

SUPERFLEX

Flooded McDonald's

2009

Film, duration: 21 minutes

Over the course of twenty one minutes, a life-size replica of a McDonald's burger bar gradually floods with water. As milkshake cups, fried food and restaurant furnishings get swept up by the incoming torrent of water, the film is a haunting reminder of the man-made detritus filling our oceans today.

*Flooded McDonald's* was made following a period when many exaggerated disaster movies were being produced in Hollywood. In 2019, those movies have become a reality for many as events linked to climate change continue to threaten our environment. *Flooded McDonald's* powerfully questions the impotence of large multi-national companies who need to step up and take responsibility to help prevent climate change. The presentation of this film coincides with Auckland Council's declaration of a climate change emergency in the city on June 11<sup>th</sup> 2019.

Courtesy of the artists

Bill Culbert

Pacific Flotsam

2007

Fluorescent light, electric wire, plastic bottles

*Pacific Flotsam* is made up of two hundred and forty discarded plastic objects and seventy eight fluorescent tubes. The artwork's title refers to one of five ocean gyres known as the Great Pacific Garbage patch; the largest accumulation of ocean plastic in the world located between Hawaii and California.

Bill Culbert was fascinated with how ordinary objects could be seen as art. He was known as the "Master of Light" through his use of electric light in his art and he represented New Zealand at the 55<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale.

*Pacific Flotsam* fuses the visually beautiful with the sobering thought of the reality of plastic in our oceans. Culbert's use of scavenged and found materials in his art reflect an artist acutely aware of adding to the detritus of everyday life, and the skill of using what was already to hand.

Bill Culbert sadly died at the age of 84 on March 28<sup>th</sup> 2019.

Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū,  
purchased 2008

Joyce Campbell

Flight Dream

2015

HD video with audio, sound by Peter Kovolos, text by Mark von Schlegell, duration: 25 minutes

*Flight Dream* was inspired by Mark von Schlegell's short story *Flugtraum* which charts the journey of a diver who plummets towards his own end in search of a monstrous creature in the ocean's depths. *Flight Dream* marks an ongoing dialogue with the writer Mark von Schlegell who wrote *Flugtraum* in response to Campbell's previous series of Marianas prints, including the two displayed in this exhibition.

The monster hinted at in *Flugtraum* reflect Campbell's interest in formlessness. Set against a black background, the fluid forms of light and colour conjure images of the ocean deep as a surreal and other worldly environment. On April 28<sup>th</sup> 2019, Dallas businessman Victor Vescovo made the deepest dive of 11,000 metres to the bottom of the Marianas Trench. Amongst several new species of marine creatures, he also found a plastic bag and sweet wrappers, proving that plastic pollution has now reached the deepest point of the Earth's oceans.

Courtesy of the artist and Two Rooms, Auckland

Joyce Campbell  
Falls in Flood  
2018  
Film

This projection features Te Reinga falls, where the Ruakituri and Hangaroa rivers meet to form the Wairoa River. Te Reinga falls is the home of the Taniwha Hinekōrako; a female ancestor of all members of the hapu known as Ngai Kohatu or Ngati Hine Hika. Hinekōrako is the kaitiaki of her people and in times of flood Hinekōrako has been known to rescue those trapped in the flood waters by reversing the flow of the raging waters. She lives beneath a rock below the falls called Hinekuia and has another summer home in the large pool above the falls. She takes the form of an albino eel and has also taken the form of a beautiful woman.

*Falls in Flood* is part of a larger series of works called Te Taniwha. Working with Richard Niania, Keeper of Hinekōrako's stories, these artworks honour Campbell's and Niania's mutual friend and mentor, Phillip Smith, his great Grandmother, and the other Taniwha to which the project title refers, Paretaniwha McRoberts.

Courtesy of the artist and Two Rooms, Auckland

Joyce Campbell

Mindanao 1

2002

Ilfochrome photograph mounted on aluminium

Ryukyu

2002

Ilfochrome photograph mounted on aluminium

Mindanao is a submarine trench located in the Philippines and Ryukyu is an archipelago of Japanese islands. The Mindanao trench is thought to be the third deepest point of the world's oceans with a depth of over 10,000 metres. Despite the total darkness and harsh conditions at this depth, the deep sea environment holds an abundance of life with thousands of uniquely designed fish and invertebrates found living there.

In *Mindanao 1* and *Ryukyu*, Campbell uses a black background to reflect the darkness of the sea floor. The suspended forms of light and colour have been created by subjecting sculptural objects to a corrosive process of electrochemical dispersal which causes colloidal sheets to drift, entangle and tear apart.

Courtesy of the artist and The University of Auckland Art Collection

Jean Baudrillard  
St. Clement #1  
1990  
Photographic print

Jean Baudrillard is better known as a philosopher, but also had a photographic practice. Through photography, he explored the difference between the illusion and the real which also reflected his concerns in philosophy. Baudrillard captured an apparent absence in each of his photographs and titled them after the places they were taken. In *St Clement #1*, a car is shown submerged under water. According to Baudrillard, “the whole world is merely an illusion of the senses and the sensory trace of that disappearance.” In the exhibition, Baudrillard’s photograph can be considered a reminder of the trace left by the result of human actions.

Courtesy of The University of Auckland Art Collection

Rikrit Tiravanija

Untitled

2008

Screenprint

Rikrit Tiravanija was a pioneer of the relational aesthetics movement which foregrounded the importance of human relations and social context in art. The text that appears on this print is from a publication called the Situationist International, which was also the name of a group of artists, writers and social critics active from 1957-72. Situationist International aimed to eliminate Capitalism and argued for a revolution to take place in the realm of the everyday. The print therefore considers the possibility of social collectivism as an antidote to the status quo. In the context of this exhibition, Tiravanija's print and philosophy of social action may suggest a way of tackling Capitalism's devastating power over issues such as climate change.

Courtesy of The University of Auckland Art Collection

Terry Urbahn

Bottles/Mosh

2005

Digital video, duration: 4 minutes, 59 seconds

*Bottles / Mosh* captures the constant jostling of plastic flotsam as they emphatically 'mosh' to an instrumental version of Motörhead's much loved anthem Ace of Spades. Filmed from a bridge over the Tiber River in Rome, the plastic debris of bottles, containers and footballs are thrown into rapid motion in the fast-moving torrent of water. The music brings humour to the imagery as the plastic waste bobs relentlessly to a medley of electric guitars. Combining the humorous with the sobering image of plastic pollution, *Bottles / Mosh* is a clever incitement of the pace of human actions and their resulting effect.

Courtesy of the artist

Raewyn Martyn  
Climate Change Heartbreak Poems  
2006 – 2013  
Cellulose, pigment, seawater

Written a decade ago, Raewyn Martyn's poems conflate shifting consciousness of climate change with experiences of heartbreak. These poems are realised within the highly sensitive material of cellulose; an organic compound produced by and found in the cell walls of plants.

Martyn's work will visually change during the exhibition's timeframe as the cellulose rehydrates and shrinks again in response to shifts in the gallery's atmospheric conditions. By allowing these shifts to occur, Martyn's work reflects on changes prompted by climate change and how materials like cellulose can replace more environmentally harmful products made from petroleum. For example, plant and bacterial biopolymers like cellulose now have a range of biodegradation rates and more sustainable production processes, enabling petro-chemical plastics to be replaced.

Courtesy of the artist

Mata Aho Collective

Taniwha Tales

2016 – present

Website

Bringing to light the power of localised narratives and the mana of waterways as a source of inspiration is Mata Aho Collective's *Taniwha Tales*. Presented on a touch screen for visitors to read, *Taniwha Tales* is a collection of narratives of Taniwha, a kaitiaki in Māori culture, donated by friends and family members of the artists.

Taniwha can take any form which is reflected in the many different narratives that make up *Taniwha Tales*. As part of the exhibition, *Taniwha Tales* help us to think about our waterways as more than a resource, and as vital entities that hold power and can connect to our lives, histories and heritage in many ways. By acknowledging the diverse ways that taniwha exist, Mata Aho Collective's *Taniwha Tales* highlight the multiplicity of indigenous knowledge.

Courtesy of the artists, Mata Aho Collective: Erena Baker (Te Atiawa ki Whakarongotai, Ngāti Toa Rangātira), Sarah Hudson (Ngāti Awa, Ngāi Tūhoe), Bridget Reweti (Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāi Te Rangi) and Terri Te Tau (Rangitāne ki Wairarapa).