

This is the third time we've had the opportunity to look at works from our collection here at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Taking them from our private world and putting them out into the public is always a strange experience for us. There's so much more space here to play with of course but what's really fascinating is to see how a curator makes something very different out of what we know so well. This time it's Lauren Gutsell who has done the honours for us and we want to thank her for her insights, her commitment and her patience. She has made some intriguing connections and juxtapositions that we hope others will enjoy as much as we have.

We would also like to thank Cam, Genevieve and Karina along with all the others who have worked on this exhibition. It is always wonderful to see work you love staged with such style and professionalism.

The artists and dealers already know how profoundly grateful we are to them, but thanks again anyway. Here's to you all.

We sometimes wonder how it is that two people so resolutely from Wellington have managed to develop such a close relationship with Dunedin. In the end it all comes down to people, the staff past and present at the DPAG who have been so welcoming and committed to our collection over nearly 20 years. It's been a great experience; we wouldn't have missed it for the world.

Jim Barr and Mary Barr, March 2016



front cover: OSCAR ENBERG Thomas Pynchon as 'The Sponsor' 2013 [detail]. American ash, walnut, sterling silver, oil paint on cast aluminium, chrome, nickel, brass, copper plated steel, cuttlefish wreath. Photography courtesy the artist and Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland. Photo by Alex North

back cover: GLEN HAYWARD The Seventh Day 2011. Timber and paint.

Page 2: FIONA CONNOR Murals and Print 2014. Cast aluminium

Page 3: FIONA CONNOR Stairs in Series 2008. Timber, metal and plastic fittings, polystyrene, paint. Collection of The Bowse Art Museum. Gift of Jim Barr and Mary Barr. In background: ANDREW BARBER, Wall painting (Artspace washroom), 2006, acrylic on linen. Private Loan Collection, The Bowse Art Museum.







Page 4 (left): GLEN HAYWARD The Seventh Day 2011. Timber and paint. Photography courtesy Jim Barr and Mary Barr Page 4 (right): MATT HINKLEY Untitled (16) 2011. Plastic

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Page 5 (below): MATT HINKLEY Untitled 2010. Polymer clay







Page 6: KATE NEWBY Saturday Morning 2013. Ceramic and glaze.Photography courtesy the artist and Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland. Photo by Alex North

Page 7: KATE NEWBY oh god how I love to dream let alone sleep 2015. Glass











4 Page 8: PETER ROBINSON Die Cuts and Derivations 2015. Felt. Photography courtesy the artist and Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland. Photo by Alex North

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Page 10: ANDREW BARBER Stiff Blanket (butch) 2010. Oil on linen. Private Loan Collection, The Dowse Art Museum. In background: ANDREW BARBER Wall painting (Artspace washroom) 2006. Acrylic on linen. Private Loan Collection, The Dowse Art Museum

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Page 12: ROHAN WEALLEANS Big Square Brainy 2009. Acrylic on stretched canvas. Photograph courtesy of Jim Barr and Mary Barr

light switch and the Jim Barr and Mary Barr Collection conduit

LAUREN GUTSELL

"The interior is the asylum of art. The collector is the true resident of the interior"

Arcades Project, Exposé of 1935 - Walter Benjamin

The nature of a private art collection means that, more often than not, the artworks are brought into the collector's home; sharing this private space with both the occupants and their other possessions and furnishings. This transition from dealer gallery or artist studio to a residential dwelling is predicated on a different set of concerns than that of a collecting institution. Private collectors are not restricted by any civic duties, or the need to justify their acquisitions or fill a 'gap' in the collection. Instead they have the ability to move down numerous aesthetic pathways, to support aesthetic change and purchase work simply because they are drawn to it – whether it is love, intrique, surprise or admiration – there is a desire to live with the work and see it on a daily basis.

Jim Barr and Mary Barr have an organic and instinctual approach to their art collection; they pursue personal pleasures and buy what resonates emotionally. They rarely need to discuss an artwork, and if a work does warrant a conversation then it is seldom purchased. The couple have built close relationships with artists and dealers,

which places them at the cutting edge of contemporary practice; often purchasing works immediately after their creation or even commissioning works directly. *Light* switch and conduit, the Dunedin Public Art Gallery's third major exhibition celebrating this collection, draws on Jim and Mary's recent period of collecting, most of which has taken place during their time living in an inner-city Wellington apartment. It is the very essence of materiality, the handcrafted, the fabricated or the found: the fragility and vulnerability of the objects; and the exploration of space, assemblage, and replication that anchor the works in this exhibition together in a dynamic conversation.

There is a direct relationship between the spaces that Jim and Mary have called home over the years — including a turn-of-the-century villa, a large apartment in a converted office block and a smaller, more domestically scaled apartment — and the works themselves. An apartment abundant with space, both in floor area and ceiling height, gave the opportunity to live with large sculptures and installations, such as Michael Parekowhai's colossal inflatable rabbit *Cosmo* (2006) or Rose Nolan's wall





painting Glad (2004). Their current home has brought a new dimension to their collecting; during this time Jim and Mary acknowledge that the works collected have, for the most part, become more intimate in scale, while the size of their collection itself has increased. Light switch and conduit explores the relationship between artworks and the domestic context; in the space the works inhabit, their materiality and the conceptual underpinning of the works themselves.

Light switch and conduit includes artists who, as part of their practice, consider the formal and conceptual potential of space. Fiona Connor's work hovers between perception and reality, the original and the imitation. The lines between public and private space are often reframed and disrupted through her sculptural and architectural interventions. Stairs in Series (2008) is a replica of the stairway in the office block where Jim and Mary were living. At face value the work seems monumental tons of concrete, timber and steel. In reality polystyrene and paint replace structural materials, pulling us into Connor's artifice. Stairs in Series provides Jim and Mary with a movable trace or record from an earlier time in their lives; replicating not only an element of their domestic past but also taking that memory and location, removing its function, and memorialising it in a sculptural form.

Like Connor, **Glen Hayward** explores the concept of originality by replicating and re-contextualising everyday objects; highlighting things that often go unnoticed. In 2011, Hayward created *The Seventh Day* during his artist's residency at the McCahon

House Museum. The title of the work refers to the painting Six days in Nelson and Canterbury (1950) by Colin McCahon; a work that has a vertical red brushstroke in the centre of the composition. Hayward's light switch and conduit1 is an exact replica of the electrics at the McCahon House Museum. The original was surrounded by a painting that McCahon and his wife and fellow artist, Anne Hamblett, had created: in a similar orientation to the red brushstroke in Six days in Nelson and Canterbury. While the work's realistic exterior exudes an implied functionality, it is, like all of Hayward's works, carved from wood. When positioned on a grey wall in Jim and Mary's home its presence is commonplace and could easily go unnoticed – by its very nature this artwork is naturally at home.

There is something intriguing in a work that operates on the periphery of space; where strategic scale and subtlety means it could be passed by without anyone even noticing. Matt Hinkley has become well-known for his small and detailed objects, often made of plaster, clay, silicon or plastic. Untitled (2010) and Untitled (16) (2011), are positioned in the gallery space, not hidden or purposefully concealed, but rather asking people to take the time to notice. They offer a moment of discovery for the viewer, a challenging of perceptions, while simultaneously having the potential to become an opportunity missed. Untitled (16) is the skeletal remains of a Ping-Pong ball, its surface carved away to the point before collapse. By contrast, for *Untitled* Hinkley has pushed polymer clay into a mould, resulting in an embossed print on

the surface. Hinkley's practice questions the very notion of space, not only with how a work occupies a particular space, and its impact on its surroundings, but also how space is navigated.

Kate Newby is another artist who embraces the subtle and overlooked, in both the physical manifestation of the works, and the references that underpin their creation. By working with ceramics, metals, textiles, and glass, Newby explores not only the physical properties of sculpture - materials, volume, weight and texture – but also the spaces they inhabit and in which they are encountered. She has the ability to transform the mundane and the ordinary into something precious, covetable and celebrated. The intimate groups, or clusters, of ceramic and glass objects in this exhibition are guietly coloured and are organic in form and texture. One of the most poetic aspects of Newby's practice can be found in the titles she creates - Saturday morning; Stones don't swim (Wednesday); oh god how I love to dream let alone sleep – which can reflect a passing thought at the time of its creation; a lyric from a song playing in Newby's studio; or a line from a poem².

In contrast to the diminutive scale of works by artists such as Hinkley and Newby, this collection also encompasses works by artists known for their large-scale, immersive, multi-component or architectural installations. **Peter Robinson** has never shied away from experimentation across a diverse range of materials, techniques and ideas. The exploration of materials including perspex, steel, polystyrene and felted wool,

has led to installations that can consume the space, confront the viewer and question the position of modernist sculpture. Whether they are viewed as tribal totems, taonga, binary codes, pick-up-sticks or minimalist sculptures, Robinson's felt-covered wooden rods explore the manipulation of materials, craft traditions and sometimes. collaboration and performance. Here there are three felt rods; of various textures, sizes and colours. Each one boldly shows the repetitive and time-consuming nature of its construction. By contrast, Die Cuts and Derivations (2015) exploits the flexibility of felt in its original textile state. Navy felt, cut into strips, is draped over a coat hook; exploring both the potential and limitations of the medium, while also questioning the greater whole versus the sum of its parts.

Despite their outward simplicity, **Michael** Parekowhai plays with perception in the same way that he tests expectations of everyday items; of scale, of historical and cultural traditions, and the comfort zone of his audiences. The Moment of Cubism (2009)³ is a set of six bronze lemon trees, which, due to their young age are not bearing fruit – a symbol of wealth, longevity and purification. This work was sold as individual trees, breaking up the 'nursery', whereby individual trees became more reminiscent of a potted house plant, or one awaiting its transition to the garden. Canis Minor (2016), by contrast, consists of multiple components and materials. Eyes are immediately drawn down to the large piece of retro carpet, a design and colour palette reminiscent of a fashionable 1970s interior. A 'constellation' of golf balls, and several fabricated bronze

HANDED ET EN EU

objects adorn this celestial carpet. The *Black Hole* photograph pulls everything into its void, reflecting the objects themselves, the viewer and his or her surroundings. In this installation, which simultaneously hints at a domestic interior, a star-filled infinite sky and a putting green, Parekowhai seductively plays with time and space.

Like Parekowhai, **Rose Nolan** has been a consistent presence in Jim and Mary's collection over the years. The couple have lived with three large wall paintings installed by the artist herself – spelling out RN (the artist's initials), Glad and finally Selfless, all in her well-known red and white colour palette. Her practice can be anchored in conversations around abstraction. language and conceptual art; as well as the twentieth-century avant-garde agenda, which saw art used as a tool to transform society. Nolan's work is also full of humour and personal content – giving away its motives with strategically chosen words. Despite its domestic scale, why do we do the things we do? (2008) poses a very large question that can be asked of anyone who stands in front of it.

Andrew Barber's practice has a direct relationship with the domestic environment. Having spent over a decade working as a professional house painter, Barber has a profound knowledge of his materials, their preparation and application. This knowledge informs his artwork, yet Barber transcends the two-dimensional surface of interior painting. He moves it into the threedimensional realm - bringing many of his canvases off the walls: jutting into space, acting as free-standing screens, hanging off the ceiling or painted directly on the floor. Geometric patterns, comprising of grids and lines (often diagonal), adorn his canvases - reminiscent of plaid fabric, cushions covers or venetian blinds. Barber also has an interest in the 'study' or the sketch, often creating a small work at an intimate scale and an identical work at a much larger scale which has the ability to inhabit and transform space architecturally. An example of this is the large-scale work Stiff Blanket (butch) and Study (butch) II, (both 2010). Where the monumental Stiff Blanket (butch) challenges most domestic settings, encroaching into living spaces, its smaller counterpart is more comfortable in a home environment.

Oscar Enberg's odd and ambiguous sculptures can raise many questions for the viewer. Anchored in a formalist framework, Enberg is interested in the form and style of objects — the visual aspects — including texture, colour and line. At the extreme end of the formalist spectrum it is believed that everything needed to understand an artwork is contained in the work itself; the concept, the artist, the environment in which it was created are all irrelevant. Enberg does not go that far: while his work may retain some of its secrets, he gives the audience clues through his use of titles and common everyday objects and materials. One of the three works by Enberg in this exhibition, Thomas Pynchon as 'The Sponsor' (2013), references Thomas Pynchon's 1960 short story Entropy; a dark but witty story that draws on ideas of pop culture, consumption, intoxication and entropic excess. The fabricated table is a hybrid of six different materials, Pynchon's head adorning the table sprouts a kidney-shaped wire antenna and a wreath of cuttlefish sits on the floor. This kidney shape, of both the table and the wire antenna, are based on an episode of The Simpsons where Kirk Van Houten is

attempting, unsuccessfully, to draw 'dignity' in a game of Pictionary. This mixture of materials, the highly polished and the 'handmade', are cleverly orchestrated props that conjure feelings of disorder and uncertainty.

Jim and Mary have played an important role in supporting innovative artists from the earliest stages of their careers. **Simon Denny** has been championed by the couple since he was just out of art school in the early 2000's. Among the many works they have purchased is *Deep Sea Vaudeo* (2009)⁴. Television, and its technological developments, has been a recurring motif in Denny's work. For Deep Sea Vaudeo, he created a system of multimedia works, including a series of television sets in various stages of aesthetic and technical evolution. Acting as a meditative screensaver, these works explore what was an 'industry standard' for visual display in an electronics showroom. Marciana Library/ Marco Polo Airport overlay proposal diagram *3"* (2014/2015) documents Denny's plan for the two spaces utilised when he represented New Zealand at the Venice Biennale in 2015. Here, Denny took parts of the highly decorated interior of the sixteenth century

Marciana Library, including its lavish ceiling, and created life-sized photographic reproductions. These were applied to the floor and walls at the Marco Polo Airport — raising questions about the intersection of private and public space, the accessible and the unreachable, and the historic and the present day.

An installation that consist of multiple components that function collectively, raises interesting questions when it is broken down into individual parts and enters numerous private or public collections. This is a guestion explored by **Luke** Willis Thompson, whose practice pushes and tests the limits of what an artwork is. Thompson cleverly subverts the expectations of his audience and plays with the boundaries between public and private space, often taking his works far beyond the walls of the gallery. While his works can be loaded with personal details and trauma, these are not details that are handed to the audience upfront. When considering Untitled (we people who are darker than blue) (2010-2014), viewers see two sets of framed works on opposite sides of a free-standing wall. One set are the 'originals', collected from J Weir Funeral Homes, in Ponsonby. The second set, positioned on the other side of the gallery wall, are printed in black and white. They are copies, traces or 'ghosts' of the originals – conjuring thoughts of loved ones, the social structure around funerals. and what is in fact on 'the other side'. Now dispersed across multiple private and public collections, this work demands a different type of relationship between individuals for it to operate in its original form – requiring

negotiation and discussion in navigating this shared ownership.

Known for redefining the medium of paint, Rohan Wealleans' works are notorious for conjuring up words like tactile, bulbous, magical, grotesque, colourful, or excavated. Rather than painting two-dimensionally, Wealleans builds up layer upon layer of bright acrylic paint on his selected surfaces, ranging across canvas, fibreglass, polystyrene, figures, or furniture. Taking a blade, Wealleans then carves and cuts away sections of the paint, revealing colourful cross-sections as he goes. The excavated slices are then added to other sections of the canvas building up the layers, forms, colours and textures. Morphing into thick three-dimensional forms, these works operate in a space between paintings and sculptural objects. Big Square Brainy (2009) shows the artist's virtuosity with not only paint but also the blade.

How we understand things – the urban environment, architecture, technology, philosophy, abstraction and the domestic – is one of the central concerns of **Dan Arps'** practice. Basket Case (2015), a very recent addition to the collection, positions itself somewhere between a painting and a sculpture. Its unusual and tactile texture, formed from a silicone mould, has been made entirely out of paint and polyurethane – its rigid form seeming to defy its materiality. His sculptural forms, wall reliefs and installations can often be described as messy and rough and are known for their diverse and bold colour palette and their abundance of seductive textures. In Portal 2 (2015) Arps has used a digital printing process to create a replica of a wood panel door – casually hinting at an alternative space or realm, but not transcending its own two-dimensionality. In this exhibition, Arps has supplied the door and he has also given us a set of keys in Lost Keys (2013). The keys, indiscernibly framed in a vitrine-like structure, once belonged to Gambia Castle, an artist-run space in Auckland (2007-2010), of which Arps was one of the founding artists.

Hany Armanious was a painter in his early career but by the 1990s he was exploring the possibilities that lay beyond painting's two-dimensional realm. While it may appear that Armanious has simply collected everyday objects, his relationship with the readymade is more complex. A preoccupation with casting has been a defining characteristic of his practice for decades; the artist reworking the original object, its materials and its associations with humour and wit. Lighthouse (2013) is an open black frame that sits on the floor. Contained, or perhaps framed, within this structure are a series of commercial mixing blades cast in sterling silver. Taking a variety of forms, they each have reflective surfaces and, although stationary, hint at their ability to rotate. This work not only shows Armanious' interest in form, but also his exploration of plinths and methods of display.

In contrast to Armanious' process of crafting or replication, **Xin Cheng** gathers and collects existing objects. Whether stumbled upon on the street, on the side of the road or in a second-hand shop, Cheng creates sculptures and installations that are clearly informed

by her engagement with the world. There is an intrinsic interest in how materials and forms sit together; an experimental desire and resourcefulness that permeates her work. A 'duct tape roll with found finial from Arthur's Pass that survived the Christchurch earthquake', 'unfired clay replica of Neolithic Scottish carved stone balls', and 'dried coconut from Indian grocery stores'5 – these are a collection of strange and even unrecognisable items perched on two plywood planks, strung together and precariously held up with string. Notions of regeneration, adaption, endurance and innovation foster Cheng's belief that things are constantly in flux. There is potential for change, for materials and objects to be reshaped, re-contextualised and, ultimately, transformed into art.

Campbell Patterson similarly draws directly on his everyday experiences and surroundings in his work. Across ten TV screens we see the living room of Patterson's mother serving as the backdrop for his films, which documents his attempts to lift his mother for as long as he can. Ritualistic in nature, the performances, which began in 2006, are filmed each year on his mother's birthday. The duration of the lifts has varied over the years, from several minutes to his record time of 6 minutes 20 seconds from 2012. This series traces and documents the changes to Patterson, his mother and their immediate surroundings, with humour and determination. Like most of his videos, this work is immediate; it is not edited and it is captured only by his video camera – no lavish sets, no film crew. Patterson takes his immediate surrounds as both his inspiration



and his stage; recording, exploring and competing with his domestic environment. His works often include elements of risk, pain and endurance – such as placing ice-blocks in his mouth until they melt – while also hovering in the realm of the compulsive and of the self-restrained – like attempting to hand draw over 1000 'perfect' circles as in *Punishment 1* (2011). He explores and tests his physical and psychological limits with raw improvisation and absurdity.

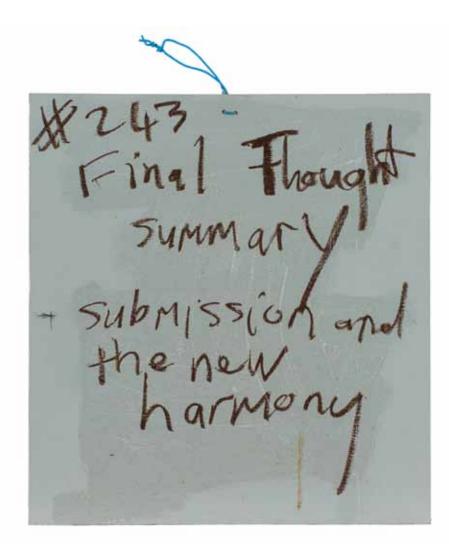
The final work in this exhibition represents one of the most consistent threads in Jim and Mary's collection; **et al**. Since the 1970s people have pondered the question; who is et al.? A female or a male? One artist or a group? et al. is in fact an anonymous artists' collective, or to be specific, a cast of pseudonyms, that including Lillian Budd, Blanche Ready-made, and P. Mule. A Latin abbreviation for 'and others', et al. uses the united agency of a collective and anonymity as tools to negate issues of authorship, gender and originality. Each pseudonym, with its own artistic additions to the collective conversation. explores group culture, behaviour, technology, politics and religious practices – both past and present. There is a poetic undertone to this collective's investigation; manifesting in installations that include photographs, collages, text works, readymade sculptures and films. et al. has been an important reference point in not only Jim and Mary's collecting, but also in their lives; Final thought (2006) is a fitting finishing point to Light switch and conduit. Numbered '243', this work appears to record a passing thought, one of submission, acceptance and authority; but more than that it represents a practice that has resonated in Jim Barr and Mary Barr's domestic sphere for decades.

Lauren Gutsell, March 2016

- A 'conduit' is defined as 'a pipe or tube for protecting electrical wires or cables'; or 'a person or organisation that acts as a channel for the transmission of something' (Oxford Dictionary).
- 2. 'oh god how I love to dream let alone sleep' was taken from the poem For the Chinese New Year & For Bill Berkson by Frank O'Hara (published c.1964).
- 3. The title is taken from John Berger's 1969 book *The Moment of Cubism and Other Essays*.
- 4. Also the name of an exhibition shown at Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Cologne in 2009.
- 5. Taken from the materials used in Xin Cheng's *String Shelf* (2011): nails, string, plywood, duct tape roll with found finial from Arthur's Pass that survived the Christchurch earthquake, pork bone, paper model of a bookstand with rocks inside, found turned wood vase, unfired clay replica of Neolithic Scottish carved stone balls, dried coconut from Indian grocery stores, dried basket fungi, wood fired and glazed raku replica of Neolithic Scottish carved stone balls.

Page 16+17: ROSE NOLAN Why do we do the things we do? 2008. Acrylic on board

Page 21: et al. Final thoughts 2006. Oil stick and acrylic on board. Jim Barr and Mary Barr loan. Collection of The Dowse Art Museum





















Page 22: OSCAR ENBERG Thomas Pynchon as 'The Sponsor' 2013. American ash, walnut, sterling silver, oil paint on cast aluminium, chrome, nickel, brass, copper plated steel, cuttlefish wreath. Photograph courtesy of Jim Barr and Mary Barr

Page 22+23: OSCAR ENBERG Conner Family Values 2014.
Brass, black chrome, copper, gold passivate and nickel plated cast bronze. Photography courtesy the artist and Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland. Photo by Alex North

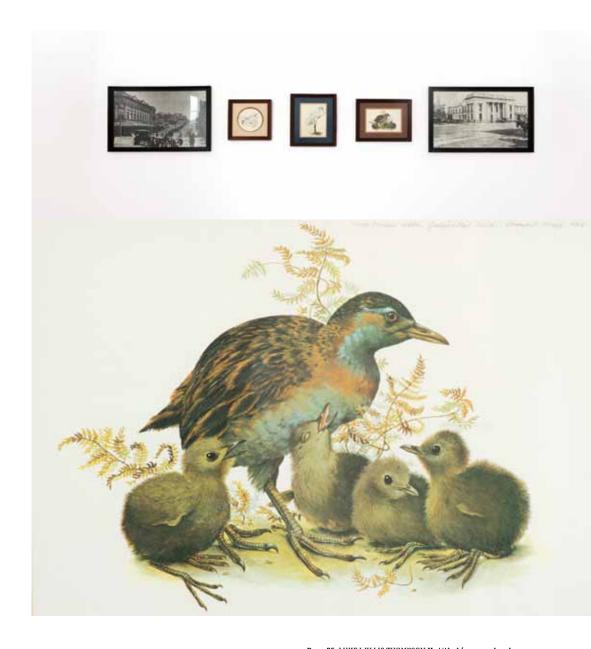
Page 23: OSCAR ENBERG Sunset for St Lucia 2014. Swamp Kauri, agate, apache tears, onyx, tourmaline. Photography courtesy the artist and Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland. Photo by Alex North





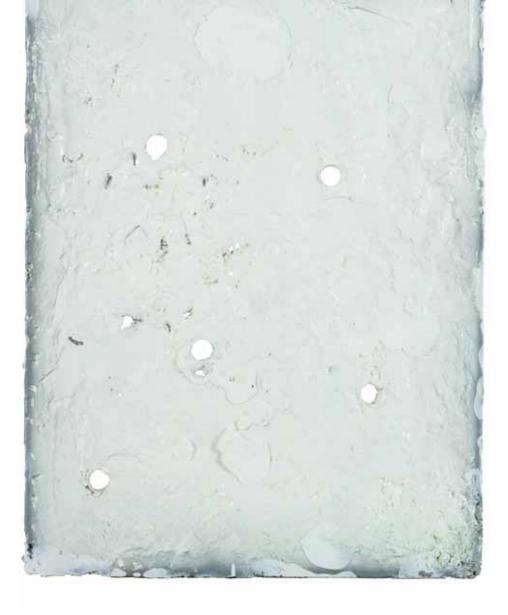
Page 24: SIMON DENNY Marciana Library /Marco Polo airport overlay proposal diagram 3 2014. 2 digital prints on Plexiglas, digital prints on brushed aluminium, coloured anodised aluminium brackets

Page 24: SIMON DENNY Deep Sea Vaudeo 2009. [screen capture] Video installation, TV and cabinet. Jim Barr and Mary Barr loan. Collection of The Dowse Art Museum



Page 25: LUKE WILLIS THOMPSON Untitled (we people who are darker than blue) 2010 – 2014. [installation and detail] C-type prints. Photography courtesy the artist and Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland. Photo by Alex North. From the following collections: Jim Barr and Mary Barr; Chartwell collection, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki; Peter Shand, Auckland; and Private collection, Auckland



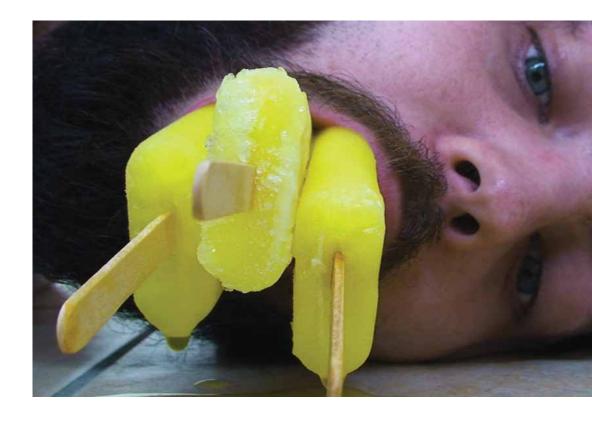


Page 26: DAN ARPS Lost Keys 2013. Polyurethane, acrylic, coloured stones, keys, wood and steel, key rings, woollen yarn, construction glue, epoxy glue, clear acrylic. Also shown: KATE NEWBY It's a good time here, but it's better down the road 2014. Glazed and high-fired porcelain and stoneware, cast silver and bronze. LUKE WILLIS THOMPSON Untitled (we people who are darker than blue) 2010 – 2014. C-type print

Page 27: DAN ARPS Basket Case 2015. Polyurethane and paint







◆ Page 28: HANY ARMANIOUS Lighthouse 2013. Pigmented polyurethane resin, sterling silver

◆ Page 29: XIN CHENG String Shelf 2011. Nails, string, plywood, duct tape roll with found finial from Arthur's Pass that survived the Christchurch earthquake, pork bone, paper model of a bookstand with rocks inside, found turned wood vase, unfired clay replica of Neolithic Scottish carved stone balls, dried coconut from Indian grocery stores, dried basket fungi, wood fired and glazed raku replica of Neolithic Scottish carved stone balls. Photography courtesy the artist and the split/fountain. Photo by Asumi Mizuo

Page 30: CAMPBELL PATTERSON Lifting my mother for as long as I can 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015. [left to right: screen capture from each year in order of production].

Single channel DVD.

All Jim Barr and Mary Barr loan, collection of The Dowse Art Museum (excluding 2013-2015).

Page 31: CAMPBELL PATTERSON 3 in 1 2011. (screen capture) Single channel DVD

Light switch and conduit: The Jim Barr and Mary Barr Collection was exhibited at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery between 8 April and 14 August 2016.

Visit the Barrs' blog at www.overthenet.blogspot.com

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