

In the pursuit of imaging the relationships of organisms to each other and their environment, Joyce Campbell's *As It Falls* places her practice within an ecology of photography. A selection of photographs from Campbell's 2019 mid-career survey, *On the Last Afternoon: Disrupted Ecologies and the Work of Joyce Campbell*, have been curated in a new installation at Two Rooms. Made specifically for the ten-meter wall at the Adam Art Gallery Te Pātaka Toi, Campbell's hand-printed scrolls have been reconfigured within the architecture of the ground floor gallery at Two Rooms. With the longest scroll measuring over six meters long, they stand opposite a series of small process studies.

Talking to Campbell about the work, she describes the scrolls as 'impossibly large'. Trained initially as a sculptor, Campbell revels in the physicality and craft of monumental printmaking. *As it Falls* pushes the boundaries of the processes of developing photographs. The ritual of bathing a print in chemicals becomes a daunting task at this scale, challenging both the technical process and Campbell's physical capabilities. As objects these works emerge within relationships to specific spaces. Not only were they conceived for the singular architecture of the Adam Art Gallery, the size of the prints themselves is determined by the ceiling height of the darkroom where they were made at Elam School of Fine Arts. Staggered at varying heights in the Adam Art Gallery, here in Two Rooms, the scrolls have contracted and now stand together column like, with each one buttressed by its neighbour.

The scrolls are enlargements of negatives from Campbell's archive. These particular images date back to the early 2000s when Campbell was living in Downtown Los Angeles. The crystals come from her 2004-2005 series, *Brittle City*. Grown on concrete sculptures made by Campbell, the crystals become a tower, a vault or a well; architectural embodiments of her intoxication with Los Angeles, a hard and heavy city with endless allure. Hand-printed on a monumental scale, Campbell's crystals become a vortex which threatens to pull you in.

However, in the small process studies, the same swirling rabbit hole is seen in its entirety. The prints reveal Campbell's constructions and staging, as well as the manipulations of her negatives which have been cut to fit into the enlarger at a specific angle. Once a source of concern for the artist, the desecration of her negatives is now revealed as a celebration of the technical processes that contribute to a desired composition. With the two series facing each other, a tight relationship is evident. The space between them connects rather than separates, filling the gallery with the same viscous ecologies Campbell endeavors to depict in these exacting and impressive works.

The remaining works from *On the Last Afternoon: Disrupted Ecologies and the Work of Joyce Campbell* are on display at Te Uru Waitakere from 19 September until 22 November 2020. The book, *On the last Afternoon: Disrupted Ecologies and the Work of Joyce Campbell* co-published by Sternberg Press and Adam Art Gallery, is now available at Two Rooms.

Erin Lee, September 2020

Biography

Joyce Campbell (b. Aotearoa New Zealand) is an interdisciplinary artist based in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. She has a BFA from the School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury (1992) and an MFA from Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland (1999). She has lived, taught, and worked in Southern California and in Auckland, New Zealand, and has undertaken residencies in New Zealand (2001) and Antarctica (2006). Her recent work utilizes anachronistic photographic techniques, such as the daguerreotype and ambrotype, as well as conventional analogue and digital photography, video, film, and sculpture to examine the collision of natural and cultural systems.

Campbell's interest in biological and physical systems has led her to develop a set of photographic techniques that render visible the minute and incremental emergence of complex form, be that the growth of a microbial colony, crystals in the process of formation, the migration of glaciers into the ocean, or of silver from an electrode dispersing into colloidal suspension. She produces mural-scale photographs that invite her audiences to immerse themselves in the environments depicted. Campbell has participated in numerous exhibitions both in New Zealand and abroad including *The Future is already here - it's just not evenly distributed: The 20th Biennale of Sydney*, Cockatoo Island & Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia (2016), *Heavenly Bodies*, Santa Barbara Museum of Art (2014), *Che Mondo: What a World*, Curated by Carole Ann Klonarides, Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, Los Angeles, USA (2013), *Te Taniwha/Crown Coach*, Nichols Gallery, Pitzer College, Claremont, CA September (2012), *The Liquid Archive*, Curated by Geraldine Barlow, Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne, Australia (2012), *Altogether Elsewhere*, Curated by Rob Tufnell for the Zoo Art Fair, London, Great Britain (2009). In 2019 the major survey exhibition *On The Last Afternoon: Disrupted Ecologies and the work of Joyce Campbell* curated by John Welchman opened at The Adam Art Gallery in Wellington.