

**** BEAUTY is in the STREET**

Areez Katki

Sione Monu

Lula Cucchiara

Luisa Tora & Molly Rangiwai-McHale

Ash Mosen / Mosen Studios

Rawiri Brown

28 April —

Liv Worsnop / Plant Gang

Eleanor Cooper

Oliver van der Lugt

Luka Mues

Dawn Blood

— **02 June 2017**

Lulu Fang

Annie Mackenzie

Tendai John Mutambu

Bridget Riggir

Lana Lopesi

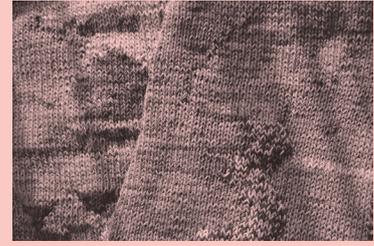
Ella Sutherland

Billie Popovic

Curated by Elle Loui August

Developed and toured by Objectspace

**** RAMP Gallery, Hamilton**



Areez Katki, *Constanople Dress*, 2016



Sione Monu, *Blanket Couture Series*, 2016



BEAUTY is in the STREET

Elle Loui August

Rain beads in my hair and weaves its way slowly through the fibres of my coat. The winter downpour is moving audibly beneath the grass, draining toward where a stream once ran. Tuna Mau, flowing to Waiatarau- the bay of one hundred reflections. No longer a bay, an eeling ground, and no longer a slum, or an enclave of affordable social housing...

The water pools among the grass, simultaneously moving downward toward the aquifers, caverns and drainage tunnels of the city's subterranean infrastructure. The rain, filling the aquifers and dams, moves beneath the city, through the city, emerging through pipe systems and household taps to nourish the lives of an increasingly diverse populace. It will sweat out through skin, in the streets, in schools, in hospitals, workplaces and on dance floors across Tāmaki Makaurau. It will mingle with the fabrics and fibres of the factories, fields and workrooms of a globalised textile market – in t-shirts, denim, work wear, dresses, slacks...

The exhibition *Beauty is in the Street* began as a response to the themes of the Objectspace National Symposium of 2016, for which notions of 'unrest, change and activism' were bought under the title of *Object Unrest*. Focusing this exhibition through the medium of adornment and streetwear, was by no means a glib attempt to connect to any simplified notions of the 'contemporary' or its languages. Instead, it sought to connect the broader discussions anchored in the symposium to the terrains of self-determination that take place in our everyday lives. To signal – albeit gently and incompletely – a connection to traditions of transformation and resistance by viewing the fierceness of transformative thought through its nuanced manifestations in aesthetic gestures, and in practices of love, care and energy.

The re-imagination of selves, of the city through the body, through the particulars of subjective experience, and the manner in which these

intersect with the experience and practices of making – and wearing – and the communities we create in our actions and works.

For an emergent generation of designers, artists, craft practitioners and writers, not only are our own labours and the conditions in which these unfold, of immediate and pressing concern, but so too is the awareness of the labours and working conditions of others. The brute exploitation and environmental degradation experienced by those with whom we share our world, and our own participation in flows of increasing material inequity, are clear. The materials that we acquire and exchange, the materials that we work with, all impact upon other beings in various ways. Our public spaces, our shared, and our meeting spaces which flux online/offline we find regulated by private, financialised and militarised interests. We cannot be sure that they are public, we cannot be sure that we want to participate, yet we are in it. We call to each other from across the street, the bar, the parent teacher meeting, across reading groups, and parks. How do we transmute this world into another, with whatever it is, and who ever we have at hand?

'We went to the public hospital but it was private, but we went through the door marked 'private' to the nurses' coffee room, and it was public. We went to the public university but it was private, but we went to the barber shop on campus and it was public. We went into the hospital, into the university, into the library, into the park. We were offered credit for our debt. We were granted citizenship' Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons*¹

To a generation largely shackled by the debts incurred by study, creative practices are frequently etched out of working weeks either long or casualised and underpaid – each terrifying in their own confines and precarities. As Luka Mues writes of his collection 'Hang in there Baby,'



'I made this capsule collection while working a day job 60 hours a week and it took me nearly a year and a half to complete. I felt overwhelmed and unsure for a lot of this time, always questioning what I was making and what I was working towards. In my mind the title is a reassurance for spare-time labourers scratching together creative capital after hours.'

The garments, objects, texts and spatial gestures included in this exhibition are all touchstones for rich and diverse practices which develop within their own specific domains, and yet, which also intersect with other makers, communities, environments and modalities of practice.

From Areez Katki's synaesthetic meditation on Istanbul's Bosphorous Strait in *Constantinople Dress* – a

garment which responds to the environment, history and movements of this body of water, translated through Katki's craft and care – Luisa Tora and Molly Rangiwai-McHale's playful crystallisations of performative and affective online embodiments, to Ella Sutherland's graphic inquiries of printed spaces as public spaces.

Activated outside of this exhibition across many mediums and multiple platforms, each practitioner in their own vernacular attends to the situations and sensations of our environment as sites of embodiment and life. In approaches both humorous and hopeful, they move through cities, streets, meetings and parks, emerging in new constellations and collectivities of practice.

1 Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons*, Minor Compositions, 2013

Lana Lopesi I saw a video recently, in which Good Winter designer Jared Faasalele spoke of his new collection of leather bags as being based on the principles of tatau. Although visually the references to tatau are invisible (to me) this is one example of how young designers living in the diaspora combine traditional design principles with contemporary design technologies.

I first caught a glimpse of Good Winter online – black and brown handbags which were modelled by two people of colour. The bags were classic, simple designs. I thought they were marketing to the wrong the audience.

For my 24th birthday my parents and sister brought me one of these leather bags. I had warned them to order far in advance because, as the designer makes them by hand, they may not have the one I wanted in stock. My mum didn't listen, of course, but Jared pulled through anyway.

I really wanted that leather bag. Because I live in New Zealand where an all black leather bag is a common and desirable aesthetic. But, I wanted a Good Winter bag specifically because the company is owned – and the bags are made and designed – by Samoans.

—

It's very easy in New Zealand, for us to place our own assumptions about design culture onto designers from the diaspora. But where within that would we place the black leather bag? We assume an interest in 'inherited' aesthetics which reflect tradition and familial design culture. But we can too easily forget, that these designers are influenced by multiple worlds.

Question one:
What is your relationship to tokenism?

We live in a world where cultural capital or the capital of difference is both paradoxical and contentious. The relationships between culture, power, privilege, design and fashion are undeniable, and such 'capital' can be a dangerous reminder of the oppression and 'othering' which often outcasts certain social groups. On the other hand in a global world where people position themselves across a number of identities and lifestyles, capital – only naturally – seizes upon difference to create new markets and products.

Question two:
Who is producing and who is profiting?

In the dynamic which exists between commodification and resistance, difference itself becomes a site of conflict and struggle, over bodies, desires, land, labour, and the distribution of resources. It is within this space – between conflict and commercial appeal – that difference itself carries a legacy of disruption and political struggle. It is within this space that there is an ever-present potential for colonising (once again) diverse and already marginalised markets, individuals and communities.

Deco blossom exit, lacquered mule knit, double-faced Persian lamb. Leather checkerboard leather stole, black bugle bead futuristic lone wolf geta sandal. Gold foil acrylic drop. Baby slogan T drill.³

Like any system, fashion incorporates and reshapes events and deviancies occurring at a local level. Fashion adapts, almost synchronously, with local and lived courses.

An individual subject as a component or agent of any given system, is connected to many more systems and subjects. The behavior of a system's subjects inform its function at a larger global scale. The local and the global incorporate and account for one another. If either deviates, the other will react, causing an adaptation of the whole – a co-adaptation and an emergence.

The subject that Self-fashioning – instead of simply being fashionable – consciously acts as an agent connected co-adaptively to other – both human and nonhuman – agents and systems. This is to act inside a margin of difference which exists within continual repetition. To labour difference into being in the chance that it may emerge throughout a system at large and cause change greater than the local to occur. To cause the emergence of not only new forms, but also new substances and relations is to engage with the Self-fashionability of life.

A Self-fashioning subjectivity inhabits its agency to manipulate symbolic and material difference at both a local and global scale. Self-fashioning, is an act of group survival, change, and construction; a local star logic.

Bridget Rigg

Taking forged, lived, and hurt meanings and reinstating these as sign values, fashion incorporates, fractures, and returns to us the splayed events, attitudes, and shifts of the present as a constellation of cartoon parts. The feedback cycles of fashion leave the subject to compose itself from its own, and from others' splinters – to rebuild a self from an exploded and tactile view of the present.

The substance of the fashionable subject is repetition. Event, Self, and World desirously spiraling as colourful textile pictographs, and embodied by the individual who composes itself from the soft cues of a collective history.

1

Miu Miu Fall 2016
Ready-To-Wear
Vetements Spring 2016
Ready-To-Wear
J.W. Anderson
Spring 2017 Menswear

Pilgrim buckle slipper, refugee peak cap, reworked high-rise relaxed-skinny jean. White face spool loom sweat-pants, cop-badge gold. Hidden gender-open anonymity uniform, cold war epaulette.¹

2

Catherine Malabou,
Plasticity at the Dusk
of Writing: Dialectic,
Destruction, Deconstruction,
trans by Carolyn Shread
(New York: Columbia
University Press, 2011)

In our repetition we are instantly historic subjects. Made from, and reliving stasis and crisis, the historic subject existing in a backwash state – a local contour of the same fabric that precedes and prevails it. This subject is elastic, a material that when bent finds new form but remains the same – elasticity as the masking of change, as the transferal of form and not the transition of material.²

3

Prada Fall/Winter 1996
Prada Fall/Winter 2003
Prada Spring/Summer 1996

Formed of reprocessed symbols and materials the fashionable subject can only be caught between itself as it is and the world as it is. The new does not emerge. Coded only through the preexistent, the fashionable subject finds itself trapped by the myths already given.

John Mutambu

In the work *Buenos Aires Tour* (2003), by the artist Jorge Macchi, a cracked pane of glass is superimposed onto a city map, determining, through its fissures, eight aleatory itineraries running across Argentina's capital. Along these journeys Macchi records items he comes across; archiving, photographically, fragments of the city. The resulting panoply of *objets trouve* not only imply their significance, metonymically, as parts of anonymous lives from which they have been cast away, they further coalesce – contracting and expanding between macro and micro in the viewing subject's mind – to suggest narratives surrounding their present union as a grouping of otherwise disparate forms.

Within Macchi's practice one finds all types of ephemera and found objects: newspaper clippings, city maps, sheet music, obituaries, broken glass and a range of other common items that are given new life. Against the call for art to be spectacular he looks to the modest, unnoticed, mundane; those parts of material culture dispensed with in a quest for novelty. Here the incidental is made to take pride of place within a theatre of the quotidian as evocations transform into elaborate compositions in languorous and often understated ways.

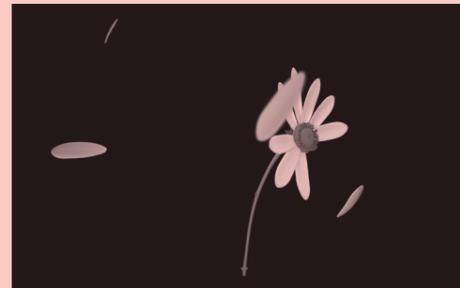
Just as an elision of opposites takes place in Macchi's work – light and dark, presence and absence, chance and fate – so, too, can the city itself become a space where extremes coincide: 'extremes of ambitions and degradation, brutal oppositions of races and styles, contrasts between yesterday's buildings, already transformed into trash cans, and today's urban irruptions that block out its space.'¹

1

Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Steven Rendall trans.) Berkeley: University of California Press (1984), 91.

2

Ibid.



Luka Mues Hang In There Baby Campaign Film still, 2015. Directed by Juliet Carpenter

Where the-city- as-macrocosm intersects with the-body-as-micro-cosm, the former seems to dominate, persistently and with little regard for the latter. So, then, how do we entwine the two into a generative dialectic of contemporary urban life?

To lead a daily urban life against the abstractions of urban planning.

To encounter the city not as seen from above but to be immersed within it.

To exist within the shadows of the state-sanctioned view of the city as a plan, drawn to scale, and mapped as a totalising whole.

To make embodied, subjective and personal the organised and intelligible orderings of the city by re-formulating its syntax along personal lines.

To erode the ambitious hyperbole and idealism of those purveyors of progress: the bureaucrats, the developers, the real estate agents.

To find the 'rhetoric of walking' in the city and to search for an alternative rhythm.²

To uncover the poetics and politics of lived experience, by turning to the subject adrift.

Areez Katki is a Persian-born knitwear and textile craftsman. His appreciation for knitwear can be traced to when he was taught to appreciate the act of hand knitting by his maternal grandmother. Her tutelage and affiliations with the crafts still has an influence on Areez, having come from a family of Indo-Persian stained glass makers and wood carvers. During, and since his degrees in Art History and English, Areez has been creating small collections of artisanal apparel. Areez has taken a few years away from producing work to live around Europe and the Middle East, and has recently returned with new sources of research, information and materials that he has been applying toward his more recent collections.

Sione Monu is an artist of Tongan heritage who recently migrated to Auckland, New Zealand to pursue a career in the visual arts. His background is in illustration, painting and digital photography. Sione's practice has a vibrant presence through his Instagram (@sione93) in which he develops short films and performances exploring relational politics and personal connections.

Originally hailing from Córdoba, Argentina, Lula Cucchiara has been living in Auckland for the past 8 years. A film and photography enthusiast, Lula has dedicated the last 8 years to working in the New Zealand Fashion industry, taking on many different roles. She works primarily as a photographer and has recently put together a series of fashion films and shoots with her latest film being presented at the New York Fashion Film Festival. Recent collaborations have found Lula being involved in the clothing industry in new capacities, focusing on screen printing, embroidery and tattooing leather.

The product of two black sheep, Ash Mosen was born and raised in Christchurch. She was taught to sew by her mother and taught to paint by her father. Ash has worked in the studios of a number of New Zealand designers and is currently living in Auckland and working on the first capsule collection for her label Mosen.

Born in Otaki and of Māori and Rarotongan descent, Rawiri Brown graduated from AUT with a Bachelor of Design entered in Fashion, and has since worked for many local designers with a focus on New Zealand made. Having lived in central Auckland for over a decade residing for the majority in Ponsonby, the cities' ever changing landscape provides a basis for his current work.

Fiji native, Luisa Tora is an interdisciplinary artist, an activist, and a writer. She worked in human rights in Fiji and the Pacific before

moving to Aotearoa in 2009. Her work can be found in private collections in Aotearoa New Zealand and in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. She is part of The Veiqia Project, the creative research project inspired by Fijian female tattoo.

Molly Rangiwai-McHale (Ngāti Porou, Te Aupōuri, Scottish, Irish, Chinese) is an Auckland-based multi-disciplinary artist. She has a BA in Visual Arts from the University of Auckland. Her work can be found in private collections in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia and the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

Liv Worsnop graduated from Ilam School of Fine Arts with a BFA in 2012, majoring in Sculpture and has since pursued a cross disciplinary practice. Through the moving, shifting and manipulation of found detritus she has been investigating the way we as energetic beings exist within the physical world. Another thread of her practice has operated under the title *Plant Gang* and has looked to the environmental conditions of post-quake Christchurch. Projects have included a catalogue of wild plants growing in the central city, a zen garden constructed of materials found on site and various guerrilla gardens. This ongoing project has traversed environmental and socially based relationships in response to post-quake Christchurch.

Eleanor Cooper (b. 1988) is an artist based in Tāmaki Makaurau. She holds a BA in Philosophy and a BFA (Hons) from the University of Auckland. Her work is interspersed with time spent in remote locations working for the Department of Conservation. Recent exhibitions include *They say this island changes shape*, The Physics Room (2016); *Loverdose Tattoo*, Pilot (2015); *Man with sword arrested*, North Projects (2014) and *ELECTIONS 2014* with Ella Grace McPherson-Newton et. al, RM (2014).

Oliver van der Lugt is an artist and textile designer currently based in Melbourne, Australia whose practice spans sculpture, installation, textiles and music. He has exhibited in New Zealand, Australia, China and the United States; his graphics for ASSK Paris have been worn by Rihanna, Grimes, Le1f and Venus X; and his music (performing under the name *airmax'97*) is played in small dark clubs worldwide.

Luka Mues graduated with a Bachelor of Design (Hons) majoring in Fashion from Massey University, Wellington in 2011. He currently works as a stylist and costume designer in Berlin, Germany.

Dawn Blood is a queer femme artist, poet and writer currently residing in Melbourne. Her practice revolves around poetry, sound and design. Most recently she has been working on a solo music/video project.

Born in Shenzhen, China, Lulu Fang relocated to Auckland as a teenager. Lulu is interested in stories told by the human body, objects and materials, and their relationship to place. Her recent work is engaged with issues of migrancy, choosing to work with what is often left behind when people leave their home, such as worn shoes and clothes and other waste materials.

Annie Mackenzie's practice focuses on the intersection of material cultures, handworked labour and the dispersal of traditional knowledge. Recent exhibitions include *Vanished Delft* at Pah Homestead curated by Anna Miles, *Walking Forwards Backwards* at Enjoy Gallery Wellington, *International Foodcourt/Global Classic*, The Physics Room, Christchurch; *Who Opens The Door*, Blue Oyster Gallery, Dunedin and *Pay for the Printer*, Triple Major Shanghai, China. She graduated with a Bachelor in Sculpture from Ilam School of Fine Arts in 2009. Annie Mackenzie was the 2016 recipient for the Creative Fibre New Weavers Award.

Tendai John Mutambu is a curator and writer based in Tāmaki Makaurau who recently completed a one year tenure as curatorial assistant at Artspace NZ. He has a strong interest in art writing, critical theory and contemporary curating.

Bridget Riggir practices as a curator and writer and is a current co-director of RM gallery.

Lana Lopesi is a multidisciplinary artist and writer based in Auckland with an interest in social practice and print media. Lana's work often explores the various issues for diaspora and indigenous communities with a focus on the cultural exchange that occurs via migration. Lana's writing has featured in publications in print and online including Art New Zealand and E-Tangata. She is also Visual Arts Editor of The Pantograph Punch and was a co-founder and editor of #500words

Ella Sutherland is an artist and graphic designer currently based in Sydney, Australia. Recent projects include: *Pale Like a Fish*, Published by North Projects and Ilam Press (2016); *Boring month start to finish, the whole month*, North Projects, Christchurch (2015); *Speaking Places: How to work*, RAMP, Hamilton (2015); *Princess x sleeping muse*, TCB, Melbourne (2015).

Biljana Popovic is an Auckland based artist interested in identity, agency, relationality, sexuality and technology. Her practice explores the poetics and politics imbued in designed objects. recently Biljana has been investigating the intersection between industrial safety objects and character narrative tropes found in popular culture. Her favoured medium is 'the event'.



Luka Mues Hang In There Baby
Campaign, 2015. Photographer George Rump



RAMP
GALLERY

Ramp Gallery
School of Media Arts
Gate 5, Wintec City Campus
Collingwood Street, Hamilton

07 834 8800 ext 3228
info@rampgallery.co.nz
www.rampgallery.co.nz