

Cao Fei
Asia One
2018
video, 63 minutes, 20 seconds

Asia One imagines a near future in the fictional, fully automated Asia One Unmanned Warehouse. The narrative centres on events in the year 2021 and focuses on a young female worker, a male worker, and a cute AI robot. After long periods of loneliness and labour in the factory, the young workers start to have a special feeling for each other.

Their monotonous life in the factory is interlaced with imaginary dancers who perform Cultural Revolution-era model operas to upbeat music. Through references to China's political history, automated technology and conditions of labour, Fei's surreal tale of cyclical ecstasy and despair advocates for a renewed sense of humanity among the masses.

Courtesy of the artist and Vitamin Creative Space

Cao Fei

11.11

2018

video, 60 minutes, 36 seconds

11.11 is a documentary that records the intense workload experienced by workers at JD.com as they prepare for China's Double Eleven Festival. Held annually on November 11th, it is the largest shopping day in the world. Fei's film is a startling reminder of the wider impact of consumer needs and the capital gains of global corporations. JD.com achieved 120 million Chinese Yuan in sales in one day on November 11th, the equivalent of 26 million New Zealand dollars. *11.11* accompanies the artist's fictional film *Asia One* shown nearby.

Courtesy of the artist and Vitamin Creative Space

John Baldessari
Learn to Dream
2011
screenprint

The phrase *Learn to Dream* is one that John Baldessari has revisited multiple times in his work. By using these words, Baldessari encourages the reader of his text to dream as a knowing activity as opposed to something that happens involuntarily. *Learn to Dream* is realised in the typeface 'Churchward Montezuma 96 Extra Bold' by New Zealand typographer Joseph Churchward. Presented in this exhibition, the mantra-like instruction of Baldessari's phrase highlights the importance of engaging with the creative and irrational, outside of the daily grind.

Chartwell Collection, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased
2012

Aroha Novak

The right to be unequal

2019

Wood, spray paint, gold leaf, velvet, steel

The right to be unequal is a response to the transparent barrier known as the glass ceiling for income. The ladder represents a visual scale of social economies, realised through materials like graffiti and gold leaf that reflect society's pigeonholing of wealth and class. The artwork's title is taken from a quote by Margaret Thatcher whose former leadership of Britain's Conservative Party echoed the Rogernomic reforms in 1980s New Zealand. Novak's sculpture is a reminder of the neo-liberalist class divide and the desire to climb to the top of the economic ladder.

Commissioned by Gus Fisher Gallery

Courtesy of the artist

Angela Tiatia

The Fall

2017

two-channel high definition video, 4 minutes, 58 seconds

The Fall draws on survivor accounts from the Battle of Singapore in 1942 to explore the effect of catastrophic change on individuals. Its title is taken from the battle and refers to the mass surrender of British Forces to Japan. Tiatia's film suggests the disintegration of a social order where an unhinged humanity has taken charge. Some of the film footage evokes similarities to events such as the London Riots in 2011, where mass unrest overtook the country following the unlawful police shooting of Mark Duggan.

Commissioned by the Australian War Memorial, 2017

Courtesy of the artist and Sullivan+Strumpf, Sydney

James R Ford

Back and forth and round and round

2014

pine rocking chair, wood stain, foam stress balls

Back and forth and round and round references the idea of a continuous loop or cycle explored in the exhibition. Two stress balls are featured: a happy face positioned between the chair frame and a sad face waiting to be crushed underneath. Ford's artwork symbolises the contradictions inherent in contemporary lifestyle which is often informed by Capitalist ideals. Stress balls are promoted to workers to relieve stress, while rocking chairs reflect a slower pace of life and relaxation. In Ford's work, stress and relaxation become cause and effect.

Chartwell Collection, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of the artist

Mervyn Williams
Midas Finds his Soul
1968
screenprint on paper

Midas Finds his Soul refers to the Greek myth of King Midas who was granted his wish that everything he touched would turn to gold. Blinded by greed, Midas soon regretted his wish when his food, drink, and his own daughter were turned to gold. According to the artist, *Midas Finds his Soul* is a caution to ill-considered tendencies in society which lead to physical and social environments being unsuitable for human habitation.

Courtesy of The University of Auckland Art Collection

Duvet Brothers

Blue Monday

1984

colour, stereo, video, 3 minutes

Blue Monday was conceived at the height of Thatcherite Britain, when Conservative Party rule and heavy reform had a debilitating impact on British people. Combining television clips of the Royal Family with footage from the 1984 miners' strikes, nuclear testing and political rallies, *Blue Monday's* references were life changing for many. As a stand-out example of the genre of scratch video, *Blue Monday* is a pivotal work in the context of the exhibition and is arguably as relevant today as when it was first made.

Courtesy of the artists and LUX

Miranda Bellamy

Meme

2011

video, 22 minutes, 23 seconds

Meme is a 24 second looped video that shows the cycle of commerce at a McDonald's drive-in. The video's whirring soundtrack echoes the movement of the car as it speeds up, in and out of a McDonald's drive-through on an endless loop. The night time setting and toy-like appearance as a toy car slot, parodies the monolithic status of McDonald's as a global brand. Titled *Meme*, the video refers to an element of culture passed from one individual to another and internet content spread rapidly by internet users.

Courtesy of the artist

Gabrielle Amodeo
Little Boy Blue
Sound by Will Oldham
2008

stop-motion animation, original drawings inked rubber stamps on
paper
2 minutes, 11 seconds

The well-recognised logo of Cerebos iodised table salt is the focus of this stop-motion animation. Responding to the brand's invitation to "see how it runs," *Little Boy Blue* depicts the salt's logo of a young boy running in motion. The animation is paired with a song called *Little Boy Blue* by Will Oldham whose words echo the tenacity of the boy running. In the context of the exhibition, *Little Boy Blue* is a timely reminder of an individual's continued plight in the face of adversity.

Courtesy of the artist

Deborah Rundle

Revised Payload

2016

employee time clocks, timecards, printed text

Revised Payload explores changes in the working day under global capitalism. The numbers 8-8-8 are the numeric symbol of the eight-hour day movement, translating as eight hours labour, eight hours recreation and eight hours rest. The eight hour day movement can be traced back to the Industrial Revolution in nineteenth -century Britain where working life was transformed through large factories and industrial production. In *Revised Payload*, Rundle highlights the inconsistent meanings of the number eight; a lucky number in Chinese culture and an infinity symbol when viewed on its side.

Courtesy of the artist

Emily Hartley-Skudder

Gentle on Hands and Everything They Wash

2019

Mixed media, including: foam, acrylic paint on window vinyl, oil on linen, readymade ceramic basins, acrylic tinted liquid soap, digital sublimation print on microfiber

Gentle on hands and everything they wash is a slogan from a favoured New Zealand brand called Sunlight Soap. Situated in the building's original women's bathroom, this installation features saturated, sweet shop coloured basins and products that evoke an intimate and private space. Hartley-Skudder's installation recalls experiences of the bathroom as a space of refuge and escapism. A place to cry, clean up, break down, or confess, the installation is a reminder of the value of private spaces and the gender divisions attached to them.

Commissioned by Gus Fisher Gallery

Courtesy of the artist

Cushla Donaldson

composite for a happiness that forgets nothing

2017

aluminium composite material, enamel, ink, video, quick response codes, the internet

composite for a happiness that forgets nothing explores mechanisms of labour and exchange through the setting of the cruise ship where the artist's friend works as a celebrated performer. For Donaldson, the cruise ship is a microcosm for real world geo-political divisions where hard manual labour happens out of sight and tax statuses are conveniently manipulated. The video includes real footage of cruise ship performances with promotional images of interiors. As decadent materials are name checked, the video's illusion of luxury fades into a more menacing façade.

Commissioned by The Physics Room, Christchurch

Courtesy of the artist

Carole Prentice
And He Called Them
2019
acrylic and oil on canvas

'...he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men' ...James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother in a ship... mending their nets; and he called them.' Matthew 4:20-21 KJV

And He Called Them is a new commission for the Gus Fisher Gallery. At the time of making, our three gallery staff feature. The Art Deco dome is shown being raised upwards, signifying the gallery's reopening following a refurbishment to the unique Grade I listed building.

Commissioned by Gus Fisher Gallery
Courtesy of the artist and Mokopōpaki, Auckland

Carole Prentice

Keep it Clean, French Fried, Edition Wrap, Loving It, Best Potatoe,
Cheers Ralph

2019

ink, waxed McDonalds wrappers, butter paper

Carole Prentice's new series of drawings have been inspired by her Uncle Ralph's former fast-food business.

The artist comments: "Back in the 50's, way before the Golden Arches invaded the country, my Uncle Ralph, born and bred here in little old New Zealand, was the first to sell *'McDonald's French Fried Hot Chips'* to go. No burgers though, they would arrive later with the clean-cut American corporate that all but killed our cultural passion for the crispy, fairground toasted sandwich and battered sausage on a stick."

Commissioned by Gus Fisher Gallery

Courtesy of the artist and Mokopōpaki, Auckland

Hikalu Clarke

brass plate

2019

Mixed media

brass plate responds to the gallery's location in Auckland's central business district. Mimicking the façades of the street's corporate skyscrapers, Clarke's work draws attention to the visual signifiers that have come to represent a global moneyed elite. The artwork's title refers to the name Brass Plate Company, which describes companies that exist in name only. Clarke's work references an office at 369 Queen Street where a singular office harboured a multitude of companies, such as SP Trading Ltd who hit the headlines when they were involved in an illicit weapons deal.

Commissioned by Gus Fisher Gallery

Courtesy of the artist

Julian Dashper

Untitled (Four Squares: for Richard and Donald, both born 1928)

2008

framed plexiglass

University of Auckland Art Collection

These panels use the same colour palette as the Four Square supermarket brand, marketed as the 'trusted kiwi grocer.' Dashper's series is a tribute to his father Richard Dashper and New York Minimalist artist Donald Judd, who he refers to as his artistic father. Dashper's ode to Four Square plays with the concept of big city wealth versus small town simplicity. Owned by the New Zealand Corporation Foodstuffs, who also own Pak'n Save and New World, Four Square's motto perhaps belies its corporate roots.

Courtesy of The University of Auckland Art Collection

Billy Apple
ADJUST THE HEIGHT TO EQUAL THE WIDTH
2019

Commissioned by Gus Fisher Gallery
Courtesy of the artist