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## Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki reveals new directions in contemporary New Zealand painting



Stella Corkery, *Smoke and Butterfly* 2015, oil and gesso on canvas, 1250 x 1000mm, courtesy of the artist and Michael Lett

In a world saturated with visual stimuli and bite-sized moving images, how does painting, a static form, stay relevant?

Giving a potent answer to this question is Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki's free summer exhibition, *Necessary Distraction: A Painting Show*.

The exhibition opens on Saturday 28 November with more than 100 paintings from 20 established and emerging New Zealand contemporary artists. Of the artists represented, 14 are producing new artworks to be seen in the exhibition for the very first time.

Auckland Art Gallery Director Rhana Devenport says *Necessary Distraction* is emblematic of the Gallery's commitment to new research and offers a fresh lens on the art of our time and place.

'Painting has arguably never been stronger in our contemporary cultural environment as it competes for attention alongside the tsunami of digital imagery available online. This exhibition highlights the Gallery's role as a catalyst for sharing perspectives about art and ideas, as we offer extraordinary encounters with art to engage, challenge and inspire our audiences,' she says.

Auckland Art Gallery Curator, Contemporary Art Natasha Conland says new directions in painting, one of the most familiar artistic platforms, have emerged in New Zealand over the last five years.

'New Zealand artists are exploring, with renewed energy and vitality, the ways in which painting can sustain itself as a compelling and rewarding, multifaceted medium 'In doing so, they are creating a powerful argument for the relevance of painting today.'

The paintings in *Necessary Distraction* seek to hold the viewers' interest in a world which competes excessively for attention span.

'They do so by moving away from traditional painting styles, such as abstraction, surrealism or impressionism. They skip between stylistic traditions and encourage us to stop and engage in the present moment,' says Conland.

Conland says the exhibition will show a different side of New Zealand painting.

‘Unlike painting seen in the past, where artworks – although unique – shared related styles or thoughts; there is vast multiplicity within painting today, the common thread is a powerful synthesis of the current broader visual field,’ she says.

‘These artists attempt to eradicate past boundaries and restrictions associated with painting in order to involve the viewer in a conversation between art work and idea.’

(ends)

**For high res images or interview requests:**

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**Artists, in alphabetical order:**

Anoushka Akel, Dan Arps, Nick Austin, Andrew Barber, Kirstin Carlin in collaboration with Emma Fitts, Stella Corkery, James Cousins, Nicola Farquhar, Julian Hooper, Simon Ingram, Milli Jannides, Saskia Leek, Patrick Lundberg, Oliver Perkins, Kim Pieters, Jeena Shin in collaboration with Rosy Parlane, Ngatai Taepa, Barbara Tuck, Adrienne Vaughan