

## Workslist

1. Untitled, c.1975 – 1980, coloured pencil and crayon on paper, 25 x 21cm  
Courtesy of Wallace Arts Trust
2. Untitled, c. 1969, graphite on paper, 32.8 x 20.4cm  
Courtesy of Robert Heald Gallery
3. Untitled, c.1975–1980, graphite on found paper, 40.1 x 25cm  
Courtesy of Christine Fernyhough
4. Untitled, c.1975–1980, graphite on found paper, 20.8 x 26.9cm  
Courtesy of Christine Fernyhough
5. Untitled, c.1975–1980, graphite on paper, 25.5 x 41cm  
Courtesy of Robert Heald Gallery, Wellington
6. Untitled, c.1975–1980, graphite on found paper, 26.5 x 29.7cm  
Courtesy of Craig Anderson and Hanna Scott
7. Untitled, c.1975–1980, graphite and coloured pencil on paper, 41.2 x 50cm  
Private collection, Auckland
8. Untitled, c.1975–1980, graphite, coloured pencil and crayon on paper, 43 x 36.5cm  
Courtesy of Robert Heald Gallery
9. Untitled, c.1975–1980, graphite on found paper, 24 x 30cm  
Courtesy of Robert Heald Gallery, Wellington
10. Untitled, c. 1965–1975, oil pastel on paper, 25.5 x 20cm  
Private collection, Wellington
11. Untitled, c.1975–1980, graphite, coloured pencil and crayon on found paper, 29.5 x 18.5cm  
Courtesy of Robert Heald Gallery, Wellington
12. Untitled, c. 1965–1969, graphite, coloured pencil and crayon on paper, 37.5 x 27.5cm  
Courtesy of Robert Heald Gallery
13. Untitled, c.1975–1980, graphite and coloured pencil on paper, 37.5 x 30cm  
Private collection, Auckland
14. Untitled, c.1975–1980, graphite, coloured pencil and ebony on paper, 42 x 25cm  
Private collection, Auckland
15. Untitled, c.1975–1980, graphite, coloured pencil and crayon on paper, 35.5 x 43cm  
Private collection, Auckland
16. Untitled, c.1975–1980, graphite and coloured pencil on paper, 43 x 30cm  
Private collection, Auckland
17. Untitled, c. 1967–1969, graphite on paper, 28 x 23cm  
Courtesy of Robert Heald Gallery
18. Untitled, c.1975 – c. 1980, graphite, coloured pencil and crayon on paper, 29.5 x 21cm  
Private collection, Auckland
19. Untitled, c.1975–1980, graphite and crayon on found paper, 38 x 25.5cm  
Courtesy of Robert Heald Gallery, Wellington
20. Untitled, c.1969, graphite on paper, 28.2 x 26.1cm  
Courtesy of Robert Heald Gallery
21. Untitled, c. 1975 –1980, crayon and graphite on paper, 30.5 x 47cm  
Courtesy of The Chartwell Trust
22. Untitled, c.1975–1980, graphite on found paper, 31.5 x 21.2cm  
Courtesy of Christine Fernyhough
23. Untitled, c.1975 – c. 1980, graphite, coloured pencil and crayon on paper, 30.5 x 25cm  
Private collection, Auckland
24. Untitled, c. 1975–1980, crayon and graphite on paper, 58.5 x 23.5 cm  
Courtesy of The Chartwell Trust
25. Untitled, c. 1969, graphite on paper, 18.3 x 25.5cm  
Courtesy of Robert Heald Gallery
26. Untitled, c.1975–1980, graphite, coloured pencil and crayon on found paper, 36.3 x 25.9cm  
Courtesy of Christine Fernyhough

There are so many dimensions of Susan's work that I think are interesting but probably the most important for me is the pictorial logic that unfolds in her work from the 1970's.

What interests me most about this period is the way she develops a form of abstraction against the grain of more familiar models of Western abstract art, that works not through the suppression of illusion or the attenuation of the figure, but rather through an intensive multiplication of figural elements, their baroque postural contortion, and a joyously polyvalent illusionism.

Susan exploits the formal plasticity of line that cartoons have always utilised, where bodies extend, bend and contract in impossibly exaggerated, expressive movements that obey affective and psychic forces over the pictorial imperatives of a naturalistic physics. She just goes further, not having any use for the narrative constraints that generally contain these unruly dynamic potentials.

In these drawings each body's contour doesn't simply describe a discrete visual identity but forms a kind of generative membrane from which myriad formal variations of the figure and its spatial warp proliferate at each instance of inscription. As the serried masses of bodies accumulate, their multiplicity and pullulating entanglement yield a textural density that confuses the visual identity of each figural element's form. The result is a microscopic dimension in productive tension with a macroscale depth, where the bodies and all their recognisable formal characteristics become obscured in a sinuous stratigraphic complexity, the cumulative detail bleeding into a vibratory continuum that quivers at the perceptual threshold of visual chaos. The figure doesn't just occupy space, it constitutes it - a metamorphic module that in its progressive displacement spawns a variegated topology, balanced by unmarked zones of bare paper, through a drawing process of additive, improvisational connection. This complexly textural, figural agglomeration maps an abstract surface that I'm deeply attracted to, probably because of the way it thematically foregrounds the disorientation of the body decentred by movement and multiplicity.

Drawing is a form of manual thinking that is well placed to capture the unthought, and for me these works articulate pictorial rhythms of a wordless zone where a trillion hallucinatory cells are dancing, grinning, spinning, and sprouting limbs as they swarm in a dread candy coloured slew of masks and psychically charged appendages. Her work is a great example of a kind of pop or pulp modernism. Weirdly abstract, formally inventive and compositionally complex, she engineers anti-narrative pictures obsessed with movement that suggest a connection between her novel treatment of fundamental pictorial problems and an imaginative ontological model, where forms constantly emerge and collapse in a process of ceaseless becoming.