



NZ at Venice

Collected reflections on the  
National Pavilion

by Will Gresson

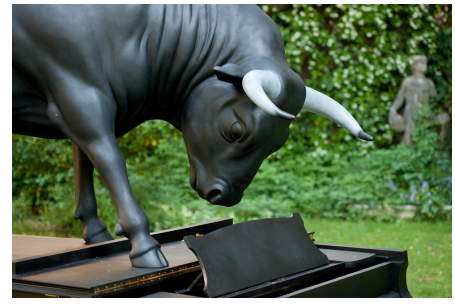
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Bill Culbert, *Level*, 2013. Photo: Jennifer French.



Judy Millar, *Giraffe - Bottle - Gun*, installation view, 2009. Photo: Judy Millar.



Michael Parekowhai, *Chapman's Homer*, 2011. Photo: Michael Hall.



Simon Denny, *Secret Power*, installation view, 2015. Photo: Jens Ziehe.



Lisa Reihana: *Emissaries*, 2017 New Zealand Pavilion, Venice Art Biennale. Image: Contemporary HUM.

*The Venice Art Biennale, established in 1895, attracts today 86 participating countries and over 500,000 visitors, making it one of the most prestigious opportunities for exposure for participating artists. A group of permanent national pavilions are found in the Giardini, where Australia was the last country to secure a site in 1988. Other countries temporarily occupy buildings elsewhere in Venice, with the freedom and challenge to find a different site every two years.*

*New Zealand has participated in the Venice Biennale with a national presentation since 2001, with exhibitions by Peter Robinson and Jacqueline Fraser (2001), Michael Stevenson (2003), et al. (2005), Judy Millar and Francis Upritchard (2009), Michael Parekowhai (2011), Bill Culbert (2013) and Simon Denny (2015). Lisa Reihana: Emissaries, the 2017 New Zealand exhibition in Venice, included an*

*expanded version of Reihana's audiovisual work in Pursuit of Venus [infected], alongside two large-scale digital photographs, and a constellation of sculptural works. This year also, New Zealand's pavilion was for the first time situated within the Arsenale, the other permanent venue of the Biennale.*

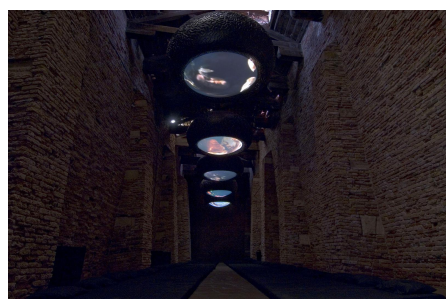
*With the 57th Venice Art Biennale closing this week, and Dane Mitchell freshly announced as the New Zealand artist selected to produce a project for the 58th Biennale in 2019, London-based New Zealand writer Will Gresson looks back at the way New Zealand has presented itself on the global stage that is Venice, since first officially taking part in 2001. In particular, Gresson shares a personal response to the last five national projects which he was able to attend and some thoughts on the relevance of cross-national presentations in the future.*

New Zealand's participation at the Venice Biennale has always been associated with a degree of controversy. The most prominent example of this was in 2005, when broadcaster Paul Holmes took aim at artist collective et al. and by extension, Creative New Zealand and the Government for sending *The Fundamental Practice* to the 51st International Art Exhibition. The ensuing media furore centred over not only the amount of funding the collective received but also more problematically, the actual value of the work itself and the collective's willingness to 'front up' and explain their practice.

In the wake of Holmes' televised interview with the then-head of Creative New Zealand Peter Biggs, politicians on the right voiced their own disdain for the work, their chief criticism being that it was elitist and generally 'unrepresentative' of New Zealand. Prior to the controversy, there was typically only limited coverage of New Zealand's presence at Venice. In the years since however these questions have continually arisen in discussions over the work selected, and to some extent their consideration is consistently evident in the artists chosen to go to Venice.

In 2007, New Zealand did not send a national pavilion, in part as a response to the negative domestic reaction leading up to the 2005 event (it should also be noted for the record that the original mandate for New Zealand at Venice was an allocation of funding for

three pavilions, 2001-2005). Two New Zealand artists, Rachel Rakena and Brett Graham, did participate in the 2007 Biennale however with a collateral exhibition entitled *Aniwaniwa*. Unfortunately, as the project was not an ‘official representation,’ it often goes unacknowledged in the wider story of New Zealand’s presence at the Venice Biennale. Another project, a book entitled *Speculation*, was published by NZ Venice Project and JRP|Ringier that same year. Edited by Brian Butler, who was the director of Artspace in Auckland at the time, the publication looked at the work of 30 New Zealand artists chosen by 8 local curators, all addressing possible future national pavilions at Venice.



Brett Graham and Rachael Raken, *Aniwaniwa*, 2007, installation, 52nd International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia. Now in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada.



Brett Graham and Rachael Raken, *Aniwaniwa*, 2007, installation, 52nd International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia. Now in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada.



et al., *the fundamental practice*, installation view, 2005. Photo: Jennifer French.



et al., *the fundamental practice*, installation view, 2005. Photo: Jennifer French.



et al., *the fundamental practice*, installation view, 2005. Photo: Jennifer French.

My first experience of the Biennale was in 2009. I was 21 years old, six months out of university and on my way to Germany to work on a recording project. I spent five days in Venice, touring the Giardini and Arsenale grounds, and as many other pavilions and parallel events as I could manage in the sweltering June heat. To say the experience was overwhelming would be an understatement. Venice



is a baffling space to navigate in any circumstance, but particularly during the incredible spectacle of the Biennale. Looking back now though, I realise just how significant a year it was for New Zealand's participation at the event.

In 2009, two artists had been selected to represent New Zealand, Judy Millar and Francis Upritchard. In his 2016 book *This Model World: Travels to the Edge of Contemporary Art*, Anthony Byrt recounts a telling conversation he had with Millar during one interview: "It was a relief to have Francis there," she says. "It was an extremely difficult time to be doing Venice, because you knew if you messed up there would never be another New Zealand artist go. So there was an added responsibility that went way beyond your own work – a responsibility to perform and behave. Francis having to front that too took some pressure off."<sup>[01]</sup>

Ultimately the exhibition was successful for both artists. Millar's profile in Europe was raised significantly and she continues to exhibit internationally, splitting her time between Berlin and Auckland. Upritchard has been based in London for several years, and her first survey exhibition *Jealous Saboteurs* was shown this year at City Gallery Wellington Te Whare Toi (more on this later). Both have since returned to the Biennale as part of a collateral event and the curatorial exhibition respectively.<sup>[02]</sup> Subsequent artists New Zealand has sent since 2009, (Michael Parekowhai in 2011, Bill Culbert in 2013 and in particular Simon Denny in 2015) have all been hugely well received – at least abroad.



Judy Millar, *Giraffe – Bottle – Gun*,  
installation view, 2009. Photo: Judy Millar.



Judy Millar, *Giraffe – Bottle – Gun*,  
installation view, 2009. Photo: Judy Millar.



Judy Millar, *Giraffe – Bottle – Gun*,  
installation view, 2009. Photo: Judy Millar.



Speculation publication, 2007. Design:  
Warren Olds, Studio Ahoy. Photo: Creative  
New Zealand.

I have been fortunate enough to attend every Biennale since 2009, watching the evolution of New Zealand's official representation with each iteration. The profile of the national pavilion has steadily risen over that time, arguably reaching its apex in 2015 with Simon Denny's *Secret Power*, spread across two of the most prestigious and visited places in Venice: Marco Polo Airport and the Marciana Library right on Piazza San Marco. In 2017 the New Zealand pavilion was situated inside the Arsenale complex for the first

time, one of the two major sites of the Biennale which also plays host to part of the curator's exhibition and many other national pavilions of note. The chosen artist, Lisa Reihana with her project *Emissaries*, looked poised to build on the positive critical momentum surrounding New Zealand at Venice from arguably the strongest location the pavilion has ever had.

The twin pressures of domestic politics and the Biennale's own fluctuating priorities make it difficult to predict exactly how an artist's work will be received, particularly given how far in advance many of the decisions are made. Reihana's selection then, felt engaging, not just because of the positive attention it received in New Zealand media, but because having finally been able to see it, I also felt that the work is as unique and multifaceted as people said it was. The astonishingly accomplished technical prowess of *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]* is enough to make it stand out in what felt like a generally disappointing year for the Biennale; the visuals are strikingly detailed and nuanced, and the sound (designed by James Pinker) is powerful and dramatic. But beyond those significant strengths the content of the work, from the clearly meticulous detail of its construction to the obvious depth of research and collaboration that has gone into it give it a weight which feels significant in the particular times in which it's been shown.

There is a collective element to *Emissaries* which appears to vindicate its title, not just in terms of the different people and performance groups involved in the making of the work but also in terms of the perspectives and identities present within it. In an engaging interview posted elsewhere on this website, Reihana goes into detail about some of the approaches she used to create the work, one of which was to grant a generous degree of artistic freedom to the performers: "[what] I did was to explain what the work was and invite talent to tell a story, to create a space for speaking back through time. I often didn't know what was going to happen, there was an element of trust and honour in the making of this work."<sup>[03]</sup> The title of the work in particular is a reflection of the different strands of representation that run through the piece, both in terms of Reihana's role as the 'New Zealand representative' but also in the different groups identifiable within the spectrum of the work. "Emissaries has many nations in it," Reihana has said.



“Samoa doesn't have a pavilion, Tahiti doesn't have a pavilion. The Pacific doesn't have a pavilion. They don't have the support structures or the possibility of creating such a pavilion. Friends in Hawaii have said they're thrilled to be represented here, because they're in the work.”<sup>[04]</sup>



Francis Upritchard, *Save Yourself*, installation view, 2009. Photo: Andy Stagg.



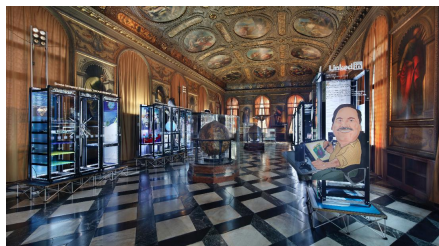
Francis Upritchard, *Save Yourself*, installation view, 2009. Photo: Andy Stagg.



Simon Denny, *Secret Power*, installation view, 2015. Photo: Paolo Monello.



Simon Denny, *Secret Power*, installation view, 2015. Photo: Paolo Monello.



Simon Denny, *Secret Power*, installation view, 2015. Photo: Jens Ziehe.



Simon Denny, *Secret Power*, installation view, 2015. Photo: Jens Ziehe.

To be sure, this raises other questions of authorship, identity and cultural appropriation. The artist herself addresses these issues in the same interview: “It's so hard, as a Māori, it's political to go out and re represent other cultures. The sort of questions you face are 'why are you doing it?’”<sup>[05]</sup> To what extent is a collective notion of the pacific told by one part of that collective a step up from the colonial Euro-centric gaze which defines *Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique* (1804–1805), the neoclassical depiction designed by Jean-Gabriel Charvet as a scenic wallpaper from which Reihana's work stems? As the artist herself describes it, the inspiration was born of “seeing these strange representations of Pacific people, and not being able to recognise them, and knowing that it's from us and from home, that we have a shared cultural knowledge, and seeing a



reflection of that from another historic time.”<sup>[06]</sup> It nevertheless gives cause for reflection on what it means not only for the work but also for the regions currently absent from the discourse in Venice as a whole. Perhaps an even bolder vision for what New Zealand at Venice could be in the future might lead curators and artists to run further with Reihana’s collaborative approach and officially work with artists from different regions in the Pacific in a collective capacity?

Arguably more problematic is the fact that the project was supported by The Royal Society. In a post on their website dated February 22, 2017 the Society announced their support of the project by stating “The Society – which played a vital role in Aotearoa New Zealand’s early history – is sponsoring Lisa Reihana: Emissaries in a partnership that echoes support for explorations made nearly 250 years ago. The Society backed the world-changing Pacific voyages of English navigator Captain James Cook, including the first voyage of the Endeavour with Joseph Banks – the ambitious global scientist who subsequently presided over the Royal Society for 42 years.”<sup>[07]</sup> The link for many between the Society’s patronage of Cook’s voyage, and subsequent years of colonial violence will be difficult to reconcile.

My particular relationship to the work actually had a slightly odd beginning. When *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]* opened in 2015 at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, I was immediately aware of the groundswell of critical praise the work received in New Zealand’s art media. When Reihana was nominated for the Walter’s Prize in 2016 it cemented in my mind the idea that she was destined to be the next representative at Venice with that work, something I confidently asserted at the time to a colleague back in New Zealand (despite not having seen a single second of the work itself). They responded by pointing out that the rules regarding the selection of New Zealand’s representation at Venice prohibited sending existing work that had previously been shown, but I was confident that they would find a way, as indeed they did. The work *Emissaries* incorporates elements of *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]* with the addition of new footage, including a section where Captain Cook is played by a female actor (Auckland Art Gallery assistant curator Julia Waite) alongside the original section where Cook was played by a male actor (Marek Sumich). A new emphasis on the

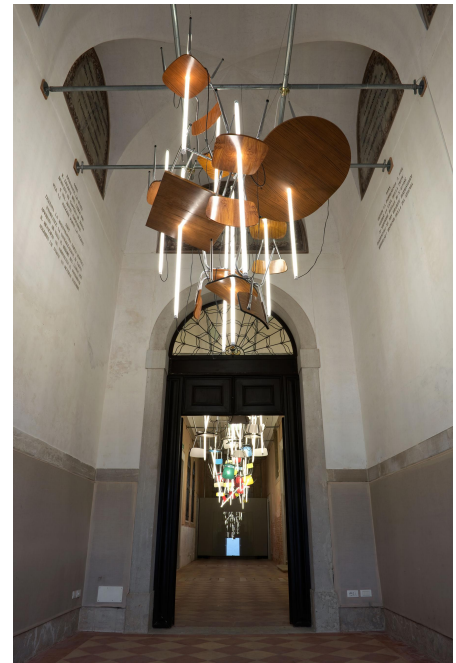
maritime craft of the Pacific is juxtaposed with the Endeavour as well, and the whole project is augmented by a collection of original telescopes that tie the work to figures like Galileo and the city of Venice. Recordings of Cook's clock are also incorporated into the work, the access to which alongside the telescopes is another part of the Royal Society's contribution to the project.



Bill Culbert, *Daylight Flotsam Venice*, 2013. Photo: Jennifer French.



Bill Culbert, *HUT, Made in Christchurch*, 2013. Photo: Jennifer French.



Bill Culbert, *Drop*, 2013. Photo: Jennifer French.



Installation view of Lisa Reihana, *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]*, 2015-17 (detail). Ultra HD video, colour, sound, 64 min. Image: Contemporary HUM.



Lisa Reihana, *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]* (detail), 2015-17, Ultra HD video, colour, sound, 64 min. Image courtesy of the artist and New Zealand at Venice.



Lisa Reihana, *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]*, 2015 (making-of).



Lisa Reihana, *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]*, 2015 (making-of).



*Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique* (detail), scenic wallpaper illustrated by Jean-Gabriel Charvet and manufactured by Joseph Dufour. (1804-1805). Courtesy of P. Plattier, Musées de Mâcon.

My confidence over Reihana's selection was based on two interrelated impressions I have about New Zealand's presence at

Venice. The first is based on what could be called a lingering resentment over the 2005 debacle. New Zealand's mainstream press doesn't have a particularly open attitude to the arts (something in recent years which has been challenged by newer media like #500words, The Pantograph Punch and The Spinoff amongst others). Since then, I would argue there has been a demonstrable trend to pick what could be called 'defensible' projects to avoid another media scrum that might permanently end New Zealand's participation at the event (in the manner alluded to by Millar in her conversation with Byrt). Reihana's work, from its technical achievements to its deep connection to New Zealand history feels like a project which would garner public support. This is played out by the fact that there are a record 150 patrons supporting *Emissaries* at Venice in 2017.

The second is based on how the New Zealand pavilions compare to the way other countries manage their own presence. In 2013 Bill Culbert's selection to represent New Zealand was described by one critic as evidence of the country's 'cultural malaise.'<sup>[08]</sup> To some extent this criticism feels related to those that met et al.'s selection in 2005, a kind of misunderstanding of what being the national 'representative' actually means. In point of fact, it was exactly the kind of project that many countries elect to send to Venice, an established, marketable and highly experienced artist who could navigate the environment both critically and financially. Denny is perhaps another good case in point, (the domestic controversy surrounding his collaboration with journalist Nicky Hager notwithstanding), and Reihana feels similarly placed to capitalise on the opportunity.

I also frequently site the example of the German and French pavilions in 2013 as a way of challenging what could be considered limiting views on who participates at Venice. Initiated by the two nations' foreign ministries, the two countries swapped pavilions to mark the 50th anniversary of the Élysée Treaty on Franco-German friendship. Germany exhibited four artists that year, none of whom were German. So to summarise then, the same year critics in New Zealand were sceptical of Bill Culbert representing New Zealand because he had lived overseas for so long, Germany sent four non-German artists and exhibited them in a building with 'Francia' inscribed on the outside.<sup>[09]</sup>



It feels worth reiterating however, that Venice is generally an incredibly difficult environment to show work in. In 2015 the United Kingdom sent Sarah Lucas, one of the infamous ‘Young British Artists’ of the 1990s. Her work was exactly what you might expect from her - bright yellow phallus-invoking sculptures and cigarettes protruding from the orifices of half assembled mannequins bent over furniture and appliances. That same year however, Nigerian curator Okwui Enwezor had put together an incredibly ambitious and politically charged Biennale, which rendered Lucas’ works somehow out of step with the curated exhibition as well as some of the other pavilions on show. Granted there would no doubt have been many who preferred the irreverence of Lucas’ work to more earnest politics of Enwezor’s curation, but it serves as an example of how the perception/reading of an artist’s work can be fundamentally altered by the surroundings.

Venice is also complicated by its rich and varied history. As a significant European city, with ties to narratives of trade, exploration, colonisation and conquest, the perception of complex cultural narratives removed from their geographical grounding can and does lead to things being ‘lost in translation,’ to lean on a worn cliché. How much of the nuanced commentary Reihana’s work contains actually comes across to an audience is difficult to quantify, much less some of the criticisms others might have of them. It was also difficult to look past a wall text included alongside Francis Upritchard’s work in the curated section of the exhibition, which described the sculptural works as being “like strangers belonging to a separate, surreal world, but each claims its own irrational individuality.”<sup>[10]</sup> To say this misses some of the issues surrounding the artist’s work would be an understatement. In actual fact it glosses over all of the significant and *perfectly recognisable/identifiable* cultural elements problematically appropriated within the artist’s work in favour of a completely Western perspective of the ‘foreign’ as intrinsically alien. In October 2017, Lana Lopesi, Kaiwāwāhi Ahurei / Editor-in-Chief of the Pantograph Punch, published a significant review of Upritchard’s recent survey exhibition in New Zealand which delved into these issues in greater depth and from a much more knowledgeable perspective than I am able to here.<sup>[11]</sup>



Michael Parekowhai, *He Korero Purakau mo Te Awanui o Te Motu: Story of a New Zealand River*, 2011. Photo: Michael Hall.



Michael Parekowhai, *Chapman's Homer*, 2011. Photo: Michael Hall.



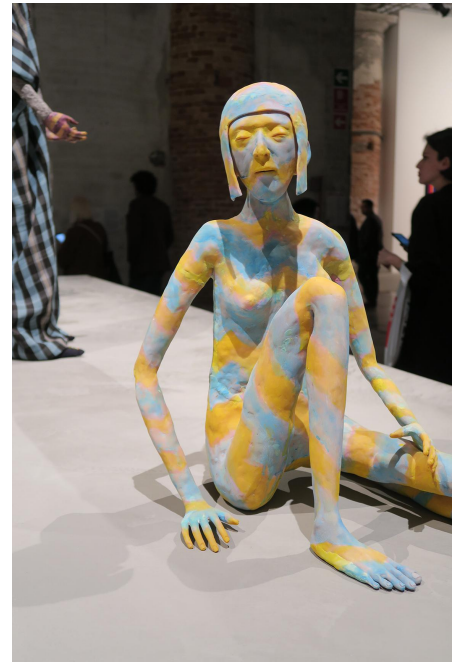
Francis Upritchard, *Buey*, 2016, steel and foil armature, paint, modelling material, fabric; and *Makiko*, 2016, steel and foil armature, paint, modelling material, fabric, hair. *Viva Arte Viva*, 57th Venice Art Biennale, 2017. Image: Contemporary HUM.



Francis Upritchard, *Purple and Yellow Diamond*, 2016, steel and foil armature, paint, modelling material, fabric, hair. *Viva Arte Viva*, 57th Venice Art Biennale, 2017. Image: Contemporary HUM.



Francis Upritchard, *Black and White Fringe*, 2017, steel and foil armature, paint, modelling material, fabric, hair, bone. *Viva Arte Viva*, 57th Venice Art Biennale, 2017. Image: Contemporary HUM.



Francis Upritchard, *Marianne*, 2016, steel and foil armature, paint, modelling material, papier-mâché. *Viva Arte Viva*, 57th Venice Art Biennale, 2017. Image: Contemporary HUM.



Francis Upritchard, *Octopus with Fish*, 2016, bronze. 57th Venice Art Biennale, Arsenale, 2017, Venice. Image: Contemporary HUM.

Macel's commentary feels like part of a wider issue I had with the event this year, which could be described as being focussed on form over substance. Additionally, much of the work felt somehow impotent and directionless in the face of the current political climate, an impression that felt particularly strong in the Giardini Gardens where many of the permanent European pavilions are situated. While many of the press releases invoked recent political developments, the works felt insufficient and unengaged, as if they had been made in calmer times and then written about retroactively to try to give them contemporary relevance. One particular criticism I have encountered living in the UK as it floats through the chaos of Brexit and domestic political uncertainty, is that many countries in Europe are struggling to negotiate their own history (something which certainly feels relevant here). This leaves many of them uncertain of how to navigate their present and largely fearful of the future. Current political unrest in Catalonia and the recent German, Austrian and Czech elections, where far-right movements made huge gains, speak volumes about the uncertainty in which much of Europe is engulfed. Arguably in a time when the notion of the nation state is undergoing such a dramatic and violent reconsideration, the rigidity of the Biennale's

structure with its fixed national pavilions is simply unable to reflect the extent of contemporary social and cultural schisms.

There was also a strange lack of digital work, and a lot of the discussion seemed to hark back to a more romantic notion of the artist in their studio and a generally more insular perspective, something which felt especially true of the curator's sections. Much of the work felt like it spoke to narratives of the artist and their relationship to their practice rather than grounding that practice in any kind of wider social context. Curator Christine Macel has described this year's event as "a Biennale designed with artists, by artists and for artists." There will no doubt be sympathy for that project amongst those worn thin by the seemingly endless political turmoil of the past 12 to 18 months, or simply for those who would have attended in 2015 and preferred less of the political gnashing of teeth.

That said, it felt difficult to escape how out of step much of the work felt, particularly from countries from which one would imagine there is much to talk about. Mark Bradford's work in the Pavilion of the United States felt strangely muted (at least compared to the much more engaged exhibition text), and Phyllida Barlow's work in the British pavilion seemed to me like a concerted exercise in how to avoid mentioning Brexit. Perhaps it's no coincidence then that many of the pavilions from the other side of the Eurocentric axis like New Zealand (or the incredible South African representation) this year were some of the strongest, precisely because they put the past both front and centre. Reihana's work had what so many others were missing, and that lasting sense of timely urgency is what has stayed with me the longest.

### *Footnotes*

01. Anthony Byrt, *This Model World, Travels to the Edge of Contemporary Art*, Auckland University Press, 2016, p. 167.

02. In 2011 Judy Millar was included in *Time, Space, Existence* presented by *PERSONAL STRUCTURES* at Palazzo Bembo 4 June - 27 November 2011. Francis Upritchard was included in Curator Christine Macel's selection for the 57th International Art Exhibition, *Viva Arte Viva* in 2017.

03. [www.contemporaryhum.com/an-interview-with-lisa-reihana/](http://www.contemporaryhum.com/an-interview-with-lisa-reihana/).



04. Ibid.

05. Ibid.

06. Ibid.

07. [www.royalsociety.org/news/2017/02/global-arts-and-science-unite-in-unique-sponsorship-for-lisa-reihana-exhibition/](http://www.royalsociety.org/news/2017/02/global-arts-and-science-unite-in-unique-sponsorship-for-lisa-reihana-exhibition/).

08. [www.pantograph-punch.com/post/no-guts-no-glory-nz-s-malaise-at-the-venice-biennale](http://www.pantograph-punch.com/post/no-guts-no-glory-nz-s-malaise-at-the-venice-biennale).

09. Ibid.

10. Quoted from a note printed alongside the title panel to Francis Upritchard's sculptural works in the Arsenale.

11. [www.pantograph-punch.com/post/review-jealous-saboteurs](http://www.pantograph-punch.com/post/review-jealous-saboteurs).

## Biographies



Bill Culbert (1935-2019) was one of the world's leading light artists. Culbert had more than 100 solo exhibitions worldwide during his incredible 60-year career. Having represented New Zealand at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013, Culbert was notable for his inventive use of light and shadow in painting, photography, sculpture and installation work, as well as his use of found and recycled materials. From suitcases pierced with fluorescent tubes, repurposed furniture, vast arrays of reclaimed plastic containers, Culbert's poetic work invites us to revalue familiar objects and refocus our perceptions.



Francis Upritchard was born in 1976 in New Plymouth, New Zealand and lives and works in London. After studying Fine Art at Ilam School of Art, Christchurch, she moved to London in 1998 where she co-founded the Bart Wells Institute, an artist run gallery, with artist Luke Gottelier. In 2006 Upritchard won New Zealand's prestigious Walters Prize, and has had major solo exhibitions at Vienna Secession in 2009, Nottingham Contemporary in 2012, Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center in 2012, Marugame Genichiro-Inokuma Museum of Contemporary Art in 2013, and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles in 2014. In 2009, she represented New Zealand at the Venice Biennale. Her work is in international collections including Tate, London; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Paisley Museum, Scotland; Saatchi Gallery, London; Auckland Art Gallery, Toi o Tāmaki; Christchurch Art Gallery, Te Puna o Waiwhetu; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; and Queensland Art Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane. She is represented by Kate MacGarry, London; Anton Kern Gallery, New York; and Ivan Anthony Gallery, Auckland.



Judy Millar is one of New Zealand's most internationally recognised artists. Since 2005 she has shared her time between Auckland and Berlin. Highlights of her career include two exhibitions at the Venice Biennale; representing New Zealand with her solo exhibition *Giraffe-Bottle-Gun* (2009); and in the collateral event *Time, Space, Existence* (2011); inclusion in *Rohkunstbau*, Berlin (2010) and solo exhibitions at the Auckland Art Gallery (2002) and the IMA, Brisbane (2013). Her paintings are held in all major public collections in New Zealand and in several international collections including the Kunstmuseum St Gallen and Tichy Foundation in Prague.



Lisa Reihana (b. 1964) is a multi-disciplinary artist from Aotearoa New Zealand (of Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hine and Ngāi Tū tribal descent) whose practice explores how identity and history are represented, and how these intersect with concepts of place and community. The subjects of Reihana's portraiture inhabit a world in which the boundaries of past, present, and future are mutable; their identities are likewise unfixed and transgress everyday expectations of cultural and social norms.

She graduated from Elam School of Fine Arts, Auckland University, with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1987, and recently completed her Master of Design through the Unitec Institute of Technology. Reihana has an extensive exhibition history in New Zealand and abroad and in 2014 she was awarded an Arts Laureate Award by the Arts Foundation of New Zealand. Her works are held in private and public collections including Te Papa Tongarewa; Auckland Art Gallery; Australia National Gallery; Staatliche Museum, Berlin; Susan O'Connor Foundation, Texas and Brooklyn Museum, New York.



Michael Parekōwhai (b. 1968, Porirua, NZ) draws upon an abundant range of both vernacular and collective vocabularies in his work. He re-manufactures these lexicons into complex narrative structures and formal languages, exploring perceptions of space, the ambiguities of identity, the shifting sensitivities of historical memory and the fluid relationship between art and craft. Ideas of camaraderie, tools of teaching and childhood learning, as well as quotes from modern art history and popular culture, also play out in many of Parekōwhai's stories.

Parekōwhai graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Elam School of Fine Arts, Auckland in 1990, followed by a Master of Fine Arts in 2000. Parekōwhai was selected to represent New Zealand at the 54th Venice Biennale in 2011 where he exhibited *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer* at the New Zealand pavilion. In 2015 he exhibited *The Promised Land*, a retrospective survey of his practice at the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane. In 2018, Te Papa Tongarewa's opened its newly expanded contemporary art galleries with *Détour*, a major solo exhibition from Parekōwhai. His work has been included in: *Toi Tu Toi Ora: Contemporary Māori Art*, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki (2020); the 5th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane (2006); the 5th Gwangju Biennale (2004); the 13th Biennale of Sydney (2002) and *Headlands: Thinking Through New Zealand Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney (1992).



Simon Denny (\*1982 Auckland/New Zealand, lives in Berlin) is an artist whose work explores the cultures and values behind contemporary technologies. In recent years, Denny has looked at the exploitation of information in data-economies, using his work to visualise systems of competing political and economic visions, interrelationships of labour, capital, developments in technologies, and impacts on the biosphere.

He studied at the University of Auckland (2005), and the Städelschule, Frankfurt am Main (2009). Denny's work has been exhibited recently in solo exhibitions in the K21 in Düsseldorf (2020); Museum of Old and New Art, Tasmania (2019); MOCA, Cleveland (2018); OCAT, Shenzhen (2017); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2017); WIELS Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels (2016); Serpentine Galleries, London (2015); MoMA PS1, New York (2015); Portikus, Frankfurt (2014); Adam Art Gallery, Wellington (2014); MUMOK, Vienna (2013); Kunstverein Munich (2013). He represented New Zealand at the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015. His works are represented in institutional collections including MoMA (New York), Walker Art Centre (Minneapolis), Kunsthaus Zürich (Zürich), Sammlung zeitgenössischer Kunst der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Berlin) and Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Wellington). Denny co-founded the BPA//Berlin Program for Artists, an artist mentoring program in 2016. Since 2018, he is a professor for Time Based Media at the HFBK, Hamburg.



Will Gresson is a writer, musician and artist from New Zealand. He is the co-founder of *without appeal*, an independent publishing platform currently based in London.

