



On Civicness and Participating in Public
Life through Art Practice - Panel
discussion transcript

HUM's panel discussion in Berlin -
Part Two

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Buchanan

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Neukölln, Berlin, October 2021. Photo: Stephanie O'Connor.



(L-R) Pauline Autet, Cat Auburn, Daniel Malone, Ruth Buchanan, *On Civicness and participating in public life through art practice* panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM, 02 October 2021, Berlin. Photo: Stephanie O'Connor.



(L-R) Pauline Autet, Cat Auburn, Daniel Malone, *On Civicness and participating in public life through art practice* panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM, 02 October 2021, Berlin. Photo: Stephanie O'Connor.



HUM team and panellists of *On Civicness and participating in public life through art practice* hosted by Contemporary HUM, 02 October 2021, Berlin. Photo: Stephanie O'Connor.

Continuing its series of public events, Contemporary HUM hosted its third panel discussion on 2 October 2021 in Berlin. The conversation explored the idea of 'civicness' and how it is tied to social responsibility within a global community, taken from the perspective of three artists from Aotearoa living in Europe. It asked questions such as: What does collective work or cooperation with others allow in contrast to an individual practice, and is authorship important in a collaborative project? What does a site-specific response look like when working in situ within vastly different contexts, from art institutions and public theatres to the NFT market? Is there a relation to be traced between civicness and social change and what tools can be used when attempting to rethink power relations?

Guest speakers included Glasgow-based Cat Auburn; Berlin-based Ruth Buchanan; and Warsaw-based Daniel Malone. HUM's Editor Pauline Autet moderated the talk.

The event started with a short position statement from each guest artist who presented a recent or current project to feed the panel

conversation which followed. See Part One to read these presentations, before reading below the edited transcript of the panel discussion.

PAULINE AUTET Today's talk tackles the theme of civicism, and what that means for three individual art practices, working on projects involving community participation and in multidisciplinary collaborations, especially when working in the public sphere.

Civism is a complex term that can mean a lot of different things. And the more we delved into this subject, the more it became apparent that it could be tackled in different ways. For one, it evokes our relationship to the city, and today we are interested in it as a broad term as understood from the Latin roots of the word *civic* which link it to the notion of citizen and civilian. One common definition defines the word *citizenship* as one's awareness of belonging to a community.

In this sense, citizenship is predominantly associated with the public realm: it seeks to define individuals' identities and roles as citizens, as well as the respective public institutions where these can be put into practice. Although we are all New Zealand citizens sitting up here for this talk, it's not so much the notion of citizens in relation to a nation state or geographical borders that we're going to be interested in discussing today.

Rather, it's the idea of being part of a global society, which is constantly shifting, which seems a more fertile terrain to discuss how we navigate the world as an artist or cultural professional, while bringing our moral and social sense of responsibility, our values and our needs with us. This reflects Contemporary HUM's mission of demonstrating and championing the diversity of voices that come from Aotearoa New Zealand as opposed to condensing that or demonstrating that there is a typical way of working or typical identity. Our goal is really to foster international dialogue and a broader exchange of ideas.

The first subject I'd like to discuss with you is collaboration because there's a form of it involved in the heart of the projects you presented today, whether it's a collaboration with an architect, for

you, Cat, or working from the heart of cultural institutions for you, Ruth, in order to bring changes that better reflect the contemporary society that we're in. And, for Daniel, working collectively with other disciplines and professionals in theatre.

To kick us off, can you tell us how collaboration works for you, what collective work or cooperation with others allows you to do, perhaps in contrast to your individual practices? And whether this brings up questions in relation to authorship—do you see authorship as important when you're working collaboratively? Daniel, you said in your presentation that you were fed up with certain aspects of working solo, what does collective work bring you in contrast?



On Civicness and participating in public life through art practice panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM, 02 October 2021, Berlin. Photo: Stephanie O'Connor.



Daniel Malone, *On Civicness and participating in public life through art practice* panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM, 02 October 2021, Berlin. Photo: Stephanie O'Connor.



Cat Auburn, *On Civicness and participating in public life through art practice* panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM, 02 October 2021, Berlin. Photo: Stephanie O'Connor.



HUM's Editor Pauline Autet, *On Civicness and participating in public life through art practice* panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM, 02 October 2021, Berlin. Photo: Stephanie O'Connor.

DANIEL MALONE In the theatre work that I shared today, everybody in the ensemble has their own task. Everybody's sitting at the same table right from the very beginning of the process and bringing their own expertise. This discursive and very horizontal

aspect is very important to the politics of our group working together.

It does have to insert itself into the hierarchy that's present in theatre but there's a safety in numbers or in forming a team that relies heavily on a certain interpersonal dynamic—friendship, is probably the best word to describe it. To be honest, some of the most difficult times have been when those friendships have become a little bit strained and the organic shifts in the ensemble have usually been tied to that.

One of my favourite things about this process is that everybody's putting ideas on the table and discussing everything but in the end, you each have a very specific task to perform. I make the call on the costumes or scenography.

I like this blurry line between roles, but the fact that you still ultimately have a strong sense of standing in one place and working from there, that no one's going to come and undercut that. And when the ensemble's worked at its absolute best, it's been when people have supported each other's decisions even when they haven't fully understood them. Or when we've stood up together to do something that the theatre didn't want to let us do.

RUTH BUCHANAN Thanks Daniel. I consider my artistic practice as being founded in concepts of design.

And I understand design as being about making relationships. And that means that collaboration and conversation—being in relation—is fundamental to how I work. This thought of grabbing a form, which I think of as being like jelly, means the more of us that grab that form, the more wobbly it gets.

I'm interested in establishing as many relationships as I can in the process of each project, so the jelly gets super wobbly. And that, for me, is what collaboration could bring, the wobble.

CAT AUBURN I've just been thinking about what Daniel mentioned in relation to friendship and collaboration. My collaboration with Kyle Lewis is based on a long friendship. I

haven't always worked collaboratively in my art career.

Collaboration requires a certain capacity for mistakes, friction and letting go of control. Over the last five years, I've become more confident and comfortable with working in that way. It's definitely been a learning curve for me.

Kyle and I have developed a way of working that's thinking *with*, rather than thinking separately. We try to always do this process together, almost like a hive mind or using each other's brains as external hard drives. With this way of working comes a certain amount of confidence to tackle things that are really difficult. I think that some of the questions involved in the NFT project I spoke about could have been overwhelming for me to tackle alone. It's been incredible to have a collaborator to move through complicated conceptual spaces with.

In relation to your question regarding authorship: our project is absolutely about interrogating ideas of ownership, and who gets to own things via new technologies that were previously unable to be owned. Asking questions about authorship and ownership is integral to the larger project itself. We don't necessarily have solid answers to these questions yet, because we're still in the process of developing the project.



Audience members at *On Civiness and participating in public life through art practice* panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM, 02 October 2021, Berlin. Photo: Stephanie O'Connor.



On Civiness and participating in public life through art practice panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM, 02 October 2021, Berlin. Photo: Stephanie O'Connor.



Ruth Buchanan, Berlin, October 2021. Photo: Stephanie O'Connor.



Audience members at *On Civiness and participating in public life through art practice* panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM, 02 October 2021, Berlin. Photo: Stephanie O'Connor.

PA And Ruth, how do you work with the institution and is it collaboration or cooperation? You said earlier that sometimes your intervention is only half welcome. Do you dissociate where your work ends and where the structural processes of the institution start? Does the wobbly jelly start to mix everything up and does it matter? Is it important where the authorship of the artist stops?

RB For me, the question of authorship is one of dignity and defining for oneself how you want to be recognised.

I personally do want to be an author. I think there are many aspects of our lives, for so many complex reasons, where we've been

asked not to be authors. Thinking from a female perspective, from a Māori perspective, it's very important that we define for ourselves, without the oppressive sense of "norms" around the topic, what authorship means.

That's where the wobbly thing is important, because the sense of authorship needs to be flexible to maintain that sense of dignity. It should be something that we can all define in a way that feels complex enough for the paradigm we are speaking from.

PA Thinking of your projects broadly as occupying public space - whether it's a public theatre or an art institution or even dematerialised a step further to the NFT market - I also read your work in terms of site-specificity.

Do you see yourself as having a site-specific response when you work in situ within these very different contexts? Are there parameters that you look for, or respond to, from one context to another, from one project to another?

Daniel, when you switch from one public theatre to another, the play moves and is performed in different buildings and cities but is there a site-specific aspect in the way you imagine the spatial installation or the subject of the play?

DM In terms of my work with this theatre ensemble, the physical architecture is quite set - although we try to mess with it as much as we can - it's a given, more or less, as a theatre. It's more about site-specificity represented by an audience. We think a lot about who the actual audience is going to be.

For example, in the *Lawrence of Arabia* piece, we had an ideal audience in mind. The commission was about stories of immigration and refugees, so we were imagining what it would look like to make productions for this audience. They certainly are not going to the theatre, but what would they like to see if they did?

So in that sense it was quite specific. And the theatre went to considerable effort to try and get those communities to come to these productions as well.

RB For me, “situatedness”, is more useful than site-specificity because it draws in what you’re talking about, Daniel: the process of creating an audience through a production, and how you’re able to call in the situation in which you find yourself. And while that does mean spatial- site-specificness too, I think it’s more useful to think about it holistically—bringing as many different elements into how you understand the situation, how you wish to turn it into this dream engine, to dream a play for an audience that will never come. Or doesn’t exist, yet.



Daniel Malone, Berlin, October 2021. Photo: Stephanie O'Connor.



Pauline Autet, Berlin, October 2021. Photo: Stephanie O'Connor.



Audience members at *On Civicness and participating in public life through art practice* panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM, 02 October 2021, Berlin. Photo: Stephanie O'Connor.



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PA Cat, it's the first time you're working within the NFT market—what was it in this new field that you wanted to respond to and why choose to occupy this specific site?

CA Working remotely through the pandemic has had a huge impact. I'd been thinking a lot about Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* because engaging with community became completely virtual for me for quite some time and, interestingly, global rather than local. The NFT project was an extension of this experience. Kyle and I had been thinking about how to engage with different online communities, at the same time as trying to think about the physical site or locus of each project that we were undertaking.

PA Something else that is striking within your three presentations is the questioning of overarching systems, often to do with power structures. I'm wondering if a relation can be traced between civicness and social change, and what tools you use to rethink these power relations.

Civicness is inherently linked to positive qualities of learned civility, such as tolerance, mutual respect, awareness towards others, social concern and responsibility. But in contrast to this, the role of the contemporary artist today is not to be a public servant, bound by moral action, ethics or notions of political correctness.

The realm of art is by definition meant to be free, yet in recent times we increasingly talk about responsibility towards specific communities, avoiding speaking on someone else's behalf or appropriating from others' experiences... So there's a potential friction here when we put these two concepts next to each other. Can artistic practice incite, and do you aim to incite, social awareness within the audience?

CA I'm not sure that my art practice can hold all of that - I try not to put such enormous pressure on it. But I think what I can speak to instead is the idea of *smuggling*. I'll enter

situations where I might not necessarily be known as an artist, keep my artist brain switched on and smuggle in ideas of social awareness that way.

Earlier this year, as part of my PhD, I had the opportunity to do a policy making internship with the UK government in the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. They knew that I was an artist, and they were interested in the opinions and experience I could bring to policy making as an artist. I felt like that was a very direct way of engaging with civicness and social responsibility, and a way of probing and asking questions from inside an institution of power.

I also think involving artists in other parts of civic life, such as governance, is really important.

RB Like you, Cat, I think about how spaces can be texturized by a variant of thinking. And sure, I would definitely like the world to be radically different than it is. My main focus, particularly more recently, has been on working into preexisting structures, in this case, the museum.

Bonaventure Ndikung has talked about the body as the primary museum, and the museum as the secondary museum—he describes the museum as a space where cognition and experience come together. My focus has been to try and understand how we can play that out in space. I think there has been a lot of fascinating discourse in the sphere of the museum, but there's been less opportunity to apply the physical, this grabbing situation, where you could feel difference in something like a civic framework, where we see a melding of the spatio-political.

This is where I'm interested in digging into. And I imagine that it could be really effective, particularly if you start to engage in conversations across best practice in other fields of governance.

DM In my introduction I spoke about being fed up with certain modes of production and contexts. The international Biennale show, the residency, the site-specific temporary bespoke

work, hung on a hook of a certain big idea. I found working in theatre to be a nice shift away from that.

It's not that I don't think artists should be engaged in those things. It's just that it's often set up in a way where it becomes meaningless, at best. Or at worst, you find yourself engaged, as I did many times, in what appears to be the exact opposite regime of values and power structures.

I was, and I remain still, more interested in a more traditional idea of an artist, in terms of creating a certain kind of dissonance. And I do believe that that can be productive in very useful ways.



Pauline Autet (L) and Cat Auburn (R), Berlin, October 2021. Photo: Stephanie O'Connor.



Panellists for *On Civicness and participating in public life through art practice* panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM, 02 October 2021, Berlin. Photo: Stephanie O'Connor.



Audience members at *On Civicness and participating in public life through art practice* panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM, 02 October 2021, Berlin. Photo: Stephanie O'Connor.

PA This subject of dissonance links back to Cat's mention of Donna Harraway's phrase, 'staying with the trouble'. Perhaps it's important to talk about what those troubles might be. What are the challenges of the projects that you showed us that you are choosing not to walk away from? The challenges that are potentially uncomfortable but that you're choosing to stay with to try and work through them, or transform them, or find new ways of using them.

CA I think the biggest 'troubles' that Kyle and I have experienced are confronting the questions: who are we to embark upon this project? Who are we to create an NFT of an historic event? Who should own the NFTs once they're created? Also, the potential dangers of causing cultural erasure - which is the

opposite of what we, as artists, want to do - when going through the process of distilling an historic event to create an NFT. We always want to include nuance in our work, rather than extract it.

‘Staying with the trouble’ on this project has meant having to actively transgress and engage with difficult ethical situations in order to reveal the wider problematic processes and potential pitfalls that are built into large power structures - such as the economic mechanisms that are currently adapting to absorb NFTs. Transgressing feels so uncomfortable and often like the wrong move. But it has been the only way to discover more about NFTs beyond what is presented to us in an oversimplified way by the media.

My collaboration with Kyle really helps me manage my discomfort. It’s steady.

RB Like Daniel, the mechanisms of the wider international art world were certainly troubling to me. I come from a framework of feminist institutional critique and at some point I felt there was a lag between how I was thinking and what I was doing. This thing of grabbing and pointing, which is a concept discussed by writer Marina Vishmidt, has been very helpful for me. Here, critique would be the moment of pointing, and transformation would be the moment that you grab.

Once I understood that the question was: what was I pointing at?, it was important to develop strategies that allowed this grabbing. And that has meant changing the way I work and changing the parameters that I set for a working relationship. Generally, I’m only doing things where I have a long time to engage with the situation. If there’s the possibility to be within an automated system and grab, and grab, and grab, then for me, it allows a shift to move from pointing into developing strategies of transformation, turning on that dream engine.

PA I have one more question before turning to our audience. How do you see the relationship between the creative or collaborative process and the tangible (or intangible) work

produced, and does one prevail over the other for you? Could we go as far as saying that the sign of a successful integration into public life is the artwork as 'non-event', that manages to blend and merge into our everyday social praxis?

DM I probably have the easiest job of answering that question from the perspective of producing theatre because the outcome is very concrete. And there's a place for it in the programme. And there's money spent on it in the expectation that it will be presented and seen. But in the rest of my practice, the process is more important to me than the outcome, especially right now.

RB For me, the outcome is crucial, but at the same time, the process is also important. If I'm working with an institution, it's through the process that the echo can happen, longer term resonance. So if, through the process of working together, we identify the limits of, for example, the acquisition procedure in that particular institution, or the communication strategy, or the check-in situation, then, through those conversations, we adapt that procedure. That happens and stays as an echo within the institution after my exhibition has gone. At the same time there are parts of my work, my process, that are just for me, and don't need to be made public. That's important too.

But certainly, exhibition-making is absolutely key and I would not want to disaggregate the process from this live moment of having a body and being in space and encountering the multiple dynamics that make that liveness happen.

CA Yes, I would agree. I see the moment that an exhibition occurs, or an art object is solidified, as a fleeting moment where I can offer it to the public, or to an audience, or to just one other person, before it is folded back into my art practice. That moment of solidness happens briefly within a big mixing process.

I don't see my art practice as a process of popping research in one end and then popping an art object out of the other. Rather, I see it as a big series of mixers that continuously fold the end results back into the middle of the process to be explored further.



Audience member Bob van der Wal asks panellist Daniel Malone a question, *On Civicness and participating in public life through art practice* panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM02 October 2021, Berlin. Photo: Stephanie O'Connor.

Questions from the audience

QUESTION FROM THE AUDIENCE FROM BOB VAN DER WAL

Can you speak to the protests depicted towards the end of your presentation?

DM I can't speak to that specific image which is one of hundreds that are on the internet, because the protests of this particular production at the theatre went on for quite a long time. It was the biggest protest in theatre in a long time in Poland so the theatre had to take it very seriously. There were very strong calls for the whole theatre to be shut down from various quarters, although not necessarily with much hope of success from the grassroots bodies that were protesting. But certainly through political pressure, the church and the government, it was a real threat that there would be prosecution around issues of blasphemy.

They had to get security. Actors and people working in the theatre were definitely feeling under threat. There were even explosive

devices that were set off, one inside the theatre. I don't know the exact details, but the programme was altered slightly. But this theatre is very conscientious of its role, standing behind artists making projects like this. So, they stuck with the programme and didn't back down. It was scary.

And it is worth remembering, that although they're very vocal and they do have a relationship to the political party of power at the moment in Poland, they are still this extreme minority of people with strongly held opinions.



Audience member Clementine Delisse asks panellist Ruth Buchanan a question, *On Civicness and participating in public life through art practice* panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM02 October 2021, Berlin. Photo: Stephanie O'Connor.

QUESTION FROM THE AUDIENCE FROM CLÉMENTINE DELISSE

It's a question for Ruth—when you work on your embroideries, they also look like floor plans, particularly the one that has a spiral and the smaller grid. Could you explain what the spiral is in terms of your idea of the dialogue that you want to bring to bear between the body and the collection? And is the spiral part of your thinking of the body, and the movement of the body within the space?

And if so, how do you suspend the centrifugal feeling, that if you go through the spiral you will end up finding the collection. Where is the collection in all of this?

RB The spiral is a way of thinking about the relationship between temporality and the construction of history.

My interest in the spiral has come out of working and thinking very closely with the work of an Aotearoa New Zealand poet called J C Sturm. She's a Māori Pākehā poet. Her work has been really important to me, to try and understand how a body exists within, beyond, beside, across time.

Spiral time, as a tool with which to think, is a way to confront a sense of historicity and cultural norms around how we would understand our place in a timeline and the accumulated norms that have produced that timeline. From a mātāuranga Māori framework it would be an invitation to dislocate from a sense of linear timespace. Maybe a useful image to have in mind is the whare whakairo, the carved meeting house, or wharenui, which is a body. It's not metaphorical. It's a body. In this space, the physical, so our bodies, but also our sense of being humans, cannot be disaggregated from the enclosures of temporality within the framework of Western museum practice.

CD So, the spiral embroidery is not part of your plan at all? Conceptually it is, or cosmologically it is. But it's not a floorplan?

RB The particular floorplan spiral that I showed today is a dream museum of mine. That's an imagined future museum. And the spiral, as a concrete form, will indeed appear. The top floor of Kunstmuseum Gegenwart Basel was specifically imagined to host a work by Joseph Beuys who was a very important voice in the construction and development of the concept of making this contemporary museum for Basel.

One of the big things around this exhibition and the new director's thinking is to address when the contemporary begins as a so-called category. Beuys' piece will move from the contemporary to the modern collection. In moving this work out, we have the opportunity to open that space up for the first time in 40 years, until now it was always dark up there, with windows blocked because of light sensitivity. And actually, when you take the boards off those walls, you see the river Rhine and the Roche skyscrapers.

It's quite amazing. We have this moment of trying to introduce a rethinking of art historical time.

So with that in mind it makes sense to introduce the spiral on this floor. The spiral will happen in the form of a curtain, which is something I'm making with the invigilators. They will be involved in the construction through a week-long intensive dyeing workshop where we colour the fabric for the curtain and their uniforms, this is important as they will ultimately be living with and also operating the work, because the curtain will be opened and closed, depending on their mood or other events in that space. The spiral also occurs in the organisation of the collection. But you'd probably only notice that if you looked at the floorplan, I think.

In the moment of visiting the show, it will probably feel closer to heterogenous accumulation, but if you would look at the drawings that the architect and I are making, then you would have more of a perception of this ambulation through a spiralling time and body.



HUM's Comms Manager Genista Jurgens asks a question on behalf of viewer Estella Castle, Berlin, October 2021. Photo: Stephanie O'Connor.



Audience member Josh Rutter asks the panellists a question, *On Civicness and participating in public life through art practice* panel discussion hosted by Contemporary HUM02 October 2021, Berlin. Photo: Stephanie O'Connor.

QUESTION FROM THE AUDIENCE FROM ESTELLA CASTLE

We have a question from the livestream audience for all artists: Is there a danger that by expecting artists to connect with a local community, rather than the venue doing the connection, that we inadvertently create monocultures around the work?

And the second part is that by moving the responsibility for connecting to community from theatres to artists, that those communities only see work that connects to them, rather than work that comes from a different idea, ethos, perspective or culture?

DM Maybe I'm misunderstanding the question, but I would have thought it would have been rather a danger in the opposite way. If it's up to the institution, ordinarily the institution is a lot more calcified in terms of who its audience is, who it brings in, how it reaches out to them.

There's always a bit of tension there between what the artist and the institution wants. In terms of theatres in Poland, they each have quite a particular audience that attends. That seems more in danger of being labelled as monocultural, I think.

CA I think this is a funding issue. There used to be funding for community projects - and the arts. Those separate pots of money have started to become commensurable. Artists are expected to do a lot of community facilitation in order to meet funding criteria for their projects.

I see an issue with exclusively connecting arts funding with local communities, and expectations of facilitation being put solely on artists' shoulders. Artists may not have the right kind of background, skillset or training in facilitation to carry out those commitments to local communities.

QUESTION FROM THE AUDIENCE FROM JOSHUA
RUTTER

I noted J C Sturm and Donna Haraway. I was wondering if there are any other recommendations for texts relevant to the subject in general, books or other?

DM I mentioned the Kristin Ross book, *Communal Luxury*. That's a really super book, specifically around the Paris Commune, and using it as a model of a way of thinking about public space and dissonance and disruption. She's great.

RB I would recommend Anne Boyers, *The Undying* and also, Sara Ahmed, *On Being Included. Racism and Diversity work in institutions*. They're both very worthwhile and very different analyses of complex structures.

CA I've enjoyed Ursula K. Le Guin's short essay called *The Carrier Bag Theory*.

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Biographies



Cat Auburn is based in Glasgow (UK). Her art practice investigates how culture is constructed, reinforced, and strategically employed. She is currently an AHRC Northern Bridge Consortium PhD candidate at Northumbria University (UK). Her doctoral research is a practice-based exploration of the inheritances of Anzac mythology from the First World War and its influence on contemporary identity. Cat's exhibition, *The Horses Stayed Behind* received the 2016 Award for Best Regional Art Exhibition at the New Zealand Museum Awards. This exhibition had a three-year national tour and was created during the 2014/2015 Tylee Cottage Artist Residency with the Sarjeant Gallery in Whanganui, (NZ). Other residencies include D6 Culture in Transit (UK, 2019); Tyneside Cinema (UK, 2016); Olivia Spencer Bower Fellowship (NZ, 2010). Exhibitions include the TRIO Biennial in Brazil, Tyneside Cinema (UK), Baltic 39 (UK), Sarjeant Gallery (NZ), Dowse Art Museum (NZ), Te Manawa Museum (NZ), Waikato Museum (NZ), Tauranga Art Gallery (NZ). Cat's 2018 short film, *Shaken* (commission by Northern Film and Media in collaboration with Channel 4) was broadcast on national UK television in August 2018 and was officially selected for the 2018 Aesthetica Short Film Festival (UK).



Daniel Malone (b. 1970, Māwhera/Greymouth, Aotearoa/New Zealand). Completed a Bachelor's degree in Art History and then a Fine Arts degree in Time Based Arts at Auckland University and later taught there for several years until he paid off his student debt and left the country in 2007. In the early 1990's he co-founded the artist-run gallery Teststrip and remained involved in such initiatives (LOG Illustrated, Cuckoo, Gambia Castle) while developing a contextually driven, site-specific performance/installation practice that saw him presenting temporary projects at numerous biennales and international group shows throughout the 2000s. Primarily basing himself in Warsaw, he has also lived for shorter periods in other European cities over the last ten years, developing a more material-based kitchen table practice more suited to this peripatetic situation. He has also had the opportunity to work in an ongoing capacity as part of a theatre ensemble, collaboratively conceptualising as well as designing costumes and scenography for performances in Poland, Germany and Sweden.



Pauline Autet is a curator and producer in the field of contemporary art, working across research, development, design, editing and production of exhibitions and publications. She has worked alongside artists and art professionals from emerging to established, in public and private sectors in Wellington, New Zealand and abroad. In 2015, she was involved with the New Zealand pavilion for the Venice Biennale and in 2016 she moved back to Paris and founded *Contemporary HUM*. She is also in charge of *TextWork*, editorial platform of the Fondation Pernod Ricard and Trampoline, a non-profit initiative of private actors of the contemporary art scene in France.



Ruth Buchanan is an artist of Taranaki, Te Ātiawa and Pākehā descent living in Tāmaki Makaurau. She works across exhibition making, writing, design and teaching. Her work draws out the contested and dynamic relationships between the body, power, language and the archive. This process of contesting often relates closely to the types of relationships that standardised infrastructures, such as archives, libraries and museums, create between our bodies and society at large, and actively asks how these relationships could be otherwise.

