

Kate Newby

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Kate Newby
I can't nail the days down
Installation view
Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, June 2018



Kate Newby
I can't nail the days down
Installation view
Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, June 2018



Kate Newby
Swift little verbs pushing the big nouns around
Installation view
Michael Lett, Auckland, January 2018



Kate Newby
Dwelling Poetically: Mexico City, a case study
Installation view, 2018
Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA), Melbourne



Kate Newby
I can't nail the days down
Installation view, 2018
Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna



Kate Newby
I can't nail the days down
Installation view, 2018
Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna



Kate Newby
Not this time, not for me.
Installation view, 2017
Sculpture Center, New York



Kate Newby
My list of places to drop in on regularly
Installation view, 2017
Sculpture Center, New York



Kate Newby
Plants. Songs. Food. Clothes.
Installation view, 2017
Sculpture Center, New York



Kate Newby
Snow covered everything
Installation view, 2017
Index - Contemporary Swedish Art Foundation, Stockholm



Kate Newby
Texas. *Big Wave Surfing*,
Installation view, 2017
Artpace, San Antonio





Kate Newby
Let me be the wind that pulls your hair
Installation view, 2017
Artpace, San Antonio



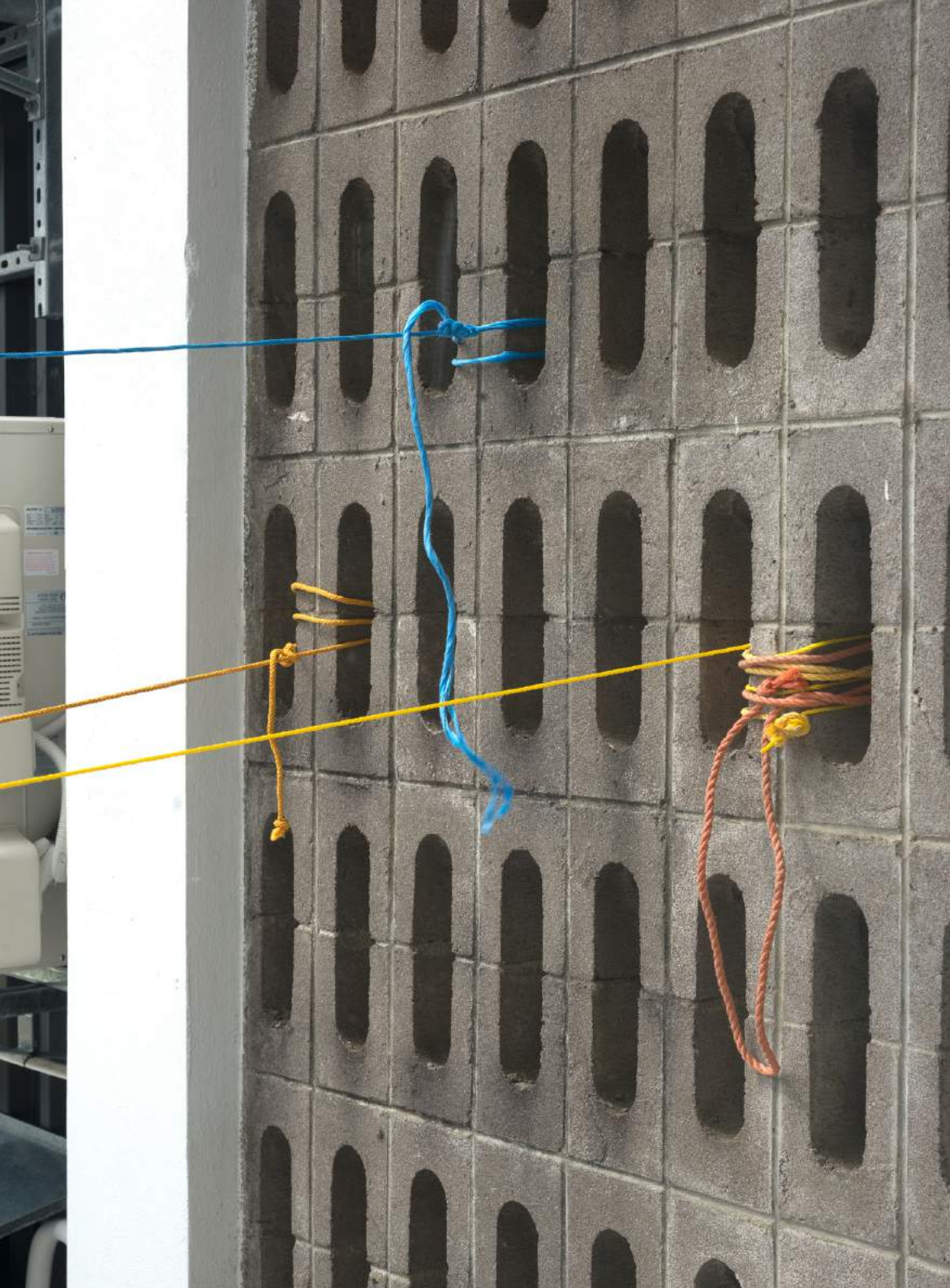
Kate Newby
Big Tree, Bird's Eye
Installation view, 2016
Michael Left, Auckland



Kate Newby
All stuff you already know.
2016
glass, white brass fixture, wire, rope
Installation view, 2016
Michael Lett, Auckland



Kate Newby
They say you've got to live there for a while
2016
bricks, coins, white brass, pink silver, yellow silver, bronze, stoneware, porcelain, glaze,
bottle top, paper clip, nail, glass
2070 x 9830mm



Kate Newby
I know you love Manhattan, but you ought to look up more often
2016
assorted rope
dimensions variable



Kate Newby
I memorized / I loved it so much
Installation view, 2015
Laurel Gitlen, New York



Kate Newby
I memorized it I loved it so much
Installation view, 2015
Laurel Gitlen, New York





Kate Newby
Two aspirins a vitamin C tablet and some baking soda
Installation detail, 2015
Laurel Doody, Los Angeles



Kate Newby
I feel like a truck on a wet highway,
Installation view, 2014
Lulu, Mexico City



IMPRESSIVE

ok, this is getting interesting.

Impresionant

♥♥♥

it's very interesting and beautiful

God love this :)



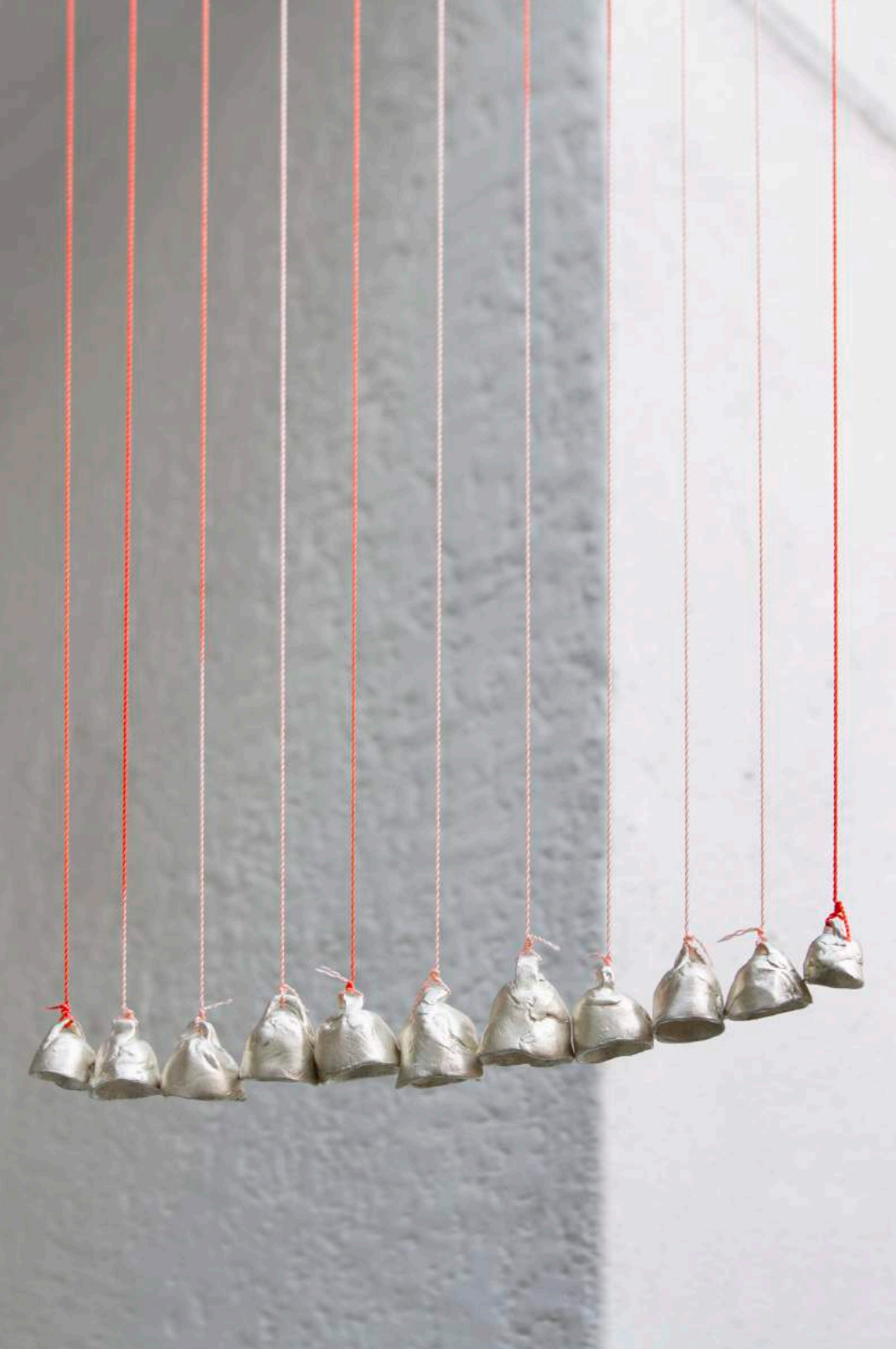
Kate Newby
Mr + Mrs Hands
Installation view, 2014
Wieder Arnolfini, Bristol



Kate Newby
I feel like a truck on a wet highway
Installation view, 2014
Lulu, Mexico City



Kate Newby
I feel like a truck on a wet highway
Installation view, 2014
Lulu, Mexico City



Kate Newby
I feel like a truck on a wet highway
Installation view, 2014
Lulu, Mexico City



Change





Kate Newby
Maybe I won't go to sleep at all.
Installation view, 2013
La Loge, Brussels



Kate Newby
Maybe I won't go to sleep at all.
Installation view, 2013
La Loge, Brussels



Kate Newby
Crawl out your window
Installation view, 2012
The Walter's Prize, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

Kate Newby

Born 1979, Auckland
Lives and works in Brooklyn, New York

EDUCATION

2010-2015
Doctorate of Fine Art, Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland

2007
Masters of Fine Art, (First Class Honors), Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland

2001
Bachelor of Fine Art, Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland

AWARDS & RESIDENCIES

2017
The Chinati Foundation, Marfa, TX
Spring 2017 International Artist-In-Residence Program, curated by Michelle Grabner, Artpace, San Antonio, TX

2015
Gertrude Contemporary Residency, Melbourne
Creative New Zealand Work Grant

2012/2013
Fogo Island Arts Residency, Newfoundland

2012
The Walters Prize, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
International Studio and Curatorial Program ISCP, New York

2010-2014
The University of Auckland Doctoral Scholarship

2010
Theatre of Erosion or I Hate Work This is not a Play (with Geoffrey Farmer), Banff Centre, Banff Künstlerhäuser, Worpswede, SOMA, Mexico City

2008
Creative New Zealand Work Grant

2007
The University of Auckland Masters Degree Scholarship
Heneritta and Lola Anne Turnbridge Watercolour Scholarship

2006
Post Graduate Bursary, The University of Auckland

2002
Creative Communities Grant from the Auckland City Council for a site-responsive installation in Central Auckland
Creative Communities Grant from the Auckland City Council to fund an Artist-run Gallery

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2018
Lumber Room, Portland, Oregon (solo) (forthcoming)
Hordaland Kunstsente, Bergen, Norway (solo) (forthcoming)
Swift little verbs pushing the big nouns around, Michael Lett, Auckland (solo)
21st Biennale of Sydney, Sydney (group)
Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne (group)
I can't nail the days down, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (solo)
All the stuff you already know, The Sunday Painter, London (solo)
Nicelle Beauchene, New York (group)
Ritual, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen (group)
Belonging to a Place, An exhibition by Fogo Island Arts, Embassy of Canada, Washington DC (group)
Still Life, September Gallery, New York (group)
Further Thoughts on Earthly Materials, Kunsthau Hamburg, Germany (group)

2017
Let me be the wind that pulls your hair, Artpace, San Antonio, TX (solo)
In Practice: Material Deviance, curated by Alexis Wilkinson, Sculpture Center, NY (group)
JADE BI, curated by Sara De Chiara, Galeria Madragoa, Lisbon (group)

2016
Big Tree. Bird's Eye. Michael Lett, Auckland (solo)
The January February March, with Jennifer Kabat, (curated by Michelle Grabner),

The Poor Farm, Wisconsin (2016)
Cooper Cole, Toronto (solo)
A plot of land, Dutton, New York (group)
Every day I make my way, Minerva, Sydney (group)
Light switch and conduit: the Jim Barr and Mary Barr collection, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin (group)

2015

Two aspirins a vitamin C tablet and some baking soda, Laurel Doody, Los Angeles (solo)
Always humming, Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne (solo)
I memorized it I loved it so much, Laurel Gitlen, New York (solo)
Casualness: it's not about what it looks like it's about what it does, Old Folks Association, Auckland (solo)
Basel Miami, Laurel Gitlen booth, Miami (group)
Natural Flavor, (curated by Vivien Trommer) Ludlow 38, New York (group)
Thought Cupboard, The Dowse, Wellington (group)
The Secret and Abiding Politics of Stones, (curated by Chris Sharp), Casa del Lago, Mexico City (group)
Homeful of Hands, Josh Lilley, London (group)
Ordering Nature, Marianne Boesky, New York (group)
5x5 (curated by John Parker), Hastings City Art Gallery, Hastings (group)
Inside Outside Upside Down (curated by Natasha Conland), Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Auckland (group)
Parallel Oaxaca at Supplement London, Supplement, London (group)
Where the trees line the water that falls asleep in the afternoon (Curated by Chris Sharp), P420, Bologna (group)
Inside the City (curated by Janneke de Vries), GAK Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst, Bremen (group)
Lunch Poems, with Joanna Margaret Paul, Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland (group)
There Is Only One Catch And That Is Catch-22 (curated by Blanca de la Torre) Y Gallery, New York (group)
NEW 15 (curated by Matt Hinkley), Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne (group)
An Imprecise Science, Artspace, Sydney (group)
The January February March, The Western Catskills, New York (group)
Eraser, Laurel Gitlen, New York (group)

2014

Laura, Lucy, Mark and Felix, MODELAB, Wellington (solo)
I feel like a truck on a wet highway, Lulu, Mexico City (solo)
Tiny-but-adventurous, Rokeby, London (solo)

The Promise (curated by Axel Wieder), Arnolfini, Bristol, UK (group)
Fin, Utopian Slumps, Melbourne (group)
Portmanteaux, Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland (group)
Thin Air, Slopes, Melbourne (group)
Slip Cast, Dowse Museum, Lower Hutt (group)
Lovers (curated by Martin Basher), Starkwhite, Auckland (group)
Mud and Water, Rokeby, London (group)

2013

Maybe I won't go to sleep at all. (curated by Anne-Claire Schmitz), La Loge, Brussels (solo)
Let the other thing in (curated by Nicolaus Schafhausen), Fogo Island Gallery, Newfoundland (solo)
What a day., Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland (solo)
How funny you are today New York, Greene Acres Garden, Clinton Hill, Brooklyn (solo)
because the world is round it turns me on (curated by Clara Meister), Arratia Beer, Berlin (group)
The things we know (curated by Tim Saltarelli), Henningsen Gallery, Copenhagen (group)
Third/Fourth Artist Facilitated Biennial, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne (group)
Between being and doing, Utopian Slumps, Melbourne (group)

2012

Crawl out your window, Walters Prize exhibition, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Auckland (prize winner) (solo)
All parts. All the time., Olive St. Garden, Brooklyn (in association with New York City Department of Parks & Recreation and International Studio and Curatorial Program ISCP, New York) (solo)
How funny you are today, New York, Fort Greene Park, Brooklyn (in association with New York City Department of Parks & Recreation and International Studio and Curatorial Program ISCP, New York) (solo)
Everyone knows this is nowhere, castillo/corrales, Paris (group)
ISCP Open Studios, ISCP, Brooklyn, New York (group)
Running on Pebbles: through lines with incidents and increments (curated by Allan Smith), Snakepit, Auckland (group)

2011

Do more with your feeling, SUNDAY art fair, London (Hopkinson Mossman booth) (solo)
I'm just like a pile of leaves (curated by Natasha Conland), Auckland Art Gallery Toi

o Tāmaki, Auckland (solo)
I'll follow you down the road, Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland (solo)
Prospect: New Zealand Art Now (curated by Kate Montgomery), Wellington City Gallery, Wellington (group)
Melanchotopia (curated by Nicolaus Schafhausen and Anne-Claire Schmitz), Witte de With, Rotterdam (group)
Out of a stone (curated by Daniel Munn), Banner Repeater, London (group)
Bas Jan Ader: Suspended between Laughter and Tears (curated by Pilar Tompkins Rivas), Museo de Arte Zapopan (MAZ) Guadalajara (group)

2010

Crawl out your window (curated by Janneke de Vries), GAK Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst, Bremen (solo)
Burnt house. A little later, Gambia Castle, Auckland (solo)
Black Door Files, Black Door, Istanbul (group)
Bas Jan Ader: Suspended between Laughter and Tears (curated by Pilar Tompkins Rivas), Pitzer Art Galleries and Claremont Museum of Art, Los Angeles (group)
post-Office (curated by Robyn Pickens), Artspace, Auckland (group)
Texticles (curated by Ron McHaffie and Lisa Radford), TCB at the Melbourne Art Fair, Melbourne (group)
The sky, a window and a tree, in collaboration with Fiona Connor, CalArts, Los Angeles (group)

2009

Get off my garden, Sue Crockford Gallery, Auckland (solo)
Blow wind blow, Y3K Gallery, Melbourne (solo)
Cross Coloring, Hell Gallery, Melbourne (group)
IN CASE IT RAINS, IT MIGHT INVOLVE WATER (curated by Marijke Appleman for ADSF), Rotterdam (group)
The Future is Unwritten, The Adam Art Gallery, Wellington (group)
Today is OK, Gallery Manuela Klerkx, Milan (group)

2008

Thinking with your body, Gambia Castle, Auckland (solo)
Brussels Biennial 1 (curated by Nicolaus Schafhausen and Florian Waldvogel), Brussels (group)
Break: Towards a Public Realm, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth (group)
Give us a sign, Courtney Place Light Boxes, in association with City Gallery, Wellington (group)
Run!, Window, Auckland (group)
Let it be now, Christchurch Art Gallery, Christchurch (group)
4 th Y2K Melbourne biennale of art and design, TCB, Melbourne (group)

Hold Still (with Nick Austin), (curated by Claire Doherty), One Day Sculpture, Auckland (group)
The World (will soon turn our way) (with Fiona Connor and Marnie Slater) site-specific project, Mt Eden, Auckland (group)
Academy (with Ryan Moore), TCB, Melbourne (group)
Many directions, as much as possible, all over the country, 1301PE, Los Angeles (group)
2007
My Poetry, for example, Rooftop and vacant plot, Symonds Street, University of Auckland (solo)
On the Benefits of Building, Gambia Castle, Auckland (solo)
A Windy Fire, Te Tuhi, Auckland (solo)
Working on Talking (with Frances Stark and Ruth Buchanan), Gambia Castle, Auckland (group)
Moment Making: After the Situation, ARTSPACE, Auckland (group)
How W.H. Auden spends the night in a friend's house, Gambia Castle, Auckland (group)
Omnipresents, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne (group)
Twone (with Sriwhana Spong), Physics Room, Christchurch (group)
I Dig Your Voodoo, Joint Hassles, Melbourne (group)

2006

The Silver Clouds (curated by Cuckoo), Order and Progress/Next Wave Festival, Melbourne (group)
Don't Rain on my Parade, Special, Auckland (group)
Inner City Real Estate, Enjoy Public Art Gallery, Wellington (group)

2004

Very Interesting, Very International, site-specific projects; Agile, Brooklyn, Berlin, Copenhagen (solo)
Remember New Zealand (curated by Tobias Berger), 26th Sao Paulo Biennale, São Paulo (group)
Cuckoobough, Westspace, Melbourne (group)

2003

Money for Nothing (curated by Tobias Berger), Artspace, Auckland, City Gallery, Wellington (group)
Vs, Michael Lett Gallery, Auckland (group)

2002

My Blues Song, Starkwhite, Auckland (solo)
Honestly, New Artists Show, Artspace, Auckland (group)

Fertilizer, High Street Project, Christchurch (group)

ARTIST BOOKS AND EXHIBITION CATALOGUES

2017

Let me be the wind that pulls your hair, artist book, San Antonio
In Practice: Material Deviance, curated by Alexis Wilkinson, Sculpture Center
(catalogue)

2015

Laura, Lucy, Mark and Felix, MODELAB, Wellington (online catalogue)
Our first-second-third-fourth selves write our messages, NEW15, Melbourne
(catalogue)

2013

Incredible feeling, Clouds Publishing, Auckland (monograph)
Let the other thing in, Fogo Island Arts and Sternberg Press, Berlin (catalogue)

2012

I went from a 5 to a 7, (with Fiona Connor), self-published artist, Los Angeles,
Banff, Auckland (artist book)
I'm just like a pile of leaves, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Auckland
(catalogue)

2011

The sky, the wall and a tree, self-published with Fiona Connor and Gambia Castle
Press, Los Angeles (artist book)

2010

Bas Jan Ader: Suspended Between Laughter and Tears, Claremont Museum of
Art, Los Angeles (catalogue)

2009

Discreet and Popular, a monthly reader, Gambia Castle Press, Auckland

2008

Holding onto it only makes you sick, Gambia Castle Press, Auckland (artist book)

2007

My Poetry, for example, self-published, Auckland (artist book)
Architecture for Specific People, Gambia Castle Press, Auckland (artist book)

2004

A Creative and Artist Masterpiece, self-published, Aigle (artist book)

2003

Money for Nothing, Artspace, Auckland (artist book)

2001

My Blues Song, Starkwhite, Auckland (artist book)

SELECTED ESSAYS, REVIEWS AND ARTICLES

2016

Kate Sutton, Kate Newby; Laurel Doody, Artforum, February 2016 (review)
Rosanna Albertini, Kate Newby: don't be all scared like before, The Kite, 2016
(essay)

2015

Maura Edmond, Kate Newby 'Always humming', Primer, 2015, (article)
Rosanna Albertini, Kate Newby: Silent Bricks, The Kite, 2015 (essay)
Daniel Munn, Life Lived Outside, Le Roy 3, 2015 (article)
Chris Sharp, Eye of the Beholder, Osmos, Issue 06, Summer, 2015 (article)
Roberta Smith, Kate Newby and Helen Johnson at Laurel Gitlen, New York Times,
16 July 2015 (review)
Chris Sharp, Kate Newby, NEW15, 2015 (catalogue essay)

2014

Jennifer Kabat, In Focus: Kate Newby, Frieze Magazine, 2014 (article)
Francisco Goldman, Mexico City Mix, National Geographic Traveller, 2014 (article)
Leslie Moody Castro, Lulu, Mexico City, Artforum online, 2014 (review)
Jennifer Kabat, The Small Often Vague Things – Kate Newby's Radically Slight Art,
The Weeklings, 2014 (article)
Hamish Coney, Breakfast in America, Content Magazine, 2014 (article)

2013

Mami Kataoka, I like works when their condition as art is unclear, in Kate Newby:
Let the other thing in, Sternberg Press, 2013 (essay)
Jennifer Kabat, It's The Small Often Vague Things, in Kate Newby: Let the other
thing in, Sternberg Press, 2013 (catalogue essay)
Kay Burns, Kate Newby: Let the Other Thing in, C Magazine, Issue 120, 2013
(review)

Chris Kraus, Kate Newby's Bones, in Kate Newby: Incredible Feeling, Clouds
Publishing, 2013 (essay)

Sarah Hopkinson, Kate Newby's Outside, in Kate Newby: Incredible Feeling,
Clouds Publishing, 2013 (essay)

2012

Julia Waite, If not concrete then what? Kate Newby's I'm just like a pile of leaves
Archive, Reading Room 5, 2012
Sam Eichblatt, Occupy Brooklyn, Metro Magazine, Issue 363, 2012

2011

Sue Gardiner, Aspiring to the condition of architecture, Artnews, Spring 2011

2010

Jon Bywater, Discreet Poetry: Kate Newby's 'Get off my garden', 2010 (exhibition
essay)

Allan Smith, Know how can do: E, F, G, K – busy with the elephant; or, Calculate, evaluate, improvise: Eve Armstrong; Fiona Connor; Gaelen MacDonald; Kate Newby, in *Natural Selection*, Issue 7, Winter 2010

2009

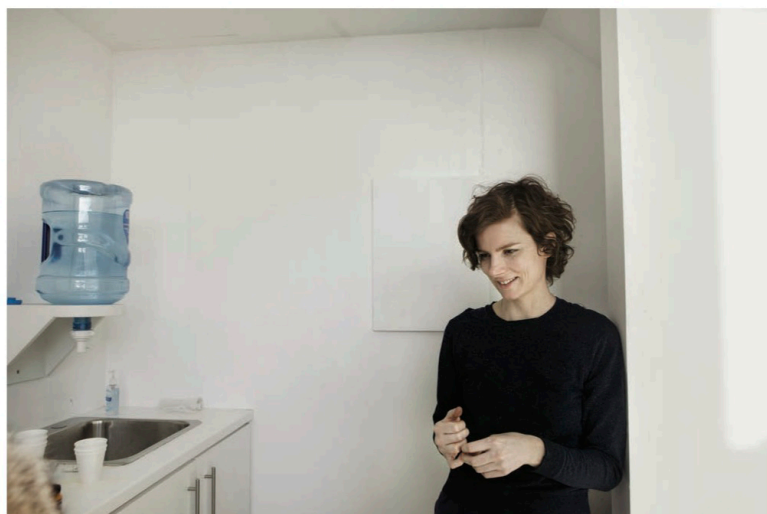
Sue Gardiner, You really had to be there!, *Artnews*, Autumn 2009

2008

Louise Menzies, Kate Newby & Nick Austin, *Frieze online*, 2008 (review)

Ruth Buchanan, Poems about nature documentaries, in *Kate Newby: Holding onto it only makes you sick*, Gambia Castle Press, Auckland

Interview
 Kate Newby
 by Ross Simonini



“My work is about putting myself into situations where anything can happen. I’m not doing a lot, but I am fully immersed in the process”

I met Kate Newby in her Brooklyn studio, a simple, clean box of a room she occasionally used for mental wandering, but not for making art. She’d recently returned from installing her show *A puzzling light and moving* (2018), at the Lumber Room in Portland, Oregon, which would be up for a year, at her request. Over the coming months, she planned to revisit it, adding, removing and reconsidering the choices she had made during her original installation.

The show includes many of Newby’s characteristic forms – tiles, wind chimes, puddles – all made from earthen materials: clay, cotton, wire, glass. The objects often appear weathered, like artefacts that could’ve been excavated from any global civilisation at any time. Her installations seem to reconstruct nooks from these timeless places and can express urban grandiosity and naturalistic modesty within the same space. For her recent show *I can’t nail the days down* (2018) she used thousands of clay bricks to lay a floor in the Kunsthalle Wien. Throughout the room, the bricks were speckled with the kind of quiet gestures you might overlook in your local pavement: dimples, embedded coins, errant scratches. A viewer must engage the work with head down and gaze soft.

Newby spends much of her research time outside, strolling the streets around her exhibitions, gathering the elements of her art from the ground. Many of these little items could be called ‘junk’ or ‘found’, and yet her sculpture bears little resemblance to the kind of art that is historically associated with those descriptors. She often transforms and merges her findings with her own elegant fabrications to create something almost artless. Her work, both indoors and out, often feels continuous with the world around it, like an intimate encounter with a patch of grass in the centre of a vast metropolis.

As we spoke, Newby and I played with a collection of thimble-size sculptures she’s made over the years. Many of these were metal castings of things from ephemeral life – a can tab, a match, a pebble – but she also laid out a collection of shell-like clay forms in a single gestural push. Each one is filled with bits of found glass, and then fired in a kiln to create melted, frozen puddles that fit into your pocket. She’s made hundreds of these – compulsively, it seems – and has included them in many exhibitions as a part of her ever-growing vocabulary of objects.

Since moving from her home in New Zealand, Newby has only had a studio for a brief stint, preferring to make everything onsite. A few weeks after our meeting in the autumn, she unburdened herself of her short-lived studio space in New York and decided to work at home, which nicely suits her process.

“It actually feels good,” she wrote to me, “like the studio was a stretch and I was trying

something out. But it’s good to consolidate and feel a bit safe as well. I remember we talked about energy and resources and taking care of the artistic self, and this all feels like a move towards that. I liked reading the comments in the interview about why I had a studio and I’m glad you got me in the moment when I was still in one... Maybe I’ll never have one again?”

ROSS SIMONINI *We are in here in your studio, but you don’t really use it like a studio.*

KATE NEWBY I don’t make anything here. My work is made in installations. I go somewhere, bust out all this work and then leave. And I’ve been wondering, is that going to become unhealthy after a while?

RS *Unhealthy how?*

KN Well, I don’t want to get depleted, and sometimes I feel very sad when I install a show and it opens and I never see that work again. I never get to revisit it, or spend time with it. Because the work can’t come back here to the studio. I mean, my show in Vienna was 6,000 bricks. That shit isn’t ever seen again... *can’t* be seen again!

“Every time I pick up a piece of glass from the sidewalk, it’s me seeing the glass, for one. It’s me seeing the glass, for two. And it’s me deciding if I feel safe enough in whatever situation I’m in to pick up the glass. Because it’s actually quite embarrassing”

RS *What happens to that work after?*

KN Galleries don’t want to store this stuff. In the case of the Vienna work, some got sent to the Kunsthau Hamburg. Some of it was recycled. Now it’s being reduced to 1,200 bricks and I’m going to ship that to my mum’s house in New Zealand, because she can store them at the end of her driveway. She doesn’t know this yet.

RS *These bricks and clay tiles you make often have impressions in them. What’s your process to make those marks?*

KN Well, the brick works are made at brick factories. I carve into bricks when they have been formed but the clay is still unfired. I make marks by stabbing, scraping, carving; as well I push pieces of broken glass that I have picked up off

Facing page: Kate Newby.
 Photo: Steffen Jagenburg. Courtesy the artist

the sidewalk into the unfired brick. The bricks then return to the factory line to be fired with all the other bricks. With the clay works I am throwing the clay on the ground, onto objects around the area that I am working, and I’m collecting these marks. Sometimes debris gets burned into the clay too. So I’m not really doing anything.

RS *It seems like you’re doing something.*

KN I’m just performing an action. There’s not a lot of craft involved. But I’m completely active. My work is about putting myself into situations where anything can happen. I’m not doing a lot, but I am fully immersed in the process. It’s also active in the sense that, every time I pick up a piece of glass from the sidewalk, it’s me walking, for one. It’s me seeing the glass, for two. And it’s me deciding if I feel safe enough in whatever situation I’m in to pick up the glass. Because it’s actually quite embarrassing.

RS *Why?*

KN Because I’m crouched down often around trees, going through the dirt, and people say, “What are you doing, picking up dog shit?”

RS *How many times have people said that to you?*

KN Quite a few.

RS *Is the embarrassment part of the work?*

KN Yeah, it means I’ve become vulnerable.

RS *Did you collect things as a child?*

KN I’m actually not a big believer in picking things up.

RS *Really?*

KN Someone asked me the other day if I collect rocks, and I said, no! It’s terrible to take rocks.

RS *But glass is ok?*

KN Yes. It’s a refused material readily available, it’s almost like cleaning in an insignificant way... Or shells. People give me shells, but I don’t collect things. Sometimes I’ll collect things if I’m sentimental. Like I had a Kombucha on the plane and it was called ‘Clear Mind’, and I liked that, so I kept the bottle cap.

RS *Are you always looking for things?*

KN Yes, but there are factors: how’s my mood? Because sometimes I just can’t do it. And: do I have pockets to carry it?

RS *You’ve made some work to be exhibited in pockets. For months at a time.*

KN I give work to security guards or attendants. Sometimes I’ve given these works to other artists who are in an exhibition with me. I like the idea that the work is getting shown privately. You

can't see the work unless whoever has it wants to show you. I like how things come in and out of visibility. They are not presents, though. I ask the work to be sent back to me.

RS *To see how it transformed?*

KN The work gets vulnerable really quickly. Pieces get lost. And that's not uninteresting. Then you have the memory of it. A lot of the work is metal, and I don't seal them, so they are able to develop a natural patina from the hand touching. It's minimal. But I want to see the damage. [She takes a jar from a shelf and dumps the contents on the table: dozens of miniature sculptures] These are the ones I never give away. I've made several hundred of these.

RS *You seem pretty loose with your work.*

KN Oh yes. I'll give it away without thinking about it. I just got an email, which said that a bird shat on my roofing tiles in Portland, which is great. What a success!

RS *Would you call these little works 'charms'?*

KN No, because 'charm' elevates them. I want you to elevate them. What matters is that you find them valuable. [Holding a twig cast in metal] This is from my father's avocado tree.

RS *Do you tell viewers this?*

KN No. I push back on narrative. It makes it easier for people to have narrative. But I'm stubborn about it. I don't know why. Most of my work needs special attention. It needs weather, circumstance. The tiles need rain and the wind chimes need wind. They're always changing. What's a puddle if it's not outside in the rain?

RS *Which is why you have to work onsite.*

KN Yeah. It's exhausting. This recent show [at the Lumber Room], I made it in two and half weeks.

RS *When did you start working this way?*

KN 2010. My first major exhibition was in Bremen at the GAK [Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst]. I was in New Zealand and I got an email out of nowhere. So I arrived in Bremen and made the whole show there, over the course of five weeks, and I just stayed on afterward. It set the precedent for me. Then I moved to New York in 2012.

RS *What was the art community like in New Zealand?*

KN Quite positive. I grew up on a beach on the west coast of Auckland, 40 minutes from downtown. In the bush, really. I was part of an artist-run space called Gambia Castle. Rent's cheap there, so you can run a space with your friends. And I was working in hospitality and could get by on that. It's small, too, so it's an entangled community, and there's a nice competition. We all made each other better.



Here, in New York, it's so vast and everyone is busy. I'm really happy that I'm an artist from New Zealand. I think New Zealand artists are good artists. I believe that. I don't know why. Maybe because of our remoteness, being at the bottom of the world. Or because we're both self-deprecating and wildly energetic. It's a recently colonised place and it was the first country in the world to give women the

A puzzling light and moving, 2018 (installation view). Photo: Worksighted. Courtesy the artist and Lumber Room, Portland

vote. Our female prime minister is unmarried and just gave birth. Stuff like that happens. It makes for interesting artists.

RS *Why did you leave?*

KN I never left on purpose, but I'm glad I left when I did. I just kind of moved around, and New York was the place I left my stuff. And now I'm thirty-nine and I don't know if I want to move again. I always thought I'd wind up in Brussels. I love it there.

RS *Why do you have a studio if you don't use it?*

KN I only got this studio a year and a half ago. It's my first real studio since art school. It's a big deal. I just needed my own room, to think about things, to rejuvenate. This morning I just made a playlist of songs I loved from 1994. And it doesn't feel unhealthy doing that. It feels good. I always listen to songs over and over again, and those are the songs on the list: Mazzy Star, Jane's Addiction, Cowboy Junkies, songs from the *Singles* soundtrack [1992], the *Empire Records* soundtrack [1995]. Music meant and means a lot to me.

RS *Are you nostalgic?*

KN I wish I looked back more. My work requires a lot of first, quick responses. Working with clay is like that. So making this mixtape is a way to balance that out.

RS *When you said you wanted to balance out your lifestyle, what do you mean?*

KN I just want to get better at lifestyle. Artists have a lot of agency. I can say what I need. I need time to think. I recently pushed off some shows to help myself, but it's hard, because if you're not showing, you're not making money. It's emotionally confusing.

RS *Are you a fully professional artist?*

KN Yeah. But I was getting my doctorate in art for a while and living off of the scholarship that came with that. I don't sell a lot of work. But what else am I gonna do? I travel too much to get a job. I have cheap rent. I don't spend a lot. I'm a taxpayer in the US but [legally] I'm a 'nonresident', and I'm also a 'nonresident' in New Zealand. So I'm a nonresident everywhere. So I find it hard to get grants. It doesn't matter, though. I cherish making art. I'm flabbergasted that I get to do what I'm doing. But this doesn't



top I love you poems, 2018, assorted clay and found glass, dimensions variable. Photo: Worksighted. Courtesy the artist and Lumber Room, Portland

above The more I listen to it the more I love it, 2017, glass, beer bottles. Photo: Johan Wahlgren. Courtesy Index - Contemporary Swedish Art Foundation, Stockholm



top *Were there no impossibilities*, 2018, glass, wire, 210 × 170 × 30 cm. Photo: Lewis Ronald. Courtesy the artist and The Sunday Painter, London



above *I can't nail the days down*, 2018 (installation view). Photo: Jorit Aust. Courtesy the artist and Kunsthalle Wien



Not this time, not for me (detail), 2017, mixed media, dimensions variable. Photo: Kyle Knodell. Courtesy the artist and Sculpture Center, New York

mean I'm living it up. I find it tough to pay for yoga classes, but I'm not going hungry. I was swimming all summer because the pool was free. I picked up ten cents on the ground yesterday and that was all I made this month. I mean, when do we get to calm down, relax and pat ourselves on the back?

RS *Are you suspicious of art at all?*

KN I'm not sure when art is about thinking and when it's about feeling. I think through doing things. It's funny, I like Patti Smith but I don't want to watch a documentary on her. I'm hesitant to learn more. I'm the same with process. I try to come at materials blindly, like glass and clay. I give myself permission to go into a glass studio and know nothing. I can just play around with glass frit and make choices.

RS *Artmaking is basically decision-making.*

KN I really don't like looking at work when I feel like the artist hasn't made a decision. I can see when they didn't know what was going on. They felt overwhelmed making it. I like specific work. Sometimes people can't make their minds up. They find everything appealing.

RS *Does this happen to you?*

KN Yeah, I can tell when it happens in my own work, too, but it's usually a few days too late, after the show's open. Maybe I wasn't

in the space of being able to make decisions. I just know when I'm tapped into the thing. But it's also way more complex than that. It's like the Patti Smith thing. I don't want to refine what I know. I don't want to complicate it. But I've never really vocalised this before. None of what I'm saying is very thought out.

"I push back on narrative. I don't know why. Most of my work needs special attention. It needs weather, circumstance. The tiles need rain and the wind chimes need wind. They're always changing. What's a puddle if it's not outside in the rain?"

RS *Seems appropriate though, for the subject.*

KN I think a lot about how I like to see work. I like the feeling of not knowing when a work

ends and where it begins. But I think that's often done with less, not more. For instance, I love the *Sun Tunnels* [1973–76] by Nancy Holt. It's committed. I think about commitment all the time – to materials, situations, words. People muck around too much. This is why I give myself a set amount of time to work on projects. I like confidence and face-to-face interaction. I worked on the Biennale of Sydney recently, and it was all on email. How could I tell them what I want when I haven't even been to the site? I found that very hard. I'm not an artist who sketches up things.

But I'm still trying to understand the ways I want to work. For me, assertiveness is the goal. In Vienna for my show at the Kunsthalle Wien I wanted to do something but I was afraid to ask, because it would be so much work for everyone involved. And then I thought: is that really how I'm making decisions? That's why I have a studio, to think and keep myself from making lame decisions. I was going to make a decision because it was too hard for people I don't know who are paid to help me. And I almost didn't catch it. But that's just the self-limiting aspect of being a woman, a person from New Zealand and a sensitive person. If I'm not careful, these things can go unchecked. I can't be bossed around by art.

Ross Simonini is an artist and writer living in New York and California

FOLLOWING KATE NEWBY

BY CHRIS SHARP



A rock in this pocket, 2018 (detail), 21st Biennale of Sydney installation view at Cockatoo Island, 2018. Commissioned by the Biennale of Sydney with assistance from Creative New Zealand; Michael Lett, Auckland; Austral Bricks; Paving By Design Pty Ltd. Courtesy the artist; Michael Lett, Auckland; Fine Arts, Sydney. Photo: silversalt photography



Swift little verbs pushing the big nouns around (detail), 2018, *Swift little verbs pushing the big nouns around* installation view at Michael Lett, Auckland, 2018. Courtesy: the artist and Michael Lett, Auckland. Photo: Alex North



Swift little verbs pushing the big nouns around (detail), 2018, *Swift little verbs pushing the big nouns around* installation view at Michael Lett, Auckland, 2018. Courtesy: the artist and Michael Lett, Auckland. Photo: Alex North



I can't nail the days down installation view at Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, 2018. Courtesy: the artist. Photo: Jorit Aust

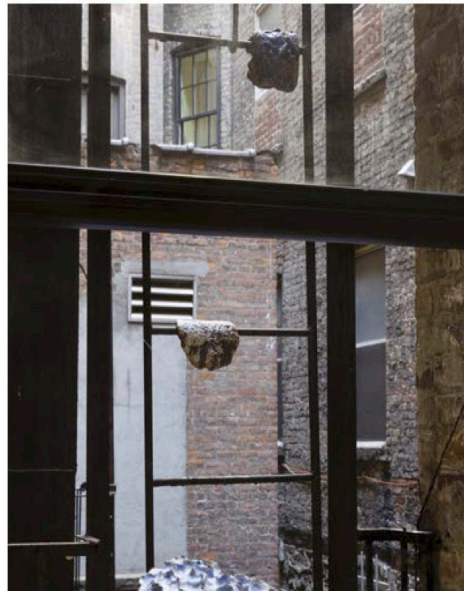
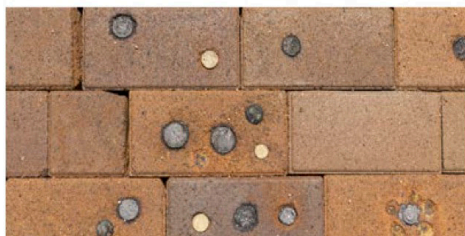
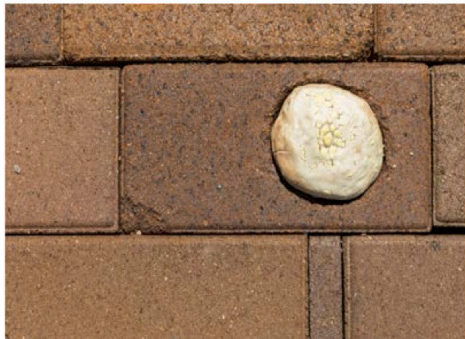


DOWN THE ROAD





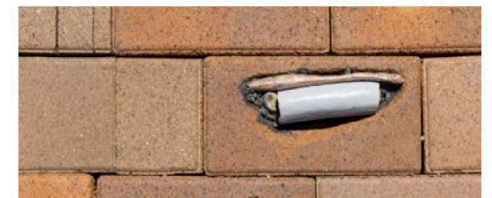
Arriving in Marfa on a Sunday / Marfa New Years Day, 2017, Swift little verbs pushing the big nouns around installation view at Michael Lett, Auckland, 2018.
Courtesy: the artist and Michael Lett, Auckland. Photo: Alex North

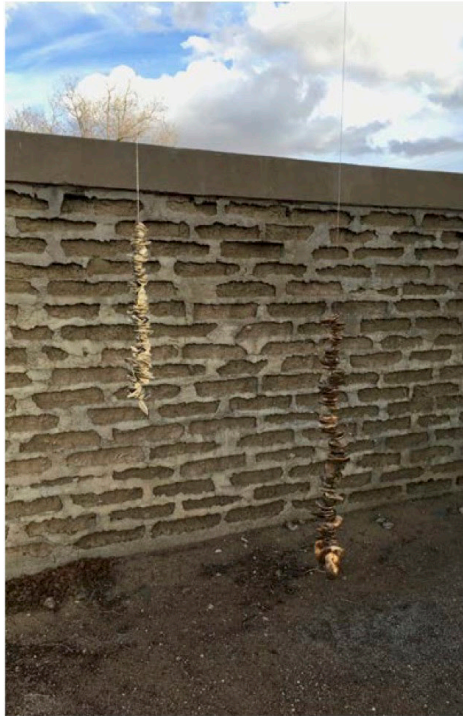


A rock in this pocket, 2018 (details), 21st Biennale of Sydney installation views at Cockatoo Island, 2018. Commissioned by the Biennale of Sydney with assistance from Creative New Zealand; Michael Lett, Auckland; Austral Bricks; Paving By Design Pty Ltd. Courtesy the artist; Michael Lett, Auckland; Fine Arts, Sydney. Photo: silversalt photography

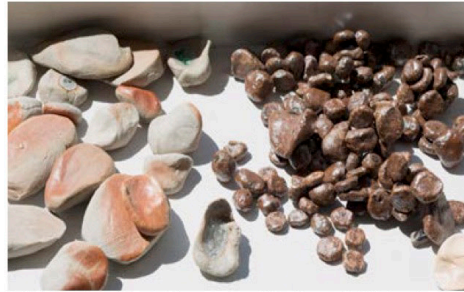


Marfa residency, 2017 © Kate Newby. Courtesy: the artist and Michael Lett, Auckland





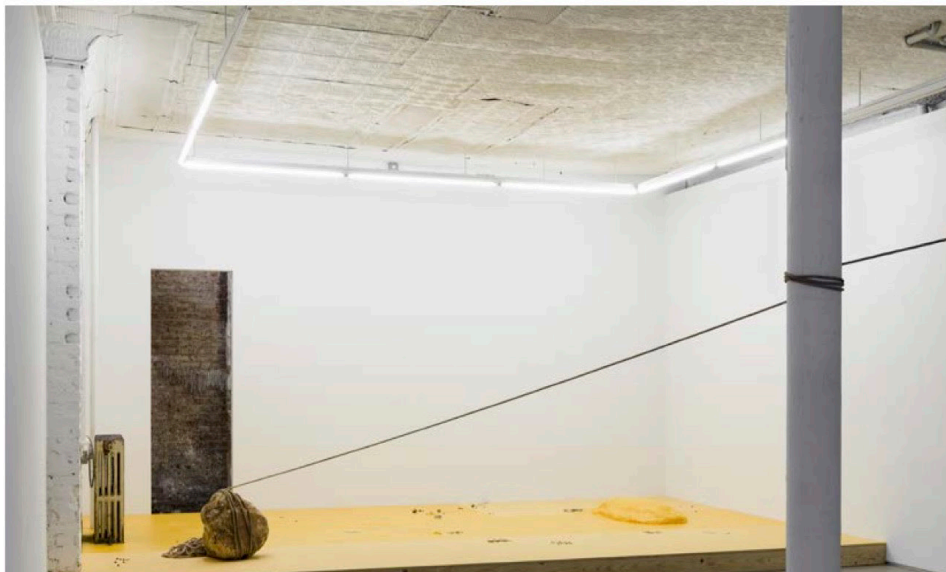
Marfa residency, 2017. © Kate Newby. Courtesy: the artist and Michael Lett, Auckland



Swift little verbs pushing the big nouns around (detail), 2018, *Swift little verbs pushing the big nouns around* installation view at Michael Lett, Auckland, 2018. Courtesy: the artist and Michael Lett, Auckland. Photo: Alex North



A rock in this pocket, 2018 (detail), 21st Biennale of Sydney installation view at Cockatoo Island, 2018. Commissioned by the Biennale of Sydney with assistance from Creative New Zealand; Michael Lett, Auckland; Austral Bricks; Paving By Design Pty Ltd. Courtesy the artist; Michael Lett, Auckland; Fine Arts, Sydney. Photo: silversalt photography



In an age of such profound distrust, the seemingly naive candor and trust of Kate Newby's work strikes me as almost heroic. It is probably most succinctly conveyed in the language she uses, for instance in her work and exhibition titles.

One phrase in particular always stays with me: "I'll follow you down the road," the title of her 2011 exhibition at Hopkinson Mossman gallery in Auckland, New Zealand. Interestingly, that direct address also brings to mind one of Newby's personal artistic heroes, Frank O'Hara, and his mock manifesto and movement, Personism. "Personism," O'Hara wrote somewhat ironically in his celebrated 1961 manifesto, "has nothing to do with philosophy, it's all art... One of its minimal aspects is to address itself to one person (other than the poet himself), thus evoking overtones of love without destroying love's life-giving vulgarity." Such a statement feels almost like a key to Newby's work, and something the viewer should keep in mind when looking at it. But before discussing how the work operates, I should say a few words about what it is.

Kate Newby is essentially a sculptor, working with ceramics, casting and glass, textiles and wood, among other materials. Generally of a modest, even intimate scale, the work has nevertheless been known to occupy entire rooms or other spaces through architectural interventions or subtle modifications, which range from altered floors to expansive layers of modified bricks to textile walls. Only ever figurative symbolically, her ceramic, porcelain, cast silver "pebbles," "rocks," or flora are sometimes inserted in "puddles" of poured, pigmented concrete. Over the last few years, Newby has been making wind chimes out of ceramic, porcelain, and cast metal, which might be placed outside or inside and have recently evolved into hanging, tendril-like or vertebrae-like sculptures consisting of irregularly round objects stacked up like spines. At times, the works include elements she finds on walks, primarily in New York's Central Park, which could be anything from debris to broken bits of glass, which are fired with the ceramics, becoming small, transparent puddles among the concave surfaces of the ceramics, single combinations of which can also be small, stand-alone sculptures, as in her recent solo at Michael Lett gallery, Auckland, and Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna.

The architectural interventions can consist of low, raised platforms, which are sometimes painted and bedecked with various collections of materials, which are liable to assume a rune-like syntax, as in her show at Laurel Gitlen gallery in New York in 2015, or semitransparent fabric walls hanging in front of windows or solid walls. Newby has a propensity to leave a given exhibition space and site works, such as puddles or ceramic rocks, either nearby the exhibition space or somewhere in the same city. This propensity is motivated less by an antipathy for the white cube and more by an interest in lived experience, which the white cube

in terms of his interest in what he called the dialectal quality of art: something that evolves and changes and has a much greater chance of happening, it goes without saying, outside the white cube. As such, the work is ideally never removed from human experience. It exists in the world and is subject to its vicissitudes. This is precisely why, although what Newby does is embedded in studio practice, walking and the peripatetic mode play such an important role in what she makes. Hers is a practice that seeks to continually break down the barriers of the studio and the outside world, and in doing so, not necessarily deny art its rarefied space and thus collapse the boundaries between art and life, but rather assert the degree to which art and life are mutually dependent. Such an affirmation is as informed by the legacy of the post-studio practice of Francis Alÿs, which is very out-in-the-world, as by the apparent spontaneity and lived-ness (for lack of a better word) of O'Hara's poetry.

Whence the humanity of the work, and its refreshing lack of (defensive) irony or cynicism. This may lead to accusations of sincerity or earnestness, but the work's conspicuous humanity has a lot more to do with trust, which lies in a rare willingness to be vulnerable. This vulnerability is evident in everything from the relative fragility of the work as it makes its way through the world, to the language the artist uses to communicate it (as in her titles), to how she presents it. For instance, one series consists of a collection of ceramic and silver pebble-size objects, which the institutional guard or invigilator keeps in his or her pocket and shares with visitors upon request, letting them handle the objects themselves.

Given the interactive component, this might seem to evoke something along the lines of relational aesthetics, but that is not the case at all. Newby is much more interested in how and where sculpture happens—or even, at times, how it un-happens. I am thinking in particular of her series of ceramic skipping stones, which she gives to someone who skips them on a body of water while she photographs the action. The most interesting part of this work might be the difficulty of locating exactly when and where it happens: in the creation of the ceramic stone? Its being handed over? Its final resting place at the bottom of the body of water? The act of skipping? the photography and/or the resulting photograph?

I think the work comprises all of these. And thus, despite its apparent simplicity, it puts a productive pressure on the very notion of sculpture. Newby never takes sculpture for granted, but always questions what it is, how it can be, and where it can take

Quiet wanderer

Sculptor Kate Newby's subtle interventions – currently on display in a studio above Karangahape Road – have made her one of New Zealand's most internationally successful artists.

TEXT ANTHONY BYRT — PORTRAIT TODD EYRE

In the early 1970s, several artists abandoned the white-walled galleries of New York, contemporary art's epicentre, and headed for the wide-open expanses of the American West. Out there, Michael Heizer made 'Double Negative' – two enormous trenches that intersect with a natural canyon and form an almost 500-metre-long, 15-metre-deep sculpture. Robert Smithson constructed 'Spiral Jetty', a massive coil that stretches out into Utah's Great Salt Lake. And Nancy Holt built her 'Sun Tunnels': huge pipe forms in the Great Basin Desert, oriented so each catches the sun at a different time of day.

An unlikely inheritor of their breakthroughs is exhibiting in Auckland at the moment. In 2014, the influential British art magazine *Frieze* described New Zealander Kate Newby's art as "radically slight", and, more significantly, "earthwork in miniature". Wind chimes, coins pressed into the pavement, plastic bags fluttering in trees – quiet interventions like this have made Newby one of New Zealand's most internationally successful artists, praised and feted by some of the most influential curators and critics in the world.

When we meet in Auckland, she's jetlagged – not long back from her adopted home

of New York, where she's lived since 2012. Newby's return to Auckland is for her first exhibition with dealer Michael Lett, having recently shifted to his gallery from Hopkinson Mossman.

Our interview is on her first full day in the city, though she's been back in the country for most of the week, working in Huntly. There, she made more than two tonnes of clay bricks for her show, working with the last North Island outfit still producing them. "They had a healthy amount of suspicion of someone [like me] coming in, but in the end they were really excited," she says. "They hadn't experienced anything like it."

Newby modified 300 bricks before they were fired, pressing characteristic little gestures into their surfaces – old coins, little stones, pull tabs from soft drink cans, and mucky little pieces of ceramic that look like birdshit or chewing gum, depending on the angle. She also left another 300 as they were. "The more I handled the bricks," she says, "the less I wanted to do to them. I started out being really aggressive, but by the end I just liked them as they are."

And this is the big challenge of Newby's work: marrying up the slight with the radical, the banal with the ethereal. In other words, her interventions can at times seem



so quiet they barely make a squeak. A case in point was her work 'Pocket Charms' for the 2011 Wellington exhibition *Prospect*, in which gallery attendants carried tiny trinkets around in their pockets, unseen unless you specifically asked for them. Buying into Newby's significance means accepting this delicate obsession with leaving the barest trace of her own presence behind, in an attempt to show us that even tiny gestures can dramatically alter our experience of a site.

Installed in a rear space at 321 Karangahape Road, Newby's new show *Big*

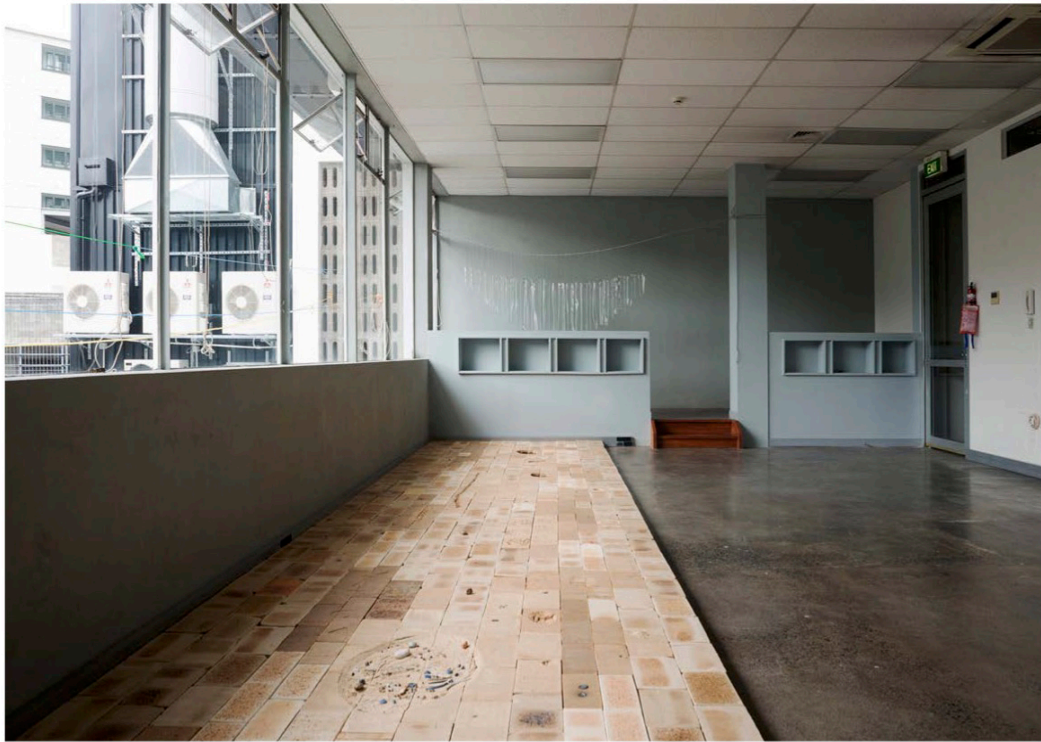
Tree. Bird's Eye seems to represent a more forthright shift in her practice. On the floor, she's laid out almost all of her **Artforum, February 2016** glass, most of which look like insipid colour somewhere between sun-bleached clay and pale flesh – in a long grid, which becomes a footpath you can walk along as you lean down to look at her gentle marks.

There are more forceful moments too: oval cavities like craters; a long, serrated gouge like a canyon; random holes like something has burrowed through the pre-fired clay – incisions that are more visceral than we've come to expect from her, and that accumulate

into tiny desert landscapes. There's also a massive 'wind chime' made from dangling glass, most of which look like icicles, while others, ribbed and bulging, have the slightly disconcerting appearance of high-end sex toys.

Outside the massive windows, Newby has tied several pieces of brightly coloured rope, like a makeshift washing line. Beyond them are the dreary backsides of apartment and office buildings. It's an exhibition that messes with the boundaries between inside and outside, and between architecture and

Above Artist Kate Newby, back from New York, photographed in the Karangahape Road space that houses her newest installation.



Above Newby's latest exhibition uses bricks she commissioned from a Huntly factory, some of which she's lightly modified.

Opposite page The exhibition also includes a wind chime made of dangling, icicle-like pieces of blown glass.

sculpture, so that we're never entirely certain where Newby's work begins and ends. As I'm looking past her ropes, in a perfect accident of site-specificity, a man with hairy legs and little shorts comes out onto his beige balcony and hangs his laundry to dry.

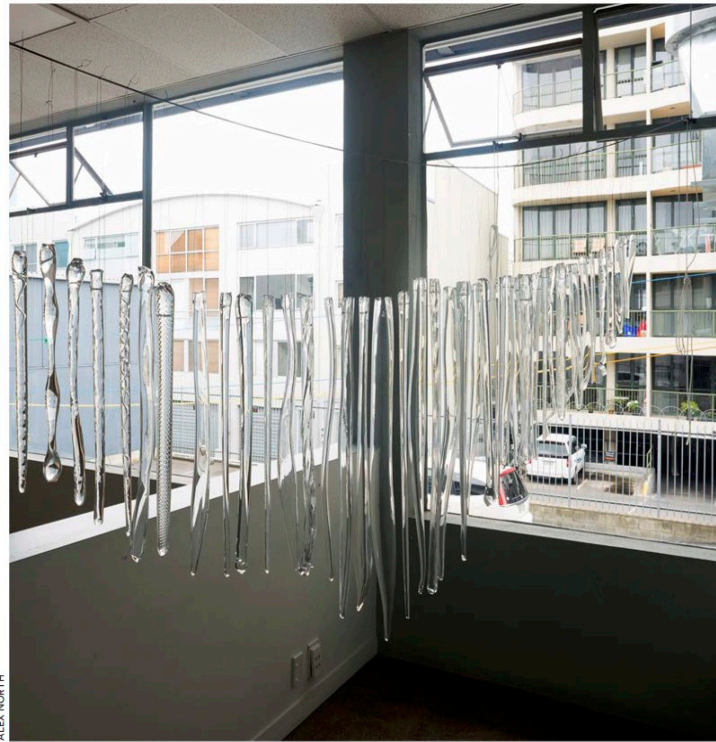
When I point out it seems an unusually big undertaking by her standards, Newby bristles slightly. In fact, she says, she sees a lot of her sculptures as huge – particularly the ones in cities or landscapes, such as a concrete pedestal that wraps around the base of a tree in a public space in Bristol, England. What matters most for Newby is not size, but how she responds to the spaces she finds herself in.

Karangahape Road is a special space for her to exhibit. She was a key member of the group associated with the K' Road artist-run space Gambia Castle in the mid-2000s, which included other luminaries like Fiona Connor, Nick Austin and Simon Denny, and Newby's former dealer Sarah Hopkinson. "I have so much history on K' Road," says Newby. "My very first apartment was in St

Kevin's Arcade when I was 19. When I walk up and down K' Road everything is pretty heavy. But in this space, there were none of those connotations, which is kind of nice." In here, it's the architecture of the space itself, particularly the huge windows letting in soft light, that Newby is so responsive to.

Newby grew up at Bethells Beach and keeps close ties with Auckland: she completed her doctorate at the Elam School of Fine Arts last year and was the 2012 winner of the Walters Prize, New Zealand's richest contemporary art award. But it's clear she's a natural-born traveller. Since 2010 she's had an insane exhibiting schedule: New York, London, Berlin, Melbourne, Mexico City, Toronto, as well as a much-sought-after residency on Fogo Island in Newfoundland, and an exhibition in Wisconsin, smack in the rural centre of America, with the important artist, curator and writer Michelle Grabner – a particularly tricky gig, Newby jokes, given she doesn't drive.

Earlier this year, she took a road trip with friends through the American West to



ALEX NORTH

She has the permanently optimistic air of someone intrigued by the tiny details of the world around her.

see some of the great works of earth art, including 'Double Negative' and Holt's 'Sun Tunnels', which she was particularly struck by. The journey helped her think about her connections to their work, and to 1960s and 1970s sculpture more generally. "What am I doing that's any different?" she asks. "These encounters, these gestures. For them, I think it was brave new territory, and for me it's not. So in a way I'm interested in creating that brave new territory for myself."

What does she think that will be, I ask? She's not entirely sure yet. But, "I don't think it's [inside] the gallery," she answers, cautiously. In 2017, she'll have every chance to test this, with two residencies in Texas: at Artpace in San Antonio, and a prestigious opportunity at the Chinati Foundation in

Marfa, a huge institution in the desert developed by Donald Judd as a temple to Land Art and Minimalism.

But for now, Newby has to fly back to her adopted home. In the time she's been in New Zealand – just a week or two – America has changed dramatically with the ascent of Donald Trump to the presidency. When I point this out, she seems unflustered; New York, as she says, is still one of the most liberal, tolerant, open cities in America. She has the permanently optimistic air of someone intrigued by the tiny details of the world around her. I also sense that if things get too oppressive in the States, Newby, the quiet wanderer, will find a new home somewhere else.

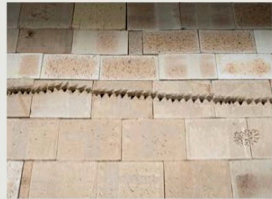
"I don't think I'm a creative genius with a lot of ideas," she says. "What I am is an observer. I'm interested in continually listening and being able to change and adapt. I don't want to be stuck in anything." ●

Kate Newby's exhibition, Big Tree. Bird's Eye is at 321 Karangahape Rd until 10 December.

OTHER KATE NEWBY WORKS



Her 2012 Walters Prize-winning work, *Crawl out your window.*



A detail from Newby's current installation, *Big Tree. Bird's Eye.*



I feel like a truck on a wet highway, a Newby installation in Mexico City.



Another detail from Newby's current installation, *Big Tree. Bird's Eye.*



I memorized it I loved it so much, a 2015 installation in New York.

Kate Newby

LAUREL DOODY

"The main thing is to tell a story," Frank O'Hara declares in "Fantasy," which appeared in his seminal 1964 collection *Lunch Poems*. In the text, O'Hara slaloms back and forth between daydreams of Helmut Dantine, the Nazi antihero of the 1943 film *Northern Pursuit*, and tending to an ailing Allen Ginsberg, who spends the poem wrestling with indigestion behind a bathroom door. The story the poet tells has no single narrative but skitters between reverie and a makeshift recipe for Alka-Seltzer.

Kate Newby borrowed O'Hara's formula—"two aspirins a vitamin C tablet and some baking soda"—as the title for both her exhibition and its sole work. The multimedia installation was on view at Laurel Doody, a gallery nested in the second floor of a residential complex on a tree-lined street just off Wilshire Boulevard's Miracle Mile. Like the poet before her, Newby emphasizes the quotidian character of her work, positioning complex formal responses to her surroundings as if they were incidental observations of a casual passerby. The artist has carved out a practice that mixes pinprick interventions with major architectural overthrows, coaxing a fleet-footed lyricism from such common building materials as concrete and brick. For this installation, she started by stripping the floors of the gallery, a move that offset the domestic accent of the interior while imbuing the space with equal measures of vigor and vulnerability. Newby then covered nearly a third of the room with a surrogate carpet of bricks, which she had subjected to various alterations while they were still in the factory. These were laid flat across the floor, the intentional gaps and misalignments in their coursing aggravated by the tiny acts of violence Newby inflicted on the clay before the bricks were fired. These ranged from hatch marks scored into the surface, to shallow craters lined with melted glass, to dusty blooms of zinc residue left from pennies pressed into the clay, only to explode in the heat of the kiln. Once the bricks had been baked and assembled, the artist added a handful of what she calls her "pocket charms," a half-found, half-fabricated collection of odds and ends comprising aluminum pull-tabs, bottle caps, nails, and ceramic stones that had been painted to look like pebbles. Rounding off the assortment was a set of talon-like metal awls that Newby had sand-cast as tools for working the clay. No bigger than a finger, each instrument bore the impressions of its making, preserving the various imperfections of the casting process.

As part of her bid to redefine the gallery space, Newby pushed her installation beyond the bounds of the existing architecture into the areas immediately outside the windows, which were left open. Two clear glass objects, made to look like rocks but sized and shaped like



Kate Newby, *Two aspirins a vitamin C tablet and some baking soda*, 2015, mixed media. Installation view. Photo: Fredrik Nilson.

lungs, sat perched on the outside ledge—a nearly invisible intrusion into the residential landscape. Suspended from a nearby tree was a set of icicle-shaped wind chimes in silver, steel, and ceramic, strung together on rough cords, suggesting a necklace of twigs or a mouthful of long, skinny teeth. This free exchange of the indoors and outdoors was formalized in one final, seemingly spontaneous gesture: a puddle of pale yellow beeswax, which fixed a handful of black, larva-like flower stamens to the wooden floorboards, not far from the gallery door.

Brought together, the various components of the installation produced an impression not unlike that of an animal's lair, where bits of fur and undigested bones testify to past brutalities, unrelated save for their role in the larger enterprise of sustaining a living creature. Like O'Hara with his *Lunch Poems*, Newby deploys her fragmented gestures in the service of a greater alchemy. Unlike the poet's homemade remedy, however, Newby's work provides little relief, inducing a wearying state of wariness in the viewer, lest they miss "the main thing."

—Kate Sutton



How to have a relationship with a rock

Last year Kate Newby won the 2012 Walters Prize. This year she's part way through a six-month residency on a cold, windswept island off the coast of Newfoundland, where she's creating personalised bodies of stones.

Last week I decided to make a hand-poured concrete puddle in the ground here on Fogo Island, off the northeast coast of Newfoundland on Canada's eastern flank. This is not a new thing for me. For the past few years, I've been making puddles in various grounds in a range of places – often coloring the concrete and inserting rocks that I've made out of clay. When I was thinking about making a puddle here, though, it escaped me that I wasn't going to be able to dig any kind of hole in the ground – it's just too frozen. Today it's -12° but it feels like -22°Celsius. Actually, if you have the right clothing, it's possible to spend hours outside, which is what I did last Monday. In order to make a hole in the ground I first had to build a fire to melt the ground. This was a daylong activity and thankfully the

wind was gentle, so I was in no danger of setting fire to Gertie and Darryl's house next door. After spending four hours burning the fire down to coals, I spent only about four minutes digging a hole. Then I poured yellow/beige/buff concrete into the hole and waited about 24 hours for it to dry. It's certainly not my best work – I can say that quite honestly – but fortunately I seemed to have poured it at the right time of the year on exactly the right day. Monday 14 January was sunny and not too cold; on Tuesday it rained so the puddle filled up with water; on Wednesday it was freezing so the water froze nicely inside the puddle; on Thursday and Friday the ocean in the distance behind the puddle froze over completely, so it made for great photos, and on Saturday and Sunday it snowed.

Opposite page: Tower Studio at sunset, Fogo Island
Below (from left): Puddle work in progress, January 2013

All photos by Kate Newby except where indicated

Some think Fogo Island was named by Portuguese sailors who thought it looked like a volcanic island in the Cape Verde Islands, off West Africa (*fogo* means "fire" in Portuguese). This island is indeed volcanic, but not in the way those Portuguese sailors believed. The volcanic rock here is about 420 million years old. When you walk up Brimstone Head, which looks like a large, round, lumpy, steep hill in the shape of a curled-up animal, you can clearly see some massive quartz sandstones, overlaid by three distinct coarse mudflow sections that look lumpy and filled up with many little rocks. Some fragments are textured with lots of little cavities, like pumice, but most are pink, fine-grained rhyolite, which looks a bit like cement with many little pebbles and bits in it. What I found most charming about Brimstone Head was seeing pink, glassy banding in a large rock face, which indicates the volcanic ash was very hot, and this hot ash welded like glass as soon as it fell to the ground. The rock face then tilted on a 40-degree angle as the whole island moved over time. What struck me was learning such simple pieces of information; this rock is extremely old; it's on a slope because the whole island has tilted downwards over millions of years; it's still moving; I was able to stand in front of it and touch it.

I also learned recently from local geologist Paul Dean that the reason rocks are so prime for studying here on Fogo Island is because of the ice that comes down from the Arctic, and the pack ice that freezes around the island every winter. The ice breaks up into little sections and combined with tidal movements it acts as a natural abrasive, keeping the rocks clean and making them easy to see. Easy to see if they're not covered in snow and your eyes can see through the icy northwest wind blasting your face and body.

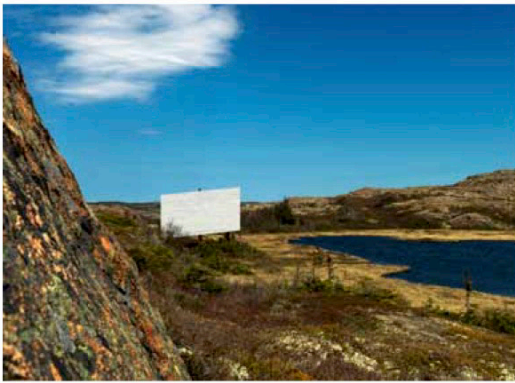


Kate Newby on Fogo Island. Photo: Drew Lichtenstein

Now it's Monday again and the puddle has long disappeared in a bank of fluffy snow. This morning when I was checking it (the puddle is in front of my house right beside the sea), lo and behold, on the frozen Atlantic Ocean behind it was a seal bobbing about in the water. There was no way I could capture that in a photo, but it made for a special event in the life of the puddle. It's in situations like this that I feel the work can be less and that it doesn't have to do as much or over-perform – if you put something out there in conversation with an interesting situation, it manages to tell its own story, often better than you can.

Realistically, where else could this happen – making work with sun, snow and a seal? And that's why I'm here.





Left (from top): Bridge Studio; Long Studio (photos: Bent R. Synnevag); Fishing stage at Tiltling; Fogo Island Inn

Opposite page (top): Tower Studio in winter; (below) Kate Newby's rock works in progress, January 2013

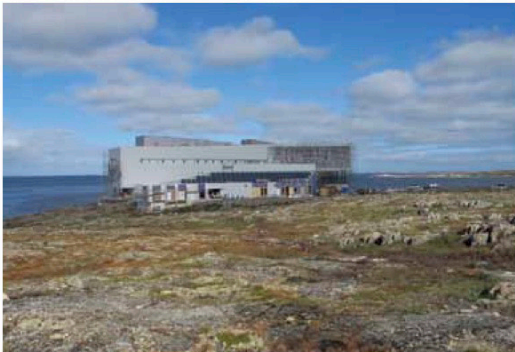


My nearest town, Joe Batt's Arm, is six miles away and is one of seven main towns (outports) on the island, which has a population of 2,300. The community is currently undertaking numerous ventures to revive itself in an attempt to keep on keeping on after the 1992 Cod Moratorium when the Canadian government suspended all fishing in the region because of the cataclysmic collapse of the cod fishery. Part of the island's resuscitation plan is a residency programme called Fogo Island Arts, which currently offers four, soon to be six, artist's studio residencies. The studios, designed by Canadian architect Todd Saunders, are all extremely specific to the surrounding landscape. The Squish studio looks a bit like an iceberg out on the rocks. The Bridge studio juts out over a very large pond, and the Tower studio in Shoal Bay, where I am, is three-storeys high and has a ladder inside it – sort of like the inside of a ship, which makes sense because Shoal Bay was where fishing boats were built before the moratorium when the fishery was thriving.

Perhaps because there aren't really any distractions here (apart from the weather), it feels possible to make work and focus on things in a way that hasn't seemed possible before. Perhaps this is because I have only a few friends, am not part of a community and am well rested; each day seems to offer more space for clarity of thought and the chance to think about many things at once in useful ways. It does get annoying having to cook all the time, as there are only two options for eating out – Chester's Fried Chicken up by the gas station in Fogo Island Central and a Chinese restaurant in the town of Fogo that I have yet to try. I'd love to order some food in, or at least be able to walk down the road *on a sidewalk* (no such thing here) to a restaurant that served a fresh salad.

Sometimes the domestic routine is a bit more annoying than I like... getting home only to do the dishes from the night before, attempting to cook something other than pasta, and then trying to stay awake past 8pm – there are no distractions to keep you awake. But, all of these things evidently make for the right working conditions for me, and for a lot of other artists who've come to work here.

A few weeks ago Paul Dean mentioned that the folk on Fogo Island used to heat their beds with rocks. They'd put them around the wood stove to warm up and then use them as a sort of hot water bottle in their beds. It was interesting to talk to Paul and find out more about the social integration of rocks into daily living on the island. Rocks were also used as anchors as not everyone on the island could afford wrought iron anchors. Killicks, as they're called, are rocks held in a sort of wood basket, which can be lowered into the ocean just like an anchor. Also if you walk into just about any house here, you'll see a rock on a windowsill. Shoal Bay, where my home and studio are located, is all on top of granite.



So far the bulk of my work on the island has been making rocks from white stone and porcelain and then firing up the kiln, which is housed in the entrance of an old wooden church across the road from my house. Probably the last thing this island needs is more rocks, so I'm a little uncertain about my ideas here... but I'm thinking that instead of creating bodies of rocks that speak of 'deep time' (the concept that the geologic time scale is vast) and the different regional bodies of rock, I want to create lighter, humanised bodies of stones. Or maybe 'personalised' is a better way to describe them. I plan to give these sets of rocks names I've observed around the island. *Miss Deep Bay*, which is the name of a boat in Deep Bay. *Nicole's*, the best restaurant on the island, and only open in the summer. *Peg's*, which is the name of a bed and breakfast here. *Tina's*, which is the name of the gas station – names and evidence of places and people living remarkable daily lives.



Before I leave the island in March these works will be part of an exhibition (the first) in the Fogo Island Gallery, which has been curated by Nicolaus Schafhausen. He's strategic director of Fogo Island Arts, which administers these residencies, and has recently been appointed artistic director at the Kunsthalle Wien in Vienna.



The Fogo Island Gallery was built as part of the Fogo Island Inn, a luxury hotel complex that includes a cinema, restaurant, library, study and saunas – all of which will be open to locals as well as guests. The inn is owned and run by the islanders as a way to support themselves and to fund the artist's residency programme, a geology residency and other small business ventures.

For more information about artists' residencies on Fogo Island, visit www.fogoislandarts.ca

THE SMALL OFTEN VAGUE THINGS – KATE NEWBY'S RADICALLY SLIGHT ART
JENNIFER KABAT
Thursday, June 12, 2014

GAUZY COTTON SHEETS wave across the ceiling of a former Masonic temple. They veil the lights and a wooden grille overhead with slats in the shape of stars. I stare up and get stuck on the word “like,” not whether I like the installation and how it reconfigures the room (I do immensely) but the idea of *likening* itself. What if you stop and cut off the analogy you’re about to make and leave it open? I was going to try to describe the fabric in terms of something familiar and recognizable, which would help you picture the room. But what if I stop there, rather than completing the image the words connect to? What if they’re not *like* anything? What any analogy exposes is not the exact thing itself but its failure, that it’s *not* this thing. Hold back and there’s a gap, the space the simile was going to paste over. Let the hole remain and you expose something more profound, certainly more unfinished and shaggy than the thing you were going to compare it to in the first place.

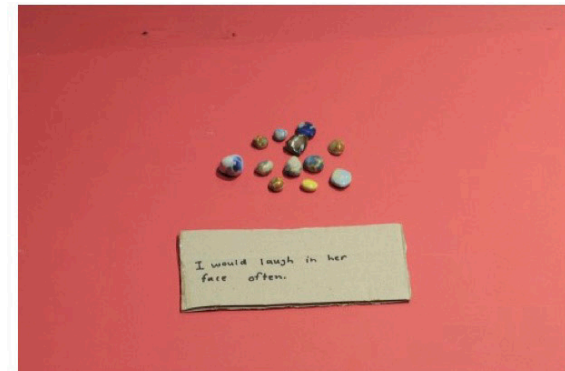
This is what happens in Kate Newby’s work where the changes she makes in her installations are slight, some stained fabric billowing overhead, a curtain hung to create a corridor in a gallery, or a bit of concrete put in an awkward spot, and she uses them to make us aware of small, subtle things. So, as I rush to turn her work into gleeful associations because I love the sheets and the way they billow, the words I write in my notebook are “clouds, sky, weather....” The fabric “laps down in waves,” yes, “waves” on the altar. But her installation is not any of this, and my associations obscure its possibilities. The fabric hangs a third of way down from the ceiling, shrouding it while also making you more aware of it. Temples, like churches, by their very nature are hierarchical, directing attention to the front, to the altar, but she interrupts that order. She makes you look up. Then, there are the sheets themselves, a puzzle too, with footprints and rain-stained striations from where they’ve hung for a month outside as she worked. Now they’re a quasi-chronicle of her time in a studio on the roof of a Masonic lodge. And, there’s the concrete blob forcing the temple doors open.

For her installation *Maybe I won’t go to sleep at all* last autumn in Brussels at La Loge, these ghostly interventions spread across the building let you see it anew. Why ruin that by making her work like something else? It asks you to pause on the tiny gaps, the word *like* maybe.



Sheets as, as, what? Stains, covering, clouds... Kate Newby's "Maybe I won't go to sleep at all." 2013, installation view: La Loge, Brussels, all images courtesy of the artist and Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland.

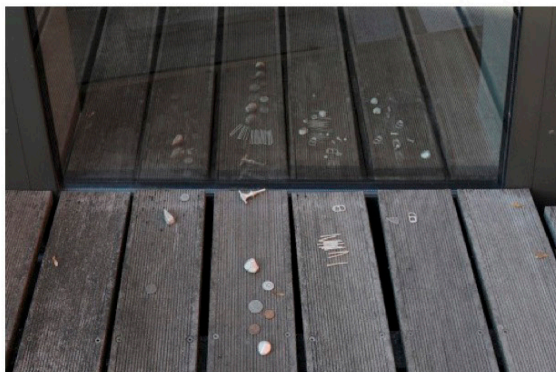
A Masonic lodge turned art space, La Loge comes loaded with those associations of secret societies and the pyramid and all-seeing-eye on the US dollar bill that always accompany Masons. Newby’s installation subtly interrupts that. She starts in the basement with her groupings of rocks on a low plywood platform in the middle of the room. Before each set is a tag, not quite a caption, to the pieces. Labeled “Shelter Island,” or “Depend upon it,” or “Do more with your feelings,” they could be commands or places or something else entirely.



Maybe I won't go to sleep at all., 2013, installation view: La Loge, Brussels

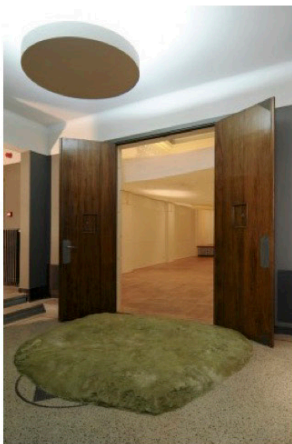
On the next floor is the temple and above that a corridor she’s covered in the same cheap carpet landlords hope will hide stains. On it she writes in chalk, “oh hi.” The dot on the “i” is rubbing off where people have walked on it. On the top floor a clay wind chime hangs knotted to the outside of the building. It’s as if she’s moving from bedrock and foundation to air and wind, but that *as if* also elides the strangeness in the pieces, the way the tags don’t fit the stones, the way the string on the chimes is threaded through rough holes gouged into the walls, letting in light. She attacks the building but not like other artists might; this is no grand gesture. Meanwhile, some of her rocks look “real,” others handmade and rough, bearing the scars of their making, the glaze imperfect. At the window is a collection of nails and coins and pull-tabs from cans. They’re “pocket charms” she calls them that she’s

carried around with her for months, and they're laid out on both sides of the glass. Some she's found on the street, others remade and cast in silver. It's not important to know what's "real" and been collected or what's "art" in being remade. Instead it's the question, that gap of not knowing.



Maybe I won't go to sleep at all., 2013, installation view: La Loge, Brussels

Just to enter the temple you're forced to step onto a blob of concrete that shoves open the doors. Obscuring the Masonic symbol, the blob is a question too. Is it blocking the entrance? Do you walk on it? How do you know what to do? Are you allowed in? Then, how do you interact with something defined as art? The question is subtle. This isn't institutional critique, nothing that heavy. The answer is left to the viewer, but the question itself is the same gap left open if you pause to consider the small situations and interruptions in Newby's work. At its heart she's asking us to reconsider the world around us. She's offering us an attunement to it.



Maybe I won't go to sleep at all., 2013, installation view: La Loge, Brussels

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In 2012 she won New Zealand's biennial Walters Prize, and up until about five years before she didn't even show in galleries. She refused to. Instead she'd choose ad-hoc spaces like the path students used as a shortcut to the university in Auckland. There on a hilltop she put up a flagpole. There was also work in abandoned buildings and friends' flats,^[1] and this fall in Copenhagen for part of a show at Henningsen Gallery she installed a set of wind chimes atop the city's highest hill. Only there was no sign for the chimes, no didactic text or directions at the gallery, nothing marking this out as art. To see them you'd have to stumble on them, and she's said she likes work that's a bit "renegade," that "you encounter if you are walking or you might hear from a distance."

Last winter on Fogo Island off the Newfoundland coast, she made a pothole. (Her work is full of literal gaps and holes like this often celebrating puddles and scabs in pavements, and the small ways they transform the world). Getting to Fogo Island takes at least two planes and a ferry, and her piece was remoter still, at the end of a dead-end drive by the sea. Meant to fill with snow, melt, cover with ice, get driven over and eventually disappear like an actual puddle, her puddle required burning a fire over the spot for a day just to thaw the earth to dig the hole. The piece was almost an earth-work in miniature, except only a few people ever knew of its existence.



Not the puddle on Fogo Island but Newby's "Walks with men," 2011
mortar, glazed ceramic rock, bronze, silver pebbles.
installation view: Prospect: New Zealand Art Now, City Gallery, Wellington
photo: Kate Whitley

For several years she's made a series *Let the other thing in* of rocks to skip in water. It's possibly a performance, but maybe not. Maybe that's too defined a word for it. Kate hands a porcelain pebble to friends to skip across everything from swimming pools on Long Island to remote ponds on Fogo Island, the East River and the Mississippi, wherever she and a friend happen to be. She'll slip you the stone, and I can tell you the moment is difficult, exhilarating and an honor. You're being given something she's made and asked to chuck it away. But what is *it* exactly? What transpires? Is the moment art? Is it the pebble she, the artist, makes, or is it the friendship being celebrated, or the act of skimming the stone? Or, that you throw away something she's made and it disappears forever? Or, the photo documenting it on her iPhone? No matter the answer, something ephemeral is being marked and that becomes a way to consider all those questions.



Let the other thing in (Drew), 2013, c-type print.
 Courtesy: the artist and Hopkinson Mossman,
 Auckland

When Newby handed one to Anne-Claire Schmitz who curated the Brussels show, she protested that she couldn't, that she didn't know how to skip a stone. She was also scared of throwing it away and wasting it. Newby told her it didn't matter, and Schmitz skipped it, the one time she's succeeded in bouncing a pebble off the water's surface. Afterwards she said the loss was worth it because she did it right. Her success made the sacrifice okay, a comment I love because it adds to the levels of interpretation with the series. When I tried, mine skidded on the ice stopping in the middle of a frozen pond. Maybe the rock got covered with snow later, or maybe it's at the bottom. Maybe it's been picked up by a bird and carried off. The project, though, was originally meant to exist entirely outside of galleries because as Newby puts it, she doesn't "want to wait for a nod from the art world saying it's okay to make art now."

In her gallery installations you get the sense that she's trying to escape the gallery itself. Just the title alone of her show at Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst in Bremen hints at what she's up to: "Crawl out your window." Nominated for the Walters Prize for her installation there, Newby created a corridor with a curtain shaping the light from the window and drawing attention out of the gallery. If you looked across the river you'd see two hand-scrawled words on a wall: "Try, Try." They were in response to a Lawrence Weiner piece on GAK's riverside foundations. In perfectly kerned letters he'd written, "HAVING BEEN BUILT ON SAND WITH ANOTHER BASE (BASIS) IN FACT" about the sinking of culture and GAK itself and the island on which the gallery stands. Her piece and its exhortation were filled with hope and humor. Try, try.... She knows it will fail. Her graffiti will inevitably be erased or covered up or wear off, and people won't get it or will miss it entirely, but it's about the encouragement to see, to respond, about the hope offered up in the tiny revelations available to us if we look, if we are open.

When awarding her the Walters Prize Mami Kataoka, the head juror, called Newby's work the "least eloquent" of the four nominees.^[2] Her own art dealer has called it "indifferent," speaking of the skim stones,^[3] and Kataoka went on to describe Newby's installation as "the most reserved but radical way of transcending the fixed architectural space for contemporary art." Newby's word for all this is "casual," meaning unfixed and responsive, reacting to the situation where the work exists, and she gets frustrated when people fill up the spaces, be it in a

gallery or, say, that gap left by an incomplete analogy. She writes in notes for her thesis about an artist who altered his gallery's space and lighting to create a new awareness of it. Then, he filled it up with his sculptures. Why so much stuff, she asks. "Why do people always have to put their work into things? Why can't it just be a thing? Not like a performance but more like a situation. A situation with less stuff."



Maybe I won't go to sleep at all., 2013, installation view: La Loge, Brussels

Instead, she wants to underline how you see the space itself. For a show at Hopkinson Cundy in New Zealand in 2011 she fell in love with a line of nails in the floor and remade it with shinier, newer ones, shaping the light so people would hopefully notice them. On the top floor at La Loge, the flag outside is an invitation to look beyond, to see the sky and sun, and the white sheet flaps there emblazoned, "I think I'm doing it in a really interesting way."

Her work shows the possibility in noticing the small failures and fissures and approximations of the world around us. Like she did on her flag, she reuses scraps of language and inspirational slogans found on packaging and juice bottles. She'll also write odes to a carrier bag caught in a tree, and the patches and scars on a stretch of sidewalk transfix her: "The debris, bits of rubbish, sticks, gum and concrete impressions left on pavements are very special things. They are markers of time spent and people living." Meanwhile, she's been photographing the bag for days, "having the time of its life out there. Blowing about being cheeky, somehow flying past the rules and regulations of the city and the things around it. Not a bad idea or model for art in the world. Why stop short?"

Why indeed? There's such a joy in the world in her observations, and as she recreates these elements in her work, the banal becomes transcendent, only it's not necessarily pretty or graceful. It can look awkward and disarming. It's a blob on the ground, a handmade puddle gouged into a ramp she's made in gallery like she did at the Auckland Art Gallery for her Walters Prize show. Or, stained cotton strung across a ceiling. They make you stop because they're not "like" what they're supposed to be, because they're weird and out of place or vaguely familiar but not quite enough.

Newby sees the everyday as an emotional terrain inseparable from what she makes. It's there in her rocks and pocket charms and the sheets in the Masonic temple. Because she develops her work in response to an actual space, what she shows is her emotional engagement with it over time, inserting herself and her daily, lived experience into temples, galleries, museums.... I'm tempted to call her work feminist, only Newby herself makes no grand claims and refuses to ascribe to larger theories or critiques. Her work is intensely small and personal.

How do you write about a woman who makes work from the residue of emotions without that sounding like a trap? Yet she uses these to transfigure the spaces where she shows, and she doesn't ask for a perfect understanding or you to untangle her feelings or for them to be made manifest.

Back in the temple, I stand under the canopy, the _____. I stop, stuck again on the word "like." Similes, they're cheap and easy – and the art writer's stock in trade. Her work is full of holes and approximations, which if you pause on them provide new openings. So, instead I want to stop on the act of approximation and leave that hole open a bit longer. In notes for her thesis, she writes of a friend using a word in a slightly off way. He was describing a fight with his boyfriend as "really heavy scenery" versus "a heavy scene." That small mistranslation delighted her. She calls it "jolting and brilliant.... It's fitting, but not correct. It's saying something but in a fresh and unusual way. It's that little bit of a tweak, that little twist, that perhaps all things need, art and otherwise." It opens up that moment so you see it anew, and that's really a way of describing her work – jolting, awkward, slightly off and maybe a bit embarrassing. She's said she knows a piece works if she's embarrassed by it. What she makes is "really heavy scenery," where you pause on the approximation that never quite fits. Her work allows the image you (or I in this case) would use to describe her to fail.

To be an art writer and have your words ripped out from under you, to experience – as I did in that temple – the very failure of language, is incredibly profound. It felt like a philosophical proposition, as if Newby hasn't just reconfigured the space, but the very way I see the world and the way we try to normalize it by the pasting over the bits that don't fit, by making them understandable, by making them seem like something else. Instead the gaps and trash, patches and emotions, the shonky everyday that she celebrates seems full of limitless possibility.



[1] Sarah Hopkinson, "Kate Newby's Outside," *Incredible Feeling*. Published: Clouds and Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland, 2014 p. 72-73.

[2] <http://www.aucklandartgallery.com/whats-on/events/2012/august/the-walters-prize-2012>

[3] Email with Sarah Hopkinson May 14, 2013.