

# **Aotearoa Art Fair 2023**

***The Table***  
**mothermother**  
**(Iteration 20)**

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## ESSAY 1

### *In praise of The Table*

Orissa Keane

#### *A Table For -Ing*

Take the word *activity* for a moment. A table – you activate it through using it. At a table you might eat, talk, work, write, have hard conversations, have light conversations, read, have a coffee, have a fuck, think, rest.

#### *A Table For Non-Monetary Exchange*

In an art fair, a table might be used for making transactions, for discussing artworks or some such schmoozing. Same as in a shopping centre, the only idle seating can be found in a food court or cafe. Commons might be the last thing you'd expect to find at the most commercially focussed art event of the country—somewhere free, inviting, shared. The Table is the same table which would otherwise be situated at mothermother, where a visitor might stay for just-that-much-longer; invited to sit, read the exhibition catalogue or roomsheet in the space, eat lunch while they're there, have a cup of tea, or something harder, why not? The gallery is licensed for that very reason.

To reframe Ted Purves and Shane Aslan Selzer's opening scenario in the chapter 'No longer normal: critical exchanges in the landscape of art' (2014),<sup>1</sup> imagine: You pay \$3.90 using your HOP card to arrive at Britomart and walk the short distance to The Cloud where someone scans your entry pass worth between \$25 and \$150 that a friend gave to you because their workplace gave it to them but they didn't feel like going; once inside, you realise you're thirsty and pay \$25 for a glass of champagne. You have engaged in a number of common 'economies' or modes of exchange. A *redistributive or command* economy includes, for example, a bus which runs on schedule no matter how many passengers and costs the same for everyone whether travelling three stops or ten. You acquire a premiere pass to the Fair by way of a *traditional* or social economy which tends to be that among friends, family and neighbours—ie. I don't need this, you might want this—I believe it is also called the *gift* economy. Then there's the *capital* economy exemplified by the exchange of goods and services for abstract signifiers like money.

In 2016, Eve Armstrong set up the Trading Table (2003 – ongoing) at the Michael Lett booth at Auckland Art Fair (now Aotearoa Art Fair). The social project offers a point of non-monetary exchange for goods and services, the value and fair

trade of which is negotiated between the trader and the artist or facilitators. Armstrong explains how the artwork is an extension of daily life: "I am constantly trading for things like childcare. Or I would owe a friend 'art hours' where she's helped me on my project and I'm going to help on hers in the future."<sup>2</sup> I'm often owing people editing hours—I've just begun making a series of *One Free Edit* tokens.

To continue the previous economic narrative: Suppose, then, having finished your glass of champagne, you go over to the mothermother booth to find yourself a seat at The Table. Judy Darragh<sup>3</sup> is already there, and gathered are a small group of people who are there to listen, participate in discussion, drink tea and home baking, rest a while, or have their minds race. What is being exchanged? And according to what economic system? Maybe a better word here is *share*; ideas, introductions, time and knowledge are all being *shared*. Its application is no different to *exchange* but it is a more appropriate word for imagining everything laid out on The Table all at once to be dipped into as required. And of the economic system? You can put a number on anything, but it's not that useful. The invited guests are offering their time in kind, mostly because they appreciate a good discussion. Yet, perhaps an invited guest will arrive at a particularly quiet time and be happy there just hanging out with a couple of welcome lingerers.

#### *A Table For Words To Soak Into*

In 2003, queer duo Split Britches initiated The Long Table, an open-source project which offers an alternative model to the typical separation of audience and speaker (notably in panel discussions), promoting instead equality in expertise by opening the floor to everyone who has something to share. "The Long Table is a dinner party structured by etiquette, where conversation is the only course."<sup>4</sup> The webpage has instructions for how to hold your own Long Table and a list of guidelines for etiquette, even suggesting when to use the Long Table: "to invite community knowledge around difficult conversations, to break down institutional barriers for knowledge, to cultivate community."<sup>5</sup> The Table is quite long.

Hands pressing, elbows resting, fingers pointing, touching The Table. There'll be debates and disagreements and sympathetic words burrowing deep into the wood grain. I have to remind myself sometimes that people are storytellers, artists are storytellers, that this is an important part of daily life and what makes us human. It's special even though it is everyday.

Imagine the flatbed truck or the trailer the muthas will have used to haul it in.

Rightly worded in the press release: it will have been *hauled* in. How many people to carry it? The gesture is even bigger than The Table itself; connecting people, their artists, within what can otherwise be a very strange space of commerce and fluorescent lighting. Their artists are showing works of the body and invoking the body, collaborative and community works made by more than one set of hands, works which come from both our built and natural environments (because they are inseparable). We share space as much as we share our bodies, whether in lending a hand or holding a loved one in an embrace. While some of the works share a groundedness, given by their command of the everyday, others share a sense of longing for locatedness, coming from some place the imagination goes when you let it.

#### *A Table For A Lingerer*

I covet a table like The Table. The Table is traditionally a dining table in classification. A dining table is of a different constitution to a coffee table or a work desk. I'm aware that I'm dramatically idealising The Table on many levels. On a physical and social level I crave a table to feel at home at, to do many things at, with many people. On an intellectual level I crave the challenging discussions I didn't realise until now, writing this, that I was missing—I've been too comfortable for too long. And too comfortable eating and working on the beds or couches which have substituted a dining table and chairs for the last six years.

I like to seek out the spaces which invite a lingerer, tables which invite your extended stay. Especially in other cities when you're suddenly just tired and you want to sit down somewhere quiet and somehow familiar. I'm imagining, because I think *I* would do this, you might come back to The Table more than once, once you discover it. Sometimes you might find one of the invited guests there too, maybe you'll plan for that to happen, but maybe just out of that sense of familiarity and belonging you'll return to The Table and take a seat and find that internal quiet rarely afforded at the Fair. And you'll find yourself with the artworks again and you'll notice something different.

1 Ted Purves, Shane Aslan Selzer, 'No longer normal: critical exchanges in the landscape of art', *What we want is free: Critical exchanges in recent art*, eds. Ted Purves and Shane Aslan Selzer, second edition, Albany: State University of New York Press, (2014). Pp. 8-18.

2 Eve Armstrong at Michael Lett, the Auckland Art Fair, Ocula, 2016. Accessed online 06.02.23: <https://ocula.com/magazine/insights/eve-armstrong-at-michael-lett-the-auckland-art-fair/>

3 March 2023 Guests at The Table include: Judy Darragh, Fiona Jack, Dina Jezdic, Nina Dyer, Sophie Coupland, and Becky Hemus.

4 Split Britches, Long Table, Accessed online 02.02.23: <http://www.split-britches.com/long-table>

5 Ibid.

## ESSAY 2

### An extract from *Species of Spaces* a thesis submitted in 2020 by Tori Beeche for her Master of Fine Arts.

#### *Lived Space: Brush History Against the Grain*

My strongest memory is not actually a memory but, rather, something created from my imagination. In fact, I have quite a few memories I imagined and then came to remember as if they had really happened. These memories were originally my father's, transferred to me as a child through the stories he told me about his life growing up in Norway and the hours we spent together looking at his old childhood photo albums. His recollections were like magical stories to me, and I would happily listen to him often repeat them. He recounted these tales with a sense of longing and in such detail that, at some point, I conjured up my own cinematic version of this brilliant life. My version a heterotopia that I imagined has now become a core strategy that I employ in my painting practice. There was the one about the famous Norwegian polar explorer Roald Amundsen picking my grandfather up from school. The one about my grandfather taking the German surrender at the end of World War II, and my favourites – the ones about my great-grandmother's love affairs. Having moved to New Zealand from Norway in 1968, my father's sense of displacement and alienation from his family resulted in him suffering from a severe affliction of nostalgia. Once deemed a medical condition, a form of homesickness, nostalgia is now considered to serve an existential function. It gives the afflicted and those around them the benefit of the positive emotions that they experience during a bout of nostalgic recollection. Reverie, for my father, served a healing function. As he carried those around him along for the ride on his fantastic trips down memory lane, he experienced a sense of social support and connectedness to the new life and family that he created in New Zealand.

These shared journeys formed meaning and constructed a sense of identity for him to carry around in his new home of Aotearoa.

For me, my father's verbal sketches of a Scandinavian utopia opened a world of grand possibilities quite out of step with my surroundings. This provoked a delicious sense of disorientation, like the early explorers such as Amundsen might have felt: "Always lost because they'd never been to these places before," happy to simply be a "wanderer in a terrain where even the most familiar places aren't quite themselves and are open to the impossible" (Solnit, pp. 14-25, 2006). The result of sharing my 'lived space' with my father, the consummate storyteller brimming with phantasms, is a nostalgic lens on my representation of the world. This is expressed in my painting practice by the visual language of reference I employ to activate ideas of nostalgia. These represent both personal and shared histories that capture notions of fashion and style that refer to another time.

Exploring reflection and longing as a guide lead me to Boym's 2001 book *The Future of Nostalgia*. The dichotomy of this title brings to mind the White Queen's comment to Alice in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* (1871): "It's a poor sort of memory that only works backwards". The value of nostalgic recall for envisioning and planning a future are ideas explored by Boym in her book and in her article 'The Off-Modern Mirror', published in the journal *e-flux* in 2010. Boym slows down our immediate response to the idea of nostalgia by modifying the concept with two possible prefixes: restorative or reflective. She describes restorative nostalgia as a "wish to resurrect the times before the recent past, to restore things to their former glory, a rebirth of the old as the new nation" (Boym, Intro xviii, 2016). We see this manifesting in groups of people who try to restore their own cultural practices that have been lost through displacement, as in my father's case, or more traumatically taken from them in conquest, colonisation and/or persecution. It is a toxic mutation of Boym's definition of restorative nostalgia that is at the core of the recent revivals of nationalism we have seen around the world. This deviation has created the conditions that made Brexit and Donald Trump's US presidency possible, and Le Pen a near thing for France. This version of restorative nostalgia has been intensified by a disenchantment with globalism, specifically global capitalism. The recollections of those suffering from this form know two main plots, the return to origins and the conspiracy (Intro xiii-xix). Restorative nostalgics, such as Brexit voters, take themselves very seriously. They are willing to fight and die for an

'us', though they fail to comprehend that within the melting pot that is our global economy, the nationalistic 'us' that they wish to restore no longer exists. Their desire to retro-activate borders and focus on national solutions for the problems humanity faces today is misguided and dangerous.

Our epoch to date is experiencing a deadly pandemic, systemic racial human rights injustices, profound environmental damage to our planet, multiple refugee crises, and devastating poverty with the failure of modern capitalism. For each of these individual catastrophes, allowing nostalgia for the Empire to create an identity politics of nationalism and an intolerance of racial and cultural difference is not the solution. Boym does point out, however, that some forms of nostalgia can be positive. It can be the catalyst for taking action to restore cultural practices and can create cultural spaces that give voice to the desires and concerns of modern nations in flux. Nostalgia is a useful prompt for creativity as it can provide a way for human culture to process trauma. Perhaps it is not surprising that we are seeing artwork engaging with issues of time, memory, histories, nostalgia, antiquity and the past dominating the contemporary art scene, both locally and internationally (Dornauf, 2020). The second prefix Boym uses to modify the word nostalgia is reflective, an affliction in which one is more critically aware. As an artist, I find this variation a particularly useful lens through which to look. Boym explains that, for a reflective nostalgic, critical thinking and the longing they feel are not opposed to one another. Affective memories do not absolve the sufferer's responsibility for compassion, judgment or critical reflection (Intro xiii-xix).

Reflective nostalgics are fully aware that the place they long for is irretrievably lost, perhaps because it only ever existed as a tangible yet unrealised possibility (Intro xviii). Reflective nostalgia becomes an art of intimation, of speaking about the most personal and intimate pain and pleasures through 'cryptic disguise' (p. 252). Boym describes it as playing a game of hide-and-seek with your hopes and memories in a way that allows for reflection on the past without succumbing to rose-tinted longing. The nostalgia Boym is describing here might be seen in my father's longing for the fjords of Norway but needs to be reflected upon more broadly as a symptom of the current epoch. In an interview she did for the 'Thinking Aloud' YouTube channel, called 'Slow Thinking in Modernity', Boym stresses the interconnectedness of nostalgia and modernity. She uses the term 'modernity' here as Baudelaire understood it in his 1864 essay 'The Painter of

Modern Life', as not only referring to the modern era, but also containing ideas and opinions that critique it, too: "By 'modernity' I mean the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable" (Baudelaire & Mayne, p. 13, 1970). For Boym (and Baudelaire), the term 'modernity' encapsulates more than just the transitory and ephemeral. It is a dialectical concept that also considers what is persistent to change in the complex and contradictory energies at play in the modern world. Boym explains that she selected the term modernity to encourage more reflection, asking us to slow down our thinking and to critically consider our progress in the modern era and perceive the problems that have arisen from the rapid rate of change experienced during this period. We have gained much, particularly in technology, but our losses have been significant, too; cultural traditions and belief systems, to name a few. Boym advocates for a 'slow thinking movement' to counteract the fast tempo of contemporary life that has produced a new rhythm of time that prevents critical thinking.

Verwoert's essay 'Historic Desire Unbound: On the work of Paulina Olowaska' links Boym's ideas on the future of nostalgia with Baudelaire's concept of modernity. At the centre of Polish artist Olowaska's (b. 1976) multi-disciplinary art practice is the rediscovery of things and their meanings inspired by nostalgia. This rediscovery of things, be it an object, a piece of art history or a woman in history, causes Olowaska to zigzag around her reference points and find stories that others might have overlooked as being unimportant. Yet, these "dumb stories or leftovers", as Olowaska puts it, hold important or hidden meanings that bring the artist's attention into focus (Frieze Studio Productions, 2019). Verwoert identifies the narratives within Olowaska's oeuvre as the female inheritance of the modernist cause. By locating and re-examining the contributions women have made to the modern era, Olowaska changes historic narratives; she finds inspiration in literature, biography and archival imagery. Consequently, her muses have been wide reaching, from early twentieth-century avant-garde women who contributed to art's history but still remain marginalised, such as her portrait of English painter Vanessa Bell (2004), to the anonymous muse for the *Alchemist* (2015), who was discovered in a secret collection of erotic Polaroids once owned by Italian architect Carlo Mollino. Olowaska lets her nostalgic sensibility guide her image selection, from modernist magazines to old knitting patterns. Her practice asks viewers to both reappraise the women she chooses to paint and scrutinise the West's

consumer capitalism and its associated objectification of women (Mullins, 2019). By Olowaska selecting muses from people with whom she has particular 'affinities and solidarities', she gives focus through her art practice to the previously marginalised female effort and thoughtfulness that goes into the daily tasks to create happy lives. Modern capitalist society puts virtually no value on these domestic contributions; in fact, it barely even notices them. However, in his essay, Verwoert suggests that it is these overlooked narratives that have shaped our modern world, not only the male-gendered grand master plans that get routinely documented. Verwoert sees Olowaska as an artist whose work poses ways of correcting this significant omission. He explains that her re-presentation of the past is a certain kind of political statement; a call for us to appreciate her rediscoveries via Boym's idea of reflective nostalgia and for them to be re-mediated and re-valued. This kind of critical reflection – on the modern condition that incorporates nostalgia – led Boym to publish her musings online in her 'Notes for an Off-Modern Manifesto' project and to sketch out her views in the *e-flux* article 'The Off-Modern Mirror' (2010).

Off-Modern is a contemporary worldview that took shape in the first decade of the twenty-first century. At the heart of it is the idea of a detour, which suggests unexpected exploration and encourages us to venture into uncharted territory to recover unforeseen pasts. Rather than the fast-changing prefixes that attach implacable forward movement, such as 'post', 'pre', 'anti' or 'neo', Boym inserts the adverb 'off', as in 'off kilter', 'off the wall' or 'off course', which confuses our sense of direction (2010). Her proposition is to send us on a detour, forcing us to explore side-shadows and back alleys rather than the straight road of progress that has been blindly followed. We are to "explore interstices and disjuncture, and gaps in the present order to co-create the future" (2010). As an artist, the creed of off-modernism offers much, for the movement is not an 'ism' but "a prism of vision and a mode of acting and creating in the world that tries to remap the contemporary landscape filled with the ruins" – ruins that draw from the past (2010). Thwarting the deterministic narrative of twentieth-century history, "Off-modernism offers a critique of both the modern fascination with newness, and the no less modern reinvention of tradition". In the off-modern tradition, reflection and longing, estrangement and affection go together (Boym, Intro xvii, 2016).

# **Artists:**

***Tori Beeche,  
Jana Wood,  
Susan Nelson,  
Karen Rubado,  
Michelle Reid,  
Natalie Tozer,  
Janet Mazerier,  
Lillie Balfour,  
Rowan Thomson,  
& Peter Derksen***

***The Table  
mothermother  
(Iteration 20)***

## ARTIST STATEMENTS

### Tori Beeche

Tori Beeche's paintings inhabit a spatial dimension that is formed by the social, emotional, and aesthetic narratives that the spaces we live in hold. Although she grew up in a suburb in Auckland, the narratives of her lived space were Scandinavian. From the décor of her family home to the social and emotional narratives of family life, her Norwegian father's influence was profound. Childhood memories of stories and visits to her father's homeland felt like fairy tales, sparking her imagination and creating the lens of nostalgia that are layered into Tori's paintings.

Informed from these central relationships and autobiographical experiences, Tori also cites the work of French philosopher Michel Foucault on the relational nature of space as an important influence. Particularly his writings on how he believes the social practices, institutional forces and material complexity of humans and spaces interact. Tori uses Foucault's idea of "heterotopia" (a term he used to describe 'spaces of otherness') to think about the construction of the spaces she paints. Foucault talks about heterotopias as having a shadowy existence, somewhere between fully recognised socially and non-being, that require the help of the imagination to be comprehended. For Foucault, heterotopias are spaces that are 'neither here nor there', such as the moment you see yourself in a mirror, or spaces which represent a juxtaposition of location and time. Tori thinks of her paintings as heterotopias of a nostalgic affliction – a Norway/New Zealand mash-up. A response to notions of displacement and migration.

### Natalie Tozer

Encyclopedic references explain that *'Tabula rasa or blank slate is the theory that individuals are born without built-in mental context and therefore all knowledge comes from experience or perception. Epistemological proponents of tabula rasa disagree with the doctrine of innatism, which holds that the mind is born already in possession of certain knowledge. Proponents of the tabula rasa theory also favour the 'nurture' side of the nature vs nurture debate when it comes to aspects of one's personality, social and emotional behaviour, knowledge, and sapience.'*

In economic theory Tabula Rasa is also an important concept. The Statue of Liberty symbolises the Babylonian ritual of emperors holding up a torch when they proclaimed liberty. Political economist Michael Hudson explains that 'liberty' whilst referring to the idea of freedom, also ex-

presses an important concept – debt forgiveness. Hudson meticulously shows us that Babylonian and Mesopotamian rulers in their first reigning year reinstated financial balance for the people by cancelling any personal agrarian debts that had mounted up over the reign of the previous ruler. These debt cancellations happened regularly in Near East society from 2500 BC through to 1600 BC in Sumer, held in the first year of the ruler's reign, the Jubilee Year, in the aftermath of war, or building a temple. As a result debt was not able to mount up over a worker's lifetime.

Today, creditors are doing what Bronze Age rulers strived to prevent – a rejection of renewal, and wealth accumulation which imposes stifling debt upon populations.

The Table symbolises a place to clear the air, discuss critical issues, acknowledge successes and dreams for the future.

### Janet Mazenier

Metaphorically and literally our tables serve us, providing a place of and for offerings, notions of homing, of giving, receiving and holding, a space for collecting, collaborating, nesting, enabling, playing, grounding, worlding and world-making; a chance to slow down and allow for stopping, breathing, tasking, spilling, denting, marking, gouging, excavating, burying, exploring, surviving, witnessing, recording, slapping, grinding down, wearing out, tiring, vulcanising and of course, imbibing.

### Michelle Reid

"We eat light, we are sun-eaters," states a guest in a climate conversation describing the beautiful process of photosynthesis. Organisms use sunlight to synthesise nutrients from carbon dioxide and water, some of which we like to eat. Our natural light source is the Sun from which we humans feel heat and absorb as energy.

In Western metaphysics light and the Sun metaphorically signify truth, being, God, sacredness, power, spirituality, transcendence, awakenings and enlightenment, however my interest is held by tactile impressions. Light lacks haptic qualities yet engages a felt-body communication with the perceiver. Light regulates our circadian rhythms, melts tension and boosts moods. Light can gleam an ephemeral glint on objects which are normally functional; disruptive flashes can irritate and disorient the observer; and glare induces an almost painful contraction where a blinding light can be both intriguing and disturbing together. During condensing greenhouse effects of heat and light I imagine a future

'atmospheric-pendulum' intensifying to resemble aspects of William Turner's dematerialised state of nature.

The flavour of plants is affected by light and atmospheric conditions. Daily food preparation involves blanching, boiling, baking, soaking, roasting, frying, searing, and seasoning, mimicking a range of miniature atmospheric effects. Cooked vegetables are tastefully balanced by elements when heating and cooling, and adding oil, water and salt. Tinkering with environmental conditions in pots and pans, we are preparing to consume a seasoned bite of tropospheric radiance.

### Karen Rubado

My grandfather had an aversion to elbows on the table and would covertly spin a knife at any bony joint that dared rest on the surface. As kids, his reaction was hilarious until you were the subject of his wrath.

Many years later, I met my husband, who was appalled (and still is) at anyone who puts their hands under the table while eating. He's French, so I imagine this is a French affliction. I'm not, and I still put my hands underneath.

Despite the stringent rules of the table, it was my mother who turned the object into a joyful platform. It was she who spilled out crayons, markers, glue and paint to keep us entertained and homemade cookies and treats to keep us going. And, it was my great grandmother, Super Grandma, who filled the table with her homemade tortillas and tomatillo sauce so we could all make tacos together.

Much like my art practice, I see the table as a place to throw away the rules and embrace the unexpected and delicious and revel in the generous act of making.

### Jana Wood

Facing the Awa

A trade-me find, from a Waikato farming family, I received this table with details of the origins of its craftsmanship, but who would know from which forest it came before arriving here? This table supports me every day as I sit, facing the Tipuna Awa, the river ancestor, the mighty Waikato, elbows and forearms and sometimes forehead, resting on the rimu.

I can't see her from here, the Awa, but I can feel her mauri, her evolution from a small wet bubble underground, in the Central plateau near Tongariro. She gathered forces, mingling and channelling energy to meander, then gush

violently, then meander again into floating rhythm through virgin rainforest, in days long past.

She made it here, to the Port, Te Pūaha-o-Waikato, to be sucked out into the Moana, the Tasman Sea, Te Tai-o-Rēhua and into the Pacific, Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, that liquid continent, huge and unknown, that supports us, she mixes with other ocean currents and swells to become the one that supports all life on earth.

### Lillie Balfour

Mum and dad have somewhere else to be, errands to run, so we're left to fend for ourselves in the empty house now mysterious with new shadows and echoes. They're hip-height, knee-height, but we run together in a blur. Through door frames and up and over the couch. Feet patter and we laugh wildly. Now we're hungry. A mandarin is unearthed from the depths of my bag. We gather round it, big eyes following thumb, tear, citrus spray. Sat on the border between kitchen and lounge, law and chaos, their little lungs huff from rosebud mouths. Tiny breaths puff like a summer seashell in your palm - porous, ridged, warm from the sun. A hand on my knee, another on my arm. Sometimes I think we're one and the same- three and the same. Sometimes I think I could build a life with stolen moments like these.

### Susan Nelson

*Hug in bronze* calls to mind the evocative negative shapes of animate and inanimate interworlds. Table and chairs are a scaffold for shifting legs, bent elbows, facing faces, and story-hands. Liquid-filled vessels are brought to sipping lips, curvatures of handles tipping and righting. Sex-kitten spoons lay waiting in repose. Padded fingertips clutching smooth hardnesses in servitude to wagging tongues and bleeding feasts. Leaning spines press weighty bows into moaning wood. A whole new creature is formed and reformed. Until the sparkles of spills are wiped away. Table and chairs sit silent, undead. Flat plains and triangles. Wedges of sunrise swallow her stains. A crumb casts its shadow.

Rowan Thomson &  
Peter Derksen

In the beginning was nothing

And then there was I

But what am I?

Where did I come from?

And where do I begin or end?

I am a single point, expanding

An explosion of creation

I have no centre, no left, no right

I am diffuse.

I am a cloud of matter and light and energy

Emerging and becoming and bursting into being

I am a collision of atoms endlessly rearranging

I am a molecular mass gaining consciousness

I extract, I contract, I condense, I compress,

I take shape

I encapsulate myself in skin

In all material there is a parallel ghost, shadowing its form and blurring its ethical edges. This shadow ripples outwards messily, entangling me in its web of relativity, dragging me through its reverberating guilt network. The petro-packaging of my sushi lunch is preserved immaculately on the ocean floor. The cobalt in my phone's lithium battery was mined by child slaves in the DRC. My exhaust fumes have invaded your lungs.

My choices have impacts millennia into the future, which casts decision-making into a hazy, unreal space. How do we connect when we drift, isolated, in our sea of production? What need drives this shell? What desires fuel and which burn?





Tori Beeche (she/her),  
*Alma Zucchini*, oil on canvas,  
350 x 450mm



Lillie Balfour, (she/they),  
*chest (redux)*, 2023, glass, resin,  
paint, glue, board, metal,  
30cmx30cm

Michelle Reid (she/her),  
*Al Fresco*, 2022, oil and watercolour  
on panel, 400x350mm





Karen Rubado (she/her),  
*mixed messages*, (Detail), 2022, cotton and  
plant-based paint, 650 x1660mm



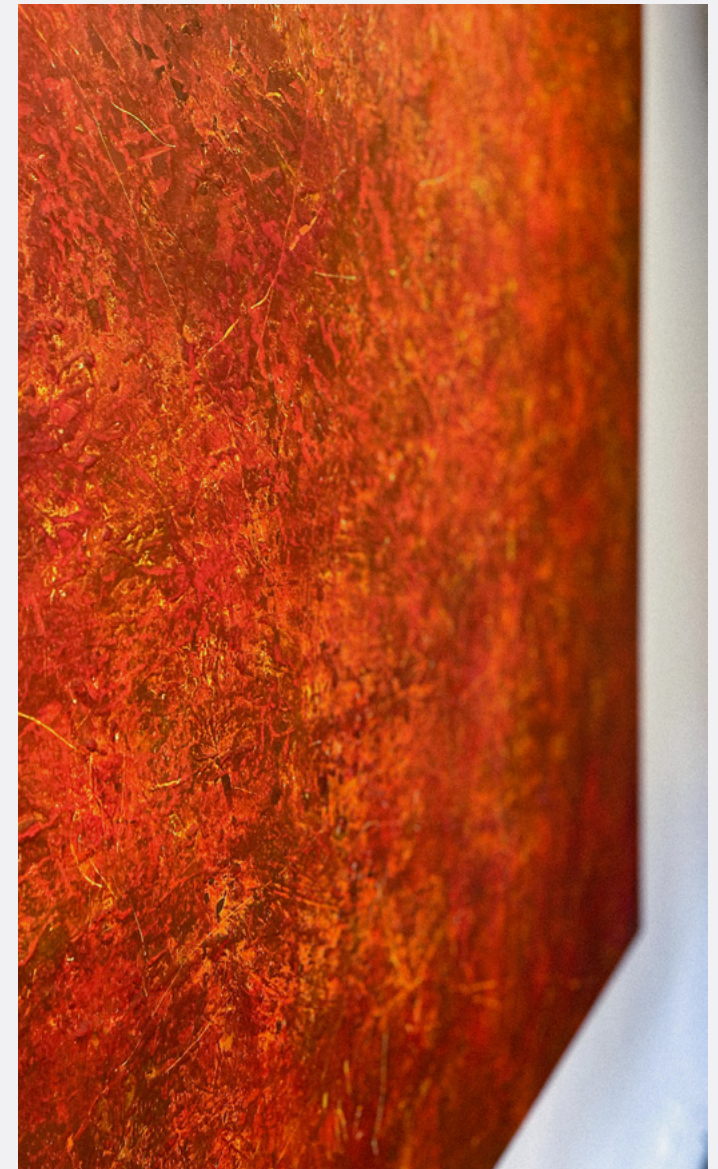
Jana Wood (she/her),  
*ka kau nga ika katoa ki raro ki te rire*,  
*All the fish swim down to the deep*, 2022,  
Oil paint on Board, 730 x700mm



Susan Nelson (she/her),  
*Hug in bronze*, (Installation view) 2021,  
480 x340mm (9 pcs)



Janet Mazenier (she/her),  
*Blood in the Soil*, (Detail), 2022, oil and mixed media  
with beeswax medium on stretched canvas,  
1400 x 1200mm



Rowan Thomson (they/them) & Peter Derksen (he/him),  
*Transmutations (pewter)*, 2022, reclaimed pewter, alu-  
minium, steel, digital print on matte paper



Natalie Tozer (she/her)  
*Mountain*, (Detail), 2023, archival Fuji Flex  
print, 975 x 274mm

## BIOGRAPHIES

Janet Mazenier's paintings engage with a language of realism and abstraction allowing an experimental approach for each artwork creation, every layered mark, stroke and daub acting as a portal into the cognitive site of the encounter responsible for its existence. Possibilities are discovered via slow walking, looking and thinking, as a result encouraging discoveries of less-observed multiplicities of strata and materials. Mazenier walks her neighbourhood of Devonport in Tāmaki Makaurau with experts such as archaeologists, soil specialists, historians and others to understand what has gone before, so the land can be re-presented in a different context, hinting at the hidden and the unexpected, the landscape and its history more deeply understood via these others' eyes. As a result, knowledge gained reflects at times the uglier elements within the landscape such as toxic waste; and the beauty contained within a multi-layered strata of wetland material. Paintings echo how Papatūānuku slowly builds layers of soil over time, the layered, constructed surfaces drawn on, covered up and excavated many times to reveal aspects of the work beneath. As a painting might have 40-50 layers, their history develops archaeologically, reflecting the land with its multi-dimensional, complex layers. Janet is a fulltime, professional artist who completed her Master of Fine Arts (1st class Hons.) in 2021 at Elam, University of Auckland. She is a doctoral candidate at Auckland University of Technology. [www.janetmazenier.com](http://www.janetmazenier.com), [@janetmaz](https://www.instagram.com/janetmaz)

Natalie Tozer is a multimedia artist based in Tāmaki Makaurau exploring narratives of the underground to unearth objects and knowledge. She splices expanded geological enquiry with science fiction. Working with time-based processes and materiality she is interested in folk tales, mythology, debt forgiveness, digging, tunnelling, anarchist anthropology and the collective.

Recent shows include The Meta-modern in Literature, Art, Education, and Indigenous Cosmologies: An Interdisciplinary Symposium at AUT, Companion Pieces at Public Record, Māter Mater at Silo 6 and the National Contemporary Art Award finalists exhibition at Waikato Museum.

Tozer holds an MFA with first class honours from the University of Auckland. She received the Lightship Award which funded the presentation of a 110m open-air video work at The Ports of Auckland and represented Elam School of Fine Arts at the Guangzhou Graduate Art Fair.

She is the founder and caretaker of mothermother which has promoted curatorial activism for underrepresented artists since 2019. [natalietozer.com](http://natalietozer.com), [@nattozer](https://www.instagram.com/nattozer)

Jana Wood's paintings sit within that liminal space of abstraction and representation. The work is the result of a slow kind of looking and feeling, hearing, listening and being in the wild environment that surrounds her studio at Port Waikato. Wood's imagery and framing devices work metaphorically to express environmental concerns, the colonial grid, and re-wilding of spaces. Jana is of Ngati Raukawa/ Ngati Pakeha descent. She received her Bachelor of Visual Arts from AUT in 2015, and PGDip Fine Arts from Elam in 2018. Her work is held in various private collections as well as the Wallace Arts Trust collection. Selected recent exhibitions include The National Contemporary Art Award (2022), mothermother, *iteration 14 (lockdown special)* and *Three Painters*, McLeavey Gallery (2020). [janawoodstudio.com](http://janawoodstudio.com), [@janawoodstudio](https://www.instagram.com/janawoodstudio)

Michelle Reid is an artist based in Tāmaki Makaurau who works under an umbrella of Atmosphere Aesthetics and Emotional Spaces engaging with the felt space and exploring climatological realities in her painterly practise. Reid's interests in environmental degradation of a future post-human landscape generate her displaced sense of romanticism.

Reid graduated with a Bachelor of Textile Design from Massey in 2001, and in 2019 gained a Postgraduate Diploma from Elam School of Fine Arts with Distinction. In 2017 she received a Highly Commended at Molly Morpeth Canaday Award in Whakatane, and was the Corbans Looking West Winner in 2016. Reid was a finalist in the New Zealand Painting and Printmaking Award in 2019 and her artworks are held in contemporary private collections in Auckland. Recent exhibitions include *Lurky Spaces* at Artfull's Arcadia in Queens Arcade, *In the Wild Ballet* at Lakehouse Arts and *iteration 14 (lockdown special)* at mothermother. [@michellereid\\_studio](https://www.instagram.com/michellereid_studio)

Tori Beeche (b. 1972, Aotearoa) lives and works in Auckland Tāmaki Makaurau. Beeche has a Master of Fine Art from University of Auckland's Elam School of Fine Arts (2020). Her work has been included in the finalist exhibitions for the Molly Morpeth Canaday Award (2021), New Zealand Painting & Printmaking Award (2020), and the Sunshine Coast Art Prize (2018). Recent exhibitions include *idyll* at Page Galleries, Wellington (2022); *iteration 14 (lockdown special)* at mothermother,

Auckland (2022); *Unseen* at The Tuesday Club, Auckland (2022); *Caught up in Circles* at Föenander Galleries, Auckland (2021) and *Spaces of Synchronicity* at Malcolm Smith Gallery, Auckland (2021). Beeche's paintings emerge through a process of extracting poetic moments from historical image archives interwoven with Beeche's personal memories and imaginings. Often reflecting the artist's own Scandinavian heritage, the works are imbued with a nostalgic longing. [www.toribeeche.com](http://www.toribeeche.com), [@tori.beeche](https://www.instagram.com/tori.beeche)

Susan Nelson is a Tāmaki Makaurau-based multi-media visual artist who's practice celebrates authentic creative process as an alchemy that occurs between matter, imagination, and the unconscious. Curiosity and playful exploration are at the heart of her work which spans an eclectic range of mediums from bronze, plasticine, paper, yarn, wax, wood and clay to found objects. She has work in the Wallace Arts Trust collection and recent exhibitions include The Molly Morpeth Canaday 3D Award Show 2022, mothermother *iteration 14 (lockdown special)* 2022, and *Unseen*, Tuesday Club 2022. [www.snartist.co](http://www.snartist.co), [@snartist\\_](https://www.instagram.com/snartist)

Rowan Thomson is a queer pākehā artist based in Tāmaki Makaurau. Their practice contemplates transcendence, consciousness, embodiment, perception, and identity. Through photography, video, and image-based installations, they explore an ambiguous space between form and abstraction that raises questions about the boundaries of the self. Rowan recently completed a BFA(Hons) at the University of Auckland Waipapa Taumata Rau. Recent exhibitions include mothermother *Iteration 17* (2022), *Transmutations*, Brittle City Press (2022).

Peter Derksen is an artist and archivist living and working in Tāmaki Makaurau. Within his sculptural installations, matter shifts between states, muddying forms in contemplation of hyperconsumptive systems. Instability is embedded within these transformations, leaving room for molecular structures to become unfixed and unpredictable. Recent exhibitions include Portage Ceramic Awards, Te Uru Waitākere (2022), and *twisting, turning, winding*, Objectspace (2022).

Lillie Balfour is an Ōtautahi-based artist interested in the overlaps between media, reality and expectation. Their work engages with text and imagery to locate memories and feelings just beyond reach, and their practice is grounded in bookmaking, printmaking and painting.

Karen Rubado lives and works in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. She completed her Master of Fine Arts at the University of Auckland in 2017. Rubado is interested in the aggregation and transformation of found materials through hand-making. Her enthusiasm lies in the connections between intention and action, the real and imagined, and the imperfection that often characterises the handmade. Inspired by techniques of improvisation within a structure, her weaving practice encourages the unexpected and allows for spontaneity as a catalyst for discovery. Karen was recently commissioned to produce a work for Te Tuhi and was featured as an emerging artist for Projects curated by Gabriela Salgado and Francis McWhannell in the 2018 Auckland Art Fair. Recent exhibitions include *A Beautiful Collision* at Zenith Interiors in Auckland (2022), Selected at Melanie Roger Gallery in Auckland (2022), *soft ware* at Melanie Roger Gallery (2021), *1924* at Corban Estate in Auckland (2021), and *Daisy Chain* at The Den Project Space in Christchurch (2021). [karenrubado.com](http://karenrubado.com), [@karenrubado](https://www.instagram.com/karenrubado)

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Sam Tozer, LOT23

## IMAGE CREDITS

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## COLOPHON

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*mothermother is a circular project,  
a platform, a collective voice, and  
a network*

*mothermother is iterative,  
non-hierarchical, and inter-  
generational*

*mothermother makes space  
for exhibiting artists to connect,  
acknowledge and be seen through  
a kaupapa of manaakitanga*

*mothermother evolves as  
each artist passes the taonga of  
invitation onto the next, fostering  
support and opportunity*

*mothermother prioritises  
collective thinking and nonlinear  
concepts of time, history, and  
economy*

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