

***Cruel Optimism***  
**2021 new artist show**

**Exhibition date:** 29 October - 21 January 2021

**Submissions close:** Monday 23 August 2021

**Artists announced:** Friday 27 August 2021

Artspace Aotearoa is now accepting submissions of work from artists for its annual new artists show. For the upcoming 2021 open-call seven artists will be selected.

The annual new artists programme is a core fundamental of our organisation's kaupapa to advocate for creative innovation within the field of contemporary art in Aotearoa. As an organisation we strive to actively provide a platform for emerging artists to exhibit and advance their practices with support from the Artspace Aotearoa curatorial and production team.

Lauren Berlant's seminal book *Cruel Optimism* (2011) has been chosen as a conceptual curatorial substructure. Berlant's pathbreaking scholarship is said to have defined the fields of affect theory, heteronormativity and queer theory. *Cruel Optimism* both as a text but also as a title seeks to offer an open conceptual beginning for artists and writers to respond to.

*"Cruel optimism exists when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing. It might involve food, or a kind of love; it might be a fantasy of the good life, or a political project. It might rest on something simpler, too, like a new habit that promises to induce in you an improved way of being. These kinds of optimistic relations are not inherently cruel. They become cruel only when the object that draws your attachment actively impedes the aim that brought you to it initially."*

Berlant, Lauren. *Cruel Optimism*. Duke University Press, 2011.

The 2021 open-call is accepting proposals from emerging artists from a diverse range of practices. Your proposed project needs to be in response to Berlant's ideations on *Cruel Optimism*.

## The Open Call Process:

This year we are looking at alternative models of submitting proposals for the 2021 new artist show, *Cruel Optimism*.

Artist proposals will be accepted in either of the following formats:

- A written outline of your proposal (300-500 words) or a video recording (up to 6 minutes).
- An informal 15 minute Zoom call and a brief presentation of artistic work on Saturday 21 August. [Make an appointment for a Zoom meeting.](#)

Proposals need to provide:

- How your proposal considers *Cruel Optimism* as an informative element to the work.
- A rudimentary proposed budget of your material costs.
- A simple exhibition layout plan of your project.

## Selection Criteria:

You need to be either:

- Recent fine arts graduates (a maximum of 3 years out of formal education).
- Or artists who have acquired equivalent experience through a self-directed practice.

Artists will receive:

- Artist fee of \$1500.
- A negotiable production budget, production and curatorial support.

## Important Dates and Next Steps:

- All submissions will receive an outcome response by Wednesday 25 August.
- Selected artists are announced on Friday 27 August.
- Production for work starts from 30 August until 22 October.
- Install schedule runs from Saturday 23 October through to Thursday 28 October.
- Exhibition opening on Friday 29 October.
- Closing of the exhibition on Monday 31 January.
- Please send your written proposal by midnight Monday 23 August, 2021 to [info@artspace.org.nz](mailto:info@artspace.org.nz).
- Alternatively, select your time to meet on zoom via calendly for Saturday 21 August. [Make an appointment for a Zoom meeting.](#)