

The Way of Matter

New making
from recent
graduates of
Aotearoa
New Zealand

Nofoagaoalii Me
Jasmine Te Hira
Brittnee Covich
Floyd Perry
Melissa McMahon
Jane Lehtinen
Macarena Bernal
Jieun Kim
Kim Whalen
Nyree McNally
Kylie Sinkovich
Caroline Konarkowska
Fran Carter
Kelsey O'Hagan
Nik Hanton
Anna-Rose Carpenter
Oliver Roake
Seung Eon Pyo
Cameron Ralston

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There is much said about the challenges of the years immediately succeeding the completion of an arts degree. Acclimatising to the economy of the job market in the cultural sector (or anywhere for that matter) and the imbalance in the supply and demand curve between the readiness and need to work and the amount of opportunities that might exist at any given time. It's a double whammy for arts graduates, while the jobs don't easily unveil themselves, it's often not a job they're even after, but the ability to keep going with what they've just spent three, four or five years trying to establish. Years of thinking, learning, making, remaking, to be confident as the author of a *thing* (object, image, action, story, etc.). To responsibly, and with intellect, weigh the value and bear the burden of bringing something into existence that wasn't there before. And in any number of the strange and particular variations of what this (practice) might look like, the necessary ingredient they all share is time.

Shows like *The Way of Matter* (previously *Best in Show*, held annually at Objectspace since 2005) have been popular with galleries and curators. Arguably a hand up, a stepping stone for artists and makers, they risk succumbing to the sexiness and supposed curatorial power of being markers for the new, the best, the hot right now, and the: you-don't-know-it yet-but-hot-very-soon. A lot has changed though over the last decade, we are less preoccupied with the notion of a specific tiered trajectory that an artist's career will take, for Objectspace though the case for maintaining a show of this nature in our annual programme is arguably different.

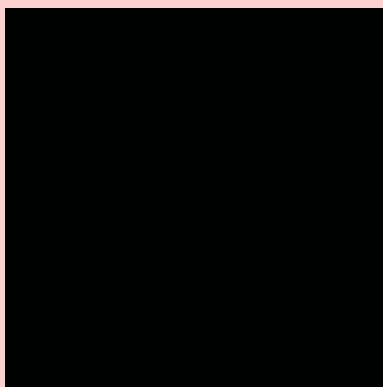
Given a close read of the precarious and changing state of arts education in the fields of craft and applied art, we have seen the deconstruction of schools and programmes dedicated to specific studio based domains (ceramics, jewellery, glass, etc.) throughout New Zealand in favour of

disciplines altogether more easy to market on graduation as 'industry ready'. And while this hasn't weakened the fervency of interest in craft based practice it has, and will further, weaken the wider cultural infrastructure that provides a framework and support for the students and then graduates who move through it. Accordingly we are committed to continuing this series, and we'll attempt to remember our reasons for it and hold them in sharp focus: to be in service of the work and of the artists, to foster confidence, to create an experience that signals to the potential and power of whatever it is that comes next along the path of a maker's practice.

The Way of Matter draws together work from 19 designers, makers and artists from varied disciplines (jewellery, fine art, textiles, graphic design, craft, ceramics). They express different methodologies for engaging materials, and in the making process, but are united for their shared commitment to these acts as means of discovery and research, and of strengthening the ideas that might underpin a work.

When visiting studios, art schools and end of year shows throughout the country late last year the mental list that might form the criteria of *The Way of Matter* seemed to grow wilder and more expansive week by week: Glorious and meticulous detail, staggering commitment to the handmade, mastery of old technologies, materials that pop and zing and mash and meld, mastery of new technologies, effortless abandon of detail in favour of gesture and form, poetic demonstrations of autobiography and storytelling... and on it goes. Works that fit no template for what the future might look like, but all are looking forward and quietly murmuring: more, more, more.

Kim Paton is the Director of Objectspace



NOFOAGAOALII ME

Mamanu 2015

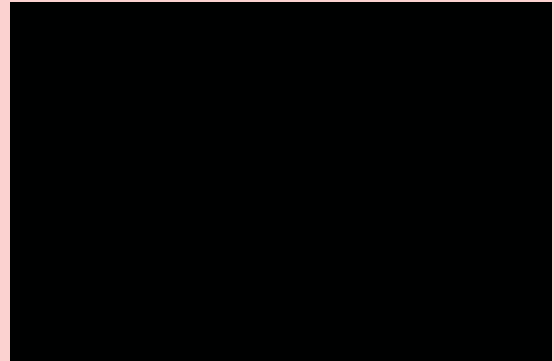
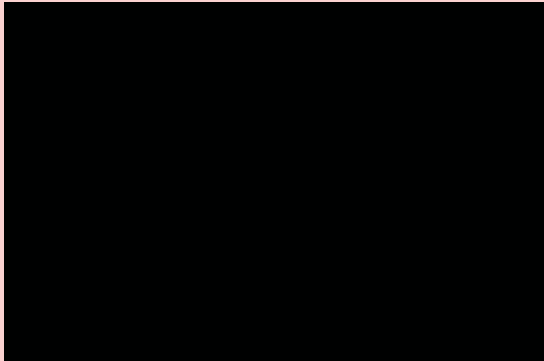
Nofo Me has investigated typography as a genre of mark-marking closely tied to ideas of location and identity. By drawing out familiar patterns and motifs from Samoan visual lexicons, Me affirms the space of speaking and of writing as one which is situated, material and both historically and culturally complex. Her type which is included in the exhibition, Mamanu (2015), was completed during her final year at Manukau Institute of Technology, and has previously been exhibited at Fresh Gallery in Otara.



MELISSA MCMAHON

Memento 2014-15

Working to capture an uncanny tangle between emotion and form, McMahon pushes the function and embellishment of her work into the realm of personal and domestic narrative. As much as they meet the decorative needs of their subject matter, the surfaces, textures and decorative flourishes of her urns figure affective emotional states, gesturing beyond a purely literal death to the many deaths, joys connections and indignities of the everyday.



KELSEY O'HAGAN AND CAMERON RALSTON

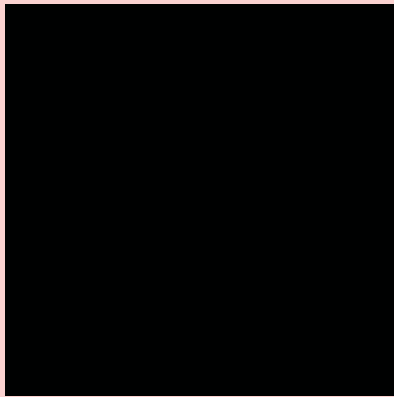
Strips Club 2015

A project initiated while students of Ilam's graphic design programme, O'Hagan and Ralston utilised the journal format to bring a self-reflexive criticality to their own design education. Strips Club created a forum for connection with their peers, previous graduates and self-determined practitioners in the field of graphic design, in order to question the nature and values of a design education, history, and discourse, and to return an agency and invigoration to their own practices.

FLOYD PERRY

Porter 2015

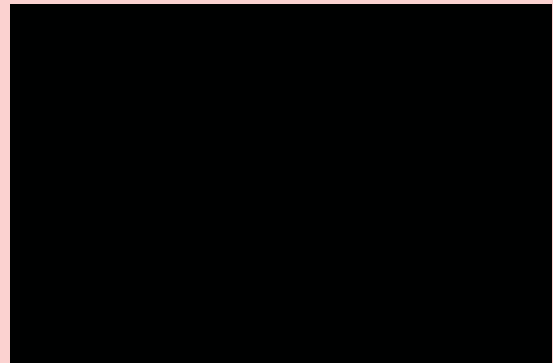
Returning to Elam School of Fine Arts after a study break employed as a builder and labourer, Perry sought to develop a studio project which anchored the sense of time, labour and skill based knowing that he had developed during this period. Growing up in the Bay of Islands where he began an enduring relationship with the ocean, Perry was drawn to study the craft of boat building as a traditional and fundamentally unchanged craft-form, with immediate practical application. In this canoe formed of Cedar, Tasmanian Oak and Kwila we see the manifestation of a final year studio project grounded in the values of slowness, functionality and applied skill, which resonates strongly with an approach to making that is adverse to wastefulness of all kinds, including not only material forms of wastefulness and ecological insensitivity, but also those of human labours, underscoring the enduring relevance of embodied making traditions.



FRAN CARTER

MOOP 2015

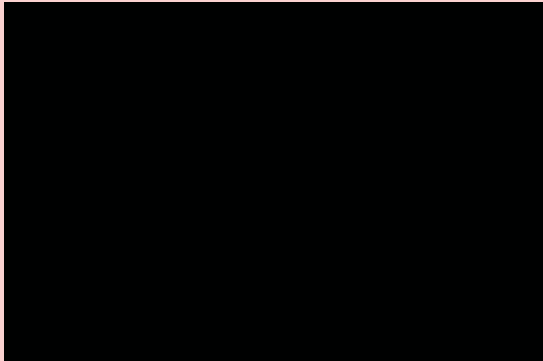
This selection of works by Fran Carter are drawn from the series MOOP created during her time as artist-in-residence at Toi Poneke Arts Centre in Wellington. In the development of this series, Carter employed a situated and community focused methodology, calling for donations from the immediate community (via the distribution of flyers throughout stores and cafes of the centre city, further aided via social media) of unwanted or unused sterling silver which Carter would then re-purpose into new jewellery objects. Eschewing forms of commercial exchange in the collation of her primary materials, Carter recast the liquidated, gifted silver back into recognisable, often disposable everyday forms, prodding gently at the pliability of established value and exchange structures.



JASMINE TE HIRA

The Beauty of Invisible Grief 2015

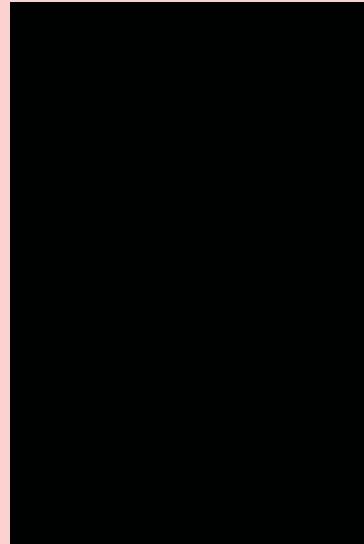
Generating processes and works which speak to indigenous conceptions of time, perception and material ontologies, Te Hira's work pays particular attention to sensation as a relational medium between histories, cultures, individuals, and the environments in which we live and dream. For The Beauty of Invisible Grief Te Hira collected water from each of the three rivers of her whakapapa, casting this as ice into a traditional hei tiki form. Her performance/video becomes an elegiac call, not only to the rivers and lands from which her daily life has been separated, but to the forms themselves; to the sense of separation from physical contact with ancestral tools and adornments, addressing museological conceptions of meaning making, in which taonga lie unwarmed by touch, separated from the communities which have created their form and life.



JIEUN KIM

A Known Hand 2015

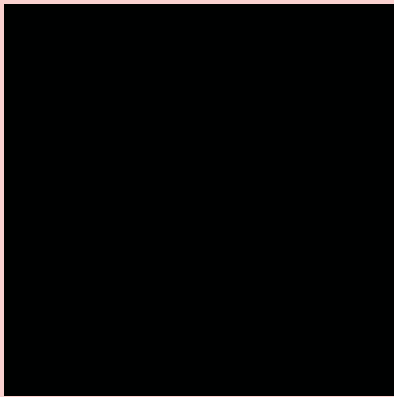
In Jieun Kim's body of graduate work, the artist foregrounds porcelain's traditional characteristics of strength and translucency in seamless partnership with the working hand made visible. Drawn to working in serial form, Kim has developed a project critically attuned to contemporary methods of production, which speaks to a quiet, yet persistent desire to skilfully connect with the materials and histories of our environments, and to shape our own conditions of being.



MACARENA BERNAL

Links 2015

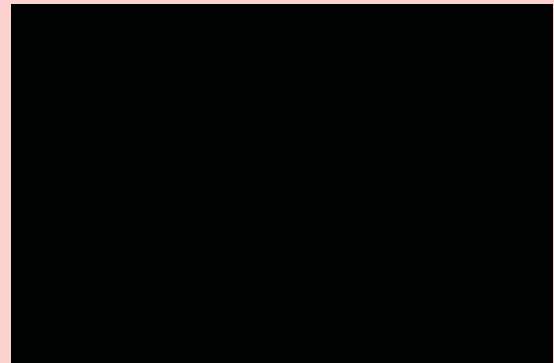
A quality of interactivity and accessibility rests at the core of recent work by Maca Bernal. Crafting geometric forms through a series of different processes – wax modelled, 3d printed, or cast in resin – Bernal brings these different scales of production together, providing the opportunity for the audience or wearer to activate these relationships of difference in their selection and combination of different pieces into one work. Bernal is interested in the way we can expand our perceptions of manual and technological processes, and through this re-evaluate our cultural attitudes toward value and preciousness.



KYLIE SINKOVICH

The Great Ecological Divide 2015

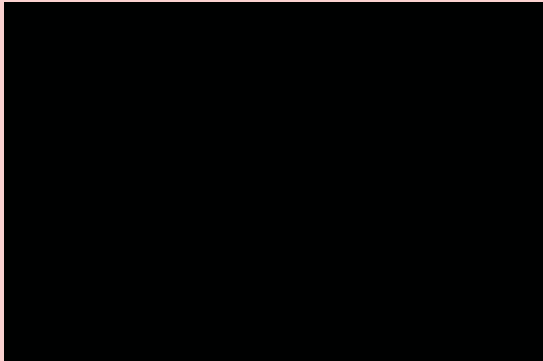
In each piece from this collection, Sinkovich investigates the process of composition as a model of wholeness, positioning a Yne balance between dissonance and resonance. Working with a sensitivity to ecological themes, Sinkovich attempts to simultaneously embrace what is singular and distinct, with the points of overlap and commonality between different substances. In this way Sinkovich allows space for the emergent qualities of the materials themselves, in what she identiYes as a process of co-creation between human and non-human elements.



KIM WHALEN

The Weight of the New 2015

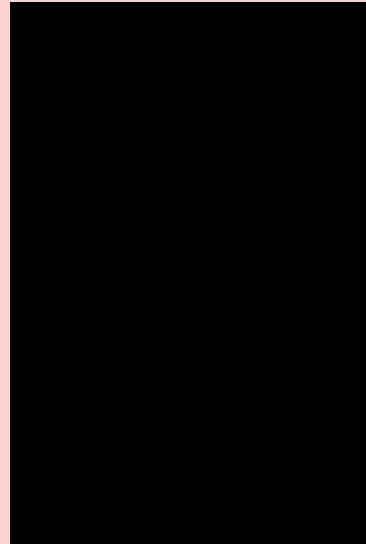
Drawing on the energy and quality of materials, Kim Whalen devises jewellery strategies which defy traditional function by pushing her works into extended narratives. The work included in The Way of Matter comes from the body of work Whalen formed during her Ynal year of study at Manukau Institute of Technology, and has been constructed using cast concrete as a relational medium of urban experience. The completed piece is activated through a perambulatory Ylm and performance work in which the artist moves barefoot through familiar places in Auckland Central, creating a sensory link between the footpaths, the artist and the others who she passes on her journey.



SEUNG EON PYO

Story of shapes 2015

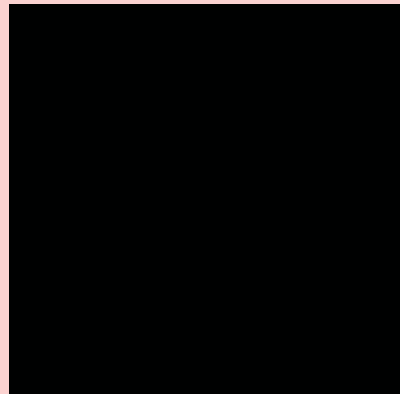
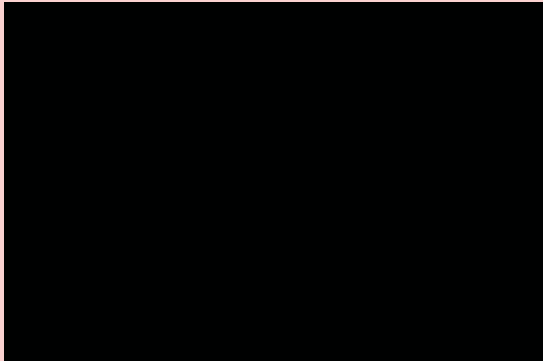
Elaborating on a sensibility drawn from mythic and folk narratives, in this collection of small scale and delicately formed objects artist Seung Eon Pyo has created a series of settings replete with whims, textures, and unknown relations, yet without a perceivable point of closure. Part mammal, mineral, vegetable and tale, Pyo's grounds or support surfaces establish the realm in which a series of story elements and relationships might take place, while the Ygurative elements foil any easy or sensible reading.



NYREE MCINNALLY

All that once was 2015

McInally has formed an extensive group of talismans, tools and sacred imagery, which are Yctive in nature yet draw their inspiration from the historical Scythian tribes of the Eurasian Steppes. Produced while a postgraduate student at the Dunedin School of Art, McInnally's research focused on the Greco-Roman writings of Amazonian warrior women, alongside revisionary archeological discovery's of the 1970's which revealed that skeletons which had been designated as 'male' when unearthed q an assumption guided by their burial with weapons and horses – where in actuality the skeletons of human females.



CAROLINE KONARKOWSKA

Perspectives 2015

Investigating the relation between speech and printed text, Konarkowska's research in graphic design – typography in particular – has extended its reach into the Yelds of phenomenology and hermeneutics. Interested in asking questions about the way in which we read and in the manner in which the tangible and material aspects of graphic design informs our perception, Konarkowska has developed a rigorous body of work which handles this penetrating line of inquiry within the realm of the made and material.

OLIVER ROAKE

Re/cognition #3 2015

Drawn from a reflective space of contemplation, Roake's work refers to processes of repetition and renewal, and the sense of replenishment that comes from engaging with tradition. Revisiting methods, images and materials, Roake has sought to review traditional spiral forms through his investigations in wood, and by experimenting with both hand and machine rendered forms of production. Roake aspires to test the poetic resonance of objects-in-themselves as carriers of time, sound, matter and labour.



JANE LEHTINEN

Being of things 2016

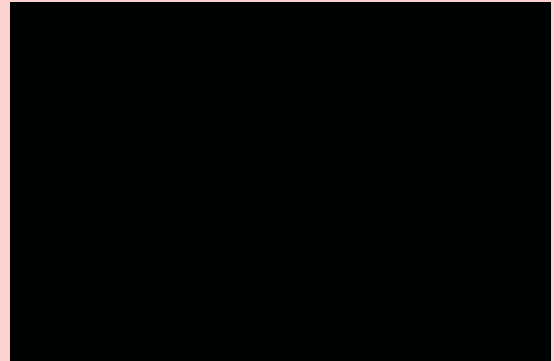
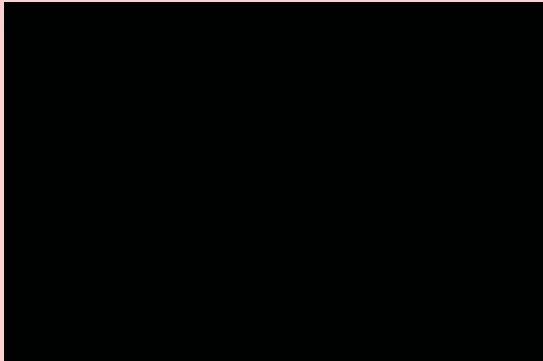
Collecting, forming and revising all coexist in the practice of Jane Lehtinen. Interested in the co-composition of thoughts and objects, and the circulation of emotional attachment to specific substances and forms, Lehtinen conceives of arrangements which effect the sense of a poetic system, one which is open to both its audience and itself. Lehtinen's broader project which includes jewellery, sculpture and installation, springs from an interest in the possibility that objects and materials themselves have voice, act as part of interconnected systems in flux, and are formative components of human communities.



NIK HANTON

Tales Untold 2015

Engaging ancient methods and materials in a process situated in the present, Hanton has established an ethos of making which connects her own series of investigations to traditional human labours and craft practices. Hanton's objects unfold as a series of improvisations which are set around a common process; for this series of works this is cuir bouilli, a historic saddle and armour making method which involves the boiling of untanned leather. Hanton works without plan or drawing, thinking through hands and processes, and encouraging the collaboration of her materials as each pushes against the restraints of the other – maker, substance and method.



ANNA-ROSE CARPENTER

Working Table 2015

Driven by an energetic inquiry which embraces both the humour and pleasure of shifting sensibilities, materials and scales, Carpenter's work evokes haptic and expressive curiosity whether working with hand-formed or digitally rendered means of production. A recent graduate of Massey University's textile design programme, Carpenter brings a tactile and imaginative engagement with everyday materials to her textiles, reproducing the worldly in what are almost anonymous and polyvalent registers. This approach is inverted in her work with sculptural materials, which include plaster, polymer and yarn, applying such close attention to each point of contact between the different textures that they become reminiscent of the focused detail of a single stitch, weave, or knot.

BRITTNEE COVICH

Yes-ter-day 2015

Covich's project research during her final year at Whitecliffe School of Art and Design, focused on modes of translation between different formal languages. Her graduate submission Yes-ter-day which is included in this exhibition, focuses on an algorithmic transference between graphic design and musical languages, using the frequently covered Beatles song Yesterday as a common point of reference for 'reading' the work from the point of view of either discipline.