



ELAM

ART UPFRONT

 **THE UNIVERSITY
OF AUCKLAND**
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
CREATIVE ARTS AND INDUSTRIES®

THE FOYER ART PROJECT 9 – 23 MARCH 2007



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Amelia Harris and Alla Sosnovskaia [The Gus Fisher Gallery, carpark](#) Eileen Leung [Shortland Chambers](#) Ana Horomia [AXA Centre](#) Megan Hansen Knarhoi [The Shortland Centre, Forsyth Barr Tower](#) Brydee Rood [The Shortland Centre, Forsyth Barr Tower](#) Ji Ah Lee [The Shortland Centre, WHK Gosling Chapman Tower](#) Karena Way [The Dorchester Building](#)

Leading the intrepid viewer through the foyers of Shortland Street's glamorous high-rise buildings, Elam Art UpFront is an art trail with a difference. Unlike sculpture parks where visitors move through a cultivated landscape to gaze at a succession of art works placed in natural surrounds, this exhibition, curated by Andrew Clifford, Curatorial Assistant at the Centre for New Zealand Art Research and Discovery, makes art part of everyday life. But the idea of a special trip being undertaken is still part of the concept, signalled by Amelia Harris and Alla Sosnovskaia's art caravan parked outside the Gus Fisher Gallery. This is

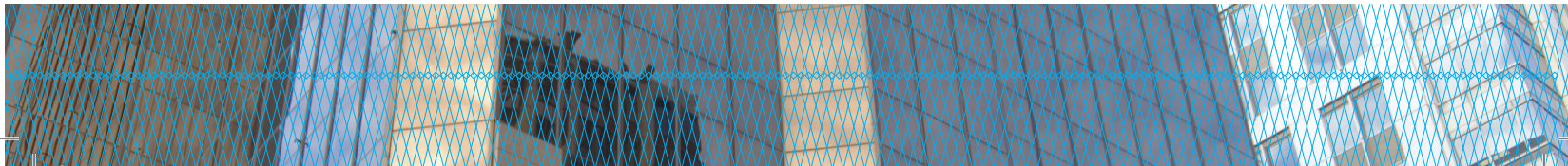
the temporary hub for the creative journey, where the interested traveller can pick up this map of the route.

Six graduating students from Elam School of Fine Arts are exhibiting in nearby foyers: Ana Horomia in the AXA Centre, Megan Hansen-Knarhoi and Brydee Rood in The Shortland Centre's Forsyth Barr Tower, Ji Ah Lee in The Shortland Centre's WHK Gosling Chapman Tower and Eileen Leung in Shortland Chambers. Innovative works, these installations showcase some of the most interesting artists to have emerged from the art school which is New Zealand's oldest, largest and best – Elam School of Fine Arts.

On behalf of the National Institute of Creative Arts and Industries, I would like to thank the companies involved, most particularly The Shortland Centre and The Dorchester Building who have made a financial commitment to the project which has funded the artists' materials. They are to be applauded for their support for innovation and cultivation of a creative knowledge economy.

Professor Sharman Pretty

Dean, National Institute of
Creative Arts and Industries,
The University of Auckland





Amelia Harris and Alla Sosnovskaia

The Gus Fisher Gallery carpark

It is not easy to find a car park in the city, and the gallerists Alla Sosnovskaia and Amelia Harris are grateful to Gus Fisher for letting us park *Mobile Gallery Unit* [M.G.U] outside his gallery. We understand the carpark is available to us from March 9 until March 23. During this time the vehicle will be stationary. The door will remain closed. The light will be on. The supporting struts [2] will be lowered to the ground. The wheel lock will be locked. All the M.G.U staff will be relieved from their duties.

Public! Keep an eye on our caravan!

Eileen Leung

Shortland Chambers

'I want my works to encourage everybody to have fresh experiences of discovering and understanding their surroundings, as if they were new migrants coming to live in a new country,' says Eileen Leung, who is herself a Hong Kong Chinese migrant.

Leung enjoys the fresh perspectives offered by the complexities of ambiguity; the world of opposites; the contradictions of life. Multiple or double-meanings, like a pun, release the artist's grip on a work, allowing the audience to determine the result without having to arrive at a definitive, singular conclusion. Ambiguity and contradiction, like the mysterious expression of the Mona Lisa or the optical illusions of Escher, propose a dual reality and leave room for thinking. As the ancient Greeks noted, it is difference rather than similarity that creates harmony.

In discussing the viewer's understanding of his work, Surrealist artist Salvador Dali once commented: 'If you have understood me, let me know, and I will try to make you uncertain again.' Leung's work recalls the way the Surrealists created images that are so surreal that they seem dreamlike, or are so dream-like as to be more real than reality, or surreal. Her structures play with perception, using translucent materials and fluid, uncertain forms that are strangely familiar. They refer to real objects, abstract form, traditional Chinese painting, organic shapes, domestic goods and cartoon-style drawing. They are intricate and loose, delicate and durable, serious and comic. They are reflections of her understanding of art and perception of everyday life.

Andrew Clifford



Colorful series, 2006 (detail)

Ana Horomia

AXA Centre



Untitled, 2006 (detail)

To articulate the space she is working in, Ana Horomia first looks for the overlooked. Choosing some incidental piece of architecture, she uses a die to cut the shape out in white card. Multiples of these shapes are arranged in serried ranks, their backs glowing with fluorescent chartreuse, magenta, pink, green and orange. Each colour forms a continuous line of bright reflected light, and the effect is like so many electrified arrows. It assists with the speed of passage through the space like the faring on a motorcycle, but also slows you down to notice how movement through internal circulatory spaces is directed and controlled, down passages and stairs, through foyers and out of exits.

This traffic analogy suits the associations of fluorescent colour. Day-Glo, an American company founded in 1946, originally manufactured fluorescent

paints for use on road signs. Fluorescent clothing is worn by road workers and cyclists to make them stand out. In the post-OSH environment of public and corporate spaces, visibility is paramount for any potential hazards, including errant art works. But by using reflected light to colour the shadow the card casts on the wall, Horomia draws attention not only to the reliable optical behaviour of fluorescence, but also to the expectation that patterns will be stable and predictable. Look for the breaks and hiccoughs in her lines, designed to focus attention and momentarily halt progression through the space.

Linda Tyler

Brydee Rood

The Shortland Centre, Forsyth Barr Tower

Brydee Rood's *Wasabi Whale Roll* presents a challenge to many of the traditional ideals of a corporate environment. Unlike the ultra-shiny, ultra-new surfaces and hard-edged lines reflected in the design of the Forsyth Barr Tower of the Shortland Centre, *Wasabi Whale Roll* consists of candy-coloured, spongy organic forms that thread their way across the floor space of the foyer. The work is composed of supermarket bags, plastic packaging and shrink wrap – junk to so many of those who inhabit the urban environment. Recycled through the process of art-making, these materials are infused with a new life.

Building on themes explored within her wider practice, Rood presents a visually enchanting, texturally touchable work with an innocuous title that belies the confrontational associations surrounding the work.

Highly topical, particularly with the stand-off between Greenpeace and Japanese whaling ships in the Antarctic, is the issue of Japanese whaling and the tradition of eating whale meat in Japan. Equally topical is the broader issue of human consumption and waste, as well as plastic clogging our oceans and the insides of marine mammals. In spite of the artist's playful approach, rather than moralistic stance, (the beauty of Rood's whale gut, for example, is tied in with the exquisite presentation of consumable products in Japan) a feeling of unease is evoked regarding the impact of consumerist culture on the environment, a feeling perhaps heightened by the work's placement in a corporate building.

Winsome Wild



Wasabi Whale Roll, 2007 (drawing)



1 The Gus Fisher Gallery
Kenneth Myers Centre
74 Shortland Street
(for info and maps)
Amelia Harris and
Alla Sosnovskaia
carpark



2 Shortland Chambers
70 Shortland Street
Eileen Leung



3 The Shortland Centre
Forsyth Barr Tower
55-65 Shortland Street
Brydee Rood
Megan Hansen Knarhoi



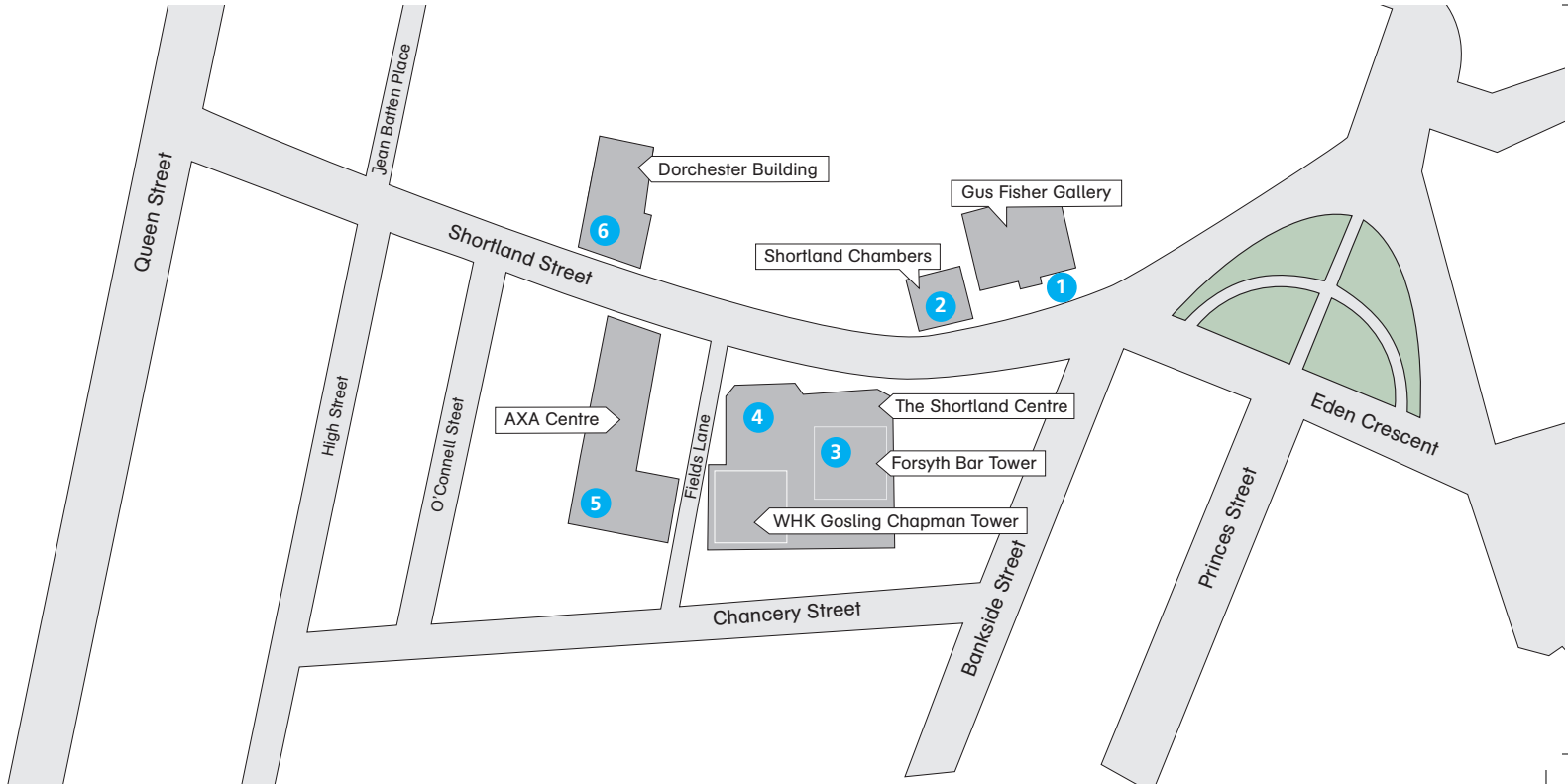
4 The Shortland Centre
WHK Gosling
Chapman Tower,
51-53 Shortland Street
Ji Ah Lee



5 AXA Centre
41 Shortland Street
Ana Horomia



6 The Dorchester Building
34 Shortland Street
Karena Way





Megan Hansen Knarhoi

The Shortland Centre, Forsyth Barr Tower

With a grandmother who crocheted, and a mother whose part-time job was seaming the sides of woollen garments, it is no wonder that Megan Hansen-Knarhoi learned to stitch and bitch at an early age. Working as a Gallery Assistant during *Bright Paradise*, the first Auckland Triennial, in 2003, she met her destiny. Artist Ani O'Neill recruited her to teach visitors how to crochet a flower as part of *The Buddy System*. The rest is craft history – Hansen-Knarhoi was hooked.

The woollen thread led her to complete an MFA at Elam in 2006. Her final submission decorated the gentlemen's conveniences in Mount Street with a pegboard of aphorisms and a full complement of black and white reversible breasts, replete with sugary pink nipples. This kit of barbs and boobs was 'the manifestation of my interest in and continuing research into sex, sexuality, ethnicity, colour stereotypes and

signifiers and religion,' the artist declared, adding that they were also 'tasty titbits'.

Such a heavy load is worthy of at least an underwire, and here it is, a woolly excursion into the hard surfaces of corporate space. Weighty matters get translated into a few looping yarns, hung up for patient passersby to unravel. For once, the artist is content to pose questions about art, craft, beauty and ugliness without the answers being all sewn up.

Linda Tyler

Ji Ah Lee

The Shortland Centre

'Is it the human condition to feel isolation, even among friends?'

Standing on the outside, looking into an otherwise empty retail space which features Ji Ah Lee's multi-media works, the viewer may first catch a flicker of their own reflection in the glass. This mirroring (or extension of a single identity) is echoed within Lee's filmed performances, which she describes as a 'manipulation of... an identity that exists in my inner "other" life... my psychic reality'. Ji Ah Lee autobiographically uses herself as subject, intimately exposing and exploring her experience of assimilation, from a Korean culture into a New Zealand one. Just as the glass shop front provides a barrier to a closer interaction with the works, the process of adaptation to an entirely different culture is fraught with communication barriers on a number of levels,

creating isolation and alienation, and a sense of being on the outside.

Drawing on influences from both cultures, Lee's moving image works are dream-like and as such are highly mesmerising. It is strangely compelling watching the greenish sludge being poured onto the heads of the mirror-image artists and into Lee's mouth in a never ending stream. If, as Lee states, this liquid represents the negative reactions the artist experienced during the process of adaptation, in a deeply visceral way, the work fulfils Lee's intention of communicating what it means to be 'other'. Displayed in a shop space, which is close to a Japanese restaurant and seats where people may drink tea and coffee, the work is at once at home, yet also out of place.

Winsome Wild

All quotes taken from Ji Ah Lee's artist's statement, Elam end of year exhibition, November 2006



Untitled, 2006 (film still)



Karena Way

The Dorchester Building

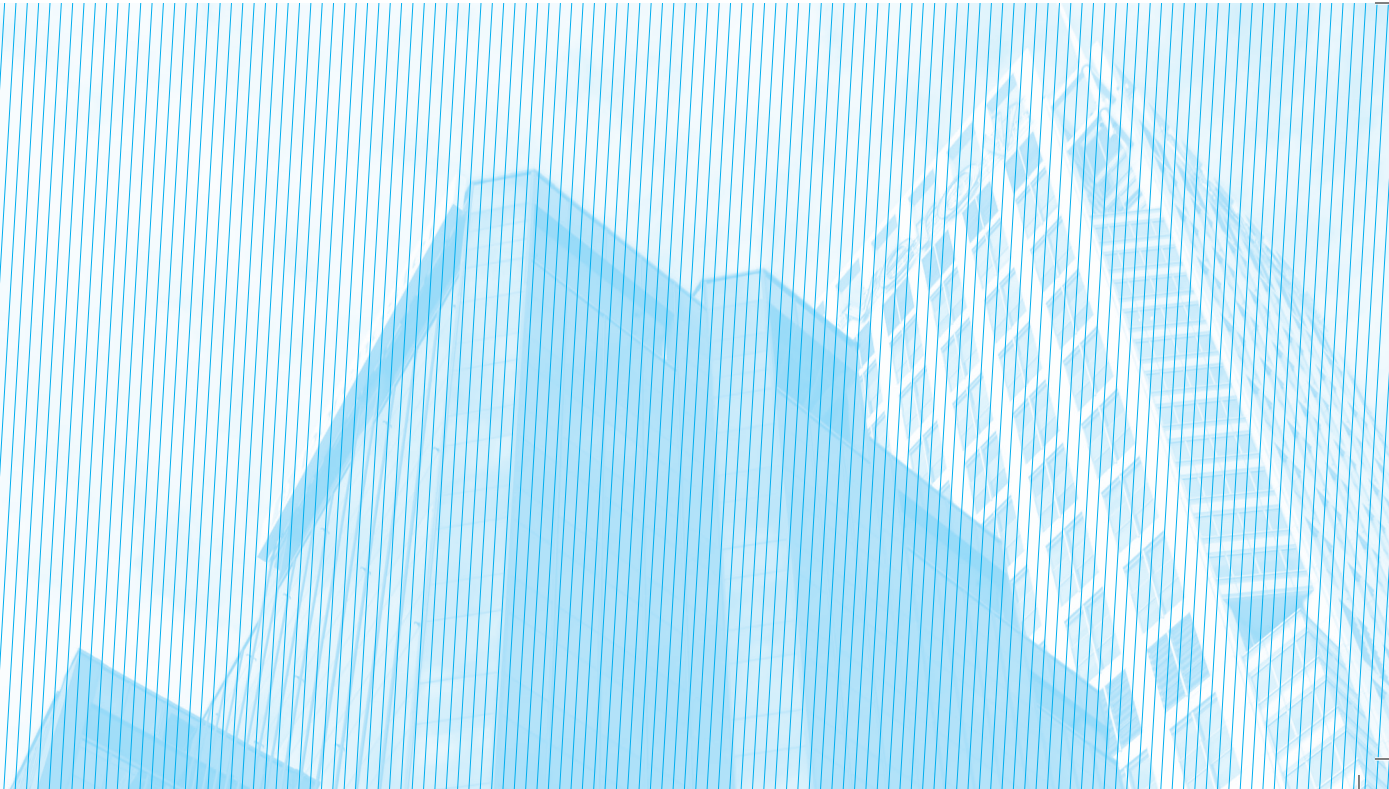
Collecting images of bollards, Karena Way provides a taxonomy of industrial objects framed as sculptural motifs. Worn, scarred and marked with evidence of their individual histories, they are laid out in a formal grid for analysis. Captured and processed using only digital techniques, and printed with highly saturated colours, they emphasise our relationship with the contemporary urban environment.

On land, bollards are usually boundary markers, distinguishing the roadside from the footpath, preventing egress from one area to another, or simply dividing territories. Nautical bollards, however, play a distinct role. They function as a tethering point, securing and connecting sea vessels to the more secure environs of land. They recall journeys to or from home and reference the arrival and departure

of tourists and migrants, as well as the constant traffic of commercial craft.

Way is also interested in recent debate about New Zealand's foreshore and seabed. Her work references this contested liminal zone, noting the layers of history embedded not only in the land but also in transitional spaces, which are neither land nor sea, yet retain their own history of movement and activity. Located on Shortland Street, which was once Auckland's waterfront, Way's photographs provide a mooring point from which to contemplate the transformation of Auckland.

Andrew Clifford



Acknowledgements

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