

Four new artist projects launch this week at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

This week Auckland Art Gallery will launch four dynamic new art projects by contemporary New Zealand and international artists to activate the building:

- *The Interior*, a sculptural installation by Thai New Zealander Sorawit Songsataya on the Level 2 outdoor terrace
- *The Violet Hour*, a site-specific painting by New Zealander John Reynolds on the windows of the South Atrium
- New Zealander Sara Hughes' interactive exhibition, *All My Favourite Shapes* in the Todd Foundation Creative Learning Centre
- *A Place Beyond Belief*, a work by leading Scottish artist, Nathan Coley, in the Gallery's North Atrium.

Auckland Art Gallery Director, Kirsten Paisley, says: 'The launch of four lively new projects will open up the Gallery's expansive public spaces over the summer months and on into 2020. Individually and collectively, these engaging works animate the Gallery's spaces and enhance the relationship with Albert Park in a way that is bold, ambitious and visually fresh.'

'We're delighted to present two new site-specific artworks by New Zealand artists John Reynolds and Sorawit Songsataya who draw inspiration from our unique location and natural environment. Sara Hughes's interactive exhibition, *All My Favourite Shapes*, in our family-focused Creative Learning Centre, gives all visitors the freedom to express themselves creatively. In our North Atrium we unveil a new acquisition, Nathan Coley's captivating and provocative sculpture, *A Place Beyond Belief*.'

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Nathan Coley,
A Place Beyond Belief,
2012

Nathan Coley: *A Place Beyond Belief*

Opens 30 November

Auckland Art Gallery's latest artwork for the central North Atrium profiles the new acquisition of Scottish artist, Nathan Coley's work *A Place Beyond Belief*, 2012. This vibrant text-based light sculpture is set billboard-style in lights on a large scaffold.

A Place Beyond Belief is part of an ongoing series of illuminated text works by Coley, who uses readymade phrases or chance encounters to create resonance in public spaces. The artist procures phrases from a variety of sources, including literature, popular songs, interviews and overheard conversations. Coley removes the words from the context of their original utterance and restages them in the architecture of public spaces.

The phrase, 'a place beyond belief', was heard by Coley in a radio interview aired during the 10-year anniversary of the September 11 attacks in the United States of America. The young woman interviewed recounted a story from the time and, in this phrase, appears to reflect on thinking anew and looking again.

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Sara Hughes
All My Favourite Shapes, (installation view),
Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 2019

Todd Foundation Creative Learning Centre

Sara Hughes: *All My Favourite Shapes*

Opens 30 November

This interactive project by Auckland-based artist Sara Hughes, for the Gallery's Creative Learning Centre, gives everyone the chance to become the artist. Inspired by childhood magnetic board games and her own children's play with wooden blocks, *All My Favourite Shapes* is a family-friendly participatory installation that invites visitors to use the same decision-making process as the artist. Using coloured magnetic shapes arranged into abstract patterns on the Gallery's walls, visitors can collaborate on an existing composition or create original work in this constantly evolving geometric installation.

Initially conceived for an exhibition at Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 2019.

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John Reynolds,
The Violet Hour (work in progress),
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 2019

Window Commission

John Reynolds: *The Violet Hour*

Opens 30 November

Auckland Art Gallery is delighted to announce a new site-specific, temporary commissioning programme presented on the Gallery's South Atrium windows. Launching the programme is John Reynolds' new painting installation, *The Violet Hour*. Using a twilight colour palette, Reynolds paints directly onto the space's spectacular full-height windows looking out to Albert Park.

The composition is formed by a series of hovering painted rectangles that, together, create a veil over the glass to filter the natural light. Light pushes through the different densities of paint to create a stained-glass effect. Influenced by the surrounding environment, *The Violet Hour* simultaneously changes the South Atrium space and engages with Reynolds' long-standing interest in Colin McCahon's late painting.

Until 30 November, Reynolds may be seen painting in the Gallery space.

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Sorawit Songsataya
The Interior, (instalation view),
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 2019

Sorawit Songsataya: *The Interior*

Opens 23 November

Sorawit Songsataya's new sculptural installation, *The Interior*, is an affecting exploration of our relationship with native bird species. The work includes a blue resin-cast moa, Aotearoa New Zealand's largest – and now extinct – flightless bird, surrounded by a group of native and endemic bird species, some extinct, others endangered. Their minimal forms are polished and abstracted, yet their life size offers a fantastical experience of a time when Aotearoa was richly populated by birdlife.

The work refers to a watercolour by Trevor Lloyd, *Te Tangi o Te Moa*, 1907, from Auckland Art Gallery's collection, in which a cluster of forest birds bid farewell to the 'last moa'. The birds in *The Interior* reflect the spectrum of our relationships with the natural world: from an appreciation of the ornamental to a desire for intimacy and knowledge.

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For images and interviews

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Events

Family Launch for Sara Hughes: *All My Favourite Shapes*

Sat 30 Nov 11am | FREE

Join artist Sara Hughes in our celebrations to mark the first day of this new interactive display in the Todd Foundation Creative Learning Centre and be among the first to put your mark on the wall. All welcome.

In Conversation with Nathan Coley

Sun 1 Dec 2pm | FREE

Hear acclaimed Scottish artist Nathan Coley talk about his practice and our major acquisition, *A Place Beyond Belief*, in conversation with international curator and writer Juliana Engberg.