

# Rebellious Modernities

Sosefina Andy // Matt Coldicutt // Gordon Matta-Clark //  
Yonel Watene

curated by Gabriela Salgado

08 December 2019 - 15 March 2020

PRINCIPAL FUNDERS



## Rebellious Modernities

*If the best of architecture is building towards a neutral matrix then the human experience becomes the object.*  
– Gordon Matta-Clark<sup>1</sup>

*Rebellious Modernities* comprises new works by Auckland-based artists Sosefina Andy, Matt Coldicutt and Yonel Watene. For the first time in Aotearoa New Zealand, Te Tuhi also presents the film *Open House* by American artist and architect Gordon Matta-Clark (1943–1978).

Instead of beginning with a curatorial framework, the exhibition emerged from observation of conversant features in the work of the three artists. Andy, Coldicutt and Watene all create physical and emotional installations that engage the senses, while simultaneously destabilising modernist parameters that often underpin architectural value. Taking as inspiration the notion of ‘anarchitecture’,<sup>2</sup> a term popularised by Matta-Clark, *Rebellious Modernities* brings together works that play with ideas of use and uselessness, employ recycling strategies and celebrate inventiveness in the light of scarcity, as well as challenging individualism by weaving memories to resist collective amnesia.

Against the backdrop of New Zealand’s housing crisis – now reaching record

<sup>1</sup> João Ribas and Delfim Sardo, *Gordon Matta-Clark: Splitting, Cutting, Writing, Drawing, Eating*, Culturgest/Serralves, 2017.

<sup>2</sup> The word ‘anarchitecture’ emerged onto the cultural scene in 1974. It was coined by a group of artists who produced a collaborative exhibition by the same title. Initially used colloquially, it has become synonymous with one individual in particular, Gordon Matta-Clark, who is considered the chief representative of the Anarchitecture Group, which included artists Laurie Anderson, Tina Girouard, Suzanne Harris, Jene Highstein, Bernie Kirschenbaun, Richard Landry and Richard Nonas.

and alarming levels<sup>3</sup> – and the rise of homelessness worldwide, these millennial artists test notions of private and public space by constructing strategies for survival and belonging through their art. Their at times precarious structures show modernism’s failures and reverberations: chiefly excess leading to waste, and the awkward adaptation of European style to other geographies. However, most vitally the works celebrate collectivism and political auto-construction.

The exhibition includes Matta-Clark’s 1972 film *Open House*. This film records the artist’s industrial waste container built with discarded construction materials between 98 and 112 Greene Street, New York, where in 1970 he co-founded the first artist-run gallery in SoHo. The footage includes dance performances by the artist himself, Tina Girouard, Keith Sonnier and other friends, activating the precarious structure he named ‘Dumpster Duplex’ during its opening day.

Matta-Clark conceived of the dumpster as ‘throwaway housing for throwaway people’ – a tongue-in-cheek critique of

3 More than 40,000 people living rough or in garages were reported in August 2016. Al Jazeera, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZ\\_Fopka524](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZ_Fopka524)

4 Painter Robert Rauschenberg officiated as a guest chef, often preparing special dinners on Sundays.

5 Jorge Luis Borges, 'The Minotaur', *The Book of Imaginary Beings*, Vintage, London, 2002.

the dispensability of the many and the over-accumulation by the few. Doesn't it sound familiar?

### Anarchitecture

Matta-Clark studied architecture at Cornell University, with one year spent at the Sorbonne. Upon graduating, he returned to New York City, becoming more interested in art-making than in architecture. This was a natural shift, given that his father was Roberto Matta, a Chilean member of the international surrealist group, and his mother was American painter Anne Clark.

Matta-Clark became famous for his trademark splitting and cutting of buildings with a chainsaw: epic site-specific interventions that survive solely through photographic documentation. However, this memorable body of works was preceded by less visible, food-focused events, an early expression of his belief in art as alchemy. A function of the artist is that they are able to transform ingredients or discarded materials to create something edible or useful. In 1971 Matta-Clark opened

an artist-run restaurant, FOOD, where fellow artists took paid shifts to support their practice by cooking poetic menus to complement significant art gatherings.<sup>4</sup>

Among contributions in writing, sculpture and installation, Matta-Clark's work is relevant to artists working today because of his overarching vision. It simultaneously challenged artistic canons and attempted to propose practical solutions to the 1970s New York housing crisis. With this socially engaged mindset, Matta-Clark set in motion a type of artistic invention that he hoped would serve the exponentially growing houseless community. In the early 1970s, New York City's dereliction proved a fertile ground for his radical interventions.

Following the United States' economic meltdown, many industrial activities withdrew from downtown Manhattan. The resulting urban decay led to the creation of an artist-in-residence law of which Matta-Clark became a beneficiary. Numerous artists occupied abandoned industrial buildings in SoHo, gaining unprecedented access

to large studio spaces. While beginning as a breeding ground for radical ideas, the material deterioration due to the financial crisis ultimately became the source of a drastic transformation. In the following decades, the artists' revamped neighbourhoods became objects of desire for up-and-coming *nouveau riche* and prominent dealer galleries. Matta-Clark never witnessed this unfortunate gentrification, however, as he died prematurely, in 1978, at the age of 35.

As Matta-Clark transformed his reality, he began making works that addressed homelessness around the city. During the 1971 Brooklyn Bridge Event – an outdoor group exhibition and performances held on an condemned pier under Brooklyn Bridge – Matta-Clark contributed his iconic *Garbage Wall*, 1970, a garbage pile packed in wire mesh to be used as a wall, designed to provide ideas for the construction of shelters for those sleeping rough. During the launch of the event, he presented another food-centred offering: *Pig Roast*, 1971, a street banquet that fed hundreds of people. Matta-Clark's immaterial practice worked against the collecting impulses of the art market, while his

legacy was to infuse many sculptural and culinary practices by artists worldwide in the following decades.

### Anarchitectures in Aotearoa

Works in *Rebellious Modernities* by Yonel Watene and Matt Coldicutt offer a localised, unwavering response to the modernism that is encapsulated by a culture of excess and waste, and other conventions at odds with the poor-quality infrastructure of Aotearoa that contributes to social injustice.

Coldicutt's pristine white maquettes operate as cyphers of existing and imagined modernist buildings, summoning the principles of the Bauhaus school. Among them, a labyrinth model based on Jorge Luis Borges' short story 'The Minotaur'<sup>5</sup> is presented next to maquettes of *Bauhaus Dessau*, by Walter Gropius, 1925; *Haus für einen Künstler / House for an artist* (never built), by Le Corbusier, 1922 and Buckminster Fuller's iconic *Geodesic Dome*, 1948–49. As a counterpoint to this historical index of modernism, several freehand ink

drawings of legal and illicit basketball nets in Mexico, Guatemala, Aotearoa and Cuba capture the flavour of communal auto-construction. The visible tension between the irrevocable precision of the architectural maquettes and the makeshift basketball net drawings critiques the promise of modernity and the deception wrought by its egalitarian assurances.

In another room, Charles and Ray Eames' famous design item *Rocking Chair* is reinterpreted as a mash-up of found materials, including discarded basketballs from a school playground. In turn, Coldicutt's reclaimed kauri timber from the old Elam building gains a new sculptural life, part of a poetic metamorphosis of materials that elevates and reincarnates educational vocation.

With *housewarming party*, Watene symbolically squats in Te Tuhi's Iris Fisher gallery while reframing it as a site for the construction of his first home. The impossible dreams of and deceptions practised on millennials collapse in his wharenui, which he activates every weekend with mural

painting sessions: a wink to DIY principles among the struggling, low-income population.

According to an account by his widow, Jane Crawford, Gordon Matta-Clark joked about becoming a member of the landed gentry, thus mocking the British colonial impulse to accumulate real estate. For that purpose, he bought at auction unusably small slivers of leftover land in Queens and Staten Island for \$25–\$75 a plot. In 1973 and 1974 he featured the spaces in the series *Reality Properties: Fake Estates*, through photographs, maps, bureaucratic records and deeds, and spoke and wrote about them – but was never able to occupy these residual zones of the city, which upon the artist's death returned to the city council as payment for unpaid taxes.<sup>6</sup>

The urgency of *Fake Estates* is reincarnated in Watene's occupation of the white cube, employing gestures that address the unequal distribution of land. Following the logic of a celebratory ritual, *housewarming party* is a playful wink to Watene's first attempt to own real estate in his mother country.

Watene's purpose also reflects integrated ways of doing and sharing that speak to indigenous methodologies in practice, and go beyond representation. So too does Sosefina Andy's approach. Andy is known in Aotearoa for her crochet architectures. The installation *Familiar Things* embodies her childhood experiences of communal space in Sāmoa, a personal universe whose epicentre is located at her grandmother's home. At Te Tuhi, she draws from her family memories to restore the sensorial qualities of the materials and the craft practices transmitted by women from generation to generation. Evoking the textures and sounds of her grandmother's home, the installation enables visitors to relate to what we carry along from place to place, the fundamental luggage that keeps us going through experiences of migration. Crochet wall partitions, thresholds and a tree bring Sāmoa to Tāmaki Makaurau and honour the makers for creating a new chapter in a long-standing tradition, weaving the future with their own hands.

### Pluriversal modernities in the tropics

The modernist style inaugurated by Le Corbusier and the Bauhaus in the first quarter of the 20th century influenced architects around the world. Its utopian ideas – particularly in ending underdevelopment – spearheaded the emergence of remarkable disciples of the style in Latin America. Oscar Niemeyer in Brazil, Clorindo Testa in Argentina, Carlos Villanueva in Venezuela and Ricardo Porro in Cuba all undertook major building projects that were to endorse the ideals of progress. However, the adaptation (aside from a certain tropicalisation of the European form) of the modernist template in the region arguably reveals a failure of greater significance. Around 1960, the same year that Niemeyer's futuristic city of Brasilia was founded, modern architecture and its ethos proved unable to offer affordable housing and urban solutions to a growing disenfranchised population. The economic slowdown of the region in the post-war period has been blamed for such failure, while the unfiltered colonial transfer of ideas from Europe to the rest of the world can also be counted as a somehow more natural cause.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>8</sup> 'Pluriversality' is a notion partly originating in western post-structuralism, but in the context of contemporary art practice it summons the idea of a multitude of agencies as opposed to a universal paradigm.

## Gambiarra

It is common knowledge that humans are resilient. Once a system fails, we create a new one, and thus endlessly the human impulse to invent continues. This idea is succinctly contained in the notion of *gambiarra*, which in Brazilian Portuguese language describes the idea of 'making do' in light of material scarcity. Examples are construction strategies that assemble found materials or that which is available; as well as objects or actions that make a 'quick fix'. This all entails a significant fluidity between materials that cancels hierarchies of objects, from low tech to complex connections – recalling what American artist Jimmie Durham has humorously named as 'the illegal combination of rejected objects' when referring to his artistic practice.

*Rebellious Modernities* invites visitors to reassess notions of universal currency by critically examining modernism as an imported category. The artists propose pluriversal<sup>8</sup> approaches that involve alternative creative solutions. Their purpose includes investing value in domestic materials while embracing

appropriation. They also address local needs in the face of housing crises and, most importantly, celebrate collectivism as a deeply rooted form of resistance.

Gabriela Salgado  
Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland  
November 2019

## WORKS

### BEV SMAILL GALLERY

1. **Sosefina Andy**  
*Familiar Things*, 2019  
installation
2. *A piece of Home rooted in texture*, 2019  
crème and baby blue wool  
(crocheted)
3. *A beaded door*, 2019  
wooden beads
4. *The collective*, 2019  
family's old clothing
5. *Metal drawing*, 2019  
rebar construction rods  
commissioned by Te Tuhi, Auckland

Sosefina Andy was born and raised in Sāmoa. She migrated to Aotearoa when she was 11 years old. Andy grew up surrounded by family and spent most of her time in her maternal grandmother's house. This close-knit familial setting encouraged an intergenerational exchange of history, knowledge and skills where family traditions were passed down from ancestors to the next generation. The works in this exhibition embrace and retrace memories of home and aiga (family), upholding the matriarchal influences of her family, while drawing on the memory of a home that nurtured her interest in handcraft.

Memory is explored in her practice through the body's experience within

a space over time. The repetitive crafting of each work forces the body to remember while highlighting interaction and the exchange between maker and material or maker and their collective. Thus the production of objects in *Familiar Things*, 2019, was cultivated from a series of layered and fragmented recollections. Andy creates an immersive space that allows people to be embraced by wool, fabric and the sound of beads touching when bodies move through them. The handmade representations in the space of *Familiar Things* revitalise these bodily sensations. Andy leaves an impression on every surface of the space for people to see, feel and experience.

The crocheted wall hanging across the gallery acts as a threshold that separates or connects two sections of the room. Ideas of exchange and collective making are vital in the production of *Familiar Things*. A metal chair located between the crocheted walls indicates the presence of the maker, while a fabric mat in front of the chair – in the form of more than 300 flowers sewn from old family clothing – creates an expansive area. The processes utilised to create this installation emphasise familial documentation and durational making.

# The New Zealand Herald

## Buyers home in as city hits sale mode

By [Bernard Orsman](#) @BernardOrsman  
**12:37 AM** Saturday May 18, 2002

By BERNARD ORSMAN

Open home today, 1pm–2.30pm. Two–bedroom, two–level unit on ground floor with own courtyard and carpark. Gas cooking and heating. Sought–after location, close to Ponsonby cafes and shops.

Used to be home of low–income family. Built to provide a sense of community and solve the housing problem for inner–city workers.

Offers over \$230,000.

Hordes of people attracted to inner–city living will today start tramping through 13 one–, two– and three–bedroom units offered for sale by the Auckland City Council in desirable Freemans Bay and Grey Lynn.

The usual tyre–kickers will show up. Many, though, will be vying in a booming property market for one or more of the well–built homes of former council tenants, which Auckland Mayor John Banks and his Auckland Citizens & Ratepayers Now allies are selling as the city gets rid of "non–core" services.

Interested buyers are invited to make offers of between \$140,000 and \$230,000 or even more for nine units in Freemans Bay from May 29 and submit tenders on four units in Grey Lynn by June 11. Open homes will be held over the next fortnight.

The marketing hype comes with a glossy article from New Zealand Home & Entertaining magazine on the stylists, designers, architects and film–industry types who have turned a council block in Freemans Bay into an "art ghetto" after 141 of the 201 homes on the site were sold between 1996 and 1999.

City Vision leader Dr Bruce Hucker said the marketing gave a message that the council favoured gentrification of the inner city at the expense of people on low and moderate incomes.

The 13 flats are the first homes to be put on the block by the new council, which plans to sell the remaining 130 council houses and 1670 pensioner units.

By [Bernard Orsman](#) @BernardOrsman

Copyright ©2015, NZME. Publishing Limited

## Matt Coldicutt

### GALLERY FOYER

6. *Minotaur Labyrinth 1967–2019 (imagined), from J. L. Borges' eponymous short story, included in The Book of Imaginary Beings, 2019*

7. *Haus für einen Künstler 1922–2019 (unbuilt), Le Corbusier, 2019*

8. *Geodesic Dome 1948–2019 (prototype), R. Buckminster Fuller, 2019*

9. *Bauhaus Dessau 1925–2019, W. Gropius, 2019*

steel, kauri, cast acrylic

10. *Free Hoops: Aotearoa, Mexico, Guatemala & Cuba 2015–19, 2019*  
 steel, ink, paper

### GALLERY ONE

11. *Units of Habitation: From Studio to Library, Whitaker Place, 2009–2019, 2019*  
 rimu

12. *Units of Habitation: Ballin' Chair, 2019*  
 steel, kauri, basketballs

### COURTYARD

13. *Units of Habitation: Schematic for Social Buoyancy, 2019*  
 steel, rimu, bronze, water

14. *Units of Habitation: The Universal Set of Logical Relations, 2019*  
 steel, rimu, basketball hoops (St Mary's College/inorganic collection)

15. *Units of Habitation: The Universal Set of Logical Relations, 2019*  
 steel, rimu, basketball hoops (Tole Reserve/personal)

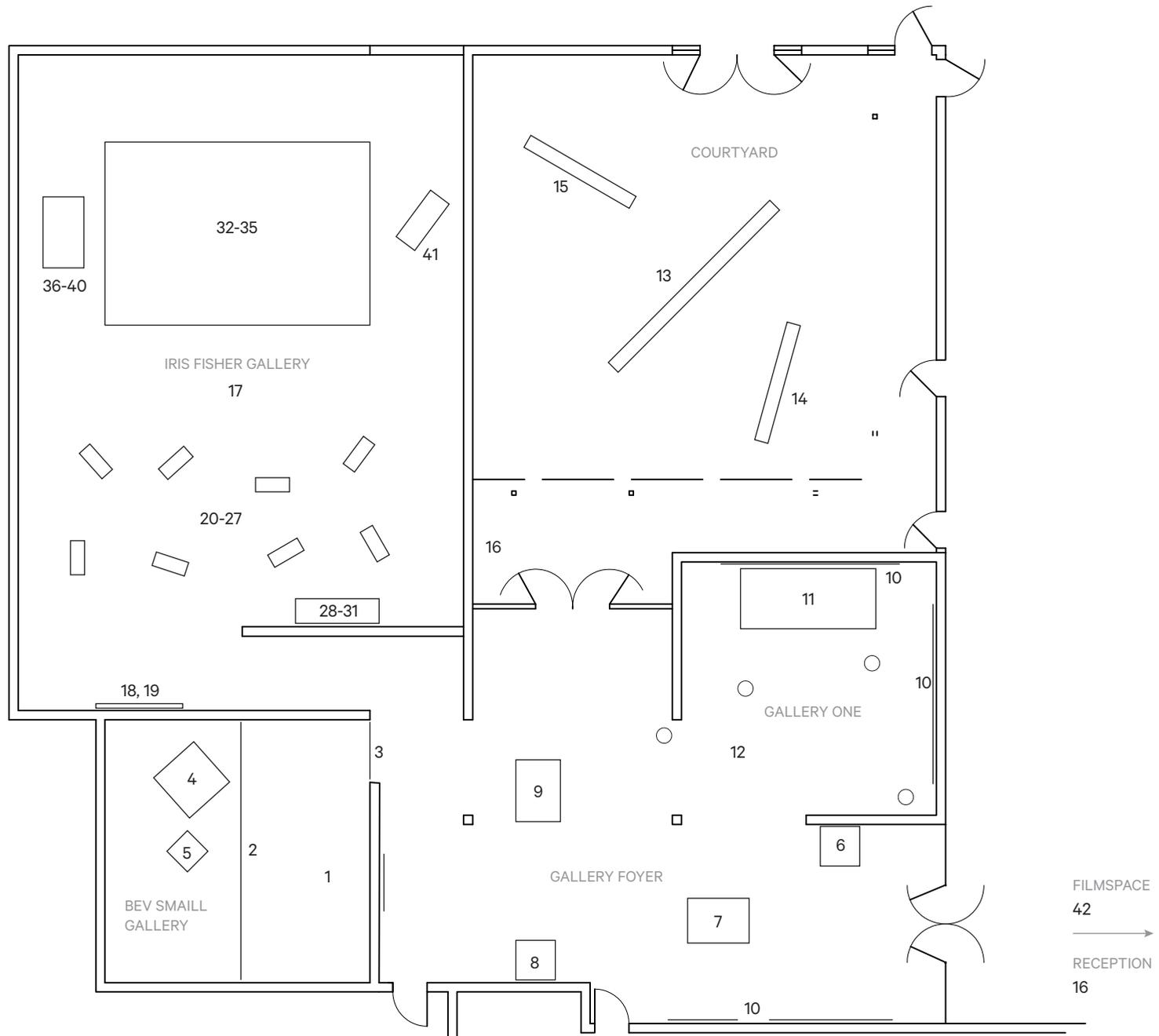
16. *Units of Habitation: Reduced Season, 2019*  
 concrete, cacti (various)

all works commissioned by Te Tuhi, Auckland

In his works, Matt Coldicutt explores states of balance and/or instability within the realms of cultural ecology, natural ecology and political ecology. Coldicutt aims to provide a physical and conceptual balance between rest and play through an active viewing experience and negotiation of function.

The main structural materials used in this installation were salvaged from two historic buildings (numbers 12 and 30 Whitaker Place) at Elam School of Fine Arts, both demolished ten years ago to make room for student accommodation. Relocating these materials from two specific sites, Coldicutt aims to build upon Miwon Kwon's idea of 'changing regime' in the context of site-specific art: 'Work no longer seeks to be a noun/object but a verb/process, provoking the viewer's critical (not just physical) acuity regarding the ideological conditions of that viewing.' This means that particular works in this exhibition must be

MAP OF WORKS



activated by the viewer, either physically or through each individual's unique understanding of the world.

Recasting space and investing an alternative situation or location within it is a way that art can create social utility, as Henri Lefebvre suggested.<sup>2</sup> By salvaging materials or ideas with wavering cultural value from specific demolition sites, recreational facilities and fragments of history – what Michel de Certeau describes as waste products of everything a functionalist administration is not capable of dealing with<sup>3</sup> – Coldicutt attempts to reinvest value back into these materials through 'restorative processes'.

Salvaging specific materials from specific sites, attempting to give visual form to real or imagined social change in scale models and referencing places and objects for art constitute the fundamental kaupapa of Coldicutt's works. When displaced from natural and cultural environments, the materials and objects take on forms which embody a frustratingly oblique and seemingly tangential history. Extractive and constructive processes from primordial tree to architecture to art may be immaterial – however if 'architecture is in the details',<sup>4</sup> looking intently at our built environment and the things we value is one way of becoming more aware of instabilities created between ecological systems and how we engage with their fine points of balance.

The design elements of each work are informed by the Bauhaus pedagogical model after it underwent anti-academic art school reforms which unified art and trade/craftwork with its multidisciplinary approach to art and design education.

*The basketballs in this work were donated by students at Ngā Puna o Waiōrea Western Springs College – ngā mihi!*

1 Miwon Kwon, 'One Place After Another: Notes on Site Specificity', *OCTOBER*, no. 80 (Spring 1997), p. 102.

2 Vincent Kaufmann, 'Angels of Purity', *OCTOBER*, no. 79 (Winter 1997), p. 60.

3 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1984, p. 94.

4 Modernist architect and third director of the Bauhaus Ludwig Mies van der Rohe speaking about restraint in design, the *New York Herald Tribune*, 28 June 1959.

Further reading

Freemans Bay Wikipedia article  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freemans\\_Bay#M%C4%81ori\\_origins](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freemans_Bay#M%C4%81ori_origins)

IRIS FISHER GALLERY

17. **Yonel Watene**  
*housewarming party*, 2019
18. *Llaves a Dia de los Muertos or Day of the Dead Yves (telekinetic Skype)*, 2017  
HD video  
7 minutes 17 seconds  
edition of 3 + 2 AP  
filmed in Pluma Hidalgo, Oaxaca, Mexico, on Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead), 1 November 2017  
courtesy of the artist and PAULNACHE Gallery
19. *Untitled Karanga*, 2019  
HD video  
3 minutes 32 seconds  
edition of 3 + 2 AP  
original recording by Roberta Francis Watene  
borrowed audio and video of Jigglypuff  
borrowed recording of a jazz performer on Museum Island, Berlin  
borrowed audio from the exhibition Bergama Stereo, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin  
filmed in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand, and Krakow, Poland  
commissioned by Te Tuhi, Auckland
20. *Untitled Hongi (hot)*, 2019  
pine, ash, raw linseed oil, turpentine, custom-made wood finishing oil, oil paint
21. *Untitled Hongi (green)*, 2019  
pine, ash, raw linseed oil, oil paint
22. *Untitled Hongi (dane)*, 2019  
macrocarpa, ash, Danish oil
23. *Untitled Hongi (teak)*, 2019  
macrocarpa, ash, raw linseed oil, teak oil
24. *Untitled Hongi (red)*, 2019  
redwood, ash, raw linseed oil
25. *Untitled Hongi (kauri)*, 2019  
kauri, ash, raw linseed oil, custom-made wood finishing oil, carnauba wax
26. *Untitled Hongi (tawa)*, 2019  
salvaged tawa, ash, raw linseed oil, carnauba wax, paint, spray enamel
27. *Untitled Wrestlers (tötara)*, 2019  
salvaged tötara, carnauba wax, natural decking oil, raw linseed oil, custom-made wood finishing oil, silkscreen ink
28. *Hands against the wall (multinational)*, 2019  
salvaged timber, ash, raw linseed oil
29. *Hands against the wall (tall dark-skinned man)*, 2019  
kauri, ash, and raw linseed oil
30. *Hands against the wall (mid height, mid tone)*, 2019  
kauri
31. *Hands against the wall (brothers)*, 2019  
kauri, ash, raw linseed oil, silkscreen ink, enamel (2 parts)
32. *Wharenui (first home)*, 2019  
cardboard, newspaper, house paint and oil paint; mattresses, various objects, artworks  
commissioned by Te Tuhi, Auckland

33. *Labour of love (saving money cutting corners)*, 2019  
performance  
every Saturday from 12 noon to 1:30pm throughout the exhibition's duration  
commissioned by Te Tuhi, Auckland
34. *Immortal Dance*, 2018–19  
HD video  
14 minutes 4 seconds  
edition of 3 + 2 AP  
filmed in between María Huatulco and Pluma Hidalgo, Oaxaca, Mexico (including footage from Western Springs Park, Auckland)  
courtesy of the artist and PAULNACHE Gallery
35. *A conversation about painting*, 2018–19  
HD video  
5 minutes 18 seconds  
edition of 3 + 2 AP  
filmed in Pluma Hidalgo, Oaxaca, Mexico  
borrowed audio from interviews with Brice Marden and Chris Martin  
courtesy of the artist and PAULNACHE Gallery
36. *Poor Man's Feast*, 2019
37. *Allen key table*, 2018–19  
Allen keys, epoxy adhesive, spray paint, graphite, oil paint, plywood, bricks
38. *Untitled (chair)*, 2018–19  
boxes, art books, rimu tongue and groove floor panels, oil paint, custom-made wood finishing oil
39. *Wizard staff #1*, 2019  
unopened beer cans, enamel paint, tape, epoxy  
commissioned by Te Tuhi, Auckland

40. *Wizard staff #2*, 2019  
unopened beer cans, enamel paint, tape, epoxy  
commissioned by Te Tuhi, Auckland
41. *Hanging out to dry*, 2018–19  
denim and A-frame clothes dryers  
commissioned by Te Tuhi, Auckland

*housewarming party*, 2019, is a faux-celebration wherein the public is invited to celebrate an unnamed millennial's first home purchase. This unnamed millennial – potentially the artist – his wife and rabbit represent a shared concern around the property market in Aotearoa. Fear of never owning your own home, anxiety around foreign and intergenerational competition, unprecedented inflation in the property and rental markets, a rapid rise in homelessness, overcrowded and mouldy homes and mass evictions – these types of issues make for an emotionally charged society, whose burdens often transfer into everyday life. At work, breakfast, lunch or dinner, over drinks or coffee, property is a topic that captivates New Zealanders, bordering on obsession.

As its name suggests, this work takes the form of a housewarming party. Unlike a millennial 'piss-up', this housewarming party is inspired by more traditional parties and focuses less on excessive drinking and more on activities. A party itinerary suggests a list of entertaining activities for

partygoers to be completed in a sequential order. The itinerary follows the process of a pōwhiri, with each activity taking form as a stage within the process. Starting things off, Watene presents two video works that translate as haka pōwhiri and karanga (challenge and welcoming call), played on loop at the entrance to the marae ātea or roadside.

*Llaves a Dia de los Muertos or Day of the Dead Yves (telekinetic Skype)*, 2017, is a video work filmed in Pluma Hidalgo, Oaxaca, Mexico, on the Day of the Dead. The video presents the artist during a telekinetic Skype conversation with the dead (in this context, the artist's stern and scrutinising self-portrait is interpreted as a challenge). In the video *Untitled Karanga*, 2019, the artist's wife, Robbie, attempts to recite a love poem written by the artist (titled 'Artist/Author') over an audio recording of the Pokémon Jigglypuff singing. Jigglypuff, whose songs put people to sleep, and Robbie's poetry recital makes for an awkward karanga designed to incite a dreamy state among visitors.

The next stage of the pōwhiri focuses on the manuhiri (visitors) and tangata whenua (locals) meeting and sharing the breath of life by performing hongiri (the traditional Māori greeting where two people press noses). The manuhiri and tangata whenua may be seen as the partygoers and host, but this can also be interpreted as intergenerational or foreign parties and ideologies meeting

one another. Watene's wooden *Hongiri* sculptures represent this meeting process.

The third stage presents the unnamed millennial's first home (also translated as wharenuī) – the exhibition's centrepiece. Crudely constructed from cardboard boxes, Watene's 'first home' is a satirical play on the astronomical costs associated with building in Aotearoa, and becomes an alternative architectural design that bypasses such costs. To further decrease expenditure, the unnamed millennial has stolen the land that *Wharenuī (first home)*, 2019, occupies (which is a practice similar to colonisers worldwide).

During the exhibition, the artist will perform *Labour of love (saving money cutting corners)*, 2019, in which he will paint a mural on *Wharenuī (first home)*. Playing into the saying 'if you want something done right do it yourself', this performance references the ever-increasing costs of home renovation and the risks of getting untrained personnel to renovate your home (which is arguably 'not right'). Watene's performance will occur every Saturday from 12 noon to 1:30pm throughout the exhibition.

The mural presents a symbol that has been recurrent for the artist: the wizard, which references the epic fantasy wizard as a way to explore the human condition. Traditionally speaking, wizards are old, powerful and wise. In stark contrast, Watene's wizards are

youthful and vulnerable, often portrayed in common human situations, such as a first date or first day of school. In this sense, his wizards represent a universal human condition, or a common whakapapa, based on the belief that human predicaments are inherent and singular, transcending cultures, races, continents and generations.

The interior of *Wharenuī (first home)* is inspired by the wharenuī commonly found on marae. Kitted out with mattresses, makeshift cushions and common household items, *first home* is a place for people to rest, sleep and meet. Its interior design emerges from the artist's concept of the Universal Room, where a house has only one common room functioning as bedroom, lounge, kitchen, bathroom, study and garage. The party's whaikōrero (speeches) and waiata (songs) will take place in the Universal Room.

Watene's video *A conversation about painting*, 2018–19 (filmed in Pluma Hildago, Oaxaca, Mexico in 2019), borrows audio material from a discussion between painters Chris Martin and Brice Marden about their respective practices, which translates as a speech on painting. During the video, Watene attempts to cook a batch of bananas, which later morphs into a psychedelic landscape painting of the Oaxaca mountain range. Watene's video *Immortal Dance*, 2018–19, also filmed in Pluma Hildago, uses kanikani (dance), fireworks and recording of a Mexican

marching band to portray a waiata on life, death and the search for immortality (inspired by Alobar and Kudra's journey in Tom Robbins' novel *Jitterbug Perfume*).

Beside the wharenuī is a hypothetical wharekai (dining room) where the hākari (feast) takes place. The feast manifests in the form of a temporary installation titled *Poor Man's Feast*, 2019, a conglomeration of sculptures that play into the idea that poor people have bad diets. Guests are invited to sit around a plywood table, Allen keys and bricks, on a bench made from rimu floorboards and boxes. The table is void of food, hinting at the host's negligence, or his inability to feed his guests.

Watene also presents a series of new sculptures called *Wizard staffs*, 2019, made in the likeness of wizard staffs from the eponymous drinking game in which partygoers drink and stack empty beer cans to create a staff (indicative of how much someone has drunk). Unlike the staffs in the game, the artist's *Wizard staffs* are made from unopened cans. A manifestation of alcoholism, the *Wizard staff* is a 3D counterpart to Watene's wizard. In this context, they represent inu (drink) for partygoers.

During his honeymoon in November 2019, Watene completed an in-situ project in Prishtina, Kosovo, and Warsaw, Poland, titled *staff party*. For this project, he presented a number of *Wizard staffs* in public places, later abandoning them to be either thrown away or dismantled and consumed. *staff party*, 2019, acts as

a prelude to the housewarming party.

The backyard is located on the other side of the wharenuī and includes a sculpture titled *Hanging out to dry*, 2018–19, made from two A-frame clothes racks which have various paintings and denim materials hanging from them. The process of hanging paintings from a clothes rack symbolises the abandonment of one's past, which may be a culture, identity, memory or history in need of protection or remembrance.

---

FILMSPACE

#### 42. **Gordon Matta-Clark**

*Open House*, 1972

41 minutes, colour, silent, Super 8mm film on HD video  
courtesy of The Estate of Gordon Matta-Clark and Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York

Gordon Matta-Clark's film *Open House*, 1972, documents the making and the opening of the homonymous work built by the artist and his friends between 98 – 112 Greene St in New York.

The house consisted of a labyrinthine layout designed inside an industrial waste container with found construction materials. The film captures the experimental construction process of *Open House*, made of three corridors wrapped around three miniscule rooms under an open roof, and the lively activation of the 'house' by the group of artists under the rain.

## BIOS

**Sosefina Andy** graduated with a Masters of Visual Arts from Auckland University of Technology in 2018. She was the inaugural recipient of Te Papa's Helen Hitchings scholarship for postgraduate fine art students in 2017.

Andy's practice focuses on the role of craft-making as a mode of adaptation that is driven by generational knowledge passed down from ancestors. Her instrumental translation of such knowledge through sculptural and installation-based artworks values the matriarchal influences within her family, unpacking traditional Sāmoan methods such as lalaga (weaving) and ula (necklace) making through alternative materials. Her works explore the performance of labour, memory and geographical migration, including her own move from Sāmoa to Aotearoa New Zealand.

---

**Matt Coldicutt** graduated with a Bachelor of Architectural Studies from Auckland School of Architecture in 2008, a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Elam School of Fine Arts in 2010 and a Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Secondary) at the University of Auckland's Faculty of Education in 2011. At present, he is Head of the Technology Department at Ngā Puna O

Waiōrea Western Springs College where he teaches design. During 2014-17, he co-established and curated Rockies ARI (now Mokopōpaki) at 454 Karangahape Road. His art practice seeks to investigate balance and instability surfacing from urban development and convoluted social-spatial crisis through reflections, unrealistic propositions and alternative situations.

---

**Gordon Matta-Clark** was born in New York in 1943 and died in 1978. He studied French literature at the Sorbonne and Architecture at Cornell University. From the early 1970s, as a founding member of the artist-run Food Restaurant in New York's SoHo neighbourhood, Matta-Clark participated in numerous group exhibitions and projects. His work was presented in Documenta V, Kassel, Germany and at exhibitions in São Paulo, Berlin, Zurich, and the 9 Biennale de Paris. Major projects by Matta-Clark were staged in Aachen, Paris and Antwerp.

Following his death, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, Germany and IVAM Centro Julio Gonzalez, Valencia, Spain among others, organized major retrospective exhibitions. In 2007, the

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, honoured him with a retrospective entitled *Gordon Matta-Clark: You Are the Measure*. In 2017 the Bronx Museum of the Arts presented *Gordon Matta-Clark: Anarchitect*, a major survey featuring more than one hundred works by the artist.

---

**Yonel Watene** (born 1989, Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand) is of Māori (Ngāti Maru (Hauraki)) and Greek descent. He is represented by PAULNACHE, Gisborne, Aotearoa New Zealand. In 2016 he founded SAVOIE de LACY, a small gallery located in Ravensbourne, Dunedin. After the gallery's closure in 2017, SAVOIE de LACY was superseded by SAVOY GERACOPOL, a nomadic project dedicated to presenting art in unconventional spaces.

Typically working in series using painting, sculpture, photography, writing, and occasionally moving image, Yonel Watene's practice is defined by a relentless desire to experiment with different styles and mediums. Drawing on the legacies of artists renowned for their stylistic diversity such as Sigmar Polke, Pablo Picasso, Roni Horn and Chris Martin, and a wide variety of sources—art historical, musical, cultural,

and autobiographical—his work can be seen as akin to Charles Mingus' 1959 album *Mingus Ah Um*, touted as "an extended tribute to ancestors". In this sense, Watene pays tributes to a universal 'ancestor'—a history, idea, narrative or tradition—in each body of work, where each body is a track, and his oeuvre is the album.



