

Media Release
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Ann Shelton: *Dark Matter* to open at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

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Ann Shelton, *The Courtesan, Poroporo (Solanum sp.)*, from the series *jane says*, 2015-16, pigment print, 1119x840mm

On Saturday 26 November Auckland Art Gallery will open *Ann Shelton: Dark Matter*, the first major review of the New Zealand photographer's 20 years of practice.

This free exhibition uncovers the dark matter or unknown substance in Ann Shelton's art in which time, place, narrative, trauma and female authorship unfold in shifting and destabilising ways.

Auckland Art Gallery Director Rhana Devenport says Shelton is one of New Zealand's leading creative practitioners working in photography.

'*Dark Matter* is the first review of Shelton's work and offers a fresh insight into the artist's deeply researched and explorative imagery,' she says.

The exhibition will present a significant selection of past work, including previously unseen photographs from the 1990s, and a new series, *jane says* (2015–16), which looks at histories that connect plants and female stories relating to fertility and reproduction.

Also featured are early series that brought her to attention as an artist using photography, such as *Redeye* (1995–97), which recorded the artist's social scene in Auckland in the early 1990s, as well as works that show her transition from photographing others to photographing place, such as *Abigail's Party* (1999) and *K Hole* (2000).

Included in the exhibition is *Public Places* (2001–03) which confirms Shelton's unique ability to disturb and unearth true and fabricated histories and make forgotten stories visible again. Through images which reference 'crime scene' and forensic photography, Shelton steps beyond genres to focus on moments long after the events have occurred.

Other bodies of work, *Library to Scale* (2006) and *room room* (2008), illustrate the role of the photograph in the archiving and surveillance of social and personal life.

Shelton says she offers new ways to look at histories that have been, and continue to be, manipulated and contrived in various ways.

'My work investigates the social, political and historical contexts that inform readings of the landscape and its contents.'

The Gallery's Principal Curator Dr Zara Stanhope says Shelton engages with a range of interconnected subjects in her work, which also investigates how photography is a powerful force for the creation of meaning in our lives.

'Shelton reveals photography's unique role in connecting with people, place and histories, through its link with archives and the documentary impulse, revealing dark matter that otherwise goes unnoticed,' she says.

(ends)

Exhibition details

Ann Shelton: Dark Matter

When: Saturday 26 November 2016 to Monday 17 April 2017

10am – 5pm daily except Christmas Day

Where: Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

Corner Kitchener and Wellesley Streets

Auckland, New Zealand

Entry is free

For high-res images and interview requests contact

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Artist bio

Ann Shelton has a Master of Fine Arts from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. Awards for her work include the 2010 COCA Anthony Harper Contemporary Art Award and the 2006 Trust Waikato Contemporary Art Award in New Zealand. Her works are featured in numerous public and private collections in New Zealand and overseas. Shelton is an Associate Professor at Massey University's Whiti o Rehua School of Art in Wellington where she lectures in Fine Art and Photography. She is currently Chair of Enjoy Public Art Gallery, Wellington's longest running artist-run space.