

2013

National Contemporary Art Award

Sponsored by Waikato Society of Arts

catalogue

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All art now is conceptual, defined by its stance in relation to other art and its place in the market. It would be more fruitful and interesting at this point to ask how an image transcends other images, or more to the point: How can the market be used to do what art used to do?

”

– Chris Kraus, *'Where art belongs'* 2011

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Introduction

All works of art have their source in a concept, an idea. From the design on the packaging of a two-minute noodle packet, to the work of Andy Warhol, the concept is what starts things cooking in the kitchen. The National Contemporary Art Award gives us a glimpse of current ideas in art.

Acknowledgements

Waikato Museum sincerely thanks the Waikato Society of Arts for sponsoring the \$15,000 first prize in the 2013 National Contemporary Art Award.

Thanks also go to this year's judge, Jon Bywater.

More

Visit our website or look us up on Facebook to find out more or to share your thoughts and opinions on the award. Simply scan these QR codes with your smartphone or tablet device, or go to the URLs below.

waikatomuseum.co.nz
facebook.com/NatConArtAward

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From the Sponsor

**Melany Sutherland,
President of
Waikato Society of Arts**



The National Contemporary Art Award began in 2000 and was the brain-child of the Waikato Society of Arts. The aim was to encourage young artists, the new, and the innovative. It is often said that art reflects society, but it also challenges and pushes the boundaries – and this is, in part, the role of the National Contemporary Art Award. It is exciting that this award and exhibition is in Hamilton, as it is considered one of the premier annual art events in New Zealand. Waikato Society of Arts is proud to be this year's sponsor.

We thank all those who entered the award and congratulate the finalists and wish them well as they progress in their careers. We also thank Waikato Museum for their continued support and administration of the event. Acknowledgement must also go to past and future sponsors for their commitment to keeping this award in our city.



From the Director

**Cherie Meecham,
Director of Waikato Museum
Te Whare Taonga o Waikato**



With \$15,000 up for grabs and a heritage that has entrenched it as a major event on the nation's arts calendar; the 2013 National Contemporary Award sails into its twelfth year, albeit with some changes. This year, the prize money is kindly contributed by our major sponsor, the Waikato Society of Arts (WSA) but that is not all.

There is a story here and a history of an art organisation rekindling a relationship with an art award we all want to retain. We cannot thank the Waikato Society of Arts enough and we look forward to the opportunities we can create together from this liaison between two strong local art organisations with a shared goal – to retain ground for the arts in its manifold form.

Change is good and this year we introduced blind judging. We thank our judge Jon Bywater for his careful consideration, which was no small task given that there were over 200 entries. The result is this exhibition, presented by entrants and chosen by the judge; together they have shaped this award.





From the Judge

**Jon Bywater,
Judge of the 2013 National
Contemporary Art Award**



As a visitor to Waikato Museum, what kind of art do you get the most from? Something that you 'get' immediately? Something with a slower release? That invites you to come back to it again and again? Maybe something someone has made that seems to let you know what it's aiming for; while simultaneously pulling that thing off? Something that sparks off good questions... about the world? About art or art's role in it? That stirs up fresh feelings? Something that returns you to the familiar? Perhaps something that simply evinces a vivid, particular attitude?

As the National Contemporary Art Award is an open-call competition, the judge is faced with glimpses of people's work that have a full spectrum of appeals.

This year's entries were made anonymous before I got to see them. Unattributed to the artists but supported in most cases by a statement, the pieces were, to an extent, out of context of the other work that gives them part of their usual meaning. In choosing the finalists from the several hundred submissions, I did my best to be open to potentials of every shade, from the deeply-felt and serious to the witty and light, the sensual alongside the cerebral, the quiet as well as the loud, exquisite control and glorious nonchalance.

I did not make it my job to categorise though. I have not tried to give the exhibition any coherence extra to a pluralistic idea about the value we can find in contemporary art. My personal experience and prejudices have inevitably been important guides. With the goal of fairness, I have tried to track how and where this was the case. I have confidence that active viewers will uncover the diverse sensibilities and concerns, personal and planetary, reflected in the selection.



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Psychedelic river tribe moored up for a trade

S Brent Hayward

Oil, enamel, synthetic polymer on canvas

“

For some time I have been engrossed in the history books of New Zealand; pre-treaty times, from the 1820s up to 1840, life would have been primitive.

The Paakeha invasion and its colonisers mirrored this primitive country.

My painting is defined by a calming presence, acupuncture intervention.

It examines trade, for an ever-evolving civilisation in need of societal and emotional interaction. This painting brings visual elements to suggest tangible collisions which fused vibrant personalities. These cultural figures formed our significant iconic kiwi consciousness.

S Brent Hayward Esq.

– a New Zealand painter, 2013



Pass the tide

Daniel Webby

Single channel video

“

A series of encounters with the people of Tairāwhiti (east coast, North Island) initiated by way of solicited rides. Reflecting on the narrative impetus of the road movie, questions of 'truth' posed by cinéma vérité and the locus of intent (when considered against the horizon of the event).

”

”



Paths (Hamilton street circuit)

David Ed Cooper, James Wylie

Digital prints



The loop contains and excludes, it can be circuit and track or border and boundary. These loops enable return and quantitative feedback becomes qualitative feedback.

Path dependence is the notion that every decision made in the past will ground itself. Functionality is not a right, and certain decisions are locked beyond or despite their merit.

A famous example, the QWERTY keyboard layout, something easily improved but implementing change proves too daunting.

The city provides its own path dependence for a street circuit. The design and conception of this track is in direct conversation with Hamilton's social currency.

When freedom is practised in a closed circle, it fades into a dream. – Debord



Morrison Drive, Hobsonville 23 November 2012

Dieneke S Jansen

Pigment inkjet



Hit by the closure of the Air Force, rezoning, redevelopment and a tornado, Morrison Drive is where the last Air Force dwellers and redevelopment meet.

The RNZAF sold the airfield back to the NZ Government in 2002. Of the 3,000 homes to be built 15 per cent were to be state housing. The 2008 elected government removed the state housing requirements from Hobsonville Point and instead introduced a 'gateway housing' scheme to help first-time home buyers. This scheme was axed mid 2012. Prime Minister John Key suggested that creating housing for low income earners in more affluent suburbs was "economic vandalism".

Morrison Drive, Hobsonville, 23 November 2012 is constructed from 20-plus photographs, joining viewpoints that look up, across and down. Expanding on the singular viewpoint and moment, it aims to activate a viewing experience, in an attempt to find new ways to think about social space.





The benefits of coconut oil

Christina Read

Fabric



Coconut oil is said to be very good for you. I have forgotten why exactly but apparently it is; I've eaten it by the spoonful and I even tried it once as a hair conditioner.



Just breathe

Denise Batchelor

Video



Feeling fearful or frightened?

Just breathe

Maybe tired or fatigued?

Just breathe

When in doubt, take a moment and

Just breathe

Breath is inherently connected with humanity, with animalia, with nature. It unites us with an element of similarity. Yet within contemporary Western culture there is often a feeling of separateness and distance, a sense of hierarchy. By taking time to observe, to empathise with other living beings, we may begin to perceive the interconnected and interdependent nature of the world we live in.





Persepolis: What lays in the abyss it has created

Shahriar Asdollah-Zadeh

Installation, LED signs,
painted skull mould



Theories on diaspora can be both regional and global in definition. Diaspora artists affected by global migration propose for themselves hybrid identities simultaneously influencing the new environments they live in. The homeland is not a memory of a fixed place in time, but rather it is discourse that engages the past, present and future all at once. Since the Iranian Islamic revolution of 1979 the region has been unstable at all levels of society and order. The installation critiques the displacement of millions of people due to the Islamic revolution of the 1980s and how that single event has changed our perceptions of what we see contemporary Iranian society to be, a modern day diaspora of the 20th century. The region is at a critical crossroads and given the complex nature of Iranian society it is unpredictable what may happen next.



And we dare to dine...

Janet Knighton

Mixed media



A response to cultural approaches towards sacred places...

In the February of 1822 Hongi Hika invaded the Waipa triangle at Matakaitaki near Pirongia.

The Matakaitaki pa site was well suited to traditional Maaori hand-to-hand combat with many sheer cliffs, trenches and strong palisades. But the combined Waikato tribes-people there at the time could not be protected from the musket which had never been seen in the Waikato until this Ngaapuhi invasion.

Tragically, as they fled in panic to the sound of gunshots, two thousand men, women and children fell into the trench they had excavated from the Waipa River to the Mangapiko Creek to fortify the Matakaitaki site and died of suffocation.

Today this sacred ground to Maaori is marked with a bridge sign, a Historic Places Trust monument and picnic tables for travelling diners.





Nova

Annabelle Buick

Pine, plywood

“*Nova* investigates the notion of presenting ‘woven pattern’ into a three-dimensional art form.

Nova stretches the confines that (raraanga) weaving presents and explores my contemporary practice to what is perceived as weaving.

The concept is rendered by innovative use of woodblocks that are re-purposed to construct a woven dialogue that encompasses optical illusion and the two-dimensional object.

Nova responds to various light sources which alters the appearance and engages one to view pattern by form, rhythm and unity.

Nova is a contemporary illustration that traditional woven patterns can be reconfigured.”



Cluster

Alexander Bartleet

Mixed media

“Artist Alexander Bartleet uses thousands of objects in his artworks that document the current environment he lives in. If he was to travel, the artworks would change dramatically. Some objects are more recognisable than others.

They are assembled onto a surface as randomly as possible and preserved in resins, metals and paint. He then studies these often forgotten and disregarded objects in a controlled manner with the use of traditional painting methods.”



Be seen, be effective!

Ben Clement

Custom digital display units, HD videos



This work seeks to utilise the artist as facilitator for transparency and promotion of the National Contemporary Art Award via its direct and indirect sponsors.

Content is sourced from the websites of every sponsor of the Waikato Society of Arts and presented as promotional videos.

The sponsors of the Waikato Society of Arts are: Sky City Hamilton Community Trust, Yealands Estate Wines, Hamilton City Council, Ventura Inn & Suites Hamilton, Carlton Party Hire, Waikato Chamber of Commerce, Perry Property, Tompkins Wake Lawyers, NZ Community Post, Kahurangi Estate, Wise Group, WSA Members, Philip Vela Family Trust, Trust Waikato, The Lion Foundation, Accountants on London, Craig's Investment Partners, The Waikato Times, Gordon Harris, The Warehouse Stationery Ulster Street, Sharp, Creative Communities NZ, Creative Hamilton, Convex Plastics, Vivid Images, Pak 'n' Save Mill Street, Lion Nathan, Bayleys, and Mother Earth.



Disguised as its physical self

Zac Langdon-Pole

Found sun-bleached curtain



Why mightn't there be, somehow, a new science for each object? ⁽¹⁾

For many years this curtain has been hanging in a room. Light has travelled across vast and empty distances, each day (and night), resting layer upon layer of evidence, slowly and accumulatively upon its wavy folds. It is an image that has a time-span much the same as our own, compressed into a single moment. Like that of a plant or a leaf, it is a visible archive of its own function.

Some points of departure in making this work were questions such as: When do things become visible? Is it possible to discover an image not seen before – to reveal a new image? If Hegel's belief was that art should 'reveal the spirit as bone', what might it look like to reveal the bone as spirit?



(1) Barthes, Roland. 1984. Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography.



Riders by Lee in the newspaper

Yoon Tae Kim

Newspapers



This photograph is to be published as an advertisement in an edition of a local periodic Korean newspaper, but without any texts or an indication of what it is. In doing so, the photograph will no longer be just an image on a surface but rather objectified as a physical newspaper page. Any time after the dissemination of the newspaper, the photograph will again be transformed into different objects depending on how the individuals in the control group make use of it.

The photograph to be used has been selected from an image pool in which none are photographed for this specific purpose. The photograph retains no clear distinction between the ordinary depiction of the mundane and the ordinary advertisement imagery, but still retains pictorial beauty.



The playwright

Paul McLachlan

Photo etching



The playwright is a portrait of an artist, based on a Greek sculpture in the Otago Museum. My images are the manifestation of my own engagement with what C.G. Jung identified as active imagination: where I have concentrated so intensely on the image that it begins to live, or become 'pregnant' with possibility. The act of looking activates the image itself, investing it with life.

One of the most passionate engagements with the idea is W.B. Yeats' poem *The Statues*, wherein Yeats imagines his real man, the imagination, sleeps within him. However, for me the principle question that arises is: What happens to the way we view these statues when they can 'see' us back? I am interested in images in which the distance between observer, the observed and its referent closes in, where the distinction between the subject and object is overcome.





Exercises with Kasanova

Brydee Rood

HD video (silent)



At the Presidio Riding Club, a brisk walk from my studio at Headlands, I found a new friend and collaborator in Kasanova - a charming chestnut steed and his rider / owner Tessa de Franco. *Exercises with Kasanova* was created during an afternoon of gentle rubbish bag inflation; as I attached each rubbish bag to Kasanova I maintained continuous narration and eye contact.

"Hi Kasanova I'm just passing Tessa this rubbish bag balloon to attach to your saddle..."

During a series of exercises we added more bags progressing into a sequence of movements through the Marin landscape. Frequently Bear, Tessa's pet pug dog, trailed Kasanova, becoming an unexpected participant in the work.



Bush

Thomas Hinton,
Nicholas O'Mahony

Super 8mm film



Bush is a Super 8mm film that reframed the seminal 1971 film, *Swamp* by Robert Smithson and Nancy Holt. The action of the film *Swamp* is direct. Holt walks through the tall grasses of a swamp while filming, guided only by what she can see through the camera lens and by Smithson's verbal instructions. The viewer experiences the walk from Holt's point of view, seeing through her camera lens and hearing Smithson's spoken directions. Vision is obstructed and perception distorted as they stumble through the swamp grasses. The film confronts issues of perception and process. *Bush* uses the parameters set by Smithson as a model for production and relocates the context of the film to the lush New Zealand bush.





The epic whirlpool

Kathy Barry

Watercolour and pencil on paper



The Epic Whirlpool forms part of a series of drawing-diagrams that are the result of my investigations into the dynamics of energy transference and transmutation. These works exist on a gridded field and are subordinate to various systems and invisible codes to perform oscillations of force and affect.

The Epic Whirlpool envisions particles of energy mobilised to interweave and stretch, to expand and generate intensity.

A consideration of our relationship to energy is implicit to these drawings, recalling the utopian aspiration within the legacy of geometric abstraction.



Flow

James Sutherland, Jeremy Mayall

Digital film



This work relates to the writings of Hungarian psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihaly, who contends that people are happiest when they are in a state of flow - a state of concentration or complete absorption with the activity or situation.

The work is autotelic, and invites the viewer to enter into a state of flow. Any narrative is drawn from within. On first viewing, the work appears to be repetitive in terms of sound and image, but subtle shifts exist in space and texture. This repetitiveness seeks to lull the viewer into a quasi-meditative state: a reference to 'being in the work' in abstract expressionist tradition.

Musically, this piece explores a harmonic field of specific pitches, constructed with an internal symmetry around the note F4 using both the major and minor third intervals alternately. This internal symmetry is not overtly obvious upon listening due to the offset nature of the melodic placement.





Arterial lines

Justin Spiers

Pigment print



In *Arterial Lines*, pig-hunting trophies are seen thrown over a fence in North Otago. The fissures and scarring of the skin resemble the landscape that the animals were removed from. The image seeks to trouble conventional readings of our relationship to the land and the national imaginary. We are left with corporeal fragments and the gaze of an eyeless beast reflecting attention back at the viewer.



Lemonnier

Selina Foote

Acrylic on canvas



In considering the modernist painting agenda to have run full course, the question lingers: “How might abstract painting function without an apocalyptic myth?” If there is no trajectory toward the discovery or unveiling of the last painting or the purest painting then the possibility arises to move not only forward but also sideways and backwards through painting’s history, borrowing individual solutions to painterly problems from the toolbox of modernism.

Reproductions of historic portrait paintings operate here as a source, yielding abstracted shapes, compositions and palettes, which inform the development of a new work. Manet’s *Portrait of Mademoiselle Isabelle Lemonnier* (circa 1879) functions here as that source, providing a preliminary representational image which then gives way to a rule-based system shifting to an abstracted outcome.





Summit

Thomas Hinton

HD digital video



Summit is a HD digital video that documents a site-specific installation made in May 2013. The installation was formed over four days using an earthmover to redistribute old powdered milk from an abandoned 1970s dairy factory.



Dana in the lounge

Sam Carpenter

Oil and acrylic on canvas



My work is based around exploring domestic interior/exterior spaces and how the figure sits and interacts within these spaces. I love the feelings of awkwardness that my paintings project through the naive brush work and awkward spaces. I'm interested in moving between flat blocks of colour/space and defined detailed sections (areas of interest). This shifting idea allows the painting to fall in and out of perspective and allows me to experiment with both highly controlled and loosely controlled mark-making.





World tour 2013

Dean Strickland

Acrylic on canvas



This is part of a body of work about the Maaori Prophets; King Taawhiaio, Te Kooti and Raatana.

5 February 2013

God's covenant with iwi Maaori is restored in the Waikato.



(1) Stealth tower #3 (2) Windfall from stealth tower

Mark Purdom

C-type photographic prints



What is not seen is for all practical purposes non-existent. – Solomon

Some animals have evolved to be brightly coloured in appearance; they rely on being explicitly seen by other creatures as a form of deterrent, others favour cryptic colouration as a defence mechanism to deceive and therefore remain undetected to potential predators. Necessity to remain hidden from 'others' and the world is at the core of Purdom's photographic project *From Certainty to Doubt*, which looks at the multi-faceted ways in which camouflage, mimicry and ambiguity play as much a part in the lives of humans as they do the animal kingdom. Stealth towers (macro cells) transmit mobile phone data. To ease visual pollution it has become increasingly necessary to disguise them as inconspicuous objects, the tree being one of the obvious choices. Purdom's diptych *Stealth Tower #3* and *Windfall from a Stealth Tower*, examine the absurdities of these concealment strategies.





Humboldthian drop

Matthew Crookes

Video



Humboldthian Heights, Wedding, Berlin.
An absurd journey from the top of the
abseiling wall to the ground, and back
up again.



17,134km to Taksim Square

Paul Handley

Adhesive pigment print



Distance from Waikato Museum to Taksim
Square, Istanbul. A place where individuals
or groups may gather, connectivity within a
public domain.



Meeting points for democracy.

www.paulhandley.com/Circle_of_Latitude.html





Tow away

Talia Smith

Medium format photograph

“

In my practice I am drawn to areas of non-place. Perhaps at one point in time they had a purpose but in the present this has become redundant. The element of what was once there in a space is what captures me; it reminds me of time gone by - of youth, of minutes, of hours. I see this longing to connect and not-forget everywhere I go even in the most desolate areas.

”



Black hole

James Bellaney

Acrylic and enamel house paint

“

My processes engage with the fluidity and interconnection of Maaori cosmological beliefs. The paint is poured, finding its own rivulets and enclaves so the surface appears to be moving, the parts interrelating organically to create a continually renewing whole. *Black Hole* reinterprets the skull; an icon of (im)mortality emptied out by contemporary pop culture, and questions the oppositions of life and death, good and evil. Referring to Hine Nui Te Po, the entity of death who was also the goddess of light, *Black Hole* makes porous the boundary between *within* and *without*, the *particular* and the *untrammelled*, the *present moment* and the *spiralling chaos* of time. Of equal parts chance and consideration, the work breathes with an undulating convergence and parting of forces. How I create comes from this generative space of the natural and supernatural worlds as one, of life and death as found within the resonant void.

”



Could this possibly be?

Lance Pearce

Custom hourglass,
New Zealand currency notes



Superfluous (Monday)

Marita Hewitt

Watercolour on paper



At the centre of the artist's practice is an exploration of the demarcations between waste and value. The subjects that inhabit the figurative space in the painting(s) are found items, items that have been used by someone else and have then become superfluous. Collected subjects end up in the artist's hands when they periodically appear on the perimeter of her property. These pieces of rubbish then become lionised via the meticulous and conventional practice of still-life watercolour painting.

Embedded within this process lies reference to social, ecological and entropic ideas, whilst opening the door to the narrative imagination; overlaid with an acknowledgement to the inherent beauty of banal forms and a celebration in the art of detournement.





A million dots (The small movements that make up the grand gestures)

Gabrielle Amodeo

Pencil on paper



I feel I was rather old when I realised there are one million millimetres in a square metre, but when I did it was an, 'of course!' moment. $1000 \times 1000 = 1,000,000$ (of course!) there is a simplicity and beauty, a sheer elegance to this sum. That the commonplace area of one square metre (say, the size of my kitchen table-top) so neatly contains the almost intangible quantity of a million is simply pleasing to me.

In response, I have made a *million dots*.

In my practice, I'm interested in why things are familiar and how the familiar can be construed differently. This work pushes and pulls between its two fundamental measurements: one square metre and the millimetres making up that area. By forming the square metre from a million dots (one for each millimetre) this ordinary space is seen differently through the separate renderings of each of its constituent parts.



Mumu whaariki (Paatikitiki surface)

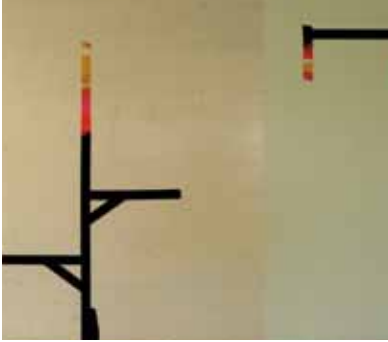
Alexis Neal

Printed woven whaariki



This work explores the distinct Mumu pattern which was influenced by Major Kemp who taught Maaori how to play draughts as a soldier. Whanganui Mumu has an almost draught-board effect, arranged to produce a diagonal sequence of a collection of patterns. The significance of the Mumu with the combination of different tribal patterns represents intermarriages between senior families and tribes. Part of a new body of research began last year while during the Tylee Cottage Residency. Here I discovered an incredible woman, Pura Te Manihera McGregor who bequeathed her very rare collection of artefacts to the people of Whanganui in 1920. At the age of thirteen Pura fought alongside her uncle, Major Kemp in the pursuit of Te Kooti. This Mumu whaariki hangs to honour her values and is representing her contemporaries today. The Maaori story is rendered with European materials. It's a simple, effective weave. It is social and personal, cultural and human.





Makeshift

Frances Hansen

Acrylic, tape on found board

“

I enjoy witnessing domestic ingenuity and human traits of inventive making-do.

This work is part of a larger body of work entitled *The Bunnings Problem*, presenting moments of DIY approaches to home decorating and renovating.



Fanatical ritualistic painted version of cover art from Led Zeppelin's 'Presence' LP

Toby Raine

Oil and pencil on denim

“

The imagery that forms the basis for my paintings stems from 60s and 70s photographs. This source material evokes ideals of revolution and counter-culture. They strike me as the last point in history where utopian visions, spirituality and political ideals formed a sense of optimism or belief, what Hebdige describes as a construction of “an alternative identity which communicated a perceived difference: an Otherness”. The flip-side of such idealistic movements can adopt a darker nature such as the hippy-orientated concerns of the Manson family that spiralled into some of modern history's most heinous atrocities, or the Satanic messages that can supposedly be found if 'Stairway to Heaven' is played backwards. Considering both the positive and negative connotations that have arisen from such subject matter, my paintings themselves seek to somewhat model a schizoid perspective through the use of imagery characteristic of excess and a delusional world view.

”



Transcription
– 37.789778, 175.286431

Shannon Novak

Augmented reality intervention



Everything is music. Colour, abstract form, and sound are used to reveal the musicality behind everyday objects as I experience through synaesthesia. In May 2013, I visited Waikato Museum and unknown to the museum developed a site-specific augmented reality intervention capturing my synaesthetic response to a lift alarm in the building. The work now exists permanently in virtual space, activated by the audience using a mobile device. I become the curator, hacking the gallery system, installing a work that only I can remove.



NB: This work requires an iPhone or iPad to work. The application AURASMA needs to be installed on your device.

Please ask museum hosts for directions to the lift doors by the entrance to the Exscite gallery.



View to the patio

Natalie Guy

Polystyrene



This work continues a series focussing on interior objects, memory and reinvention. Memory is intended to be a particularly active communication in these pieces with the idea of twisting and subverting conventions of interior space by using every-day modernist furniture as a point of departure. The newly created pieces can be seen as creating a certain type of unstableness, of not fitting: of being neither art work, furniture, prop, nor décor. The ambiguity is further expanded by the use of temporary materials.





Field (Rouge)

Jessica Pearless

Fluorescent acrylic on linen on board



Recent works seek to define the factual visual aspects of painting; colour, form, space, material and the metaphysical; intuition, perception, otherness, in an attempt to explore the notion of contemporary painting as a set of signs or signifiers. Each painting aims to embody a presence that is concrete yet abstract, proposing the possibility of painting now as a contemplation space for self-projection.

I identify with the idea that non-objective abstraction can stand as a dichotomy of ideas, a way that a rational, material thing, an artwork, can conjure up and embody an essentially esoteric, immaterial thing, to perhaps represent what is indefinable - the thought process.



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