

Two Rooms

One of New Zealand's most established and recognisable painters, **Gretchen Albrecht** is a consummate colourist, and her chromatic mastery is readily apparent in every work. Albrecht's paintings combine formal, historical and ephemeral qualities, with stained canvas's acting as a generous counterpoint for rhythmic patterns of gestural movement, form and scale. The tactile quality of the work resonates strongly with Albrecht's allusions to an inward sense of order engaged in a dynamic relationship with the underlying rhythms of a natural, mythological cosmos. Albrecht has exhibited extensively in New Zealand and internationally for five decades. Her work is held in major New Zealand and Australian public collections including the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Auckland Art Gallery, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Waikato Museum and Art Gallery, The University of Auckland and Victoria University. In 2002 the Auckland Art Gallery mounted the large-scale exhibition, *'Illuminations: a 23 Year Survey of the Hemispheres and Ovals'*. She is the subject of several major publications, including, most recently, her monograph *Between gesture and geometry* (Massey University Press, Auckland 2019) and *Colloquy: Three Essays*, (Auckland, 2015), edited by James Ross with essays by Colm Tóibín, Linda Gill and Mary Kisler.

Matt Arbuckle's practice is a process-driven exploration of place, representing landscapes that are conceptualised through their very making. Although there is an underlying interest in the formal elements of the landscape – its horizons and intersections – as a consideration in his painting, Arbuckle acknowledges the influence of the Supports/Surfaces artists, a group working in France from the mid-1960s to mid-70s. These artists were interested in deconstructing the essential elements of a painting – the support (stretcher) and surface (canvas) – and experimenting with pushing the limits of the painting medium. In a similar way, Arbuckle has rejected the paintbrush, and instead applied colour to the fabric through staining, pressing, and dyeing, concerned primarily with process over outcome. Arbuckle's work is held in the Chartwell Collection, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki and James Wallace Arts Trust. In 2017 he was the recipient of the James Wallace Art fellowship to Vermont Studio Centre, USA.

Jude Rae is a Sydney-based artist, primarily known for her still life paintings, portraits and architectural interiors. The non-narrative imagery she employs allows the attention to dwell on the formal and material aspects of representational painting, encouraging a more reflective and considered approach to the complexities of visual experience. Over the last thirty years Rae has exhibited her work in Australia, New Zealand, Germany and the USA.. In 2005 and 2008 Rae won the Portia Geach Memorial Award for Portraiture and in 2019 won People's Choice in the Award. In 2014 she was a finalist in the Archibald Prize and in 2019 was Highly Commended in the Prize. In 2016 Jude Rae was the recipient of the prestigious Bulgari Award presented in partnership with the Art Gallery of NSW. In 2010 she exhibited *Still Lifes* at Canberra Museum and Gallery and in 2017 a curated survey of her work titled *A Space of Measured Light* was exhibited at Drill Hall Gallery at the Australian National University, Canberra

Ann Shelton most recent research engages with plant narratives and histories, in particular the intersection of botanical histories and human knowledge systems. Shelton is interested in how through art, the perceived power play between plants and humans can be redefined and modified. Her *jane says* series depicts plants, herbs and flowers as diverse as peony, rue, sage and pennyroyal, which feature in recipes for tonics and tinctures that have been used historically in attempts to control reproduction. This series of large-scale hyper-real photographic works reference the Japanese tradition of ikebana, which the artist learned, and its visual and conceptual qualities of structure and control. Drawing on Shelton's own childhood experiences of small-town flower-arranging competitions and her decades-old collection of 1970s ikebana magazines, the series utilises saturated utilitarian aesthetics to draw a viewer into the deeper research context for the work. Recognised as one of New Zealand's leading photographic artists, in 2016 Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki developed the major mid-career survey exhibition *Dark Matter: Ann Shelton* curated by Zara Stanhope, which toured to Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū in 2017. Other recent exhibitions include *jane says*, Denny Dimin Gallery, New York (2019)

Elizabeth Thomson has developed a remarkable oeuvre working across large scale installations to exquisitely crafted small sculptural works in which she explores the complex visual interplay between art and science. Specifically referencing biology and physics, Thomson's work investigates the representation of scientific knowledge, drawing on languages of pattern and abstraction, harmony and rupture, analogy and rhythm. Thomson has an extensive exhibition history and her work is held in major national and international collections including Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand (Wellington), Auckland Art Gallery Toi O Tāmaki (Auckland), The Victoria and Albert Museum (London), Australian National Gallery (Canberra), Queensland Art Gallery (Brisbane). In 2014 she exhibited hundreds of flocked bronze moths in an ambitious installation, *An Invitation to Openness – Substantive and Transitive States*, at the Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt and at the Tauranga Art Gallery in 2015. The solo exhibition Elizabeth Thompson: Cellular Memory has been touring Aotearoa New Zealand since first opening at Aratoi, Masterton, 2017. In 2019 a major new exhibition at the Govett Brewster 'Waking Up Slowly' brought together Thomson's work with internationally acclaimed New Zealand artist Len Lye.