

A stellar line up of international contemporary artists at Auckland Art Gallery for Auckland Arts Festival 2020



Image credit:
Sriwhana Spong *Now Spectral, Now Animal* 2019/2020. Commissioned by Edinburgh Art Festival and Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki. Supported by Creative New Zealand.



Image credit:
Martine Syms *Incense Sweaters & Ice* 2017, video (color, sound), 1:09:00 minutes, image copyright Martine Syms, courtesy of the artist and Bridget Donahue, NYC.

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki presents four new projects by international artists in the exhibition *Honestly Speaking: The Word, the Body and the Internet*, open from 22 February 2020.

Works by artists **Shahryar Nashat** (Switzerland), **Sriwhana Spong** (NZ), **Frances Stark** (USA) and **Martine Syms** (USA) reflect on the relationship between the human body, technology and language.

In an era dominated by digital image making, each of these artists engages us in important questions about our own subjectivity, often at its most visceral – the body itself. In doing so, they reignite questions of gender and cultural politics and their relationship to new technologies. This attention to body and language raises important questions about personal truth and power in the digital age.

The exhibition includes a major new work by UK-based New Zealand artist Sriwhana Spong, *Now Spectral, Now Animal* (2019/2020), which has been co-commissioned by Auckland Art Gallery and the Edinburgh Arts Festival in 2019.

Auckland Art Gallery Director Kirsten Paisley says: '*Honestly Speaking* invites visitors to consider how our increasing reliance on digital technology influences our identity and understanding of the world around us.'

Curator Natasha Conland says: 'For many years now, we have lived with the phenomenon and fascination of the digital world presented in moving images. *Honestly Speaking* shares the interests of four prominent artists from a variety of global positions who want to reinstate the relationship between the digital image and the human subject – often through references to the body itself, and our own position in relation to media and its compelling language.'

Honestly Speaking: The Word, the Body and the Internet is presented by Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki in association with Auckland Arts Festival 2020.

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Image credit:
Shahryar Nashat *Start to Beg* 2019
synthetic polymer, atomized acrylic, and
fibreglass. Courtesy of David Kordansky
Gallery, Los Angeles.



Image credit:
Frances Stark *Black Flag* 2018, oil on
canvas. Courtesy Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/
Cologne/New York.

Exhibition details

*Honestly Speaking: The Word,
the Body and the Internet*

When:

Saturday 22 February 2020 to
Sunday 7 June 2020

10am–5pm daily

Where:

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
Cnr Kitchener and Wellesley Streets
Auckland, New Zealand

Free with Gallery entry

**For more information, high-res images
and interview requests contact:**

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Further information

Sriwhana Spong's *Now Spectral, Now Animal*, (2019/20) is a multi-media installation that explores the writings of the 16th-century mystic St Teresa of Avila, whose book, *The Interior Castle*, describes an imaginary architectural space in which women can freely think, write and speak. Spong's work considers how a fictional space created through text can be a site for agency.

Being exhibited for the first time in New Zealand is a selection of recent work by renowned Los Angeles-based artist **Frances Stark** that illustrates her ongoing critical study of identity in the United States as it plays out in social media. Her video and painting cycle, *Black Flag* (2018), uses satirical commentary to borrow from popular and artistic culture.

Martine Syms' film installation, *Incense, Sweaters, and Ice* (2017), explores media, from film to social media, and their influence on perception and identity. Situated in an interactive installation, this seventy-minute, cinematic video feature is split into three parts across the room, and follows the story of Girl, a character loosely based on the artist's mother.

The Gallery has also commissioned three new sculptural works by **Shahryar Nashat** from his ongoing series, *Start to Beg*. These seven-foot-long, pink polymer and fiberglass abstract structures take on the feeling of recumbent bodies. The works will be exhibited alongside Nashat's video work *Image is an Orphan* (2017), a haunting monologue on human desire and technological concerns.

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