

Art New Zealand

NUMBER 186 / WINTER 2023

\$9.75 (incl GST)
ISSN 0110-1102



Dagmar Dyck
Reuben Paterson / Chauncey Flay / Emma Bass
Zahra Killeen-Chance & Solomon Mortimer
Selwyn Muru / Allen Maddox / Georgia Carr
Ink on Paper at Christchurch Art Gallery
Landscape Painting in the Nineteenth Century
Tributes to Ans Westra / Ron Brownson / William Main





Wellington

**Hana Pera Aoake & Taarn Scott,
in collaboration with Riki Gooch**
Ngā hau o Tāwhirimātea

Enjoy Contemporary Art Space
18 February–15 April

SAMUEL TE KANI

Ngā hau o Tāwhirimātea is a group show between artists Hana Aoake and Taarn Scott, with a sound work contributed by musician Riki Gooch. It is also a haunting exercise in the conceptualist's adage 'less is more'.

In collaboration, the artists have filled the space with cunningly sparse ornament, from Scott's jewelled hangings like gonzo weathervanes, to Aoake's ceramics, placed with enough emptiness between that they evoke the meandering sprawl of a reef—but a reef bleached and diminished by rising acidity. The ceramics themselves still acidify. The ceramics themselves still acidify. The ceramics themselves still acidify, as if to say even in decay—losing battles with industrial toxicity—the natural world retains its mastery of morphological archiving, ensuring that dwindling counts of flora/fauna

do not dim the ontogenic splendour of life as it scales (or tries to scale) changing adaptive peaks—as it has done since before the first innovation, when some lonely cells thought to pool their cytoplasmic resources and make organisms. It is a gamble that has arguably paid off, and which we would do well to heed in times of social and ecological splintering.

Taarn Scott's sculptures dangle from the ceiling in imperceptible undulation, speaking to wind in shape not movement, and yet still managing to capture kinetic force in their spindly curvatures—if wind had silvered skeletons and if you could capture it and vivisect its essential nature, this is what that might look like. What you would miss at a glance is that each sculpture bears silvered drops. These do not crowd the pieces because they are few in number and bring a delicacy to Scott's milieu of wind-swept sky, an elegiac moodiness.

In line with the sparseness of Aoake's ceramics Scott's drops and spindles speak to scarcity and ecological corruption/disruption, but they also

(left & below) HANA PERA AOAKE & TAARN SCOTT with RIKI GOOCH

Ngā hau o Tāwhirimātea 2023

Clouds (steel bar, aluminium wire and sheet, scrap metal from *Invasive Weeds*), copper rain drops (collected scraps), found uku from Ōtakou Peninsula, bought uku from Nelson and Waikato, glaze, glass, grog, lustre, linen, silk and polyester thread; stereo audio, multiple instruments by Riki Gooch

(Photographs: Cheska Brown)

speak to nature's gentleness. An intuition of tenderness to counter the ambient violence with which climate change has inevitably arrived, and with which it will conceivably swell in stature. It is an observation that is perhaps truer to nature's MO in being a confluence of *force* rather than an avenging angel with an *agenda*.

Tying form and texture into soothing singularity is Riki Gooch's titular sound work. Premised on synthesising the four directions of the wind into a kind of aural speech, the piece waxes and recedes with tidal grace, punctuated infrequently by delicate piano chords but otherwise rolling out with oceanic polyphony. This is the kind of work that places you in the sublime inimitable of nature, whether sea or forest or the vacuum of space, filling the emptiness between sculptures and hangings with a sonorous schematic of geo-time.

The cumulative evocation of these works is Wellington's southern coast (still very much a gothic novelty to this writer—a Northland boy). There is even an embroidered map in tribute to the region's taniwha, courtesy of Aoake. In character the south coast is harsh, nearly brutal, cold, harking to Greenland vistas more than the pōhutukawa sprigs and flaming board shorts of a Kiwi summer. And yet the presence of taniwha is uniquely *here*, even if certain of those taniwha have been antagonised into oblivion, and now (in the rebalancing of massive geologic forces) make gradual and ceaseless reparations.

