

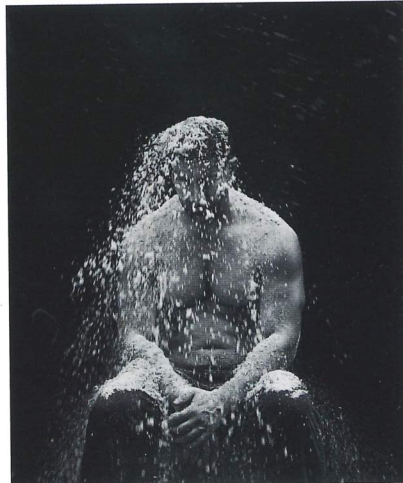
All change

Central-city gallery finishes an ambitious year of exhibitions and plans an outward-looking 2020.

New floor, new walls and a new curator: the Gus Fisher Gallery has been all change this year, and that change seems set to continue. Here's what curator Lisa Beauchamp has to say about the gallery's programme so far and what is on the horizon for 2020.

"I feel like we've pushed ourselves to the max this year. Three major exhibitions, two offsite programmes and a diverse public programme with every show – for a core team of three, it's not bad. The ambition to put on socially responsive exhibitions that resonate beyond the art aficionado's walls is, to me, exactly what curating is about. Reflecting on our commercial location, our first show *We're Not Too Big to Care* characterised us and our intention to question political agendas and our place amongst them. This was followed by a show on oceans and plastic pollution with *The Slipping Away*, and our third exhibition, *The Shouting Valley: Interrogating the Borders Between Us*, suggests that freedom of movement is often a Western privilege. Addressing the treatment of people in Australian offshore detention centres, among other experiences relating

Bill Culbert, *Pacific Flotsam*, 2007. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū. Photo: Sam Hartnett, courtesy of Christchurch Art Gallery.



Hoda Afshar, *Portrait of Emad*, from the series *Remain*, 2018. Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

to migration, *The Shouting Valley* embraces issues happening under our noses and brings them to our immediate attention."

Beauchamp says, "I like to look outwards rather than inwards, working on a programme that creates meaning for audiences and artists. The year 2020 promises more film as we remember New Zealand's first television broadcast (transmitted from our building 60 years ago); a responsive exhibition looking at the physical and cultural manifestation of viruses; and discussion of problematic heteronormativity and pinkwashing in Auckland."

So stay tuned for more ambitious exhibitions at the gallery – and more bold paint-colour choices. *The Shouting Valley: Interrogating the Borders Between Us* is on until 14 December. gusfishergallery.auckland.ac.nz

On the waterfront

Marlborough gallery has been bringing major artworks to town for 20 years.

Twenty years is a long time in the regions, and The Diversion Gallery celebrates this anniversary with an exhibition of significant abstracts from the studio of the late JS Parker. The gallery was named for his fiery painting of the Wairau River diversion at sunrise, still in the personal collection of gallery director Barbara Speedy and her partner Nick Gerritsen.

Now located on the Picton waterfront, The Diversion began in December 1999 when Speedy took over a space at Grove Mill Winery near Blenheim. Formerly a journalist, she had interviewed artists including JS Parker, Don Binney and Michael Smither for various magazines. They later became anchor artists for The Diversion, which focused on senior New Zealand contemporary artists who emerged in the 1960s and 70s, reflecting the couple's own collecting.

"We live in a geographically isolated region, and it was hard to see work by those artists first hand. So we decided to bring them here."

In 2011, The Diversion moved to the Picton

Barbara Speedy with JS Parker's painting *The Diversion* (left) and Philip Trusstum's *Bot AN* (right)



waterfront, where passing art lovers are often surprised to discover Nigel Brown, Fatu Feu'u, Graham Bennett and others. "In the end it is always about relationships, whether in the city or a small town. Artists want to be respected, celebrated, championed, whatever their national standing. It underpins everything."

Twenty years brings change. Speedy has taken on emerging artists with a distinctive edge, and exhibitions are often curated around social and environmental issues. In February 2017 she and Gerritsen began taking artists to Meretoto/Ship Cove to invite responses to that place of sustained contact between Māori and Cook. The third *Meretoto* exhibition opens on

20 November, and includes Neil Pardington, Barry Cleavin, Dee Copland, Michel Tuffery and Nigel Brown. And writing is reasserting itself – Speedy is now working on three significant book projects relating to major artists.

"A few years ago I explored the idea of moving to a main centre – but there's something special about reaching out from the regions. And having the best view inside and out, across the road to the harbour – surprising those city visitors."

Meretoto: Wero – the Challenge runs from 20 November to 14 December; *JS Parker: Selected Paintings*, 16 December 2019 to 18 January 2020. thediversiongallery.co.nz