

A Great Place For Boats Except During S.W. Winds

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21 October–15 November 2009

Presenting an arrangement of tentative scaffolds, layered reflections and purposeful inversions, **A Great Place For Boats Except During S.W. Winds** synthesises an array of associative platforms and currents within which we are invited to attempt to navigate.

Just as his earlier exhibition for The Physics Room, *dr don: or how I learned to stop worrying and love Helen*, conveyed “a sense of dislocation, fragmentation of identity and the obstacles generated by social conditioning,” this exhibition, which employs vast quantities of VHS tape, salvaged materials, bitumen, spray paint and a selection of printed photographs, sees [redacted] again invest in specific cultural and political affiliations to elucidate the broader system of control that shapes our actions and experiences within these islands.

Extending the concerns of an earlier work, *They drive Impalas don't they* (Marsupial Warehouse, Christchurch, 2009) which riffed on Théodore Géricault's infamous masterpiece *The Raft of the Medusa* and the unnecessary events that gave rise to that painting, for this project [redacted]'s upturned and depopulated vessel carries a sail woven from shredded strips of New Zealand's 2002 Terrorism Suppression Act and its consequent amendments.

Narcissistically doubled, earthed to its own reflection and hovering above a rippled pool of videotape, [redacted]'s new raft provokes a refreshed consideration of the after-effects of the 2007 anti-terror raids and the symbolic and objective violence of the state's approach to enshrining its own security that October. Whether the 2007 raids are approached as a tragedy/travesty in their own right, or as a slowly unfolding disaster—the full effect of which we have still not yet seen—[redacted]'s material ruminations and provocations on this and other matters at stake within this installation are characterised by a beleaguered, but apt, sense of scepticism.

Cycles of cultural recollection and various systems of material and ideological circulation are hinted at through [redacted]'s use of specific, and consequently subverted, associative materials. Here bitumen clads and provides a tar-sealed ground for a specifically inscribed wall instead of materialising as a smooth platform for interpersonal and commercial movements alike. A series of normally unseen and spooled magnetic strips here line-up and interlace in a static but light-inflecting surface, and shredded sections of a copied tome team-up to produce the fabric of [redacted]'s stymied sail.

Within this flurry of ricocheting material signs and informational cues, [redacted]'s photographs set up further art historical and contextual points of reference. The backwards painted slogan “The Promised Land”, positioned as it is within sight of Colin McCahon's old Christchurch residence—also near [redacted]'s own—is set alongside the last phases of demolition of Christchurch Women's Hospital and a section of text from Douglas Wright's autobiography *Ghost Dance* (2004) which openly addresses the “legendary bitterness” and “prolonged rejection” of McCahon's work as well as “his utter refusal to compromise”. A quality Wright attributes equally to McCahon, as to “the battle scarred landscape” that he chose to live within.

Below this triumvirate of images upon [redacted]'s partially clad, lean-to bitumen wall lies the proclamation “ceci n'est pas Rose Selavy” and in spite of the clearly claimed anonymity of [redacted]'s stance in the lead up to this project, here the artist borrows directly from Magritte and Duchamp to establish that while “this is not a Rose Selavey”, it is equally not an Ann Sagan, Alan Lacan, Las Soln, Ngo Tan Tsan, Taf Ashton or a Stan Long, even though any of these pseudonyms lie a little closer to home for [redacted]. Similarly, the additional possible interpretation of Duchamp's playful female moniker Rose Selavy as “arroser la vie”, might also allow us to surmise that [redacted]'s **A Great Place For Boats Except During S.W. Winds** is equally “not a toast to life” but a sincere consideration of, and reflection upon, its various trials.