

This is the house that jack built

Andy Butler, Kerry Deane, Sara Gómez,
Ming Ranginui, Ashleigh Taupaki, X&Y
27 July – 13 October, 2024

If you arrived at an art gallery and were asked to empty your pockets of valuables into a tray, would you? As an audience member, would you agree to this kind of exchange? In 1977, collaborative duo X&Y staged an exhibition titled *Take the money and run* at de Appel in Amsterdam that asked gallery visitors to do just that: hand it over. After turning their belongings over to gallery staff at the entry, visitors were then led to watch via closed-circuit security camera this same scenario play out for others, and ultimately witness the artists leave the premises with their things. This performative intervention sharply describes the logic of the closed-circuit. Here, the circuit in discussion is the way much of life's value is measured by an unbreakable loop between wealth and an individual's proximity to it.

In *This is the house that jack built* each artwork casts light on this closed-circuitry and the complex frictions it avoids. The wielding of the individual's visible economic position as power par excellence risks blunting the value of other social contributions such as reproductive and collective labour. The models of individualised ownership are also further entrenched. The various societal and infrastructural mechanisms that enact this separation between so-called public and so-called private life often curtail nuanced and emergent approaches to exchange and relationship building. Whereas, exchange and relationships happen in many ways: through collaboration, whakapapa, nurturing loved ones and places, and underscoring solidarity. Considering value in this expanded way prompts the reimagining of standards: in this exhibition at the centre of Kerry Deane's work *Drawing* (2024), two faces encounter one another, underneath reads the subtitle 'Dialogue.'

Artspace Aotearoa is a public contemporary art gallery founded in 1987 by artists and arts workers, it continues to be artist-led. We work within a specific city context, and spiral out into national and international conversations that promote practices that present emancipatory world views.

The 18th-century English nursery rhyme which gives the exhibition its title expands upon the closed-circuit. The diagram describes interlocking exchange economies of scale within an ecosystem and the subsequent effect of these processes on said ecosystem. As an acute diagram of relationships the nursery rhyme has frequently been used as a scaffold to critique modes of oppressive power such as the right to vote in the UK, slavery in the US, and colonisation here in Aotearoa New Zealand. Zooming in on these interdependencies, this exhibition explores standards of exchange across multiple decades and contexts. Beginning with Afro-Cuban filmmaker Sara Gómez's seminal film *Mi Aporte* (My Contribution, 1972), shot in a work camp in Cuba offers first-hand accounts of the challenges of integrating women into the workforce 13 years into the revolution. Spiralling to Aotearoa today, Ashleigh Taupaki's drawings made in the gallery animate intimate histories. Taupaki's practice insists her whānau, hapu, and iwi are non-negotiably bound to place and its innate collectiveness.

This is the house that jack built invites audiences to encounter a fifty-year arc of artworks and their relative contexts. As in X&Y's 1977 provocation to give it all up to participate, each work in the exhibition considers the complex nature of exchange, and how whole value systems can be neglected by social valuing of homogenous worth. The visitors to X&Y's exhibition were eventually reunited with their belongings located at an undisclosed site not by following a linear procedure but, after engaging in extended dialogue with fellow audience members and the artists. This process, as with the Artspace Aotearoa annual question "do I need territory?", invites the audience to pause, take stock, and scan the opportunities for exchange and relationships here in the gallery and in daily life. Consider which points on the circuit enable, which entrench, and how this could all be otherwise.

1, 3

Ming Ranginui

sweepstakes, 2023

Till the clock strikes five, 2023

Muka, cotton pearl thread, driftwood, 170 x 16 x 11 cm; satin, wadding, beads, vinyl cord, cord lock, clock mechanism 68cm (diameter).

Handmade by the artist, both sculptures continue her exploration of combining customary and contemporary practice and material together in order to consider the many aspects of compartmentalised life. Courtesy the artist, Season Aotearoa, Robert Heald Gallery and the Jan Warburton Collection.

2

Kerry Deane

Drawings, 2024

Acrylic paint, charcoal, permanent marker on gesso primed canvas, framed, 87 x 164 cm. Produced as vignettes over time and brought together at Māpura Studios these scenes document the artists experience of living at Karekare as a young person. Courtesy the artist.

4

Sara Gómez

Mi Aporte (My Contribution), 1972

35mm film transferred to data, black and white, Spanish audio, English subtitles 33'36", looped.

Commissioned by the Federation of Cuban Women but banned at the time, the film presents critical testimonies from women navigating the complexity of revolution and patriarchy.

Courtesy of the Sara Gómez Project and the Vulnerable Media Lab at Queen's University, Kingston, Canada.

5

Andy Butler

Deep Clean, 2021

HD video, black and white, audio on speakers. 11'00" minutes, looped. Shot on location at Arts House, Naarm Melbourne where it was originally shown.

The artist cast an actor who resembled his mother to perform the often invisible service work central to the life of cultural organisations. Courtesy the artist.

6,7

Ashleigh Taupaki

mataika, 2024

the eel-catchers, 2024

Hand-drawn ink on wall, 280 x 450 cm; hand-drawn ink on wall 280 x 500 cm.

The artist tells the history of her hāpu through drawing practice. Using tools from dramaturgy, one set of drawings recounts a key event of resistance to occupation from 1879 in the form of a script for a play under development.

Courtesy the artist.

8,9

X&Y

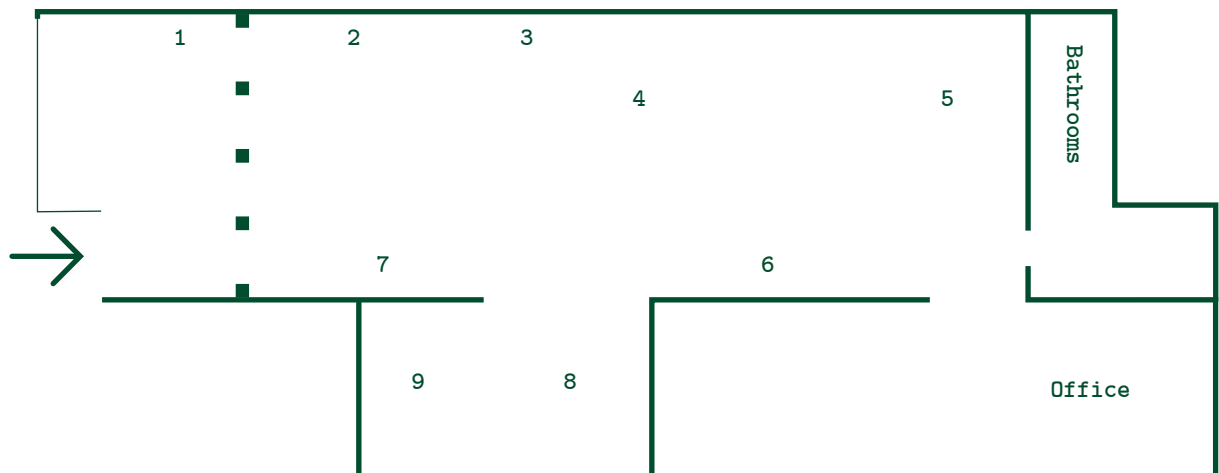
Documentation of Take the money and run, 1977

Rich Poor, 1977

Facsimile copies of documentation, statements by the artists; super 8mm film transferred to data, full colour, English audio, English subtitles. 17'34", looped.

The documentation is all that remains from the performance. The film was shot on the streets of lower Manhattan, NYC and splices together the breadth of responses to their leading questions: what do you think of poor people, what do you think of rich people? Courtesy the artists.

Karangaahape Rd



East St

Andy Butler is an artist, writer, and curator living in Naarm Melbourne. His visual practice employs moving image, performance, painting and text to consider strategies for maintaining hope and optimism at a time of political upheaval, with a strong focus on the political currents of the Indo-Pacific region. Andy has undertaken several residencies including with Asialink, Manila, Powerhouse, Sydney, and the Humboldt Forum, Berlin. He has recently developed significant commissions with the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art and Ian Potter Museum of Art. Recent curatorial projects have been developed with Monash University Museum of Art and UTS Gallery, Sydney.

Kerry Deane was born in Paeroa, but spent formative years living on Lone Kauri Farm within the Waitakere Ranges overlooking Karekare. This close relationship with the environment fundamentally impacted, and continues to inspire, the work he is making today. Deane worked continuously as a lawyer from 1979-2015 initially as a criminal defence lawyer and later in commercial law until a catastrophic stroke changed his life. He now focuses his time on writing and drawing and works out of Māpura Studios, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.

Sara Gómez (1942-1974) was an Afro-Cuban filmmaker who engaged directly and courageously with the social, political, economic, and cultural transformations promised by the Cuban Revolution until her untimely death. Gómez directed numerous documentary films in 10 prolific years. She also made *De cierta manera* (One way or another), her only feature-length film. Her films navigate complex experiences of social class, race, and gender by reframing revolutionary citizenship, cultural memory, and political value. Her inventive strategies become foundational to new Cuban cinema and feminist film culture, but they also continue to inspire media artists today who deal with issues of identity and difference.

Ming Ranginui of Te Ati Haunui-a-Pāpārangi is an artist from Whanganui who lives in Tītahi Bay. She gained her Bachelor of Fine Arts (Hons) at Massey University, Wellington (2020), and furthered her studies at Te Wānanga o Raukawa, specialising in raranga. This year she completed a residency at the Banff Centre, Canada. She creates sculptures using a blend of whatu and taniko weaving techniques as well as modern fabrics to address tino rangatiratanga, spirituality and survival. Her work has been shown widely in Aotearoa, most recently at Treadler and Objectspace.

Ashleigh Taupaki of Ngāti Hako and Samoa is a multidisciplinary artist based in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland working primarily in object, drawing, and research. Taupaki has developed an expanded mind mapping practice that emphasises connectivities across historical, cultural, and environmental ecologies. She is currently a doctoral candidate at Te Waka Tūhura - Elam School of Fine Arts and Design.

X&Y were a collaborative duo active from 1976-1978. Artists Coleen Fitzgibbon and Robin Winters, were both working with performative installation prior to collaboration, including participating in programmes at Whitney Biennale, the Kitchen, and Anthology Archives all in New York. Their shared interest in gender and class politics propelled the collaboration, culminating in the exhibition *Take the money and run*, de Appel in Amsterdam (1977). Returning to the USA, they founded an advisory group with artists Peter Fend, Jenny Holzer, Peter Nadin, and Richard Prince to offer creative and practical services. Most recently Fitzgibbon has exhibited film works and Winters has exhibited works of blown glass.

Events

Monday 29 July, 10am – 2pm

In focus with Andy Butler: Writing as a process of discovery

Wednesday 31 July, 6pm

Deep dive: Artist lecture by Andy Butler

White-Saviour-Industrial-Complex

Thursday 8 August, 6pm

Question time: A lecture by Tavia Nyong'o

What is a queer Ancestor? Lessons from Audre Lorde and James Baldwin

Monday 2 September – Sunday 29 September

Online Screening Room

Emily Parr

Through the Time Spiral: 'Oli 'Ula, 2021

Wednesday 4 September, 6pm

Deep dive: Kaitohu Director's lecture

Why do intergenerational exhibitions matter?

Wednesday 25 September, 6pm

The Handlers, read by Poata Alvie McKree

First Thursdays Open Late

1 August, 5 September, 3 October, 6 – 8pm

Reading Room

A letter to Binna Choi from Marina Vishmidt, August 19, 2009

To learn more about these events, visit artspace-aotearoa.nz

To read the text by Marina Vishmidt, visit artspace-aotearoa.nz/reading-room

To request a tour for your group contact info@artspace.org.nz

Acknowledgements

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To support our work and enjoy additional events consider joining a Supporters Circle.

To learn more about this programme, visit artspace-aotearoa.nz/tautoko

The annual question

Each year Artspace Aotearoa sets one question which our exhibitions and events orbit in the company of artists and audiences. Across the year, we explore what this question offers us and what artworks and their authors can weave together. In 2024, we ask, “do I need territory?”

These annual questions are multifaceted invitations to consider the world in which we live. They are poetic, philosophical, and open yet, never untethered from material reality and its urgencies. Since drafting this question in early 2023 it has developed sharpened bearing as instances of material urgency have forced it into focus at an intensifying rate. These urgencies have included, but are not limited to: the irreparable harm to human dignity unfolding in occupied Gaza and the threats made to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in Aotearoa. Like all necessary questions, “do I need territory?” encompasses the full breadth of human experience: conflict to optimism, fragility to strength. Like all necessary questions, it also insists that we account for the limits many experience in daily life as much as it opens up possibilities to reconsider the codes through which we organise our lives.

History shows us that commitment to critique prevalent modes of relating is unflinching. It also shows us a dogged insistence on wielding power at the cost of the other can push resources to their absolute limit. Late capitalism suggests much of human value is experienced

at the edge of things in the edges: the point where one body ends and another begins, where community space finishes and private domain starts, where monetised time clocks off and our ‘free time’ takes hold.

The impulse to compartmentalise these not necessarily distinct zones has been an efficient tool for the entrenchment of hierarchy through nation states, public service entities, and even families. This delineation process may be presented as serving a particular cause, where an annotated boundary is required for protection’s sake, however there are equally instances where this act results in experiences of radical dehumanisation. Boundaries, borders, and cuts are concepts enacted to extract a quantifiable value by separating said value from the other. However, scholar and activist Ruth Wilson Gilmore encourages us to consider that these same sites are also where relationships begin, where transformation becomes possible.

What shape would the world take if we would go towards difference? Perhaps the sister to what we ask this year is the question, “where do we find solidarity?” Honing in on this secondary question becomes necessary when solidarity is understood to be a form of enabling abundance that ensures dignity and security for all. What would it take to feel not only part of a community but also full as an individual, a boundless participant? Would it take access to a critical and lively art world? Would it take access to one’s whakapapa,

language, and stories? Would it take the ability to describe your terms of engagement? If freedom emerges by our commitment to it again and again it must take many forms.

In 2024's programme each participating artist and their work contribute to considering the annual question in a dynamic way. Rather than producing a clear answer we seek to describe a whole. This whole insists that yes, opening the door to fundamental questions is to be in conversation with the poetic, the philosophical, and material realities.

Ruth Buchanan, Kaitohu Director
January 2024

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Each year we orbit one question in the company of artists through exhibitions and other events. Across the year we explore what this question offers us and what artworks and their authors can weave together. In 2024 we ask “do I need territory?” You can think of this as one exhibition in four parts, as a score played across a calendar, or maybe even as a forest. Join us.

2024

Do I need territory?