

Indigo: Central Otago Artists Exhibition at Orion Powerhouse

WRITER

Warren Feeney

In 2019, nine artists from Central Otago set up Indigo, an informal group, assuming the responsibilities of curators, a task more frequently associated with staff in public galleries. Yet over the past three years their curatorial practice has encouraged them to explore the potential of each other's work and new relationships and ideas.

Collectively, the arts practices of Luke Anthony, Shaun Burdon, Judy Cockeram, Rachel Hirabayashi, Megan Huffadine, Lynn Kelly, Jillian Porteous, Lynne Wilson and Nigel Wilson encompass carving, ceramics, jewellery, painting and sculpture. Thematically, they are equally conscious of the potential of their group exhibitions as agents to reveal both diverse and shared thematic responses about their work.

All the artists are supportive of one another's practice and this is central to their reason for being. Working mainly with recycled native timbers, Luke Anthony's sculptures of fantails and other native species embody a respect for the environment and ecosystems, a principle that is shared by the collective. Certainly, this is evident in painter/sculptor Rachel Hirabayashi's intimate and expansive views of the Cromwell landscape and its measured occupation.

Working with clay in Cromwell since 2006, ceramicist Lynne Wilson's interest in her materials are, in part, about the relationships that her practice makes with the history of the land, and our presence in it today. Wilson makes impressions of samples of old ornamental ironwork, conscious of time and the elements taking their toll on her subjects. Painter/sculptor and installation artist Megan Huffadine is interested in the objects that we hold and value as artefacts. Yet it is not their particular histories, rather their display and possible reading in public and private spaces.

Lynn Kelly is a senior contemporary jeweller associated with the pioneering Fluxus workshop in Dunedin. Drawing upon a history of botanical studies and local plants, her response to her subjects whether ferns, seed pods or flowers are simultaneously about past and present.

Multimedia artist Judy Cockeram, previously taught drawing in digital technologies at the University of Auckland's School of Architecture. In 2021 her practice has returned to the physicality of mark making. She notes: It is that special human to human exchange that opens the conversation between the viewer and the thoughts of the maker'. Cockeram's organic forms, abstract or figurative, share



← Megan Huffadine, *still life with baroque vessel #2*, 2021, acrylic paint and other mediums on board

→ Lynne Wilson, *Cross Culture Cromwell*, 2021, ceramic



their association with nature and the environment with painter and ceramic artist Jillian Porteous, her work a response to the colour and light of Central Otago, the rivers and its bird species.

Former senior lecturer in painting and life drawing at the Dunedin School of Art, Shaun Burdon, shares this attitude, working intuitively, responding to the subjects of his work and their making as critical to their resolution. He describes his paintings as about 'Incidents and accidents', making images

expressing the ambiguity and mystery of life. Painter Nigel Wilson's interests are with the qualities of his materials and the abstraction of his subjects. Living in Alexandra from 2000, Central Otago is both an abstracted and tangible presence in his work, touching upon the reality of being in the land.

Indigo Artists

Orion Powerhouse Gallery
1 Rue Pompallier, Akaroa
16 October – 7 November