Assay/ Essay

Artist-run in Aotearoa New Zealand

Gabrielle Amodeo (Ed.) ISBN——978-0-473-37840-0

Support comes in various forms, and I have been a recipient of many, many types of support to get *Assay/Essay* to this point.

Thank you to Enjoy Public Art Gallery and the Chartwell Trust for your integral and deeply appreciated backing. Thank you to my contributors (without whom there would be no book) and the countless other people who, through sharing their experiences and expertise, have shown me what an exceptional treasure our artist-runs are. And thank you to designer Ashley Keen, for taking so many pieces and making it into this gorgeous whole.

Most especially, thank you to Emma Ng and Louise Rutledge, and, latterly, Sophie Davis. I can't encapsulate in a single sentence all the many ways you three women have helped me.

So, simply,

thank you.

Preface—

The idea was simple: a publication looking at artist-run spaces in Aotearoa New Zealand. And even in that first statement, just in the words I used, the complexity of the territory began to reveal itself.

Is artist-run spaces too limiting? Is artist-run initiative more inclusive? Do I then make it a standard across the publication, and expect my contributors to use it instead of terms they personally established as fit for their endeavour? (Variously initiative; space; project; project space; art project space.) No, I would simplify to artist-run and otherwise let the contributors use what suits them. After all, the adverb is more important than the noun it's modifying. Yes. Artist-run.

But if we're talking about artist-run, how do I justify including the Blue Oyster Art Project Space and Enjoy Public Art Gallery? These trust-governed institutions, which garner substantial Creative New Zealand funding, have demonstrably moved beyond their artist-run roots. But therein lies their importance: their roots are artist-run, and the decision to become a charitable trust is noteworthy.

And that was the easy stuff! What about trying to capture records that disappear almost as fast as the artist-runs themselves? How about unravelling the apocryphal from the real in a history littered with—indeed, sometimes built on—gossip and stories? What about longevity? Or funding? Or careerism? Or how to address and counter Auckland-centric narratives, male-dominant narratives, and pākehā-dominant narratives? Thick and fast, the simple 'publication that looks at New Zealand artist-runs' revealed the multiplicities of the territory's themes, characters, problems and triumphs.

For a small country, we have a surprisingly rich and textured history of artist-run activity, and with this richness is a related complexity. This publication could have gone in any one of so many directions; perhaps as a whole its greatest problem is that I couldn't decide on one direction. I wanted it to explore everywhere, but inevitably (actually, obviously) it couldn't.

It especially doesn't tackle bigger issues that sorely need tackling, most notably Māori and Pacific representation in artist-runs. Along with the rest of society, the arts need to address the white-privilege still in operation; this publication, regrettably, does not do that.

However, although the publication has its shortfalls, it offers a collection of views that explore the facets of artist-runs in New Zealand. And these views—from artists, curators and writers—reveal the forms, the functions and the roles that artist-runs have in the New Zealand arts.

Assay/Essay includes first-hand reflections from founders of artist-runs that have recently closed. It opens with Grace Ryder's description of running North Projects—the most recently closed at the time of writing. Daphne Simons, Karl Bayly and Robbie Fraser also reflect on their experiences of opening, running and closing Canapé Canopy, PILOT and FERARI respectively.

Lauren Gutsell considers her position as a trustee of the Blue Oyster and sets out to demystify The Trust: what it does, why it exists, and how it relates to the space itself. This is countered by Emma Bugden's look at galleries that not only operated off their own bat—self-funded and self-reliant—but also blurred the boundary between artist-run and commercial. Emma Ng addresses the ephemerality of artist-run archives (both physical and digital) asking how something that is intrinsically, almost necessarily, transient, establishes longevity as recordable art history? And Yolunda Hickman's page works speak from the artist's position. Taking the idea of an artist-run as a career 'stepping stone', her search-engine-generated titles give form to a collection of self-help mantras for emerging artists: sometimes hopeful or poignant, sometimes jaded and cynical.

Assay/Essay was produced in the near-aftermath of the earthquakes in Ōtautahi Christchurch, and accordingly, substantial attention is paid to the unique situation Christchurch arts found itself in. Transcripts by Dog Park Art Project Space and North Projects, produced for the symposium *Curating Under Pressure,* are included as historical documents recording this point of crisis for the arts. Responding to these documents, Keir Leslie's searing criticism of how funding dollars were spent in Christchurch after the earthquakes serve as a reminder of what ought to be considered important when supporting the arts in future events: not the eponymous temporary narrative of 'the transitional', but a foundation of autonomous, critical and engaged art programming.

Finally, the insert attempts to record, as completely as possible, the year (but not the order) of opening for each artist-runs from 1992 onwards—the beginning of the heyday of artist-runs in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In their more archaic senses, assay and essay mean attempting, positing and testing things. These words helped me establish a simple framework for what I broadly see artist-runs doing, and what I tried to do with this publication.

—Gabrielle Amodeo

Fig. 01

Grace Ryder

North Projects—

Many times I've been asked how North Projects started and I struggle to articulate a single 'a-ha' moment. In my final year of art school, I became increasingly frustrated with my institutional environment and my half-hearted attempt at a fine arts degree. I opted, instead, to invest my time in Christchurch's independent project spaces, volunteering and drinking my way through them. By doing this, I became part of a larger, more discursive community and conversation that I felt I could learn from and contribute to.

Here, I met the other eventual co-founders of North Projects, Sophie Davis and Sophie Bannan. They were people I enjoyed the company of and we motivated each other. With the impending closure of crucial post-quake spaces Dog Park Art Project Space and Room Four, we had many conversations about the future of the Christchurch arts community. We had also heard of some funding aimed at events for Christchurch youth. Then, over the course of a very few weeks the three of us found a property on Trademe, signed a lease and applied for that funding as North Projects. And so we began, quite suddenly, in late 2014.

In the fresh new year of 2015, after the initial funding had run out and four months into North's life, we finally had the chance to reflect on and voice what our collective ambitions were. We discussed curatorial ethics and standards, and our expectations of one another. We also discussed the importance of working with artists from outside of Christchurch alongside local artists and peers. There was an unspoken understanding that we expected a level of professionalism as a collective, even if it sometimes felt like we were anything but. While we had 'serious ambitions' as a space and tried to keep everything running smoothly, things were sometimes chaotic. The important thing was that we were providing a platform for diverse critique and open discussions, a space for our friends and colleagues to meet, talk and socialise.

Following this time of reflection, we decided to pursue elusive Creative New Zealand funding through Quick Response grants. We established a year's worth of deadlines, individual exhibition timelines and contracts. We tried to work to these dates, sharing the many gallery jobs without setting formal 'roles' and communicating constantly (re-reading our group text thread during this time is both amazing and horrifying). These self-made deadlines are still in place today (as I write this we are three days from closing, the ultimate deadline).

Most of the time doing this felt like unnecessary additional pressure, and it wasn't the way we would have chosen to operate, if we each had our way. However, we did manage it, often only just scraping by, and sharing an honest sigh of relief and a well-deserved hug at the openings. I understand now that this is normal for most spaces and institutions: underpaid and very much overworked.

Throughout 2014 and 2015, and while running North Projects, we were between us completing masters and honours degrees while working paid jobs. At one point in 2015, I was completing my honours, working as a gallery host at Christchurch Art Gallery, and was cooking and nannying for three families.

This period was also when an article in *The Press* enthusiastically exclaimed, "North Projects sits poised between home and gallery".[1] There is no denying the domestic qualities of the building; it is a former domestic space. This domestic likeness, however, overwhelms the article, except for a brief acknowledgement of the predominantly white interior being the only thing making the space recognisable as a gallery—never-mind the artwork.

Over time, we noticed how articles about North played up this domesticity. We also started to realise that this wasn't simply because of the physical qualities of the gallery space, but also because it was run by three young women. North Projects, like my nannying and other 'women's work', required a lot of emotional labour. And although I see a common thread between the way North has been represented as a home over a gallery and my line of work throughout the beginning period of North, I resist this reading. The 'feminine' and 'domestic' provided an easy point of departure for a male journalists writing about three young females running the only artist-led space in the city.

North Projects played a significant role within the Christchurch arts 'ecology', something I am close-to exhausted from. We intended to fulfil a need within our community for as long as it was valuable, or as long as we could sustain it. As much as we operated the space for ourselves, it was also to support our peers by exhibiting local, national and international practitioners. We haven't just shown our friends or those within the immediate Christchurch circle (only thirty-four per cent of our programme has been by local, Christchurch based practitioners). Our reason for being within this ecology was to diversify it.

In spite (or perhaps because) of our ambitious programme, we were made very aware of our position and worth within this 'ecology' and other people's quick and easy conditioning of it. Our age and gender opened us to very much gendered 'criticism' of the space. My favourite was a conversation in which we, together with another colleague, were called 'overconfident young women in this city'. By being outspoken and ambitious, in combination with our age and gender, this person, I assume, felt his power threatened.

Artist-run initiatives have a short life span: that's the reality of them. By the end of 2015, Sophie Davis and I were running North Projects alone. We decided that at two years we would reassess the space, our accomplishments and our individual circumstances. Throughout 2016, Sophie and I toyed with many options for North, including working towards charitable trust status. But the best and easiest option was the one we've chosen—to close and step away. This is a happy exit. We feel like we've achieved what we wanted to as individuals and as a collective.

There have been a handful of people who have backed North from the outset. I hope they know who they are for we have no adequate way of showing them. One of these people didn't realise the opening of Ana Iti's *Is the past a foreign country?* was our last. He mentioned to me, whilst filling up his glass, that there was a certain air to the opening, a feeling that was not present at the others. I told him it was our last. He sincerely hugged and thanked me for a job well done. He said we will be missed and I agree with him.

North Projects was a place that housed a broad, inquisitive, questioning and critical community, who came regularly to our gallery and engaged in great art with us.

Grace Ryder is a curator and gallerist based in Ōtautahi. She has been a co-director of North Projects since its establishment in mid 2014, alongside fellow co-founders Sophie Davis and Sophie Bannan. Recent projects include: *Soft Indicator*, Hana Pera Aoake and Nathan Gray (North Projects, 2016); and *LoverdoseTattoo*, Lauren Burrow, Eleanor Cooper, Melanie Kung, Vanessa Preston and Evangeline Riddiford Graham curated by Sophie Davis and Grace Ryder (PILOT, Hamilton, 2015).

1—Warren Feeney, "Earthquake Shattered Home Reborn as Art Space", *The Press*, 18 May, 2015, Art and Stage.

Fig. 01— Closing of North Projects, October 2016

SEARCH TERM:

STEPPING STONES

SEARCH RESULTS

ANSWERING THE CALL/IGNITING THE FIRE

If it's tough finding a good matcha latté or liquorice infused ale in your neighbourhood, why not kick-start the gentrification process?

Open an artist-run space today!

COMPREHENSIVELY ADDRESSES EMOTION REGULATION NEEDS

Meet like-minded people in your area.
Take comfort in kindred spirits who understand your love for art.

See: Skinroom building community in the Hamilton suburbs; Whau the People engaging in West Auckland; Second Storey starting a support group of art school friends; and We Should Practice bringing art to the wider world.

WHANGĀREI HEADS HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION

If you can't show at the gallery, bring the gallery to you.
With rising costs of living and the housing crisis looming large, creatives must get creative when it comes to space. When life gives you lemons, grow a tree.

Organise an exhibition in your tree/flat/garage/car/bedroom/bed/shower. Disrupt domesticity, usurp the White Cube, interrogate institutional authority, hold the academy to account!

And have a party.

See: F U Z Z Y V I B E S, with the mullet model—gallery out front and living out back; Canapé Canopy had the best trees in town; and the fond memories of FERARI bringing the milkshakes to the yard with Mr Whippy free all night at the annual end of year fundraiser.

NB: It's a good excuse to get around to some housework.

A MEMBER-OWNED FINANCIAL INSTITUTION

Got some money burning a hole in your pocket?
ARIs might be the investment for you!

See: Gloria Knight

STONE AND WATER WORLD LANDSCAPE SUPPLIES

Don't leave the ARIs to the WMAs[1]!
They've already got the rest of the (art)world.
Blockade the WMAs! Reclaim the ARIs!
Return to the fringe, the outside, the edges, the people, the truth! Art used to make change; remember the Situationalists? Renew alternative spaces for alternative people! Carve an identity and speak the truth!

Be the change you want to see in the (art)world.

See: Single Brown Female exploring age, cultural heritage and physical appearance within an arts discourse; dance with FAFSWAG celebrating queer Pacific culture within the wider arts community; and Shit Sandwich Foundation aiming to usurp capitalism by playing the game

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIONARY SERVICES

As we move forward into the future, [the bureaucracy] plans to focus on urban regeneration by revitalising public spaces to create a diverse and vibrant community hub to reinvigorate the community through creativity and innovation.

Opportunities abound for creative practitioners of all creative disciplines and media to engage with [the bureaucracy] to collaborate to make a plan to cope with the transition and make the most of the creative opportunities that emerge as we move towards the future.

TL:DR: Community Chest / Chance:
Advance to Go (Collect $200)

See: Snake Pitt and PILOT making nice with local property owners to use empty spaces for art.

For more extreme examples, see Dog Park and North Projects, kicking against post-quake bureaucracy since 2012

1——Have you been living under a rock? 'White Male Artists'…

K. Emma Ng

gallery.net—

Artist-run spaces are often Frankenstein in nature: mutated organisations held together by the spit, love, tears and oily rags of many, who come together in shifting configurations. As a collective endeavour, the memory of an art space can be hard to retain. Institutional knowledge ebbs and flows, and an art space's physical archive might range from a collection of miscellaneous posters kept rolled in the cupboard, to the immaculately labelled file boxes of RM.[1] More often than not, the history of an artist-run space is held in fragments—small books, ephemera and, now, dispersed through online event listings.

The internet presents the illusion of an external archive, an accessible-anytime supplementary brain that provides reassurance to the forgetful and the overloaded. One can tap a few scant keywords into Google to dredge up the rest of the iceberg—knowledge once known, now forgotten, and probably a whole lot never remembered in the first place. But when one goes in search of something very specific, or a detail that is very small, this external memory can begin to seem a little hollow. It's difficult to find online information about New Zealand's artist-run spaces that are no longer operating. It seems as if all it takes to disappear into the thicket of real-brain-only history is to stop paying for website hosting.

There's a lot of energy, at the present moment, around remembering the artist-run spaces of decades past (this project among them), and a lot of interest in this history. Perhaps this occurs as the 90s begin to feel truly historical and those involved reach a comfortable enough position for hindsight; or perhaps as a generation of curious artists and curators who weren't witness to this history emerge. I am one of the curious, having been born in 1990, when New Zealand's influential first artist-run spaces were about to open—and as New Zealand households were about to dial up their internet connections for the first time. Mystery amplifies the aura surrounding the artist-run spaces that I never knew, and it still surprises me when I go to Google them and come up empty-handed. Spaces such as Teststrip, High Street Project and Fiat Lux are all remarkably invisible in the online history of New Zealand's artist-run spaces. Some likely never had a web presence to begin with; others return dead-end 404s from tantalisingly graspable urls. Mention of these spaces triggers the flicker of nostalgia in the eyes of others, while the rest of us stick to experiencing it second-hand, and the occasional blurry glimpse of a familiar artist or curator milling about in rare, inherited copies of *LOG Illustrated* and *Natural Selection*.

Hard-copy-only is the general condition of much of New Zealand art history (though one that initiatives such as the digitisation of collections and The Dowse Art Museum's Wikipedia Project have begun to address). I suspect some of this gappiness and difficulty of access is deliberate, or at least that those involved are somewhat grateful for how challenging these things can be to find. Much like decade-old *MySpace* pages, the accessible digital archive presents opportunities for embarrassment that didn't exist before. Enjoy's website hosts a comprehensive archive, with a listing for each exhibition in its sixteen year history. Supporting, as we do, many artists at early stages of their practice, I'm sure it's crammed full of work that artists would now look back on as excruciatingly 'first-solo-show'. These archive pages are not only accessible but also *visible*—with our analytics indicating that many visitors still find their way to pages such as *The Horoscope Show*[2] when searching the internet for information about Tessa Laird or Andrew Barber.

In 2016, we significantly overhauled the Enjoy website (one of a flurry of galleries getting rid of their out-dated sites that have been too expensive to redo on a whim). As part of the process we've been revisiting the archive and discovering how much of a construction its version of events might be. One suspects it presents a rather revisionist history of Enjoy at certain points, contested and complicated by material from our physical archive, conversations with eye-witnesses, and accounts found in the contemporaneous hard copy periodicals we have on hand. This gave Louise Rutledge, our Communications and Publications Manager, the opportunity to do some satisfying sleuthing as she worked her way through the archive, uncovering wild disparities such as this show from 2003, described on the old website as follows:

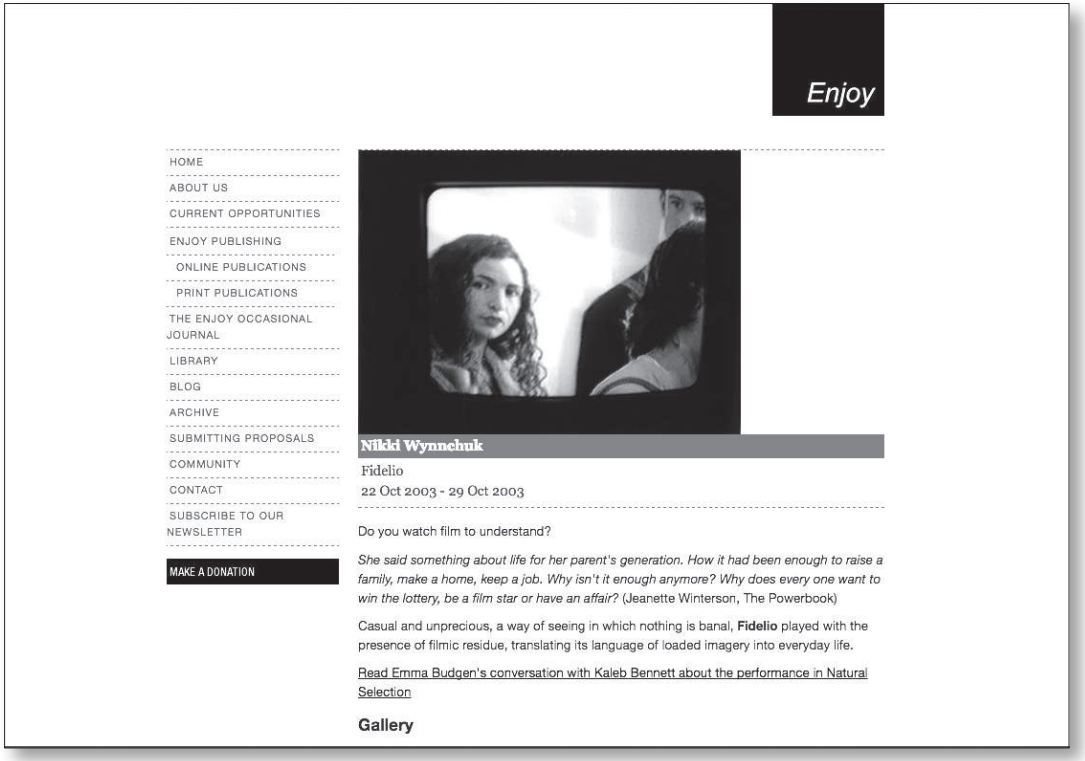


Fig. 02

K. Emma Ng—gallery.net

Quite a lot is obscured by this brief and opaque description, and a very different picture of *Fidelio* emerges from discussion with those who were there on opening night. An interview by Emma Bugden, published in *Natural Selection*, opens by describing the exhibition's premise:

> 4 good-looking women were hired by the artist to attend the exhibition opening and behave detached and impassively. They were given two films—*Lost Highway* and *eXistenZ*—as reference points, and they were to initiate no conversation themselves, merely respond to others. A video was

made of the project, which was subsequently shown at the gallery as the exhibition.[3]

Emma's interview makes clear the social stakes of the work: embarrassment and awkwardness. For the exhibition-goers whose interactions with these attractive women were filmed and later screened at the gallery, you can understand their hope that this would remain buried.

In the interview, Emma also mentions Enjoy's message board, which hosted vigorous, often heated discussions of Enjoy's activities. The discussion forum is long gone but I wonder, do people miss that sort of thing? Does it figure into the nostalgia? Or is there quiet relief that that phase of internet interactions is over and those parts of the site have been tidied away? It's certainly difficult to conceive of a gallery hosting an online forum like that now. For spaces like Enjoy, this erasure is closely related to its movement into a different era of institutional history. But it seems an equally distant prospect for younger artist-run spaces too, which tend to emerge into the present moment with a highly developed image-consciousness, as suggested by Nick Spratt when interviewed by Gabrielle Amodeo for Art New Zealand:

> With most of the spaces that I've seen recently in Auckland they've had a much clearer sense of what they're about right from the beginning—to the point that they're already highly brand-conscious before they've opened their doors.[4]

Some launch with a brand so polished, so on-trend, it's sometimes difficult to tell where the irony ends and the earnest professionalism begins. Ultimately though, it's probably unhelpful to attempt comparison with the artist-run spaces of decades past. These spaces are born of a different time and run by artists who've been steeped in the digital since childhood—who not only understand the digital environment they operate within, but understand the digital as a part of their physical environment.

In many ways the conditions of an artist-run space are sympathetic to the qualities of the internet. Artists move fluidly between art spaces, forming interconnected networks of related practices and spaces. The relations between potentially geographically disparate spaces essentially function as a web of nodes. And while it tends to conjure the image of a gallery, the term 'artist-run space' accommodates forms such as pop-ups, archiving practices and, now, practices that occupy a purely digital space too.

An obvious New Zealand example is Window. Resourced by the University of Auckland, it has had a dual onsite/online programme of contemporary art projects since being founded by Stephen Cleland, Michelle Menzies, and Luke Duncalfe in 2002. As a 'mobile agency', CIRCUIT Artist Film and Video Aotearoa New Zealand also provides a significant and primarily digital space for the viewing, sharing, and promotion of New Zealand artists' work. Other recent examples of online contemporary art projects are the Blue Oyster's *The Presence of Absence*[5] and The Physics Room's *natural sympathies and weird weather*.[6] Such projects see the potential of digital space explored as a curatorial form and a vehicle for publishing. The work is not just presented online for reasons of convenience, our experience of it is shaped in ways similar to the ways curators and artists might shape the physical experience of encountering a work in a gallery space.

It will be interesting to see what happens to such projects over the next decade, particularly with regard to the standard practices that might emerge for archiving online work. Questions around how work made for the digital space might best be stored, collected, and made available are still up for debate. For now, physical archives push a lot of buttons: nostalgia, order, and materiality. RM's raw card files and its label maker; Enjoy's utilitarian metal shelving and numbered binders with those red vinyl covers; the Blue Oyster's white archive boxes, one for each year, neatly lined up in the old bank vault behind the office in their new space. One wonders where to find such fetish in the digital.

Emma Ng is a writer and curator from Aotearoa New Zealand. She has recently departed Enjoy Public Art Gallery, where she was Manager/Curator. Emma is currently undertaking an MA in Design Research, Writing and Criticism at the School of Visual Arts in New York City.

1——As lovingly described by Gabrielle Amodeo: "raw card A4 boxes on plywood shelving, the spines of each box carefully labelled—using a very special label maker—with white text embossed onto black tape. Not merely printed, *embossed*". Gabrielle Amodeo, "Eighteen Years, Six Rooms: Nick Spratt & RM," *Art New Zealand*, Autumn 2016, 44.

2——http://www.enjoy.org.nz/aquarius-pisces-aries-taurus-gemini-cancer-leo-vir

3——Natural Selection 1.4 http://naturalselection.org.nz/archive/1/1.4_Emma_Bugden.pdf

4——Gabrielle Amodeo, Ibid. 47.

5——Phillip, Brendan Jon, *The Presence of Absence* (Dunedin: Blue Oyster Art Project Space, 2015), http://www.son-la.co/presence/

6——Boswell, Rebecca, ed. *natural sympathies and weird weather* (Christchurch: The Physics Room, 2015), http://www.naturalsympathies.net/

Fig. 02——Screen grab from previous Enjoy website: http://www.enjoy.org.nz/aquarius-pisces-aries-taurus-gemini-cancer-leo-vir

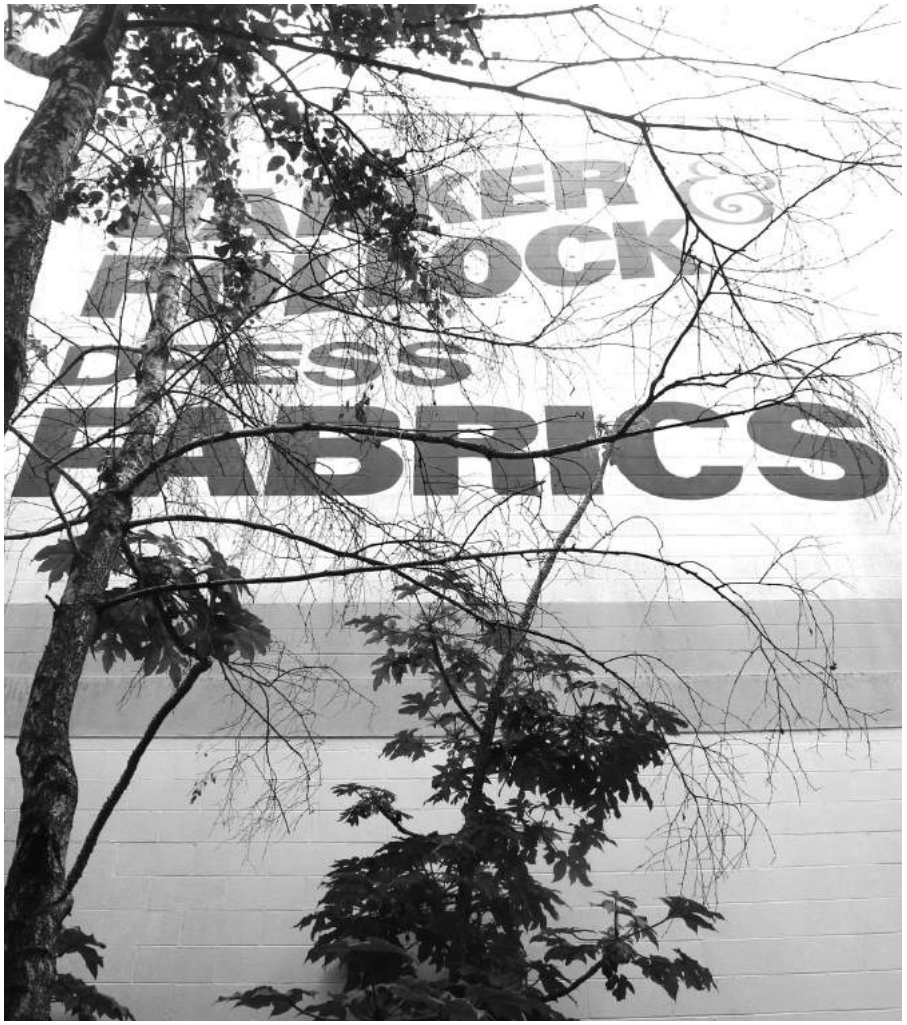


Fig. 03

Daphne Simons

How we turned our backyard into a short-term project space— Canapé Canopy

In 2015–2016, we were living in a small place on Cross Street in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. This place happened to have a garden out the back with some depressing patches of grass, the occasional plant or shrub and some surprisingly well-established tropical plants; a huge banana plant with an abundant banana yield and two tall mountain paw-paw trees.

The garden was surrounded on all four sides by white apartment buildings and overlooking balconies. It felt simultaneously like being in Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* and at the bottom of a well.

The Plan:

1——Re-plant the grass—it looks depressing.

2——No friends, and not our own work (a reaction to the feedback loop that some artist-run spaces create by showing their own/friends work, who are also then the majority of the audience).

3——Contact a mixture of international and local artists—they are welcome to extend the invitation and develop the show as they like.

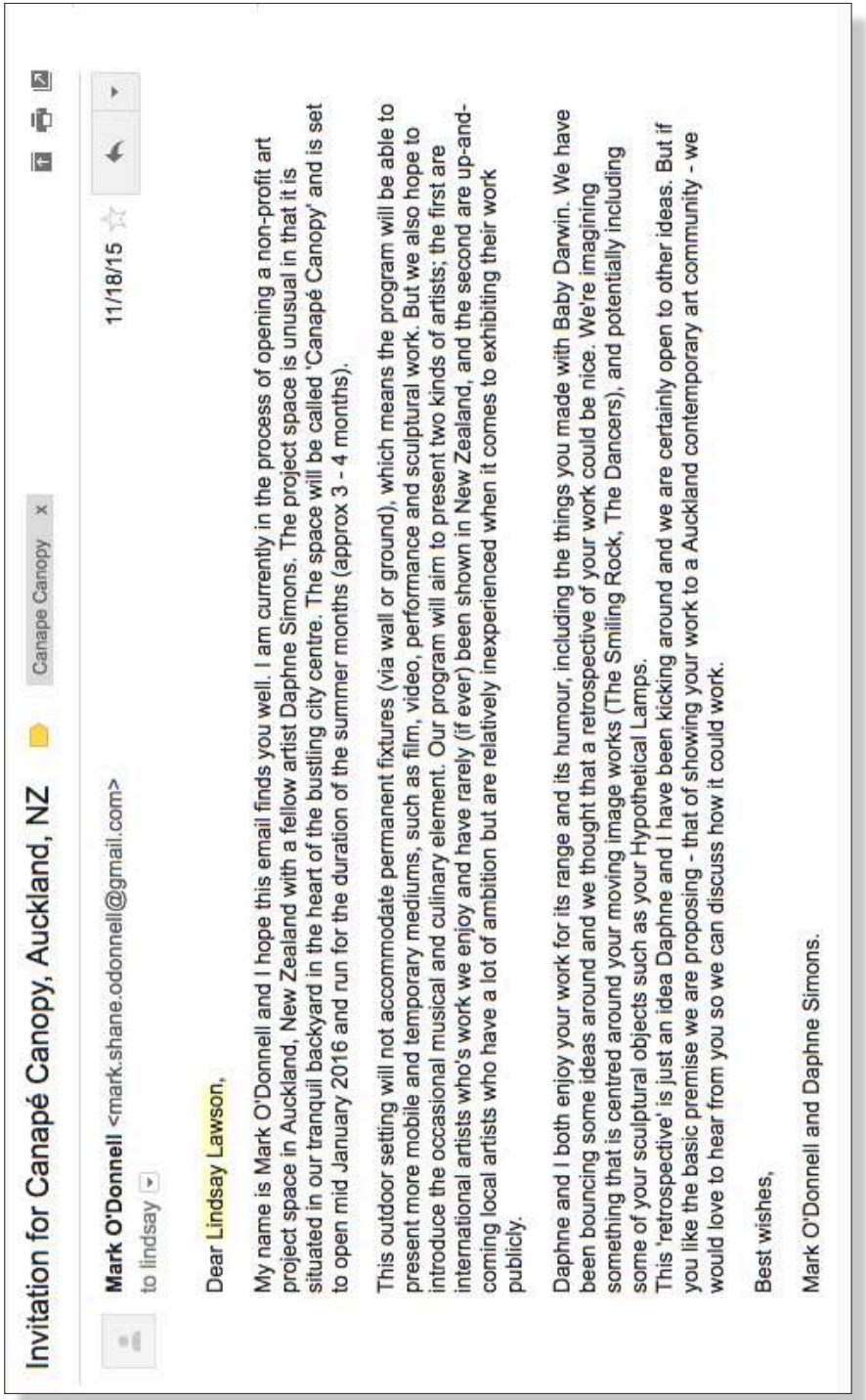
4——Only female artists—Mark's idea; why not set a constructive parametre? But this decision doesn't need to be made explicit.

5——Short-term summer programme (3–4 months), because the weather will turn bad towards April. Begin organising well in advance. No proposals—not enough time. Two weeks per show, couple of days to de-install and re-install.

6——Artist comes first. Our role is as technicians/facilitators rather than directors or curators.

7——Note to self: in propositional email be as polite, honest, clear and specific to that artist's work as possible but with low reply expectations to avoid disappointment.

Daphne Simons——How we turned our backyard into a short-term project space——Canapé Canopy


Invitation for Canapé Canopy, Auckland, NZ

Canape Canopy ×

Mark O'Donnell <mark.shane.odonnell@gmail.com> 11/18/15

to lindsay

Dear Lindsay Lawson,

My name is Mark O'Donnell and I hope this email finds you well. I am currently in the process of opening a non-profit art project space in Auckland, New Zealand with a fellow artist Daphne Simons. The project space is unusual in that it is situated in our tranquil backyard in the heart of the bustling city centre. The space will be called 'Canapé Canopy' and is set to open mid January 2016 and run for the duration of the summer months (approx 3 - 4 months).

This outdoor setting will not accommodate permanent fixtures (via wall or ground), which means the program will be able to present more mobile and temporary mediums, such as film, video, performance and sculptural work. But we also hope to introduce the occasional musical and culinary element. Our program will aim to present two kinds of artists; the first are international artists who's work we enjoy and have rarely (if ever) been shown in New Zealand, and the second are up-and-coming local artists who have a lot of ambition but are relatively inexperienced when it comes to exhibiting their work publicly.

Daphne and I both enjoy your work for its range and its humour, including the things you made with Baby Darwin. We have been bouncing some ideas around and we thought that a retrospective of your work could be nice. We're imagining something that is centred around your moving image works (The Smiling Rock, The Dancers), and potentially including some of your sculptural objects such as your Hypothetical Lamps.
This 'retrospective' is just an idea Daphne and I have been kicking around and we are certainly open to other ideas. But if you like the basic premise we are proposing - that of showing your work to a Auckland contemporary art community - we would love to hear from you so we can discuss how it could work.

Best wishes,

Mark O'Donnell and Daphne Simons.

Fig. 04

A number of artists that we contacted did not reply to our emails, and it was surprisingly difficult to get in contact with people in our own country if we weren't already friends with them. We thought Facebook would be the easiest way to make contact, but our messages would just disappear into some mystery inbox folder. We didn't end up having any musical or culinary based things, other than Sarah Webb's homebrew at the last show. We did send an email to American musician Young Thug about creating some new tunes, video clips and showing some of his drawings for a project—he's renowned for working fast—but we got no response.

Unaccounted-for Factors

I find this funny now, but initially we were planning projects around the fact that we couldn't attach things to the wall or the ground because we were renting the place, whereas we should have been more concerned about the weather.

Those initial assumptions meant we set out favoring un-fixed mediums like performance and moving image. But as it turned out, five out of the six projects had AV equipment and the sixth one was definitely not weather-proof. This meant that whenever it was forecast to rain, we didn't dare put the work outside. In between the open hours, all the works were stored in our kitchen/living area. We would then re-install the shows each night we were open. We hosted the openings and open-hours in the evenings, between 6–9pm, because we both worked full-time and I worked weekends. Although Mark had an actual room, I was sleeping in the hallway/dining room. It became very normal to eat and sleep amongst the stored art and miscellaneous gallery equipment (projection screens and other structures we built). This made for a pretty ridiculous couple of months. I found that people were always very respectful when they realised we also lived there. Anyone that needed to use the bathroom and saw our living arrangement seemed to understand the precariousness of the situation. The only time we officially showed anything indoors was for Lindsay Lawson's show, where one of her 'hypothetical lamps' lit up the garden, so we screened her moving image works in our dining room/my room/hallway to avoid light interference.

The temperamental weather meant we became a kind of online weather service and posted daily updates on our website, Facebook and Instagram. We embedded a three-day weather report on our website to keep people in the loop. Looking back, I think this was quite interesting: it was a different way of managing opening hours to that of most galleries, which emulate the regimented opening hours of a shop. We were at the mercy of even the slightest drizzle. It still surprises me that it never rained when we had the openings! Luckily that was when most of the people came to visit the shows.

The physical space remains today but is hopefully enjoyed in other ways by new tenants. We decided to move on and finish Canapé Canopy when the weather turned sour and our lease came up. The website (which still gives weather reports for Auckland) and social media platforms continue to exist as an online archive. This was the first time Mark and I had organised a fully fledged, albeit short term, project space. (The closest thing we had done previously was invite artists to make tiny versions of works for a model barge-boat gallery in a makeshift pool in a carpark.) I think it was important that we were clear about the physical conditions of the space when we first contacted the artists, so that they weren't in for any nasty surprises. I think of Canapé Canopy as a really valuable learning experience: the fast paced programme and unusual space provided the artists and ourselves with challenges that (I think) made for six very diverse and refreshing projects. Ultimately, the uncertainty of the weather and its effect on the opening hours never seemed to faze the artists, and I am very grateful to them for taking up that challenge. The artists' enthusiasm and pragmatic attitude is what made the experience so worthwhile.

Daphne Simons is an artist living and working in Auckland. From February to April 2016, her and Mark O'Donnell co-organised the outdoor project space Canapé Canopy. Her other recent projects include: *Fly-suit (a live demonstration)* (NZ on TV Gallery, Auckland, 2016); *Riff Raff – Are we there yet?* with Li-Ming Hu, (GLOVEBOX ltd, Auckland, 2016); *Programme* (Casbah, Hamilton, 2015); *Roof Access/ Public Sculpture 101* (Artspace Chartwell Stairwell Commission, Auckland, 2014-15).

Fig. 03——Outlook from Canapé Canopy's backyard garden
Fig. 04——Example of propositional email to artists

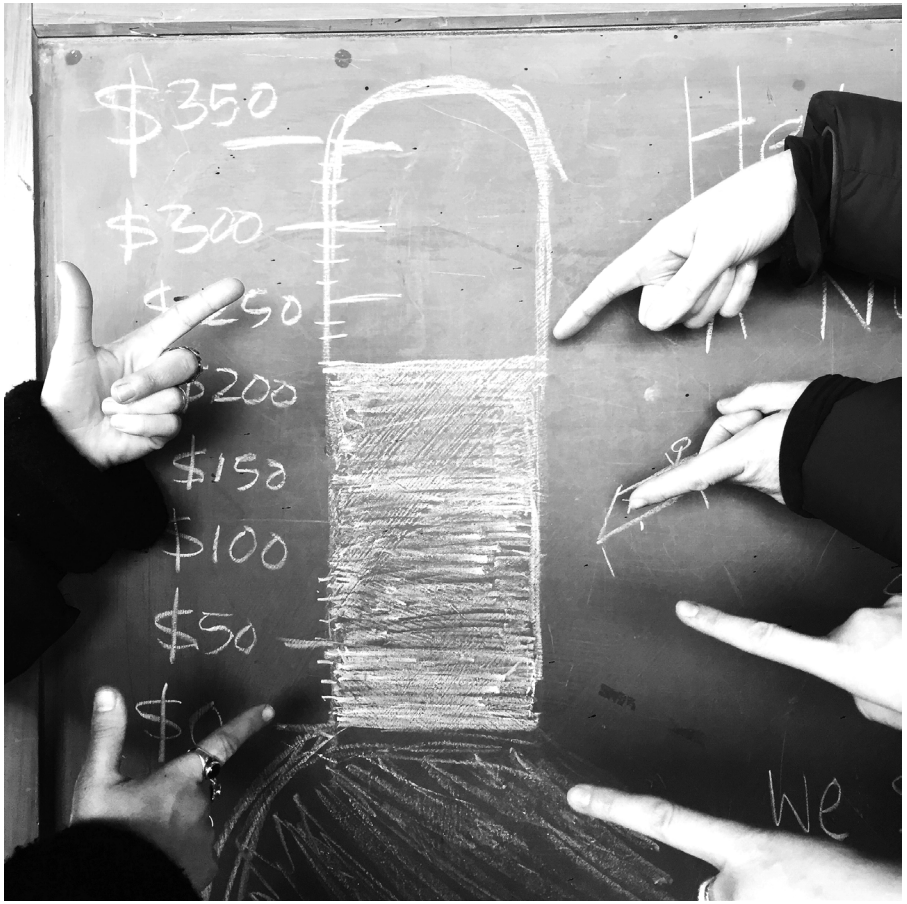


Fig. 05

On Board—
The Blue Oyster Art
Project Space

Lauren Gutsell

For me Dunedin is home; I am fortunate to be part of a generation that has always had the Blue Oyster Art Project Space as an anchor in my creative community. However, being only twelve years old when the Blue Oyster was established in 1999, my understanding of the gallery's history has been, in many ways, conveyed to me through other people's stories and memories. The Blue Oyster was founded at a time when there were no spaces dedicated to experimental contemporary art in Dunedin, with former artist-run initiatives including Everything Inc, Galerie Dessford Vogel and The Honeymoon Suite having closed by the late 1990s. The Blue Oyster and the Blue Oyster Arts Trust (BOAT) were formed in response to this gap in the local art scene, establishing an independent gallery space that served both artists and those interested in experimental contemporary art.

The Blue Oyster, at that time an artist-run space, was formed by Emily Barr, Steve Carr, Wallace Chapman, Douglas Kelaher and Kate Plaisted. Initially located on High Street, the space aimed to promote and develop contemporary art and establish a gallery that was very much committed to, and for, the people of Dunedin. As an artist-run initiative, the Blue Oyster had the opportunity to avoid much of the structure and bureaucracy associated with public or commercial galleries. The Blue Oyster had a particular focus on emerging and experimental arts forms, supporting a mixture of national and international artists who pushed boundaries and brought a range of art practices (painting, sculpture, installation, photography, film and digital media) into various conversations.

Across four locations: 154 High Street; 137 High Street; the basement of Moray Chambers (24b Moray Place); and 16 Dowling Street (its current location), thirteen directors, eight administrators, and fifty board members (past and present), the Blue Oyster has evolved into a credible and professional not-for-profit contemporary art space that still shares many of its founding principles. It has developed a significant reputation as a contemporary art space in New Zealand and has made great strides in building that reputation internationally. The nature of a not-for-profit art space, which sees all money earned or donated put back into the objectives of the organisation, means that resources are limited and the gallery is dependent on the hard work and initiative of the staff.

I have often found myself in thought-provoking discussions surrounding the Blue Oyster and the community's perception of its role and function, including: what does it really mean to be experimental? Do you have to be emerging to be experimental? Are experimental and emerging the same thing? What defines a not-for-profit space? What is the difference between a project space and an artist-run space? And what does the Board of Trustees actually do? When invited to write this text, with the aim of demystifying the role of a Board of Trustees, it seemed like a fitting opportunity to put words together in response to some of these questions.

At its foundation, the Board of Trustees was comprised of the founding members of the Blue Oyster—the artists that had instigated and developed the gallery. They were solely responsible for the success of the space, from its exhibition programme and community outreach, to funding and daily operation. As the demands of the gallery outgrew the capacity of the board members, a gradual separation between the board and day-to-day running of the space developed. With growth has come the need for infrastructure, which has seen the position of Director, who also serves as curator, become more prominent: shifting the emphasis of the Board of Trustees away from operations and towards governance.

There are two words that immediately come to mind when I consider the role of the Board of Trustees: responsibility and support. The Director reports to the board, and the board remains responsible for many facets of the organisation. These include overseeing the financial position of the gallery, defining where the space is going and how it is going to get there, and the appointment of the Director, which has a significant impact on the gallery's development and effectiveness. The Board of Trustees meets once a month. During each meeting the members review the monthly financial statements and a report, written by the Director, which documents what has happened at the gallery over the previous four week period. It is a significant duty to be financially responsible for an organisation—to be accountable, morally and legally, for where funds are being spent and why. These monthly reports are a clear reminder of that responsibility. To be in a position to support the hard work and dedication of the Director is a very valuable part of being on the Board of Trustees. During my time on the board (since March 2015) Chloe Geoghegan has been at the helm. Chloe brings an amazing amount of energy and motivation to the role. The success of the gallery is largely due to the work that Chloe pours into the space.

The BOAT requires a minimum of five members and a maximum of eight. A quorum of three is required to officially conduct a meeting; and fifty-one percent of the board must be present to vote on binding policies and decisions, majority rule. Each trustee holds a one year term on the board with the option to continue beyond this, and most do. In addition to the financial position of the organisation and Director's reports, the board discusses a range of topics at monthly meetings including policies, exhibition programming, future planning, fundraising and community development—all conversations that are recorded in the Minutes by the secretary. Recently, the Board of Trustees, in conjunction with the Director, has been redeveloping the gallery's strategic plan. This document, which is reviewed every three years, outlines the vision and goals of the organisation and serves as a guide for its operational activities, key priorities and goals for a specified period of time. The strategic plan informs the decision-making and planning for all aspects of the gallery. It is important that collectively the board has a clear understanding of the Blue Oyster's vision and purpose—to consider what makes the Blue Oyster distinctive and its reasons for existing.

Throughout the gallery's history there have been different and shifting approaches to programming. Historically the board had curatorial control over the exhibition programme, functioning as a curatorial committee. More recently this curatorial responsibility has been transferred to the Director, moving the board into an advisory role. The Blue Oyster has, predominately, called for exhibition proposals each year, from which comes the majority of the exhibition schedule, while also leaving space for projects initiated by the Director. The Director presents the proposals and

other exhibition concepts to the board and a discussion on each project takes place. These discussions are a platform for asking questions, raising concerns or offering helpful advice and ideas. From this point the Director is in direct conversation with the artist(s) and involved parties. The three year term of the Director means that the curatorial style of the Blue Oyster shifts and moves with each new appointment. As with the Director, the trustees also change over time. This revolving process alters the unique set of expertise available, bringing in fresh perspectives and ideas.

As a current trustee I am consciously asking myself certain questions: are we satisfying the goals of the gallery? Are we complying with the requirements of current funding and presenting a compelling reason for the continued funding of the space?[1] Are we, as the board, meeting the expectations of the artists and the community? And are we developing our own skills to further the gallery's reputation? Do we measure the success of the space by the very factors that follow experimental practice—where often the process of getting there might mean more than the apparent success of the outcome? It is also important that the board considers the environment external to the organisation. This information—including other contemporary spaces or potential competition for scarce resources—can be used as a measure to ensure that the gallery's aims and position remain relevant, distinctive and achievable.

The Blue Oyster's reputation continues to grow and the organisation has, throughout its lifetime, become more professionalised. However, within a competitive environment with limited resources, the yardstick is always changing. Expectations and aspirations of the gallery must evolve, with changing Directors and trustees, in order for the gallery to stay current, experimental and be able to meet funding criteria. There is something to be said for being a part of a very competent and motivated group of people all working towards a common goal—people who are also in roles external to the Blue Oyster but are engaged with, and part of, the local community that the organisation serves. At its core, the Board of Trustees is a governing body: accountable for the success of the gallery, the goals and aims of the organisation, and making sure that the space, and the Director, have what is needed for a sustainable and successful future.

Lauren Gutsell is a curator and writer based in Dunedin. She is currently the Assistant Curator at Dunedin Public Art Gallery and has been on the Board of the Blue Oyster Art Project Space since March 2015.

1—Whether that is government funding through Creative New Zealand, Dunedin City Council or a range of charitable trusts and generous patrons.

Fig. 05—Blue Oyster Arts Trust, Fundraising at the Otago Farmers Market, 2016

SEARCH RESULTS

FOR A HOME YOU WILL LOVE

What goes (pop) up, must go (pop) down.
Leave popping-up to homeware outlet stores. Instead consider a ‘temporary’, ‘evolving’, ‘transitive’ exhibition (see advice re: suffixes on page 55).

> *See: Think back to Parlour channelling the Victorian drawing room; Cuckoo laying eggs across New Zealand; Elbowroom taking over empty shops and new kids on who knows what block Public Domain “never the same place twice”.*

QUICKLY CREATE VISUAL PATHS

Small space, big opportunities! Don’t let the size fool you—this space packs a punch. Central landmark character building, prime street frontage and 24-hour foot-traffic. Build brand visibility while you sleep!

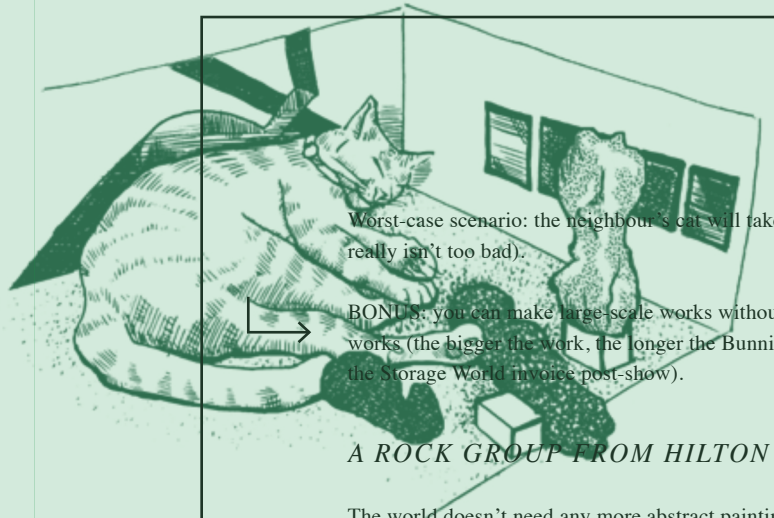
> *See: Rockies building on the Teststrip, Gambia Castle and Sue Crockford legacy in the K’Rd window, sandwiched between a Laundromat and an eternally empty retail space; meanwhile Meanwhile started in a window and is about to expand.*

CARING BOUTIQUE CHILDCARE

Build your own world and play exhibition in a dollhouse. Channel your inner Thomas Demand, try to remember fabrication skills taught by school technicians and soon enough you’ll have a gallery perched on your coffee table.

No one actually goes to the show anyway; they just look at the photos online so they can talk about it at Peach Pit. You’ll establish a whole new ‘model’ of playful practice. And with web presence your model world can live forever!

Keep in mind that the devil is in the detail: take care with your Exacto knife; invest in a new lens (upgrade the iPhone = tax deductible); avoid Blu-Tack (it leaves a residue); and phone a friend who knows Photoshop.



Worst-case scenario: the neighbour’s cat will take a nap on your gallery, (which really isn’t too bad).

BONUS: you can make large-scale works without actually making large-scale works (the bigger the work, the longer the Bunnings receipt pre-show and higher the Storage World invoice post-show).

A ROCK GROUP FROM HILTON HEAD ISLAND!

The world doesn’t need any more abstract paintings. Build a post-studio practice instead: you’ll save on studio rent and can easily travel to exotic exhibition locations. Integrate art into the way you want to live.

Try music, cooking, running, knitting, writing, fashion, gardening, reading, dog grooming (you’re welcome to borrow mine anytime).

White walls and long-term leases do not an art practice make. Step outside the privileged spaces model with their high over-heads and administrative gymnastics. Start an initiative.

The medium is the message and the message is people.

> *See: POP Projects’ Pasture Paintings, with their urban meadows and bee sanctuaries; Whau the People, bringing people together and engaging with the world; D.A.N.C.E. Art Club, with their world-record dance-athon; and Taharangi Hou, a series of wānanga that began at the Blue Oyster and will travel around the country. In fact, follow the Blue Oyster’s workshops calendar generally for socially minded art practices and events.*

A NEW APPROACH TO ADDICTION THERAPY

Do you find yourself falling into the same patterns time and time again?
Are your circadian rhythms aligned with awards application deadlines?
Do you red flag the seasonal emails calling for proposals, hoping this will be ‘your year’?

You’re not alone; we’ve been there too.
Maybe it’s time for a new approach.

Fig. 06

Dog Park Art Project Space

Feel Good Success in the Transitional City—

Founded in 2012, Dog Park Art Project Space was an artist-run space located in the industrial area of Waltham, Christchurch. For two years directors Chloe Geoghegan and Ella Sutherland worked with local, national and international practitioners to develop a monthly programme of exhibitions. While the space was initiated at a time when very few arts institutions were in regular operation and the focus of creative projects in the city shifted toward a more transitional approach, Dog Park worked to remain consistent with and connected to other gallery-based organisations outside of Christchurch.

Feel Good Success in the Transitional City

This paper was presented at the conference Curating Under Pressure, *The University of Canterbury (November 2015), in association with the Goethe-Institute.*

From its very beginning Dog Park was not an endeavour founded in response to the trauma of the earthquake, but a continuation of the lineage that existed before and still exists today. It was one of the few spaces in Christchurch that contradicts the still growing force that has become known as the Transitional City.

While there was no escaping the devastation and trauma of the quake, when we got together in early 2012 to establish an artist-run space, we decided that the most beneficial project we could facilitate for the art community would offer consistency rather than be temporary or transitional. There was no ignoring the fact that things were anything but normal, but we did not want Dog Park to be dictated by those circumstances.

Our position is difficult to define in positive terms, which is why we prefer to open our talk by thinking of Dog Park as contradictory and oppositional. As the term 'transitional' was yet to become the principal idea that would define post-quake Christchurch, using disaster and the ongoing recovery as reference points never informed our strategy.

While typically exhibitions are developed through existing networks and personal connections, the sharp decline in visitors to post-quake Christchurch had a significant impact on the formulation and progression of new projects. We wanted to encourage practitioners from outside of the city to visit and to make work that would be entering into a relevant and worthwhile conversation. We did this by employing the same level of rigour and detail you would experience outside of a 'special' context.

While the earthquake halted openings, programmes and events, the roll out of graduating practitioners and new audiences did not stop. Having graduated ourselves from Ilam School of Fine Arts, we appreciated the importance of a stable, consistent and connected community. We were part of a scene that taught us how to grow a practice that would translate locally, nationally and internationally. With this gone, we could see that there was a large and complex curriculum of innate knowledge that felt near impossible to articulate.

No matter the context, every artist-run project is subject to critical analysis and is, at some point, obliged to respond to challenges and temptations to conform along the way. Despite the fact we had embarked on the most common activity you could do as emerging practitioners, in the context of Christchurch it often felt as though we were doing something completely alien, going against the prevailing tone of the Transitional City and the commercial notions of 'feel-good success' that came with it.

The idea of us suggesting that our programmed artists make work tied to a natural disaster felt problematic on many levels: we did not want to build a project around a disaster, and neither did they. Because the transitional scene was highly visible, well funded and significantly backed by local and international media, we often found ourselves inadvertently receiving feedback on how poorly we were doing as a contemporary art community in the face of change.

During the 'Creative Summit' hosted by Wellington organisation Letting Space for their 2013 transitional project 'TEZA', local academic and transitional driver Barnaby Bennett made an antagonistic statement about the contemporary art community in Christchurch. According to artist Ali Bramwell's published response to the Summit, titled *Love and criticality,* Bennett claimed that our community in particular, "was failing to adapt and were collectively showing signs of professional malaise or even irrelevance in the face of the post-quake environment".[1] Bramwell then observed Bennett retreat from this point, "unwilling or perhaps not yet able to elaborate a partly formed thought and commit to any concrete criticism of specific examples and excusing himself (somewhat disingenuously) as a non-art expert". Bramwell lamented this action, citing it as "a conversation that would have been productive to pursue".[2]

Documented in issue 7 of local graphic designer Matt Galloway's publication *The Silver Bulletin,* is the transcript of a panel discussion held in mid-2012 where Bennett claimed he was not "here in September and haven't been here for any of the major earthquakes."[3] In this same panel discussion, Gap Filler co-founder Coralie Winn stated: "I do have a bit of a bone to pick with the visual arts community… I've been a little bit disappointed by the number of responses. I know people have been stunned by this whole thing and I don't want to discredit the very valid reasons as to why, but acts of art—guerrilla or otherwise—really do contribute".[4] Winn again took this position in a 2013 SCAPE 7 panel discussion, further claiming that artists did not do anything to help the community after the earthquake, implying perhaps that they were unwilling and too disengaged to contribute to collective feelings of goodwill.[5]

This panel discussion took place in July 2012, approximately one month after Dog Park had opened. This was also when we received our first grant of $10,000 from Creative New Zealand's Earthquake Recovery Grant. To give those who are not familiar with our funding context an idea of scale: the same round awarded $100,000 to Gap Filler for two years of operation.[6] This funding pool was initially directed toward supporting independent artists who lost their studios and a lifetime of work. The fund has since progressed to also become the first port of call for larger transitional projects from Art Beat to Art Box to Arts Voice; Gap Filler, Life in Vacant Spaces, FESTA, Rekindle, The Exchange, TEZA and of course Street Art.[7]

As stated in an article published in August 2012 for *Artist Alliance,* our goal was to become "a point of reference for the redevelopment of Christchurch's cultural landscape—to be a space that consistently contributes and challenges its context and the status quo".[8] It is important to acknowledge here that before the status quo became the Transitional City, it was the contemporary art community pre-quake, a community that was as we stated in the same article: "reasonably exhausted by the time the earthquake physically destroyed it. […] Christchurch was suffering from a loss of momentum and despite a few glimmers here and there, the city was predominantly recognised for its slower pace and drab infrastructure." [9]

In a guest editorial piece for the aforementioned issue of *The Silver Bulletin,* Bruce Russell described how bored we were in post-quake Christchurch, but then states that this was nothing new. He wrote:

> Boredom always coexists with everyday life. […] The earthquakes took a lot. They also gave us a holiday of a new kind. Not a vacation of planning and choice: but a festival of destruction, a chance to see things we never imagined in the city. New views, new jobs, new pastimes, new meetings, new sadness and new fun. The balance of boredom was upset.[10]

Until, he continues:

> …The urbanists began their work. It was important work, we were told: with clipboards, and tablet computers. They asked questions, made notes. They gathered people together and persuaded them to imagine a new city. […] We had to form focus groups and conduct exercises in our imagination. They affixed a Post-it note to our future and took a photo. And they laminated it.[11]

It was fast becoming apparent that we would not only have the past status quo to respond to but a new one as well: the blossoming Transitional City.

The notion of the 'transitional' has prompted much discussion in this community. In a larger city perhaps the two approaches need not have met, but in Christchurch there has been no avoiding this new mode, to the point where at times we were even asked why we didn't acknowledge our

own project as transitional. One could argue that we contributed to a mixed panorama of reasonably progressive projects that should be considered as socially engaged art practice, alongside Gap Filler and everyone else doing things outdoors and in.

We all supported each other and our projects: borrowing things, lending these things, volunteering, participating, donating and attending. We were truly engaged in our local context. However the contrasts we have highlighted for you so far demonstrate the tense division of opinion between: the unhelpful closed off contemporary art community versus the all-inclusive socially conscious gap-filling community. We know it is not that simple, so we wish to address our argument within the broader ideology of socially engaged practice.

In her 2012 text "Microutopias: Public Practice in the Public Sphere" Carol Becker states: "The challenge to navigate the tension between public and private realms is hardly new to artists".[12] And that: "…artists often gravitate to what is missing". So what is missing here? For Gap Filler, it is buildings. They have gaps to fill. For the artists that Gap Filler have a bone to pick with, what is missing is ongoing critical dialogue generated around contemporary art practice. Maybe this isn't something that can be visualised but it was certainly an ever-present, driving concern for us.

In Claire Bishop's 2008 *Art Forum* article, 'The Social Turn,' she explains how political motivations lead to artistic gestures that don't quite hit the intended mark of resistance because:

> There can be no failed, unsuccessful, unresolved, or boring works of collaborative art because all are equally essential to the task of strengthening the social bond. While I am broadly sympathetic to that ambition, I would argue that it is also crucial to discuss, analyse, and compare such work critically as art.[13]

Bishop then cites the observations of French philosopher Jacques Rancière to demonstrate that this denigration of the aesthetic ignores that art is founded on a systemic confusion between autonomy and heteronomy:

> Untangling this knot—or ignoring it by seeking more concrete ends for art—is slightly to miss the point, since the aesthetic is according to Rancière, the ability to think in contradiction: the productive contradiction of art's relationship to social change, characterized precisely by that tension between faith in art's autonomy and belief in art as inextricably bound to the promise of a better to come.[14]

For us, the Transitional City does nothing to untangle the knot art creates, or in fact tangle it. The transitional concept ignores and misses the point, which is that "the aesthetic doesn't need to be sacrificed at the alter of social change, as it already inherently contains this ameliorative promise".[15] Dog Park was the necessary contradiction to what was happening as the Transitional City was growing rapidly around us. We needed to create a path to critical discourse and collaboration that confronted a darker, more complicated social practice beyond this local one-off disaster context. A stable programme of monthly art projects opens up more possibilities for artists to address broader issues that plague our contemporary context every day.

We continued to invite artists, designers, writers and curators to Dog Park. New work was developed, relationships were formed, and conversations around the projects, the space and Christchurch grew and contributed to a wider network of exchange. As our community reconnected, we had hoped for some space from the transitional ideology, but because of its ability to be neatly wrapped up, packaged and broadcast we had no option but to continually negotiate it.

In an interview in 2013 on Radio New Zealand's *Arts on Sunday* the host, Lynne Freeman, introduced and discussed Dog Park in a transitional context.[16] For her, the Transitional City was the answer; the perfect feel-good sound bite. To us, it felt ridiculous to have to entertain such irrelevant feedback when Dog Park was providing a completely different mode of engagement. Or, when publications such as *Art News* wrote about Christchurch inhabitants becoming delightfully "mobile, adaptable, flexible, and even nomadic at times", we were operating from a 90 metre squared tilt slab industrial unit, about as permanent and contradictory as you can get.[17] To us, the transitional model was not only uninteresting to the artists we were engaging, it was irrelevant to our own experience running the space.

Each person involved with the project, whether volunteer, artist, writer, designer, technician or director was required to negotiate a set of practical realities the same as you would anywhere else. There was nothing novel about our business as usual approach; we wanted to ensure that the project was generating tangible learning situations that translated beyond Christchurch. In 2013 Canadian artist Scott Rogers exhibited at Dog Park. Later that year he documented his experience for *Canadian Art:*

> In this environment, it is undoubtedly difficult to sustain an art community. Nonetheless, the mood on the ground is one of determined persistence. Three galleries contribute most substantially: Dog Park Art Project Space, The Physics Room and Te Puna O Waiwhetu (Christchurch Art Gallery). Dog Park exemplifies the ethos of New Zealand artist-run spaces. […] They have put together a regular program of exhibitions by mostly New Zealand artists. This programming has been driven by its quality and relevance to the local artistic community, rather than any themes related to the earthquake. Christchurch's cultural landscape is still dominated by the idea of disaster recovery, so making room for an art conversation other than this was a vital initiative.[18]

While the 'Transitional City' may have made sense for those selling it—the perfect case study for academic and professional pursuits—we wanted to create a reality governed by critical production where contemporary practice was normal, not irrelevant.

It took a huge amount of determination to maintain our program but we feel lucky to have been part of the small but rich community of like-minded groups, organisations and individuals that supported the re-emergence of contemporary dialogue in Christchurch. This challenged our perceptions of the function of contemporary art and socially engaged practice in this context. For us, Dog Park was a silver lining hidden within the challenges we faced as emerging practitioners, and we are hugely grateful for this opportunity to tease out some of the critical issues we have been processing with a diverse audience of curators, academics, students, colleagues and past supporters of Dog Park.

1—— TEZA 2013, Transmission #5 Respondent: Ali Bramwell, "Love and criticality", http://teza.org.nz/2013/12/01/5-respondent-ali-bramwell-love-and-criticality/
2——Ibid.
3——Barnaby Bennett, "Public Talk #1" in *The Silver Bulletin* 7.5 (August 2012): 6.
4——Coralie Winn, Ibid.
5—— SCAPE 7 Public Art Discussion, Saturday 21 September, 2013 (attended by one of the authors), http://2013.artsfestival.co.nz/scape-7-public-art-discussion
6——Creative New Zealand, Who Got Funded, Earthquake Emergency Assistance Grants March–June 2012, http://creativenz.govt.nz/results-of-our-work/who-got-funded/funding-rounds/earthquake-emergency-assistance-grants-march-june-2012
7——Data collected from Creative New Zealand, *Who Got Funded (2011 to present)*, http://creativenz.govt.nz/results-of-our-work/who-got-funded
8——"Back Page" by Dog Park Art Project Space for *Artists Alliance Zine* (August-September 2012): 2.
9——Ibid.
10——Bruce Russell, "'No: Your City'—Formulary for a new Christchurch" in *The Silver Bulletin* 7 (June 2012): 3.
11—— Ibid.
12——Carol Becker, "Microutopias: Public Practice in the Public Sphere" (April 2012): 4.
13——Claire Bishop, "The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents" in *Artforum* Vol. 44 (February 2006): 180.
14——Ibid,183.
15——Ibid.
16——Interview with Lynn Freeman, Arts on Sunday, Radio New Zealand (RNZ), 2 September, 2013, http://radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/artsonsunday/20120902
17——"Sketches" in *Art News New Zealand* (Spring 2012): 42.
18——Scott Rogers, "New Zealand: Art Under The Long White Cloud" in *Canadian Art*, 29 August 2013, http://canadianart.ca/features/2013/08/29/scott-rogers-in-new-zealand/

Fig. 06—— Dog Park Art Project Space

Fig. 07

North Projects

The Problems of Being ‘Post-Quake’—

Operating out of a former dwelling and courtyard in Ōtautahi Christchurch from August 2014 to October 2016, North Projects supported the development of emergent and experimental work by local and international practitioners.

North Projects was originally co-founded and directed by Grace Ryder, Sophie Davis and Sophie Bannan. From the end of 2015, the initiative was co-directed by Grace Ryder and Sophie Davis.

The Problems of Being ‘Post-Quake’

The following essay is an updated and condensed transcript of a presentation delivered at the conference Curating Under Pressure, *The University of Canterbury (November 2015), in association with the Goethe-Institute.*

North Projects was an artist-run initiative that operated out of a former dwelling and courtyard on Bealey Avenue, Christchurch Central, from August 2014 to October 2016. During that time, we held monthly exhibitions of work by local and national, emerging and established practitioners, alongside regular public programmes.

It is significant that North Projects began operating after the initial emergency response period in Christchurch. At this point in time, self-identified ‘transitional’ initiatives such as Gap Filler had already firmly positioned themselves as agents of regeneration in the city’s rebuild, and the city had gained international attention for its public and participatory arts projects.

Indeed, North Projects developed in a climate where emerging arts initiatives tended to be viewed through the specific lens of being ‘post-quake’. In this highly charged, post-disaster context, Christchurch’s creative community has been celebrated in New Zealand’s mainstream media—as well as anecdotally—for its resilience, innovation and community-mindedness over the past five years. Although this narrative has its problems, it seems to carry an evocative power that has been able to capture the enthusiasm of a broader arts audience.

‘Post-quake’ arts initiatives are often perceived to embody the specific values that have been reinforced through this rhetoric. From 2013 onwards, many groups and activities that were diverse in ambition tended to be lumped together under the ‘post-quake’ umbrella (although this has become less frequent as time goes on). This tendency often obscured the critical capacity of initiatives such as North Projects, shifting attention away from our programming and operations, and deflecting it elsewhere.

Our discussion considers some of the problems and potentials of being ‘post-quake’ and what it means to be artist-run under these pressures and circumstances, posing a counter to some of the values and narratives were projected onto emerging arts initiatives in that city during this time.

Fig. 08

‘Site-specific’

The most obvious example of how North Projects might have embodied a transitional or ‘post-quake’ moment was our physical premises, a flat that was converted into a non-residential; non-commercial studio space following earthquake-damage a few years prior to our lease. We leased this space month-by-month. (Apparently the landlord, who we never met, was a little old lady who was also owned a large number of run-down flats on Bealey Avenue.) The physical locale of North Projects was important, especially in a city where there is still a need for conventional exhibition spaces, as well as social spaces for artists. It was a site that provided a particular kind of character and atmosphere that was embraced by our audience and exhibiting artists alike.

We never attempted to conceal or downplay the ‘as is, where is’ quality of our physical space, yet we often found the desire to see a particular kind of novelty in it frustrating. Google ‘North Projects’ and one of the first search results is a news article with the headline ‘Earthquake Shattered Home Reborn as Art Space’.[1] The writer of the piece did not choose this headline, instead it was an editorial decision made by *The Press* that reflects a particular way of speaking about the arts in the local mainstream media—a winning combination of Earthquake tragedy porn and everyday resilience.

Utilising a domestic—or ex-domestic—space as a gallery is not typical, but it is not unique nationally, internationally, or even locally in recent years. For us, the story behind North Projects was not that we converted an earthquake-damaged flat into a gallery, presenting an example of innovation or creativity in the face of disaster. It is that we strived to develop ambitious programming and grassroots-level dialogue that we felt was missing from the local art scene. North Projects is an example of what many emerging artists and curators have done in the past and will continue to do in the future—that is, to create a particular economy of operation that doesn’t require a lot of financial investment or bureaucracy, but provides a contribution to, and disruptive voice in, a broader field of practice.

Economics

When North Projects opened, there seemed to be a perception (both in Christchurch, and elsewhere) that there was a large funding pool of ‘earthquake money’ for arts groups in Christchurch wanting to start new initiatives that could take diverse forms.

In 2014, we received a small amount of funding through Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority under the banner of community-led events targeting Christchurch youth. Following that, we received support for our programming through two Quick Response Grants from Creative New Zealand. We ran off the smell of an oily rag, and worked within a kind of gift economy model, giving exhibiting artists small amounts of funding to make new work and covering the rent and other running expenses out of our own pockets. This only worked out as our rent was unusually cheap. Importantly,

this model also kept our autonomy relatively intact and our administration and financial reporting manageable.

Beyond this, our experience with local funders such as the Christchurch City Council (CCC)—who championed a myriad of transitional projects that came and went over the two years we were running North Projects—was that they were effectively uninterested in supporting North Projects as it represented an unsustainable model with no potential for growth. Our non-commercial, non-residential periodic lease and our status as a non-charitable trust and non-business proved to be a bit of a turn off.

In our interactions with these local bodies, we were strongly encouraged to seek business-planning advice and assistance in developing a broader audience. Little value was placed on the receptive, engaged and dedicated group of people who comprised our audience. We were also told we wouldn't be considered for funding until we secured a two-year commercial lease, which would supposedly allow us to grow our unsustainable venture and develop a long-term business plan.

This principal of sustainability is surprising given the many CCC-funded public art projects in the central city that had absolutely no long-term purpose or plan, and were set up with the knowledge and specific reasoning that they would have a short lifespan. The council was supporting transitional projects that leveraged the power of the 'post-quake', transitional narrative to position Christchurch as a centre for innovation and culture, and therefore re-gentrifying the CBD. These projects often acted as placeholders in empty lots for the express purpose of attempting to *embody* the transitional. When groups such as the CCC embrace the 'post-quake' and the 'transitional' arts they do so with a certain mandate that is often at odds with the way that groups like North Projects operate and position themselves, that is within a space of productive marginality.

Community Service

We founded North in a context where artists and emerging curators had already begun to challenge recent ideas about what art should be doing—or should be responsible for—post-quake. Each of us had already witnessed the development of local spaces such as Room Four and Dog Park Art Project Space, both of which reasserted the importance of initiatives run by and for artists and their peers in any given context. Following the closure of both of these spaces in 2014, we responded—not to the context of a natural disaster as such—but to a sense of urgency to provide support for art practices and voices of dissent that weren't necessarily being represented.

In November 2015, we collaborated with previous local artist-run initiatives to develop a project titled *Community Service: A Reading Room*. This installation at North Projects reflected on a broader trajectory of the artist-run space, one that facilitates the generation of content and discourse that occupies not just a physical site, but a social and critical space. The group of practitioners invited to contribute material to the reading room were involved in running Christchurch artist-run initiatives in their many guises; from the long standing High Street Project and South Island Art Projects; to CASKO which ran for eight weeks out of an industrial freezer in 1997; to more recent initiatives. Contributions included articles, essays, books, photographs, catalogues, posters, publications and objects that were directly or indirectly related to corresponding galleries and projects.

Merissa Claire divulges in *Cultivating the Hinge: CASKO and the Revision of Space,* that, "In writing new spaces into being, we simultaneously write new presences into the messy, opaque and highly contested fabric of space-time".[2] The reading room installation as a whole placed North Projects, not as the most recent in a linear trajectory of such activities, but as a presence in that messy fabric. As artist-run institutions generally have a comparatively short lifespan, often with changing directors and premises, the knowledge production generated within these institutions is often fleeting.

It is in this context that Sean Kerr's 2011 film *Run Artist Run* takes on a knowing and cheeky cynicism in the reading room. The looped film shows the artist running towards the camera wearing a black T-shirt that states 'Artist Run' in a white military-esque font. He's not going anywhere, but running in circles around a suburban roundabout. When shown as part of his installation *What is it Doing?* at Auckland Art Gallery (2013), Kerr's *Run Artist Run* does something different. It operates as an in-joke, a literalisation of the term. Then the joke becomes an 'in' one where the artist runs the 'artist run' in a large public institution, exposing the hierarchical standings of each distinct model within the arts ecosystem.

Community Service: A Reading Room, similarly takes its title without earnest. The material provided for the project was done so in the knowledge of a shared experience of running such initiatives. The reading room was never intended to generate an archive or a complete history, but elaborates on some of the residue of these projects and the energies of the various individuals and groups who produced them.

We acknowledge the position of North Projects within a messy artist-run vernacular. The idea of filling a gap within the arts ecosystem or responding to or within a post-disaster context is not more important to us than the programme we delivered, or conversation we contributed to in a local or broader sense. We acknowledge that our programme of experimental practices was generated for our peers. They are not necessarily easily accessible to a 'general public', and growing a wide audience was never one our goals. We did not take on the responsibility for aiding the recovery and commerce of a city or the regeneration of a citywide arts infrastructure. We aimed to reinstate the validity of operating in ways that are neither permanent and sustainable, nor (council-approved) transitional. We value and acknowledge the post-quake context that North Projects operated in, but aimed to be continually active in resisting the dominant narratives of this context that were—and still are—hostile to alternative forms of agency and knowledge production.

1——Warren Feeney, "Earthquake Shattered Home Reborn as Art Space", *The Press*, 18 May 2015, accessed 25 October 2016, http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/christchurch-life/art-and-stage/visual-art/68568964/earthquake-shattered-home-reborn-as-art-space

2——Merissa Claire, "Cultivating the Hinge: CASKO and the Revision of Space", *9 January 1998, accessed on 26 October 2016,* http://physicsroom.org.nz/archive/Casko/casko.htm

Fig. 07——— Community Service: A Reading Room, installation at North Projects, October-November 2015. Image by Daegan Wells.

Fig. 08———North Projects main gallery, featuring work by Imogen Taylor as part of the exhibition *Two in the Pink* with Gemma Syme, November 2014.

Artificial Paradises—Christchurch 2012-2016

...If an independent arts sector is to exist in Christchurch […] then it is essential that funding decisions are made based on professional artistic standards, not on feel-good vibes.

Keir Leslie

One of the plagues afflicting post-earthquake Christchurch is the essentially absurd cultural entrepreneur. This person, often with a managerial or otherwise tertiary relationship to the realities of cultural production, is, however, adept at the skill of developing grant applications; cultivating relationships with minor local politicians; and maintaining a social media presence that suggests a far greater work output than is otherwise at all discernible.

The specific form that this entrepreneur takes changes as time elapses since the 2010–11 earthquakes. For a period between 2010–14, the 'transitional' was the favoured cloak, but these days, it is more likely that the entrepreneur will claim to be engaged in some kind of social enterprise.

To expand on these brief tags: the concept of the 'transitional', which was closely aligned to the notion of 'gap filling', was a primarily architectural response to the problems posed by the destruction and disappearance of the inner city. It focussed on the production of non-permanent solutions to problems. Like all terms, it covered a multitude of sins, and some of the work under this banner was very good: but much of it was not.

Lacking any commonly adhered-to definition, it is hard to delineate precisely what 'social enterprise' *is*. A modish term used both globally and locally, as a concept it ranges from worker's co-operatives to guilt-tinged liberal cafes serving free-trade coffee while employing minimum wage workers on zero hour contracts. In the Christchurch environment, there is very little introspection about the meaning of the word; it is often a way of simply saying an ethical business, or a charity that attempts to be financially self-sustaining. Like much of this type of jargon, it is prone to press release material of stunning vacuity, as with this recent exemplar: Community and Voluntary Sector Minister Jo Goodhew recently attended, "the Social Enterprise World Forum 2016 and [met] with thought leaders in the growing social enterprise sector".[1]

The funding opportunities available to this species of entrepreneur are, as Chloe Geoghegan and Ella Sutherland point out in their paper *Feel Good Success in the Transitional City*, not insignificant. They discuss the substantial amounts of money Gap Filler, one such transitional organisation, received, but examples are easily multiplied, and often more embarrassingly. Art Box, a gallery that ended in a rather ignominious fashion when the parent body, Christchurch Polytechnic and Institute of Technology, abruptly pulled the plug, received somewhere north of $500,000 from various funding bodies—not counting the support from the Polytechnic itself.

Art Box's director oversaw a highly forgettable programme devoid of any curatorial effort. The tedium of the programme might, in part, be due to the fact that—despite the amounts of CNZ funding involved—artists had to pay rent to show at Art Box. But don't worry about his fate. He seamlessly went on to a Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA) project, the Otākaro Avon River Art Trail, an endeavour that has carefully avoided actually *doing* anything for nearly five years.

...We must rid ourselves of the false idea that art is a palliative for social ills or a branch of welfare work...

And these big spends aren't a thing of the past. More recently, Exchange Christchurch (XCHC), a project whose all-time programming highlight was an informal preview of a dealer gallery show, has received over $180,000 from the Christchurch City Council (CCC), more when you include CNZ and Rata Foundation money.[2]

Even spread across the multi-year existence of these organisations, the scale of the funding is staggering, especially compared to the absolute, let alone relative, paucity of outcomes. And yet these are the organisations that claim to embody values of mobility, flexibility, artistic innovation, and financial sustainability.

It seems it's easy to be mobile and flexible when you have a $50,000 grant to spend on fit-out. It's easy to be financially sustainable when the Council will underwrite you by $90,000 per annum.

Resilience does not come cheap.

> *We must rid ourselves of the false idea that art is a palliative for social ills or a branch of welfare work*.[3]

As Geoghegan and Sutherland suggest, the interventions of transitional figures like Barnaby Bennett and Coralie Wynn often looked for a reason for the absence of explicitly earthquake-themed art. But, against this backdrop of lavishly funded but often dismal projects, perhaps it would be better to flip the question. Instead of asking why the arts community did not churn out more 'earthquake' work, perhaps it is appropriate to ask why the transitional community provided such a receptive home for such large amounts of money chasing so few outcomes? What criticality did Bennett and Wynn bring to bear closer to home?

This catalogue of failures I've presented might seem like a rather lazy attack. After all, most projects fail, and most things suck. But what is fascinating is the extent to which

the arts community—and arts funds—were and are seen as bearing some special responsibility to support these initiatives.

Quite why the arts community (and arts funding bodies) have some special responsibility to nurture these entrepreneurs is never explicitly articulated. *Why* was it that North Projects was summarily dismissed by the CCC's arts advisers, but those same advisers fell over themselves to recommend major variations to policy in order to enable very large expenditures on projects like the Exchange? Why was $90,000 that was originally tagged for use in the central city so blithely spent in the industrial suburb of Waltham? I certainly don't object to spending money in Waltham—but *why* was this fund that was explicitly aimed at the inner city so swiftly altered to allow for funding of a project that failed to meet a key criteria? And if there was $90,000 looking for a home in Waltham, why did it fall on the Exchange at 394 Wilsons Road, and not a few blocks down at Dog Park? After all, Dog Park was an internationally relevant space that helped define and present an era of practice in New Zealand. The Exchange is a hobbyhorse.

These questions are uncomfortable questions for many in the transitional and post-transitional spaces. The 'transitional', for all that it presented itself as oppositional to certain power-centres like CERA, also embodied an instrumentalist attitude to arts practice, by subordinating professional autonomy and criticality to broader policy goals like community cohesion and urban regeneration. Policy-makers and cultural entrepreneurs were, therefore, able to build alliances around shared conceptions of art as a tool to achieve policy aims that were otherwise unattainable.

These problems are not purely academic or personal. If an independent arts sector is to exist in Christchurch, not as a branch of social welfare work or industrial policy or urban regeneration, but as an autonomous community of practice, then it is essential that funding decisions are made based on professional artistic standards, not on feel-good vibes.

Behind all this is the spectre of Claire Bishop's razor-sharp dismemberment of participatory art's claims to ethical and aesthetic superiority in her book *Artificial Hells*.[4] Bishop's championing of antagonism as a formal device is the forerunner to Geoghegan and Sutherland's positioning of themselves as the "necessary contradiction" to the transitional, and (in their paper, *The Problems of Being 'Post-Quake'*) Grace Ryder, Sophie Davis and Sophie Bannan's framing of their curatorial agenda as "critical", and "counter". Bishop is both a critical touchstone and a methodological pioneer in this area.

But it was not just against the transitional that both North and Dog Park were willing to adopt contradictory, antagonistic approaches. Both spaces operated sharp-edged curatorial strategies where decisions around programming were driven by autonomous professional logics rather than efforts to 'serve' the local art community by merely offering local practitioners space to exhibit. In comparison, Art Box defined itself so purely as an architectural, transitional project, it lacked any

curatorial rationale beyond that lazy notion of providing space for local artists: a patronising and fundamentally debilitating approach.

Clearly, both North Projects and Dog Park existed within a network of communities of practice: but they did not exist to simply *serve* those communities. Instead, they provided a space within which conversations about the purposes and definitions of those communities could be had; within which it was possible to argue about and critique those communities of practice and their locations within broader social contexts. This curatorial selfishness was key to their ability to articulate through their programming a rigorous and persuasive argument about the role of the artist-run initiative within the Christchurch, New Zealand and global art worlds.

Keir Leslie is an artist and writer who lives in Christchurch. He has recently completed a Masters in Art History at the University of Canterbury, and his writing has appeared in *New Zealand Listener*, *The Pantograph Punch*, and *EyeContact*, among others. Recent shows include *Ooo oooo* at North Projects with Tjalling de Vries (2015) and *Slick* at Dog Park Art Project Space (2014).

1——"Minister Goodhew to attend social enterprise world forum", New Zealand Government press release, 23/9/2016 http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA1609/S00445/minister-goodhew-to-attend-social-enterprise-world-forum.htm

2——"Generous Funding Support For Creative Venues", The Press, 21 November 2013.

3——Arts Council of Great Britain, *Plans for an Arts Centre* (London: Lund Humphies, 1945) 6 quoted in Janet Minihan, *The Nationalization of Culture: The Development of State Subsidies to the Arts in Great Britain* (London: Hamish Hamilton 1977) 229.

4——Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. (London: Verso, 2012).

SEARCH RESULTS

TOP PRODUCER OF ORNAMENTAL TREES FOR EXPORT

Ask yourself, “What would Denny do?” Design your destiny!

EXECUTIVE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

1. Make friends with the curator of an artist-run space.
2. Hope they will run a public institution or eponymous dealer gallery someday.
3. Pray they remember you.

See: Gambia Castle

FIDELITY FINANCIAL CENTER, GRAND CAYMAN

A circle of back-patting friends all making work in the same style.

See: definition of ouroboros.

Yolunda Hickman——Search Terms: Stepping Stones

FLEXIBLE AND STYLISH PAVING SOLUTION

Think trend forecasting.
Observe the spectacle as the newest intake on the pyramid scheme strut their school styles. Get amongst the scene, steal style tips and shoot the shit with cool kids drinking free booze.

LEADING EDGE TRAINING AND FACILITATION

Recipe for being a famous artist

Step 1: Complete MFA at Reputable Art School. Make friends with the famous faculty and the cool kids in your year. Pre-heat oven to 180°

Step 2: Graduate and start an Artist-Run Space with the cool kids who were in your year. Grease tin with butter or line with baking paper.

Step 3: Include established artists (established = dealer representation or critical success) in your exhibition roster so that people take you seriously (authority by osmosis). Beat until light and creamy.

Step 4: Scrupulously sieve the proposals as you separate the yolks from the egg whites.

Step 5: Mix thoroughly and bake until golden.

Step 6: Wait for the phone call from a dealer and/or public institution.

Dust with icing sugar and serve immediately.

CREATIVE INTERVENTION

When writing an exhibition proposal, one aims to convey intelligence.
Add a suffix wherever possible; ‘ive’, ‘ise’, ‘hood’, or my personal favourite ‘ity’.
Don’t think potential, think potentiality. Materiality. Liminality. Existentiality.

NB: Also apply to artist statements for MFA programmes and artist-run spaces.
Use with caution in public galleries. Remember: consider your audience.

Bonus points: Compounded suffixes, e.g. ‘performativity’, ‘problematise’

Fig. 09

Fig. 10

Robbie Fraser

FERARI—

The Worst House on the Street with the Best Gallery: A Focus on the First Year of FERARI and Highlights of the Second.

FERARI was conceived in early 2012 as an idea by Dawson, Dylan and Joseph (I came on board later) as a way of getting involved in an ever-evolving art scene. Using the double garage on the property—a garage that had seen a lot of social and studio use over the previous decade—it was decided to clean the space *just* enough: retaining its inherent garageness but without it doing the artwork a disservice.

How many likes on Facebook does your artist-run space have? Not as many as ours.[1]

While constructing the space itself, an operating framework was discussed between the directors. Consensus was that FERARI would be largely, if not solely, self-funded. We had heard nightmares about dealing with Creative New Zealand and decided the targets they would impose on us sounded like unnecessary stress and complete bullshit. It was also decided not to source money privately as this could be seen as selling out.

FERARI was seen by the directors as a way of establishing networks within the art scene, not only between ourselves and artists, but also between artists with similar practices that had not yet met. This was especially important within the group of recent graduates who hadn't been picked up by dealers or given the 'favourites push' at Elam.

To this end, FERARI planned that the first six shows would be collaborations formed either through the personal choice of the artists, or by FERARI pairing together artists who were unknown to each other. Based on this, and looking outside our immediate social group for the first artists to show, we decided to present *Walk of Shame*, a project by Ahilapalapa Rands and Imogen Taylor.

FERARI's suburban setting was addressed by Ellie Jones in *Quarter Acre*, an art meets architectural meets planning survey study of the houses on the corner of Crummer Road. Paired with Ellie, Jarred Bowman presented his work *JARRED* on FERARI's newly installed public sculpture plinth that had art on display 24/7—a suburban take on Alan Gibbs' sculpture park, Gibbs Farm.

Sean Kerr remarked that he wouldn't have been able to do *Ups and Downs* at any other gallery because their electrical wiring would be up to scratch, whereas ours was incredibly illegal.[2]

PBPR's *Boundless Energy* was a project grounded in aspects of inner purification through hydration, essential oil intake and quasi self-motivation mantras. Zhoe Granger and Ashlin Raymond's installation showed how a cleaned up and minimalist approach to exhibiting in the space could easily counteract and suspend the disbelief long enough to forget that FERARI was in a garage.

It was after *The Sickman Cometh*, one of FERARI's early planned two-person exhibition by Anthony Cribb and me—and after butting and giving them my opinion whenever I came around—that I officially became a director. And also moved in.

In a shift in strategy, Cushla Donaldson's epic five-week show was the first solo show in the space. Around this period, Sir James Wallace graced us with his presence for the first time, and we noticed that the net was spreading in terms of audience growth and appreciation.

The directors decided to hold a end of year fundraising show called *Saloon Des Ferari*.[3] In an attempt to challenge our install prowess and push the space to capacity, we initiated an open call for artists to put in work for a massive salon hang. The work would be sold to generate cash for new walls and paint. In the end we had ninety artists, their friends and family, a food truck, half the neighbourhood and a generous amount of alcohol. No one got arrested.

While 2013 had some of our best shows, 2012 was the year I felt we had the most energy and learnt the most. A major lesson of 2013 was you shouldn't plan too far ahead, doing so runs the risk of job boredom. That aside, 2013 started with one of the most beautifully awkward shows I've ever experienced: *Mothersburgh* by Isobel Dryburgh and Emil Dryburgh.

Bob Van der Wal showcased his haphazard style of show construction to brilliant effect, swapping real picket fences for soft replicas, and involving cameos by two German Shepherds.

John Ward Knox's opening initiated a nitrous oxide party once all the big wigs (after slumming it in the garage) had buggered off to the Walters Art Awards dinner. John Nitrous Knoxide.[4]

Rebecca Hobbs and Richard Orjis approached FERARI with *Do Me Good,* a project involving their first year students from Manukau Institute of Technology. The amazing shared lunch, family conviviality and the sounds of gunshots echoing through the space (from a performance consisting of a gaming clan playing *Call of Duty: Ghost Recon*) stand out as a treasured memory.

Sarah Gruiters and Suji Park was memorable in its mishaps and in its triumphs: although an accident cast a negative shadow over the show at the time, I think at least one of the participants can look back on it positively. Relatedly, Hannah Valentine's reaction to a friend of the space drinking far too much and stress testing a sculptural piece in her show while no one was paying attention was one of calm serenity. A testament to her character. We banned him from the house for a while.

At the beginning of 2014, FERARI ended softly with one final show: *Design Faults*. As the last show it felt right that we go back on one of our own guidelines and exhibit a co-director, Dylan Scott, alongside close contributor, Matt Coldicutt. Joseph and I had been living in the dilapidated house on the section for two years and couldn't face another winter there. We discussed opening another space but we wanted to keep the ethos of not asking for help and every other space cost money.

Looking back, one of the most satisfying things FERARI accomplished was that we accommodated a large range of people—from students in their first exhibition to award winning PhD candidates. We also still managed to remain good friends.

Robbie Fraser (Ngati Porou ki Harataunga) works primarily in painting and resides in Auckland, New Zealand. Recent shows include *A Standard of Measurement* (Papakura Art Gallery 2016); and *Painting: A Transitive Space,* curated by Simon McIntyre (ST PAUL St Gallery III 2016). He corralled this response on behalf of FERARI, an artist-run space he co-directed with founders Dawson Clutterbuck, Joseph Griffen and Dylan Scott. FERARI operated out of suburban Auckland 2012–2014.

1——14,223 at time of writing.
2——Sean Kerr, *Ups and Downs,* 12 July 2013–27 July 2013
3——'Saloon' as a pun on 'salon hang', but also us laughing at Joe because he was adamant it was called a saloon hang.
4——John Ward Knox, *'love among the ruins'*, 11 May 2013–25 May 2013

Fig. 09—— FERARI at night
Fig. 10—— Aki of Girls Pissing on Girls Pissing performing during the opening of *Alex Brown, Catherine Cumming and Casey James Latimer : Some Paintings and Girls Pissing on Girls Pissing* Album Launch, October 2013

Fig. 11

Emma Bugden

Hybrid Practices— Artist-Run Spaces & Money

It's getting blurry out there. As the contest for funding cranks up and up and up, spaces become institutions, collectives become boards, and ideas become strategic plans. Paradoxically, as artist-run spaces increasingly mimic public art institutions, commercial galleries and public institutions evoke the fragmented experimentation of artist-run spaces.

The strictly demarcated lines of the public/private system, disrupted and challenged locally since the 1980s by artist-run activity, are collapsing all over the place. It is getting harder to tell who's public and who's private, or even where the money is coming from. This essay focuses on a selection of art spaces from the past decade that deliberately rode the boundaries between collectivism and commerce.

Gambia Castle, Auckland 2006–2010

Gambia Castle was bold. I recall the sense that something different was happening. Openings were casual, but felt important. People squeezed into every corner, down the stairs, everywhere. It was usually hard to see the work for the people.

Gambia was a gallery characterised by slouching insouciance coupled with shambolic, frenetic energy. Gambia's unclear position between artist-run and dealer was intriguing in its undefined murkiness. It appeared both critical and effortlessly entrepreneurial.

> We kind of wanted to be a dealer, but we were artists. We didn't want to feel like a lower tier gallery. Artist-run spaces have boards and do proposals and show other people; become these little mini institutions serving the community and that wasn't what we wanted to do. We basically…did what we wanted.[1]

At the heart of the openings, often seen huddled together drinking and talking intently, were the collective of artists and a curator that formed Gambia. Between them Dan Arps, Andrew Barber, Fiona Connor, Simon Denny, Daniel Malone, Tahi Moore, Kate Newby and Sarah Hopkinson had already amassed an impressive set of artist-run connections, from Rm3 to Special Gallery to Teststrip, Blackcube and Window. They were becoming known as artists, but Gambia framed them as central.

They made art, they showed art: both their own, and the work of others within their networks. "The art", says Dan Arps, "was directed at other artists, there was a sense that we made shows for each other and with each other".[2]

Some of the shows were extraordinary. Fiona Connor's *old buildings* (2007), a replica of the gallery's floor, 300mm above the actual floor, enacted a poetic psycho-geography infinitely more nuanced and emotive than the follow up transformation of Michael Lett's that would see her nominated for the Walters Prize.

Dan Arps' *Explaining Things* (2008) actually won the Walters Prize. *Explaining Things*, a bleak joke on neo-liberalism, was a dense repository for the abandoned and unwanted. Objects, notes and religious material were accumulated and curated into an unsettling installation. *Explaining Things* was uncomfortable because it didn't and, like the best of Gambia Castle, it stayed with me long after I first viewed it. Similarly, Daniel Malone's *Black Market Next to my Name* (2007), a detailed taxonomy of his entire belongings, gave me the disorienting, vertiginous notion I was slipping away, object by object.

And, apparently, they sold the art. This assertion, let's call it a rumour, charged Gambia with an energy that made their fellow artist-run spaces, blandly sucking at the government tit, look staid and fearful. The institutional legitimation that came with funding—heightened accountability, a track record, strong governance—suddenly felt tired. Here was a new approach, taking the best of artist-run collectivity ("the weekly Monday meetings and hanging out after, screen printing the posters, the ongoing conversations and the total advocacy…"[3]) with the promise of market-led freedom.

Looking back, many of the artists downplay the commercial reality of Gambia Castle. Fiona Connor states, "…sales were not our strength. I think its power instead came from a leverage that it gave us when working with other dealer galleries—like we had options".[4] But while Gambia Castle might have been playing at being dealers, they apparently achieved some major sales. The Chartwell Trust, after all, purchased *Black Market Next to my Name*, surely making it one of the most complex, and bravest, institutional purchases made in this country.

Gloria Knight, Auckland 2012–2014

If the market posturing of Gambia was more swagger than swag, the stances and gestures of its younger successor, Gloria Knight, appeared more commercially deliberate. Located in the Wynyard Quarter—Downtown, the business end, separated from the gallery strip by the length of Queen Street—Gloria Knight was started by artists, Henry Babbage, Juliet Carpenter, Oscar Enberg and Francis Till, and joined by curator Henry Davidson. Francis Till describes the location as a "site that both made a break from established gallery precincts and was at the time one of urban development and regeneration".[5]

Run as a collective, Gloria Knight staged the familiar tropes of a commercial gallery—restrained white lettering on the front door, vase of flowers on the desk, the clean white space—and adopted a coy, fictional quality in its marketing. Gloria was promoted as an entity in her own right, often referred to in the personal pronoun (somewhat in the mode of fictional artist / actual New York gallery Reena Spaulings). In the exhibition *Werk*, held in 2013, the installation, replicating the blankness of an anonymous hotel room, was attributed tongue in cheek to Gloria herself.

The co-directors of Gloria Knight Gallery also fronted a booth at the Auckland Art Fair wearing suits, holding technology and looking convincing. They had, declared Emil Dryburgh (later to emulate GK's blurry boundaries himself with the more

grungy F U Z Z Y V I B E S) "outshone the community of full-time dealers, *suckers*. It was a powerful moment in which artists distributed themselves, without the middleman".[6] Further capturing the zeitgeist, they were one of only twenty galleries to participate in the inaugural *Spring 1883*, Melbourne Art Fair's hipster alternative.

If Gloria Knight rebelled it was in the slickness of their presentation, the way they insinuated themselves into the mainstream, embracing its trappings whilst seemingly amused at the very conventions they adopted. Francis Till describes their stance as a reaction to other local spaces, which he felt "rejected the commercial aspects of a gallery model, which seemed an oversight or missed potential… we were all engaged with international gallery and artist models, many of these exploring an ambiguous complicity with the commercial".[7]

Reflecting on Gloria Knight towards the end of its run, co-director Henry Davidson indicated that its slipperiness of position had created tension: "because of our identity…between a dealer model and an artist run space, we sit in a strange place in relation to other galleries. It might be a slightly antagonistic relationship towards other artist run spaces…".[8]

a gallery, Dunedin 2011–2012

Not so much antagonistic as aggressive, a gallery announced its arrival with an opening show titled *We Will All Burn In Hell*. With a mission statement that promised "punk, street culture, experimental and underground fine art",[9] a gallery was a blend of white cube and the street.

Its owner, artist Jay Hutchinson, is a larger than life character himself, a heavily tattooed graduate of Otago's textiles department who embroiders exquisite tapestries of graffiti art. (A review on the a gallery website calls him "a tattooed punk hip-hop kid and a Jack Johnson style singer songwriter".) The DIY ethos of punk was a touchstone for Jay, who states, "if you can do it with music you can do it with art".[10]

The artists shown in what was described as a dealer gallery and project space were connected loosely with Dunedin. There was no set stable, but a revolving cast of "emerging artists that I had watched coming up whose work fell in between the experimental project based work but was still not commercial enough for the small handful of dealer galleries in Dunedin".[11] Most of the artists were connected in some way to the local art school, but others were walk-ins off the street. Titles continued to provoke (*Fuck Now Suffer Later*, *Draw Paint Destroy*, *All that lives must die*, *KLUSTERFUCK*) and openings were a blast, spilling out into the street, fuelled by alcohol and often by music.

a gallery sold artworks, but maintained a certain freedom from commercial imperatives, largely due to Jay's commitment to personal resourcing. "I signed the two-year lease the same week I signed a two-year contract to work … so I wouldn't have to rely on any income from the sale of work."[12] Some exhibitions, such as Gary McMillan's Sector 8, executed a high degree of formal restraint, but most of the shows presented as rough and ready, mixing a certain level of chaos with attitude.

For all that, there was care in the mess and a tight aesthetic in branding, from website to invitation cards to graphics. But above all, there was as little restriction as possible, partly a response to Jay's stints as a trustee of the Blue Oyster Art Project Space and contract work for the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Designed always to run only for two years (remember that two year contract), a gallery now operates in an intermittent, siteless form, to shapeshift further in the future.

Perhaps shapeshifting is the point. Artists can, and do, adopt and shrug off personas with ease. Galleries, it seems, can too. And, in a neo-liberal climate that demands increasing transparency of operation, it's the very slipperiness of these models, their refusal to be one thing or the other, that challenges us.

Emma Bugden is Editor of Small Bore Books, a specialist publisher in art and design. She is a former Director of Artspace and The Physics Room, and a co-founder of artist-run spaces Black Cube and The Honeymoon Suite.

1——Dan Arps, email correspondence with the author, September 2016.
2——Ibid.
3——Fiona Connor, email correspondence with the author, September 2016.
4——Ibid.
5——Francis Till, email correspondence with the author, September 2016.
6——Emil Dryburgh, "Gloria—The Dame of Wynyard Quarter" *Hashtag 500words*, December 17, 2014, https://hashtag500words.com/2014/12/17/gloria-the-dame-of-wynyard-quarter/
7——Francis Till, email correspondence with the author, September 2016.
8——Henry Davidson, email correspondence with the author, September 2016.
9——Jay Hutchinson, "We Will All Burn In Hell" a gallery presents, February 3, 2011, https://agallerypresents.com/?s=punk%2C+street+culture%2C+experimental+and+underground+fine+art
10——Jay Hutchinson, email correspondence with the author, September 2016.
11——Ibid
12——Ibid

Fig. 11——— Opening of *Fuck Now Suffer Later PJF*, at a gallery, April 2012. Image by Jay Hutchinson.


SO LONG,
AND THANKS
FOR ALL
THE FISH
XOXO
P.S.
PILOT: SØ3EØ2_
Karl Bayly

Fig. 12

When trying to sell a television show to a network, the creator will most often present a pilot episode. A pilot is made to test whether the series has the potential to be successful.

PILOT was named after this idea. It was an artist-run project that I started and operated out of a building on Ward Street in the Hamilton CBD from early 2014 to the end of 2015. I like to think about PILOT in two ways. Firstly, as an artist-run space where young artists present their ideas to the public. Secondly, I like to think of PILOT as being a space of potentiality within itself, as something that could progress and morph with the local arts community. It was also something that could be shut down at any time, much like a television pilot, because the space it occupied could be taken back by Hamilton Council, the owners of the building, at any given moment.

Over nearly two years, PILOT hosted about 200 different artists in exhibitions; events and gigs with experimental musicians; magazine launches; fundraisers; and the like. It's been nearly a year since PILOT closed up on its two-year lifespan. As the curator/operator, it took up a reasonable chunk of my life and a shitload of energy. Here are a few things I have been thinking about PILOT… post-PILOT.

I wanted to get productive and have a place that filled a gap in Hamilton's art scene, and hopefully added to the cultural capital of the city. In 2013 the CBD was a ghost town. Like a scene of tumbleweed tumbling through an old western town, where no-one is around but there's a triggerfinger hiding behind an empty-looking building? Well, Hamilton couldn't even provide that level of excitement. Buildings were concrete and rebar skeletons, grey and drab. For some time Hamilton, self proclaimed 'City of the Future'—*cough*—was dubbed 'The City for Lease'. The general public sentiment was more aligned to the latter slogan.

PILOT started out of a personal necessity to be productive. I was unstimulated with work and at that time in Hamilton there wasn't a lot of projects or artworks that I found challenging or could engage with. This could seem a little unfair, and that's not to say that there wasn't good work being produced, just nothing that really grabbed me personally. It's a small community so naturally less things are happening and there's not a huge pool of energy to pull new projects from. One of PILOT's main concerns was to change and expand the local conversation by placing artists from outside of Hamilton alongside Hamilton artists; trying to establish links between local and national concerns; and having a strong presence of artists and projects from outside of Hamilton. As the curator, I had to be aware of the community I was working within and what I was bringing into it. I was catering for an audience wider than my own areas of interest and searching for areas where those overlap.

PILOT started off the back of a small group show I curated in an empty shop in the Hamilton CBD, titled *We'd make it, if we held hands* (2013. My friend Sean (miss you, let's catch up soon!) helped me fix up the shop in one day, turning it from a total shit hole into something we could use. Someone from the council came along to the opening and began talking ideas of longer-term leasing. Weeks later, after Christmas 2013, I was contacted by the same person inviting me to look at a building that I might be able to use. Days later keys were handed over. That was pretty much the extent of the exchange, along with an unspoken agreement to not burn the building down—not that they would have been too disappointed, I'm sure—and a sense of 'do anything' within a reasonably good moral sense. PILOT took over two shop fronts, the equivalent amount of space upstairs, plus more. Fifteen-odd studios were rented out to artists, designers, fashion designers and musicians. This helped pay for the whole operation, including the gallery space, after its first three or four months of running.

PILOT was pretty standard as artist-run operations go. It ran a general three week curated programme. It never had an official proposal call out but I was always open to receiving them. I was pretty casual in my expectations of what form a proposal could take. My favourite option was meeting at a local pub. Sometimes it would even be as simple as a discussion at the pub that would evolve into an art project in the following weeks.

PILOT evacuated the premises on 29th August, 2015; its last show was that night, and was something of a half-party, half-wake.

Some months prior to this we were told the building was to be sold. It is important to mention that our landlords, the Hamilton City Council, left us to our own devices for the most part, until more repercussions from the notorious Hamilton 400 V8 Race infolded, creating inflation. Dealing with the council can be fantastic, though stressful—like dealing with a bipolar sugar daddy. Anyway long story short, we managed to run for an extra few months after the news thanks to the amazing support of our community and artists from all over New Zealand contributing to a fundraiser. Then, inevitably, as the money ran out, we were moved along. My original plan was always to end PILOT with a bang at the end of two years, so we were only three months premature of that goal. I felt two years was a decent amount of time to work some things out and plant some roots for further projects.

Looking back there are some things I would have done differently with the space. I would have changed the way it operated as a curated project; I would have further challenged the role of myself as curator; I would have utilised the exhibition space more dynamically; I would have extended the dialogue of the space to more than just a space for finished things to inhabit. After running PILOT by my lonesome, I think I got really wiped out.

It impacted on what happened in the space at the end of the day. I had the final say on everything and, well shit, anything could have happened. I think the problem was perhaps trying to do too much with too little resources and too little time. But, hey, hindsight is great, right?

Thanks PILOT, we were great together while it lasted.

xoxo

SØ3EØ2

Karl Bayly—PILOT: SO3E02

Karl Bayly is an artist, curator and subversive urban florist based in Auckland. Bayly is currently fostering several Instagram projects, going to the pools every Monday evening and knocking together websites for people whilst trying to learn new tactile skills. Recently curated: *Porgies 2016*, Ramp Gallery, Hamilton; *'93 ACCORD, 1993 Honda Accord* in carpark, Auckland (Curated with David Ed Cooper); *A revolution has to start somewhere*, A House in Hamilton East, Hamilton.

Fig. 12—— Installation view of Dead & Gone, 2015

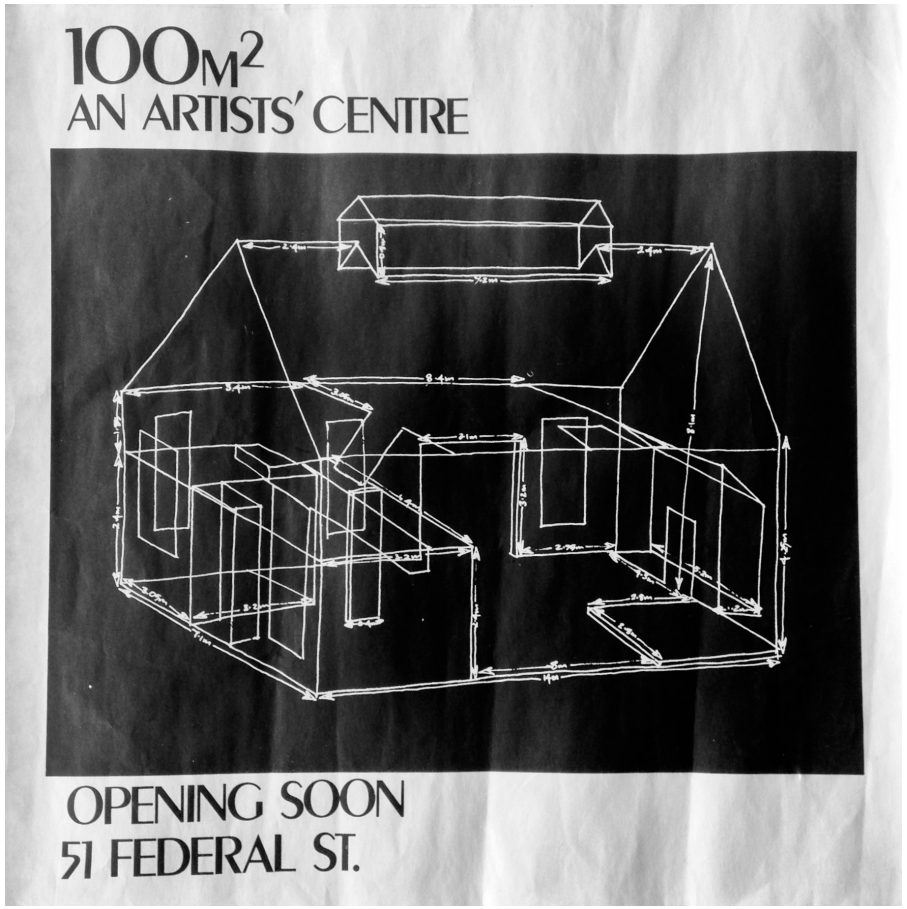


Fig. 13

On gravity and fridge magnets — an afterword

Gabrielle Amodeo

> There are four known forces in the universe […] Gravity, electromagnetism, the nuclear strong force, which holds nucleii together, and the nuclear weak force, which causes radioactivity.
>
> But gravity is incredibly weak. You can see that by … a fridge magnet can hold a pin using electromagnetism, and defeat the whole force of the Earth pulling down on it.[1]

Words conjure things into some form of being.

We talk about an art world, and—behold! Language gifts us an *art world*. Through the term art world, art practitioners establish a parallel ecosphere to operate within. Because it's a reflection of the world it stems from, the art world is replete with its own histories, politics, schools, philosophies, doctrines, joys, scandals, quirks and injustices. For an artist, the art world has its own mass and gravity: at once attractive and wearing.

When I look over the founders' accounts of starting their artist-runs, there's a common thread of seeing gaps and deficiencies in these parallel worlds: the physical gaps of their city's run-down CBD; the vacuum left by other artist-runs closing; the lack of opportunities if you weren't one of the few graduates to be immediately picked up by public or dealer galleries; or, indeed, a backyard (with dying grass and a few trees) that needed reinvigorating.

They respond by carving out a portion of space from the existing (art) world to find a form of self-determination. Language, too, carves out 'artist-run' as a localised force of resistance against the art world's ubiquitous force. An artist-run becomes the fridge magnet that holds up the pin against the force of this art-Earth.

Ziggy Lever says in relation to RM's model: "We are particularly interested in artist-run-initiatives as a space of quiet resistance and contemplation […]".[2] This can be extrapolated out. When looked at broadly, artist-runs resist: they resist an historical narrative in their ephemerality; they resist permanence; they resist a definitive name,[3] a simple definition or a single form. As loosely connected nodes of self-determination, they necessarily resist.

In Aotearoa New Zealand's art world, the tension between the two forces is necessary. The force begets the resistance, but the resistance can alter the force. Emma Bugden states: "Paradoxically, as artist-run spaces increasingly mimic public art institutions, commercial galleries and public institutions evoke the fragmented experimentation of artist-run spaces."[4] Emma's observation sheds light on an underlying trajectory. As dealers and major public institutions in this country are increasingly led by curators with artist-run roots (Sarah Hopkinson, Stephen Cleland, Melanie Oliver and, until lately, Emma herself, to name a few), they take the strategies they tested in artist-runs with them. The strategies may have matured, but they began as artist-run strategies.

The career movement of curators and artists from artist-runs into roles of seniority in the art world is an essential transition, but what about when the whole field of resistance collapses?

Where gravity is witnessed all the time (your feet remain on the ground) the fridge magnet's force is only seen when it is acting on something else. Unless the magnet is holding itself or something up, it's a nondescript block of brown-black (perhaps fronted with a jauntily-coloured plastic letter). So what happens when the effect of the artist-run's force is no longer apparent? And where to from here when artist-runs are no longer the point of resistance? Emil Dryburgh encapsulates it rather eloquently:

> The prodigal son [Simon Denny] offered these words in return; "the artist-run space is a post art-school marketing strategy". I felt the wind knocked out of me, every romantic notion I'd ever attached to artists autonomy felt squeezed. Damn you Denny! We're not all cunning and garden parties. But I must confess, as most eventually do, that Denny was onto something. The 'marketing strategy' of artist-run spaces has now been synthesized into the broader arts ecology, turned into a conduit between the art school and the dealer.[5]

The lecture Dryburgh quotes Denny from was held at Elam School of Fine Arts, and has reached something approaching folklore. I have heard several versions, but all have the same ring: opening an artist-run is a necessary part of a successful art career.

Such an enticing doctrine for setting yourself on the pathway to art world stardom! The artist-run, as a marketing strategy, is a conduit to success! But like all doctrines, it too easily takes a hacksaw to the parts of life and experience that don't fit. It recognises all the glory and none of the grit: all prospects, no daily reality.

Artist-runs are, obviously, *artist*-run. Artists do not strive for mediocrity, even though many end up being mediocre. Whether successful or not, there's always the intention of pushing boundaries, of being or doing something different from all the rest. This, logically, must flow to their artist-run activities. Very few will be stellar. Some will be remarkable. Most will fade. And that's just fine. But if the intention of the artist-run is only as a reverberation of the hollow clang of careerism, it seems a little bleak. Dryburgh (more buoyantly than me) continues: "*C'est la vie*, artists will just have to think harder if they want to antagonize the existing hierarchy".[6]

Grace Ryder, fresh from her time running North Projects (and well placed within this trajectory), gives a more nuanced view of the artist-run experience in these two quotes:

> North Projects played a significant role within the Christchurch arts 'ecology'. […] We intended to fulfil a need within our community for as long as it was valuable, or as long as we could sustain it. As much as we operated the space for ourselves, it was also to support our peers by

> exhibiting local, national and international practitioners. We haven't just shown our friends or those within the immediate Christchurch circle. […] Our reason for being within this ecology was to diversify it.[7]

—And—

> North Projects was a full-time job, with only around an hour per day to give to it. It was also a cycle of hell—having to work these four jobs, in order to pay for North, but never having enough time for North because of having to work.[8]

Grace's reflections also highlight that being a point of resistance as an artist-run can come in many forms. Dog Park and North Projects used a typical gallery-based artist-run model and enacted a fierce resistance within their post-quake setting. As Dog Park notes: "Despite the fact we had embarked on the most common activity you could do as emerging practitioners, in the context of Christchurch it often felt as though we were doing something completely alien, going against the prevailing tone of the 'Transitional City' ".[9] Even more directly, North states: "We did not take on the responsibility for aiding the recovery and commerce of a city or the regeneration of a citywide arts infrastructure. We aimed to reinstate the validity of operating in ways that are neither permanent and sustainable, nor (council-approved) transitional".[10]

Keir Leslie describes the "curatorial selfishness" of these two spaces as "key to their ability to articulate […] a rigorous and persuasive argument about the role of the artist-run initiative within the Christchurch, New Zealand and global art worlds."[11] Even in its least antagonistic form, artist-runs have the ability—and need to retain the ability—to antagonise and to resist.

Although North and Dog Park justifiably railed against a council-approved transitional, there's no denying artist-runs on the whole are transitional forms.

A good innings for an artist-run is two to three years, but the reasons behind ending an artist-run are multifaceted. Just within this book, there's the happy exit of North Projects and the council-triggered closure of PILOT; the self-imposed seasonal timeline of Canapé Canopy, and the season-related halt of FERARI; and others far beyond: the gossip of exploding personalities ending not just spaces but friendships; the petering out of pop-up spaces that so understandably can't sustain the hustle of continually finding new places to show in; etcetera, etcetera.

But there's also a paradoxical form of transience in the act of becoming a trust. It's a schism that at once formalises the transience of the people, and the hope of permanence for the institution. A trust gives form to an institution that can stand by itself, while allowing people to move in and out of its operations. Although charitable trust status seems to have remained limited to Enjoy, the Blue Oyster, The Physics Room and (curiously) Newcall Gallery, other artist-runs have considered taking this step.[12] The impetuous behind RM considering charitable trust status was

founder Nick Spratt looking to step down and hand the space over to the current co-directors.[13] RM, as something of an outlier in this discussion on transience, does offer a model for longevity without trust-governance, but this type of longevity is rare.

Lauren Gutsell comes from the other end of this experience. Not even a teenager when the Blue Oyster opened, she has grown up with the gallery. She is now one in a long line of trustees of the Blue Oyster, and her role is defined by maintaining a steady ship: "At its core, the Board of Trustees is a governing body: accountable for the success of the gallery, the goals and aims of the organisation, and making sure that the space, and the Director, have what is needed for a sustainable and successful future".[14]

And what of those artist-runs that just end? So much artist-run history is based on memory, is sustained through gossip and hearsay, and then becomes legend. This is exemplified in Robbie Fraser's reflections on FERARI. These warm and personal snippets of memory invite the reader to be a part of the story, to experience FERARI by proxy. But there's still the feeling Robbie's subtext is: "you had to be there". And there's no denying this lies at the heart of the artist-run experience: you have to be there.

You had to be there to experience Teststrip's role as harbinger of change in a world of out-of-reach dealers and public institutions; you had to be there to experience the charged atmosphere Emma Bugden remembers of Gambia Castle; you had to be at Simon Denny's Elam lecture to know what he *really* said that so influenced a generation of graduates; you had to be there, you had to be there, you had to be there. The problem is these memories become fainter and fainter as time moves on, especially from the very earliest of these spaces.

What artist-runs leave behind by way of a physical or digital record is tenuous: "More often than not, the history of an artist-run space is held in fragments—small books, ephemera and, now, dispersed through online event listings"[15]. Emma Ng beautifully encapsulates the circular fate of digital-only archives and their regression to memory status: "It seems as if all it takes to disappear into the thicket of real-brain-only history is to stop paying for website hosting".[16]

Some of the savvier spaces have begun donating their physical archives to major civic galleries, following the lead of Teststrip, whose board donated their archive to Auckland Art Gallery.[17] This archive became the material of a vitrine exhibition in 2015 titled *Teststrip: Nostalgia for the Avant-garde*, further cementing Teststrip's place in the canon.[18]

If not donated, these archives survive in boxes or rolled up with rubber bands until thrown out. Some relics make it past the era of being injudiciously kept (that point where the box has been carried around to eight different houses and two different cities, but not looked in since being packed ten years ago; that point in time before any true significance could possibly be realised) and morph into a remarkable find,

that artist-run equivalent of Antiques Roadshow, where the first poster of New Zealand's first artist-run space is found in the archive and framed thirty-six years after it was printed. Being able to include Frank Stark's poster from 100m2 is a real delight.

Enjoy and the Blue Oyster have unwittingly become two of the struts that help hold up the tenuous archive of artist-run ephemera, particularly publications. Alongside the galleries' own archives, they are also repositories for the relics of others. In discussing this with both Louise Rutledge and Chloe Geoghegan, there's a definite ambivalence.[19] On one hand, sharing of material gives them a feeling of being part of a larger network. Says Chloe: "[…] It's the publications of similar galleries that are most valuable. Displaying these and showing them to younger artists in Dunedin helps our audience feel part of a national community".[20] On the other, giving over limited space and finding a way of making it available and useful for their audience is tricky. Enjoy's collection is a trove of publications from long gone artist-runs. But the strain shows: its shelves are so tightly packed that it can be difficult to extract a single book.

When moving to Karangahape Road in 2009, RM had to deal with twelve years of accrued ephemera (both its own and that of others).[21] But, by dint of a series of co-directors with a deep interest in the practice of archiving, the RM archive, although undoubtedly still difficult to manage, has a stronger sense of purpose.[22] When the archive was still part of the exhibition space, "continuous disassembling, moving, and reassembling force[d] the archive to be renegotiated conceptually with each show".[23] Now contained in a dedicated vitrine-like office, it still presents problems to the co-directors and audience, but it remains an integral part of RM's model.

> […] The archive perhaps resists any particular historical narrative that can be drawn around RM's twenty years of operation. We see the benefit of having writing, theory, and documentation available to artists (not necessarily in any order) who come into the space so as to develop contiguity in past and present shows and artists. The archive is also a living record of and for those who fell off the map, moved overseas, or just stopped making.[24]

Between RM, Enjoy, the Blue Oyster and other galleries besides, in the personal libraries of artists and curators, hidden in boxes, on hard-drives or behind 404 error screens, there exists a vast, gracelessly fractured, ungainly, burdensome, partial, problematic, but nevertheless valuable archive of Aotearoa New Zealand's artist-run history. Once again, I can't help but feel that Ziggy's quote can be extrapolated out. The scattered and broken archive that constitutes the history of artist-run—even in its incompleteness or awkwardness—is an essential record that offers contiguity between past and present localised points of resistance in the art world.

I recently read Sol LeWitt's letter to Eva Hesse. Hilarious and shocking in its language and urgency, through two repeats of scouring pen marks, star-bursting lines and inward-turning arrows, and one gentler composition of dashes, its graphically repeated call is to just DO!

Maybe that's what I admire so much about artists who extend their practice into the 'artist-run': they are people who either manage to set aside doubts, or who run willingly and blindly into the role, and just DO! An artist-run is a tangible action, a result of doing in that most unequivocal sense: a moment of purposefully and publicly injecting yourself into this bourgeoning lineage of art history.

Where an art practice all too often is a polite invitation to perhaps engage that's made a few times a year as it emerges, shyly, blinking, out of the privacy of the studio (or at least, my practice is) an artist-run demands interaction. In itself it's a call to arms, a person or group of people saying, "fuck it, let's try working this art-gambit on our terms for a while". Although later the realities, doubts and strains return or arise in full measure, for those first events of an artist-run, whether quiet or loud, with bluster or substance or both, they managed to just do.

1——Ben Miller, transcribed from "The Future" *QI, e06s09*, retrieved 30 October 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Do_lIiX4ijg
2——Ziggy Lever, email correspondence with the author, September 2016
3——Initiative; space; collective; project; pop-up; endeavour: affix your preferred prefix and suffix and combine at will: pop-up artist-run project space and collective.
4——Emma Bugden, "Hybrid Practices—artist-run spaces and money", contribution for this publication, 58.
5——Emil Dryburgh, "Gloria—The Dame of Wynyard Quarter" *Hashtag 500words*, December 17, 2014, https://hashtag500words.com/2014/12/17/gloria-the-dame-of-wynyard-quarter/
6——Ibid.
7——Grace Ryder "North Projects" contribution for this publication, 9.
8——Grace Ryder, email correspondence with the author, October 2016
9——Dog Park Art Project Space, "Feel Good Success in the Transitional City" transcript reproduced in this publication, 35.
10——North Projects, "The Problems of Being 'Post-Quake'" transcript reproduced in this publication, 42.
11——Keir Leslie, "Artificial Paradises—Christchurch 2012–2016" contribution for this publication, 49.
12——Or, at least, these are the only artist-runs that I can find on the Charities Register: https://www.charities.govt.nz/
13——Gabrielle Amodeo, "Eighteen Years, Six Rooms: Nick Spratt & RM," *Art New Zealand*, Autumn 2016, 51.
14——Lauren Gutsell, "On Board—The Blue Oyster Art Project Space" contribution for this publication, 28.
15——Emma Ng, "gallery.net" contribution for this publication, 14.
16——Ibid.
17——http://www.aucklandartgallery.com/explore-art-and-ideas/archives/19626
18——http://www.aucklandartgallery.com/whats-on/exhibition/teststrip-nostalgia-for-the-avant-garde
19——Louise Rutledge, recorded conversation with the author, September 2016
20——Chloe Geoghegan, email correspondence with the author, September 2016
21——Ziggy Lever, email correspondence with the author, September 2016; and Gabrielle Amodeo, "Eighteen Years, Six Rooms: Nick Spratt & RM," *Art New Zealand*, Autumn 2016, 50.
22—— Ibid.
23——Ziggy Lever, email correspondence with the author, September 2016
24——Ibid.

Fig. 13——Poster for the opening of 100m2, 1979. Courtesy of Frank Stark.

SEARCH RESULTS

OUTDOORS DEPARTMENT

At the opening everyone is standing outside the gallery smoking and drinking. The art is inside.

See: F U Z Z Y V I B E S, FERARI and GLOVEBOX ltd.

DIY ADVICE SECTION

Q: There's an artist-run space I'm really keen on and they have an open call for proposals, so now's my chance to apply. Only thing is, they're programming for the end of next year. I don't know what I'm having for dinner tonight let alone what art I'll be making a year from now! What should I do?

- Performance (Anxiety) Artist

A: Dear *Performance (Anxiety) Artist*,

First step: take a chill pill (metaphorically, of course), curl up on the couch and read *Art & Fear*.

Seriously though, there's a secret no one talks about: we're all scared, all the time. So let some truisms ring loud between those ears of yours: 'fake it 'til you make it', 'you're scared because you care', 'a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step'. They're clichés because they're true.

Remember, this proposal is asking for the first date, you're not marrying the work yet. Be thoughtful, take your time, and if they say yes, know that the project will develop, grow and change over time. And good curators know this too!

There's no hurry, the right idea will come along. Invest time writing a draft and ask people you trust for advice (and proofreading). Make sure it's correctly formatted then cross you fingers and click send. You'll never know if you don't ask!

Agony Art

P.S. The opening night will be worth the wait!

See: Art & Fear*, "Art is like beginning a sentence before you know it's ending" (p. 20); and R. M. Rilke's* Letters to a Young Poet*, written between 1902-08, still hold resonance to the creative pioneer.*

COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

Be supportive and go to your best friend's opening at the brand-new artist-run space of the moment. It's a great opportunity for them, a way to extend their work and finally garner some well-deserved attention. You walk in the door, you're smiling, you're thrilled, wave across the room, congratulatory hug, it's a knockout show!

Try to suppress the teeny pang of sadness for all the things you could have done with the space. What a great space.

There must be a German word for having two conflicting feelings at once, right? Schopenhauer would know.

LAYING PATHWAYS: STEP-BY-STEP TUTORIALS

Take a chance, propose an exhibition, flirt with failure, get up, dust yourself off, try again.

Rinse and repeat as many times as necessary.

Celebrate and commiserate as many times as necessary.

Let Anne Truitt be your spirit animal, "You won't arrive. It is an endless search".

See: Anne Truitt's Daybook *and Sol LeWitt's famous letter to Eva Hesse: "Just stop thinking, worrying, looking over your shoulder, wondering, doubting, fearing, hurting, hoping for some easy way out […] Stop it and just DO".*

STUMBLING BLOCKS TO PROGRESS

Here, we can see a glorious example of the Common Artist Moth as she attempts to emerge from her cocoon. Out of the entire Lepidoptera order, this species is unique for the length of time they may spend struggling to break free.

In fact, even if fully pupated, many Common Artist Moths may spend their entire lives trying to emerge.

See: Megan Dunn's 'Submerging Artist'.

YOUNG ADULT SUPPORT NETWORK

Mantra: All artists are my friends, even the ones I don't know and the ones I don't like.

Yolunda Hickman is an Auckland-based artist, lecturer, exhibition-goer and Doctoral candidate at Elam. She has been involved with artist-run spaces and initiatives as an artist and organiser. Selected exhibitions include *Legend and Letters* (Window 2015); *Terrace Setting* (RM 2014); *Size* (Te Tuhi 2014); and organised the exhibition and publication project *Field Essays* in 2012.

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——Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet*. (London: Penguin Classics, 2016. First published 1929).

——Shaun Ussher (Ed.), *Letters of Note: An Eclectic Collection of Correspondence Deserving of a Wider Audience*. (San Fransisco: Chronicle Books, 2014)

Gabrielle Amodeo is an artist and writer living in Wellington. Since completing her MFA, Amodeo has regularly shown throughout New Zealand, notably at Dunedin Public Art Gallery; The Dowse Art Museum (Wellington); and Artspace (Auckland). She won the 2015 Parkin Drawing Prize and participated in the 2016 Late Winter Intensive Residency at the Banff Centre, Canada.

Amodeo has shown at, volunteered in and written for artist-runs from Auckland to Dunedin frequently and proudly since 2008. Their varied support for her over the years is an immeasurable foundation to her art and writing practices.

Published by Gabrielle Amodeo with support from Enjoy Public Art Gallery and the Chartwell Trust

Eco100 115gsm/250gsm
Pop'Set Spring Green 120gsm
Times font, Helvetica Font

Edition of 100

ISBN: 978-0-473-37840-0

Contributing Editor

Gabrielle Amodeo

Contributors

Karl Bayly

Emma Bugden

Lauren Gutsell

Robbie Fraser

Yolunda Hickman

Keir Leslie

K. Emma Ng

Grace Ryder

Daphne Simons

Dog Park Art Project Space

North Projects

Design

Ashley Keen

Proofreading

Louise Rutledge

Sophie Davis

Kerry Amodeo

Justin Henehan

Amy McGuire

South Island Art Project / Christchurch
1992–1995

Teststrip / Auckland
1992–1997

CASKO / Christchurch
1996

Fiat Lux / Auckland
1997–2000

Honeymoon Suite / Dunedin
1997-1998

S*W*A*B Presents / Christchurch
2000

Black Cube / Christchurch
2002

Special Gallery / Auckland
2003–2006

Platform 01 / Hamilton
2003–2008

Canary Gallery / Auckland
2004–2006

SHOW / Wellington
2004–2006

Cross Street Studios / Auckland
2006–2010

Ariki Gallery / Hamilton
2007–2008

New Friends Gallery / Hamilton
2007–2008

A Centre for Art / Auckland
2007–2010

Gambia Castle / Auckland
2007–2010

448 Gallery / Auckland
2008–2009

Newcall / Auckland
2008–2010

The Russian Frost Farmers / Wellington
2008–2012

GalleryGallery / Christchurch
2009–2010

Rice and Beans / Dunedin
2011–2012

High Street Project / Christchurch
1992–2011

The Physics Room / Christchurch
1996–Ongoing

RM (variously rm3, rm212, rm401, rm103) / Auckland
1997–Ongoing

Blue Oyster Art Project Space / Dunedin
1999–Ongoing

Cuckoo / Unfixed
2000–2006

Enjoy Public Art Gallery / Wellington
2000–Ongoing

Window / Auckland
2002–Ongoing

None Project Space / Dunedin
2003–Ongoing

Assay/
Essay
Artist-run in Aotearoa New Zealand
Contents—Gabrielle Amodeo Design—Ashley Keen ©

Mygalaxi Gallery / Wellington
2011–2012

A Gallery Presents / Dunedin
2011–2012

Personal Best / Auckland
2011–2012

ABC Gallery / Christchurch
2011–2012

Second Storey / Auckland
2011–2013

Snake Pit / Auckland
2011–2013

183 Milton Street / Christchurch
2012

Dog Park Art Project Space / Christchurch
2012–2014

Gloria Knight / Auckland
2012–2014

FERARI / Auckland
2012–2014

Plaza / Auckland
2012–2014

Room Four / Christchurch
2013–2014

PILOT / Hamilton
2014–2015

LOFTjervois / Auckland
2014–2015

F U Z Z Y V I B E S / Auckland
2014–2015

Casbah Gallery / Hamilton
2014–2015

North Projects / Christchurch
2014–2016

Man Friday / Christchurch
2015

Canapé Canopy / Auckland
2016

Fresh and Fruity / Online/Unfixed (originally Dunedin)
2013–Ongoing

Elbowroom / Unfixed (Wellington)
2014–Ongoing

Whau the People / Auckland
2014–Ongoing

Rockies / Auckland
2014–Ongoing

GLOVEBOX ltd / Auckland
2015–Ongoing

Club Mirage / Auckland
2015–Ongoing

SKINROOM / Hamilton
2016–Ongoing

Meanwhile / Wellington
2016–Ongoing

Play_station / Wellington
2016–Ongoing

Artist-run in Aotearoa New Zealand