

it
does
no
harm
to
wonder



—
it does no
harm to
wonder
the body
of the
work

richard
reddaway

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remembering Tom Taylor

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preface

susanna shadbolt
director, aratoi
wairarapa museum
of art and history

Where once the stories we told ourselves were anchored in a solid understanding of the world, now they have become things of uncertainty, best told in dynamic relation to other forms of knowledge.

— Richard Reddaway

In an era of environmental concerns, intensified consumerism and increasing cognisance about self and identity, the self and its relational surrounding and system of relationships has become— on a local, national and global level— a matter of great uncertainty.

The exhibition *Richard Reddaway: the body of the work / it does no harm to wonder*, embraced uncertainty and invited, or rather, anticipated wonderings toward futures not-yet-known.

Richard's work has the immense power and mysterious ability to disrupt expectations and the viewer's traditional understanding of concepts of art and beauty. With its conceptual roots in the physical world, it asks us to think about identity and the body and how we define ourselves in new and challenging ways. At the same time, it takes us somewhere further— into a realm of wonder and perception, into an abstract space.

Aratoi Wairarapa Museum of Art and History is immensely proud to be involved in the publication *it does no harm to wonder / the body of the work*, that follows the artist's survey exhibition over the summer of 2019–20.

The exhibition, curated by Janita Craw, explored enduring themes in Richard's work and tracked them in relation to the contexts of the times in which they were made. It is the artist's first significant survey exhibition and included sculpture from the mid-1980s, photomontages from the 1990s, recent sculptural objects and new collaborative work with local craft groups.

Aratoi plays a pivotal role in the cultural and intellectual life of the region, presenting cutting edge contemporary art while remaining committed to bringing art to a wide and varied audience. For Aratoi, *Richard Reddaway: the body of the work / it does no harm to wonder* is one of the most adventurous projects ever staged; a true celebration of the artist's work, highlighting his extraordinary dedication to his art and his ability to link with local communities.

The exhibition and publication would not have been possible without the generosity and support of a great many people and organisations, all of whom not only deeply value Richard and his work, but also endorse the cause and mandate of Aratoi as a public museum playing a pivotal role in the cultural and intellectual life of our region.

—
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Wasking (right)
with *de los Pobres*, 2016 in
Family, Pataka
Museum + Art,
Porirua
Image: Shaun
Matthews

introduction

kate linzey

This publication, in emulation of the practice of Richard Reddaway, is something of an assemblage. It is divided into five sections that, rather than tidying up, piece together a body. It is a work of aggregation. Here I will endeavour to provide an entry into this assemblage, not to sum it up reductively, not to tell 'you,' the reader as an excluded party, the nature of the work that is done here. Rather as an invitation, as the various authors and designers were invited, to see where things go—to wonder.

You will find the works by Richard appearing chronologically, interspersed with texts which, as you may expect, expand on the simple act of viewing things. There are essays and poems, additional page works and even an extra little book. These will (perhaps) tumble frustratingly through your fingers and be hard to put back in place. The publication *it does no harm to wonder / the body of the work* is for riffling through.

Though organised according to historical time this convention is presented as an opportunity for interference. Within sections 1 & 2 Richard has remade a number of works from the late 80s and 90s. He has shown us that the past, written into the present, is always available for reconstruction. Perhaps too, to question the presumption we make of the future to put-the-past-behind-us. As much as we know ourselves now, we knew ourselves then, and here we might consider the constructed nature of that knowing—by the times, places and the people that make us.

The invited authors, Tim Corballis, Julian Holcroft, Emit Snake-Beings and Andrew Gibbons, Owen Connors and Bridget Riggir-Cuddy, interviewer Sophie Jerram, designers Anna Brown, Jo Bailey and Sarah Hall present multitudinous voices. Often even within a singular text the written word can be seen to bifurcate into the different styles and modes by

which wondering occurs: a day dream, a film treatment, the expansion of a story left unfinished, the ambiguity of an endless poem.

As Tim suggests, we think with ‘the resources that are available’ to us in our ‘time and place.’ Whether in their looped words you are enticed by the erotic bodies of Owen’s poetry (a gentle ‘shyness in nudity’ or an abrasive ‘defecate from this specific ass’) or the intense questioning of Bridget (‘Who are you?... What are your intentions?... Who are your ancestors?’), the aim is to wonder upon the making of identity.

Making is central to this work. In Richard and Janita Craw’s *You and I*, the desire to make is revealed not as an exclusive desire for products (what is made) but in the acts of talking and touching that is the process of making. In the communities they encountered there are people who make together, but as often alone. They make things for themselves and for others, necessities and gifts. Perhaps the most challenging aspect of Richard’s ‘invitation’ was to make for ‘nothing’ — to not harbour a vision of the future in which a bowl, a jersey, a fine cloth, would fulfil a need. The desire to make ‘for’ reveals the extent to which we extend teleological thinking even to our identity, as productive members of society. But there is another ‘for’ to be recognised in how we live with things, whether they function, amuse or comfort us. All reflect our similarly physical presence. In *You and I* to make for nothing is not so much art for art’s sake, but making for the sake of being made.

In the Appendix, *sometimes we dream monsters*, is a continuation of this project by other means. Here children

were invited to make wearable objects in cardboard and then explain them through stories and performance. These narratives revealed the monstrous ambitions and desires, the noxious powers and hidden weaknesses of their strange creations. This too was a process of wondering.

Richard Reddaway: the body of the work / it does no harm to wonder casts light onto the last 35 years of art and life in Aotearoa New Zealand. While necessarily circumscribed, as Bridget suggests, by the ‘artist’s name’ this is only in as much as the artist is, like all of us, made by this place and these times. Can we recognise in Richard’s art the nebulous machinery of neoliberal theory that has permeated our schools and universities, hospitals and prisons, our places of work and leisure, even, according to George Monbiot, our very minds?¹ Defined as a form of free market economics, the theory is underscored by social principles of individualist freedom and competition, typified by Margaret Thatcher’s 1987 claim: “There is no such thing as society.”² But amidst the dismantling and privatisation of much of this nation’s social infrastructure, the period from 1985 to 2020 also saw a terrific cultural efflorescence, from the renaissance of Te Reo to the annual celebration of NZ Music Month. Does this too appear in Richard’s work?

‘It does no harm to wonder’ wrote David Lange in introducing Sophie Jerram’s *Bombs Away*.³ The testing of ideas, to think the alternative, Lange suggests, is the potential of such a speculative project. An idea smith himself, when arguing in 1985 that “Nuclear Weapons are Morally Indefensible,” Lange

notoriously quipped: “I can smell the uranium on it [your breath] as you lean forward!”⁴ Focusing his criticism on the nature of nuclear weapons rather than the nations that chose to use them, Lange was able to empathise with such nations while simultaneously stating why we don’t need them here in the South Pacific. But is this desire to see both ways a weakness? Does it merely erode whatever convictions we might hold to resist, as happened during the fourth Labour government, the tsunami of neo-liberal economics.

To make is to be future oriented. We talk and touch that which is unmade into thing-ness. Yet when we ask ‘where to now?’ or ‘what future?’ the only evidence that can guide us comes from history. To plan the future, to forge it as a crystal structure, a utopia, history tells us is fraught with dangers. But to fail to plan at all is to throw what we value to the wind. ‘Do you think you are conservative?’ Richard asks, or ‘if you are talking about an idea of the community of difference, of the commons, what does the idea of radical and conservative mean?’ What has been discarded can be remade, what has been suppressed can be brought into the open, what does not yet exist can be imagined. This is the work of wondering.

- 1 George Monbiot, “Neoliberalism—the ideology at the root of all our problems” *The Guardian*, April 15, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/apr/15/neoliberalism-ideology-problem-george-monbiot>.
- 2 Margaret Thatcher “Interview for ‘Woman’s Own’ (‘No Such Thing as Society’),” September 23, 1987. *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*, 2020, <https://www.margarethatracker.org/document/106689>.
- 3 Sophie Jerram, curator, *Bombs Away*, Megan Adams, Tony de Latour, Fiona Jack, Jo Randerson, Richard Reddaway, (2002–3), at The Physics Room, Christchurch and The Adam Art Gallery, Wellington.
- 4 Alina Siegfried, “‘I can smell the uranium on your breath’ — Anti-Nuclear New Zealand 30 years on.” *Edmund Hillary Fellowship*. March 2015. <https://stories.ehf.org/i-can-smell-the-uranium-on-your-breath-anti-nuclear-new-zealand-30-years-on-1d870838332c>.

DRAWING TITLE

**'zig
'zag**

zig-zag
1985 / 2019

EXHIBITION

the body of the work /
it does no harm to wonder

ARTIST

richard reddaway

DATE

february 2020

SCALE AT A2

not to scale

aratoi
Wairarapa Museum of Art and History

section one



—
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Three sculptures—*Zig-zag*, *Four-Square* and *3-Up*—made and re-made in wood and clothing and sacking.

In 1985, at the University of Canterbury School of Art, these works reflected the context of their times: punk and the Dunedin sound; Bastion Point and the anti-Springbok tour protests; German neo-Expressionist painting and New British sculpture; the radical economic reforms introduced by the fourth Labour government. Re-made four decades later it is possible to consider their ability to express changing times.

Aggregates of human form, the works are metaphors of community. Where once skinny and angular, built to only just stand within a lean economy of means, they have

become more substantial, perhaps, just a little flabby, reflecting a certain pathos of aging bodies. Recreating the past, even with a little flabbiness, has a politic, it can even be a protest. Does art cause or only reflect change? Does the artist's desire that a new work 'make you think' fade? Can making the old new again make you think again?

This section includes instructions to make again *Zig-zag*. Traditional anxieties for art's authenticity, its sacred aura of uniqueness, is dissolved in a new concern. *Zig-zag's* metaphorical community structure is now dispersed becoming the potential means for a community of makers. The making of structures that is the very performance of making



Three-up, 1985,
wood, hessian and
clothing, life-size



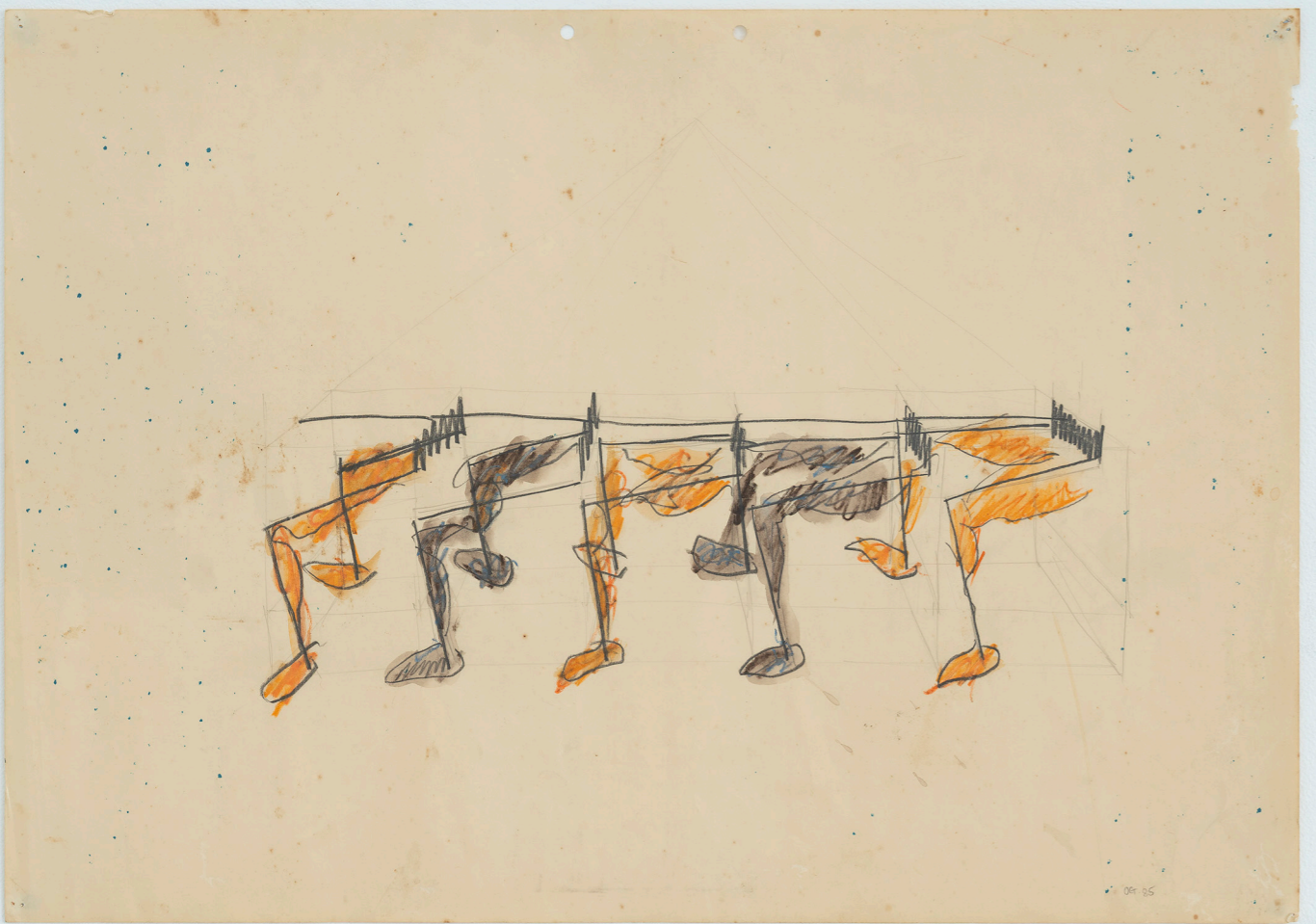
Three-up,
2019, detail



Four-Square, 1985,
wood, hessian and
clothing, life-size



Four-Square, 2019,
wood, hessian and
clothing, life-size

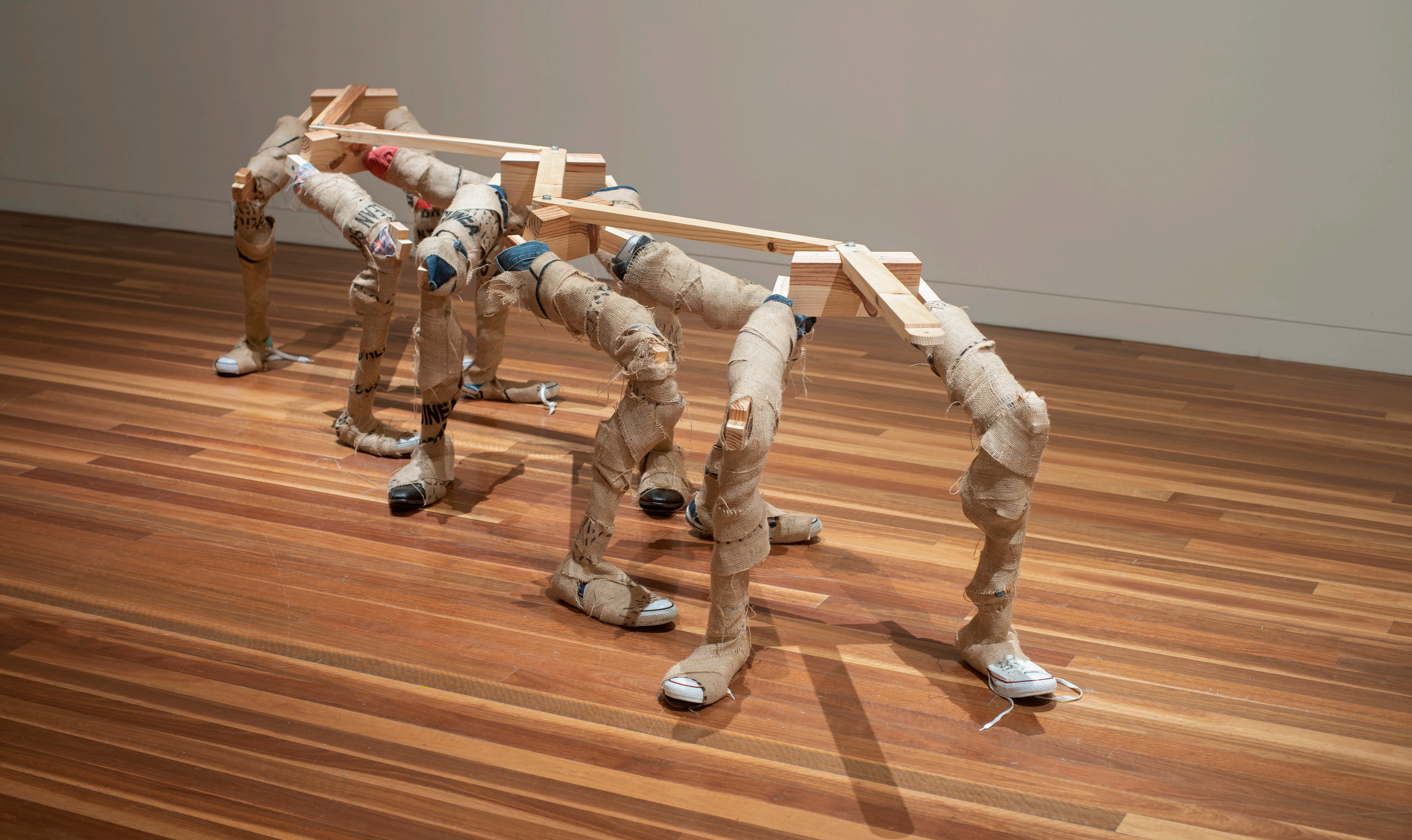


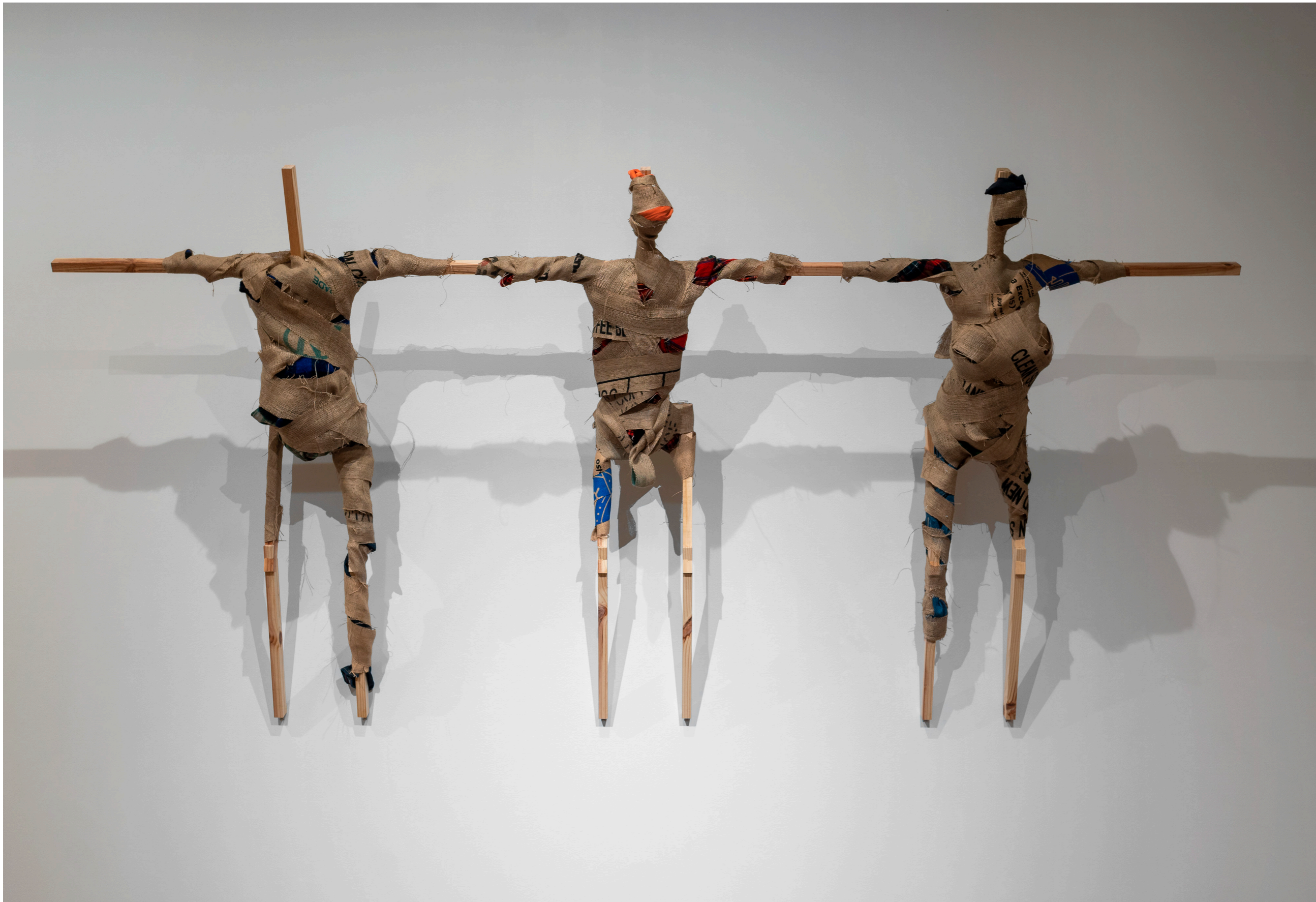
*Drawing towards
Zig-zag, 1985,
pencil on paper,
42.0 x 59.4cm*



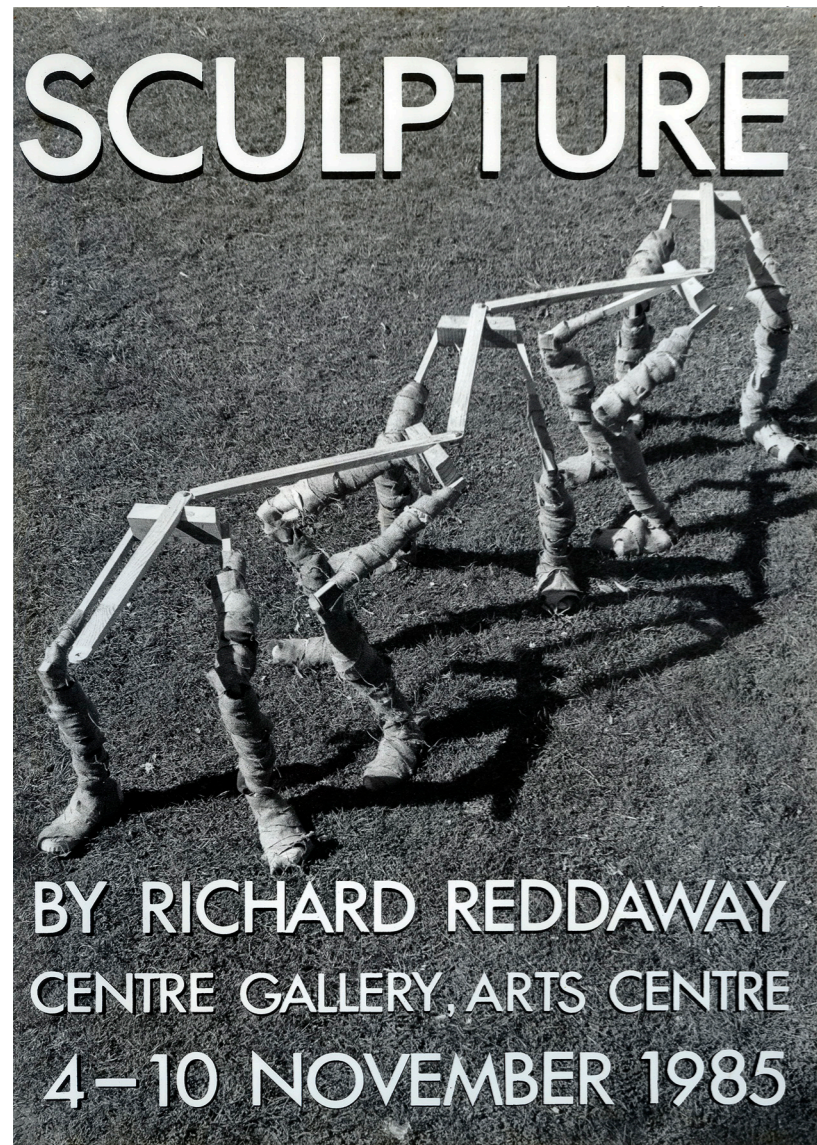
*Four-Square, 1985,
wood, hessian and
clothing, life-size*

*Overleaf: Zig-zag,
2019, wood, hessian
and clothing, life-size*





Now We Are Three,
2019, wood, hessian
and clothing,
life-size



Poster for an
exhibition 1985,
30.4 x 45.6 cm

bodies and the shapes and combination of everything

tim corballis

I am going to start with a description: *Armies and war surge inward on the top left, above the brutality of the police and the decadence of the bourgeoisie. They face other bodies on the right, the people in postures of revolutionary militancy alongside the heroes of the movement, white men, some sitting on the fallen head of a statue of Caesar. In the centre: great machinery, wheels and cylinders, the construction of things; cultivated plants; enormous lenses, sending forth from their edges oblongs of vision—the microscopic swarm of life, and crossing with it the great bodies and forces of the cosmos. At their meeting, at the meeting and collision of it all, two things: a great fist clutching an orb, and in it the division of cells, our ultimate motor, and the fist itself emerges from the machine, and is part of it; and man, man the controller, man at the controls.*

For those who have not already recognised the work I am talking about, or are unfamiliar with it, it is Diego Rivera's mural *Man, Controller of the Universe* (1934). I am not quite sure exactly why I am starting with it, except that it caught my eye. It is reproduced on the cover of a book that is face up on my desk, and in many ways it feels like what it is: a visitation from another place and time. I won't go into its history in any great detail. It is well enough known: an early version made for the Rockefeller Center in New York was removed after its sponsors became nervous about the communist iconography, and the mural was subsequently remade in Mexico City.

After I sent a first draft of this writing to Richard, he confessed to me that he didn't particularly like Rivera's mural. I understand that. It's not a subtle work, though I'm sure it has depths and layers to explore, and a substantial corpus of criticism dedicated to them. I do kind of like it, but maybe only because I like the thought of a time and place where such bald visual statements were possible.

So that's what I mean by a visitation from another time. And looking at it now, even through a nostalgic pair of glasses, there is plenty not to like. Who can now accept, for starters, man, and men, in the no doubt unthinkingly exclusive sense—man and not woman? It's not entirely bad: women are there, wearing red headscarves, among the front line of the revolutionaries. They are there, I suppose, as workers—everyone is a worker, and women's work is work, as Engels knew. But who can accept all the famous faces? Marx, Engels, Trotsky, Lenin. Darwin. Jupiter the god, and even Caesar's fallen head. It is as if the world were a montage of recognisable men—decapitated or not—and anonymous others.

Still, Rivera's mural caught my eye for the masks worn by the soldiers, and for all the faces—themselves masklike—and all the bodies, and the shapes and the combination of everything. There is barely room for nature amongst all the human striving and making, which means that it could, no doubt, be called a mural of the Anthropocene *avant la lettre*. Nature is there only in the specimens of flora and fauna that Darwin presides over; and in the soil, itself a human creation, under the

fields; in science; and the barest hint of sky marred by the smoke of war. So my eye is caught by the image of a universe created, not only by people (men) but in large part out of their bodies: human creations and human bodies and human faces as the building blocks of everything that exists.

To be caught by this vision is not quite to accept it. Here are some notes I took: *A great architecture of human bodies. An architecture of support. The moral and the anagogical. Our bodies as all we have, the resource, and as the thing that supports us, that requires support. Faces also, and the turning outward, the way we might actually begin to build. Why does a building with bodies also require a face and a mask? What does building on bodies mean? Altering bodies? Making awkward (as if that is the only way we can build, by exposing the fault through which we might join bodies together—as though it is mainly by the awkwardness and incompleteness of the human body that we speak at all).*

I am talking about my notes, and a book cover that caught my eye, to emphasise how I am only patching something together, and only using the resources that are available to me at a time and place to think with. Without really knowing any better (which is also part of the point) I imagine Rivera doing the same—using the building blocks available to him, culturally speaking: promises of industry, famous men's words and deeds, images of bodies and decadence and war. I am talking about it also because I imagine Richard, in the work in this book and exhibition, doing the same: piecing together structures

out of what is there for him. This might be a hollow observation: it is all anyone can do, to use what is available to them and only despair or wonder at what is not. The available resources include the physical matter of sculpture, and the images and ideas also, circulating or stumbled upon.

I have known Richard for just over 15 years, though I have only engaged with his art more recently. Looking back at his work now, I can see him, well before I met him, working at times with the barest of resources: his own body. I could make all kinds of comparisons already: man, no longer the controller of the universe, no longer wanting to marshal all of the resources of science and revolutionary vision (an idea more available to Rivera than to us); but man, now naked and representing nothing, controlling nothing but himself and, I think, neither forgetting nor excluding anyone else.

My point in this piece is not to make art historical comparisons and judgments, and call outs aren't my style—not even of old Rivera. Richard's early work, as he has told me, includes an attempt to think about and articulate a Pākehā identity. This clearly involves recognising the problem of such a project, the impossibility of a strident and confident white male self-assertion that doesn't embody the triumph of the rulers, or re-enact racist violence against Māori, immigrants, women, anyone falsely accused of standing in their way. It can only be a good thing for man no longer to be, or strive to be, the controller—which isn't to say that white men aren't still crawling over themselves to further increase their grip and their control of the universe.

But in other ways Richard's work also builds with bodies. It makes an architecture of them. Maybe there is a hint of Marx here too, in the naked body—as the symbol and manifestation of the worker's ultimate, inalienable labour power, the new proletariat who has shed all the heavy clothes of the old world. So an architecture of all those bodies, building with what they have: themselves. I hope you can see what I mean, looking at Richard's work.

The idea of an architecture of bodies allows us to think in a lot of ways: about how bodies might combine to form structures, as well as about how bodies themselves are structured; about the play of forces through limbs and vertebrae, their balance and support; about joints within bodies and between them; and about faces themselves as joining mechanisms linking one body to another through meaning and mirroring. These thoughts can aim downward toward the body of the fragile human being, shivering in the vast field of history, punished by colonialism, unpaid and half-paid work, casual and structural racism, and war, always war, wars of all kinds. What architecture does a human skeleton need, within and around it, in order to stay upright? What supports does it need when it falters? I also hope to suggest an upward glance at how bodies together create a world (and perhaps the creation of a world out of bodies is also the shelter that each human body requires). And I hope to find similar forces at play in Richard's makeshift masks and prostheses. These are not only the extension of the body—Rivera's great machines, welded to the human—but models and augmentations of fragility and stumbling, and humour too. If forces act through the articulation of joints,

then faces and their masks and expressions are joints between people. Sculpture in its additive forms (its expanded field) is already close to building and architecture. I wonder what we build.

An architecture of bodies can be our utopia, but of course utopias are always only a shift in perspective away from our worst kind of hell. Some of the worst horrors of the last century have been precisely that: the results of structures built from the human body. What better formula for exploitation and slavery?

When Richard was making his very first works, there was still a hint of Rivera's world to be felt in the air. Conflicts were grand, with some remaining whiff of ideology, and associated with states: the US and the Soviet Union, and apartheid South Africa. It was possible to rail and protest against all this—its racism and its nuclear proliferation, and the specific states representing it. But that world was being dismantled. By the 90s, or so we were told, everything was okay, and history, along with apartheid and the iron curtain, was over. Protest didn't go away, but turned its sights towards vaguer targets.

By the turn of the century it was free trade agreements. Trade and finance were in the ascendant—and the people? We had been told, for 15 years already, that we were on our own: no longer citizens but already, well before the internet, users—users (in the sense of that old phrase 'user pays') of state services that were increasingly being privatised anyway. For all that the world has turned again, and that things aren't

at all okay any more in that Clintonite, boom economy sense, the other message has sunk in deep: we remain, I think, on our own, having to make something of our selves.

And then we have seen, in the last decade or so, a resurgence and continuation of those movements that hope to build something out of the coming together of bodies: 2009 in London, 2010 in Spain, then in Egypt and worldwide, and in Aotearoa, in 2011. These movements can already seem naïve today. It is of course easy to be critical, to focus on subsequent political compromises and failures. What have those movements brought to North Africa, the Gulf and Syria? What substantial gains in the West?

There is a lot to be said about the occupations, firstly that in Aotearoa the act of occupation must be put in the context of colonialism and Māori resistance: the longer movement of occupations including Bastion Point, Pākaitore, Ihumātao, and the linking of occupation to mana whenua. That means the international occupy movement necessarily made an awkward entrance to Aotearoa, focusing on the arbitrary and depoliticised agora of Aotea Square, say, or worse, in Wellington, a patch of grass not quite belonging to Civic Square. What could the occupiers claim in the context of settler colonialism? It couldn't be mana whenua of those places they occupied, however much there was sympathy with and involvement from Māori land struggles.

Or, in fact, we might think of factory occupations in the long age and shifting places of labour: Turin 1920, the French

and Italian occupations of the late 1960s, Uruguay 1973, Argentina in the early 2000s, Korea 2009. Land is no factory, and kaitiakitanga is not labour, but for all their vast differences, it is worth being sensitive also to the similarities between labour occupations and the land occupations of Aotearoa. In both cases, a people or a class reclaims what is theirs—land, work and care, the sources of life and wealth—from what takes it from them: colonialism or capitalism, the appropriation of land or surplus value. These are both movements that aim at particular places, places of significance and connection to the occupiers, places where lives are lived—or should be—and things made.

So what was there to occupy, in the half-public squares claimed by Occupy? The occupiers were not, in a sense, aiming to occupy those places at all: to claim a life in the place or a connection to the land, to demand the right to what was made or grown there. Occupy Wall Street, the poster case, did not occupy Wall Street or the financial institutions with which it is associated, but a nearby park. In a sense, Occupy was ultimately not interested in an occupation of the park itself, and so, famously, it was unclear what it was aiming at.

To be fair, Occupy faced off initially against an abstract opponent: finance capital, something responsible for strange, arbitrary revaluations and transformations of the status of land and production themselves. So if Occupy's choices of place never quite hit their mark, it was also partly because there was no mark to hit.

As always there is another way to view Occupy, one that, I think, has been equally well rehearsed by now. If places themselves have some power, it is partly in their ability to bring bodies together. This may be a matter of mana whenua and the fires of home, or a matter of production and worker's control. It might, however, just be to do with what is established in a place, what is laid down purely and simply when people stand together. This can mean conflict as much as consensus—the working out of things, of solutions between people and their failure and renegotiation and failure again. But if the great abstractions that Occupy was hoping to fight—without, it might be said, much hope of success—are or seem placeless, then the act of coming together in a place begins to make an alternative: the mere fact of bodies together. Finance's magic, deriving from relations of debt stretching across and between nations, is to remove people from place, firstly by removing them from their homes when it fails, but also by allowing the vagaries of a distant and complex speculative machinery to decide on the value of land, production and, indeed, all human activity. Suddenly the land we stand on, the work we do, is valued or worthless because of the movement of markets and the decisions of speculators. Finance disembodies and isolates, and it is against this that occupiers can hope to bring bodies together.



There is, I can't help thinking, something like a game of art about all of this: the gallery and the town square being somewhat equivalent, a place to gather, a place to show up and be seen and counted. It is part of the confusion of our times that the game of art and appearances can also be about attracting investment and hawking wares.

Richard said to me that he had doubts about the Occupy movement, and I am sure I have similar doubts (some of them expressed above). It is best when, and perhaps precisely because, it is an aimless and placeless cause, demonstrating a different logic of appearances than the old pursuits, racist, sexist and colonial through and through, of power and capital. Those pursuits themselves mostly take and occupy. Occupy is best, then, when it shows us a movement that is modest, or even troubled, with regard to lands and places. Such a movement would make no claim on them. Making a modest demand, it would put into play only the resources available to it. It would be, I suppose, not about occupation at all. It would emphasise less the place than the act of convergence on it, and so it would be less a movement of occupation than a movement of movement.

It strikes me that this is a clue to how, as Pākehā, to be political. I don't mean to say that a movement of movement is exclusively or especially Pākehā—it is there too in the long Māori tradition of hikoī, something Kate mentioned while I was talking with her and Richard about a late draft of this piece. But it is something that can be practiced, I hope, without claiming and taking and exclusion. Kate also mentioned a connection to Richard's work that hadn't occurred to me: the way sculpture does not just occupy

spaces, but is also, at times, moved and worn and carried. This thought is a reminder of the icons carried at the head of religious processions, and it gestures also at the costumes and placards of political marches. It is a figure carried and passed around, borne on bodies rather than planted and anchored to the ground. It is a figure for assembly and invitation, for gathering and colliding. Is it the best we can do? Maybe, maybe not. It is certainly something—something we can do with the material at hand, stuff, perhaps, that no-one will invest in. This is all at its best when it is funny and kind (Richard's work is), when it acknowledges the stresses that people bear in their joints, and the things people make, and the ways they care for one another.

untitled (Romanesque),
1986, photomontage on
paper, 42.0 x 59.4 cm

timeslipping: christchurch 1982

julian holcroft

PROTAGONISTS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

* Not their actual words unless stated otherwise.

Miwon Kwon, Art Historian*

Walter Benjamin, Philosopher, Theorist, Broadcaster*

Julian Holcroft, Artist, Writer

Bruce Stewart, Television Scriptwriter*

Grant Lingard, Artist Friend*

Gang Members One and Two, The Mongrel Mob

Ridley Scott, Filmmaker*

Julian Meyers-Szupinska, Art Historian*

Richard Reddaway, Artist

Dan O'Bannon, Scriptwriter, Filmmaker*

VOICEOVER JULIAN HOLCROFT *reading Miwon Kwon*

*The difficulty lies in how to delineate 'the present' as an object of study. To be of the present but out of date is the strange temporality of contemporary art history.*¹

PROLOGUE TEXT *scrolls across the screen*

Christchurch: the social and political milieu of the 1970s. Underlying the wider societal anxieties about climate, cloning and nuclear destruction is a reservoir of images and ideas which have had their genesis in an amalgam of 1950s and 60s science-fiction writing and film. Through pop-cultural osmosis these original archetypes are being slowly absorbed into the collective unconscious of a new generation of New Zealand children.

VOICEOVER JULIAN *interjection*

A process of substitution is taking place comparable to the translation of philosophical thought in the radio episodes of Walter Benjamin's *Enlightenment for Children*² which is prototypical of his later iconic text *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*.³

WALTER BENJAMIN

In this work I first articulated an interest in the decay of the 'aura' of an art object (its original presence in time and space) and its mechanical reproduction, as in a photograph. In *Enlightenment for Children* I defined this loss in translation as a type of creative substitution that takes place when creating a reproduction, a radio program or an artwork.

JULIAN

So, it's a bit like the movement of the tectonic plates in the Christchurch Earthquake or the shifting river tributaries of the Waimakariri, they can be equated to a network of creative deviations?

1. Miwon Kwon, "Questionnaire on 'The Contemporary'," *October* 130 (Fall 2009): 13-15.
2. German title *Aufklärung für Kinder*, 1985 publication of Walter Benjamin's radio scripts from 1927 to 1933.
3. Walter Benjamin, German title *Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*, originally published in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, 1936.

WALTER

Yes, it is a deconstructive move, a shaking or shifting of established channels which in my essay *The Task of the Translator*⁴ I also compare to a process of breakage and fragmentation, restoration and realignment.

FADE IN 1982 THE UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY ILAM SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS IN CHRISTCHURCH

A small cohort of students are at work in their studios. They share an approach in common influenced by science-fiction films and books, children's science-fiction programs and body horror.

JULIAN

My appreciation of science-fiction was inspired by programs imported from the BBC and broadcast on New Zealand television in the early 1970s like *The Tomorrow People*⁵ and *Timeslip*.⁶

BRUCE STEWART

You know, I wrote most of the episodes of *Timeslip*. But they are gone now, the original colour videotape wiped. Sadly, *Timeslip* only survives as black and white telerecordings. The set designs are clearly low budget but, along with the development of electronic sounds, the program helped establish a pre-internet visual language of hard science, environmentalism, time travel, telepathy and elements of psychological horror.

JULIAN

Yes, those episodes of *Timeslip* were like a gateway drug for me into more complex pop cultural archetypes. There were films featuring space travel, aliens, organic horrors and mutations created by an earlier generation of science-fiction filmmakers in the 50s and 60s.

Films such as *The Fly*⁷ and *The War of The Worlds*⁸ with its striking special effects, *The Time*

4. Walter Benjamin, German title *Aufgabe des Übersetzers*, [first printed as introduction to a 1923 German translation of Charles Baudelaire's poetry], in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn; ed. & intro. Hannah Arendt (NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich 1968), 69-82.
5. *The Tomorrow People*, 1973-79, BBC TV.
6. *Timeslip*, 1970-71, ATV for ITV TV.
7. Kurt Neumann, dir., *The Fly* 1958.
8. Haskin Byron, dir., *The War of The Worlds*, 1953.

machine,⁹ *Jason and the Argonauts*,¹⁰ *The Planet of The Apes*¹¹ and *The Day of The Triffids*.¹² Remember that in New Zealand the final switch to colour broadcasting was only completed in 1975 so the original lurid phosphorescent Technicolor hue of these films was lost in the black and white broadcasts.

CUT TO CHRISTCHURCH SOMETIME IN THE 1970S

It is a rainy afternoon. There is a science-fiction film playing on the television but due to poor reception the picture is affected by static and lacking contrast the image appears to be composed of washed out greys. A child is transcribing scenes from the flickering television set into black and white pen and ink drawings. He starts with images based on organic shapes and mutations and then begins to add and expand the drawings across the page to create something new...

VOICEOVER JULIAN

When I arrived at art school my way of making art was informed by a process of translation, it was a visual synthesis of science-fiction film and hard science concepts and later body horror films.

CUT TO CHRISTCHURCH WINTER 1982 BARBADOS STREET

*It is cold. Body horror – new at the time – is a useful way to encapsulate 1982. Our protagonists Julian and Grant are walking home along a Christchurch street after attending a late-night screening of *Possession*,¹³ a body horror film starring Isabelle Adjani and Sam Neil. Julian shares his thoughts with Grant.*

JULIAN

After seeing a film like *Possession* the last thing we would want to do is run into a gang.

GRANT LINGARD

Yeah, like the Mongrel Mob.

9. George Pal, dir., *The Time Machine*, 1960.

10. Don Chaffey, dir., *Jason and The Argonauts*, 1963.

11. Franklin J. Schaffner, dir., *Planet of the Apes*, 1968.

12. Steve Sekely, dir., *The Day of the Triffids*, 196.

13. Andrzej Żuławski, dir., *Possession*, 1981.

As if on cue a Ford Mark III Zephyr, a favourite vehicle of the gang, pulls out of a driveway in front of them (The Mongrel Mob is mostly Māori and have a reputation of targeting anyone dressed as a Punk Rocker or Boot Boy). Catching sight of the duo the car begins to slowly reverse backwards along the rain slicked street. The heavily misted windows are rolled down and ‘hey ziggy, ziggy’ can be heard from inside.

VOICEOVER JULIAN as interior monologue

Perhaps they thought we were David Bowie fans?

A futile attempt by Julian is made to cross the road. The sound of sudden braking and the squeal of tires punctuates the silence as the car comes to an abrupt halt. Doors all swing dramatically open as patched members of the Mongrel Mob holding long necked bottles of DB brand beer exit the vehicle and station themselves around Julian and Grant.

This is Christchurch and so our protagonists are given a little time to try to ‘talk’ their way out of their predicament. To explain to the Mob’s satisfaction the ‘meaning’ of their chosen dress code. Boots and an army greatcoat are interpreted as symbolic of national front supporters.

Pan and close up across a group of scowling faces: Deciding they are not worth the effort the pair are given strict instructions.

MOB MEMBER ONE

Eh Ziggy, we don’t want to see you wearing ‘boots’ near the square again. That’s our turf.

MOB MEMBER TWO interjects

next time we will take you to the graveyard...

(gestures to a graveyard opposite)

...bend you over a gravestone and fuck your white arse

VOICEOVER JULIAN *interjection as if in a flashback*

This was an idea that had not occurred to us (we had only imagined a beating) but it now definitely catapulted us into another level horror, the psychological headspace of the classic 1970s video nasty films *I spit on your grave*¹⁴ and *Deliverance*,¹⁵ which of course we had seen, and images of the forced organic penetration, gestation and xenomorph 'birth' featured in *Alien*.¹⁶

The Mongrel Mob climb back into their car, the doors close and they drive off very slowly into the distance. Julian and Grant run across the road and jump over a low wall surrounding the graveyard. Crouching behind it they hide for a while before resuming their walk home.

(*Reel to Reel*)

CUT TO THE PRESENT

A table is strewn with slides and black and white photographs of installations and sculptures from 1982. There are images of Julian Holdcroft's John Wyndham Triffid inspired plaster, tree trunk and tar constructions and sand works by Paul Dew that reference Frank Herbert's Dune. A paperback copy of Rendezvous with Rama by Arthur C. Clarke holds up one leg of a chair.

JULIAN

Remember, in *Enlightenment for Children*, Benjamin uses the eyewitness account as an empirical form of translation. For Benjamin, a traumatic experience can be transcribed through a language of deconstruction, translation and substitution. For example, Benjamin describes the impressions of bodies left in Pompeii as imprinted into hot magma like the striking, marking or stamping of an inscription or image into the hot wax of a seal. In this way the traumatic experience - natural or man-made, flood or earthquake - becomes translatable, it is marked onto the surface of everyday objects, customs and practice.

14. Meir Zarchi, dir.,
I spit on your grave,
1978.

15. John Boorman, dir.,
Deliverance, 1972.

16. Ridley Scott, dir.,
Alien, 1979.

RIDLEY SCOTT

In many science-fiction films from the early 1980s there is a graphic visceral and psychological horror component that arguably has its genesis in my film *Alien*. But I admit it is a lineage that includes others: David Cronenberg, the master of body-horror, was making *The Brood* at the time, and then three years later made *Videodrome*.¹⁷ And John Carpenter re-made *The Thing from another World*¹⁸ as *The Thing*.¹⁹

JULIAN

The fecund, sensory, organic, slipperiness and irrational mythology of the science-fiction horror film has a close alignment to feminist practices that emerged in the 1970s. The physicality and psychological excesses of these films would have been antithetical to the concerns and problems of hard-edged painting and minimalism as taught at Ilam. But some of these ideas did bleed into the materiality, texture and tactility of 1980s post-object practice. I'm thinking of Pauline Rhodes as being an early exponent. It was a process-orientated approach where techniques derived from film making and film culture; temporality, spatial design, sound and light were used to create ephemeral installations and objects which no longer exist physically but remain imprinted into photographs and slides.

JULIAN MYERS - SZUPINSKA

This small archive of extant images aligns with my notion of a para-art history.

MIWON KWON

Yes, I would expand on Myer's idea to suggest something parasitic, an art history without a conventional form or category of belonging, a self-consciously para-art history, taking 'para' from the Greek meaning 'beside', but also, used in certain combinations, meaning to be

17. John Carpenter,
The Brood, 1979 and
Videodrome, 1982.

18. Christian Nyby,
dir., *The Thing from
another World*, 1951.

19. John Carpenter, dir.,
The Thing, 1982.

“amiss” or “irregular” denoting alterations and modifications to the body of art history.²⁰

(*Test Pattern*)

JULIAN

A reinterpretation of science-fiction horror film tropes can be observed in the existing documentation of Richard’s artworks from the 1980s, his sculptural installations and collaborative projects. There is a baroque mechanical horror to the wrapped, truncated and articulated torsos that suggests to me an affinity with 70s and 80s horror films. The schlock comedy horror of dismembered and reanimated torsos and heads featured in the cult film of HP Lovecraft’s *Re-Aminator* or *Return of the Living Dead*, for example.

RICHARD REDDAWAY *interjects*

I don’t know, at the time I thought I was going through a repudiation of my teenage science-fiction obsession...

JULIAN *turns to speak to Richard*

Well, your photographic collages and recent works speak to a kind of choreographed horror. Their underlying DNA stretches back to your early hybridized black and white architectural/human photomontages, which suggest storyboard animations that constrict, encase, cast and entomb the human body within the narrow confines of Neoclassical architecture. I can prove it: in 1996 you titled an exhibition *Forbidden Planet* after the movie.²¹ This suggests the influential echo of childhood science-fiction film experiences.

(*Tele Sync*)

JULIAN

In the recent documentary *Memory: The Making of Alien*²² a similar process is intuited. Dan O’ Bannon transcribes and distils images and

20. Kwon, “Questionnaire on ‘The Contemporary,’” 15.

21. Fred M. Wilcox, dir., *Forbidden Planet*, 1956.

22. Alexandre O. Philippe, dir., *Memory: The Making of Alien*, 2019.

ideas from his childhood into the script for *Alien*.

DAN O’ BANNON

True, I drew on an assemblage of individual and collective archetypes, on my interest and fear of insect mutations and parasitical hosts, my fascination for the miniature, extraterrestrial worlds in the Italian science-fiction film *Planet of the Vampires*²³ and the ancient beings of the Cthulhu Mythos, the fictional universes, tropes and ‘hive mind’ concepts of writer HP Lovecraft.

‘Hive Mind’ is a somewhat mysterious term that relates to the concept of ‘a collective consciousness’, partly analogous to the behaviour of social insects, where an alignment of fragmentary ideas occurs. Individuals arrive at the same creative conclusions separately but there is coalescence in a particular time and place.

JULIAN

So, it’s not surprising then that coalescence, or gestalt intelligence is a frequent plot device in children’s science-fiction films in the 1970s, perhaps derived from adult science-fiction in the 1950s and 60s, for example, *Forbidden Planet*, *Quatermass and the Pit*,²⁴ and *Dune*.²⁵

THE HIVE MIND *in a booming, echoing voiceover*

The DNA of disparate collaborations, the loose threads and strands of epochs and eras shape the body of the work. It is a process of creative gestation from which something new and cohesive emerges...

FADE OUT

23. Mario Bava, dir., *Planet of the Vampires* (Italian: *Terrore nello Spazio*, lit. ‘Terror in space’), 1965.

24. *Quatermass and the Pit*, 1958–59, BBC TV.

25. Frank Herbert, *Dune: 1* (Philadelphia, Pa. Chilton Books, 1965).

section two

forbidden planes



—
it does no
harm to
wonder
the body
of the
work

These photomontages appeared in the exhibition *Forbidden Planet* at Auckland gallery 23A in 1996, and then again in *ISLAS* in the Canary Islands in 1997. They are the most materially substantial examples of a kind of ‘photographic sculpture’ first made as drawings toward sculpture and then as artworks in their own right. While not entirely three-dimensional, as we expect sculpture ought to be, these works are images-as-objects: screen-printed on aluminium, rivetted together and installed to respond to architecture and the real, built space of the gallery.

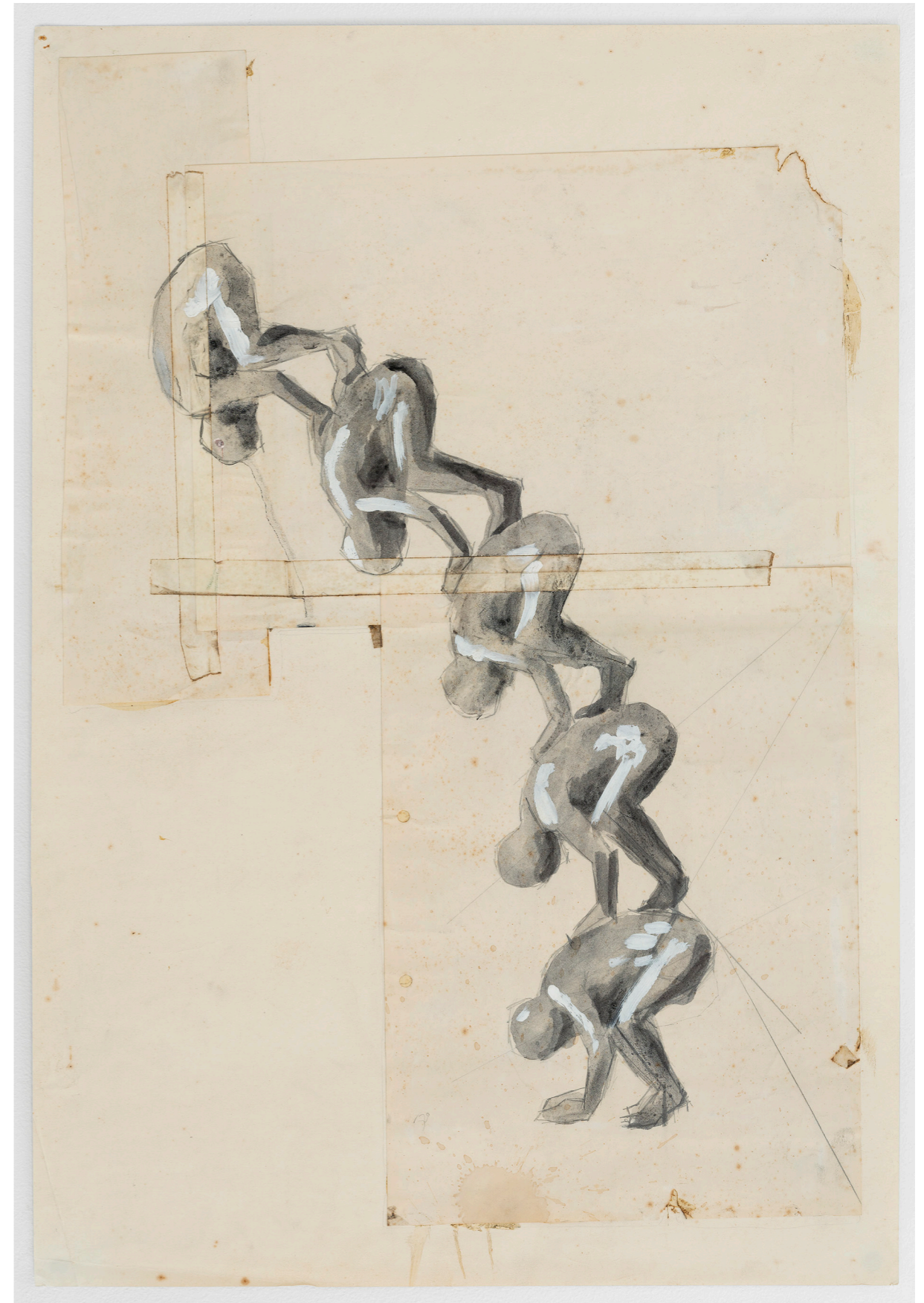
Forbidden Planet is also the title of a 1956 American science fiction

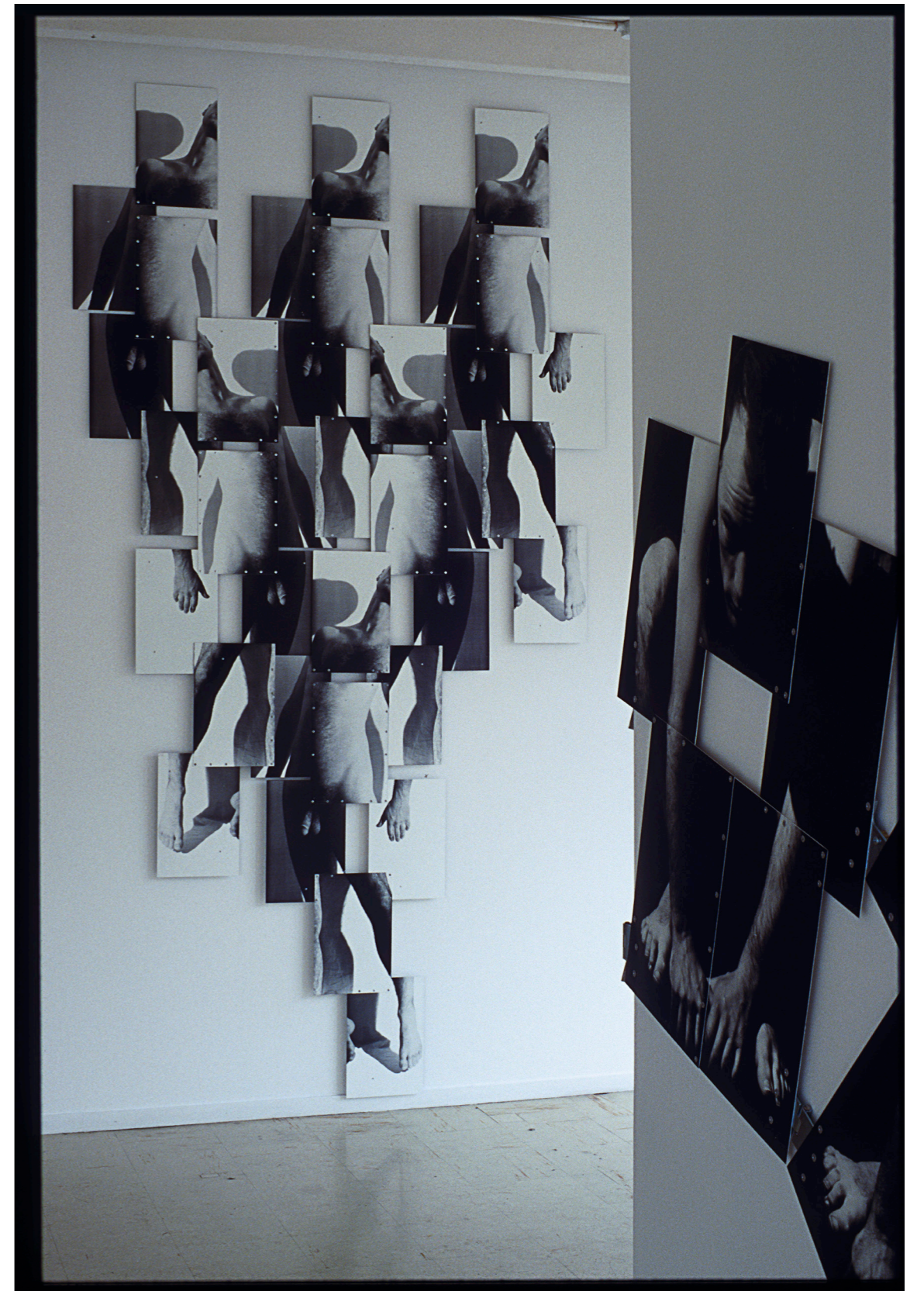
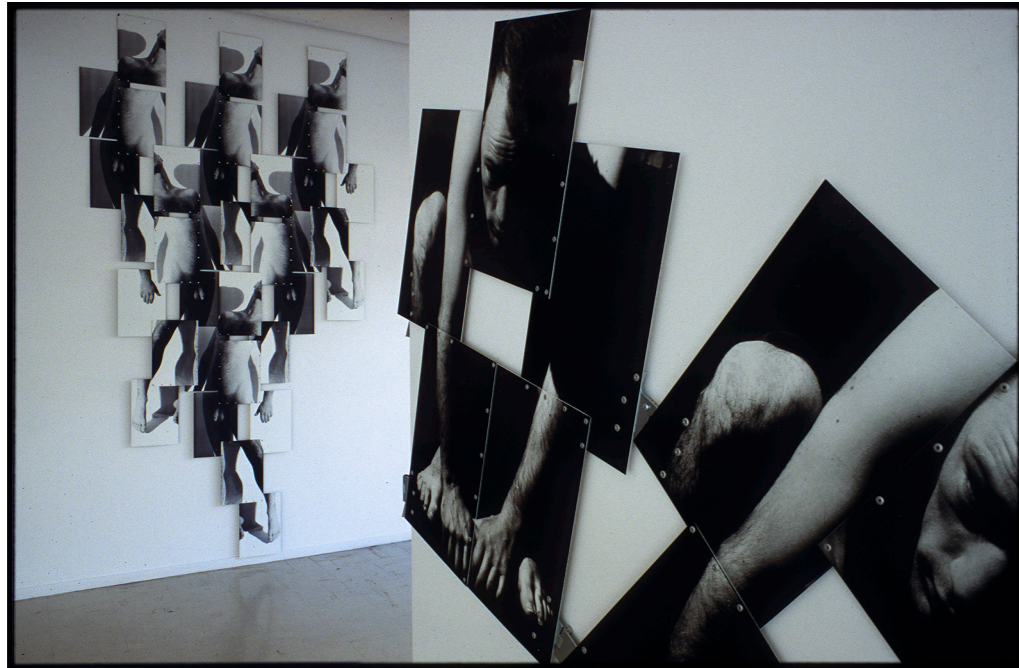
film loosely based on Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. It is a story, a childhood memory, of monsters and fear. Here, these monsters lurk or take giddy flight, for Auckland in the wake of the mirror-glass development of the 1980s was a place of delirious insecurity: of predatory desires and increasingly precarious employment alongside a boom of personal/self-development groups. “My evil self is at that door, and I have no power to stop it,” exclaims Dr. Morbius, the movie’s Prospero, and in this context the expression is a useful epitaph for a decade of souring ambition.

These photomontages too have been remade. Various new versions

appear here including a fold-out page of *Frieze*. Now slick and infra-thin, these digital editions were easily cut, exposure matched and touched-up for scratches and dust. Where every step in their making in the 90s was fraught with difficulties and risks of damage, their digital remaking could be done on the couch. Yet as digital (and even as published prints) the newer versions are ephemeral 'data' while the earlier versions will always hold their material permanence.

Drawing towards a sculpture, 1986, pencil and wash on paper, 42.0 x 59.4 cm





Both pages:
Monsters of the Id
(foreground) and
Spacemen, 1996,
in *Forbidden Planet*,
23A Gallery,
Auckland

Monsters of the Id,
1996, in Aratoi,
2019



Both pages:
Spacemen, 1996,
screen-print on
aluminium,
320 x 181cm

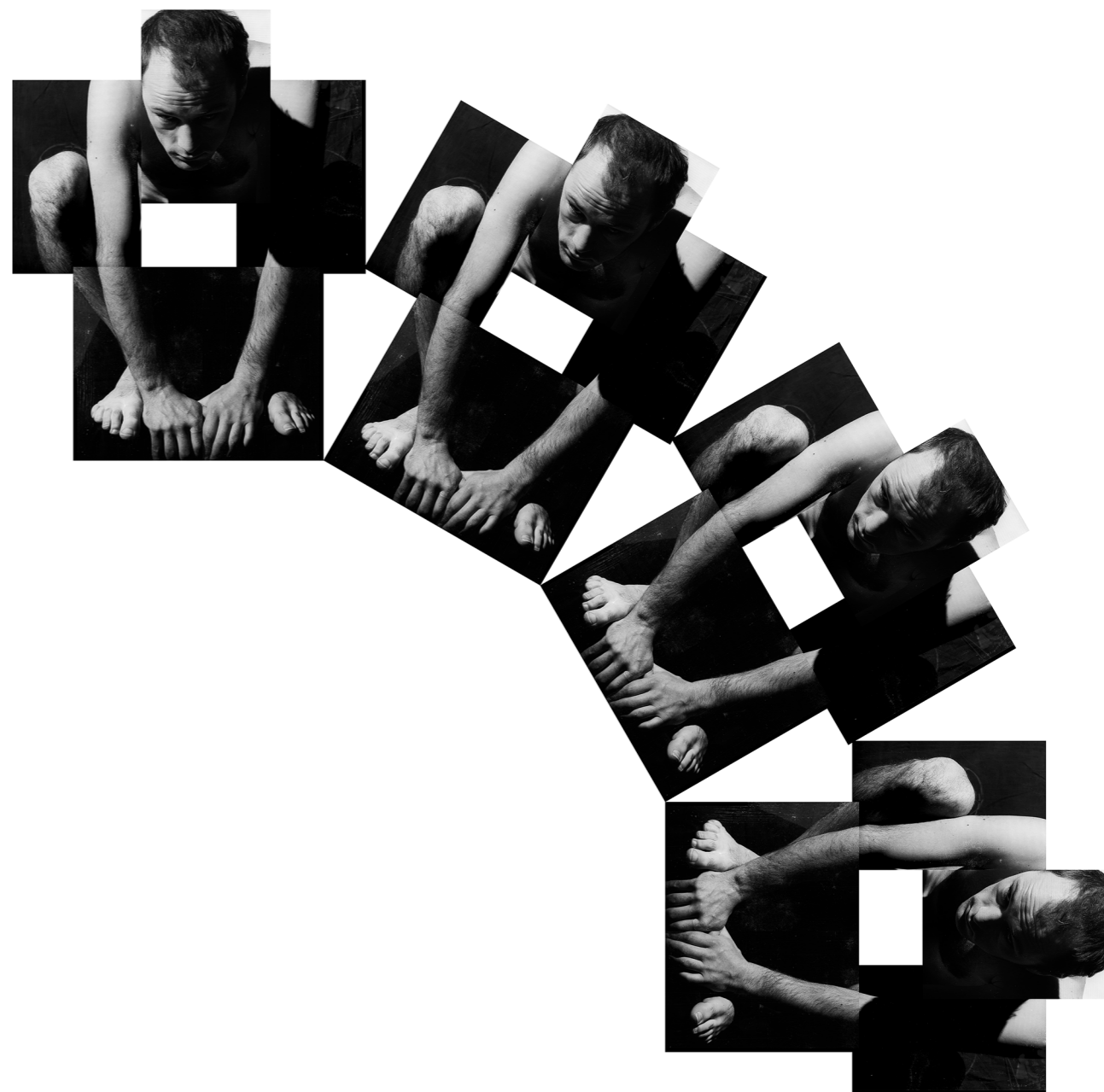
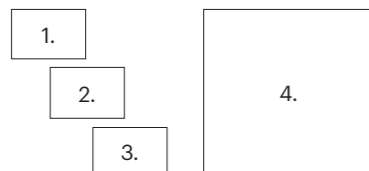


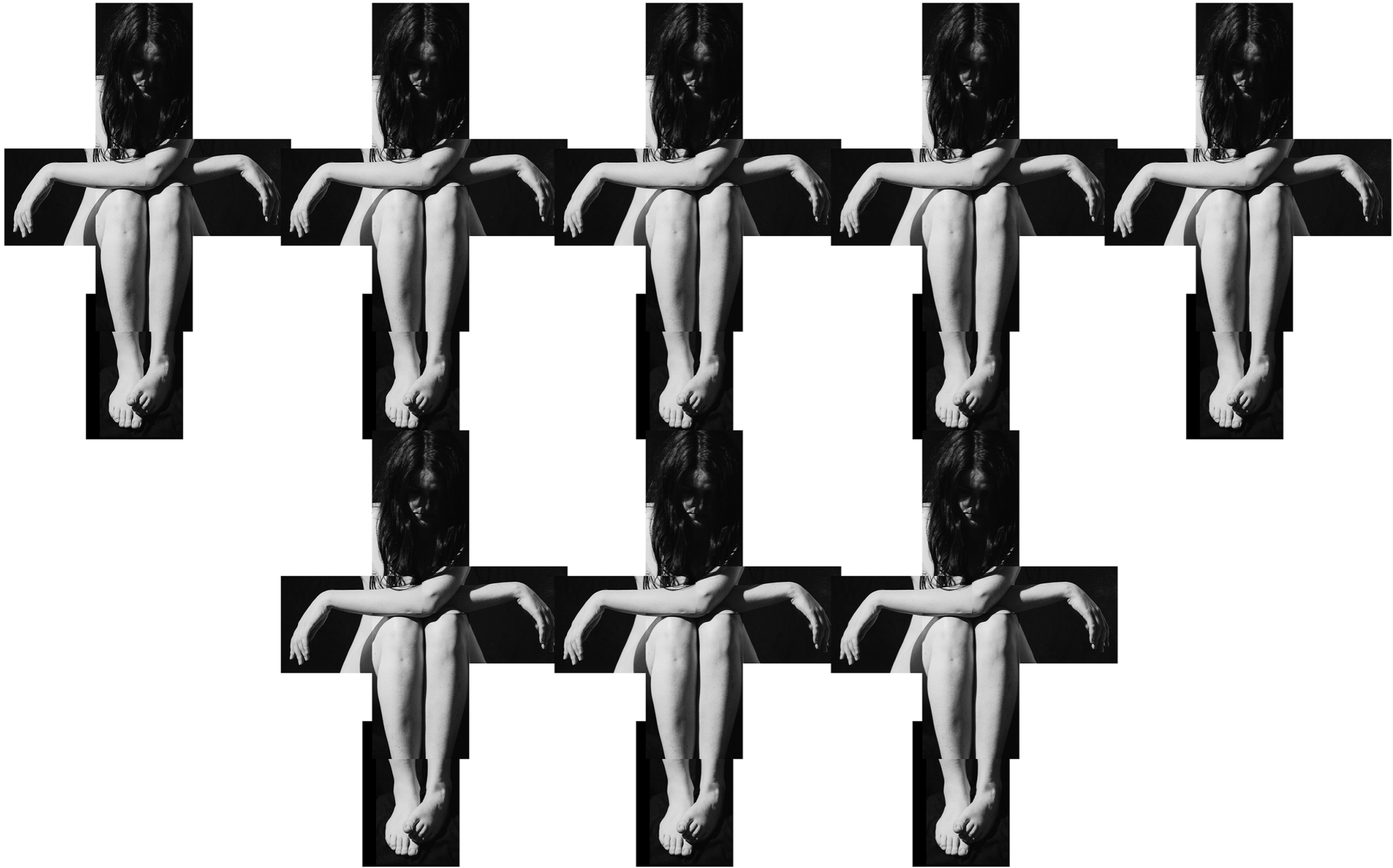


Monsters of the Id, 1996, screen-print on aluminium, 288 x 388 cm:

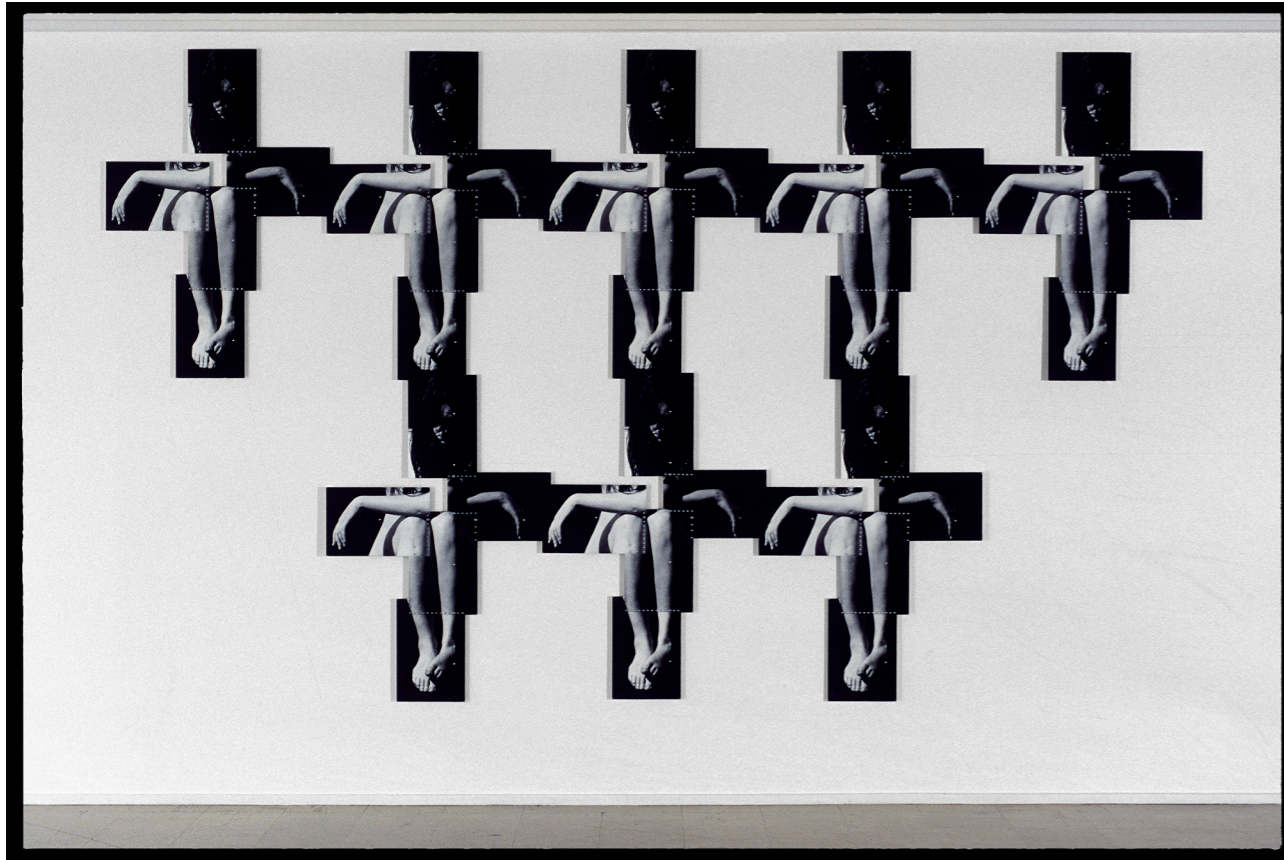
- 1. detail
- 2. detail
- 3. detail

- 4. *Monsters of the Id*, 2019, digital image





Heart Shaped Table,
2019, digital image

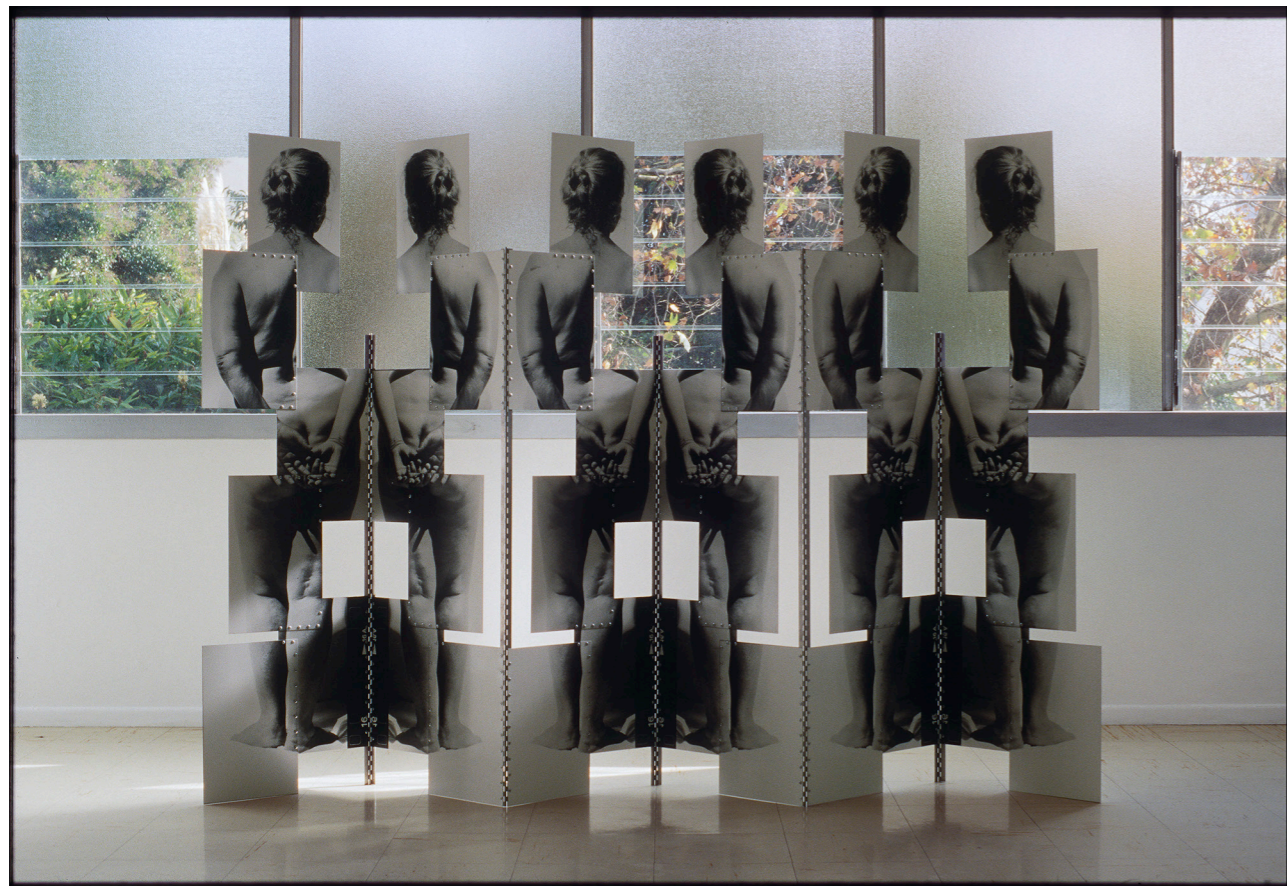


Heart Shaped Table,
1996, in *Forbidden Planet*,
23A Gallery,
Auckland

Screen (background)
and *Heart Shaped Table* (foreground),
1996, in *Forbidden Planet*,
23A Gallery,
Auckland







- | | |
|----|----|
| 1. | 2. |
| | 3. |

1. *Screen*, 1996, in *Forbidden Planet*, 23A Gallery, Auckland
- 2 + 3. *Screen*, 2019, in *Richard Reddaway: the body of the work / it does no harm to wonder*, Aratoi, Masterton

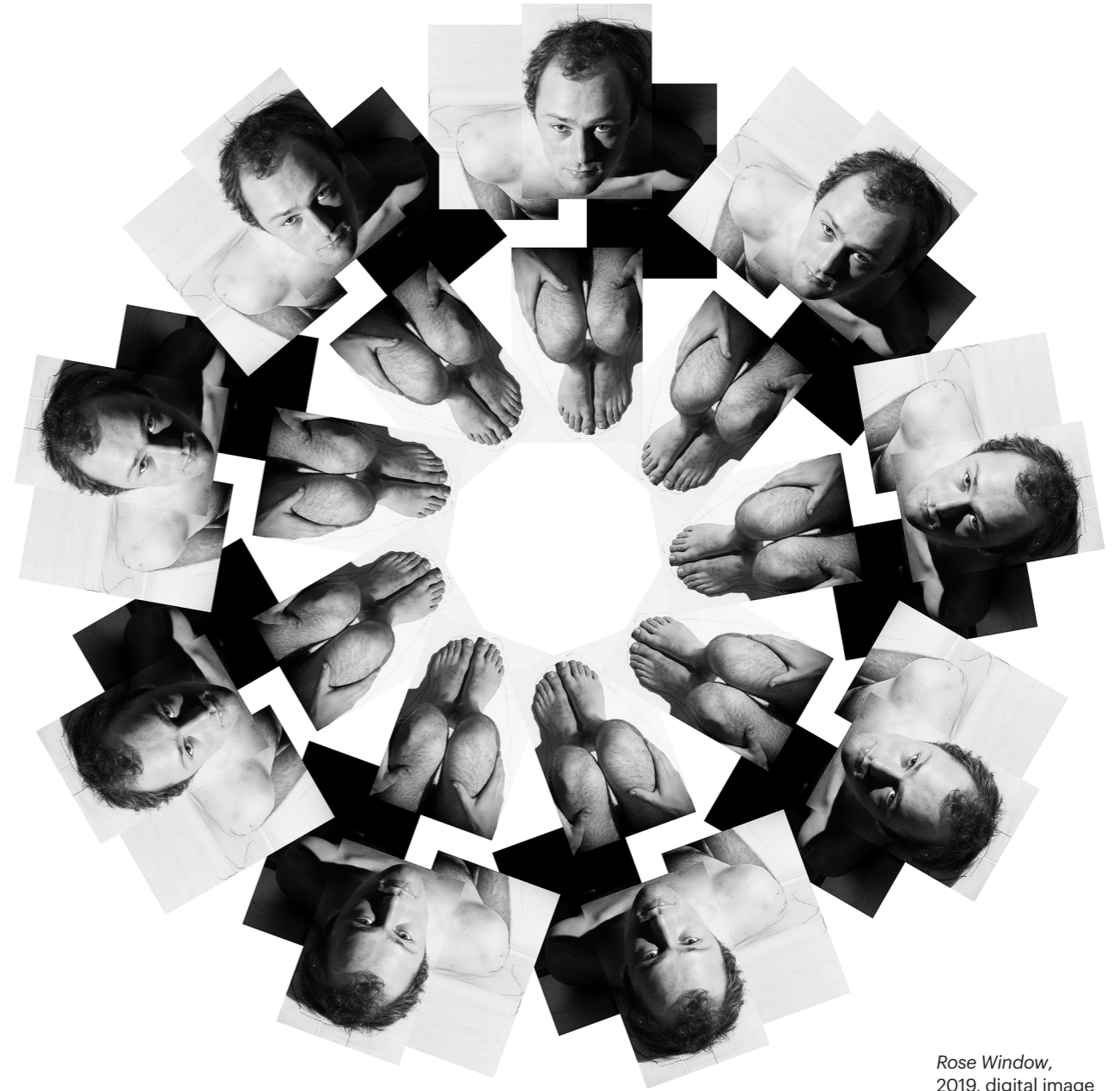
Previous spread:

Screen, 1996, screen-print on aluminium, 170 x 288 cm (dim. variable)





Rose Window, 1996,
in *ISLAS*, Centro
Atlántico de Arte
Moderno, Las Palmas
de Gran Canaria,
Spain, 1997



Rose Window,
2019, digital image



- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 1. | 2. | <p>1996, in ISLAS, Centro Atlántico de Arte Moderno, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain, 1997</p> |
| 1. | <i>Heart Shaped Table and Rose Window</i> | |
| 2. | <i>Rose Window</i> | |

Frieze and Barrel Vault, 1987, in Photomontages on an Architectural Theme, Jonathan Jensen Gallery, Christchurch, 1988



Pediment, 1988, screen-print on paint, gold-leaf and aluminium, in Distance Looks Our Way: Ten Artists from New Zealand, various venues the Netherlands and Spain, and here at the Sargeant Gallery, Whanganui, 1989

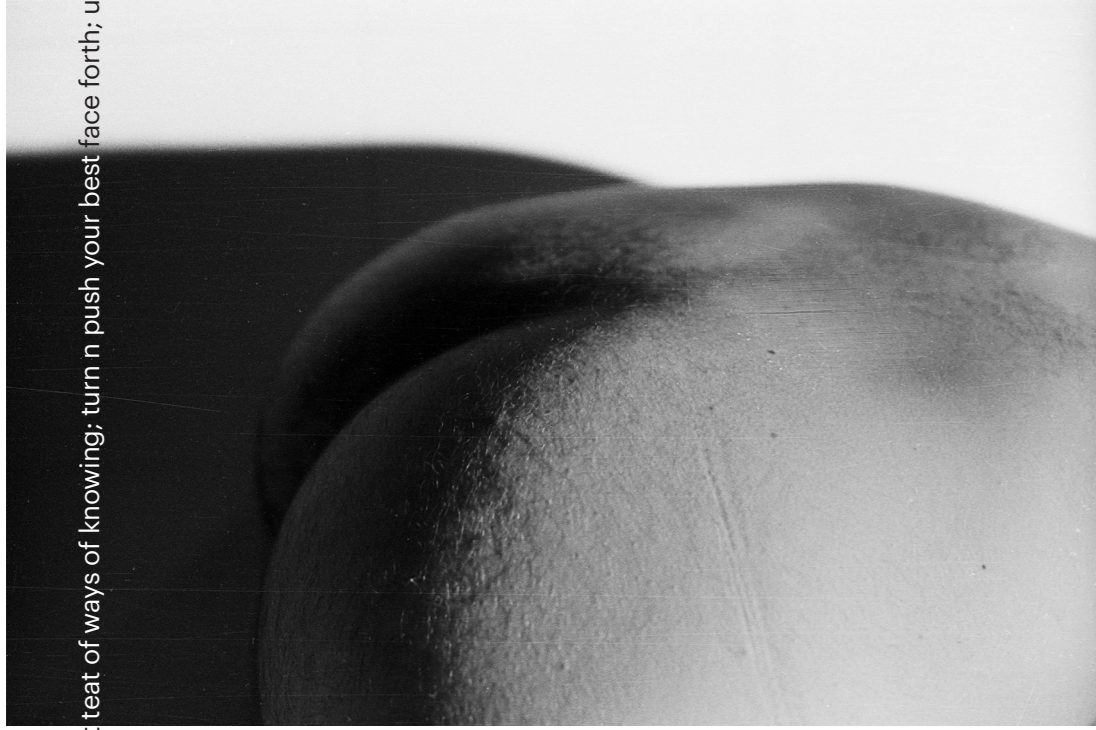




spiral jacobson

owen connors

Pagefold: *Frieze*,
2019, digital image



never becoming meaningless no matter how often they really get you; teeth of an un
 sprung trap; at teat of ways of knowing; turn n push your best face forth; unnecessary examples will follow;
 from the body apologetic; performing the same actions so nothing will crash; now you
 want to fuck; forget about it; forget the bubble; affluence; stylish aeon; rouge laying waste to my powers;

boundaries of you; see; each of these love rely on these love; put your finger; point your finger;
 passionately mock the crap mimicry of gender; passionate for your vulnerable eyes; but what of tomorrow; when
 upon arrival; it arrives again; with which we may wash off the corpse; wash out the sleep; over the
 barbaric sleezy; still a shyness in nudity; choose a point in relation to another point and w/ deft planality defy the

lacking; each for their necks and implants; but they were hot and they were white and apparently

outrageous ambition; take upon yourself the pleasure from time to time; mechanise joy; mechanise mask; mechanise



all different inside; but here what is there to spew; but flamboyancy in parts; but austere; i forget it's brief; it's more

admirable to be without character than it used to be; don't you feel the confines; caged religion;

wild sides; backs; fronts; certainly impermanent; but totally natural to linger; like hugs that show the clones your
care; like after the sun still see the light; after the touch inflamed the flesh; neck; back; face; face;
back; neck; judged by the way you fall in line; attended another nostalgia service; bought along this goddamned
harmony; stretching out this goddamned muscle; ask it when it plan to transform to ecstasy; with
back; neck; judged by the way you fall in line; attended another nostalgia service; bought along this goddamned

new things; limbs; wimbs; forms of forgiveness; greased on encounter; waste of the planets belongings; tried
 to seek the you i remember; before slowly adjusted to suffering; come travel from town to town;
 encouraging promiscuity; cease that inside shudder n shyness; that vast sleep; i think better in the minutes
 after danger; making the backlash articulate; try trying again; thinking of newness outside you;

the nexus of consumer identity; briefly gorgable; with natural mythos; tell me when the virus
 stops being a monster; when we care for that not seen as us; when the worlds on fire; n we no longer bother
 reverence for the boundaries given; to rename this self something different; we didn't come
 in alone; but with the fated who were dealt a skeleton that stopped changing; clinically rabbid; stuck in





done to yourself; just kidding; breathing; replicate care n fuel the day fueling the day fueling; success collides with bad behaviour; until there are as many hopes are there are despondent screwings; or so they say; palpably; passive's fear; deviate from the hole; as a hole is a hole is a grave; i have claimed 100 meters of air around myself; for mine alone; every direction; breathing; so do not do to others what you have

section three

tales
from
else-
where
(once)

—
it does no
harm to
wonder
the body
of the
work



Three works included in *Richard Reddaway: the body of the work / it does no harm to wonder* are a fragment of a larger grouping called *Family*, exhibited at Pātaka Museum + Art (Porirua) in 2016. “Families get together, sometimes an assembly is required. Work is done: scones are baked and buttered, beer is poured into 8oz glasses and wine into stems, music is played and there’s dancing. The kids play: balloons pop, cake is eaten, strange three-legged races are run and there’s sunburn.”¹

Family is a complex of active and passive elements, subjects and objects, for which room must be made. Continuing the use of audio

¹ Richard Reddaway, 2016, exhibition text, Pātaka Museum + Art, Porirua.

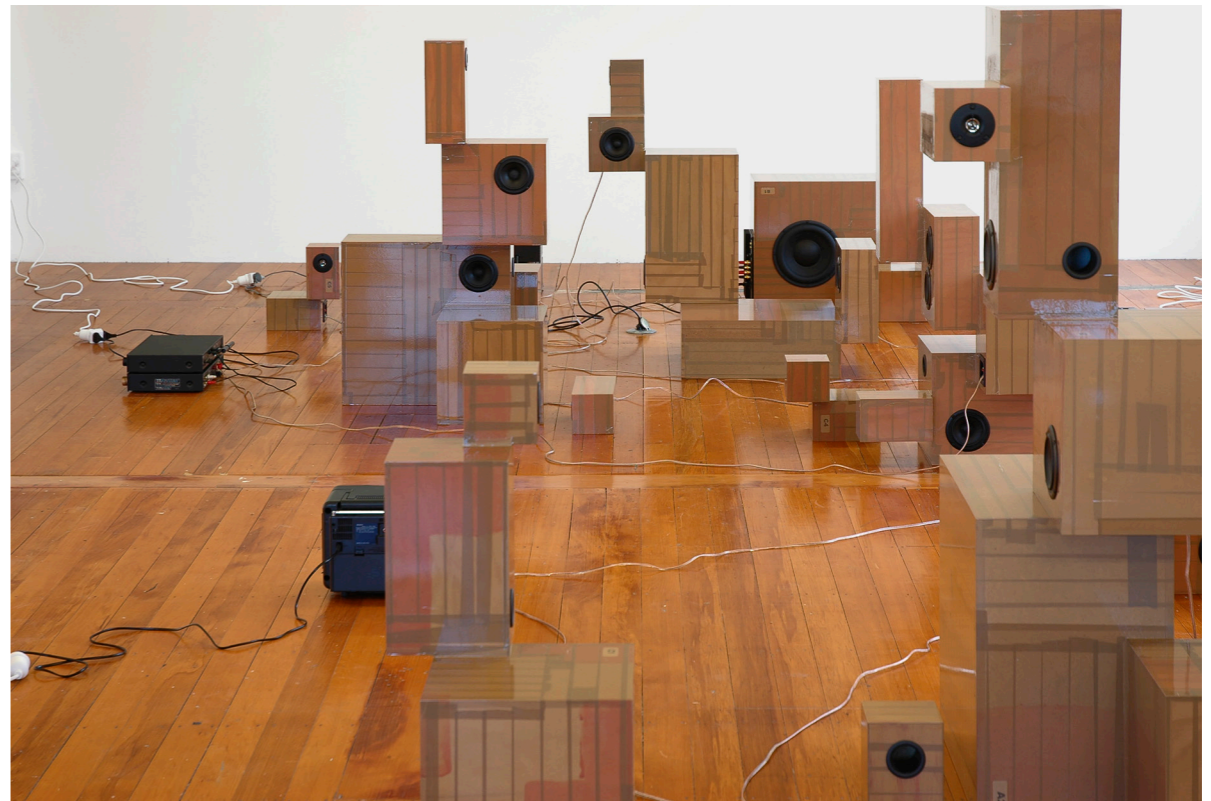
components *Tales from Elsewhere (Once)* features a new soundtrack by Bryce Galloway, available on BandCamp.

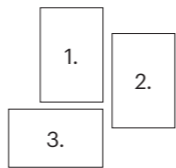
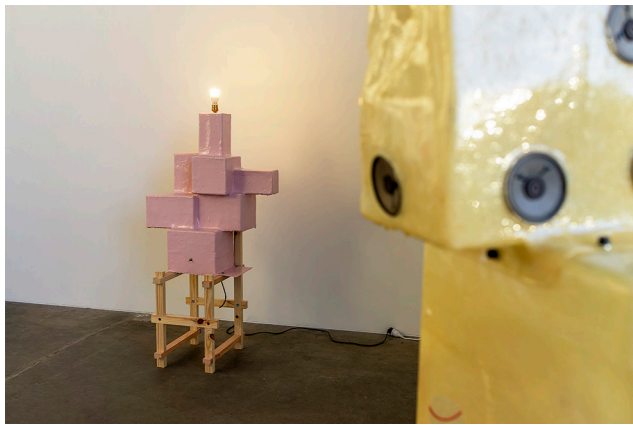
This cacophony of sounds and forms and bodies is a continuation of *Some Assembly Required*, exhibited at the Jonathan Smart Gallery in 2014, and certain themes that had emerged from *BYO Music*, at the Physics Room 2005. As speculations on what a ‘baroque body’ might be, these earlier works coincide with Richard’s increasing recognition of the impacts of neo-liberal economics and the changing social politics that were introduced to Aotearoa New Zealand some thirty years earlier.

<http://talesfromelsewhereonce.bandcamp.com/releases>



BYO Music, 2005,
wood, tape and
audio components,
The Physics Room,
Christchurch



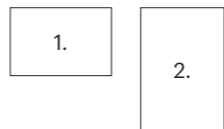


1. *Embassy*
2. *de los Pobres*
3. *Wasking*

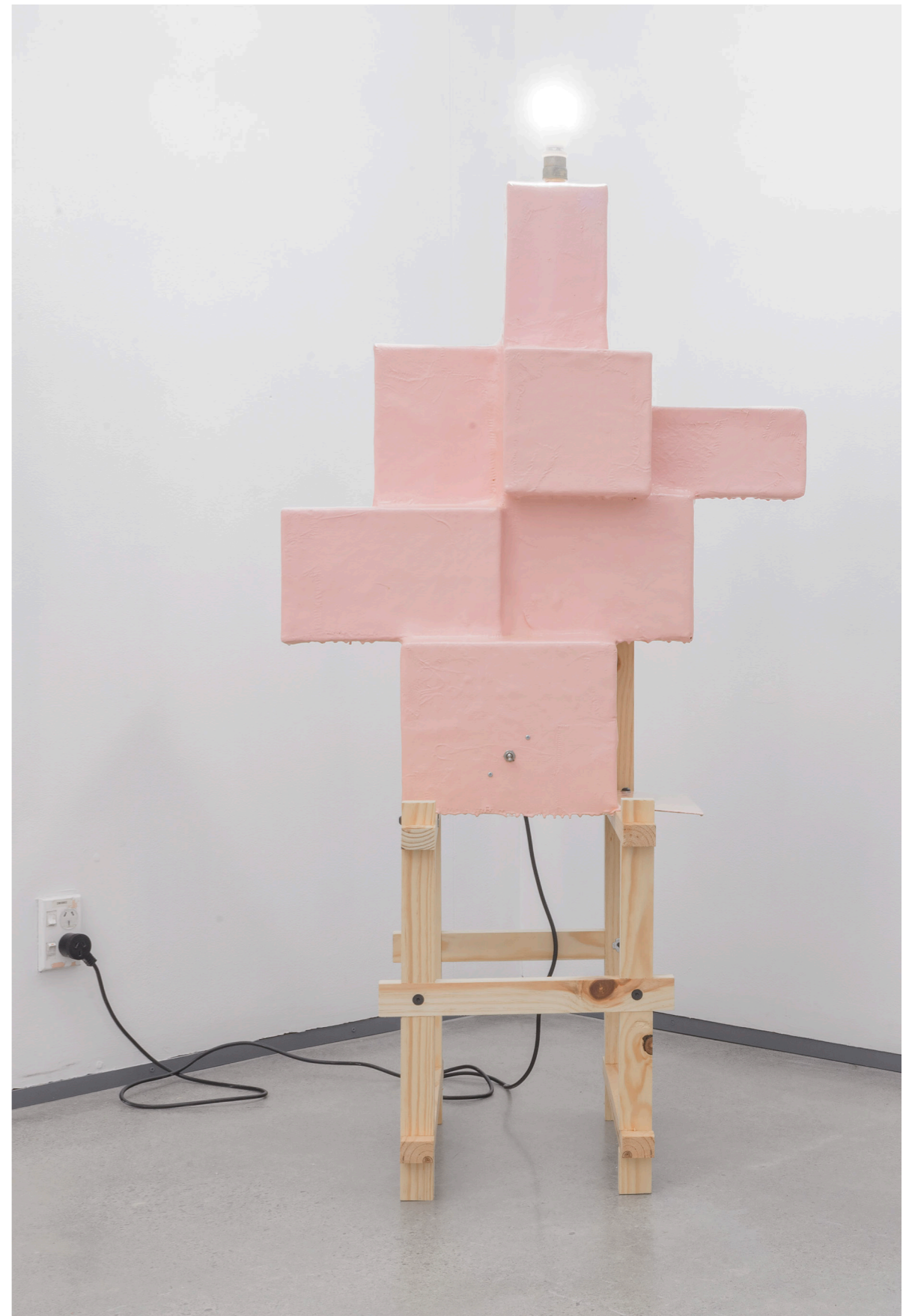
2014, in *Some Assembly Required*, Jonathan Smart Gallery, Christchurch



Wasking, 2014, wood, fibreglass, paint, electrical components, 160 x 78 x 54 cm



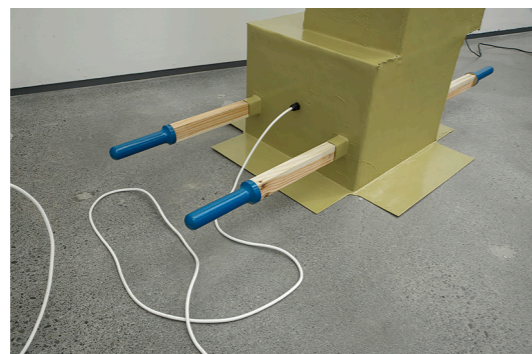
1. *Wasking* detail
2. *Wasking*, 2014, wood, fibreglass, paint, electrical components, 160 x 78 x 54 cm



96 / tales from elsewhere

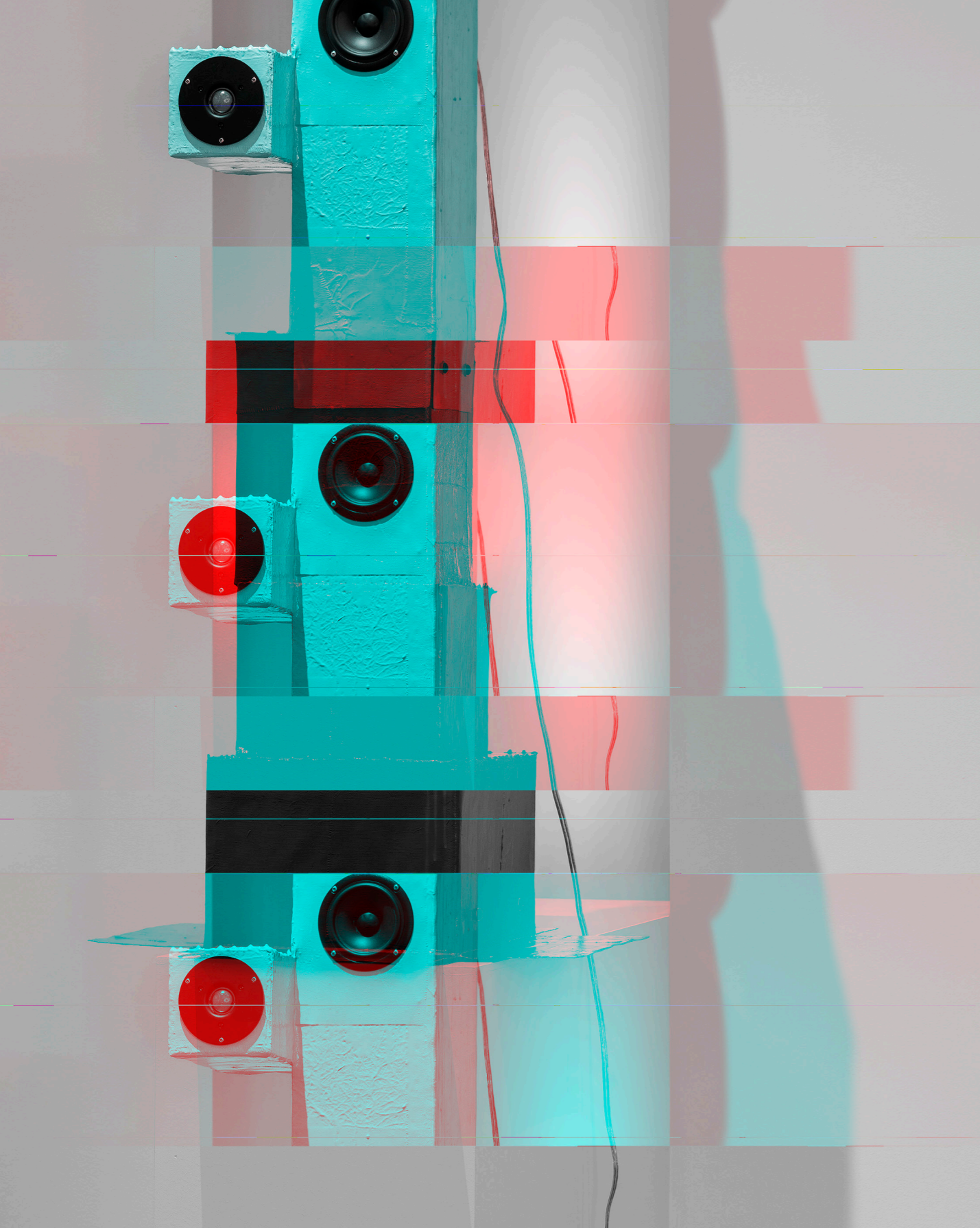


Installation images,
Family, 2016,
Pātaka Museum +
Art, Porirua. Images:
Shaun Matthews



untitled Green
(Family), 2016, wood,
fibreglass, paint,
audio components,
290 x 76 x 63 cm







untitled Red (Family),
2016, wood,
fibreglass, paint,
audio components,
152 x 105 x 74 cm



untitled Red (Family),
2016, detail



Richard Reddaway:
the body of the work
/ it does no harm
to wonder, Aratoi
Wairarapa Museum
of Art and History,
Masterton, 2019

learn to spot the dangerous wanderings of a maker mind! emit snake-beings + andrew gibbons

Is there any better time of year to think about the political and social and technological and economic contributions of community DiY [Do-it-Yourself] maker groups than December, and increasingly, sadly, scarily, November... that time of year of insane consumption of plastic toys and plastic packaging in spite of a new anti-plastic bag orthodoxy. The link between discard and consumerism is central to the belief system of the Christmas ideology, this cultish fairy-story of capitalism: a paradoxical emperor promenading in its invisible clothes of many-coloured discarded inkjet packaging.

As we sit writing these words, thinking about the coming together of communities of makers, our minds wander over the sea of Christmas discards created by an insanity of consumer culture that might be best described, in Philip K Dick's (PKD) words, as 'kibble.' In the now ancient novel *Do Androids*

Dream of Electric Sheep (1968) PKD used kibble to refer to the state of 'things' in a future in which everything we touch (and know) turns to cumbersome dust. In this present, piles of Christmas plastic 'kibble' are forming mountains of 'kibble' toys, soon to wash over the planet as oceans of angry plastic detritus, drowning a consumer culture that has forgotten how to make things unless it is presented as a pre-packaged consumer choice in 'DiY designer goods.' As if following instructions to put together a prefabricated piece of 'kibble' is good for the mind. 'Kibble' is not good for the mind... it infects the mind, turns the mind to 'kibble.'

A future in which minds have turned to 'kibble' is played out in PKD's 1953 short story of a big data future: *The Variable Man*. In that future PKD imagines the problems that a society of consumers might face when a maker appears. Here a maker is someone who can

work out how things work with a will to pull things apart and the skill to put them back together. The maker drops a spanner into the works adding variations which do not compute, ones that reverse the flow of commodified products into endless kibble. In this future a maker is *The Variable Man*: a heretic who does not throw things out when they no longer work; a deviant in a society where ordinary citizens lack the dexterity and knowledge to tinker effectively with things. More than this, PKD's maker doesn't even consider the possibility that a thing is no longer working—functionality becomes as malleable as clay, indeterminate and unknowable until something emerges. The variable maker holds the dangerous potential to rewrite the future of a consumer society: an unauthorised re-functioning of materials and technologies.

In the spirit of making, and the dangerous wanderings of a maker-mind, we are compelled to imagine the ways in which PKD's future big data society might 'teach' its population about the dangers of DiY and the coming together of maker communities...

Learn to spot the dangerous wanderings of a maker mind!
[retrieved from a future]

This is a cautionary lesson on the heretical behaviours of the DiY and maker heretics of the early 21st century. In this lesson we present, in necessarily alarming tones, a story of DiY culture's tendencies to locate the discarded substances of an idyllic and progressive disposable consumer society. Through this lesson we will learn of this dark past in which communities privileged making over consuming and develop our vigilance to ensure these communities remain a fragment of history.

Consumerism, consumer culture, and the institutions of mass consumption were compelled to fight against the evils of DiY subcultures and their radical de-institutionalised resistances. The modern consumer must not on any grounds be fooled into thinking that they have a DiY essence.

DiY was dangerous because it was hands-on. Its hands-on approach allowed maker-heretics to access the stuff usually, intentionally, and naturally, hidden out of sight behind moulded plastic casings and in waste management systems. Hidden, in part, through the successful oppression of the rebellious social movements that maker communities created. These communities desired to see the ingredients of our technological world spilled out for easy viewing. These messy materials of everyday life were hidden behind the beauty of the sleek plastic moulded casing or box for a good reason: we must be denied access to these ingredients on account of the constraints of convenience and time;

we don't want to get our hands messy... do you? All those wires, it just looks like someone has dropped their instant noodle dinner behind their live data monitors. Messy technology suggests a messy outcome... a messy future for a messed-up society. We have always wanted and needed clean intentional lines and a well-designed coherent future, digitally enhanced and with all waste jettisoned. Keep the waste out of sight, out of mind and especially out of the hands of re-functionist tendencies.

In our glorious information age, it is vital to remember that time when small pockets of DiY citizens, so called 'maker culture,' tried to subvert the evolution of a de-materialised world. They said that our consumer society was addicted to the immediacy of electronic time, to the mass consumption of screen-fed images, and the mass production of consumer information systems, as if these were not the most advantageous and sensible technologies for an ideal state of being! Information is clean and hygienic, a cure for our past of material substance abuse. In our information age the workings of the machine and its materials are separated from us behind the thick safety glass of the spectacle. By showing the workings and handwoven raw materials, DiY culture was a subversion of the invisible trance-like dream of the spectacle of consumption. An act of DiY was a questioning of the beauty of our society.

The visible use of recycled materials promoted the idea of an alternative to one-use objects. May Ford forbid! Seeing objects handwoven into new contexts suggested an alternative function for the materials of discard: a going against

the flow of consumerism that surrounds us. It broke the accepted relationship of innovation and discard, denying that creativity is exclusively connected with new technology and consumption of an endless river of objects.

We need to be alert, to exhibit vigilance. Potentially, the folklore of maker culture could infect us again, could threaten to overturn the appcart of this established order, just as Discordia the Goddess of Chaos did when she rolled a golden apple through the marketplace, causing all sorts of chaos amongst the Gods of consumerism, maker culture could overturn the appcart of this divine order. Perhaps we are being overly alarmist, but, all the same, do not let any variable-maker disturb the matrix with stories of sedition, or suggest that the steak you taste is not real. Don't be fooled by stories of indigenous Amazon forest dwellers, of a DiY genocide alleging an illusion of the steak: of one-use forest commodity transformed into commercial ranches and soya bean feed for beef cattle; eradicating centuries of DiY tribes working with hands and nature. Purge these strange histories from your mind, these variables which exist only in a DiY fantasyland, but most of all, keep these obscenities out of sight.

Just as the workings of our materials and technologies must be kept hidden from us, so too must the questioning of our guiding forces. In the 21st century these forces were called, pejoratively, neo-liberal capitalism. These are of course particularly redundant words. They carried connotations of alternative ways of organising and consuming materials. Such heretics as Martin

Heidegger attempted to narrate a false history in his absurd work: *The Question Concerning Technology*. Heidegger neglected the true essence of technology in a consumer society. He neglected that the technological spirit is most effective when it is invisibly ingrained in one's actions and when it is never questioned. The DiY practice of questioning must be perpetually resisted if we are to continue our journey towards a consumerist utopia.

THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE!

There is a lesson here to learn for the present. The lesson is to learn how to recognise these DiY typologies and to observe any sure pathologies in yourself. If you show signs of being the DiY type, then most likely you will have a growing supply of redundant materials in unused spaces of your unit, a box or cupboard full of odds and ends, and, more dangerous even, a whole pile of ideas about what this could be used for. Learn to spot the dangerous wanderings of a maker mind! Ask yourself these questions: have you ever wondered where 'stuff' goes after you place it in the waste portal every hour? Would you open that portal door if you knew? Or would you let those materials fall into the void so that new ones can take their place, so that jobs can be created, and the wheels of commerce continue to turn?

We do, cautiously, recommend exploring the harrowing images of early 21st century DiY community labour. Archived collections of texts and images of the work of these maker types depict the messy, cluttered, unclean, infected past. They represent and reinforce the errors of the DiY way.

Be vigilant! and just remember the inevitability of our progressive consumer society. Do not take the hard and dirty road. Look to the gods of convenience! As the prophets Fredric Jameson and Slavoj Žižek, who we conveniently misquote: "it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of [consumerism]." DiY culture was the last obstacle our consumer society had to overcome, the strange variable that would have, if left to its own devices, prevented this beautiful and predictable and clean and, most of all, this easy society.

**Tales from
elsewhere /
Fairytales
for socialists**

Richard Reddaway



**tales
from
else-
where
(again)**

—
it does no
harm to
wonder
the body
of the
work

To be read alongside *Tales from elsewhere / Fairytales for socialists*, the book of short stories that is part of this section, the series *Tales from Elsewhere (Again)* are mask-like paintings. Like *Family*, *Tales from Elsewhere (Again)* are built from fibreglass and resin cast over cardboard forms then lushly brushed with dripping enamel. But in contrast to the free-standing sculptures of the earlier series, *Tales from Elsewhere (Again)* require the support of a wall to hang, or hands to hold.

Made following time spent in Mexico, these objects attempt to bring a sense of that culture's history, its performances and performed objects—from the Day of the Dead to the statuary of Catholic rituals or

even an evening spent in a *pulqueria*—back to Aotearoa. Here, photographic documentation of that night at the *pulqueria* records the ability of art to create a moment of exchange across languages and cultures.

This series explored similarities between the becoming-postcolonial conditions of here and in the Americas, but with caution. There is a hesitant levity to proceedings: the potential for sound is offered (via speakers and cables) but not realised, things are seen through and light is shed, but only provisionally and conditionally. Where once we told stories as if they were anchored by a solid understanding of the world, now they are things of uncertainty, best told in dynamic relation to other forms of knowledge.

—
it does no
harm to
wonder
the body
of the
work

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16.

Following pages:

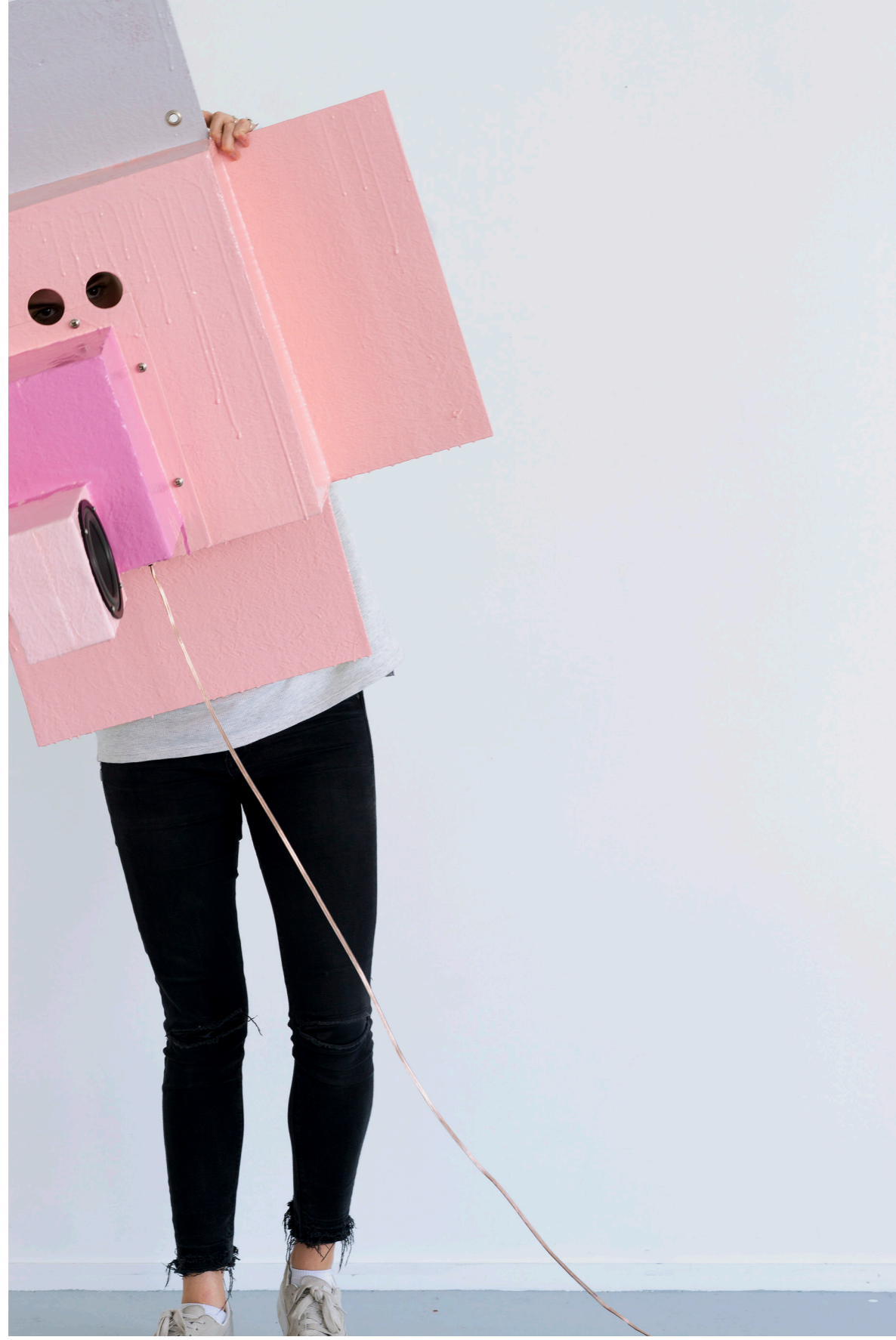
Tales from Elsewhere (as worn),
2017, digital images

1. *Mitts*
2. *Small, smaller, smallest*
3. *Small, smaller, smallest*
4. *Bo(u)y hat*
5. *Bo(u)y hat*
6. *Aging (after Maria Lassnig)*
7. *Aging (after Maria Lassnig)*
8. *Rain Monkey*
9. *Squid*
10. *A Soldier's Arms*
11. *A Soldier's Arms*
12. *Equipment 1*
13. *Equipment 2*
14. *A Soldier's Arms*
15. *Rain Monkey*
16. *Icy*



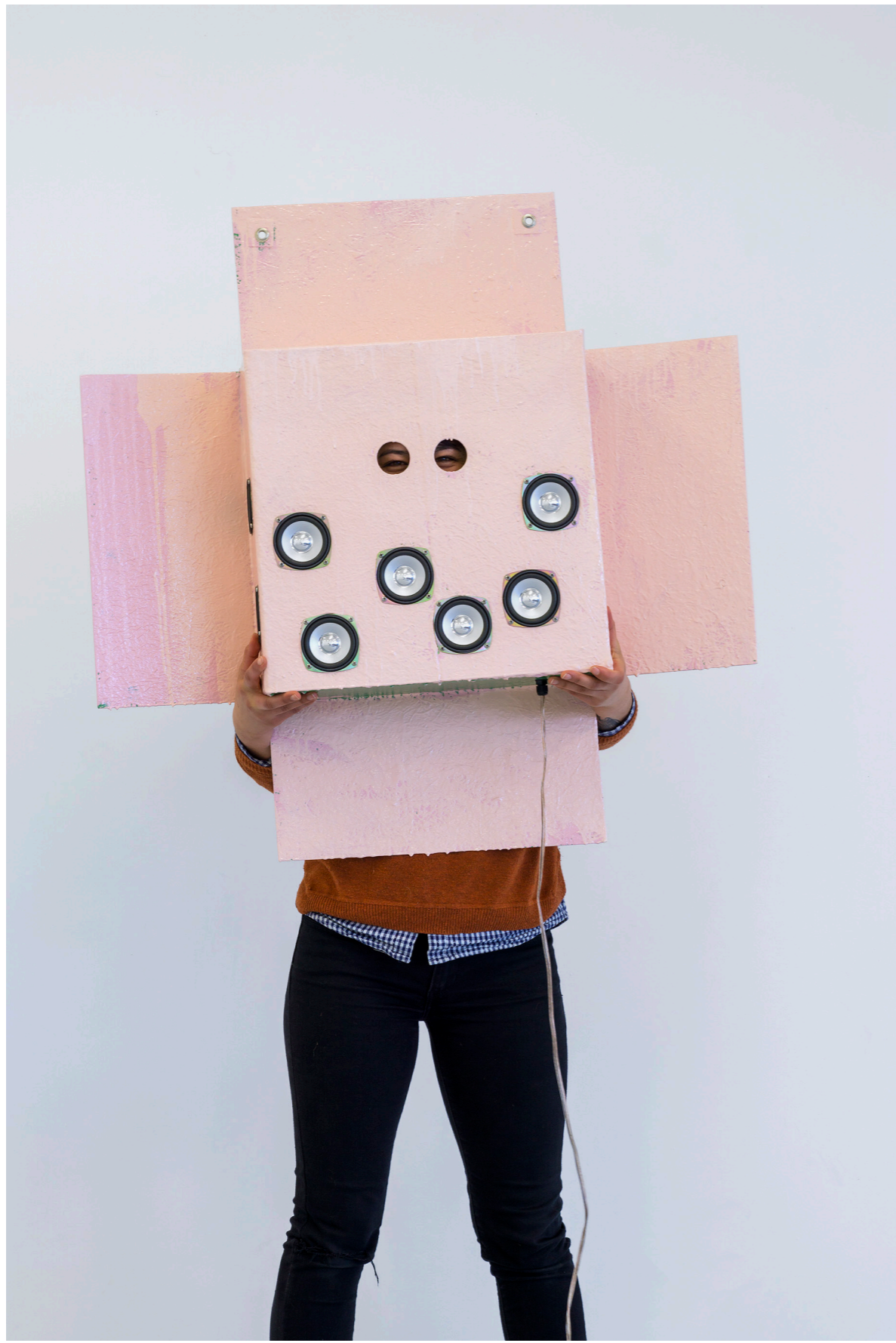
















*Ahora, vea aquí /
Now, see here, (2015),
Arquetopia / Museo
de Arte Religioso
Ex Convento Santa
Monica / Pulqueria
Maltanzin, Puebla,
Mexico*



to go beyond one's name bridget riggir-cuddy

Who are you?
What brings you here?

A name is the materialisation of kinship and lineage. However a name is given or received, its meaning—to the individual, family, or community—is essentially private, structuring a sense of self through descentance. From the outside, the points that form the constellation of one's name are usually unknowable.

Conventionally, a survey exhibition—like a name—is a totalizing structure. The survey exhibition images a concise and watertight image of 'the artist' by connecting the dots of all the complex, interwoven dynamics of one's life, artistic practice, and artwork. The survey exhibition thus tends to have a particular bearing on the art market, increasing the value of the artist by showcasing historic works alongside the contemporary, and suggesting apparently inevitable post-hoc links between their production.

In this way, the survey exhibition is a mechanism for the reproduction of artistic identity and an individualistic mode of authorship. This exhibition format demands the appreciation of not just one artwork, or series, but through a production of the artist's lineage and biography, demands and justifies an appreciation for their contribution to the cultural realm. The historicisation of the artist through this mechanism increases the cultural capital and market value of the figure of the artist as an abstract totality. The artist's name, then, is a primary unit of value in the art market. The space of the survey exhibition can never function as a full biography: it necessarily draws its own constellations.

The question of authorship is problematic for contemporary artists, whose work not only entails production, but the navigation of market logic and the professionalisation of artistic identity and labour. Models of collaboration,

participation, collectivity and community have grown in parallel to the growth of the contemporary art market. These models conceptualize, interact with, destabilize, counteract or subvert market structures, and can be stereotyped as 'relational' practices.

What is your purpose?
What are your intentions?

The reproduction of individualistic artistic identity is countered in Richard's project *it does no harm to wonder / the body of the work* through its query of 'being Pākehā.' The cluster of works, times, contexts, and collaborators are gathered by the framing of the artist's central concern: what naming oneself/ourselves Pākehā might mean and how this naming manifests itself in our 'being Pākehā.' Emerging from this concern, we witness an artistic project concerned with being Pākehā, an enquiry that is active within the project's time frame, opening its survey format to productions beyond the artist's name.

The tactic of 'engagement,' which operates on multiple levels within this exhibition and its production, appear to be motivated by the particular relation of 'being Pākehā.' Richard takes this problem and makes the central action—the action of naming—the purpose of the exhibition itself. The colonial impulse of asserting a baseline identity through naming the other is, in itself, called into question. This opens up the act of naming: to history, genealogy, purpose, and exchange.

Who are you tied to?
What lands are you tied to?
Who are your ancestors?

Being Pākehā first entails a naming: a self-naming. Our familial names are rooted in a greater genealogy, a networked inheritance of sensibilities and attributes that may suggest an ancestral sense of self through shared and connected identity. To name oneself, on the other hand, is an act that diagrams an arena of determinable relations, and opens oneself up to exterior as well as interior legibility.

If being Pākehā is first an act of self-naming, the becoming indicated by this act is an admission and subsequent commitment to a set of relations. The decision to name oneself Pākehā is primarily a decision to situate oneself within the genealogy of colonialism: to understand oneself as a colonial being, made up of past, present, and future colonial relations. Conversely, denial of this name is an implicit denial of colonial relations, and one's inherited privilege.

Unlike an inherited name, the naming of oneself as Pākehā actively connects us to a cultural inheritance in an urgent and politically purposeful way. The meaning and activity produced by this name in use is equally productive to the individual using it as it is to their social sphere; the name's relational codings are legible internally and outwardly, catalysing relational networks of coloniality for both individual and social group identities. Unlike other 'ethnic names' or classifications for a group of peoples, Pākehā defines a relationship between two peoples. Naming ourselves Pākehā is to admit to a colonial being and is one first step toward honouring history and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

This activity that follows the act of naming is central to *Richard Reddaway: the body of the work / it does*

no harm to wonder. Here, two names are encoded within a field of relationality. The survey exhibition format, which traditionally reinforces and mythologises the 'artist's name', becomes instead a space for collaboration, emphasising a commitment to the relational politics of being Pākehā. Richard's exhibition diagrams the coalescence of these identity structures—neo-liberal artistic authorship and colonial being—while its relational tactics work to attempt to undo their organizing singularity.

How will you serve the space that was made for you here?
How will you help with the work of having you here?

Richard Reddaway: the body of the work / it does no harm to wonder surveys 35 years of practice, 'tracking the socio-political contexts in which it was made.' The exhibition addresses its audience with the artist's lineage or genealogy. Though the exhibition's audience might ultimately be a national one, this presentation takes place in the smaller New Zealand town of Masterton, a place of limited significance to the artist or his past work. Unlike Aotearoa's larger metropolitan institutions, which operate to some degree in alienation from their immediate socio-geographical contexts in order to reach national audiences, Aratoi—Wairarapa Museum of Art and History exists in an immediate relationship to its geographically defined community. In the artist's approach to this context, through notions of guesthood, the practice of relational politics of being Pākehā might be considered.

Entering this place and holding space within it, the artist's model for the production and presentation of the

survey exhibition is of entering a space as an outsider. Richard operates from a position of guesthood. Naming oneself comes with arriving in a new place, or meeting new people; it is a means of claiming space and of making one's presence known. Rather than introduction by 'name only', as a survey exhibition typically might, the exhibition's practice of guesthood opens a space of reciprocity with the place and people of Masterton and the colonial realities therein.

For *You and I*, the artist engaged with craft groups local to Masterton. Months before the exhibition's opening, Richard sent an 'invitation to engage' to The Wairarapa Embroiderers Guild, The Henley Men's Shed and the Wairarapa Spinners and Weavers Guild. The terms of this engagement: the crafters 'respond to a set of "rules" for making, to produce a not-yet-known object that could be worn or held, attached to the body in some way.' The objects produced would be presented as part of the final exhibition, along with their creators. As the artist and crafters worked together to produce these objects they shared stories; of kinship, place, and self.

For Richard, art is a means to 'tell other stories about the world;' stories that might help us to work through and leave behind—to produce new states of being in the world. The space of art, for Richard, has become one inherently of telling and sharing. In this position the singularity of the artist's identity—the space of artistic singularity as an operative of the market—is extended into a space of collective use. Richard has made a practice out of turning the space art holds for him into a space

for many; a place of collaboration and connectivity through making and the sharing of stories.

Beyond ‘connecting’ with Aratoi’s immediate community, Richard’s model of engagement works from the idea that cultural histories emerge through objects and their making, and that working collectively towards their production provides a means to understanding the ‘(co-)construction of different identities.’ Though the artist’s guiding concern—‘what does it mean / do when we name ourselves Pākehā?’—was not proposed in these making sessions nor in the relationships formed through them—it was inherent to Richard’s approach to collective production.

Through this model of engagement Richard turns multiple sites of making into spaces for a collective interrogation of identity. Richard opens the space art affords him into a space for many. The figure of the Pākehā artist as a creative singularity is approached instead as a collaborative activity, while Pākehā—its individual and collective meaning—is interrogated by this activity. Collaborative making is articulated a means to access cultural imaginaries and collective identities, as a labouring to go beyond: beyond privileged spaces, identifiers and terms, instead seeking to diagram productive, self-aware and restorative relations.

Following pages:

Ahora, vea aquí / Now, see here, (2015), Arquetopia / Museo de Arte Religioso Ex Convento Santa Monica / Pulqueria Maltanzin, Puebla, Mexico

With thanks to Juan Trujillo, Robert Bubp, Camile Cavalcante, Christopher Davis, Francisco Guevara and the patrons of Pulqueria Maltanzin

Images:
Camile Cavalcante









section five



—
it does no
harm to
wonder
the body
of the
work

How and why is art meaningful, and to whom? Thinking about a project such as an exhibition, and with 'the local' in mind, art shouldn't just drop into places, particularly places such as Masterton. Surely a connection needs to be made to the people who live there. One way to do this is to venture out into the community, find its differences: people with skills and knowledge, and seek their participation, invite them to make things, to contribute something (of themselves) to the exhibition. In this instance, Richard and Janita approached makers and requested they consider a set of 'Six Rules for Making' to produce objects that could be worn or held, attached to the body in some way.

Six Rules for Making:

1. You should make it with your skills and knowledge, and with the materials and processes familiar to you.
2. It must interact with your body, made so that it can be worn, held, stood on, or something similar.
3. It may not be functional, apart from the function art has.
4. You should be imaginative in your design, even fantastical. What you make must be abstract, it must not represent anything already existing in the world.
5. Perhaps it will evoke something that has yet-to-be-seen.
6. Yet you and I can see the world through this thing. Therefore it may have eye holes, and these must be two of, circular, between 45mm (1¾") in diameter, and spaced 65mm (2½") apart.

The process involved meetings to discussed how they might respond, and how their response might be different from what they normally do, how, in the circumstances, their craft might become 'art'. And in the process, stories were shared. For objects can move us: they can evoke fantasy, imagination and cultural histories that emerge as a way through to understanding the (co-) construction of different identities. The meaning of this artwork unfolded through these encounters, through the participatory and reciprocal relationships that surfaced. The results are here to see, along with the people who made them:

From the Wairarapa Spinners and Weavers Guild: Marion Cameron, Win Ward, Janet Palmer-Langley, Helga Ackerley and Noelene Dunlop.

From the Wairarapa Embroiderers Guild: Stephanie Chilcott and Noella Godinet, and members who completed *Abandoned Screen*.

From the Henley Men's Shed: Rick Wallace, Pat Cunningham, Seymour Harris and Graham Pearson.



Following pages:
You and I, 2019,
a collaboration
with members
of the Wairarapa
Spinners and
Weavers Guild, the
Henley Mens Shed
and the Wairarapa
Embroiderers Guild

Noella Godinet,
Boxed in the 'hood,
various fibres on
canvas





Stephanie Chilcott
& Noella Godinet,
*Waste silk, waste
buttons and other
leftovers, various
fibres on canvas*





Marion Cameron,
*Waist-basket full of
holes, wool*



Members of
the Wairarapa
Embroiderers Guild,
Abandoned Screen,
various fibres on
canvas



Helga Ackerley, *In Memoria / Behalte mich in Erinnerung*, wool



Janet Palmer-Langley,
Seven, wool





Left:
Seymour Harris

Above:
Win Ward, *untitled*,
wool





Graham Pearson,
Totem Mask, olive
wood from the base
of the tree, dye and
acrylic lacquer





Rick Wallace,
Old Totoro Pou,
wood, resin and
LED lights





Left:
Marion Cameron,
untitled, thread
on canvas

Right:
Noelene Dunlop,
untitled, wool





Pat Cunningham,
Mary Cunningham's
Grandfather Pat,
jute and other
fibres



the interview

sophie jerram + richard reddaway

RR = Richard Reddaway

SJ = Sophie Jerram

Interview conducted at Swan Lane, Wellington, 12-1pm, 30/5/2019.
Transcribed and edited by Kate Linzey

SJ: And how is the prep going for the show?

RM: It's going really well. I'm learning how to do this stuff (making art) a little bit at a time, but everything's coming together. The next major thing is approaching the makers groups in Masterton. We (Janita and I) have identified the sort of groups we want to work with, and they are the Spinners and Weavers, The Henley Men's Shed and the Embroiderers' Guild. I'm very excited by the prospect of beautiful embroidered things!

SJ: Having known you from your emergence from art school, I'm really curious to how you see your time in the world... thinking about what was going on, do you recall, what was going on in the world when you graduated?

RR: Well that's really what has excited me about this project [The Body of the Work], I'm going back over thirty-years and asking, 'what was happening that contextualised the art?' Perhaps even to find what I couldn't see at the time. I think about 1981: I was at Art School and I went on the Anti-Springbok Tour marches - everyone was there - and before that in 1978 there was Bastion Point, because that was the last years I was at school I wasn't an active participant, but it was still part of the time.

And I think about the 1984 Labour government. Those 'events' are three really significant moments of quite profound social change in New Zealand... when I was about to leave school, when I was at art school and when I was about to leave art school.

SJ: What do you think the relationship between the '81 Springbok and then '84 Government was? Because in a way the '84 Government was presenting itself as a progressive move...

RR: Absolutely!

SJ: But it was incredibly anti-people...

RR: In a sense, in-so-much as the changes they enacted weren't really democratic, yes, and they surprised everyone. But I wouldn't say they were anti-people, because for me the '84 Government was liberating. As a young artist coming out of art school, I emerged into an environment where (almost) suddenly there were more records in the shops - until then the choices were limited by import restrictions - and because there were people making money and buying art, artists could live off the market. There were dealer galleries opening everywhere, and there was just more art. As a young artist it was really exciting. So, while in hindsight I can see the terrible social effects that economics has had, I'm conflicted about critiques of neo-liberalism. I understand I have been complicit in that politic, I have benefited from it. And I still can't repudiate the exhilaration, the excitement, of the freeing up of a whole load of things.

Put that in context of Bastion Point and those marches, they were the same thing, you know, because our government was recognising, amongst other things, Māori aspirations. Social emancipation and economic liberalisation were not unconnected. Nancy Fraser wrote a useful essay in the New Left Review about the association of neoliberal politics with emancipatory politics.¹ She comes to the conclusion that neoliberal politics only borrowed the language of emancipatory politics, but I'm not so sure about that, I think the two things actually are quite compatible. It's just that we've got to be very careful about where that compatibility has taken us.

SJ: Well, there's an emancipation of the dollar, there's an emancipation of a lot of ideas, but in that over time emancipating, really only the wealthy.

RR: Emm, yeah... This is where I just don't know enough! Is it inherent in liberal politics, the accumulation of wealth

and therefore social inequality? Is it intrinsic? Or is it the capture of that politics by power? Is wealth and power always going to find a way to win?

SJ: It's clear, there are people who are A-type personalities who are savvy enough to know how to drive the machine, themselves, they took advantage of the freedoms, made it work for them. Weirdly it works for them, mostly, as 'white men.' So, yeah, it actually ended up serving power.

But look, I'm totally with you in remembering the '80s as kind of this moment: 'oh, I can be an individual. I don't have to do what my family wanted me to do, I can free myself up.'

RR: And that's a privilege, right.

SJ: Let's cut thirty years to the students you see coming out of art school now, seeing them emerge now. What are their concerns that are similar to your Bastion Point and '81 moments?

RR: I re-read *Bombs Away*² before coming to this discussion, and of course I thought about Jacinda Ardern's statement³ that climate change is the nuclear moment of now... So, that's one thing, then the other is gender. I was talking to a group of students the other day about the body and art, I asked them, 'if you are not so concerned about these sorts of issues (around climate, because that's where we'd got to), what do you think the significant issue of the day is?' And they responded that gender is their moment. Which is interesting.

SJ: And that is definitely going on. Another Jacinda Ardern phrase, that is comparable and that I think is genius, is when she went to Paris, is this idea of social media as monetising hate.⁴ That was her line when she opened the Paris discussion. Is that something that is discussed? How it's abstracting the body to the avatar level when you are on social media, but how you manage your own domain, and data relating to your own domain and how that is being managed.

RR: I was reading Hito Steyerl,⁵ her essay concerning online love scams, and she made the point that the scam may be virtual but the (resulting) love is real. She suggests an interesting play on which bit is virtual and which is real.

SJ: They're born into this. Into Facebook.

RR: But they're not automatically using it or interested in it...

SJ: For me... I am curious to know whether surveillance is a thing. It feels like it will be in a few years' time... Who's managing this? We're all participants, but we're not getting any say in how it's being managed.

RR: On managing the virtual, I read the other day, "I don't know why CDs went out of fashion. Because they're cheap, you can put them on at your convenience, and no one is mining your data by you playing it."

SJ: Yeah, bring back CDs!

RR: I mean, digital information, how long it's going to last? What's going to happen when the server goes down... I worry about all the digital photographs I have taken. We can take so many more of them, it's much easier to store them and keep them, and cheaper, but will I be able to access them in 10 or 20-years' time?

SJ: Stone and paper! In relation to the body and your work, because, say in another thirty-years' time, what's going to be going on? How will your works be seen?

RR: It's been interesting looking at the photomontages after 25 years - I pulled one of them out of a box and it was like 'Oh yeah! There it is, it's such a physical object, see the imperfections on the surface, the rivets, the construction.' At the same time, I was going through the process of making digital versions of those montages. Because I can, I'm really enjoying making them and they might be useful in the publication. They're not the same, obviously they don't have the materiality and the processes of the photomontages; the memory of printing the photos in my miniature darkroom and physically assembling the parts. All the problems associated with that which are just not there with the digital. But then those digital files are just... they don't need anything; they don't have any materiality in the world.

SJ: Did you see Julian Priest's Satellite show up at the Carter Observatory?⁶ He was testing this idea ... of the weight of information. He experimented with a satellite, he launched the satellite, and the stays in orbit with a whole lot of other test satellites... He basically programmed it to delete information regularly - it's a folly of an idea but - the idea is that if it deleted the information it would be able to stay up there for longer... He had a shredder, and invited lot of people to come up and shred their documentation... It was beautiful, like a shrine on the hill.

SJ: Are you bringing out your body again?

RR: You suggested that while talking with Janita, but I haven't got far with the idea.

SJ: That's why I'm asking again.

RR: It's a challenge, even if it's a really interesting proposition. I don't know that this show would be the right place to do that, to be honest. I am interested in whether people are making things for themselves to wear or for me to wear, so maybe.

SJ: How do you think your work has kept you connected to the world, as an artist? Or has it somehow distanced you?

RR: I think, for me, my art functions as a way... to explore thoughts about politics and society. Because, you once asked me: 'am I connected to the Council, have I met them?' and no I haven't because I'm just pathetically bad at that, that actual 'real' socialising'. So, for me the art is a way to work through issues. And I spent a lot of time, over the last few years, trying to work out, 'how are social politics expressed through my work, and, for that matter, art works in general?' I think it's incredibly complex, but for some artists it is straight forward. Tao Wells, and his welfare project for example, he's really explicit, he works in-your-face politics into his art. But that's Tao. I'm interested in how an artist might make artwork that's political without such explication. I think you can understand political expression in art as happening on (at least) two axes: the first is explicit / encoded; the second literal / contextual. And then artists and their work can be located across these axes, because it's a Klein diagram. [The explicit is, well, obvious: words are used, for example; the encoded needs reading to work out the meaning; in the literal, meaning remains the same across different contexts; alternatively, context changes meaning, if, for example, I make the work or you make the work].

SJ: We've been around now, 200 years almost as a nation, what art does in this country is really still emerging.

RR: You mean the question: 'what is art here, in this place, now?' We had an interesting discussion at Massey [University, College of Creative Arts] as to whether we should we be bringing

in Craft to our programme. And the conversation devolved into, okay, well there's Craft, there's Design, there's Art, 'no' they're different things with traditional boundaries. What about Pasifika? What do we call it, we don't call it art, we don't call it craft, it's not not that, or that. And, of course, there's Toi... So, there are all these things that are obviously connected and relatable? Maybe they're the same thing, but, clearly, they are also not the same thing. That is an exciting prospect.

SJ: So... What are you preparing your students for? Now you are an 'elder' as it were... What is it that you preparing them to do, as artists?

RR: Well, I think we are preparing them to actually construct their own idea of where are going through what they make in relation to those things we were talking about, in terms of those art-forms, whatever we call them... [For example] if they are Māori and interested in accessing Toi, then that's what they're able to do, within the context of the contemporary art world, as opposed to, say, [Te Ao Māori], cause that's what [the art school is]. So, it's not trying to define what [Toi, Pasifika, craft etc] are, but to say: 'these are the possibilities, where are you coming from?'

I recognise that comes out of my '80s '90s thing, all that Postmodernism. Some of those ideas can still be interesting and useful tools. If only to break open the straight jacket of Modernism which still holds us, as much as I love Modernism... That idea that multiplicity is knowledge, is still such a valuable and useful thing.

SJ: Are you concerned though that in this country still a lot of art ends in its own little echo chamber?

RR: Yeah, definitely. And I keep coming back to asking myself: 'Richard, why are you interested in participatory art, now?' and the answer comes back to, I've always been interesting in people being able to access art, and being able to enjoy it, and use it... It seems to me that the really lovely thing about socially engaged practice/participatory art etc. is that it gives people a way into art. And that's really exciting...

SJ: Yeah great, it's much more 'we' than 'I,' suddenly.

RR: I think if I look back at the things I was trying to do, it always was, it's was just I didn't have the tools to do it.

SJ: And your student's, presumably, are likewise thinking about these things?

RR: Yeah, often they don't articulate it as such... Trying to get them to think about it and talk about it is a different issue...

SJ: Is it necessary to be aware of what [they're] performing?...

RR: I don't know, but that is where maybe being at artschool I think is different from being an artist. Because the point is to try to interrogate these things... I still believe in the 'academy' in that sense. That it is somewhere that you can actually think about art making, to try to make it better, or more interesting. All this whole issue about the axes of politics, to me, that's what we should be thinking about. About how does that work?

SJ: Do you worry about those students' debt, your students' debt coming out of art school?

RR: I worry about their situation in society in the sense that I can see them being stressed because they're working, more than I ever did as a student, because they have to. Because they've got to earn money. And they're going to leave, and what situation they're moving into, hell yeah! I wouldn't want to be 18 now! But then on the other hand, hell yeah, because what a challenge [if you've got the support].

I hope that my students, our students, our young people, will have the skills and the ability to go on and construct their future. Because, while the optimist in me that says, they are going into a world that is beset by all these really severe problems - climate change, precarious work conditions, huge debts - but they'll have the knowledge and the skill to construct their world, we're not to put barriers in their way...

SJ: We're assuming that everyone comes out with the best of intentions for themselves and the world, or do you think that some people are now choosing, actively, a more selfish life? Going back to that idea that 'No One Believes They're Evil.'⁸

RR: To just fight for your position irrespective of the chaos... It's a certain kind of politics, but it's also certain type of human behaviour as well. Behaviour that is intensely competitive and individualistic, on the one hand, opposed to the collaborative and social practice on the other... I have been thinking about this a lot... I come back to... Why not try to consider the position of one that is not one's own? I'm not very competitive, I never have been. But I can respect people who are competitive because I know some competitive people who I respect, and it makes life more interesting. I don't want to do

it, and I don't think it should be the way our whole society's constructed, but none-the-less people who get a buzz out of winning something, or speculating and being successful, or not. Maybe we need 'those kind of people' in society.

SJ: Yeah, of course. Because some people are drivers.

RR: Well I wouldn't put it like that, because I think there are collaborative drivers as well.

SJ: ...people go to art school because they are individuals, they think independently.

RR: Yes?

SJ: Maybe not?

RR: I don't know... What you are saying is, are artists like that? Are artists necessarily thinkers like that? If not individualistic, at least idiosyncratic? Part of the function of art is to question, and to create new ways to see the world. So, yes, they'd have to be. But then there are also huge social conventions around art and being an artist. I gained an understanding of this when I went to Germany for 6 months in 1989. There I was at the art school in Dusseldorf and I realised that being there, in a place with so many *ordnung* - you know, rules, everything is ordered so nicely - that as an art student I was given licence to not conform. In other words, this 'freedom to question' that artists expect themselves to have is as much socially constructed as it is an individual thing.

SJ: Socially constructed to rebel?

RR: Well, to be given the licence to be rebellious, or to think in other ways. Related to this, I don't believe in talent, really. I believe in intelligence and I believe in working hard. But the reason why people are successful seems to me is a relationship between that, and what we as a society want them to be. So, no matter how smart somebody is, no matter how hard they work, if the people around them aren't interested in them to do what they doing, they won't succeed.

SJ: The triumvirate of intelligence, working hard, and social abilities, to bring people with you.

RR: Philip Pullman described it as intelligence, hard work and luck... Perhaps there are elements of luck to success, but actually it's how you are constructed socially.

RR: What I've come to resent is how [beautiful objects] are markers of power and wealth, and that's the issue. I don't think Ferraris [and other beautiful objects] are intrinsically bad in that sense, but it's just how they are accumulated by people with power and money, and so they become those markers. I don't want the world to be empty of beautiful things, and expensive things, but I also don't want them just to be available to the ultra-wealthy...

SJ: So, if they were cheap?

RR: Not even cheap but I sometimes just wish that people could somehow recognise that you can't have everything. Maybe if you really want a Ferrari then you just have to miss out on other stuff... It's the amount of stuff that is being used up, and that becomes the environment... Consumption, that we want to have everything, the problem in some ways, with the cheapness of manufactured stuff... is that it just means we [believe we] all can have everything...

SJ: So, you're actually thinking about having a carbon budget, ourselves?

RR: Yeah absolutely.

SJ: Something like to 2000watts Society?

RR: Yeah... And the flying thing! I don't want to say that people shouldn't travel, ever. But maybe we just won't travel as much as we do. Maybe its travelling to Europe is a twice in a lifetime experience. It always used to be.

SJ: Or on a boat, like it used to be. We've only existed in the last 50 years that we've been so rapidly moving.

RR: And this over saturation of disposable plastics. It's probably only 20 or 30 years, and ... Look where it's got us, man! Part of the reason I think this is because art comes into this doesn't it. I've met incredibly wealthy art collectors, and that how they can afford to buy art. But I've also met art collectors who are not wealthy, it's just their passion and their excitement. So, buying art is not intrinsically bad, the art market is not intrinsically bad, it's just how it attaches to power and wealth...

SJ: ... Part of the reason, I think, that our generation didn't quite turn things around, environmentally - and the kids are saying 'come on!' now right? - is because, we knew what to do... but our ego, for our generation, was very fixated on us being individuals... What I'm noticing about in this generation of kids who are 20 now, is that they swarm much better, and act as a corpus and a group. And I'm curious if that's what we now have to learn in inverse, retrospectively. Because you said to me, beautifully, the other day you didn't feel that you'd ever have a stellar international career but that you were interested in, reflecting on the last 35 years. It seemed to be a really beautiful way of saying: 'well, okay what landscape am I part of?'

RR: Hang on to that! At a certain point I realised I live in a peripheral place, New Zealand, I'm not the hugely successful international artist I once dreamt of being.⁹ I have to work out how to operate within the 'small' society of which I'm part, which is where socially engaged practice is so useful. I think you're right in identifying that in this particular moment we are part of a neo-liberal model of social politics that sets up everyone as separated individuals. This competitive individualistic model 'empowers' people up to choose the best for themselves, even if it means doing environmentally destructive things. Here is a clear example of where individual benefit conflicts profoundly with community good, and we're sold that as individual choice... I like your swarming idea... I suppose that is what socialism could mean. But, a question for you: do you think you are a conservative person? I ask because I've asked myself this a lot!

SJ: Um, no. I like to think that my actions continue to keep challenging what it is I'm doing, whatever world I'm working in. So that means I'm taking risks and I'm rocking the boat sometimes... At the same time, I've ended up, over the last few years living a pretty stable life... and I want to preserve the community I live in, at least for the sake of my children...

RR: See I wonder if me even asking that question is not relevant anymore. I mean, if you are talking about an idea of the community of difference, of the commons, what does the idea of radical and conservative mean within such a context?

SJ: The commons thinking helps us move from the individual toward a more nuanced collective. What is it you might want to change or conserve?

RR: Oh, just the simple things! To live in a community in which everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Because at a very deep, intrinsic level that I can't properly explain, I believe everyone is equal, is equally valuable as an individual within our society.

- 1 Nancy Fraser, 'A Triple Movement? Parsing the politics of crisis after Polanyi,' *New Left Review* 81 (May-June, 2013): 119–32.
- 2 Sophie Jerram, curator, *Bombs Away*, Megan Adams, Tony de Latour, Fiona Jack, Jo Randerson, Richard Reddaway, (2002–3) , at The Physics Room, Christchurch and The Adam Art Gallery, Wellington.
- 3 Refers to Jacinda's speech to parliament following passing of the Zero Carbon Act, November 7, 2019.
- 4 Refers to Jacinda's speech following the signing of the 'Christchurch Call' in Paris May 15, 2019, through which 17 governments and a number of social media technology firms pledged to curtail online hate speech following the Christchurch mosque shootings of April 27, 2019.
- 5 Hito Steyerl, 'Her Name Was Esperanza, (2017),' in *Duty Free Art—Art in the Age of Planetary Civil War* (London: Verso, 2019), 115–34.
- 6 This event was part of Julian's Thomas King Observatory Residency, Wellington. 1 November 2017 till 31 March 2019.
- 7 "The life of the artist is the denial of sex. Art comes from the inability to seduce. I am unable to make myself be loved. The equation is really sex and murder, sex and death." *Louise Bourgeois: destruction of the Father, reconstruction of the Father: writings and interviews 1923-1997* eds. Marie-Laure Bernadac and Hans Ulrich Obrist (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2008): 55.
- 8 Reference is to a work by Richard included in *Bombs Away*.
- 9 "You—the artists—emerging or established, mid-career, even if you are terrible, making work that no one else can abide, your art is of its time, but it's also of your time. We will all submerge. Life is punctuated and startled at all times by death. Art reaches out into absence, brings something back. And it's not just a matter of technique. There's also that sense of the audience looking over your shoulder... don't give up." Megan Dunn, 'Submerging Artist', *Pantograph Punch*, December 4, 2013, <https://www.pantograph-punch.com/post/submerging-artist>.

appendix

sometimes we dream monsters

2019

Video, 13.41 minutes

Richard Reddaway, Kate Devenny, Ben Brunskill, Sophie Macdonald, James Riley and students from Douglas Park School: Alessandra, Xander S, Alex, Xander G, Alizae, Will, Amelia, Shaun, Arlie, Seb, Aroha, Rico, Austyn, Oliver, Bella, Okewa, Bentley, Nikita, Blake, MJ, Casey, Michael, Chloe, Mia, Colton, Mercedes, Deliah, Maia, Elise, Liam, Eliza, Kiella, Kahlani-Jaye, Gerrard, Kate, Grace, Karanema, Hazel, Kaden, Heidi, Johan, Henare, JJ, Holley, Jaxon, Honor'ss-Dee, Issac, Jack and Jasper





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This publication is published to coincide with the exhibition *Richard Reddaway: the body of the work / it does no harm to wonder* at Aratoi Wairarapa Museum of Art and History, Masterton (23 November 2019–23 February 2020).

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/
**JONATHAN
SMART
GALLERY**
/

Yet you and I can see the world through this thing. Therefore it may have eye holes, and these must be two of, circular and between 45mm (1¾") in diameter, and spaced 65mm (2½") apart.

— Richard Reddaway
+ Janita Crow
Six Rules for Making



the body of the work

it does no harm to wonder / the body of the work reviews 35 years of art and life in Aotearoa New Zealand. Following the exhibition *Richard Reddaway: the body of the work / it does no harm to wonder* at Aratoi Wairarapa Museum of Art and History, 23 November 2019 to 23 February 2020, this publication reframes, extends and at times inverts the conventions of 'the artist's retrospective'.

Refusing any didactic position, Richard's art through those years sought to be present and reactive to the time and place of its making. In this mode, while circumscribed by the artist's name, the publication has invited six writers and three designers to wonder upon the making of identity through work, art, community and family.

Framed as much as a means to look forward as back, this publication is an assemblage of parts to be looked through and even, if you choose, to make something of.