

# Octopus 23: *THE FIELD*

Tamsen Hopkinson (b. 1986 Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Te Wairoa, Ngāti Pāhauwera) is an artist and curator from Aotearoa based in Naarm Melbourne, Australia. She completed a BFA (hons) and a BA majoring in Painting, Art History and Philosophy from University of Auckland's Elam School of Fine Arts in 2010. Her practice is an expression of Tino Rangatiratanga, Indigenous Sovereignty and considers ideas around education, language and translation, materiality and sound. She is interested in alternative exhibition models informed by collaboration, artist run initiatives and community organisations.

Tamsen has held curatorial positions across key contemporary art organisations in Naarm over the last decade including West Space Inc., TCB Art Inc., UN Projects, Footscray Community Arts and The Substation. She is the co-founder of STUDIO, an educational resource that aims to document and communicate across multiple art forms via online archives and IRL events alongside Woody McDonald. She currently works as a Teaching Associate at Monash University of Art, Design and Architecture (MADA) and is a board member of IN Place, a NFP organisation based in Garambi Baan (Laughing Waters) engaging artists through a flexible residency model.

Recent selected curatorial projects include Neighbourhood Contemporary Arts Festival (2022) co-presented by Footscray Community Arts and The Substation, *STUDIO presents: Buffalo Daughter* (JPN) Northcote Social Club (2022), *CONNECT I* (2021) & *CONNECT II* (2021) FCA and *Performing the Archive: An Act of Listening* (2020) OFFSITE West Space.

Gertrude Contemporary  
21-31 High Street  
Preston South, VIC 3072

[www.gertrude.org.au](http://www.gertrude.org.au)

Curated by Tamsen Hopkinson

Gertrude Contemporary  
Saturday 15 April –  
Sunday 11 June 2022

Exhibiting artists: Bella Besen (VIC), Nicola Blumenthal (VIC), Dean Cross (NSW), Raven Mahon (VIC), Ming Ranginui (NZ), Shiraz Sadiqueen (NZ), Shannon Te Ao (NZ) and Mikey Young (VIC)

*THE FIELD* is an exhibition that considers ideas of value and navigation. Using the International Systems of Units (SI) as a framework, this exhibition will address capital, culture industry influence and its current role in contemporary practice. *THE FIELD* is a meditation on luminous intensity, reflection and aftereffect, with particular significance around the colour silver.

The SI comprises a coherent system of units of measurement starting with seven base units; length (meter), time (second), amount of substance (mole), electric current (ampere), temperature (kelvin), mass (kg) and luminous intensity (candela). Through a range of contemporary practice across Aotearoa and Australia, participating artists examine the complexities of how we assign value, and how we navigate the systems and structures that influence these values.

Initiated in 2001, the *Octopus* series of exhibitions supports ambitious curatorial practice, through engaging an invited curator annually to develop a project that draws upon their research interests and provides a platform for new forms of exhibition making. In 2023, Gertrude is pleased to announce Tamsen Hopkinson as the curator of the current *Octopus* curatorial series.

The *Octopus* exhibition series is generously supported by Proclaim.

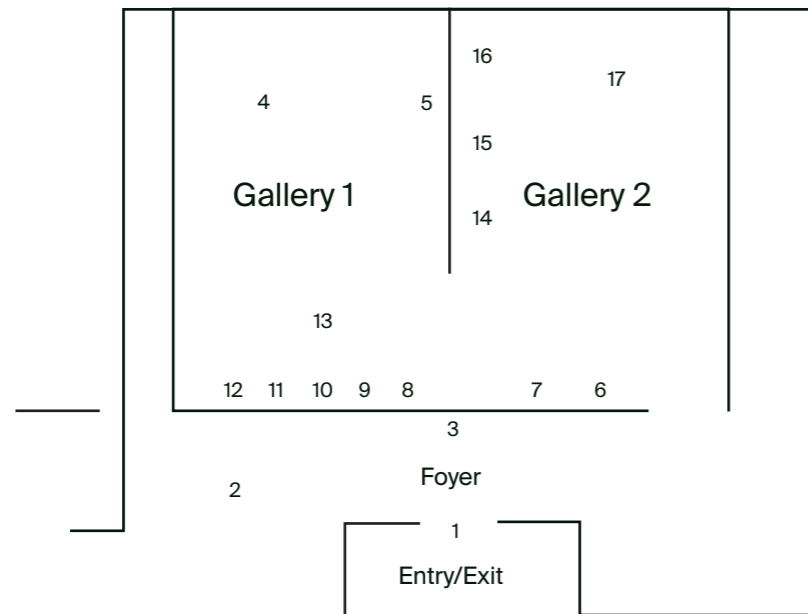
Gertrude would like to acknowledge and thank our generous supporters, patrons, sponsors and programming partners whose support enables us to continue building the careers of Australia's contemporary artists.

Gertrude is supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria; the Australia Council, the Federal Government's arts funding and advisory body; and through the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments.

Gertrude acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the traditional owners and custodians of the land and waters on which we operate. We pay our respects to the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation and their ancestors and Elders - past, present, and future.

## List of works

- Shannon Te Ao and Tamsen Hopkinson  
*Tāhū*, 2023  
fluorescent lights, silver metal tracking  
Courtesy of the artists
- Raven Mahon and Mikey Young  
*Ever decreasing circles*, 2023  
Score duration: 60 mins  
guitar, piano, clarinet, harmonica, synthesizer, sampler, bass, cello  
Courtesy of the artists
- Bella Besen  
*whatever happens happens, whatever happens happens, whatever happens happens, whatever happens happens, whatever happens happens, whatever happens happens*, 2023  
silver car vinyl, wooden board  
Courtesy of the artist
- Nicola Blumenthal  
*Silver objects*, 2023  
ply, tarp, tape, mirror, glass, bedhead, table, trolley, antler suitcase, newspaper, cardboard, wire, filing cabinet, bookshelf, metal, acrylic, plastic  
Courtesy of the artist
- Shannon Te Ao  
*Hara*, 2022  
archival digital print on Hahnemühle photorag paper  
two elements, 930 x 1160mm each  
Courtesy of the artist and Coastal Signs, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland
- Shiraz Sadikeen (NZ)  
*Plume (Upright)*, 2023  
acrylic, incense on canvas
- Sack*, 2023  
acrylic on canvas
- Petty Cash Relief*, 2023  
plastic tray, time-timer case
- Wage-form*, 2022  
acrylic on mdf
- Washer*, 2022  
NZ dollar coin, bone wax, dirt
- Face*, 2022  
steel clock face
- Rim*, 2023  
steel clock rim
- Petty Cash*, 2023  
steel cash box, cast sterling silver deadbolt, clock wheel, omega watch case  
  
Courtesy of the artist and Coastal Signs, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland
- Ming Ranginui (NZ)  
*slay Belle*, 2022  
satin, rhinestones, cotton tape, steel boning, silver cord  
250 x 130 x 130 cm
- Till the clock strikes five*, 2023  
satin, wadding, beads, vinyl cord, cord lock, clock mechanism  
68 cm (diameter)
- grants and wishes*, 2023  
satin, wadding, cardboard  
  
Courtesy of the artist
- Dean Cross  
*sad state*, 1962-2022  
brass, wire, felt, graphite, lacquer, iron, plastic  
dimensions variable  
Courtesy of the artist and Station, Melbourne & Sydney



## Artist Biographies

**Bella Besen** (b. 2001, Melbourne) lives and works in Melbourne. Bella completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts at Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne in 2022, majoring in painting. Her practice is primarily text-based, employing advertising materials and techniques in painting-like objects and wall text. Bella's work explores the networked landscape through individual experience and the authoritative nature of text based art. Recently Bella's work has focused on the intermediary space between online identity and physical embodiment. Recent selected exhibitions include Oasis Playground, Wethouse, Melbourne (2022); Anything is Possible, 211-215, Melbourne (2023); Void (Poetry), Centre D'editions, Melbourne (2022); and Sculpture Thinking Thinking Sculpture, Branching Universe, Melbourne (2023)

**Nicola Blumenthal** (b. 1991, Nowra) lives and works in Melbourne. Nicola completed her Bachelor of Fine Art at Victorian College of the Arts (2020) and Honours at Monash University, Melbourne (2022). I love my gift. It's so beautiful and adds a lot of ambience to the dark, mirrored, void. Recent selected exhibitions include: Leper, Hyacinth, Melbourne (2023); clotted, Guzzler, Melbourne (2022); a do ocean, KINGS Artist Run, Melbourne (2021); Encapsulated, Caves, Melbourne (2021); Cut, Hyacinth, Melbourne (2021); The devil finds work for idle hands, Hyacinth, Melbourne (2020); Health and Wellness, Gian's Basement, Melbourne (2019; and Everyone sins in Venice, VCA arts space, Istituto Canossiano San Trovaso, Venice (2019).

**Dean Cross (NSW)** is an artist primarily working across installation, sculpture and painting. Interested in the collisions of materials, ideas and histories, Cross is motivated by an understanding that his practice sits within a continuum of the oldest living culture on Earth – and enacts First Nations sovereignty through expanded contemporary art methodologies. His cross-disciplinary practice often confronts the legacies of modernism, rebalancing dominant cultural and social histories. Dean has exhibited widely across the Australian continent and beyond and his work is held by major institutions including The Art Gallery of South Australia, National Gallery of Victoria and The Powerhouse Museum, Sydney. Cross has shown his work extensively across Australia, this includes the FREE/STATE, Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide (2022); Sometimes I Miss The Applause: Dean Cross, Heide Museum of Modern Art (2022); LaTrobe Art Museum, Bendigo (2022); Bus Projects, Melbourne (2022); Carriageworks, Sydney (2022); Monuments, 4A Gallery, Sydney (2022); Primavera 2021, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney (2021); We Change the World, National Gallery of Victoria: Ian Potter Centre, Melbourne (2021); and Absorption, Asad Raza & Kaldor Public Projects, !e Clothing Store, Sydney (2019).

**Raven Mahon (VIC)** is a musician and furniture maker based in Naarm Melbourne. She began playing in bands and writing music in 2003 in San Francisco and established a label with bandmates in Grass Widow, who she recorded and toured with until 2013. She played in other Bay Area projects; Shitstorm, Bridge Collapse and Minerals before moving to Australia in 2017. Raven makes music under the name The Green Child alongside Mikey Young and together they have released two albums and composed and recorded music for film and television. Raven started making furniture in 2006 and currently works out of a shared studio in Naarm. Her practice is informed by collaboration, artists, past makers and a respect for place and culture. She is currently designing and building one off

commissions and has been incorporating new materials such as plaster, brass, pigment and mirror into timber- based pieces.

**Ming Ranginui** (b.1998, Whanganui, Te Ati Haunui-a-Pāpārangi) is an artist who currently resides in Wellington. Her gaudy sculptural works explore autonomy and tohu (signs) in her everyday. Recent exhibitions include Late to the ball, Season, Auckland (2023); Sleigh, Robert Heald, Wellington, (2022); Matarau, City Gallery, Wellington (2022); Cruel Optimism: New artist show, Artspace, Auckland (2021).

**Shiraz Sadikeen** (b. 1989) completed a BA (International Relations) at Victoria University Wellington in 2013, and a BFA and an MFA at Elam School of Fine Arts in 2018 and 2020 respectively. Shiraz makes work that attempts to artistically mediate the historical conditions and conflicts in bourgeois society. Using appropriation, abstraction, and the effects of mis-recognition, his work cyphers a political subtext to be worked out through interpretation. Recent selected exhibitions include: Affirmation, Savage Garden, Melbourne (2022); Ends, Coastal Signs, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland (2022); Securicraft, Coastal Signs, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland (2021); Uncomfortable Silence, Christchurch Art Gallery (2020); Geist, Neo Gracie, Auckland (2019); and Trust (with Rea Burton), Furniture Gallery, Auckland (2019).

**Shannon Te Ao** (b.1978 Sydney, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Wairangi, Te Pāpaka-a-Maui) is an artist currently based in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington. Te Ao's artistic output is centered around video and moving image installation exploring themes of language, grief and intimacy. Te Ao's works have been exhibited widely nationally and internationally. Te Ao has recently completed commissions for The 10th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT10) QAGOMA Brisbane and The 13thGwangju Biennale: Minds Rising Spirits Turning. In 2021 Te Ao presented solo exhibitions at REMAI Modern, Saskatoon, Canada; Oakville Galleries, Toronto, Canada; and Te Uru, Auckland. In 2016 Te Ao was Awarded The Walters Prize by international judge Doryun Chong. Te Ao currently lectures at Whiti o Rehua School of Art, Massey University, Wellington where he contributes to the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. He is the current Master of Fine Arts Programme Leader. Te Ao is active within the academic field participating in a list of symposia, panels and discussions delivering on diverse topics from art and mental health; identity politics; to Colin McCahon's engagement with Māoritanga. In partnership with City Gallery Wellington, Te Ao curated the exhibition Matarau featuring works from artists such as Emily Karaka, Hemi Macgregor and James Tapsell-Kururangi.

**Mikey Young (VIC)** has been a member of Eddy Current Suppression Ring, Total Control, The Green Child, Power Supply and Lace Curtain. He has released records on such labels as DFA, Mexican Summer, Sub Pop, Goner, Castleface and Upset the Rhythm, and has toured the world many times in various groups. He has compiled two albums worth of 70's folk/psych treasures for the New York based record label, Anthology recordings. Mikey has scored two films previously, *The Mule* (2014) and *Strange Colours* (2017) as well as providing music for *Go!* and *Cut Snake* and numerous short films. Over the last decade, he has become well known for mixing and mastering countless releases for local and international artists. Mikey has released his third solo album *Curtains* (2022).