

ANOTHER  
DESTINATION

CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY TE PUNA O WAIWHETU

16 NOVEMBER 2007 - 16 MARCH 2008

THE READY-MADES OF MARCEL DUCHAMP (1887-1968) WERE A NEW APPROACH THAT CHALLENGED ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT HOW ART IS MADE BY PROVIDING ORDINARY, FOUND OBJECTS WITH WHAT HE TERMED 'ANOTHER DESTINATION'.<sup>1</sup>

Contemporary artists such as those in **Another Destination** also give their choice of media a new identity and context. These five Canterbury artists all work in idiosyncratic ways and have employed a wide range of techniques and materials. Mapping their own paths and departure points, they explore artistic processes and concepts that relate to communication, the environment, biology and social constructs. Using natural objects, animal skins, a computer-generated drawing programme and video installations, they create new meanings and alternative viewpoints which hint at the many ways we view the world around us.

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Rachel Brunton's sculptures usually develop out of an analysis of a given space. Using technology to shift dimensions, she manipulates the impact of her work on the viewer. Her interactive computer-generated drawing programme, *stem parametro*, creates swathes of sculptural lines that travel from one point to another. Based on mathematical algorithms, the patterns and repetitions of these crystallised forms evoke a sense of the physical and biological energy in all living matter. 'Stem' suggests the stem of a flower or a long, narrow connective element, and 'stemming the flow'. These

connotations work in tandem with the many aspects of 'parameter'. For instance, the work incorporates a family of curves and is a dynamic system of causal factors that define its appearance (and in computer science 'parameter' is a reference or value passed to a command or programme). Lines, tubes and smoky flourishes are created by shifting the mouse, as each person who interacts with the work creates their own sophisticated doodles. As the artist says, 'The use of digital tools offers new ways of interpreting, manipulating and visualising the world around us. Creating digital art using software as a medium enables [a] response from the viewer, control of their surroundings and forms a direct connection to the artwork.'<sup>2</sup>

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Parameters and boundaries are also evident in Francesca Heinz's painting *Bloodlines*. A mass of untanned and stretched sheepskins are arranged on the corner of the wall beneath a grid of red ribbon. These appear to cage the work and emphasise an association with modernist abstraction, a genre that the artist has explored. The quilt-like appearance of the skins also evokes comfort and warmth, the beautiful and the grotesque and the idea of shedding and growth. Like the artists of Arte Povera,

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Cover: Rachel Brunton **stem parametro** (detail) 2007, interactive digital installation. Courtesy of the artist

TE PUNA O WAIWHETU  
CHRISTCHURCH  
ART GALLERY



Heinz employs materials not usually associated with art-making. The use of animal skins has spiritual and ritualistic associations, as seen in the work of German artist Joseph Beuys, and conjures up the idea of a corporeal surface upon which to project ideas and inscribe meaning. Skin in shamanism represents the boundary between this world and the next, and Heinz's parchment canvases speak of the tension between inner and outer, what is concealed and revealed.

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The installations of Simon Lawrence tap into the unseen and show a fascination for the interplay of inner and outer, but in a different way from Heinz. Science and fiction, new age phenomena, experiments and dreams are alluded to through the use of common objects and materials such as cardboard, electrical devices and video projection. *The Access Point*, a transportation portal to a distant room via the Gallery's air-conditioning system, *The Plant Room*, a video of what is happening at the other end of the device, and an arcane drawing, *Iron Jaw*, combine to suggest an inexplicable scene taking place in the inner core of the Gallery. It seems Lawrence wants us to collude with his fictitious scenarios and parodies as we follow the camera on its journey through the plant room. This (usually) non-public environment, replete with a fleeting figure in a white coat, aluminium air ducts, industrial blue doors and fluorescent lighting, is presented to Gallery visitors as an uncanny realm of sinister research and analysis.

A critique of social constructs and 'how they define us, make us seen'<sup>3</sup> is relayed in James Oram's video installation *Self Generating*. In order to remain a visible, viable entity, a lighting rig spelling out the word 'ME' is powered by Oram's strenuous efforts on an exercycle. His performance encompasses notions of ego, that of his real self and the concept of 'self' as defined by the word 'me'. As he explains, 'The real me powers the lightbulb image of me, resulting in the real me being made visible. The amount of effort put into powering the image of me relates directly to how I am seen.' His use of a bicycle as the mechanism to activate a rhetorical and actual identity summons a comparison with Duchamp's 1914 *Bicycle Wheel*. However, Oram uses physical exertion to the point of pain to describe a psychological process of struggle for attainment, while Duchamp's ready-made is characterised by a 'beauty of indifference'. Oram is symbolically put in the limelight when the bulbs sparkle through his energy, yet the piece ends when his body can no longer physically 'match the needs of the concept/ego/lightbulb me'.

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Preservation and nature's capacity to thrive and renew itself are central themes in the work of Zina Swanson. *Some people's plants never flower...* continues a body of work that combines drawing and sculpture. Swanson's mixed media drawings using tea stains, ink, pencil and plant parts depict images of delicate hybrid forms. These drawings, like the sculptures they reflect, convey a tenderness towards organisms

that hover on the brink between life and death. Her sculptural botanical tableau includes a range of specimens, filaments of nature, sealed behind glass – insects, seeds, flowers, leaves and webs – as if they are rarities, presenting a taxonomy of our environment. Her delicate ampoules, jars and fragile glass sculptures, a fusion of the natural world and the handmade, are signs of the ephemeral quality of life. As she says, 'There's something about nature and its processes that makes me feel a certain way... like the feeling I get when a bird nearly gets hit by a car... that apprehension of what is going to happen next... when you stop breathing for a few seconds.'<sup>4</sup>

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**Another Destination** exemplifies aspects of current contemporary practice in the Canterbury region while also revealing developments in national and international art. Although the exhibition is diverse in content, similar themes, energies and strategies, such as collecting, drawing, performance and installation, are evident. However, each artist is embarking on a unique journey toward their destination, with their achievements celebrated here by Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu.

1. Marcel Duchamp 'Parle des ready-mades' interview with Philippe Collin, in *Marcel Duchamp* exhibition catalogue, Tinguely Museum, Basel, 2002, p. 38. This interview was held on the occasion of an exhibition devoted to Duchamp's ready-mades, held at the Galérie Givaudan in Paris on 21 June 1967, one year before Duchamp's death.
2. Rachel Brunton, email correspondence, 25 September 2007.
3. James Oram, email correspondence, 10 October 2007.
4. Zina Swanson, email correspondence, 21 September 2007.

# RACHEL BRUNTON

Rachel graduated with a BFA in sculpture from the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts in 2003. She has exhibited in group and solo exhibitions, including **Satellite City** 2002 at Enjoy Gallery in Wellington and **Empire TC9** 2003 at SOFA Gallery in Christchurch.

stem parametro 2007  
Interactive digital installation



# FRANCESCA HEINZ

Francesca will graduate with a BFA in painting (Honours) from the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts in 2008. She has exhibited in group and solo exhibitions in New Zealand, most recently in the 2006 **Graduating Painters Exhibition** and a solo exhibition as part of the emerging artist programme 2007, both at CoCA Centre of Contemporary Art in Christchurch.



**Bloodlines** 2007  
Untanned sheepskins

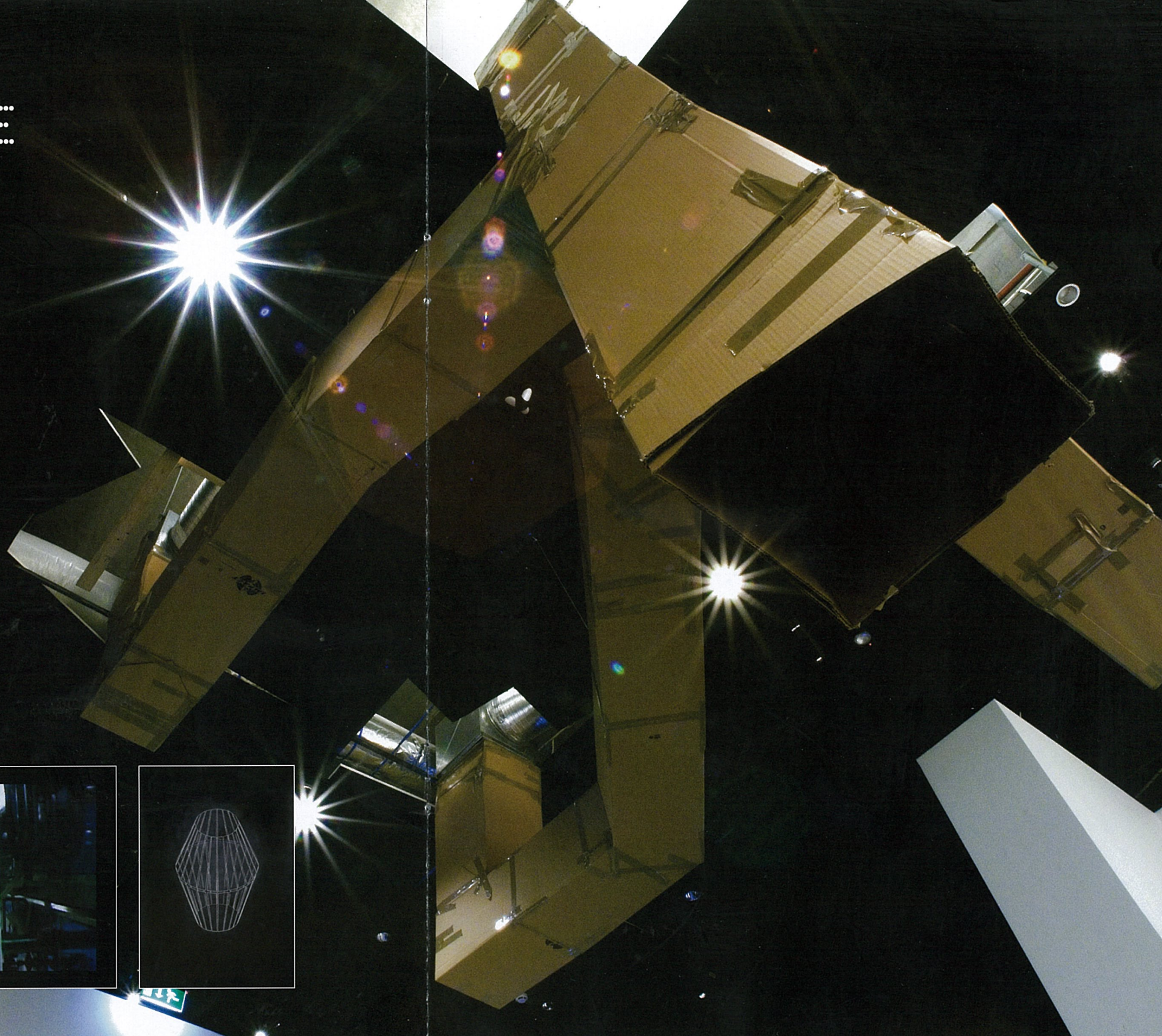
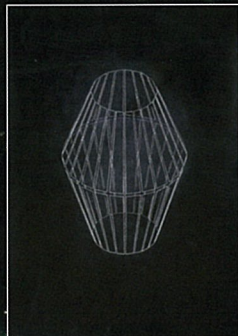
# SIMON LAWRENCE

Simon graduated with a BFA in sculpture from the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts in 2000. He has exhibited in group and solo exhibitions in New Zealand and Australia, most recently in **Construct** 2007 at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery in New Plymouth and **Path of the Path** 2007 at the Physics Room in Christchurch.

**The Plant Room** 2007  
Video

**The Access Point** 2007  
Mixed media

**Iron Jaw** 2007  
Ink on paper



# JAMES DRAM

James graduated with a BFA in sculpture from the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts in 2004. He has exhibited in group and solo exhibitions throughout New Zealand, including **Policy Decals for New Habitats** 2006 and **The Good Life** 2007, both at the High Street Project in Christchurch.

# ZINA SWANSON

Zina graduated with a BFA in sculpture from the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts in 2004. She was the 2004 CoCA/Anthony Harper Award winner and has exhibited throughout New Zealand, most recently in untitled solo exhibitions at the High Street Project in 2006 and the Physics Room in 2007.

**Some people's plants never flower...** 2007  
Mixed media

**Untitled drawings** 2007  
Mixed media on paper







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