lost. To be bewildered is not to withdraw from the world, but to question the terms on which it demands our participation.

In a passage from London-rose that is characteristic of Howe's routine revelation, she extends this idea to consider the dynamic between artist and spectator, author and reader. "Today walking over the Heath I realised that the search for 'an audience' is banal since every passer-by is an audience already, and yes the world *is* a stage on which we are performing anyway always. The helpless but pitiless audience that sits apart and at the mercy of the actor is made up of passers-by who have paused and occupy the exact same territory for that time as the actor who is just like them. In other words, the audience and actors are one entwined irruption."[6]

Howe is outlining the false assumption that having an audience confers authority upon the actor—something I am well aware of as I proffer these notes towards interpretation. Instead, Howe's films offer an invitation to sit with indeterminacy, to inhabit the uncertainty they ask of us, and to listen for the embodied rhythms and resonances of her visual language – attending to how it exceeds semantic function and becomes contingent, affective and plural.

**Jess Clifford**, introductory notes for Fanny Howe Screening, presented with The Physics Room at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, October 2026

She says her name is Tanya and that scripture is her medicine. She sets her Bible down on my tray table and traces a passage with her index finger, imploring me to read along. Sections of the page are coloured with yellow highlighter. I follow her pink-painted nail but am too tired to read the words. I nod and make interested "mmm" sounds. The man she is travelling with places his hand on her leg and says "that's enough."

When we wake for breakfast Tanya tells me Jesus visited her in a dream. “Can you give me a message for Oscar?” she asked, to which he replied “He should never travel alone.”

Two and a half weeks later, Tanya and the man are in my departure lounge at Copenhagen Airport. I don’t think they see me. During the flight, the man gets up from his seat in the middle of meal service. He speaks quietly but angrily to a flight attendant. I ask if she’s okay. She rolls her eyes and says “Yes, thank you.”

On the island I film heavy rain through the bus window. The child across from me says “movie-maker” in an otherwise Danish sentence. Her friend is distracted by a video on her phone.

When I see the church on the hill I stop filming and get ready to exit the bus. I’ve memorised this road on Google Street View already. “BREDO 4EVA” tagged on the bus shelter, no doubt a reference to Bistro Bredo, a family-owned burger joint, one of three restaurants in town, all of which serve burgers – or the family who own it. I’ve studied their menu on the restaurant’s Facebook page, which led me to the profiles of the owners, Lars and Lucyana Bredo. Lars’ cover photo is a picture of the restaurant. Lucyana poses for a selfie with two blonde children in hers, one of whom is likely the author of the graffiti. The open beef sandwich looks good, but I do not visit their establishment.

At the Brugsen on the edge of town I buy onions, garlic, blueberries, eggs, bacon, butter, maasdam, pickled cucumbers, spaghetti and a bottle of white wine. As I’m leaving I make eye contact with a man. We smile at each other. I recognise him from an Instagram reel I watched about the boat workshop he owns. We continue to cross paths, waving or nodding, but we do not talk.

I eat carbonara in the garden. I notice what looks like a headstone across the lawn. The inscription reads “Ilyttedes Humble Skull her til dignegaarden” – “I listened to the Humble School here at the Clerk’s garden.” Grave or not, I thank the spirits for having me, if only for a week. Each morning I hear a group of children walking to school through the forest behind the house, then the church bells chime.

It gets dark around 20:00. I have a bath, then sleep with the windows open but wake in a pool of sweat, temperature dysregulation my only jet-lag symptom.

I didn’t think I’d be brave enough to visit Havnekiosken 6kanten, the tiny daytime pub and cafe on the waterfront, but it was pissing down and the bus back to Humble was still over an hour away. A bell rings when I enter the small yellow octagonal building, no wider than the garden at Beveridge Street. Walking straight ahead from the front door leads me through an archway into a smaller octagonal room, where three men sit at the bar tended by a woman with short hair wearing a white singlet and jeans. This nucleus was once the kiosk in its entirety, the outer extension added later. Bench seats and small tables line the walls of the outer-hexagon, the path to the left leading to the pokie machines while the bathroom is to the right. Two elderly women and a man are at the pokies, which intermittently make spooky organ noises. Three elderly couples sit on the other side near the loo. Two tired dogs roam the narrow passage, sniffing hands and lying under tables. American pop songs play from a transistor radio. Everyone is smoking and silent and watching me. I order a beer in English and feel silly paying with my phone. I sit at a table near the door next to a man with long hair and a leather jacket. I read Thomas Bernhard’s The Woodcutters and conversation slowly returns to the room. I stay for another.

I stop to buy ingredients for boeuf bourguignon, which I will eat later by the fire watching The Idiots on my laptop.

Night sweats again.

There is a small black-and-white photograph on the wall in the room with the piano. An aerial view of Humble, the church and house are obvious in the rural landscape dotted with buildings. It reminds me of a picture taken by Alfred Charles Barker of Armagh Street in 1860, then just a row of workers' cottages in a sparse, boggy landscape. I walk a section of Armagh Street to get to work most mornings, yet struggle to conflate my reality with the one in this image. The Barker photograph captures something of Christchurch's atmosphere during this period, liminal in a sort of jarring way. It may have been easy to mime normality when reading by candlelight in a bedroom with lace curtains, but outside, the swamp and mahinga kai were unsettled by the settler arrival.

I keep forgetting I'm in Denmark because it feels like Brookside. Then I'll see a deer or smell a specific laundry detergent and remember I'm in Europe. I wonder if my ancestors felt the same when they got to Christchurch. I go looking for their parents' graves in the churchyard across the street to no avail. I have a conversation with a woman through Google Translate, but find it hard to phrase my question. Two weeks later in a gallery in Copenhagen, a painting from the 1850s depicts a cemetery of wooden grave markers, which might explain why the oldest graves I could find in Humble were from after the Frandsens left in 1870. My question remains, where are the bodies from before?

At a wine bar in Rudkøbing, a man with my father's name says the harbour kiosk is a time machine. He buys me glasses of "serious wine", tells me I'm lucky my ancestors were from Langeland and not Bornholm because "the Russians will be heading back there any day now."

He runs upstairs to get a Bluetooth speaker from his apartment, and I show him the music video for Feisty by Smerz.

The people at our table make an effort to include me in conversation, mostly locals but only one of them, Jens, was born here. Jens tells it to me straight: Langeland's economy has turned to shit because all the young people are leaving, no one wants to be a farmer. It's so bad the municipality might have to be sold to the state. Every second house is for sale, only rich Copenhageners are buying. They come for the summer, think it's bucolic, don't mix with the locals. Them though, these people I'm sitting with, were just tired of the big city and found something simple here on the island. Most of them work remotely or have retired. Jens was in the Navy. I show him my Barbie Polaroid camera and ask if I can take his picture but he's not into photos, never had Facebook, and still suspects I might be a spy.

I couldn't tell if Jette was being facetious with her oohs and awhs, calling me brave for travelling alone, but it was with total sincerity that after two glasses of wine she gathered her walking sticks and insisted she put her number in my phone in case she could drive me somewhere on the island. She squeezed my hand and told me I had such beautiful, sad eyes.

Once, after picking me up from ballet class, my mother uncharacteristically picked up two young hitchhikers and drove them somewhere really out of the way. She told me she was returning a karmic favour for the kindness she received on her OE.

I considered calling Jette when I realised I'd fucked up and essentially missed my chance to visit Herregaarden Skovsgaard. I had looked at pictures of the historic manor online and wanted to get some footage of the dioramas for my video; mannequins in period dress posed tending bakery carts and hay bales, drinks in the ballroom, hosiery in the parlour. Really spooky. It would be inconvenient to call at such short notice, so I don't. Instead I wait for the morning rain to pass, pack a cheese sandwich to eat at King Humble's grave. I walk for hours, film houses and horses, pick wild blackberries.

In Aarhus a few days later I will unexpectedly find The Populace by Nina Beier and John Miller on show at ARoS, just up the street from my hostel. 80 mannequins are scattered about the 1000 square-foot space, styled eccentrically in donated clothing, posed as if engaging with each other or the "paintings" on the walls. The "paintings" are

photographs of old oil portraits, sort of like those Maria Walls works I've heard about but never seen, the pictures of pictures. I will slink around the space, filming everything, thinking affirming, excited thoughts. It will make me think about the impossibility of connecting with history, and how much I enjoy looking at people looking at art.

At night I hear music, someone singing Creep. Outside the wind is warm and strong, making it hard to tell how far the sound is travelling. I leave the house to investigate, hoping for karaoke at a bar in a neighbouring town, but instead find myself outside the music academy in Humble. Teenagers take turns singing songs on a stage, the room lit like a school disco. Their slurred, broken English makes them sound drunk. English is not part of the curriculum on Langeland, instead they learn German. I walk the backstreets with my camera, the party pairing well with the crickets in the cornfields. A streetlight flickers as I walk beneath it.

It stopped raining a few days ago, revealing Humble's signature scent of manure and hay.

I leave Langeland, drink beer on the train, listen to A Letter from Home by "Blue" Gene Tyranny, then Train on the Island by Aldous Harding.

In a red room in Aarhus, an Appalachian witch drawls over improvisatory banjo, appropriating fables of ghosts, war and famine. She screams about the disappearance of ancestral knowledge as the banjo gets loud and harsh.

*You couldn't know, you hadn't been there!*
*You couldn't know, you hadn't been there!*

**Oscar Bannan**, How to shoot a road film

*Homage and praise to her whose light blazes like the flames that destroy the world, who is one-headed, three-eyed, whose hair blazes upward reddish yellow...* – or so says the ancient hymn dedicated to Kurukulla, The Red Tara, a deity of enchantment, magnetising power and wisdom in Tibetan Buddhism. This fragment is drawn into the audio script for the fundamental practice, and sits among core-samples from a multiplicity of texts that take us in all directions and through time – melting all "linear segments in the span of historical time", as Jasper Johns has it in another part of the script.

Convention tells us that a work of art is made at a particular time, and then from that point on it has a calculable age, much like an individual person does. Following this logic, the fundamental practice was first installed at the 51st Venice Biennale in 2005; therefore, as a work (subsequently acquired by the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki) it is 21 years old this year. However, a work of this nature questions such conventional description (the attribution of a year-date to a work, as if it was born at a point in time, and remains the same from then on, or at least iterable and identifiable as that work) by its way of being in the world.

Emancipated by its team of anonymous creators, artists who have also unshackled themselves from simplistic singularised human identity and binaries, it demonstrates that all works of art exist in their own present, in perpetuity. the fundamental practice has been shown five times now – following Venice, at Artspace (2007), the IMA, under a different name (2007), and involved in epochal at MUMA in 2024 – but this year in Tāmaki it shares the same footprint as it did at La Pietà in Venice, something established by the artists through a set of floorplans produced to guide its present installation.

The schema is dominated sculpturally and in logic by five autonomous purification units (APUs) that run on rails. The atmosphere is established by the implication of electrical energy and digital connectivity, and by the vast log-form sound work that pervades the space established by the work. It appears to be self-generating, continuing to be rewritten, scripted; or is it writing itself? Is it separably sentient from the conscience or consciousness of the artists? Do the artists breathe the same air we do? Are their concerns higher than our terrestrial attempts?

It contains considerable data/reflections/talking points, kernels, on violence against women and girls, which is not a new thing in the work of et al. At MUMA, an APU took the place of the head of a body drawn over the gallery's floorplan to provide the logic of that installation. no fucking way is a video work based in these same concerns, processing horrors, international reporting in action (and failures to act) to the UN Convention and Declaration framework. The body of epochal stood on n-f-w as its feet, which in turn stood on a carpet, a room-sized piece of second-hand Axminster carpet in browns and yellows, a genuine piece of harsh 70s reality.

The et al. installation drawings look to me like those done by astral-travelling healers who work for others energetically from a distance, moving from one site to another etherically to perform spiritual cleaning or correction. What it forms is out of time – it is dyschronic in relation to their own time as Giorgio Agamben wrote of what it is to be contemporary – and is allusive while being expository; it is allusive about exposition as a method, perhaps. It also has the air of prescience. It portends redundancies and then refutes the concept. As an entity, et al. predates Elizabeth Freeman's definition of queerness as distortion of straight time by some ten years.

In 2026 it looks like it predicted the way global workspace theory has been used to describe how AI appears to be becoming quasi-conscious. Pre-modelling a model that refers to 80s neuroscience theory about how a 'mind' creates space to 'think' (recalling and organising information) is quite a black-belt manoeuvre of prediction. It also makes the leap from standard institutional critique to considering the institution in Deleuzian terms, as any positive or generative model for action – any invented social system of positive means, cf. the law and its restrictive function. And then another leap into deinstitutionalisation and the idea of extreme politicisation without political consequences – but if any danger is signalled, it is not clearly done. Is the question the answer?

Conundrum and loan and complexity might be closer to the operating systems of this practice than takeaways and executive summaries and LinkedIn 'looks-like' 'centred-around' thinking. The text-to-voice component – for it is possibly foremost a phenomenal and vast sound work – has clear referents, which would be hard to diagram or map, but there are clues in the nomenclature: stability is found in understanding instability. 'the fundamental practice' as a phrase is a shard of Buddhist thought, referring to the pillars of ethical conduct, meditative concentration and wisdom that make up the Noble Eightfold Path.

The title of the IMA work, 'the second of the ordinary practices', is also a fragment of Buddhist thought, the practice of giving of support in material and energetic form between monks and ordinary knowledge-seekers. The 2005 publication that was part of the Venice work does begin with a series of commitments to 'poa' or heal the world. The work itself involves objects that are technologies of attention – screens, desks, teaching aids, panels, blackboards, diagrams, lists – by which we transform our knowledge. So, to think of this work as a fictive dystopian soundscape is to miss its simultaneous positivities and realism.

On a good day, the fundamental practice models a practice of collectively pulling together and cross-referencing information on possible means of healing and on profound violences – including the individualisation of people, and making out that individualisation is normal and correct, and, additionally, that it never happened anyway, and isn't happening now – and addresses an unnamed and unidentified community. Its 'we' is tactically indistinct, so I cannot be clear if (or how) I am included; however, they portend that we only get to the 'I' though the 'we' – by transindividuating – and if we really pay attention.

**Gwynneth Porter** / et. al., *the fundamental practice*, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 2026

she works steadily

in her seasonal life

like a night monk

gently pushing against

ceaseless thought

trapped in the

edifice of

mingling lives

shackled

to the world

leaning in

to squint at the sun

she catches the scent

of spring blooms

refusing the gifts

of her enemies

she dwells amid

wild verdure

and stands tall

and strong

in mist-laden

silence

**Cindy Zeiher**, timekeeper, for Joanna Margaret Paul

I'm reflecting on endings, and stop starts, and confusion and decision.
solidity > concrete > factual vs free flowing > continuous > stop start > gestural > feminine > patient or quick > disordered > open and malleable

There is a relief that ends can bring, a finality, followed by a question: what comes next? The conclusion of a motion always comes with a feeling that there was never any other possible ending. What is the natural sequence? I believe in multiple endings, I also believe in fate.

I experience anxiety around possible futures and then feel relief when I remember that what is going to happen will happen. I don't fear my life, I know it will be abundant. I know this because I don't have a bad feeling about it long term. Does this make sense to you?

we aestheticise the cause
we're morale boosters
activists need a conduit
artists are like priests
relief

Until now, I have been imagining that no one has read what I've submitted to this journal, but I also believe that this journal is being read. I want to address you: the reader. I want to ask you if anything that I have said makes any sense, or resonates, or "struck a chord"? I want you to know that I'm serious and that I really care and that I have felt totally inspired by this project and I want to thank you for being here. I want to encourage you to continue with your passions. I want to encourage you to be brave.

trade / value
theory vs authority
liberty, liberty, liberty
happiness = compelling

Contentedness is my compulsion and I work and toil and work some more
I navigate my way through these broken fences, I scrape my knees on walls as I mount them
I welcome the dust that fills my lungs as I work and toil and work some more
When I look towards this future I see the flames
When I look behind me I see myself
When I look at what I have before me I breathe a sigh of relief
The pressure that mounts can be released so simply, breathe it in, liberty
I can reach the top of any thing, I can mount the wall, I can scrape my knee
breathe it in, liberty, breathe it out, dust beneath me, dust before me, breathe it in, liberty
When there is theory, turn towards your authority, when there is discernment, take it
Dig deep and breathe a sigh of relief, dig deep and feel that energy surge and sleep
On this boat the crates are stacked tall
When those waves come crashing over they'll take them into their cold bellies and as the sea foam breaks over the wooden lips they'll send white pearls scattering across wet boards

Search and heave to reel those crates back in and stack them once again
Take a spear and pierce the heart of what it is that's keeping you in the storm
As that gnarled heart aches and tears swell and faces pull so wretched, it's like monsters walk around me and I recognise no one and I see nothing that can I can hold a light to
But the curtain has pulled back now and that monkey keeps on pedalling
Running my hand through his thick fur, I say "thank you, keep on pedalling"
breathe it in, liberty, breathe it out, authority, take what's left of me, dust, take what's left of me

**Millie Dunstall**, E. Brontë speaks of liberty, 2026

2018 was a particularly dark time. Picture it darker than you are now. It was really bad. I went to Mamma Mia Here We Go Again! in the cinema. (Reading Cinema in Wellington where they used to have tangy fruit pottles and the aquarium downstairs.) My flatmates and I formed two parties – one split to the new Mission Impossible, and my friend and I to Mamma Mia. We sat and had our worlds shattered by the joy of actors whose prep work for the film had been getting a tan in Greece.

I came out of Mamma Mia Here We Go Again! in tears (the tears were not unusual for 2018, as I said). I was crying because I realised I had forgotten how happiness felt in my body, and had remembered what being happy was like, almost at the exact moment Celia Imrie had started singing. It was surreal. Truly, "where you least expect it" stuff.

I have remained completely open and receptive to signs from the universe since. (That Mamma Mia Here We Go Again! had this effect, I hope, is hitting home just how dark the 2018 times were.)

Lo. 2026. Sense and Sensibility is adapted. My mother and I decide we must witness it together. I grew up on Joe Wright's 2005 Pride and Prejudice / my mother raised me on its OST. She and I went and saw the 20th anniversary of it in the same cinema we would watch Sense and Sensibility in. Groundhog day? No, reader. Not at all.

My world was shattered once more.

Emma Thompson's 1995 award-winning screenplay of Ang Lee's Sense and Sensibility had folks questioning why this new film now when that one is so good and accurate. BECAUSE, reader, we HAVE NEED of these sisters. Georgia Oakley's film is a space–time-twisting gate. It opens, you walk through, you are lost, all boundaries obscured. You meet Marianne, who has adapted to this realm and, like the flocks of animals she is often depicted alongside, flows in it. We meet Elinor, who has adapted differently. She has ruled up the margins and sought ought others to peer review those rules (one such person – the love of her life). Both are completely reasonable adaptations to this swimming, golden-hour, wooded and tussocked and cosmopolitan macro-microcosm.

Marianne is nobody's silly, naive little sister. Elinor is no pushover. And Mrs Dashwood is a mother alive. In reviews, people have highlighted the chemistry, the yearning, betwixt Elinor and Edward (Miss Edgar-Jones and Mr MacKay respectively), but honestly, the sisterhood had me. Yes, when Edward felt joy you could feel it shining out of George's every sinew as if it were your soul he was acting with. But Marianne calling a man dull to his face and running in the woods, loving and hating her sister openly; and level Elinor, often literally holding others upright and doing the gardening to make sure everyone is fed, telling an absolute shithead of a man that she doesn't rightly know WHAT she's capable of and seeing him pee his pants a bit is THE backbone.

The threshold of home becomes a symbol, like the space–time gate, I think. The carriage rides feel long in this film. Their travel is tiresome – not to watch, but to witness, for the characters. It takes as long as it takes. It makes the departure from their home a painful prolonged tearing of selfhoods from place, the scenes in London exciting, and the sudden arrivals of much anticipated (or dreaded) characters Truly Shocking. It's a lovely foil to the expansive moors of Barton. Little Margaret watching out the window, at the door, at the boundary, and casting her judgment like a portent. Her berry-stained cheeks and skirts, her watchful innocence that will call your bullshit; she runs to warn and to welcome with her whole being.

Elinor's priority is always her family. Marianne criticises her for expecting so little, while not crediting her with how much she achieves through restraint. Elinor does not always take her sister's sincerity as honesty, and she suffers the consequence.

The friction in these relationships is most demonstrative for us, the audience, now. How to live? There are all these rules – some, very necessary, others, not. These characters, the choice to shoot in natural light paired with the natural and seemingly relatively untreated fibres of the costumes do something primal to your sense of identity as you watch. I am that tree. I am that field. I am that rain. I am that pain. It softens you.

It softens you.

My world was shattered because someone made a film about it being okay to be exactly as human animal as human animals are, with dignity. My mother and I had to sit on a bench outside in the sun to return to this reality. After a pause, she said “there is so much of you in that film. Was it like looking in a mirror?” The blue bolt! The heart shot! The permission-giving of my mother after the permission-giving of the film was almost too much. How to live? As you are.

**Meg Doughty** / *Sense and Sensibility,* 2026

The opening had the energy of 2000s art school parties but better because the mothers know how to party and the whole town showed up for us.

Flowers were laid in great abundance for Philippa Blair (RIP) who should be more famous than, say, McCahon, her cloak propped up against the wall with painted rods, a premonition of both Jacqueline Fahey’s This Is Life (2009) and Jessica Pearless’s wearables.

For Baby Mumma and Baby (2026), Ann Shelton photographed Nat Tozer’s crotch bare but for loose weave fishnets, unbearably hot, and pictured parallel to an x-ray of her daughter’s pelvis, i.e., the bones that formed within Nat’s pelvis, and that already contained the recipe for unrealised generations. (Eggs develop in ovaries in utero, so we have all been inside not just our mothers, but our grandmothers.)

Caitlin Devoy’s Canons (2024) had tweakable nipples that titillated the crowds, literally, and Kate van der Drift bared all by way of a portion of her studio wall, taped and pinned on a slab of cardboard box and displayed within its self-saucing frame.

Notably included were a number of queer artists, cis men and non-literal mothers. Jude Saint’s painted portrait of their partner, Lucky Girl (2026), seemed, impossibly, to emit physical warmth, like my own breath rebounded from lucky girl’s skin back into my mouth.

Jude and I spoke to a social art-viewing group who regularly visit Sanderson and whose demographic is wealthy, white and retired. These ladies were impeccably gracious and asked us lots of good questions, like is queer gay? and said I was very brave for making a big photograph of myself without pants on.

Nat Tozer of mothermother and co-curator Michelle Reid presented steamy DVDs in lieu of certificates to notable participants, to the roaring delight of a perspiring crowd in the hundreds.

Care, joy, power were fully realised beyond press-release lip service, and I warmly report a moment of true and vital love in our otherwise dark times.

**Sophie Bannan** / *Mothermother*, Hana Pera Aoake, Sophie Bannan, Tori Beeche, Philippa Blair, Josephine Cachemaille, Judy Darragh, Caitlin Devoy, Ekaterina Dimieva, DJCS, Jacqueline Fahey, Inga Fillary, Rachel Grimwood, Arapeta Hākura, Julia Holderness, Phoebe Houston-Lowe, Fiona Jack, Areez Katki, Monique Lacey, Si Rong Li, Sam Loe, Michelle Mayn, Elise McDermott, Holli McEntegart, Aria McInnes, Su Nelson, Jessica Pearless, Natalie Pryor, Rosanna Raymond, Michelle Reid, Melanie Ross, Layla Rudneva-Mackay, Jude Saint, Taarn Scott, Ann Shelton, Hanna Shim, Mickey Smith, Sarah Smuts-Kennedy, Esther Stone, Molly Timmins, Nat Tozer, Kate van der Drift, Rebecca Wallis and Robyn Walton, Sanderson Contemporary, 23 July – 23 August 2026

The materials listed in the construction of the sculpture are “recycled parachute, parachute cord, die, ink, fan, xtc resin coated bicycle tyres, paua, my grandmothers pearls, copper wire, metal thread” [sic]. It isn’t entirely clear what the point of the spelling and grammar errors are here or whether they’re even intentional but they feel important. Does “die” refer to dye, or the singular form of dice, or the verb ‘to die’? Is the missing macron in pāua relevant? Does the missing apostrophe in “grandmothers” indicate that grandmother is an adjective about the pearls rather than a possessive for the noun “pearls”?

Noa Noa Von Bassewitz’s Womb(an)+ Ha!=Ora Listen...can you feel it? is the kind of sculptural intervention inviting bystanders to participate in navigating exhibition geography. It is part of Von Bassewitz’s solo exhibition Whenua Feeling at Blue Oyster Art Project in Dowling Street, Dunedin. Womb(an)+Ha!=Ora Listen...can you feel it? is a large inflatable work resembling a womb, a leaf, a flower, a heart and an anus. It isn’t clearly supposed to resemble all of these things, yet it does. The womb/leaf/flower/heart/anus, described in the exhibition notes as “gentle but also strong, a planet, a boulder, a breathing artwork” is inflated by a fan. The closer the observer gets to the artwork, the more obvious the fact that the artwork itself moves with the rhythm of breathing: inflation and deflation. The fan keeps the sculptural body alive (“a body with no air is a corpse” writes Von Bassewitz elsewhere, in Marino Te Hau: Calm The Wind). The recycled parachute fabric is a material presentation of the livingness of the work: “[t]he fabric I use has saved lives,” Von Bassewitz writes, echoing the process through which Von Bassewitz has saved the life of the fabric, transposing it from its functional purpose to an afterlife inside this artistic container. Yet the parachute fabric is neutralised through its placement inside a gallery; the stakes are no longer life and death but a question of real or constructed breathing.

There are material contradictions in the overall exhibition. For instance the work includes anchoring “listening cones” but it isn’t entirely clear what the visitor is supposed to be listening to through these cones. Are the listening cones referring to the work going on in the inner worldspace of the observer? The idea of the listening that could be summoned by the shells vanishes because the inner ear attunes itself to the Blue Oyster environment. The Blue Oyster speakers play a sound-work called Made-in-Earth, created by Noa Noa Van Bassewitz and her son Ngahere Wafer. Made-in-Earth broadens the senses beyond the merely ocular, and serves to draw attention to the full range of sensory experience in the exhibition. Exhibition notes explicitly list Made-in-Earth as part of the work. Do the listening cones therefore gesture toward this universal aural dimension of the exhibition? And if so, what is the purpose of the listening cones themselves? The cones point in the direction of paying attention, without actually sculpting attention itself.

And thinking of the environment, does the artwork stay inflated when the gallery closes? Do the gallery attendants dutifully breathe new life into the work every day when they arrive? In this way, does the body become a corpse daily and the gallery a record of its constant resurrection? Is the gallery responsible every night for the death of the Womb(an)? Noa Noa Von Bassewitz talks about the idea that Tāwhirimātea has a “forceful nature” (there’s that complicated word – nature), “he likes to slam doors” and “[runs] wild at his father in the sky.” But Tāwhirimātea makes no mark on this artwork. The wind created by the fan in this artwork is artificial. At best this wind is more like a metaphor for wind, an artificial recreation of Tāwhirimātea rather than the real deal. And in the main gallery at Blue Oyster there are really no doors to slam.

This artwork vibrates with the artificial breath of the artist. The vibration is powerful, but it is not the breath of Tāwhirimātea. It might not even be breath in strict ontological terms. The work itself is consistently feminised in the exhibition notes (the sculptural form is readily referred to as ‘her’), yet the work’s animating force is the atua Tāwhirimātea. In conversation, Liam Jacobson once said to me that “our atua existed before gender, obviously. But that’s just my opinion.”

The body vibrates against itself. The air vibrates within the body. The body vibrates against its constraints, somatic, structural, psychological or environmental. This sculpture cannot resolve within its surroundings.

**Josiah Morgan** / Noa Noa Von Bassewitz, ‘Womb(an)+ Ha!=Ora Listen...can you feel it?’ in *Whenua Feeling* at Blue Oyster Gallery, 26 September 2026 (written at the Robert Lord Writers Cottage on a residency funded by New Zealand Young Writers Fest)

The maw is often thought of as the stomach, as the zone of degustation. What it actually is though is an unbridled appetite. Some dictionaries describe it as being a destructive agency, a hunger with legs. It acts on its own volition. An agential stomach. A gullet with a mind of its own. It maws. It defiantly doesn’t do a line in delectation.

Isn't art based on delectation? If there's no art, just artists, isn't it premised on some sort of discrimination? Is the aesthetic something we're alienated from, that we're always trying to reach? How is it that painting acts like a sponge? It just soaks up everything. Where is its shadow, its doubt, its resistance? Even that's absorbed in delectation. Everything is flat. The tableaux, the horizontal. No! It's absorbent.

It's no longer stop painting but just let it run its course. It's omnivorous in the worst possible sense. It's so flattened it's beyond hierarchies. It runs on the juice of the commons, the everyday, the banality of the mark. Haptic strategies try to enliven it; technical mediations try to complicate it. Let's have a robot print it, throw the I Ching around to devise its boundaries. Parameters, parameters. Let's complicate it with personal histories. Let's let loose figuration as so many subjective vices, another extension of painting, another absorbent milieu. One platform after another. Straight down the gullet. Ever-expanding, except it never does. It grows no larger. It's still painting. Still two dimensional. Still without a shadow. Still flat. Even when it's not. Even when it's expanded, painted over football fields, divested into social networks, worn, drawn into the metaverse. Pah. It's just more flattening, more fuel for the sponge.

Painting is a maw. Pay it no mind. It's unbridled, omnivorous, absorbent. It's ongoing and never sated. How we can talk about delectation under such conditions. It's imbecilic.

Let's look at the work of Patrick Saytour, one of the members of Supports/Surfaces who turned painting into a problematic. A problem that could be unfolded, détourned and interestingly enough politicised. It wasn't so much a consumption problem as again a digestive one. Painting was to be a mediatory device, something that's continued through Saytour's practice in a way that it hasn't in say the pulsion painting that characterises Marc Devade's deviation from Supports/Surfaces. Indeed, if Devade's painting after Supports/ Surfaces was energised by a synthetic eroticism newly chartered as a proto-drive, a succinct haptic realism, then Saytour's concoctions are derisively anti-pictorial, you might even say they are bric-a-bracly absorbent. Look, for instance, at his recent materials, which include decorative tapestries, synthetic furs, flags, imitation marble, lights, cheap paintings and children's costumes. Hell, he'll even paint himself, deploying art-brut semiotics as a generic stylisation that's cyclical in its motif-configuration, emptying any semblance of meaning beyond the purely pictorial. These materials all play a kind of formal, objective game, they are nominal in the same way Devade would problematise a certain colour. Only in Saytour's painting the material object is anti-nominal; the bric-a-brac becomes anti-pictorial, a device to be absorbed, to be thrown into painting's maw.

There is such an insatiable quality to Saytour's painting that we should all be attentive to. Notice how he subjects his materials to the conventional Supports/Surfaces operations: cutting, folding, framing, stitching, patching. These are procedures. They are operational. And yet it's still foregrounding the framework of painting. Always attentive to how the painting is made. That's at least his inheritance of Supports/Surfaces formulation of Althusser's problematic, his confrontation with ideology as that which lacks consciousness. For Supports/Surfaces, this entailed deliberately stepping away from any notion of expression premised on the spontaneous engagement with materials, techniques and objects. Rather, confronting painting as a problematic upended the very material components of painting, disassembling them and serialising them. Painting, in this instance, becomes conditional. It becomes unique and encounterable; it resists assimilation.

Someone once said Saytour's paintings are "poetically plausible", which they are, but it misses the point. Sure, they teeter on the semblance of painting, but they're also deliberately ushered into that maw. Saytour's paintings are defiantly conditional. They are construed, so indebted to Supports/Surfaces deconstructive élan, that they purport something else. They resist that maw. They show up paintings' shadow; they're not content just to be thrown down the gullet. They're distressing in the way good painting should be, which is to say they're topological. They don't just let us talk about how they're made; they're activations that explain how they're made. That makes all the difference.

**Hamish Win** / Patrick Saytour (1925–2023).

Foodies are some of the wisest people on the earth. They know of many things, such as sweet, savoury and even sour. The expertise of the foodie is not merely limited to the world of gastronomy, however. Instead, the gifts of the foodie pertain to that of taste.
See, there is a perceptual and experiential world that is inhabited solely by foodies, a beautiful paradise fundamentally unknowable to layfolk: the foodie's *Umwelt / Die Umwelt des Feinschmeckers*.
From decades of extensive research, I can still only speculate as to the true nature of a foodie's Umwelt. What I do gather, though, is that it is a world closely linked to the Muses and all they inspire – a world of genius savants and philosopher kings, a world of pure expression. This explains the universal phenomena of foodies possessing immaculate knowledge of not just flavour but of fine arts and literature too (see fig. 1). Through the Muses, it seems, foodies are capable of reading the world for what it really may be: either 'yummy' or 'yucky'. They are prophets of the postmodern.


★☆☆☆☆ a year ago

Atmosphere only got four stars because the noodles are 'out of this world' authentic. You haven't tasted noodles this good until you try REALLY AUTHENTIC noodles.

Sure, the restaurant isn't 'beautiful'..it's quaint. The beauty is in both the food and the knowledge of the makers of these TRUE noodles as well as their genuine SPICES. Anyone who has seen the movie, or read the book 'DUNE' knows that 'the spice must flow' .

It DOES at [redacted]

[redacted] and [redacted]

**Food:** 5

**Service:** 5

**Atmosphere:** 4

Fig. 1: Local foodie in a state of *theia mania* interweaves the culinary with the literary in masterful Google review, 2025.

Foodies often speak truths that are beyond the comprehension of the layfolk. As such, they often find themselves vilified and persecuted. An elder of the South Island foodie community once told me in confidence that the lot of the foodie is not too dissimilar to that of Jesus: "the world will hate a foodie because He told them the truth". Yet, without foodies the realms of art, culture, creativity and expression would crumble. Prometheus would have been a foodie. "To be blessed with divine taste", my source said, "is to oftentimes hurt the ones you love most". A home-cooked meal prepared by the hands of one's own mother must still be one-starred should it lack the requisite seasonal garnishes.

I remember the day when the arts finally made sense to me. I had visited Timeless: Treasures from the Historical Collection, an exhibition held by Te Puna o Waiwhetū Christchurch Art Gallery. I found myself before Petrus van der Velden's Burial in the Winter on the Island of Marken. Confronted with tragedy and the fragility of human life, I was at a loss: "what does this all mean? Am I, too, forsaken without escape to the same fate of those depicted before me?" A warm umami finger pressed to my lips. "Fret not, my child", said a tuxedo-clad demi-god. I could tell they had hundreds of Google reviews under their belt and an impressive Substack too. With a twinkle in their demi-glace eyes, they swiftly gilded van der Velden's painting in edible gold flakes. Relief washed over me.
Before me now was a beautiful and not-sad painting, a bright painting that truly makes me believe I cannot die – that I will live and smile forever.
That was the day the *tick / die Zecke* tasted divinity and finally saw the world in all of its colour and movement.

**Kenji van Oosten**, A Week of Sickness: Giorgio Agamben's *The Open: Man and Animal*, Google Reviews, @ haute_mess_hall, *Timeless: Treasures from the Historical Collection*, Te Puna o Waiwhetū Christchurch Art Gallery.

These are addressed to you is an exhibition scored by distance. While this is in part an effect of the included artists' lives or time outside of Aotearoa – their work as missives back to us – the atmosphere is also related to the imperfect conversion between desire, act and articulation.

The exhibition's title is borrowed from artist Sharon Kivland's recent publication of the same name (Bricks from the Kiln, 2025) and was informed by Kivland's Abécédaire (Moist, 2022). These textual precedents foreground letters as alphabetic codes that enter the psyche at childhood and become attached to the self at the base of communication. This concept is exemplified by Christian Dimick's painting Remedial Action #3, in which the artist returns to mark-making from earlier in life to re-process memory and family without resolution.

Kivland's work is additionally present in the exhibition through Mes Horizons (2013–ongoing), a series of collected postcards from seaside locations. Retrieved from obscurity, their function as a pleasant souvenir has been corrupted through Kivland's application of ink over the horizon, splitting the sea and sand from the sky. The postcards may be picked up and read, but doing so turns the picture-side out of sight; even though the two surfaces are related, it is impossible to apprehend both at once. Many of the cards are blank or illegible, written in cursive French script.

Kivland's gesture folds the emotional charge of a postcard into its physicality. Looking out to a horizon, one conjures a lover, home, another shoreline with someone standing there looking back, but these are false substitutes. Mes Horizons proposes that the act of letter-writing is a similar projection. Blanking out the elsewhere of the horizon is a visual representation of the impasse between sender and recipient. It is only the sender, a point of origin, that is present in this work: *my* horizons.

For Kivland, "letters are key to the history of psychoanalysis in the 20th century".[1] What first appears as geographic distance is in fact psychic distance. This is the thrust, too, of Bas Jan Ader's I'm too sad to tell you (1970), in which the artist cries dramatically for the camera. Tearful stills of the video were sent to his friends and family in Europe from Los Angeles, where Ader was living at the time. As with Kivland's postcards, the work indexes intense feeling breaking down in the framework of language that can only be bodily expressed.

Likewise, in Abigail Aroha Jensen's transcript of a talk by Slavoj Žižek she attended, presented here as Slovenian neo-Marxist philosopher, cultural theorist and public intellectual (2026), his chronic sniff tic is emphasised on the page, registering a bodily impulse that hinder effective communication. Jensen's other work included in the exhibition, Transit Holiday (2026), is an assemblage of drawings and material collected in the United Kingdom. Together, they surface the colonial fetish for Europe and pervert the 'enlightenment' of the big OE: the same continent that produced psychoanalysis and social critique also gave us Lily Phillips; and colonial expansion laid the groundwork for tourism as we know it, establishing new destinations from which to make dispatches.

Yana Nafysa Dombrowsky-M'Baye's "colonial frictions" extend the loose concurrence of such colonial activity with the invention of postcards and psychoanalysis drawn out by the exhibition.[2] Her three-part work three baskets woven from a memory recalled (2026) traces a speculative record of the French colonial gum arabic trade

1
Gabriel Levine Brislin, 'For Sharon Kivland, Writing Is an Act of Connection', Frieze, 18 July 2025, https://www.frieze.com/article/sharon-kivland-these-are-addressed-to-you-book-review-2025

2
Jess Clifford, exhibition text, These are addressed to you, 2026, https://enjoy.org.nz/these-are-addressed-to-you

in Sénégal. In one component, a silk-screen print of an invoice from the Marseille Establishment for the Importation of Gum Arabic and Colonial Products has been double-exposed with an image of the estate of Jacques-François Roger, the first colonial governor of Sénégal. This maps a path from the artist's matrilineal home to France, where Dombrowsky-M'Baye now resides; the layers constitute a version of the self dispersed across two places. The related small steel sculptures, inscribed with French text, echo the writing of Mes Horizons and operate spectrally as a reminder of how language itself speaks coloniality.

The sense of geographic dislocation that pervades the exhibition is a vanishing point towards which language's excesses are flung. These are addressed to you is an experience of receiving a pile of letters out of context. The one-sided nature of the correspondence in this show is not a weakness – what more is letter-writing than one's own wishes, hopes, desires? – but a reckoning with the failures in writing oneself. What opens up from this is the potential for transmission beyond words.

As Sarah Rose poses in Redolence (2026), an installation that generates sound and light signals from insect sounds and other sonic fragments, *listening* might be the act of intimacy that is able to shelter such desires – an act that retreats from the human.

**Jane Wallace** / Bas Jan Ader, Christian Dimick, Yana Nafysa Dombrowsky-M'Baye, Abigail Aroha Jensen, Sharon Kivland and Sarah Rose, *These are addressed to you*, curated by Jess Clifford, Enjoy Contemporary Art Space, Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington, 23 May – 4 July 2026

This is a black-and-white photograph of birds arranged in a museum display case.

A diorama is obscured by the reflection of a skinny, arched window that extends almost to the floor and up to the high ceiling.

Birds and flora arranged in a display case are obscured by a reflection on the protective glass, a reflection of the surrounding room.

Birds and flora in a museum display case are native to Aotearoa.

At the bottom of the frame, the bottom lip of the display case is visible and is opaque in contrast to a ghostly, layered image above it.

The lip of a display case looks dark and worn. Above it, on the glass, there is something that looks like water but it is a stark white reflection on the floor from the light through a window, lines wavering as if the glass of the case is very old, handmade and uneven.

Directly above the watery line begins the deep archway that holds the window. It looks to be the depth of a person if a person were comfortably standing within it. It looks to be the width of two people standing shoulder to shoulder snug within its border.

The window and archway look to be twice the height of an average person but there is no person for reference in the image to verify this or the statements above.

Soft, fine grass of a tussock is visible behind the reflection of the window in the place where someone's feet would be standing, immediately above the watery white.

Next to a tussock is a small rock on which stands a kiwi, head stooped and beak out in front. It looks up as if looking at the camera. A white egg is positioned below its head and beak.

Grasses sprout from rocks around a kiwi and an egg.

An egg is positioned in the bottom right corner of the compositional frame.

A kiwi hunches over an egg, its hindquarters obscured by the reflection of a window.

A kiwi faces the right of the composition, its head positioned protectively over an egg. It looks back to the camera.

Pale streaks reflect on the glass of a display case over and above an egg up to where grasses hang from a rock or mossy nest on which crouches a kākāpō.

In the space above the kiwi, to the right of the white reflected window, is a moss-covered rock with an uneven surface cast in contrasting light and shadow.

Atop a rock is a kākāpō framed by fern fronds and twigs.

A kākāpō leans out over a rock framed by foliage, its foot visible. It is side-on to the camera and its eye peers back at the lens.

Whiskery feathers on the beak of a kākāpō are visible against the black of a huia.

A pair of huia perch on branches in the upper left of the compositional frame.

A male huia is partly obscured by the glare of an arched window reflected in the museum case glass.

A female huia with long hooked beak is positioned upright and faces a male huia to her left.

An arched window is glaringly reflected in the glass of a museum cabinet, its lines obscured and wobbly.

The glass of an arched window is segmented into nine rectangles in the middle plus six below and a domed section above arranged as if a sun setting in a children's picture book with a semi-circle in the middle, a horizon line and three sun rays.

Twisting fern fronds below a pair of huia in a museum case disappear behind the white of a window reflected in the glass of the case.

A kea is barely visible in the bottom left of the frame, next to a kiwi and a ghostly window reflection.

A kea has its wing outstretched and its head out of frame and appears to have no legs at all with the amount of reflected information in the glass of a museum case.

A diorama of birds native to Aotearoa is arranged in a museum case.

A black and white photo of birds native to Aotearoa arranged in a museum display case is segmented into four main areas of focus, three cut vertically at the bottom and one across the top: the reflection of an arched window in the centre-left extends most of the way up the picture, it is mostly white; the right hand side of the composition is dark and dominated by the image of a kiwi emerging from behind the reflected window, an egg is in the bottom right corner from above which the kiwi confronts the viewer; in the top section there is a sweeping line from the top right to the upper left, upon which sit a pair of huia and a kākāpō; the bottom left segment is cut in half by the wing of a kea which is dark and distorted by the reflective glass case, above it are twirling fern fronds against a light background of the room enclosing this diorama.

Above a kiwi is possibly the reflection of a large-format camera.

**Orissa Keane** / Mark Adams, *12.11.2000 Huia, Kakapo, Kiwi, Kea, The Onslow Room, Clandon Park, Surrey, England*, 2000. Silver bromide hand-print from 10 x 8-inch black-and-white negative in *Bird Land: Te Kāhui Manu*, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, 15 August 2026 – 8 February 2027.

I leave my tundra home
My soft nest
Carefully composed of moss
By mother and father
I have seen four moons come and go
Now I am compelled by a powerful song
Calling me across the ocean

Wind
You will be my constant companion as I fly
Beneath these pulsing wings
that must carry me for ten suns
I do not know the way
But the way knows me
The way is within me
And I enact the way



I arrive on land
Exhausted
My wings ache and cringe
Having borne me across the great water

A cloak of woven cloth is tied beneath my chin
I am relieved of my wings
With my nimble new hands I fold them up
I place them carefully on a rock
Upright now I can walk on two limbs
Like the wingless who only know land
Beakless I touch my soft lips that utter a word
I enter the glass nest, the doors sighing open for me
I feel the stone beneath my feet
Cut into perfect squares using nimble fingers

Bird Land: Te Kāhui Manu

How they have described and caressed our form over many centuries
I look upon these likenesses of my kin through the eyes that depict us
Why do they do so?
Perhaps the same reason we sing ourselves into the world
And feel the world arise within us
Perhaps the same reason we embody the way
So that the world may continue turning

I walk amongst these artefacts
Many hours, spirit, poured into them
My footfall echoing, calling
Tenderly described the curve of the beak
The jewel eye piercing through a painted surface
Quivering feather suspended
A bird head emerges from a human form
From a carved vessel
From the sooty blackness of night

All living things know how to be reverent
These blinking eyes gaze up and yearn for the skies

—

*The skies were marbled with the darkening pastels of the fading sunset*
*But on the ground where I stood it was already dark*
*I saw a cloaked figure emerge from the art gallery*
*I could not see a face in the gloaming*
*They walked silently to a large stone in the courtyard*
*Something lay upon it*

*They unfastened the cloak and let it fall to the ground*
*From the stone they carefully lifted a pair of wings*
*Unfolding and gracefully shrugging them on*
*The figure I had been watching shimmered*
*And transformed*
*Into the form of a bird*

*A kuaka*

*I bowed and addressed them:*

*Kuaka!*
*큰뒷부리도요!*
*Embark on your way back home*
*Travel safely and do not lose yourself*
*Before you return to your nestlands you will stop by land of my ancestors*
*May they receive you with joy*
*May the tidal flats be bountiful*
*So you may replenish yourself before the final stretch of your journey*
*I do not have wings like you*
*Please send them my love*
*Please apologise that I could not be there for grandfather or*
*grandmother's funerals*
*Please tell them that I am well*
*And that I still know how to be reverent*
*As they have always done*
*For though I do not know the way*
*But the way knows me*
*The way is within me*
*And I enact the way*

**Steven Junil Park,** *Bird Land: Te Kāhui Manu*,
Te Puna o Waiwhetū Christchurch Art Gallery, 2026



Accolade

Black leather strap of night / star-studded / starts slipping / street
lamps / strung across the hills / like fairy lights / going out one by one

Now the day's egg is cracked open / this is a slow cook / yolk sliding
down the valley / whites bubbling / making popcorn chicken clouds /
and I think I've just solved the age-old question

London Street's washed clean with Sunlight soap / someone's got
a bag of breezes and they're escaping / the little beak of a bellbird /
opens like a pair of scissors / snips the wind

And high above me / the seagulls soar / like curly brackets
punctuating the blue page / as if to say

{ This bit of sky is mine

**Tessa Boraston**, *Bird Land: Te Kāhui Manu*, Te Puna o Waiwhetū
Christchurch Art Gallery, October 2026

precisely from the awareness of a preciousness
is the relief from the singular
in an intricate story world, like a sacred chapel of memory
three horses stand on a plinth
silenced by the intricacy
of surrender? of pleasure? of God?
true relationship is always far-reaching
only the thinnest of veils
and here it is again, hot, in this writing
rising in the sky

The past month I've been writing about my visit to Michael O'Donnell's retrospective exhibition, Singing Through Clay. I started off writing about how it is hard to put to words the work of a storyteller and about the totality of an artist like Mike, whose presence so completely infuses the work by his hands and of his words. With the close of Attention Studies for the year, I began to consider my relationship to Mike's work within the broader sweep of a year where the call to attention has defined my life, within and beyond the writing.

I first met Mike in the early days of moving to Kapanga from England to take up an apprenticeship in production pottery. Mike was part of a ten-day clay wānanga held by Ngā Kaihanga Uku, and to me he

felt like a bridger of worlds, bringing the bardic charisma of his Celtic whakapapa to a life spent sensitively in these lands as Pākehā man guided by clay, kaumātua, family and land. His tohutohu:

*Whakarongo ake au ki te tangi o te Manu nei*
*Tui tui tuia*
*Tuia i runga*
*Tuia i raro*
*Tuia i waho*
*Tuia i roto*
*Tihei mauri ora*

*Listen, listen to the song of Manu, listen to the message, and gather, from above, below, within and without, and breathe life into the wellbeing of your soul.* [1]

I've introduced him here as a storyteller, but Mike is first and foremost a clay worker, and he makes sculptures, vessels and artworks that whisper songs of a soulic formation, tales and rumblings from the belly of the earth.

*Whakamanu, fly high, bird's-eye view*
*Whakaika, swim down below, deep in the soul realm*

These are words he offered like gifts, and I've rolled them around in my hands this past year as I have his seed stone – the clay discs he moulds to fit in the palm, engraving sacred spirals into the middle where the soft press of his thumb has dipped the belly. He has been making these since he took part in the "seed carriers" GE-free hīkoi to Parliament in 2003. Last year at the wānanga, he handed a kete full of them around for everyone to take. And when I visited him this October at his exhibition, he pressed another one into my hands.

Sitting with Mike's work and his stories for the culmination of Attention Studies holds a beautiful cyclicality for me, the kind that close attention enables you to understand. There is the physical presence that his work holds in my home (his two seed stones present on my altar and one of his drinking vessels regularly used for my morning tea) and in my mind's eye (the curves of his creaturely sculptures, their textured surfaces formed from groggy clay and intuitive mark making). And there is the tohutohu and the stories he has shared. It is a way of seeing that he invites you to partake in alongside him.

For example, as Mike walked me and my two friends, fellow clayworkers, through his exhibition, he shepherded us into the back section of the narrow gallery, shut off from the main space. Here was a table in the centre, holding a large shape – later revealed as his sculpture Song of the Fish Woman – covered by a blanket woven with ginkgo leaves. When Min died, Mike tells us, my grief was insurmountable, I wanted to go with her. I was trying to work it out through the clay, forming the Fish Woman. When I finished the sculpture, I couldn't understand it. Then Min came to me in my dreams. She told me to find the blanket of our daughter Emily and cover the sculpture in it. Standing back, I could see it. The mountains of Karangahake. The mountains we live beneath and are bequeathed to.

This way of seeing is one I am learning, by way of Mike. By way of all the storytellers and artists who touch my life through their work.

1
Michael O'Donnell, *Whakapapa of a White Man: The Reply* (Hauraki, Aotearoa New Zealand: Taraariki Creative Trust, 2024), 3.

I remember when I first realised this. I was at the funeral of the artist Vivian Lynn, a woman who has played an immeasurable part in shaping the person I am today. While studying in Wellington, I had a job gardening for Vivian and her partner Jurgen, and then later caring for Vivian as her health declined. I was twenty when she died, and at the funeral I stood in front of a host of fellow artists, academics and friends I had never met, and cried my eyes out, stuttering that she and Jurgen had shown me a way to see the world that I had not known until my time with them.

To attend is to take notice. Adjunct to studies, as in Attention Studies, the act of taking notice is given permission to deepen, in quality, time and meaning.

Looking back at each piece I have written this year, I remember the relationship to each work and maker, forged in me through attending. Coming back to them feels like whakamanu, flying high, bird's-eye view. From this vantage point, I pulled fragments from each piece in a light-hearted attempt at putting together a found poem. Curious to see what would be woven together.

What is whakaika, swimming down below, soul realm, is not always for laboured-over words to say on a page. But I like to see the wisps of it all in this poem. I like to feel it is all still alive in me – Joanna Margaret Paul, Caitlin Moloney and Matt Sephton, Jade Townsend, Beth Harris, Heidi Brickell and Mike O'Donnell, each having carved a space in my heart, by way of pause and question, move and beguile.

This act of ascent and descent, a part of the practice of attending, has no linear trajectory. It is not bound to order. This is what the journey of the storyteller helps us remember, for all good stories keep working on us long after the telling has finished. I will stop to listen. I will not forget to return.

**Millie Godfery** / Mike O'Donnell, *Singing Through Clay*, Friends of Aotearoa Gallery, Paeroa, August–October 2026

The bittersweet return: you discover it is not entirely yours – at least not in the ways you thought it would be. Yet, you are of it; it is the most you of any thing you have ever stumbled into. I sense this is part of the revival, of the return, of the re-stoking of the home fires. Of course this re-lighting must first free up the putrid fumes of dust, before any real crackle or warmth. So perhaps it's good we're all feeling it, now.

A few pieces I've written this year all share a disjointed kind of symmetry. Seeing how friends' experiences of return home have related in ways to some of my own experiences with homeland, and those of my 'āiga (family) – and each of these friends' stories have helped me to place myself, in different ways.

CHRYSALIS / performed alongside darling DJ Tom Plum (Ngāti Hako) for Queer Horizons' response to Whāia Te Taniwha, Christchurch Art Gallery, February 2026:

It's meant to happen this way
Drowned in the irons of home
Rich red clay slipping all my stories off
In the cloud of the river where there
Used to be a face, I've been
Wiping one cloth through a mess
Of new feathers
In the oil slick of birth
Where the gels have gone to crystal.

It's meant to happen this way
Run over on the dirt road back home
Just to find the wrong grave to cry on
The fale you longed for
Scaffolds up and long gone
By the time you have
Enough words to argue
What they meant, and which direction
So you're Maps-ing the oldest path
Back to the real house
Yea, to the bone house
Calling someone's Aunty, saying –
– Carve a notch when you find it
One fingernail deep
For when you claw your way back.

It's meant to happen this way
Blown up in the geyser of home,
Where the waves smack the tunnels so hard,
Pō the gutu of the cliff face so hard
We see turtles go flying.
Home is where the turtles
Smack down against the rocks so hard
They are like fireworks.

SUPERMASSIVE BLACK HOLE / excerpt from TENSEGRITY AND UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE, my response to Tensegrity by Sina Leo at Fibre Gallery, May 2026:

Trace the vā between fetū
Thumb, forefinger, a tilt, a lean.
It is as we name it: space, and yet
None at all, it is thrum, it is moped intersection.

Between each godhead a puma-black stampede of story
And the wrestling of the characters
Over waves' roar and rampage
This giving–taking soup that lends us to ourselves.

Shares spare glimpses, stick-'n'-pokes open
The flesh of heaven staring back at us, we name it
After all our dead, we know it
Names us right back.

When you were born you said you came from
Tōfā – and now I know that means to sleep, to dream
You said they sent you here to say:

Something you have now forgotten
But said that I could ask them later
I try not to look at the mirror in the back of the storage room.

Thumbing over your old drawings in the space that now lacks you
I trace the vā, thumb, forefinger, squint
And the space is filled
Puma-black waves, soup flesh, tōfā.

SOUTHLAND RAINBOW / written in response to *Tāmata* by Bri Leone-Rhea Lawrence (Ngāti Kahungunu ki te Wairoa) and Geo Thompson-Skipworth (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Porou) at Art Attic, Waihōpai, July 2026:

Southern black stone waiting to be left alone to shine again
Southern black gulls chasing newcomers gone gun-screech rumbling down southern black road
Southern black and yellow calloused ciggie hands cradling an albatross chick (spare it from the wind, its father, his rage)
Southern black waves smack and swallow, smack and swallow down gravel shoal spit.
Southern white sun, southern red sun, southern black sun
Oh, and hot white cuppa full of hot red dreams
Dreams like peeling back the shellac – the cold mud winter coat of a floodplain town
and letting in steam for once
Dreams like start again in the same place a hundred years ago

**Solomona Davis** (Sāmoa/Pākehā), Stumbling Home: a collection of fragments of home from across 2026

we stretch towards the savings made on daylight –

33 bees by leaving the lawns to be, 'til tomorrow
$3 dollars by driving the extra 5k to Pak n Save, and

$27 million by silencing.

6 new grey hairs by deleting Insta
looked away from the placards,
let the boy sell his books for kicks.

the ache by spending 50 dollars a week on yoga
by reusing the receipt as a list.

we're no longer sure about daylight.

we want sing as our waters warm,

but our mouths are now for mining,
for suctioning the seafloor,

the breath,

yet.
Carson pulled us through the *mush of the unconscious into some kind of grammar*

and saved a life.

**Sian Alexia**, Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage budget 2026

27.09.2026

went to the bird land exhibition like others did
looked at the illustrations of huia male, female, and rare white variant
remember looking at this image on my biology quiz
was cool to see in person
read a bit about how the male cracks open logs while the female digs
out wētā inside and i remembered that morning's dream

tried to save a wētā from two birds
shooed them away but then a third bird got to them
one of the birds i shooed away was annoyed with me because they
were hungry
and i failed to save the wētā anyway

what a treat to be reminded of a dream

21.09.2026

jane talked about her trip to the venice biennale
she held a pamphlet about mette edvardsen's piece
*time has fallen asleep in the afternoon sunshine*
there's also a mette ingvartsen
another choreographer
who's also based in brussels
people get them confused
will probably get them confused again when i dont have this pamphlet to refer to

recalled how josie and i talked about this piece at my parents' place
told karlos he would be great at this work
he could do one hundred years of solitude
our family book
he said he's read it seventeen times
he said he could probably recite the first page or so
then he did so
to our astonishment

id been encouraged by ross to commit mike kleine's work to memory in order to work with the text
he says you understand the text differently when you memorise it
*embody it* is what i thought vaguely
i did expect it to inspire how im writing now

jane said the title of mette's work was twee
and everyone laughed
said that it is a quote from fahrenheit 451
which gave it some validity
but i think it's quite a beautiful title
but then live art has always been more unapologetically emotive sincere sentimental

jane brought up questions around authorship which reminded me of how dominic forgot his poem writers festivals are fucking weird eh
and found it on the spinoff but it wasn't how he remembered it

corporeal learning
gwyn said she recalled her parents' gen remembering texts and i was reminded of some fb post about the word rap
how african american men would court women by saying let me rap to you real quick and recite love poems
but it was a digital memory that i didnt verify so i didnt share it with the group

thought about all the history songs poems incantations tales tongue twisters sounds noises stims etc that we would have held in our bodies before the written language
and that plato worried what the written language would do to us
josie said she learned in her culture and cognition class that in te ao māori, some think for knowledge to be remembered it must enter through the head and make its way into the body to become understood because at the level of the head it is vulnerable to changes in the wind
Tāwhirimātea
we can make theories about plato's concern with history since the written language
how text has made knowledge an exteriorised entity

and now we are trying to build machines that can hold all this knowledge
to be more knowledgeable than us
in the hopes that it can tell us how we best ought to live our lives
and how best to run society in our best interests
because we can't do it ourselves
it might sing us songs
that will be so frighteningly real and otherworldly that listeners would question whether we had actually created an intelligent being
but it actually had just learned to hit our most primal senses for effect
when knowledge was oral language was music
the songs would take multiple listens
once we pick up the nerves to listen to one in its entirety
before the melodies drove so deep
we started singing them back
and recalled what we should have never forgotten

26.10.2026

another dream
it'll probably just keep churning out recognisable tunes

**Kosta Bogoievski**, Last Attention Studies

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