

# Dane Mitchell

## *An Unbroken Surface*

Gertrude Glasshouse  
Friday 17 May – Saturday 8 June 2024

*An Unbroken Surface* is a new exhibition by Dane Mitchell accompanied by an original text by Hsuan L. Hsu.

For over fifteen years, Mitchell has been exploring the possibilities of aroma and its molecules to summon up experiences and reveal unseen worlds. This exhibition expands upon this line of enquiry to produce a heady, pungent, all-encompassing sculptural structure that permeates the viewer's body and infiltrates the gallery.

*An Unbroken Surface* makes deliberate use of two consumer fragrance materials to reveal a certainty: the distance between the synthetic and the natural is collapsing. The exhibition explores the different atmospheres we inhabit and how they not only colour our relation to the world but are determined by it. Through a single, focused work in the gallery space, Mitchell uses an aroma perhaps more recognisable in its synthetic form than the natural fragrance it replicates. The overpowering aromascape encountered in the space might be considered an attempt to rewild the gallery through synthetic means—or a desire for an experience of wilderness.

Most museums and galleries smell of nothing, but the volatile compounds of *An Unbroken Surface* surround and subsume the viewer and space, operating like a contagion. They produce an overwhelming sensorial pollution that infiltrates Gertrude Glasshouse.

Mitchell's ongoing interest in scent is bound up in its ability to dwell on multiple thresholds—vision, physicality, affect, time, dimensionality—and its primacy among the senses. Smell is resistant to sense-making, conjures the unseen, is temporal, and disruptive. It throws up an array of “dizzying

epistemological conundrums” (Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*, 1993) that build complicated relationships between the world and our bodies.

On the final weekend of the exhibition, a crime scene cleaning specialist will deodorise the gallery with an ozone generator over a twenty-four hour period. The gallery cannot be entered during this time, but the action can be viewed through the windows; a final, punctuating event.

### Acknowledgements

This exhibition has been generously supported by Creative New Zealand.

Gertrude Glasshouse is generously supported by Michael Schwarz and David Clouston.

The 2024 Gertrude Glasshouse Program is supported by the City of Yarra.

ARTS COUNCIL  
NEW ZEALAND TOI AOTEAROA  


1. Dane Mitchell  
*An Unbroken Surface (Isomeric Landscape)*, 2024  
4000 Little Trees (Alpha-isomethyl ionone,  
Linalool, Limonene, Citronellol, Geraniol)  
Dimensions variable
2. Dane Mitchell  
*An Unbroken Surface (Tar)*, 2024  
Pine tar, atomiser, HVAC tripod  
Dimensions variable

Artworks courtesy of the artists and  
The Renshaws, Meanjin Brisbane.

