

An interview with @canterburry



Tiles from @canterburry instagram profile

First gracing Instagram in 2019, @canterburry began as a small inside joke between a group of chronically online rural teenagers. It has since become an archival, curated blend of irony, ragebait, copy-pasta, trends, underground music, skateboarding, politics, glitz, SoundCloud mixes, piss-takes, making fun of DJs, poly humour, anything local, and anything skuxx. Through the creation of this niche aesthetic, canterburry has garnered a small cult following within Aotearoa while staying true to its roots by continuing to find increasingly unhinged Young Thug tweets that somehow top the last.

Through the quick and inexpensive means of Instagram, the account is able to document and archive in a way that taps into what the gallery, library, museum etc. can not. In conjunction to the exhibition *I've Never Had an Original Experience*, exhibition curator Emily Lyall interviews @canterburry about what the @canterburry Instagram page achieves as an archive, community, and meme page, July 2026.

As well as a crackup meme page, I see @canterburry as a raw and real collection of New Zealand youth culture. Do you think @canterburry represents that culture accurately?

Certainly not accurate haha. I struggle to keep up with what's going on a lot of the time. Culture is made up of a lot of different things too, and I post the exaggerated, funny parts of Aotearoa. But I do post about what I think is funny and/or related to my personal interests. I guess you could consider it a representation of myself and me and my friends' tastes. I think a lot of the community there aligns and that's where the connection comes from. It's definitely something for the young people. I'm not getting any younger though, so I wonder about a time when nothing I post is relatable anymore or I just slowly phase out of being so chronically online that I'm just out of touch.

The curation of your page feels very specific and hits a niche spot within the algorithm. What do you deem worthy vs unworthy of recording via @canterburry?

If I find it funny or if I think the bros will find it funny. That's it really. If it's current, then I'm more likely to get a chuckle out of it I suppose. Sometimes I nostalgia-post or just post because I think it's cool or interesting. Funny is most important though. There are times where my opinions on things become apparent based on what I post, but even then it has to be done in a way where a joke is involved. Screenshots I posted of Chlöe Swarbrick looking irritated in parliament come to mind haha.

They say anything you put on the internet stays there forever. What does @canterburry achieve as an archive that museums do not?

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There is an intersection between, say, a museum and an online page. The internet itself is an archive, and as we post and engage with it, our digital footprint creates new points in history. Instagram is a visual internet platform, so you can consider it a high-velocity archive of sorts. A museum that is breathing or mutating.

Your account was recently suspended, why do you think you were taken down?

Probably reported. I think I'm shadowbanned, though I'm not sure if that has anything to do with it. Someone also could've tried to hack me, that's what popped up when I tried to log in, but I don't believe that. Hopefully Mark calls me back soon and explains himself.

Did that experience change the way you see Instagram as a platform?

Na, I'm honestly surprised it didn't happen sooner. I took that period as a chance to lower my screen time. I've always operated under the assumption that one day I'll just wake up and @canterburry is gone. Instagram changes so much, and sometimes pages get banned for no reason or pages are left active that post crazy stuff. It's unpredictable from my perspective. Instagram relies heavily on the use of AI too, which makes it even more unpredictable.

I see your page as closely connected to the Instagram platform. Is Instagram your favourite social media to use and why/why not?

Tumblr was always my favourite, and I consider it to be the

peak of social media platforms. It was basically a combination of all the most popular forms of social media before the rise of the swiping mechanic. Now it's like every social media platform is turning into the same thing. Tumblr had a high skill curve because you had to design your blog with coding. Everything cool these days all branched from Tumblr in some way. I'm too young for Bebo, but I feel like I would've liked that one.

You talk about the meme as a form of self expression, can you expand on that?

Well I don't make like 95% of what I post myself haha. But any kind of design can be seen as self expression, and memes are not an exception. Especially when there is an intention behind it. You could argue it's a more honest form of self expression too, since it's veiled by a layer of humour.

I see what I do primarily as an act of curation. Curation is self-expression too, and there is an emotional landscape you can analyse in anybody's instagram. I've always enjoyed doing this and have on nearly every social platform I've had. Maybe I should get a job as a social media manager.

What parts of yourself might followers/viewers see expressed on @canterburry?

My stupid side I suppose lol. If I post something it's probably because it's funny, I'm into it, or I think it's stupid. I like keeping things vague and letting people interpret which of the three I mean.

The page was honestly just inside jokes at first-things only me and my friends would find funny. Over time I just posted whatever, whatever felt right. There is definitely a change in the types of memes I would post over the years, but I feel like you can get a decent gauge on the kind of person I am and who I am around based on what I post.

Can you tell me a bit about the community you've built through @canterburry?

Shout out to all the bros that fw the posts. I've met a few in person and we've become good friends. It's cool to see that you can form these kinds of connections over a screen and through a shared sense of humour. It's definitely my favourite part of running @canterburry. Knowing that people get so happy and laugh scrolling through.

What are your thoughts on the internet?

It's a tool! I have a lot to be grateful for because of the internet. I consider myself to be blessed to be born in the first generation of the internet.

Obviously there is a lot wrong with the internet, but I think it's just one of those situations where you have to take the bad with the good. It's just the consequences of the platform. If I could wave a magic wand and remove anything harmful I would.

Do you think it is forever?

I think so. I don't ever see humanity reverting to a time without the internet unless we get hit by a meteor. It's chaotic, but necessary. Maybe they'll make an internet 2.

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