

Arriving in Stages:

*Material-Conceptual
Languages of Response-Ability
within Artmaking*

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor used artificial intelligence tools or generative artificial intelligence tools (unless it is clearly stated, and referenced, along with the purpose of use), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed:

Date: 27th February 2026

Abstract

Arriving in Stages is a practice-led artistic research project with a twofold focus: to expand material-conceptual languages as ethical and aesthetic through artmaking, and to explore art's capacity to engage with political and ethical conditions within civic-social realms of relating in temporal and provisional ways. In a time marked by political instability, social division, and ecological crisis, *Arriving in Stages* positions artmaking as a form of civic-social engagement—a format that is generative and sustains an everyday practice of response-ability. Situated within interrelated fields of conceptual and visual media—durational, ephemeral, installation and performance-based, and text-driven formats of making—*Arriving in Stages* employs a related material vernacular to register daily methods of making, such as textiles, participatory formats, and printed ephemera, to support a responsive process of making that remains contingent with everyday socio-political phenomena.

Navigating my own artistic response-ability, this project foregrounds art as a relational practice, attuned to conditions of care, repair, and ultimately love. Grounded in a feminist and relational methodology of care ethics, *Arriving in Stages* explores the ways in which care takes on an additional rhythm and critical rigour when practiced in linkage with a reparative logic and a political alignment with love. Across each of these terms: care, repair, and love, I examine the reciprocal dynamics of response-ability as temporally, conceptually, and grammatically relational within everyday contexts of world in crisis. The project responds to conditions of political division and intersecting social, political, and ecological crises that shape how attention, care, and responsibility are practised as response-abilities everyday life.

My making unfolds through a range of frequencies, ranging from subtle daily activities to more eventful activations, which oscillate from within as an internal registering of things that move outwards into the world as more external modes of artmaking. These shifting registers involve practices of noticing that operate as both method and material—informing the work dialogically, textually, and through embodied encounter.

This research contributes to expanded understandings of the artist's labour by positioning caring, reparative, loving attention as a rigorous, necessary artistic ability. I propose that art's ethical potential is not redemptive, but lies in persistence, relationality, and sustained practice—where art becomes a tool for aligning response with love.

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To my parents. Thank you. Mama, for your unconditional care, and for instilling within me a love of all things whimsical. Thank you, Dad, for being a rock, and for always reminding me to work hard. To my Grandparents, Grannie, and Grandpa. None of this would be possible without you: thank you for your belief in me. It was only through listening to your stories that I had an inkling this project was possible. To Gus, thank you for attending so carefully to our shared life. Thank you for holding the camera, the baby, and the weight of the world, while I play the role of artist. To Baby G, you are the world to me. My family, I love you more than words.

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LIST OF WORKS

Note: Works are listed in chronological order of their starting points.

2019

Memo notes on my mobile phone (August 2019 – ongoing)

Things Happen notes on my mobile phone (August 2019 – ongoing)

In Progress sandwich board sign (September 2019 – ongoing)

Holding On digital moving-image based installation (industrial handle, ratchet tie-down, double-sided projection, metal frame, November 2019)

2020

Urgent-Hopeful banner (white text applique on red cotton, 108x32cm, January 2020)

Hard-Hat Thinking Terrain banner (black text applique on yellow cotton, 107x53cm, January 2020)

Office-Place Morale red vinyl text installed in studio (various dimensions, February 2020)

What Logic? banner (orange text applique on black cotton banner, 48x76cm, February 2020)

Sibling Kinship banner (off-white cotton applique on blue cotton, loose thread, 59x105cm, February 2020)

The Weight of Care banner (white text applique, pink polyester, 140x186cm, February 2020)

YEAH! This Sucks! Half-Time Oranges banner (fuchsia satin applique text on pale-pink cotton, sewn and glued, 225x110cm, March 2020)

Half-Time Oranges event (in studio, cut orange segments, eaten under a banner, March 2020)

Reckoning-Remembering banner (yellow text applique on blue cotton, 195x48cm, March 2020)

Handbag Banner (test flight) banner (15x5cm, orange cotton text applique on orange cotton, 46x23cm, April 2020)

Lockdown Banner: Spatially, Socially, banner (pink text applique, yellow cotton, 48x72cm, April 2020)

Lockdown Banner: Building the Capacity to Bear It banner (navy text applique on red cotton, 70x28cm, April 2020)

Lockdown Banner: Boys Club Cast Offs banner (pink text applique, blue cotton, 28x31cm, April 2020)

Lockdown Banner: ALPHABET letters (patchwork blue and yellow cotton, 15x25cm, May 2020)

Femme Labour patchwork banner (white text, pink frame, 50x26cm, June 2020)

BEYOND THE BROAD TERMS patchwork banner (lilac cotton text and brown cotton frame, 354x136cm, June 2020)

NOT A CALL OUT, A CALL IN patchwork banner (off-white and yellow cotton, 182x95cm, July 2020)

String Figuring series (cut and arranged lengths of string, July 2020)

Poised for Flight paper scroll (manually punctured text, 15m A3 paper copy paper roll, August 2020)

COLLUM, COLUMN, COLUM vertical patchwork banner (calico text with black cotton frame, 30x120cm, September 2020)

Posts, Pillars, Columns papier mache sculptures (various colours, various dimensions) (October 2020)

SOMEONE'S MAKING A KILLING patchwork banner (pink cotton text with blue cotton framework, 200x173cm, November 2020)

The Orange-Segment Seat square patchwork quilt (ottoman cover, various orange cottons, 120x120cm, December 2020)

2021

Thinking about Mike (Hoskings) note (A4 copy paper, digitally printed text, December 2020 – January 2021)

Inquisitions That Require More Care and **Soft Props to Humour Inquisitions That Require Care** notes (both screenshots, digitally printed, A3 copy paper, January 2021- March 2021)

F■■■ It! Note (A4 copy paper, digitally printed text, April 2021)

Orange Segment Smile self-portrait (digital image April 2021)

Orange Segment Plinth papier mache sculpture (with Nana Babara's crystal bowl, cut orange segments, April 2021)

Studio Weather helium balloons (five transparent latex balloons, oranges, digitally printed text on paper, ribbon, tape, cotton surface, May 2021)

Way Finding Posts papier mache post sculptures (series of seven, various dimensions, various colours, June 2021)

Letter to VC handwritten letter (requesting the VC to install one of my banners in their office, sent via NZ Post Service, awaiting reply, May 2021)

Topical Treatment (revised series of *Posts, Pillars, Columns*, July 2021)

Sports Field of Relation installation (various works, August 2021)

Half-Time Oranges (reiteration) gifted oranges (at the time thought to be approximately half-way through research, September 2021)

(Lockdown) Fence Banners hand painted MDF signs (series of six, installed roadside on my home fence, September 2021-December 2021)

Doomscroll I notes from my iPhone (digitally printed A3 copy paper, joined with tape, 29x730cm, October 2021)

Screenshot Memo Pad notepad (A5 copy paper, 150 digitally printed black and white screenshots, bound, December 2021)

2022

Renting, Right? sandwich board sign (yellow paper, handwriting, permanent marker, tape, January 2022)

@milestheorange Instagram account (February 2022-ongoing)

Doomscroll II paper scroll (digitally printed text, A3 copy paper roll, 30m length, March 2022)

Foam Doorway expanding foam arch (200x176cm; scaled to the size of my front door, April 2022)

Flash Card Words digitally printed ephemera (A4 yellow copy paper, May 2022)

Doomscroll III paper scroll (digitally printed A3 copy paper, joined with tape, 1300x42cm, June 2022)

Memo Pad (365-leaf bound a5 copy paper printed screenshots, July 2022)

Institutional Earth-Quaking (expanding foam doorway; scaled to the size of studio door August 2022)

Handbag Banners (dimensions variable, fabric scraps, August 2022)

System Flash Cards (yellow A4 copy paper, digitally printed ephemera, August 2022)

Miles Map drawings (freeform, 2022-ongoing)

-Leave Of Absence-

2024

That'll Cost Us aluminium receipt spike (tin foil sculpture, thermal paper, screenshots, July-August 2024)

Bad Jelly (And a Failed Attempt at Humour) (July 2024)

Miles the Orange (mascot/costume event-based politics, July 2024)

Big Worm: Feather Boa (Constrictor) plush giant pink worm (magenta non-woven polypropylene soft sculpture, 340cm, recycled polyester fibrefill, July 2024)

Noting (thermal paper scroll of *Memo*, August 2024)

Never Too Much video-based installation (*Miles* felt-body activation) HD digital video, single channel colour, sound. 7 minutes 30 seconds, August 2024)

Critic and Conscience balloons (162 printed yellow latex balloons, August 2024-ongoing use)

Come, Complain! event (helium filled *Critic and Conscience* balloons, complaint slips, August 2024)

2025

Arriving in Stages (Newsletter) (weekly series, March-May 2025)

Role Play: Mile's Parent/Infant Banner Vests (orange felt, various banners, May 2025)

Half-Time Oranges (Authorised by Miles) boxed orange (individually packaged oranges, ephemera, June 2025)

The Inflatable banana (yellow polyethylene table cover windsock, 274cm July 2025)

Comically Large Orange Balloons (orange latex balloons, July 2025)

I Only Live in Feeling inflatable balloon with text (reused orange polyethylene table cover, black text, 137x274cm, August 2025)

Half Time Oranges boxed orange (Talk Week Edition, Authored by Miles, August 2025)

AIS System (black box of project 'kit', August 2025)

An Exercise in Trying Miles felt-body (attempting to blow up a balloon at Opahi Bay, Mahurangi West. HD digital video, single channel, colour, sound. 4 minutes 28 seconds, September 2025)

Prop Table (Trapezoidal pine plywood surface, pine trestle legs. Surface dimensions: top width 100cm, bottom width 240cm, edges 69cm, October 2025)

Salt Dough Plaque (salt dough, PLA plaque, hand pressed lettering, October-December 2025)

Alphabet Tiles (Fruit Shop Style) (November 2025-ongoing)

The Story About the Tomato and the Banana banner (wax text, November 2025)

PROLOGUE:

SETTING: THE TABLE / TWO MINUTES

It is two minutes to midnight. I'm seated at an impossibly large round table, the other end just visible beneath harsh fluorescent lights. Around me, voices gather—a chorus of care and concerns shaping the scope of this research. Everyone I love is here, both living and passed: my now two-year-old toddler, my partner, my parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins. My friends, colleagues, dance teacher, and physiotherapist sit shoulder to shoulder with RuPaul Charles, Eve Sedgwick, Dolly Parton, bell hooks, and Ocean Vuong.

By the exit, Miles the Orange is preparing a mounted platter of orange segments beneath a banner that reads: *I only live in feelings*. Lauren Berlant, Sara Ahmed, Donna Haraway, and Eve Sedgwick lean forward from their seats, urging me to stay with the trouble of love, repair, care, and feminism. My great-grandfather Pop has left a typewritten note taped to the underside of the table: instructions for how to maintain his grandfather clock.

Across from me, David Seymour hammers at his laptop, drafting a divisive bill that will take far longer than two minutes. Brian Tamaki appears beside me, headset crackling, calling my name and demanding that I “man up” while forcing a donation basket between me and the table. Andrew Tate leans in to inform me that it doesn't matter if I “want to be a lawyer, a homemaker, or a webcam girl—that without a man directing me, I'm bound to “f[REDACTED] it up.” Some seats remain empty. Where the hell is Luxon?

The bogeyman of capitalism rings the work bell over the loudspeakers, while the spirit of climate crisis turns up the central heating. My many ghosts of colonial shame careen around the room on office wheelie-chairs, laughing and screaming. The bigfoot of gender leans close and whispers that I don't belong here—that this table isn't meant for me as a lower-class and gender-full woman with an infant in tow.

In the corner, a thermal printer clatters to life, spooling an already pooling paper trail: a mounting list of political, civic, social urgencies for those seated at the table to attend to. It reads:

2019

January: Hottest month to date in New Zealand
Wildfires force thousands from Nelson homes
Christchurch Mosque shootings
Wellington Central Library closes
Sri Lankan Easter Bomb Attack
Concerns over white supremacy at the University of Auckland
Plastic bag ban kicks in
Protect Ihumātao
Brexit manifests
Amazon rainforest wildfires spark global ecological concern
Hong Kong protests escalate over extradition bill
School Strike 4 Climate draws 170,000+ NZ students nationwide
Syrian Civil War continues; Turkish forces attack Kurdish-held areas
U.S.-Iran tensions escalate over drone strikes and tanker incidents
India revokes Kashmir autonomy, sparking regional tensions with Pakistan
U.S. withdraws from INF nuclear treaty with Russia
North Korea resumes missile tests after collapse of nuclear talks

2020

Doomsday clock is set at 100 seconds to midnight
Australian wildfires turn Aotearoa skies orange
New Zealand declares quarantine protocol in response to coronavirus
New Zealand closes its borders to passengers from China
WHO declares the name of the virus as Coronavirus
Royal albatross chick hatches live on DOC cam
Confirmed cases of COVID-19 in NZ
NZ borders close to non-residents
Four-level alert system announced: Entire nation enters lockdown
National State of Emergency declared
NZ population reaches 5 million
NZ government announces Three Waters Reform Program
Steps to tackle poverty: Free lunches rolled out at public schools
Black Lives Matter Rally, Aotea Square
Matariki made a national public holiday
National Rally for Freedom, Aotea Square
Napier floods
Aotearoa's first transgender Miss New Zealand announced
Labour-led Government declares climate emergency
George Floyd's murder sparks global protests, including in NZ
Jacinda Ardern wins landslide re-election for Labour Party
First successful COVID-19 elimination declared in NZ
Euthanasia referendum passes; cannabis referendum narrowly fails
Brian Tamaki arrested over repeated lockdown protest breaches
Freedom & Rights Coalition stages large protests COVID mandates
U.S. drone strike kills Iranian general Qasem Soleimani
Armenia-Azerbaijan war breaks out over Nagorno-Karabakh
Yemen war intensifies amid worsening famine and COVID-19
Iran announces withdrawal from 2015 nuclear deal limits
North Korea unveils massive ICBMs at military parade

2021

Storming of the US Capitol, Washington DC
Bomb threat closes Gisborne airport
National COVID-19 vaccine rollout announced
AIDS at lowest rate since early 2000s
Broadcasting Standards Authority no longer accepts complaints based on Māori language use
NZ becomes the second country to facilitate paid bereavement leave after miscarriage or stillbirth
Four people were injured in a stabbing attack at a Dunedin supermarket
The average NZ house price passes \$1 million
Christopher Luxon elected leader of the National Party
Hate speech becomes a criminal offence
Three Waters reform announced
Dawn Raid apology from Prime Minister Ardern
Nurses strike over pay and working conditions
Australia, US and UK announce AUKUS
Freedom Convoy protest on Parliament Grounds
Delta variant triggers new NZ lockdowns
Taliban retakes Afghanistan: NZ evacuates citizens
Myanmar military coup sparks nationwide armed resistance
Israel-Gaza conflict erupts in May; hundreds killed
Tigray War escalates in Ethiopia; humanitarian disaster worsens
U.S. and Russia extend New START nuclear arms treaty
AUKUS pact to supply Australia with nuclear-powered submarines
Iran enriches uranium to 60%, nearing weapons-grade

2022

Volcanic eruption in Tonga
Russia invades Ukraine; full-scale war begins in February
Parliament Grounds protest continues; fires burn
Queen Elizabeth II dies; King Charles named as monarch
First Matariki public holiday
Ram raids and robberies as near-constant news headlines
Daytime meteor visible in Lower North Island
NZ borders open fully for the first time since March 2020
Fire and Emergency Services strike
Tractor protest by Groundswell
Full lunar eclipse happens
Monkeypox cases detected globally, including NZ
NZ inflation reaches 3-decade high
NZ Census data collection begins preparation phase for 2023
Brian Tamaki co-founds umbrella political movement: Freedoms NZ
Freedom & Rights Coalition protests co-governance and vaccine mandates nationwide
NATO expands support to Ukraine; Finland and Sweden apply for membership
Iran suppresses mass protests with deadly crackdowns
Rising tensions between China and Taiwan spark military drills
Putin places Russian nuclear forces on high alert
U.S. and NATO reaffirm nuclear deterrence in response to Russia
North Korea resumes frequent missile tests, including suspected ICBMs

2023

Doomsday Clock is set at 90 seconds to midnight
Auckland flooding; Wayne Brown plays tennis
'Man Up' protestors (linked to Brian Tamaki) disrupt Drag Story Hour at Avondale Library
National climate protests
NZ Educational Institute primary teachers strike
Anti-TERF protest, Albert Park
Primary teachers roll out national strike schedule
School Strike 4 Climate protests occur nationally
Pro-Palestine rally, Ports of Auckland
Several North Island schools go into lockdown over bomb threat
Protest at Te Papa: Ration the Queen's verges
The death of my cousin
Cyclone Gabrielle devastates Hawke's Bay and Gisborne; national emergency declared
Chris Hipkins becomes Prime Minister following Ardern's resignation
General election: National/ACT/NZ First coalition forms government
NZ officially enters a technical recession mid-year
NZ legalises pill testing at music festivals
Brian Tamaki speaks at anti-co-governance rallies
Ukraine retakes territory in counteroffensives
Israel-Hamas conflict intensifies in Gaza
Civil war erupts in Sudan between rival military factions
Azerbaijan retakes Nagorno-Karabakh; mass Armenian exodus
U.S.-China tensions flare over Taiwan naval activity
Russia suspends participation in the New START arms treaty
Belarus hosts Russian tactical nuclear weapons
North Korea legalises nuclear pre-emptive strike policy

2024

The birth of my baby
Waitangi Treaty Grounds and Museum receive bomb threat
Wellington enters a water restriction
National hui held at Tūrangawaewae
40 false killer whales euthanised in Hawke's Bay
Protest of government Māori language policies and proposed Treaty Principles legislation
Three Waters programme repealed under government urgency
Winston Peters likens co-governance to Nazi race-based theory during State of the Nation address
Drag Queen Story Hour cancelled at Rotorua Library due to safety concerns after threats by 'Man Up' members
The nation has entered a recession
School Strike 4 Climate continues
Government ends funding for transport costs: children and students
Toitū te Tiriti nationwide protests
March for Nature Protest against the government Fast Track Approvals bill
Government announces boot camp for youth offenders
Unionised Hato Hone St John Ambulance workers strike in response to pay dispute
Court of Appeal regards Uber drivers as employees, not contractors
Tūheitia Paki, Māori King, dies
Māori Queen named as Ngā Wai Hono i te Pō
Two Muslim schools in Auckland enter lockdown after bomb threats

Dunedin and Wellington schools enter lockdown after bomb threat
 Protesters gather outside the Israeli Embassy in Wellington to protest the escalation in the Israel-Hezbollah conflict in Lebanon
 Protest on health sector cuts at Dunedin Hospital
 Pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian protesters stage competing protests outside TVNZ to mark the anniversary of Israel-Hamas War
 Protesters call on University of Otago to condemn 'Gaza Genocide'
 Pro-Palestinian protesters disrupt NZ First annual conference in Hamilton
 Third National Hui for Unity at Tuahiwi Marae
 First Budget under new government reveals significant public sector cuts
 UN releases damning climate report; sparks NZ climate action marches
 ACT Party proposes referendum on Treaty principles, prompting national protests
 NZ withdraws from UNRWA funding amid Gaza conflict controversy
 Brian Tamaki calls for Christian-based national revival at Auckland protest rally
 Gaza conflict expands; Hezbollah opens second front from Lebanon
 Ukraine war continues amid high casualties

2025

Doomsday clock is set at 89 seconds to midnight
 Wellington water shortages intensify; long-term infrastructure failures dominate national headlines
 Public-sector cuts continue across health, education, social services, and environmental agencies
 Nationwide protests escalate over the proposed Treaty Principles referendum
 University campuses see occupations and teach-ins defending te Tiriti and te reo Māori
 Legal challenges mount against the Fast Track Approvals Bill and environmental deregulation
 Health sector and social service workers undertake rolling strikes over pay and staffing
 UN releases updated climate obligations; Aotearoa faces scrutiny for weakened emissions commitments
 Immigration backlogs reach historic highs amid reduced processing capacity
 Housing crisis deepens as rents rise and emergency housing demand spikes
 Gaza conflict widens into regional war involving Lebanon and Iran-aligned militias
 Ukraine war enters fourth year with heavy casualties and winter energy shortages
 Global temperature records break again following sustained El Niño effects
 UN issues critical report on accelerating ecosystem collapse
 U.S. political figure Charlie Kirk assassinated
 U.S. election-year instability heightens global nuclear-risk discourse
 Politicisation of te reo Māori education becomes a persistent flashpoint
 Lockdowns: school closures due to repeated bomb threats or politically motivated "hoaxes"
 Government removes requirement for schools to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi
 South China Sea tensions escalate amid major naval standoffs
 North Korea conducts further missile tests; nuclear rhetoric intensifies
 Global refugee displacement reaches new highs driven by conflicts including, Gaza, Sudan, and Ukraine

An alarm sounds. Everybody's phones blare in unison. ALERT: It is now 85 seconds to midnight.

INTRODUCTION

Arriving in Stages mobilises art practice to develop and strengthen civic-social response-abilities that respond to a world in crisis. My project's overarching research question asks how, within an everyday socio-politically focused art practice, material-conceptual languages of care, repair and love can enable both civic-social and political alignments with situated practices of living with others, through provisional, durational and multimedia processes of artmaking. This research engages multiple forms and processes of making that are informed by theory, philosophy and practice. My Pākehā subjectivity within settler-colonial contexts of Aotearoa, at a time when the foundational treaty is under threat from the current government, is key to how I position myself as an artist within this research.

In this project, the terms 'civic' and 'social' are joined into the compound 'civic-social,' a move that is methodologically significant in shaping how the research operates across both material and conceptual registers of language. By embracing civic as a key term, I adopt a relational position that emphasises practices of shared world-making over legal or institutional membership. This project's emphasis on civic, therefore, extends beyond categories of citizenship and state governance. I use the term civic to describe how people participate in public life through the ways they inhabit, negotiate, maintain, and take response-ability for shared worlds, whether or not those practices are mediated by the state.

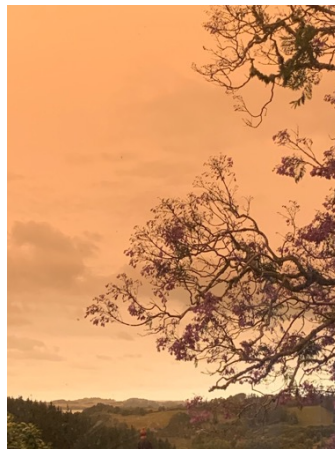
Inquiring how civic-social languages might not only generate but sustain civic-social and political alignments that are connective, I consider how provisional materials and durational processes of making enable practices of caring, reparative and loving activity. My aim throughout *Arriving in Stages* is to position and invite art-viewers to inhabit the role of participant through multiple, overlapping registers that include sensory and embodied, material and provisional, temporal and latent, cognitive and conceptual, ethical and relational registers.

I often notice the breadth and depth of urgencies that *Arriving in Stages* both accumulates alongside and endures. I would go so far as to insist that the timing of this research means that my daily work within this project chronologically unfolds alongside overwhelming and urgent clashes of temporalities, and for more than just myself. The social and political conditions under which I first began this research in the (Aotearoa) winter of 2019 now feel incredibly distant to me in the Summer of 2026, precisely because so many things have happened. Over this timeline, my project has been shaped, sometimes gently, sometimes forcefully, by a constellation of personal and political

shifting forces that impact across multiple layers of my own experience. The first significant event in the arc of this project occurred in January 2020, when the sky above Aotearoa turned a surreal, smoke-hazed orange (figs. 1-2). Carried across more than two thousand kilometres by Asia-Pacific weather systems, the smoke originated from the catastrophic 2019–2020 Australian bushfire season (also known as Black Summer). Though geographically distant, the fires brought intimately proximate atmospheric consequences. While birds mistook daytime for nighttime, people mostly continued their routines—working, commuting, shopping—under an altered light that rendered even the most mundane moments apocalyptic and strange. The stakes of living in a world both metaphorically and literally on fire became weighty and more tangible, not because of global news headlines or reported statistics, but through the atmosphere itself. This lingering orangey presence, both visually and spatially affective, stemmed a shift in my thinking where I began to attend more closely to how such phenomena settle into daily life, as singular, spectacular events, but, more importantly, as slow, large-scale emergencies unfold in more subtle ways alongside and within ordinary daily routines. Ultimately, this experience opened space for me to consider how art might respond emergently and with care in temporal connection with such phenomena.



1



2

Figures 1-2. Images of the orange sky, taken on my phone, from my parents' house in Pōhuhue (Warkworth), January 2020.

Figure 3. My phone, with a Screenshot of COVID-19 National Emergency Alert. Taken March 2020.



3

Just days after the smoke cleared, on January 23, 2020, The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists released their Doomsday Clock¹ statement:

To: Leaders and citizens of the world
Re: Closer than ever: It is 100 seconds to midnight

Humanity continues to face two simultaneous existential dangers—nuclear war and climate change—that are compounded by a threat multiplier, cyber-enabled information warfare, that undercuts society’s ability to respond.²

Marking a significant twenty-second reduction, and its (then) closest approach to metaphorical midnight, the Doomsday Clock’s accompanying statement condemned political positions and systems of disinformation that undercut “society’s ability to respond.”³ This statement struck a deep chord with my project’s concern for language and its modality of text as a method of responding to everyday yet politicised contexts, including the making of art itself. Within the looming threat of there being only one hundred seconds to midnight, the potential impact of artmaking can feel impossibly slight. Yet I couldn’t ignore the significance of these conditions as both backdrop and catalyst for my research, nor the insistence—echoed in the voices of fellow artists, writers and people close to me—that I remain with the discomfort of making art, and of conducting research, within such a politically charged and socially uncertain time.

In the months that followed, the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, initially elsewhere in the world, then here in Aotearoa. Then came the ‘unprecedented’ lockdowns. Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland) was the most affected by lockdowns (by circa six months). While the official message was to “stay home, save lives,” this guidance affected people in unequal ways. Public health measures aimed to reduce the spread of the virus inadvertently highlighted various public positions and attitudes. While many people in lockdown experienced time as newly spacious—enough, perhaps for the first time, to bake bread, sew by hand, or start a home garden—others experienced a heightened sense of inequity. This inequity emerged through differing socio-political and public attitudes toward race, mask-wearing, and work, which can be understood as forms of pervasive social policing rooted in mistrust. Holding these experiences together, rather than reading them as strictly oppositional, is crucial to recognising how the same conditions

¹ Created in 1947 by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, The Doomsday Clock symbolically measures the world’s proximity to global catastrophe, expanding from nuclear threat to include climate change, technological risk, and political instability. In my research, the Clock functions as both a relational and temporal tool, which is materialised through an everyday vernacular; emerging in language, objects, and vernacular processes that respond to the slow burn of crisis.

² Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, “2020 Doomsday Clock Statement: A Retreat from Arms Control Creates a Dangerous Nuclear Reality,” January 23 2020. Viewable online: <https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/2020-doomsday-clock-statement/>.

³ Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, “2020 Doomsday Clock Statement”

generated profoundly uneven relations to time, safety, and care. Rather than treating these experiences as competing claims on time or care, I understand them as coexisting temporal registers: suggesting that there is sufficient temporal capacity (within The Clock's now warning of 85 seconds to midnight)⁴ to attend to both the ordinary rhythms of daily life and the politicised urgencies of the present, if they are held in relation carefully and critically, rather than exclusively through a lens of divisiveness.

Furthermore, as the pandemic unfolded, another movement surged in response to the murder of George Floyd by U.S. police: the urgent resurgence of Black Lives Matter (BLM), drawing attention to decades of racial injustice. Despite a Tāmaki Makaurau-wide lockdown framework, on 1 June 2020 thousands marched in support and solidarity with BLM. Alongside, the *Say Her Name (Breonna Taylor!)* movement gained renewed visibility, highlighting the gendered erasure of Black women and femmes from dominant narratives of police violence, focusing on cases like Breonna Taylor's and demanding accountability for the gendered aspects of colonial state-sanctioned harm.

The rise of anti-Asian racism in COVID-19's wake catalysed a further urgent reckoning within my project regarding my own artistic roles and response-abilities. Mainstream media coverage of the virus, both globally and within Aotearoa, did more than report on public health: it helped shape a politically charged atmosphere of suspicion, fear, and xenophobia. As Radio New Zealand journalist Jess Fu observes, "hysteria around the coronavirus has uncovered deeply rooted anti-Chinese sentiments and xenophobic attitudes."⁵ These racist attitudes spread in step with the virus itself, surfacing across public discourse, digital spaces, and interpersonal encounters.

The U.S. Capitol Riots on January 6 2021, intensified existing senses of urgency and division. Carried out by supporters of then-outgoing US President Donald Trump, this event exposed both the emotional fragility of democratic institutions and the deep social and ideological fissures within American society. For my project in Aotearoa, some 14,000 kilometres away, this event underscores the urgency of examining who is included in the "we" of colonial democratic structures and constitutional documents: who is protected; who is excluded; and alongside this, how might structures of power, care, and responsibility become visible (or invisible), and therefore have a limitation of becoming claimed and co-opted to function in service of the state, as opposed to the collective.

⁴ In January 2026 the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists set the Doomsday Clock at 85 seconds to midnight, the closest to symbolic catastrophe in its history—citing rising nuclear tensions, insufficient global action on climate change, and emerging technological risks amid weakening international cooperation.

⁵ One especially telling example can be drawn from the *New Zealand Herald's* recirculation of a now-notorious video of travel vlogger Wang Mengyun eating bat soup—placed alongside false claims that it was filmed in Wuhan. See Jess Fu, "As Coronavirus Spreads, So Does Xenophobia," *Radio New Zealand*, February 10, 2020. <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/on-the-inside/409137/jess-fu-as-coronavirus-spreads-so-does-racism-and-xenophobia>.

All of this happened within the scope of a calendar year. The present convergence of urgencies during the project's formative stages sharpened my awareness of the inescapable entanglement between hegemonic power, colonial structures, and systemic violence. It propelled my focus beyond a simple noticing of care's ordinariness—and, in other ways, loosened my reliance on what was previously a strictly lens-based practice—toward a more temporally active grappling with civic responsibility and ethical participation. These shifts restricted physical movement yet heightened my need to respond, to act, and to participate. Through these layered and ongoing circumstances, my questioning of art's capacity to respond also grew in urgency, evolving in step with the events themselves.

Multi-Roles and Response-Abilities

Often I experience a felt and partial kind of recognition—a non-verbal “oh yes, what is that?”—not in response to the extraordinary, but to something familiar, ordinary, or even banal, though not powerless. These moments arise when I hear a word used in a particular setting, or when I see materials behaving in approximate, provisional, or uncanny ways. I am continually drawn to practice from within the generativity of noticing these instances, where neither language nor material quite fits, slips, or clicks neatly into place. Instead, they form a kind of pivoting zone: where external meets the internal, and where language and material layer together in forming a provisional response. It is from this type of material-conceptual threshold space—not quite language, not quite form, but a shifting interrelation between—that my artmaking stems.

Early on in this project, I read the word ‘responsibility’ written as “response-ability,” within the introductory chapter of technoscientific feminist theorist and posthumanist writer Donna Haraway’s book *Staying With the Trouble: Making Kin In the Chthulucene* (2016). Haraway describes the current epoch as “a kind of time-place for learning to stay with the trouble of living and dying in response-ability on a damaged earth.”⁶ More than a grammatical shift, reading response-ability in this hyphenated way, and in linkage with a recognition of the direness of contemporary conditions, has enabled my project a means of structuring the scope of my research, as well as a way of thinking and making with ethical, situated, and relational responsiveness. My project frames response-ability as a feminist, relational, and situated ethics, emphasising the capacity to respond to

⁶ Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Duke University Press, 2016), 2.

every day and lived phenomena, through attuned, material, and affective engagement rather than duty.⁷

Considering response-ability through ethicist Kelly Oliver's frameworks positions me as a conduit through which my practice becomes materialised. For Oliver, response-ability emerges through "witnessing" as a situated, affective, and relational practice, where the capacity to respond is inseparable from one's own entangled subjectivity.⁸ Within my project, this means that my methods of making through lists, signage, newsletters, and events do not simply document or reflect response-ability, but recursively instantiate it. The work itself aims to enable material-conceptual sites where witnessing and response-ability are enacted, produced through my attention, labour, and ongoing participation. In this way, the project aims to test various practice-led enactments of Oliver's ethics, where attention, care, and responsiveness are both conceptual and participatory commitments and materially embodied processes. Within this context of a world on fire, at the brink of nuclear-powered warfare, climate change, and increasing social and political division, the central line of inquiry that motivates *Arriving in Stages* is to examine the ethical position and role of the artist, particularly in relation to Donna Haraway's and Kelly Oliver's concepts of response-ability, through practice-led multimedia research.

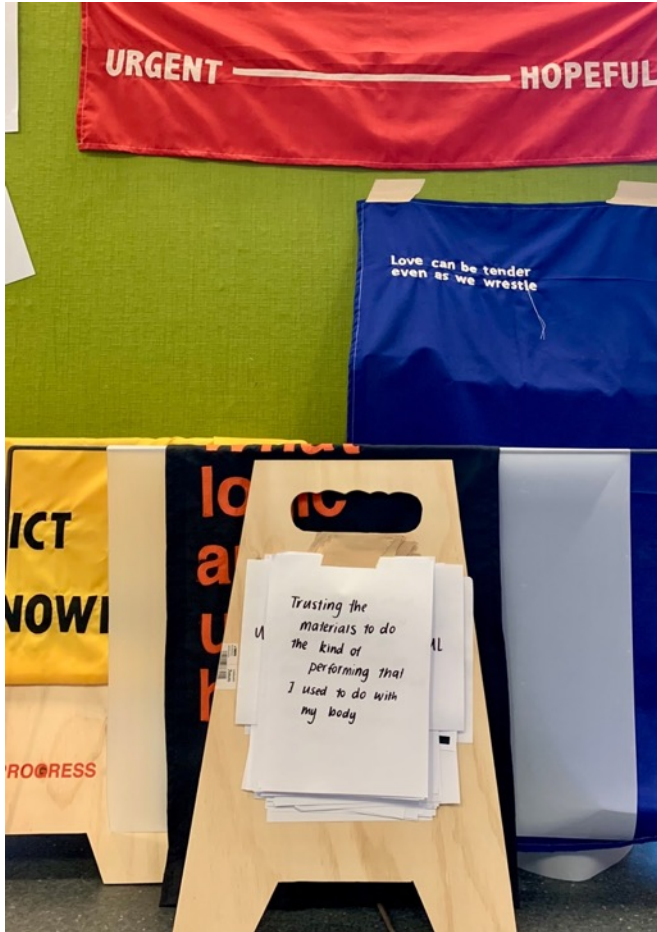
⁷ This formulation of *response-ability* can be read in connection with a broader body of feminist literature, see: Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Duke University Press, 2007); María Puig de la Bellacasa, *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds* (University of Minnesota Press, 2017); Anna Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton University Press, 2015); Kelly Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* (University of Minnesota Press, 2001); Kelly Oliver, "Witnessing, Recognition, and Response Ethics," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 48, no. 4 (2015): 473-93, <https://doi.org/10.5325/phlirhet.48.4.0473>; Kelly Oliver, *Response Ethics* (Oxford University Press, 2018).

⁸ Oliver, *Response Ethics*.

Modalities of Practice:

Arriving in Stages incorporates several different modalities of practice, involving working with text, an orange called *Miles*, and ‘The Table’, which are connected. Ranging in modalities from lists, banners, printed ephemera, inhabitable felt bodies, photographic images, video documentation, balloons, social-media posts, makeshift signage, text, and installation methods, *Arriving in Stages* functions across both conceptual realms and material aspects of practice-led research. Text is a central site through which this project negotiates its key terms as art, and is deeply co-constitutive with my other methods of thinking, writing, reading, listening and ultimately, feeling. Accordingly, text and, by proxy, language is used throughout this project through phrases, notes, banners, stories, captions, and inscriptions, which accumulate significance, drawing together etymology, colloquial use, civic vernaculars, political policies, and poetic registers into layered accounts of meaning. Text offers an access point, both formally and conceptually, through which my accumulative tracing of connections between action, observation, and care, can be read as an engagement with ethics-in-practice. Recognising how texts can also be experienced as less of a stickiness, and more like an alarm bell, I grapple with how text also functions to repel, obscure, or exclude specific ideas and bodies. Official documents, institutional scripts, political statements, and academic writing are frequent activations of text that are responded to across *Arriving in Stages*. As such, the project aims to maintain an ongoing attentiveness to the multiple methodological and ethical positions that emerge through my engagement with different texts.

Important textual modalities within my work include my ongoing and accumulative engagement with two key projects, *In Progress* (figs. 4-6) and *Memo* (fig. 7), both of which I began at the outset of this project in 2019 and have been central to my wayfinding throughout *Arriving in Stages*. *In Progress* is a simple sandwich board sign made of two symmetrical leaning wood panels, modelled on the size and shape of a yellow “slippery when wet” sign. On its wooden surface, I frequently attach makeshift textual paper signs with tape, creating a layered surface that traces my project’s key concerns and cares over time. *Memo* is a textual list maintained on my phone containing a wide range of entries and linguistic-textual registers, including single words, quotes, idioms, definitions, verbatim excerpts, and etymological links.



Figures 4-6. Studio documentation of *In Progress* (January-March 2020)

I add to *Memo* most days, sometimes multiple times per day, and over time, it has become a running list or receipt of things that occupy my emotional brain space within an everyday world in crisis. A sustained attention to what language binds and what it differentiates underpins my ongoing process of noticing. The text I enter into *Memo* becomes a launchpad that activates other aspects of the work, including *In Progress*, banners, printed ephemera, and *Miles*. Across both *In Progress* and *Memo*, language continues to function quietly, not simply as documentation, but as a central mode of active engagement and socio-political wayfinding utilised throughout the project.

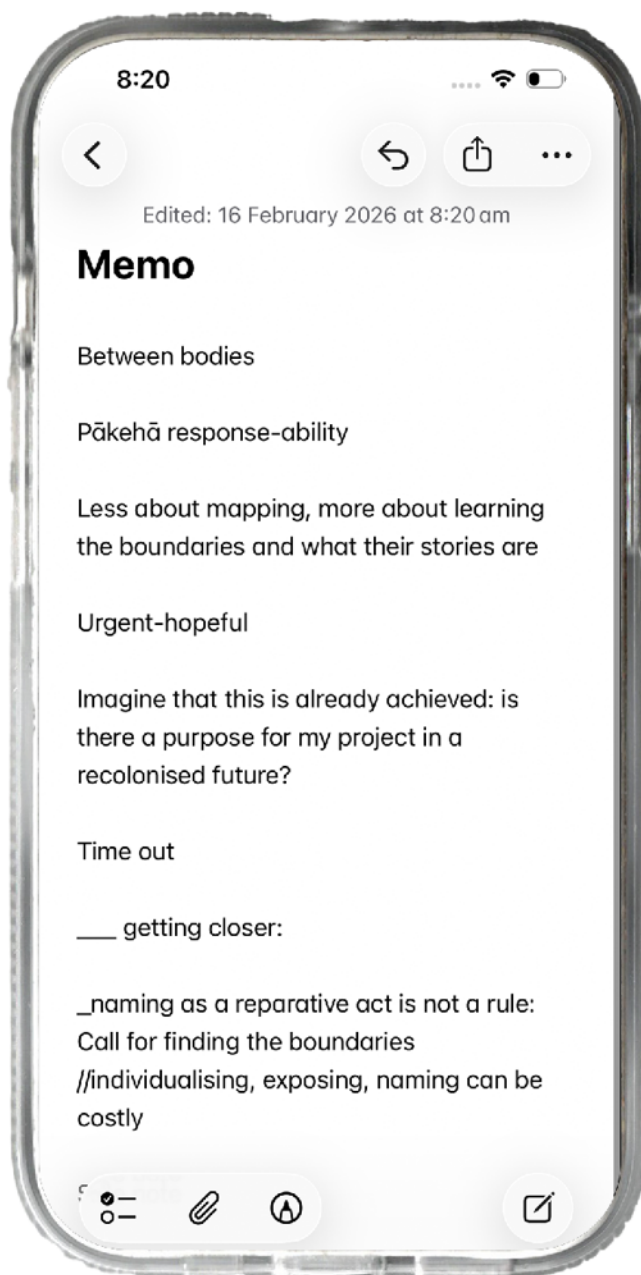


Figure 7. My Phone, with a screenshot of *Memo*'s first entries (screenshot taken February 2026)

Miles is an orange. The fruit and the colour. *Miles* is me, and I am *Miles*, but we are not ‘the same’. Where I am shaped and constrained by the demands and routines of daily life, *Miles* moves with a certain clarity of ethical purpose: noticing, responding, and enacting care in ways I cannot always access. *Miles*, as I understand them now, is multiple and exists across various interlinked material-conceptual registers. They live as a voice in my head, prompting me to notice and respond in reparative ways, as a drawn visual map of doings, tracing acts of care and attention, and as an Instagram presence (@miles-the-orange), where provisional responses can be shared, dispersed, and documented. Over the past year and a half, *Miles* has also manifested as a felt-body that I am able to inhabit physically. Across each of these forms, *Miles* functions as another conduit through which the practice of reparative attention is made tangible. *Miles* offers an important modality for my artmaking, enabling me to conceptually inhabit a reparative stance in everyday life. I see *Miles* as a dynamic and vernacular method that challenges me to create openings for the prioritisation of care, connection, and repair. *Miles* aims to test how reparative logic can extend into a living method for engaging with both material and social worlds, and for shaping art that is generative, responsive, and deeply attentive to the ordinary as well as the extraordinary.



Figure 8. Drawing of *Miles* for @miles-the-orange (January 2026)



Figure 9. (above) *Miles* felt-body (inhabited) in my AUT studio, image by Monique Redmond, August 2025.

Figure 10. (below) *Miles* felt-body (uninhabited), in my AUT studio, August 2025.

Throughout *Arriving in Stages*, the expanded role of tables has allowed for the different kinds of relational and often provisional configurations my project inhabits. For example, a table of contents, a table of voices, a table of data, a studio table, a ‘smoko’ table, as well as makeshift and temporary work-surfaces (like library desks, polling booths, park benches, play-mats, change-tables and floor surfaces) and conceptual spaces (knitting charts, shopping lists, calendars). These overlapping ways of considering tables generate my layered material and method-based approaches. Tables have functioned as both physical and metaphorical sites for the assembly of this project. It is a place where the range of voices that inform and impact my work come into proximity to be heard and held, sometimes in tension. As a project metaphor, and in connection with the prologue that opens this writing, ‘The Table’ is a speculative and methodological tool: a way of thinking-with those in conceptual and ethical alignment, while also making space for voices that are oppositional, politically inflammatory, or uncomfortable.⁹ I consider The Table an ethical structure, an ongoing invitation to civic participation and socio-political discourse, that maintains an active material and conceptual connection to the imagined site described in the prologue. It is an imagined site I return to repeatedly, a microcosm of conflicting ideas and uneven power, and a space where attention, accountability, and dialogue must be continuously negotiated. The Table, as both a physical object and a metaphor, reflects how *Arriving in Stages* is constituted through a vernacular of ordinary, widely accessible materials, often found on—or already in relation to—tables. My project’s approach to materiality is therefore drawn from my own everyday experiences with vernacular methods and materialities, such as text, textile, tape, paper, cardboard, or balloons. This is not incidental, but both conditional and integral to the role The Table plays in this research. Through my repeated return to it, both conceptually and physically, this project tests the capacities of artistic practice, and of myself, to invite, host, support, and hold others. While the key modalities of text, *Miles*, and The Table each take on distinct forms through their activation of related methods, materials, processes, and tempos of making, they collectively demonstrate how specific and ordinary practices such as lists, banners, makeshift signage, balloons, inhabitable felt bodies, drawing, photographic and video documentation, social media posts, and installation components are each capable of generating and sustaining my commitment to practicing with ethical response-ability, both as an artist and as a member of society.

⁹ See Prologue: Setting; *The Table*, 5



Figure 11. *Prop Table* in use, October 2025. Trapezoidal pine plywood surface, pine trestle legs. Trapezoid surface dimensions: top width 1 metre, bottom width 2.4 metres, edges: 69 centimetres.

As I near the completion of this exegesis in the opening months of 2026, I am thinking about The Doomsday Clock's most recent statement: "It is now 85 seconds to midnight."¹⁰ The Clock's 2026 statement identifies similar dangers to its warning of 89 seconds the year prior, and with accelerated urgency. Describing how political leaders are adopting "increasingly aggressive, adversarial, and nationalistic" practices of governance and global decision-making,¹¹ the current time of 85 seconds reflects a political climate that privileges control, division and exclusion. Approaches of aggression, adversary and nationalism, at a surface level, might be thought of as methodologically separate from the practices of care, repair, and love that guide this project. Yet it is precisely this climate of intensifying division and domination that necessitates and translates a sense of urgency, and mobilises my hopefulness toward the valuing of methodologies grounded in ethics of both political and civic-social responsibility. Correspondingly, by positioning this project within the temporal moment, I am repeatedly turning my attention to how artmaking can become a form of reparative as well as politicised civic and social response to collective conditions.

¹⁰ Science and Security Board, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, "2026 Doomsday Clock Statement. January 27, 2026." The Bulletin. <https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/2026-statement/>

¹¹ Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, "2026 Doomsday Clock Statement"

A Brief Note on the Order of Chapters to Follow:

Reflecting the temporal nature of the project itself, each chapter of this document extends that chronological logic to the writing, guiding the reader through the development of ideas, methods, and material engagements over time. Building from these foundational experiential frameworks, the chapters that follow trace the broader contours of the project, moving from conceptual framing to practice-based emergence. *Chapter One: Field of Relations* situates the research within a broader discourse of artistic, critical, and theoretical literature, exploring how care, repair, response-ability, and situatedness, become interlinked with civic-social, participatory, and everyday socio-political practices. *Chapter Two: Arriving Logics* articulates my project's navigations of care, repair and love as co-constitutive methodological as well as ethical frameworks which guide my project toward attentive, relational, and reparative engagements with both materials and audiences. *Chapter Three: Finding a Language* shifts in focus from the methodological toward the practice-based methods of my project, where I examine the potential of language and its specific use as text within artistic banner-making as a corresponding method of care, guided by feminist care ethics. *Chapter Four: Language and Its Text (Expanded)* builds on the previous chapter by further exploring an extended scope of methods and registers through which my artistic practice employs text as a means of engaging both care and concern through dynamic and subversive registers. *Chapter Five: The Emergence of Miles* details the various logics and material shifts in emphasis that enable an articulation of *Miles* as a specific engagement of reparative methodologies. *Chapter Six: The Table* discusses the significance of both material and conceptual provisionality as a key enabler of response. Through proposing the generativity that comes from decoupling provisionality with the notion of it pertaining exclusively to minor or ephemeral materials, I consider how provisional logics can function structurally and across expansive scales of making, shaping sustained practices of care, repair, and response-ability. In a moment marked by the Doomsday Clock at 85 seconds to midnight, this project turns to care, repair, and love as ways of working within—not outside—the conditions of crisis that define the present.

CHAPTER ONE: FIELD OF RELATIONS

Arriving in Stages took shape amid a convergence of urgent social, political, and environmental crises, unfolding across the duration of this project. Against a backdrop of accelerating global emergencies—climate catastrophe, pandemic, racial injustice, and the enduring legacies of colonialism, imperialism, patriarchy, capitalism and binary heteronormative structures—my work as an artist-researcher is necessarily situated, responsive, and entangled within these overlapping conditions.

Central to this project is an ethics-in-practice that foregrounds care, repair, and relational accountability. Drawing on feminist, Indigenous, and critical theoretical frameworks, this chapter examines how art can move beyond representation to become a form of active, situated response that is specifically attentive to the complexities of power, difference, and responsibility. Concepts such as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s reparative reading, Donna Haraway and Kelly Oliver’s conceptual building of “response-ability” and Indigenous methodologies from Aotearoa serve as touchstones for navigating the uneasy terrain between personal implications and broader political social entanglement. Rather than seeking simple resolutions, this research embraces the discomfort and complexity of working within historically and politically charged contexts, as they relate to the current temporal moment. It asks how artistic practice, especially when grounded in the ordinary and everyday socio-political, might offer reparative, connective, and accountable ways of engaging with the world. In doing so, the project situates itself within ongoing conversations about the capacities and response-abilities of artists to respond to, and participate within, the making and unmaking of responses that shape politicised and social worlds.

1.1 Ethical Terms of Care

The term ‘care’ underpins my project’s foundational lines of inquiry, where I examine what it might mean for artmaking to materially enact and enable care through provisional and responsive processes. What I find enduringly compelling about care is also what makes it difficult to define: its relevance spans personal, political, and disciplinary boundaries, resisting containment within a single framework. As such, I understand care as ubiquitous, inherently relational yet always partial, provisional, conditional, and context specific. Central to my project’s approach is the understanding of care as a feminist ethic: a multi-modal form of attention and engagement that grounds the practice as much as it guides it. I argue that care’s significance emerges precisely in this plurality, as a way of knowing, a practice of doing, a form of valuing, and a way of

living that also recognises that care exists in multiple forms. In other words, care is a noun, a verb, a method, a methodology, and an ethic—and, within my project, an *ethic-in-practice*.

Sociologist and feminist theorist Hilary Rose defines care as an embodied, material labour of everyday work, showing how care generates knowledge through social, economic, and institutional conditions, thus extending care methodology from the interpersonal to structural and political domains.¹² Additionally, feminist philosopher Virginia Held enables my project's understanding of care as functioning beyond a private duty, insisting on how care holds significance within public and global spheres.¹³ Rose and Held's positions support my project's examination of the capacity for care to guide engaging ethical reasoning and social organisation across scales from intimate relations to civic and political structures.

For ethicist and feminist theorist Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, care becomes a matter of contemporary urgency. Locating care as both a material and ethical practice that operates across social, ecological, and biopolitical spheres, in her journal article “Nothing Comes Without Its World” (2012) and later, their book length study of care, *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More-Than-Human Worlds* (2017) Puig de la Bellacasa conceptualises care as an ethical and material “mattering” through her notion of “thinking with care.”¹⁴ Throughout both texts, Puig de la Bellacasa draws on Haraway's emphasis on the situated and entangled nature of knowledge, questioning the epistemic and ontological “significances of care for thinking and knowing.”¹⁵ Defining a caring concept as a practice of relating that is “inseparably a vital affective state, an ethical obligation, and a practical labour,” she insists care is a central process in valuing feminist social sciences and political theories of care over the past four decades.¹⁶ Additionally, Puig de la Bellacasa foregrounds the temporalities of care, that being the ongoing, sometimes exhausting, and always situated nature of caring practices.

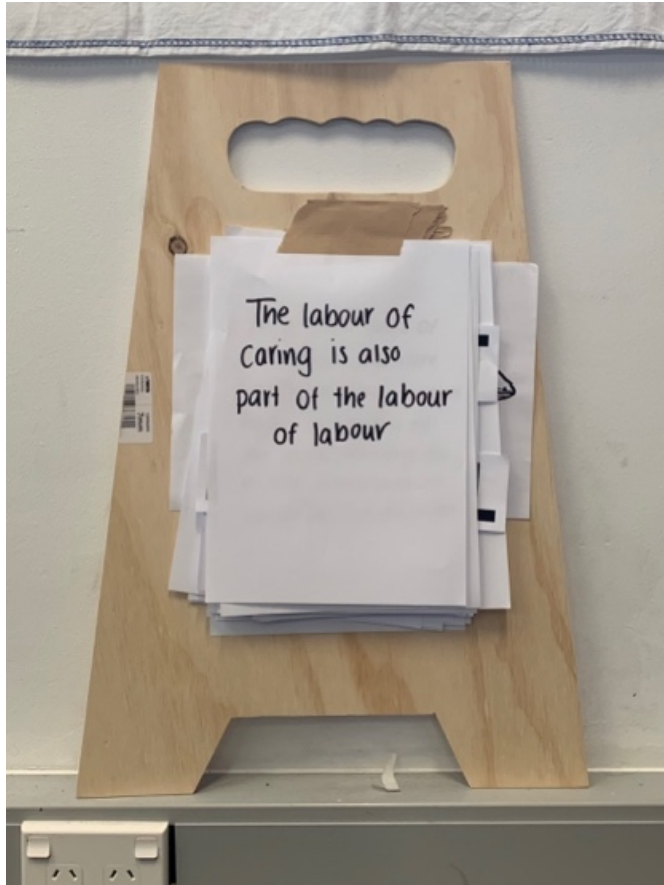
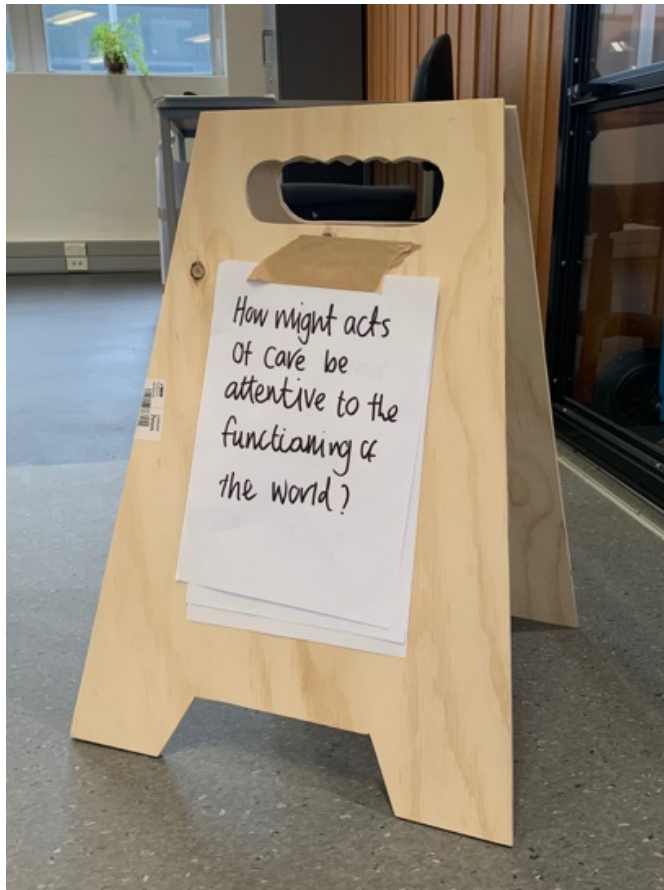
¹² Hilary Rose, “Hand, Brain, and Heart: A Feminist Epistemology for the Natural Sciences,” *Signs* 9, no. 1 (1983): 74. Additionally, Donna Haraway also rethinks care as an epistemic practice, detaching care from earlier frameworks, such as psychologist and ethicist Carol Gilligan and philosopher and educator Nel Noddings' more gendered assumptions, further positioning care firmly within a situated, accountable, and relational system of knowledge production that encompasses technology, ecology, and multispecies relations. (See Noddings: *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (1986); Gilligan: *In A Different Voice* (1983); Joan Tronto and Bernice Fisher: *Toward a Feminist Theory of Caring* (1990).

¹³ Virginia Held, *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

¹⁴ María Puig de la Bellacasa, “‘Nothing Comes Without Its World’: Thinking with Care,” *Sociological Review* 60, no. 2 (2012): 197–216, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2012.02070.x>.

¹⁵ Puig de la Bellacasa, *Matters of Care*.

¹⁶ Puig de la Bellacasa, “‘Nothing Comes Without Its World’,” 197.



Figures 12-13. Studio documentaion, *In Progress* with makeshift paper signs, (February 2020)

Accordingly, Puig de la Bellacasa's emphasises the persistence and willingness required to maintain thinking with care, over time. In this sense, care as both a practice of thinking and mattering directly resonates with the durational rhythm of my practice, which is grounded in processes of continual noticing and gathering that connect and generate meaning iteratively and over time. My rhythms of making reflect forms of care that are less about resolution and more about active participation – an attentiveness sustained through repetition, accumulation, and reciprocity. As such, I find care is a practice and a multi-process that emerges through the ongoing labours of attending to individual everyday contexts that occupy a scope between what I think of as urgent and hopeful.

Puig de la Bellacasa's insistence on a non-idealised understanding of care is crucial in highlighting the need to attend to both the presence and absence of care, recognising that each gives significance to the other. This approach is generative for my project's methods of noticing and responding, where care's traces, whether visible or invisible, influence how I think and the materials and tempos in which I make. Ultimately, Puig de la Bellacasa's framework supports my understanding of care not as a morally safe or redemptive ideal, but as a relational condition that raises ongoing questions about who benefits from care, where care is provided, and who is systematically denied it. For example, I might notice care's absence in everyday gestures, such as when a car is parked across multiple spaces at the supermarket. Or I might notice care's absence more clearly through systemic neglect, like government inaction or insufficient support for teachers and public healthcare workers. The former might lead to a quick note on my phone, while the latter might inspire the creation of a banner—importantly, both are recognised in this project as practices that perform care in contextually responsive and materially diverse ways. While my art-led project diverges from Puig de la Bellacasa's biopolitical focus, I find that noticing and subsequently responding to the "effects of its absence" through provisional and often subtle artistic means is a productive methodological approach to practice.¹⁷ These ways of paying attention help me stay connected to the everyday contingencies that shape the project's potential as art.

My project treats care not as an idealised noun to restore or reclaim, but as a pre-existing ethical condition that has shaped the practice over time in response to personal and political realities. Working in this way, thinking with care becomes a method for engaging with the tensions between where and for whom care is given, and where it is withheld. I move care beyond gendered or moralising frameworks and situate it within the shifting structural conditions that frame this project. The presence of care guides my responsiveness and attentiveness, while its absence exposes the limits and vulnerabilities of these capacities. While thinking with care orients the ethical and conceptual contours

¹⁷ Puig de la Bellacasa, *Matters of Care*, 1.

of my project, it also translates into specific methods through which care is enacted in practice. My focus therefore evolves from understanding care as a guiding orientation to exploring how it shapes concrete, iterative practices of noticing, tending, and responding within my artmaking.

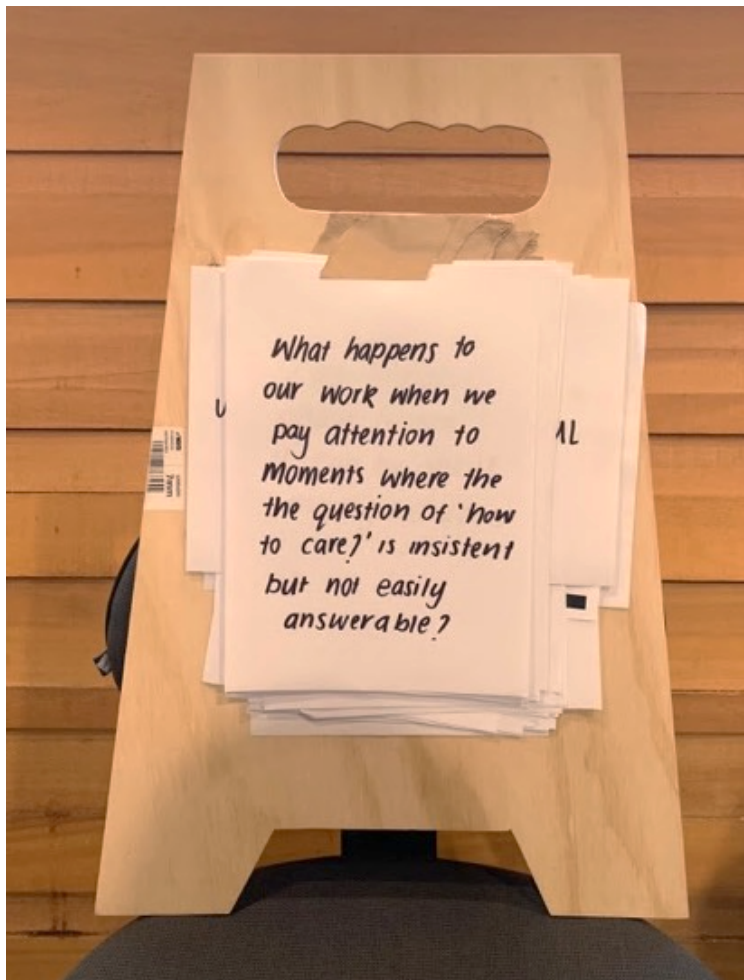


Figure 14. Studio documentation, *In Progress* with makeshift paper sign (March 2020)

1.2 Response-ability

My project is interested in response-ability as a feminist and relational concept of ethics that moves beyond conventional ideas of responsibility as duty or obligation. Response-ability emphasises the capacity to respond as a deeply relational, affective, and situated practice. For Donna Haraway, response-ability emerges through a framework of feminist scientific, ecological, and technology studies, and arises within her conceptual neologisms of ‘becoming-with’ (and later, ‘making-with’ and ‘staying-with’).¹⁸ Haraway describes “response-ability [as] about both absence and presence, killing and nurturing, living and dying— and remembering who lives and who dies and how.”¹⁹ Important to my alignment with Haraway is her insistence that “we are all responsible to and for shaping conditions for multispecies flourishing in the face of terrible histories, and sometimes joyful histories too, but we are not all response-able in the same ways. The differences matter— in ecologies, economies, species, lives.”²⁰ This type of relationality forms the foundation of my project’s intersectional, ethically constitutive, and generative approach to methodology.

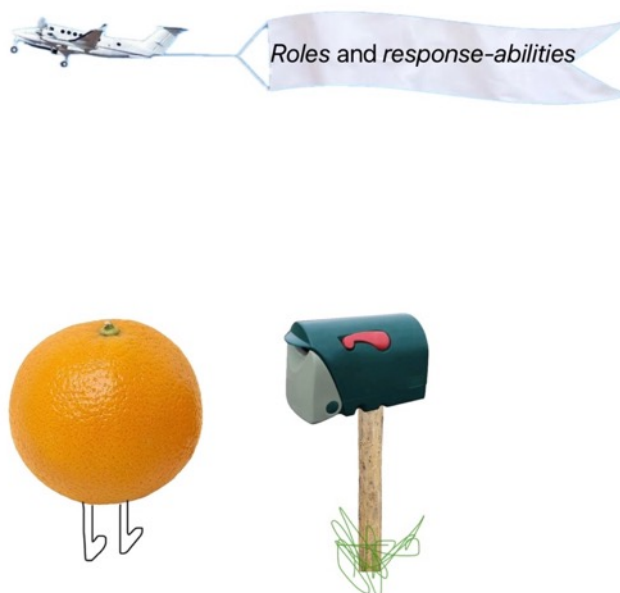


Figure 15. Miles drawing for @milestheorange, posted August 2025

¹⁸ Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 28.

¹⁹ Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 28.

²⁰ Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 29.

Haraway's approach can also be read in broader resonance with North American feminist theorist, physicist, and philosopher Karen Barad's neologisms focused on 'agential realism', where response-ability is reconfigured through Barad's quantum-scale framework.²¹ Through the core relational concept of 'intra-action,' Barad, like Haraway, proposes that response-ability is about being motivated into caring action in response to the very hegemonic conditions that sustain ethical problems—an ethical navigation that emerges through situated, material participation in the world's ongoing becoming.

In reading Barad alongside Haraway, an ethics of response-ability emerges as a site of co-constitution, suggesting a process in which subjects, objects, and worlds do not precede their relations, but emerge more iteratively through their connectedness. This co-constitution refuses the illusion of separability and universalism, challenging the conventional idea that one can stand outside of, or act upon, the world as a detached observer or isolated agent. Additionally, this co-constitution enables my project's recognition that artwork emerges as always already *in* the world, entangled with the forces I seek to understand, participate within, or care for. Furthermore, my research recognises how examining this process of co-constitution within artistic contexts necessarily involves a twofold focus on internal and external processes and realms of response-able doing that are material matters, as well as being conceptually meaningful. Accordingly, it is through Barad and Haraway's calls for continuous becoming-with 'matter' with others and worlds that my project recognises the generative potential of response-ability, a core consideration of artmaking as a worlding force. For my project's reparative-oriented artmaking, response-ability enables registers of thought to become active and materially responsive in the moment, as well as accumulatively over time. Within *Arriving in Stages*, processes of making are valued as attentive acts.

Haraway and Barad's ideas of response-ability as materially discursive and ethically significant are evident in artists Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla's artwork *The Great Silence*, 2014 (figs. 16-18). The work, created in collaboration with science fiction writer Ted Chiang, centres on the Fermi paradox,²² as told from the point of view of a critically endangered species of parrot. *The Great Silence* layers ethical and conceptual dynamics between the world's largest single-aperture radio telescope, known as the Arecibo Observatory (which transmits and receives radio waves to and from beyond the bounds of our own solar system) and the imagined narrative of an Amazona parrot living in the surrounding contexts of the observatory, which is situated in Esperanza (Hope), Puerto Rico.

²¹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*.

²² The Fermi Paradox refers to the apparent contradiction between the high probability of extraterrestrial life in the universe and the lack of observable evidence for its existence.

For me, *The Great Silence* foregrounds the heaviness of present-day earthly stakes without relying on capital-driven or anthropocentric logics. The artwork prioritises connection and listening as vital, a durational atonement and a connective act. The orientation of listening and connection resonates deeply with how I want my own practice to operate, in terms of how the work becomes a daily process of making, and also in how I want the work to be experienced. I am interested in how a viewer might be invited or called into participation via subtle acts of registering the stakes of entanglement, that is, the ethical, affective, and political weight of recognising myself as implicated in the web of relations that shape and sustain both the experience of making the work, and experiencing the world by proximity. *The Great Silence*, in this way, informs both the emotional tones and ethics of my project through its focus and insistence on listening as a generative mode of artistic response.

The Great Silence, facilitated through the parrot's voice, activates and enables my own sense of sensorial response-ability. Taking the form of subtitles unfolding across the 16-minute video, the parrot's narrative begins by noting that the "human desire to make a connection is so strong that they've created an ear capable of hearing across the universe ... But I and my fellow parrots are right here. Why aren't they interested in listening to our voices? We're a nonhuman species capable of communicating with them. Aren't we exactly what humans are looking for?"²³ There is something unexpectedly moving about witnessing the vast scale of human ignorance toward multispecies suffering, revealed not through blame, but with a quiet, reflective understanding voiced by a parrot.

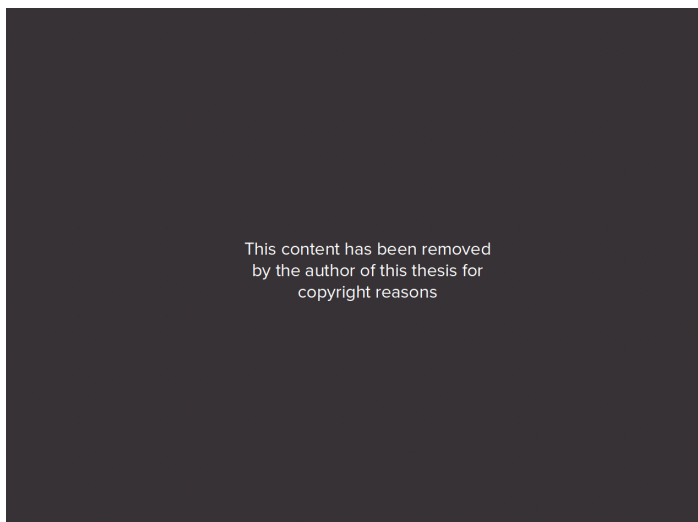
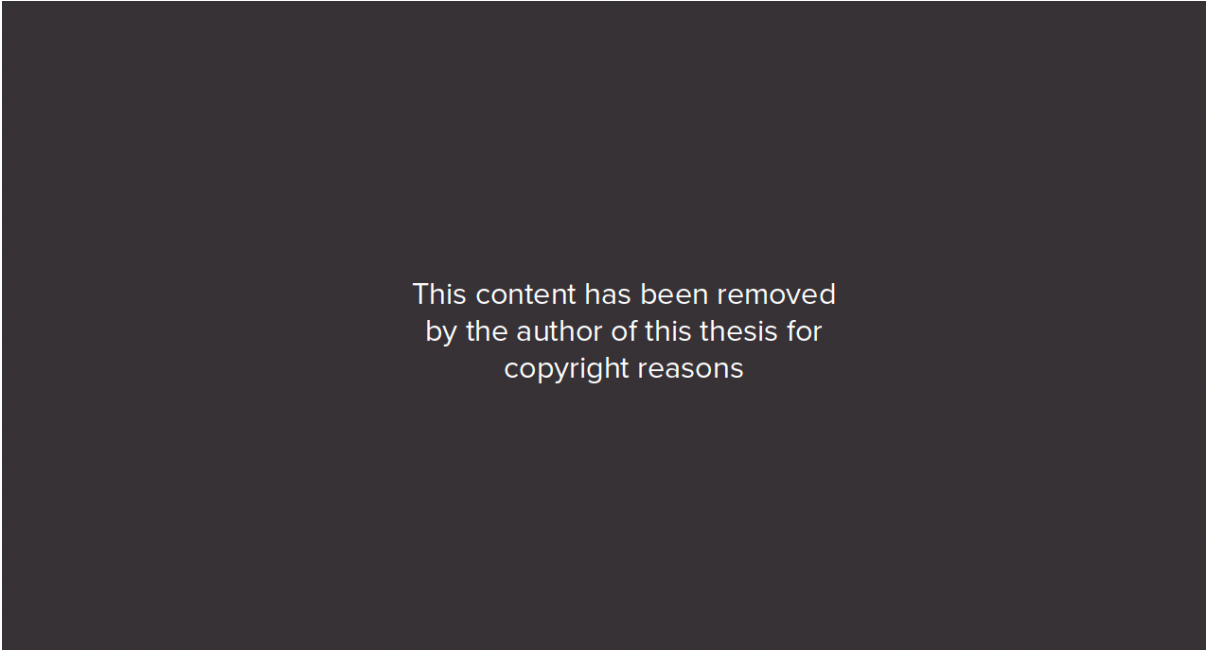
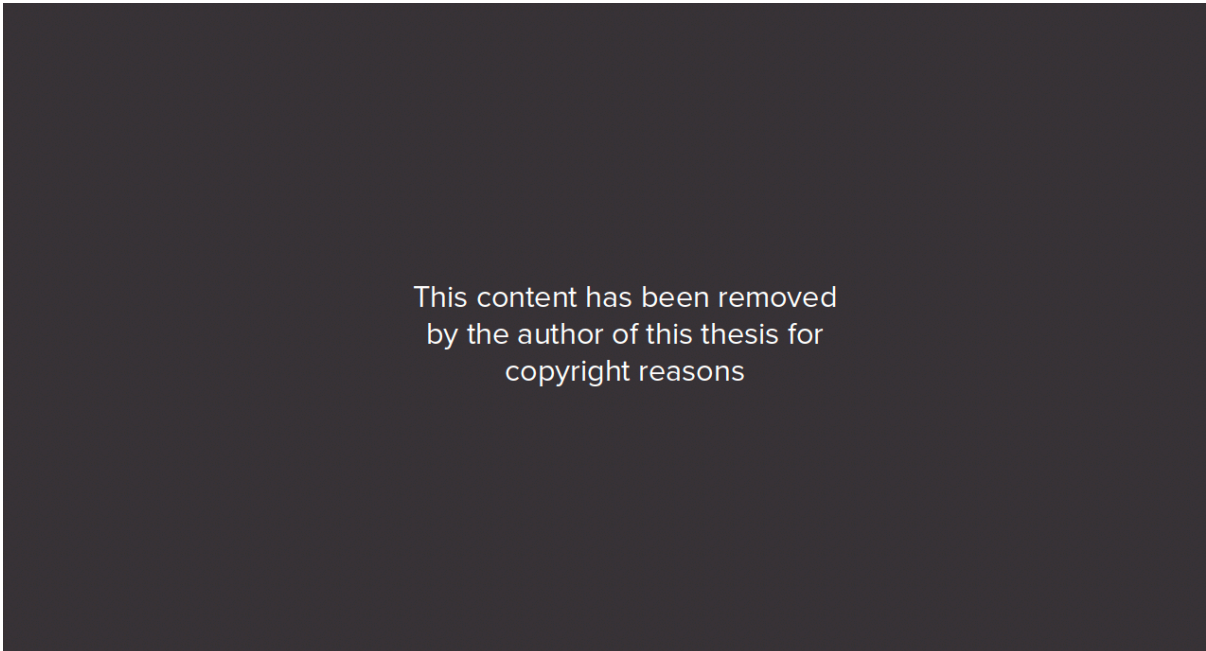


Figure 16. Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla with Ted Chiang, *The Great Silence* (2014) installation view, shown as part of *Intervals* exhibition, shown at Philadelphia Museum of Art, December 12, 2014–April 5, 2015

²³ Subtitle text quoted from Jennifer Allora, Guillermo Calzadilla, and Ted Chiang, *The Great Silence* (2014). Viewable online: <https://vimeo.com/195588827>.



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Figures 17-18. Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla with Ted Chiang, *The Great Silence* (2014). HD video with subtitles, 16:22 minutes. Stills taken at 0:22 and 10:15. Viewable online: <https://vimeo.com/195588827>

Because the parrot's voice is not explicitly heard, the viewer becomes invited into a mode of active reading over the duration of the video work. As such, I recognise how my own participation in viewing this artwork involves staying with the Amazona parrot, attending to its subtitled voice, witnessing its story, and engaging in a form of embodied, sensorial listening. It is a work I've returned to repeatedly. Each time, I find myself moved in the same way: unexpectedly emotional, caught off guard, and a little choked up. This recurring response reflects something deeper than my own sentimentality or felt connection to the artwork. It signals the emotional and ethical force of the work's response-enabling ideas and highlights the potential of response-ability's material discursiveness. The parrot's quiet, modest invitation to read, and therefore listen, and to feel with a world that often feels majorly tuned out, is indicative of the way my project is shaped by ongoing affective and ethical pulls. *The Great Silence* offers an affective and embodied register through which concepts of listening, reading and viewing each become methods of ethical engagement and response-ability. Although my project involves quite different forms of making, *The Great Silence* continues to be a touchstone. It is an artwork which allows me to feel-with, not just think-with, the ethical weight of attention, care, noticing, and listening through anthropological, ecological, and technological entanglement.

My research draws closely on philosopher, feminist theorist, and cultural critic Kelly Oliver's use of response-ability. Oliver describes the term as a fundamentally subjective, situated, and implicated process of witnessing, where one's capacity to respond becomes inseparable from internal processes of recognition.²⁴ Oliver offers my project an understanding of 'the collective' as separable subjects ethically responding to one another. Drawing on feminist ethics, poststructuralism, and psychoanalysis, Oliver offers a ethical-political lens that is deeply engaged with constructs of race, gender, violence, and the politics of recognition. In *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* (2001), Oliver critiques the limitations of ethical systems based on recognition, arguing that such models often reproduce hierarchies by requiring the other to appear in recognisable terms.²⁵ As an alternative, Oliver proposes that, "rather than an ethics based on recognising the other as the same or as having the same capacities, we need an ethics of witnessing that allows for difference, that allows for response-ability without assimilation."²⁶ Oliver's articulation of witnessing encompasses what they describes as the "double meaning" of witnessing—both as a visual and embodied practice and process. Correspondingly, I understand witnessing in the sense that it functions to describe the "precarious process of subjectivity that connect ... my sensations, affects, thoughts, and words" with collective others, especially in contexts marked by historical

²⁴ Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*.

²⁵ Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*.

²⁶ Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*, 224.

violence, political urgency, and social division.²⁷ Oliver's conception of response-ability operates in my project as a way of framing witnessing as an embodied, experiential, emotional, and ethical practice that holds difference without demanding recognition or notions of sameness. This approach underpins how my project engages collective relations as contingent, responsive encounters between distinct subjects, particularly within contexts shaped by social and political urgency.

I understand response-ability, alongside my project's notion of *noticing*, as a typology of witnessing that's inextricable from the double lens of colonialism, not as a historic 'event,' but as an ongoing system across both civic-social and political scales, specifically within Aotearoa, but also urgently in places such as Palestine.²⁸ Therefore, Oliver's witnessing is both materially and conceptually read and understood within the ongoing legacies of settler colonialism, of which I am a part. Drawing from Oliver, I engage with concepts of witnessing in my own practice of response ethics. While Oliver's term of 'witnessing' is relevant to extremely violent socio-political 'news,'²⁹ my project negotiates this thinking through methods of 'noticing' that are less directly tied to event-based experiences and concepts of trauma, yet importantly remain immediately linked to the experiences of living in a world in crisis. However, these processes are never completely detached from their respective contexts.³⁰ Methodologically, my project employs 'noticing' as a daily vernacular modality, informed by Oliver's witnessing, to articulate how spectacle and trauma are inseparable from the textures of everyday life. It is precisely the force of the spectacular and the traumatic that drives my artistic attention toward care, relation, and responsibility, shifting not away from these intensities, but into the subtle, ongoing entanglements through which they are lived.

²⁷ Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*, 224.

²⁸ I am writing this chapter the day after the March for Humanity Aotearoa demonstration (September 13, 2025) to an internalised rhythm of a crowd-wide chant: "*The occupation: SHUT IT DOWN! The Siege on Gaza: SHUT IT DOWN! The whole system: SHUT IT DOWN! The Genocide, SHUT IT DOWN!*" and "*Ka Whawhai Tonu Mātou! Ake Ake Ake!*"

²⁹ Examples might include reading news reporting on David Seymour's divisive political tactics, such as his Treaty Principles Bill, as well as the ongoing demonstrations by Destiny Church sub-group *Man-Up!* at public events in Aotearoa.

³⁰ For example, during the evening rush hour in Tāmaki Makaurau, an elderly caregiver (perhaps, a grandparent) quietly lifted a large school bag from a child's shoulders and carried it for them. In this seemingly ordinary moment, I noticed care's presence as unspoken and practiced between generations.

Noticing therefore becomes a central method in my project, linking ethics of response-ability to practices of attentive observation. Drawing on everyday socio-political contexts from my feminist and tangata Tiriti positions,³¹ my processes of making foreground a lateral mode of attention that attends to subtle, everyday relations beyond explicitly named positions or recognisable moments of crisis. It is through Oliver that this method of noticing develops, one that equates “a tension at the heart of subjectivity that opens up the possibility of considering both social-political context, on the one hand, and the intersubjective constitution of subjectivity, on the other.”³²

Additionally, Oliver explores an everyday ethic of response within a world increasingly experiencing politicised forms of violence. Here, Oliver reveals how ethics requires that I “take responsibility for the possibility of witnessing, the possibility of address and response, whether in words, moans, cries, whispers, grunts, whinnies, ... birdsong” or artmaking.³³ In this regard, witnessing becomes translatable and methodologically important for my project’s key method of noticing, which enables space for artmaking in the form of recognising and tracing the significance of connections between socio-political contexts and my more subtle, located, everyday experiences. Furthermore, Oliver’s later book, *Response Ethics* (2018), brings response-ability more explicitly into focus, framing it as a relational and affective practice of humility, attentiveness, and care. Here, Oliver introduces “response ethics” via a critical rethinking of normative ethical frameworks, arguing that response ethics offers something fundamentally different from the assumptions of virtue ethics, deontology, utilitarianism, and even care ethics.³⁴ Oliver claims that the act of witnessing itself manifests a response ethic, which in turn entails a new, radical way of approaching ethics as response ethics. This conception offers my project a perspective that foregrounds response as a dynamic, relational, and sometimes partial process that becomes the basis of my everyday methods of noticing.

³¹ *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* (also the secondary English text, the Treaty of Waitangi) is Aotearoa New Zealand’s founding agreement, signed in 1840 between representatives of the British Crown and over 500 Māori Rangatira (chiefs). While often treated as a single document, there are significant differences between the English and te reo Māori versions, most notably in their understandings of sovereignty and authority. The te reo Māori version, *Te Tiriti*, affirms Māori tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) and acknowledges the Crown’s right to govern in ways that do not override Māori authority. These contested interpretations remain central to political, legal, and cultural life in Aotearoa, shaping ongoing struggles for justice, land, and sovereignty. Any ethical engagement within this context must acknowledge the continued impacts of colonisation, and the response-abilities that flow from living as tangata Tiriti (a Treaty partner) on Indigenous Māori whenua (land).

³² Oliver, “Witnessing, Recognition, and Response Ethics,” 475.

³³ Oliver, “Witnessing, Recognition, and Response Ethics,” 477.

³⁴ Oliver, *Response Ethics*, 22.

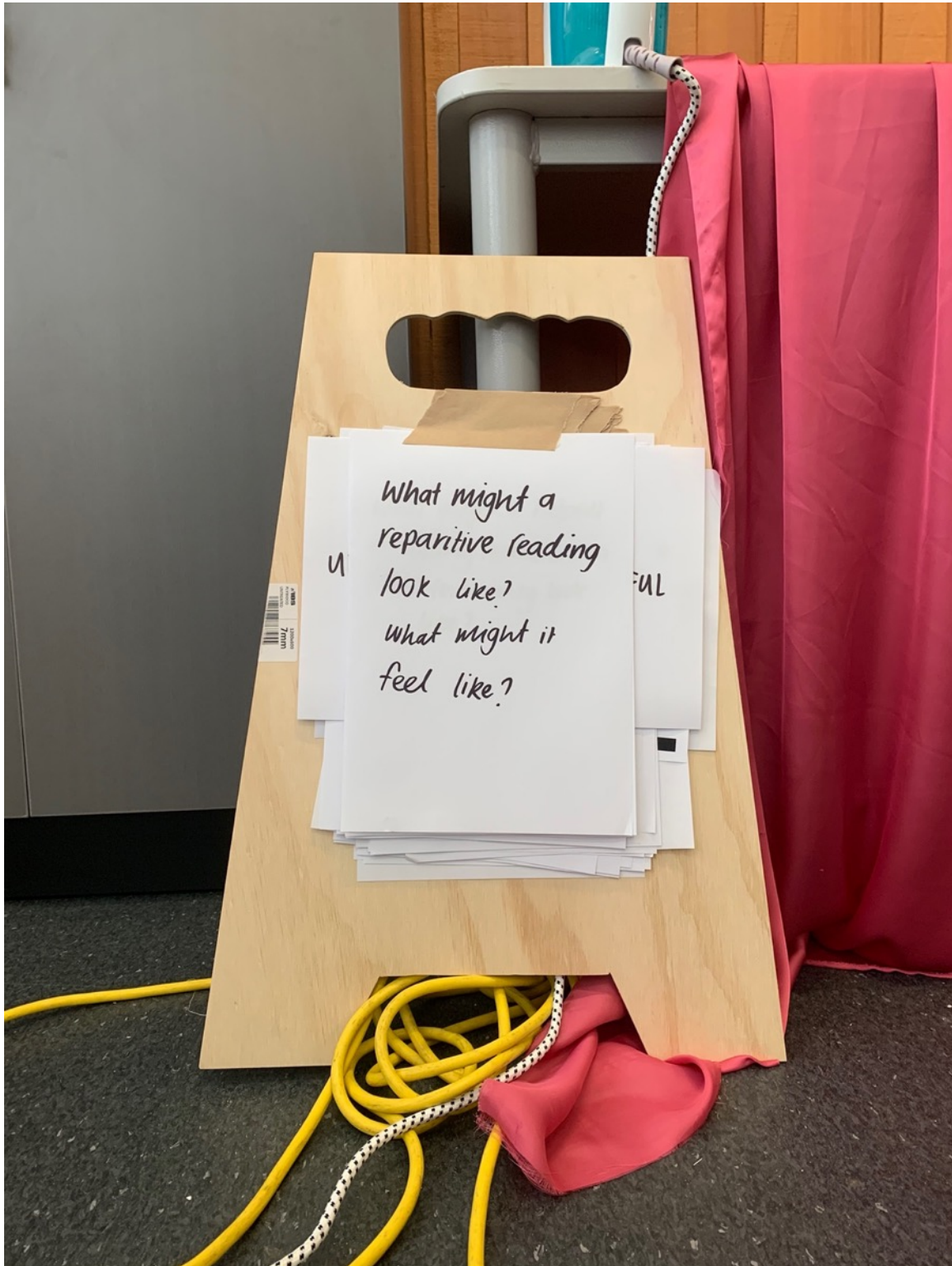


Figure 19. Studio documentation, *In Progress* (February 2020)

1.3 Reparative logics

Drawing on Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's concept of reparative reading, I frame repair as both a situated practice and a methodological strategy that underpins my commitment to care and response-ability. I first encountered Sedgwick's essay "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, Or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You" (2003) on a February afternoon in 2020, a moment I remember clearly for how it profoundly reshaped the orientation of my project, and, by proximity, how it has continued to shape my orientation toward everyday phenomena in the world more broadly.³⁵ Sedgwick describes the idea of reparative as an ethical orientation or mode of engagement to the world and each other. In contrast to forms of critique that focus primarily on exposure and demystification, reparative reading investigates how people find sustenance, pleasure, hope, and possibilities for living within, and even against, the complex cultural worlds they inhabit. Sedgwick's thinking influences how I think about the idea of repair, which is so central to my project. There is an alignment with the ongoing material and relational work enacted through *Arriving in Stages*. Here, repair is thought of as a process, a continual practice of remaining in relation, rather than a finite or resolute outcome. What is thought of as undergoing repair, then, are the conditions of my own ongoing relations with others through which shared civic worlds are continually negotiated, sustained, and remade.

Sedgwick's analysis of "paranoid reading" recognises a pattern of deep distrust applied indiscriminately within academia, but also emphasises how this distrust circulates more broadly in socio-political realms, having become "now nearly synonymous with criticism itself."³⁶ Partly building on philosopher Paul Ricoeur's 1965 concept of "hermeneutics of suspicion"³⁷—a mode of interpretation that assumes appearances are inherently misleading and must be critically unmasked—Sedgwick conceptualises paranoia as an anticipatory stance of Ricoeur's suspicious psychological disposition. Sedgwick positions paranoia as the dominant critical approach that influences how texts are interpreted.³⁸ Recognising how a suspicious logic simultaneously functions to mitigate "bad surprises," while also reading to reveal hidden structures of violence and power, Sedgwick highlights how paranoia perpetuates itself through suspicious logics of exposure and foreclosure, which function to monopolise other ways of thinking, knowing, and relating to the world.³⁹ Moreover, by accepting paranoia as a given—recognising that bad surprises can, have, and will continue to occur across both personal

³⁵ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*. See Chapter Four (Duke University Press, 2003), 124.

³⁶ Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 124. Additionally, Sedgwick also describes how this distrust is relevant to civic (and, specifically queer) bodies in reflection of hegemonic governmental structures.

³⁷ Paul Ricoeur, "Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation" (Yale University Press, 1970).

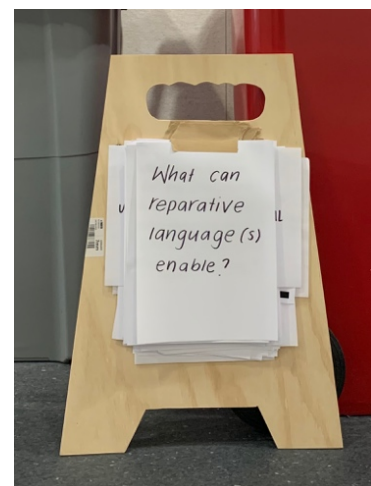
³⁸ Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*.

³⁹ Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 130, 147.

and political scales—Sedgwick ultimately contends that being paranoid is inherently insufficient for maintaining meaningful connection with the world.⁴⁰ While Sedgwick acknowledges the necessity of paranoia, especially within harm reduction and queer survival strategies, they also raise the question: “How are we to understand paranoia in such a way as to situate it as one kind of epistemological practice among other, alternative ones?”⁴¹

Sedgwick presents reparative reading as an optimistic, loving, and emotionally attuned approach to reading texts, performing knowledge, and embodied experience that, unlike paranoia, drives the reader to respond carefully to surprise, pleasure, and care. Importantly, this formulation does not place reparative reading in direct opposition to, or as a replacement for, paranoid reading; instead, repair can be understood as both adjacent and responsive to normative, and at times hegemonic, critical practices. Sedgwick avoids prescribing a specific method for engaging in reparative reading and instead develops it as an affective practice grounded in psychologist and affect theorist Silvan Tomkins’ notion that affect is a pre-cognitive, bodily response that exists beyond private feelings and emotions. Extending Tomkins’s biologically influenced affect theory into queer, relational, and political contexts, Sedgwick further shifts affect theory away from mechanistic or universalist interpretations towards situated and empirical experience. Building on Tomkins’ emphasis that affect is central to public, visible, and communicative systems of experience—and thus is fundamental to both individual and collective social worlds—Sedgwick likewise describes how positive emotional attachments are driven by engagements that are driven by their capacity to centre pleasure, excitement, interest, and care. While paranoia anticipates ‘the event’ that exposes and forecloses, repair, on the other hand, is motivated by the possibility of *ongoing* relation. Repair seeks not to end interpretation with revelation, but to remain with complexity, to assemble meaning slowly and attentively, and to sustain modes of attachment, even, and especially, in the presence of vulnerability or damage.

Figure 20. Studio Documentation,
In Progress (June 2020)



⁴⁰ Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*.

⁴¹ Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 128.

Sedgwick's reparative conceptual framework also draws heavily on psychoanalyst Melanie Klein's notion of the 'depressive position'—a self-reflexive psychological state characterised by ambivalence, complexity, and awareness of harm.⁴² By conceptualising paranoid and reparative orientations as informed by a Kleinian focus on dynamically inhabited 'positions', rather than fixed identities or personality types, Sedgwick opens up possibilities for my project's navigation between repair and paranoia in connection to both my artmaking and life-living. Challenging binary notions of either being dominant, Sedgwick's essay ultimately reads as an invitation to move reparatively beyond the culturally habituated activity of paranoia. Sedgwick's notion of repair is central to how I think, feel, and create throughout *Arriving in Stages*, and it is this very feeling, of being invited to read or think reparatively, that I want my viewers to experience through my art.⁴³

The task for artistic practices such as my own, I argue, therefore sits closely alongside what arts worker and writer Bridgit Riggir-Cuddy invites in her essay "Cope" (2024): a critical and situated reflection on the role of the artist within the art world's systems of power, including economic, institutional, and social structures.⁴⁴ Describing how power dynamics within Aotearoa art systems reflect the broader and more global social, economic, and political structures that shape it, Riggir-Cuddy insists that they are not separate from those operating in the wider world. This understanding is crucial because it recognises that making art, like Sedgwick's reading, is never neutral or detached from the power structures that shape it. By encouraging artists to critically reflect on the terms and conditions under which they work, what Riggir-Cuddy calls 'wayfinding' and, ultimately, 'coping', this approach frames artistic practice as both responsive and durationally resilient.⁴⁵ Riggir-Cuddy here argues that self-awareness and critical literacy are ethical tools, as well as necessary strategies for navigating the often precarious, politicised, and affectively charged terrain of contemporary artmaking. Rather than being passively shaped by external systems, Riggir-Cuddy invites artists to actively negotiate their positions within them. Crucially, Riggir-Cuddy's insistence on coping, like Sedgwick's notion of repair, refuses both disavowal and despair. Rather than retreating into cynicism or detachment, the notion of coping acknowledges the artist's entanglement within structural conditions while still accounting for and valuing the possibility of meaningful navigation. In this way, Riggir-Cuddy's framework can be understood as reparative: it attends to complicity without becoming consumed by it. This

⁴² Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, 128.

⁴³ Although not directly relevant to my practice, Susan Best employs Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's notion of reparative readings to discuss image-based artistic practice. See *Reparative Aesthetics: Witnessing in Contemporary Art Photography* (2016). Additionally, Heather Love extends on reparative reading by shifting focus toward the historical, social and ethical dimensions of repair. See Heather Love, "Truth and Consequences: On Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading," *Criticism* 52, no. Spring (2010).

⁴⁴ Bridget Riggir-Cuddy, "Cope," in *Hand Book*, ed. Judith Darragh and Natasha Matila-Smith (AMA Press, 2024), 67-74. Viewable online: <https://artsmakersaotearoa.nz/Hand-Book>.

⁴⁵ Riggir-Cuddy, "Cope."

positioning offers important strategies for sustaining practice amid systemic constraints. My project draws on this reparative logic, understanding wayfinding and coping not as methods for resolution or escape, but as a mode of what Haraway refers to as “staying with the trouble”⁴⁶ by attending to language in careful ways and functioning creatively and critically within narrow, often hegemonic systems that have come to define the ordinary.

1.4 Situated and Relational Accountabilities

Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples (first published in 1999) by Māori scholar, educator, and activist Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Porou) offers my project a critical framework for considering my own roles and response-abilities as an artist researcher within Aotearoa.⁴⁷ Smith argues that “feminist critique, and especially from Indigenous women, women of colour, and those Othered within dominant and white-feminism, has ongoingly and powerfully unsettled Western academic assumptions.”⁴⁸ For myself as a Pākehā feminist artist and researcher in Aotearoa, this intersectional feminist orientation functions as a critical provocation throughout my research: that feminist response-ability must go beyond white, normative Western frameworks of equity and attend to the specific, relational, and colonial contexts of this place, including Te Tiriti o Waitangi and ongoing Māori sovereignty.

In context of Smith’s writings, I make a deliberate connection between my orientation as tangata Tiriti and my artmaking. This connection between identity and place marks a foundational shift in how I began to understand the ethical stakes of my practice as a Pākehā, as someone who carries response-abilities under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and within my role as an artist and researcher. The following questions, drawn from Smith’s *Decolonizing Methodologies*, are printed on a piece of thermal paper that is taped to the wall of my making-writing space at home. Throughout *Arriving in Stages*, I have kept them close, because they insist on Smith’s deeper, relational rigour, grounded in place, community, and the lived politics of Aotearoa. In this way, Smith calls my project to methodologically grapple with not just *what* response-ability is, but *where* and *with whom* my own sensibility of response-ability surfaces, positioning it as a relational and embodied accountability within a colonised context.

⁴⁶ Haraway, *Staying with The Trouble*

⁴⁷ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (Zed Books; University of Otago Press, 1999).

⁴⁸ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 168-9.

Smith asks:

Who defined the research problem?
For whom is this study worthy and relevant?
Who says so?
What knowledge will the community gain from this study?
What knowledge will the researcher gain from this study?
What are some likely positive outcomes from this study?
What are some possible negative outcomes?
How can the negative outcomes be eliminated?
To whom is the researcher accountable?
What processes are in place to support the research, the researched and the researcher?⁴⁹

Importantly, this questioning framework offers a critical orientation that is open to situated nuance. Smith's questioning encourages my research to remain attentive to the collective socio-political and personal complexities of my position, fostering discomfort with my location within hegemonic colonial and patriarchal systems and resisting easy resolutions. In this way, Smith's questions function not as problems to be answered, but as processual and dynamic ethics, which entail living, situated commitments to more just and accountable ways of knowing. To be positioned as a tangata Tiriti researcher, for me, means to actively listen and to continue to position my project within the broader contexts of historical and cultural response-abilities associated with the complexities of Aotearoa's settler-colonial context. Smith challenges me to be rigorous around how artworks, like bodies, embody and mobilise relational ethics, as opposed to simply illustrating or representing the anthropic scales and stakes of them. Throughout my project, Smith's questions for researchers have formed the basis of my project's ongoing interrogational logic. They enable my project to employ a curious and committed type of interrogation into language and its embedded logics, 2020 (fig. 21). Thinking about logic as a type of reasoning, and as a system for developing valid or personally meaningful reasoning, I am particularly interested in how political and state-driven colonial, imperial, hegemonic logics become embedded in ordinary, vernacular uses of language. Throughout my project, I often notice logic as something embedded in language itself, manifesting materially in its formats, rhythms, and spatial arrangements, and conceptually in the ways it organised meaning, value, and legibility.

⁴⁹ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 175-6.

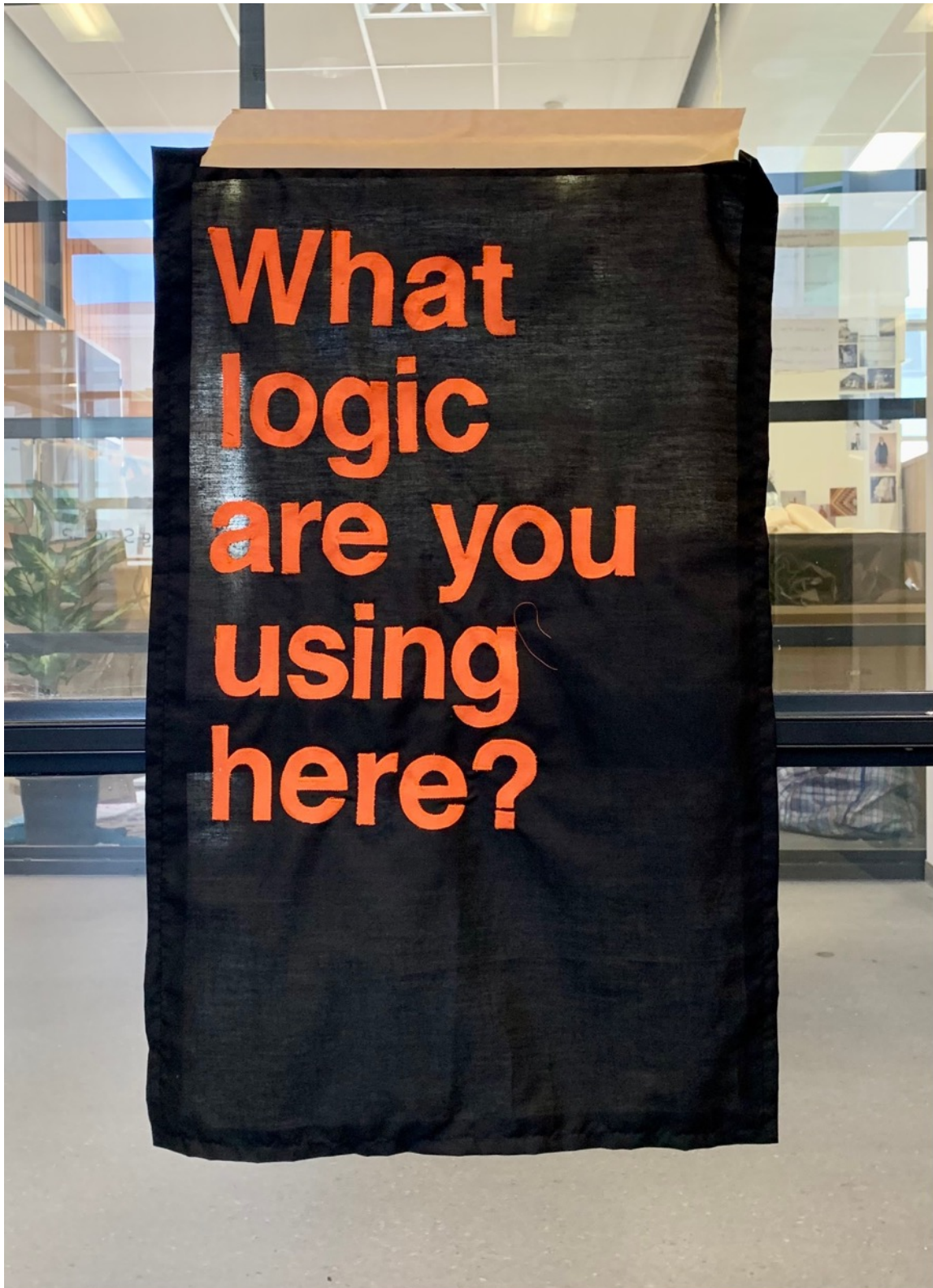


Figure 21. *What Logic?* 2020. Banner, orange cotton text applique, black cotton backing. Installed on my studio (glass) wall with tape. 48cmx76cm.

Cultural theorist and research educator Alison Jones, with writer and educator Kuni Jenkins (Ngāti Porou), also responds to settler-Indigenous research relations. Their co-authored notion “working the hyphen” similarly rejects extractive, dialogic, or mastery-based approaches to recognising the Other, instead emphasising a more unsettled and self-implicated research practice.⁵⁰ Together, these thinkers offer intersecting yet distinct pathways for engaging relational ethics within my practice-led research. Jones’ essay titled “Rethinking Collaboration: Working the Indigene-Coloniser Hyphen” (2008) examines the motivations and inferences underpinning colonial-settler interest within cross-cultural modes of research engagement. Speaking from her own position as a white settler-coloniser researcher, Jones invites others similarly situated to enter into a “less dialogical and more uneasy, unsettled relationship, based on learning (about difference) from the Other, rather than learning about the Other,” which Jones names as a process of “working the hyphen.”⁵¹ Following Jones, who “attempts to create a research and writing relationship based on the tension of difference, not on its erasure,” the analogy of working the hyphen offers a powerful conceptual act: drawing attention to the relational matter between terms and conditions, contexts and concepts, beyond a binary mode of opposition.⁵² For Jones, the hyphen becomes a term with discursive ethical potential when engaged within “postcolonial cross-cultural collaborative inquiries.”⁵³ I am especially interested in Jones’ idea of working the hyphen for the way it opens up a mode of engagement where personal relationships and positionings come with links to complex, layered, and power-laden dynamics. Considered together with Smiths’ questions for researchers, and particularly the question, “To whom is the reader accountable?” I recognise how artist Rebecca Ann Hobb’s doctoral project, *Te Karanga a Hape Hīkoi*, 2017 (figs. 22-23), in its ethics and commitment to practising within a kaupapa Māori framework, enacts response-ability within a local context, specifically regarding the hīkoi (step, strike, march, walk)⁵⁴ connection to Ihumātao. Additionally, I read Hobb’s artistic project as working the hyphen ethically, as well as materially and conceptually.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Alison Jones and Kuni Jenkins, “Rethinking Collaboration: Working the Indigene-Colonizer Hyphen,” in *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*, ed. Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln, and Linda T. Smith (SAGE Publications, 2008).

⁵¹ Jones and Jenkins, “Rethinking Collaboration,” 471, 473.

⁵² Jones and Jenkins, “Rethinking Collaboration,” 473.

⁵³ Jones and Jenkins, “Rethinking Collaboration,” 773.

⁵⁴ Te Aka Māori Dictionary, under “hīkoi,” <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/word/hikoi>.

⁵⁵ Other examples of hīkoi as an artistic method include Fiona Jack’s *Ōtākaro Plant Parade* (2015), Richard Orjis’ *Walking in Trees* (2019); as well as Catherine Bagnall’s *Dress With Tail* (2011) and *Becoming Penguin* (2016). Additionally, walking as a methodology is offered in depth within Tim Ingold’s scholarship as well as within the collaborate writing by Stephanie Springgay and Sarah Truman. See Tim Ingold, “Culture on the Ground: The World Perceived Through the Feet,” *Journal of Material Culture* 9, no. 3 (November 2004): 315–40, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359183504046896>; Stephanie Springgay and Sarah E. Truman, “Stone Walks: Inhuman Animacies and Queer Archives of Feeling,” *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 38, no. 6 (2017): 851–63, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2016.1226777>.



Figures 22-23. Rebecca Hobbs, *Te Karanga a Hape Hikoi* (2017). Photographic documentation by Raymond Sagapolutele

Taking the primary form of a hīkoi, Hobbs' *Te Karanga a Hape Hīkoi* offers both experience to be shared and, subsequently, a kind of story about art, activism, and place. Emerging from the artist's broader project "Ngā Puia o Ihumātao," in alignment with the S.O.U.L. (Save Our Unique Landscape) kaupapa, Hobbs' community-activated hīkoi was shaped by both the urgent response and approach of care that marked S.O.U.L and resistance led by *mana whenua* (traditional custodians of the land) at Ihumātao.⁵⁶

The invitation to participate within the hīkoi circulated in everyday civic vernaculars (as posters, social media, radio, word-of-mouth), embedding situated and relational modalities of artmaking within Tāmaki Makaurau's public vernacular. Participants of the hīkoi gathered at Toi Tū Studio One Gallery (Ponsonby, Tāmaki Makaurau), where the event began with shared kai (food), mihi whakatau (greetings), waiata (songs), and karakia (ritual incantations or ritual chants). Inside the gallery, flags, banners, and wearable costumes—made by Hobbs and others, including members of S.O.U.L—were installed as living artefacts to be taken, worn, and carried in the hīkoi. The hīkoi travelled together from Ponsonby Road, moving eastward along Karangahape Road, pausing and openly inviting participatory performance, speech, and waiata. These moments provisionally occupied a transitory motor vehicle-oriented space by reframing its significance as a geological structure, capable of enabling gathering, resistance, and relation, together in critical support of the mana whenua-led occupation of Ihumātao. More than just a protest or a physical journey, Hobbs' hīkoi functions as a conduit for response-enabling realms of whakapapa, story, song, memory, and political action within a civic-social modality of artmaking. As such, Hobbs' hīkoi activates Jones' and Jenkins' concept of "working the hyphen" across city space through kaupapa Māori and S.O.U.L values that foreground care, relation, and whenua.

As an artistic project, *Te Karanga a Hape Hīkoi* demonstrates how artistic practices can generate meaningful social action, beyond illustrating political concerns. By becoming embedded within and responsive to political concerns, Hobbs' hīkoi invites my project's ongoing reflection on the role of art within movements for justice, sovereignty, and community: a space where politics is not limited to parliamentary activity, but also can be recognised in the way things become spoken, sung, worn, and experienced within a daily vernacular. Hobbs' practice exemplifies how socially engaged and participatory art can act as a responsive and relational mode of making that is deeply situated in cultural, ethical, and geographic contexts. While distinct from my own methods and

⁵⁶ Rebecca Ann Hobbs, "Ngā Puia o Ihumātao: The Volcanoes of Ihumātao" (PhD thesis, University of Auckland, 2017), Viewable online: <https://hdl.handle.net/2292/37033>. Ihumātao is a site of deep cultural, historical, and spiritual significance to mana whenua in Tāmaki Makaurau. It is the location of a major land occupation and protest movement beginning in 2016. The whenua, confiscated under the New Zealand Settlements Act 1863, became a focal point of national debate after plans were announced to build a large-scale housing development on the land. The occupation, led by kaitiaki (guardians) and supported by the activist group S.O.U.L., brought renewed attention to unresolved histories of colonial land theft, Māori land rights, and the responsibilities of the Crown and private developers.

frameworks, Hobb's methods offer a powerful model of civic responsibility within artistic practice that demonstrates the interconnection between the artist's position and their obligations to place, people, and protocol.

1.5 Civic-Social (or, Ethics-in-Practice)

Arriving in Stages approaches social and participatory modes of practice not as a fixed genres or disciplines, but as responsive orientations within civic realms: as practices shaped by ongoing questions of how one participates in, witnesses, and acts within collective life. As such, my project connects the terms 'civic' and 'social' into the compound term 'civic-social,' which is methodologically significant across my approach to both the material and conceptual registers of this research. Civic-social becomes a hyphenated compound and a key term throughout my research for how it emphasises an interdependent space where ideas of public response-ability, collective engagement, and interpersonal and relational ethics are deeply interlinked. Civic-social, in this way, is useful for describing my artistic terms of engagement, which occupy a lateral, temporally-contingent, and materially provisional approach to artmaking that encourages viewers to see themselves as participants—as both social agents and civic actors, particularly outside of formal and political governmental institutions, in service to each other collectively.

Social practice and performance art often challenge conventional boundaries between art and everyday life, tending to foreground participation, process, and context alongside—or sometimes in place of—traditional aesthetic forms. Since the 1950s, artists working across diverse cultural and geopolitical contexts have increasingly embraced socially engaged, performative, and participatory approaches that disrupt modernist conventions of authorship, medium specificity, and the autonomy of artwork. My project's methods and material approach occupy a typology of practice that blurs neat distinctions between artistic making and daily lived experience. Positioned within an expanded, fundamentally feminist and queer lineage of artmaking, my project has made a gradual turn toward embracing participatory (between artist art-audiences, artist and public, and between artists themselves), socially-engaged, and durational modes of engagement.

Theorists such as Nicolas Bourriaud, in *Relational Aesthetics* (1998)⁵⁷ and Grant Kester, in "Dialogical Aesthetics" (1998)⁵⁸ emphasise art's fundamentally relational and dialogic capacities, framing aesthetics not as isolated to objects, but as social experiences co-produced in time, space, and conversation. Given the specific concerns

⁵⁷ Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Les Presses du Réel, 1998).

⁵⁸ Grant H. Kester, "Dialogical Aesthetics: A Critical Framework for Littoral Art," *Variant 2*, no. 9 (1998): 1–8.

of my project, particularly around lived experience, care, repair, response-ability, and ethical complexity, I find it generative to engage more closely with thinkers such as art historian and theorist Claire Bishop,⁵⁹ curator and critical theorist Amelia Jones,⁶⁰ and more recently, the contributions of sociologist and cultural theorist Maria Rovisco.⁶¹

Both Bishop and Jones offer my project theoretical frameworks for evaluating participation, ethics, and aesthetics within art. Bishop's foundational 2006 essay "The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents" and her extended 2012 study *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and The Politics of Spectatorship* similarly critique what Bishop names as the "ethical turn" in participatory art across the early 2000s.⁶² Directly responding to both Kester's dialogical and Bourriaud's relational aesthetics and drawing from theorist Chantal Mouffe's theory of artistic antagonism, Bishop argues that the emphasis on ethics, and particularly its values such as inclusion, collaboration, and care, can neutralise the critical, aesthetic, and emotional impact of art, rendering it closer to activism, education, or social work, and thereby risking its status and function as 'art'.⁶³ Bishop insists that socially engaged art must still be judged as *art*, meaning it must retain formal, aesthetic, and affective complexity. Bishop defends the value of provocation, discomfort, contradiction, and risk as central to art's democratic potentiality, insisting that disagreement reflects a more authentic engagement with democratic forms of political life.⁶⁴

However, Bishop's framework tends to position ethics and aesthetics as mutually exclusive forces, or at best, presents them in non-useful tension. This binary formulation, while productive for challenging instrumental views of art, is a potential limit to my project's understanding of ethics. *Arriving in Stages* diverges from Bishop's sharper separation of ethics and aesthetics, instead embracing a civic-social mode of practice which focuses on how an active dynamic between ethics and aesthetics can be deeply entwined. While Bishop warns against reducing art to its social function, her own canon, primarily well-known white, Western, and male artists, such as Joseph Beuys, Jeremy Deller, Liam Gillick, and Thomas Hirschhorn, reflects a narrowed cultural framework that marginalises feminist, decolonial, and Indigenous traditions of care and collective practice. From my feminist standpoint, Bishop's critique exposes not a

⁵⁹ Claire Bishop, "The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents," *Artforum* 44, no. 6 (February 2006): 178–183; Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (Verso, 2012).

⁶⁰ Amelia Jones, *Body Art/Performing the Subject* (University of Minnesota Press, 1998); Amelia Jones, *Seeing Differently: A History and Theory of Identification and the Visual Arts* (Routledge, 2012); Amelia Jones, *Sexual Politics of Art: Feminist Artists and the Power of the Viewer* (Routledge, 2021).

⁶¹ Maria Rovisco, *Artists, Cosmopolitanism, and the Civic Imagination: Artists as Political Agents* (Routledge; Taylor & Francis, 2025).

⁶² Bishop, "The Social Turn."; Bishop, *Artificial Hells*. Additionally, philosopher Jacques Rancière, and specifically *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible* (2006), and *Aesthetics and its Discontents* (2009) can be read in linkage with Bishop's positioning of ethics and aesthetics as mutually inclusive forces.

⁶³ Bishop, *Artificial Hells*, 80. See also Chantal Mouffe: *The Democratic Paradox* (Verso, 2000).

⁶⁴ Bishop, *Artificial Hells*, 182.

universal risk inherent within all socially engaged art, but rather a Eurocentric blind spot that fails to account for alternative modes of ethical engagement grounded in response-ability, affective labour, and community-oriented repair. I understand Bishop's focus on Eurocentric artists to reflect both a mode of representation and a particular ethical conception of artmaking. Her framework privileges artistic autonomy and critique while overlooking socially engaged practices in which care, relationality, and collective response-ability constitute aesthetic and political practice. Bishop's blind spot, then, lies in an inability to recognise care as an organising aesthetic rather than a merely social function external to art.

Ultimately, I find Bishop's value system not entirely adequate for assessing and recognising the social significance of artwork that seeks a more ordinary relationship with everyday modalities of social engagement. In a post-2020 world facing unprecedented challenges, situated ethics present neither as apolitical nor overly narrow, but more so as generative and frequently necessary for navigating what is happening in the world, wherein I am interested in how such processes of navigation might also be supported by aesthetics. This position does not ignore the importance of Bishop's critical work, but highlights how Bishop's argument, as I understand it, risks reproducing elitist and exclusionary standards of art participation under the guise of rigorous aesthetic critique. Reflecting on these concerns, my project examines how social and performative artmaking frequently operates in more subtle, nuanced modes of engagement. I therefore prioritise ethics as an experiential and embodied mode of response-ability and connection, rather than duty that diminishes artistic aesthetic and affective capacity.

Correspondingly, Jones provides a more aligned ethical framework for my project's approach to daily civic-social phenomena. Drawing from feminist, queer, and critical race theories, Jones develops an intersectional approach to performance art and visual culture that foregrounds embodiment, affect, and the durational nature of relational encounters. In *Seeing Differently* (2012), Jones posits that art is not about witnessing finished objects but about participating in ongoing, partial, and unresolved processes that both affect and are affected by its viewers.⁶⁵ Specifically focusing on "queer feminist durational processes" of artmaking and performance, Jones argues for a deeper rethinking of the structures through which the art world values, historicises, and engages with art.⁶⁶ Where Bishop privileges the aesthetic event and its capacity for antagonistic rupture, Jones insists on the ethical and affective work of *staying with* the performance, which emphasises latent and residual mechanics of performativity and embodied impressions. Jones' call for non-binary ways of understanding identification and relationality directly resonates with my project's interest in how vernacular acts of civic-

⁶⁵ Jones, *Seeing Differently*.

⁶⁶ Bishop, *Artificial Hells*, 35.

social engagement might be rendered visible and valuable, without being instrumentalised. Jones' foregrounding of affective and situated witnessing aligns with the core artistic practice of *Arriving in Stages* through modes of attention, co-presence, listening, and care, as artistic materials in themselves.

Further connected to my project's analysis of contemporary artmaking is art critic, writer, and historian Martin Patrick's interest in the "art/life divide."⁶⁷ Noting how contemporary artists work across media in order to be astride both public and private realms of thinking and making, Patrick supports my theoretical positioning of civic-social as being broadly linked to and informed by both personal-political and public-private conceptual domains. As such, I find that my interest in the civic-social sits closely with Patrick's interest in "the problematic relationship [...] between art and life."⁶⁸ Key to my project is Patrick's insistence that artmaking becomes interlinked with the "meta-conditions" and situated contexts in which it is produced, but also, importantly, valued as art.⁶⁹ Examining the convergence point between ordinary everyday life and artmaking, Patrick discusses how methods of artistic performance highlight notions of authorship and identity. For Patrick, the greatest defining aspect for contemporary art practitioners is tied to their enduring interest in exploring the interrelationships between artmaking and life-living. Accordingly, identity and authorship are offered as key conceptual terrains through which subjectivity is rendered inseparable from the ethics of occupying the present.⁷⁰ In this sense, Patrick's account of contemporary art can be read as a practice-based articulation of an ethical stance that closely aligns with Haraway's insistence on "staying with the trouble": a commitment to remaining accountable to the situated, unresolved, and often difficult conditions through which meaning and responsibility are produced.⁷¹

Integrating Patrick's articulation of the art/life divide into my research establishes an ethic of making that binds my practice to the everyday, both conceptually and materially, while also shaping how I address audiences. Grounded in a feminist ethic, my research approach extends into an ethics of viewing that understands and imagines spectatorship as active, present, and ethically implicated. Through provisional and materially vernacular modes of making, my project methodologically troubles the art/life divide, generating collective and civic-social forms of engagement, with implications for how audiences are imagined. And, correspondingly, how art is made, encountered, and shared.

⁶⁷ Martin Patrick, *Across the Art/Life Divide: Performance, Subjectivity, and Social Practice in Contemporary Art* (Intellect Books, 2018).

⁶⁸ Patrick, *Across the Art/Life Divide*. 4

⁶⁹ Patrick, *Across the Art/Life Divide*. 11

⁷⁰ Patrick, *Across the Art/Life Divide*.

⁷¹ Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*.

1.6 Artists as Civic Agents

Sociologist and cultural theorist Maria Rovisco offers a compelling framework for understanding artistic practice as both aesthetic and politically consequential. In *Artists, Cosmopolitanism, and the Civic Imagination: Artists as Political Agents* (2025), Rovisco positions artists as civic agents whose work engages with democratic and social processes through aesthetic action. Her notion of ‘bearing witness’ asks readers to consider “when, how, and if the creative process is constitutive of witnessing,” thereby framing artistic labour as an act of civic and political engagement.⁷² For Rovisco, artmaking and citizenship inform each other, and are jointly enacted through reflexive and socially responsive practices that are grounded in everyday phenomena.

Rovisco’s concept of the “politics of performative listening” provides a generative platform for considering my own civic-social response-abilities as an artist.⁷³ *Arriving in Stages* ongoingly draws from daily textual and material encounters across public life—news reports, government communications, visual motifs, protest signage, social media, and vernacular expressions such as handwritten notes and bumper stickers. In doing so, listening, according to Rovisco, proposes a mode of embodied civic attention that enables my consideration of the ethical and material stakes of performative listening. Rovisco writes of

listening as a mode of hearing that is separate from other human capacities such as seeing, speaking, and sensing ... show[ing] how artists can create a material and imaginative space for radical acts of witnessing, which have the potential to generate civil attention.⁷⁴

My project extends this idea into an exploration of listening as an ordinary act of politicised civic-social participation, wherein I challenge assumptions about what constitutes meaningful engagement. In particular, I foreground subtle, often overlooked forms of participation—such as reading, pausing, or spending time with minimal cues—as legitimate and potent modes of civic involvement. As such, I describe the work of this project as inviting a certain type of engagement, which relies on calling viewers into the role of participant through ongoingly reflecting on and responding to present shared temporal registers.

⁷² Rovisco, *Artists, Cosmopolitanism, and the Civic Imagination*, 100. Additionally, while Rovisco doesn’t refer to Kelly Oliver directly, I read their positions of witnessing as linked, and through my project’s particular method of noticing.

⁷³ Rovisco, *Artists, Cosmopolitanism, and the Civic Imagination*. See Chapter Five: “The Politics of Performative Listening”.

⁷⁴ Rovisco, *Artists, Cosmopolitanism, and the Civic Imagination*, 100.

Importantly, Rovisco distinguishes her position from that of theorists such as Bourriaud and Bishop, stating that “this is not the same as trying to establish whether certain artistic traditions (e.g., participatory arts, socially engaged art) are either ‘art’ or ‘activism’.”⁷⁵ Rather, they propose an expanded understanding of the ways the aesthetic action of artists can be relevant to democratic politics. Rovisco’s position supports my project’s understanding of material and provisional forms of making as both ethically and aesthetically layered, without relying on binary distinctions between art and activism. In this direction, I notice synchronicities with Rovisco’s framing of artists as civic agents who perform citizenship through socially situated practices. In resonance with my own approach to artistic making as a politicised form of civic-social engagement, my project, therefore functions as a practice-driven analysis of Rovisco’s conception of the artist as a civic agent, with a corresponding focus on vernacular and therefore ordinary processes and materials.

Extending these ideas within Aotearoa and practice-led contexts, Māori artist and educator Layne Waerea (Te Arawa, Ngāti Kahungunu) provides a situated, decolonial articulation of civic-social artmaking. Informed by a background in law, Waerea’s work mobilises socio-legal performance and public intervention to examine how Te Tiriti o Waitangi operates as both a foundational agreement and a living political force within contemporary Aotearoa governance. Waerea’s practice examines the tension between legislation, Māori rights, Te Tiriti, and everyday civic behaviour, employing performative gestures that are both materially modest and politically pointed with the artist’s characteristic subversive humour.

While Waerea’s performative intervention shares processes with Bishop’s discussions of institutional critique, Waerea departs from these Euro-American genealogies by grounding her practice in the cultural, legal, and political specificity of Aotearoa. Rather than invoking the public as an abstract democratic goal, I recognise how Waerea activates what Rovisco describes as a form of civic imagination through the convergence points of material activation, social encounter, and legal friction.⁷⁶ Waerea’s recent 2025 *Public Submissions: Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill* (fig. 24) made for the exhibition *A Time of Waiting* at Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery (Tāmaki Makaurau), continues this methodological strategy.

⁷⁵ Rovisco, *Artists, Cosmopolitanism, and the Civic Imagination*, 57.

⁷⁶ Rovisco, *Artists, Cosmopolitanism, and the Civic Imagination*, 92.

Principles of the Treaty of Waiting Bill 2025

Part 2

Principles of Treaty of Waiting

Principles of Treaty of Waiting

The principles of Treaty of Waiting are as follows:

Principle 1

The Executive Government of New Zealand has full power to manage queues, and the Parliament of New Zealand has full power to make rules about waiting,—

- (a) in the best interests of everyone standing in line; and
- (b) in accordance with the principles of fairness and the maintenance of patience in a free and democratic society.

Principle 2

- (1) The Crown recognises, and will respect and protect, the right of individuals and groups to hold their place in line under the Treaty of Waiting at the time they began queuing.
- (2) However, if those rights conflict with the rights of anyone else," **subclause (1)** applies only if the principle of 'first come, first served' has already been agreed upon by everyone else in the queue and ratified by a universal agreement of fairness.

Principle 3

- (1) Everyone waits the same, regardless of status or position.
- (2) Everyone is entitled, without discrimination, to—
 - (a) equal treatment while waiting; and
 - (b) the equal expectation of reaching the front of the line in due course.

Layne Waerea

(OpenAI, personal communication, January 2025)

Figure 24. Layne Waerea, *Principles of the Treaty of Waiting Bill* (2025). Vinyl text. Installation image by Monique Redmond. Installed as part of *Time of Waiting* at Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery, Auckland, 4 April – 25 May 2025

Installed as large-scale vinyl text on the main wall of the gallery's foyer in the building entrance, the text's visual presentation mimics official parliamentary bill formatting. The artwork operates as both a sculptural-textual-dialogical proposition and a participatory platform, inviting oral submissions in response to proposed guidelines for 'waiting' in public space. By appropriating bureaucratic forms, Waerea stages a subtle critique of the ongoing redefinition of Treaty obligations under contemporary governance, highlighting how legal discourse can be used to both enable and restrict Indigenous rights.⁷⁷ The use of a public consultation framework mirrors state mechanisms of participatory governance, yet is reframed through artistic intervention to reveal the slippages and silences embedded in such processes.

I read Waerea's artistic positioning therefore sits in generative linkage with Jones's emphasis on the ethical and affective labour of durational practice.⁷⁸ However, Waerea's work also diverges from the theories of Bishop, Jones and Rovisco both by foregrounding a decolonial politics of accountability specific to Aotearoa's bicultural Te Tiriti context. Her practice raises important questions for my own research, urging me to consider how participation is defined within settler-colonial governance; what forms of visibility are granted, revoked, or refused within the civic-social domain; and how artistic practices inhabit these complex legal-aesthetic spaces without replicating the same structural violence they seek to expose. Waerea's practice examples a civic-social orientation in which collaboration is not confined to fixed participants but is instead activated through dynamic structural, provisional, material, and legal relationalities. Participation becomes partial, contingent, and largely dialogic across Waerea's practice, emerging through open-ended acts of encounter, rather than prescribed roles or identities. This analysis has implications for my own project, which similarly does not locate collaboration in formalised partnerships, but rather in the shared terrain of responsiveness, attention, and the relational ethics of public life.

The different approaches of artmaking in response to the constraints of daily structures exemplified by Waerea and others bring my project's term of *civic-social artmaking* further into a scope of conceptually rigorous yet materially ordinary artistic activity. Their practices respectively challenge conventional definitions of social practice by foregrounding subtle, durational, and materially ordinary methods through which political, legal, and ethical concerns are lived, felt, and enacted. In this way, *Arriving in Stages* aims to extend these frameworks materially. As a result, my project understands civic-social artmaking not as a category or genre, but as a modality that continually

⁷⁷ Act Party Leader and Coalition Government member David Seymour's proposed Treaty Principles Bill (2023-2024) which seeks to redefine the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi), thereby replacing widely accepted concepts like partnership, protection, and participation with narrower ideas centred on individual rights and parliamentary sovereignty. Criticised by Māori leaders and legal experts, the bill is seen as an attempt to weaken the Treaty's constitutional role and Indigenous rights in Aotearoa New Zealand.

⁷⁸ Jones, *Seeing Differently*.

negotiates material-conceptual conditions of constraint, relationality, and ethical attention: where art emerges not apart from the world, but within its everyday negotiations of response-ability and care.

This literature review navigates diverse and sometimes subtly contrasting approaches to response-ability and civic-social artistic engagement, situating my research within a complex web of theory and practice shaped by global and local concerns. My contribution to this field lies in operationalising reparative methodologies as lived, everyday practices, grounded in noticing, care, and accountability, especially within the specific contexts of Aotearoa, Tangata Tiriti, socially-engaged and feminist research. By embracing rather than resolving tensions within my own registers of experiences that draw on daily socio-political phenomena, my research offers a materially expansive and context-sensitive model of artistic practice that fosters new socially and politically collective forms of meaning-making and civic participation. Following this navigation of key literature, the next chapter shifts in focus toward discussing my project's core methodologies of care, repair, and love, understood as interconnected ethics. I highlight how this methodological framework is the basis for corresponding methods of listening, reading, and feeling that drive my artmaking.

CHAPTER TWO: ARRIVING LOGICS

My navigation of ethics is a primary driver for the methodologies of *Arriving in Stages*. Interweaving ethics and methodology together means attending to my practice with a multi-focus, examining how I both notice and have the ability to respond to things both materially and conceptually. Rather than treating ethics as a set of principles, I understand it as inseparable from methodology: how I listen, attend to, respond with, and make are themselves ethical acts. Drawing on feminist relational and situational discourse, I trace the interconnected frameworks of care, repair, and love as mutually dependent, overlapping ethics that continually inform my ethics-in-practice approach. A key methodological aspect for the project is how I personally take up response-ability toward what Donna Haraway calls “staying with the trouble.”⁷⁹ I consider staying with the trouble an ethic of response-ability that listens without moralising, reads without domination, and feels without escapism.

Chapter two builds on how my methods—attentive listening, reparative reading, and the creation of conceptual public space—become further animated by a loving orientation, which together inform my project’s primary method of noticing. Through provisional materials and iterative processes of collection and dispersal, I treat repair, love, and care as the connective tissue of my practice, enabling and ensuring a continual negotiation between myself and the world. By centring love as a methodology, I aim to highlight how holding open the possibility and preference for responses that privilege care, repair, and civic-social worlding are critical in shaping both the art I make and the worlds I feel it participates in. Civic-social worlding is a process whereby I focus on visual and verbal languages as a type of relational and situated material-doing within socio-political and public vernaculars. Here, visual and verbal languages encompass the images, words, conversations, and symbolic exchanges through which relations of care, response-ability, and collective participation are enacted through both visual and language-based vernaculars.

This chapter offers love and care as core methodological frameworks that extend my reparative engagement through practice. However, I am not implying a fixed or exclusive progression; rather than unfolding one after the other, or occupying a scope of purely “good” feelings, my research positions love and care as critically rigorous, as well as deeply intertwined and co-constitutive. Their meanings consequently emerge through their ongoing interplay, resisting hierarchical ordering and fixed ways of looking, reading and feeling in the world, and instead functioning as relational,

⁷⁹ Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*.

overlapping forces that together become my project's durationally engaged and responsive methodologies.



Figure 25. *In Progress* showing *Arriving in Stages (Newsletter)* Issue #4: "A Political Alignment with Love" (March 2025)

2.1 An Ethics of Love: Feeling My Way

Important to my role as an artist-researcher is an understanding of love as both an ethical orientation and a methodological guide. Love extends care and repair by adding an affirmative, generative force that attends and mends, but also nurtures new possibilities for relation, meaning, and practice. bell hooks, Sara Ahmed, Lauren Berlant, and Kelly Oliver provide the conceptual ground through which my project comes to understand love's significance across personal and political relations.

For feminist activist and cultural critic bell hooks, an ethic of love must be practised within every socio-political movement. hooks writes that “without an ethic of love shaping the direction of our political vision and our radical aspiration, we are often seduced ... into continued allegiance to systems of domination—imperialism, sexism, racism, classism.”⁸⁰ For hooks, moving beyond the “blind spots” that sustain domination requires a deliberate and sustained ethical practice of love, that importantly begins with acknowledging these blind spots through registering both a care and a concern for others, and an attentiveness to how oppression structures their lives. In this sense, love offers more than a sentiment. It is a key ethical method for the way it works to shape how I respond to the experiences of others.

While hooks clarifies why love is politically necessary, my project also requires a framework for how a loving ethic is methodological. This is where queer political and cultural theorist Lauren Berlant's account of “properly political love” provides essential methodological traction in the ways I string care, repair, and love together as a practice framework for this research.⁸¹ Whereas hooks establishes the political necessity of love, Berlant offers a nuanced analysis of how love works as a method as well as an affective practice capable of sustaining meaningful political commitment. Berlant describes love as “one of the few situations where we desire to have patience for what isn't working, an affective binding that allows us to iron things out, or to be elastic, or to try a new incoherence.”⁸² In this sense, Berlant extends hooks' view by showing how love operates as a felt force and rhythm of staying in relation, even when coherence falters. Love can therefore be recognised as a mode of attention—a critically rigorous way of noticing, maintaining commitment, adjusting, and remaining connected through various ways with the complexities of living alongside others.

⁸⁰ bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (Routledge, 1994), 54, 64.

⁸¹ Lauren Berlant, “A Properly Political Concept of Love: Three Approaches in Ten Pages,” *Cultural Anthropology* 26, no. 4 (2011)

⁸² Lauren Berlant, “A Properly Political Concept of Love” 685



Figure 26. (above, left) Miles drawing for @milestheorange (posted July 2025)



Figure 27. (below, right) Miles drawing for @milestheorange (posted 28 February 2025)

Through Berlant, I have come to comprehend love as a methodological force within my daily practice. Love ultimately produces my commitment to practices and processes of listening, observing, witnessing, and sensing, by focusing on feelings that allow me to move awkwardly *and* ambitiously, which works to expand my ability to be more responsive to the world's present socio-political conditions. Berlant's conception of politicised love provides an understanding of how love interconnects with repair. That is, love, in a feminist, relational, and politically attentive sense, operates as a method and a structure of attention that enables me to become a loving conduit through which this project takes form. Love sharpens this relationship (between me as an artist, and a politicised experience of the world) in the ways it "involves a rhythm of an ambition and an intention to stay in sync" which Berlant notes "is a lower bar than staying attuned, but still hard and awkward enough."⁸³

Another critical context for thinking about how love emerges is feminist scholar Sara Ahmed's rejection of love as a universal solution to the world's problems. Ahmed instead opts to problematise love's inadvertent function of "Othering" through embodied sensations of hate.⁸⁴ Ahmed's idea of love foregrounds the ways that emotions are personal feelings, and, moreover, deeply embedded and directive of socio-political systems and structures, influencing how bodies and communities come together or feel pulled apart. As such, my project understands that love demands my ongoing reflexivity to distinguish genuinely ethical commitments from claims of love that may reinforce harm. This understanding positions love as a transformative yet always contestable space that shapes how I relate, create, and engage with civic-social response-ability through artmaking.

In this sense, while care offers a method of listening, and repair offers a mode of reading the world and its text(s), love offers my project a method of *feeling*. By positioning love as a feeling, my project considers love in connection to repair and care. This position also situates love within broader emotional economies that structure both personal and political boundaries. In particular, this position enables an examination of how love can inversely produce hierarchies around whose feelings count, whose emotions are recognised, and whose experiences become centred in the ongoing work of love, care, and repair. I do this 'feeling' daily, by adopting processes within artworks that actively respond to and question the emotions and politicised experiences being centred by my research encounters. Through practices of attentive listening, reparative reading, and working with provisional, makeshift, ordinary materials, my project continually asks whose feelings are given socio-political space, and whose histories are recognised or misrepresented within everyday systems of communication (such as media) as well as in

⁸³ Berlant, "A Properly Political Concept of Love," 683

⁸⁴ Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh University Press, 2004).

my practice-based research, where my own orientations function to materially shape, and in turn become shaped by, these dynamics.

How I relate to Ahmed's insistence on love's point of contention is particularly relevant to the way I continually bring in frameworks of hegemonic thought, as daily subject matter that materially and conceptually counters my project's methodologies. Though they feel contradictory to what I stand for, I continually respond to examples such as Brian Tamaki's Destiny Church *Man Up* programme.⁸⁵ While I am almost always tempted to describe *Man Up*'s orientation as the opposite of my own, acknowledging the structural parallels in how both projects (arguably) organise systems of feeling, mobilise attachment, and claim love as a guiding force enables my project a more precise analysis of how and where methods ethically diverge. As such, I can understand the *Man Up* relational framework, amongst many troubling others, not simply as so-called moral claims, but as affective alignments: declarations of love for one's own way of living and practicing. In speaking about *Man Up* and other troubling socio-political positionings, here within this exegesis, and materially across my project with works such as *In Progress*, *Memo*, *Miles*, *Arriving in Stages* (Newsletter) and my series of banners and make-shift signs, I am less interested in *Man Up* as an isolated phenomenon, or a way of pointing out my sense of 'opposition.' I am more concerned with how it works through a rhetoric of supposed loving care, participating in what Ahmed calls the politics of attachment—where love, as both a claim and a type of intervention or interruption, can just as easily become a justification for violent acts of exclusion, correction, or coercion.

In this sense, love becomes the method by which I stay in relation without collapsing into agreement. By allowing *all* a metaphorical 'seat at the table,' time and time again within the practice (by listening, reading, feeling, and responding), I open myself to recognising the embodied, cultural, and political facets that become conducive to ethical positioning. This is where Ahmed's analysis meets my method: where love functions to expand rather than limit the scope of what I deem 'worthy' of my ongoing attention. Love, then, becomes a discipline of remaining response-able within my discomfort, which offers a more ethically rigorous process than simply being reactive to it. Bringing troubling positionalities into my internal world, thinking and attending to them at various points in my artmaking, is not an act of endorsement, but one of ethical engagement, as a response-ability I have within this project. Through a loving orientation toward my response-abilities, I aim to register harm without reproducing the logics of hatred or paranoid exclusion that I critique. The result is a practice that uses

⁸⁵ *Man Up* is a programme associated with Brian Tamaki's Destiny Church, whose interventions (such as their violent and physically abusive actions at Auckland City Library's 'Drag Story Time' events, and their antagonistic presence at Pride events) are often framed by its members as acts of guidance, discipline, or cultural restoration.

love to stay with the trouble long enough for new forms of understanding, and modes of care and repair to emerge in embodied and civic-socially focused ways.

Oliver's thinking concerning "the look of love" likewise argues the importance of vision beyond processes of domination.⁸⁶ For Oliver, the look of love is akin to physical forms of caress (as opposed to a type of *grip*) as well as processes of recognition that emphasise positions of witnessing. Describing how "recognition is a form of love that requires witnessing to that which is beyond recognition, witnessing to what cannot be seen,"⁸⁷ Oliver's resonance with hooks, Berlant, and Ahmed underscores the self-critical, responsive, and embodied dimensions of love as methodology. In describing how the "obligation to speak and to listen opens a public space for love," Oliver argues that when people speak and listen to one another, they create a shared space where relationships can form.⁸⁸ This 'public space,' which I consider in my art practice, is a place of shared language that can be understood as existing beyond monolithic and literal forms, extending into a conceptual, nuanced, and iteratively experienced relational space. Oliver's insistence on the relationship between visionary processes of love and obligation to both speaking and listening to language is generative for my project's key method of noticing: a daily activation of listening and reading but also looking and feeling. My artmaking takes on a vital role as a method of creating and sustaining the kind of conceptual public space Oliver describes. Through materially formed, textual, visual, and gently participatory formats, I am interested in how my artistic practice might not only utilise Oliver's "look of love" as part of my personal doings but also enable it to be more visible publicly, through an experiencing of the artwork. A look of love, and its methods of listening both linguistically and visually, invites both myself and viewers into a continuous negotiation of connection, difference, and care, making the abstract concept of love tangible and visible within the ordinary structures of my daily life.

Love is my project's culminative affective and political orientation, guiding both my response to the world's conditions and the pace, scale, and material recursiveness of my artmaking. Love, in this sense, also becomes deeply personal, and functions to move through me. As the central conduit, love operates as my inner clock, setting the tempo of my work and shaping how the project unfolds materially through my looking, listening, reading, and feeling of things within my everyday life, in a scope between personal and political. In this way, love offers my project ethical and methodological wayfinding, and it also becomes conducive to the methods in which I have continuously translated my internal and personal feelings about the world and its conditions into art. Love allows me

⁸⁶ Oliver, *Response Ethics*, 54-73.

⁸⁷ Oliver, *Response Ethics*, 69.

⁸⁸ Oliver, *Response Ethics*, 69.

to approach troubling socio-political conditions not only critically but generatively, asking what forms of response, care, or repair my artistic practice might engage, *here* and *now*, in concurrent response to everyday occurrences. Thus, the things I respond to assemble as art in the way they become material-conceptual sites through which my own ethical, emotional, and political commitments are activated. They are the points at which my attention meets the world's demands and where the method of love begins its work.

Love also directs my artistic labour, informing my response to everyday contexts, my material selections, and the orchestration of multidisciplinary visual, ephemeral, and performative encounters throughout the project. As the central conduit, love has become my way of creating a 'buffer' between myself and the emotional and ethical load of existing in the world as a human in 2026. Just as a physical buffer cushions impact, my research methods attempt to take in the harshness, violence, or injustices of the world, what might otherwise be referred to as the emotional load of contemporary existence, and transform it into something perceptible, caring, and reparative. My acting as the project's conduit, a loving buffer, means I aim to hold and navigate spaces between the art-audience and the intensity of the world's problems. I feel the task is to enable viewers to engage, reflect, and respond on their own terms, rather than be overwhelmed or shut down by the scale of what is at stake collectively.

Although the terrain of the material I *could* respond to is vast, I also recognised that I cannot engage with everything. Instead, through sustained practice, I began to discern a pattern in what draws my attention and broadly constitutes my cares and concerns. I find myself responding most urgently to the everyday socio-political conditions that exert harmful, oppressive, or affectively difficult pressures in lived experience, with a particular focus on how these events become material and conceptual daily subject matter. Meeting these experiences in connection with care, repair and love, therefore, sets the conditions for my making. Becoming evident over time in works such as *Things Happen*, *Memo*, *In Progress*, and *Miles*, the 'subject matter' of my cares and concerns surfaces in the world as temporal frictions: moments where something stings, jars, repels, troubles, humours, and surprises me. It is precisely the languaging of these frictions that becomes the material of my art. What I choose to respond to is not arbitrary but emerges from my embodied encounters with the world's pressures and contradictions, and what I can cope with in pragmatic ways. In this sense, my artistic responses are shaped by an ethics of attention: I am drawn toward what feels heavy, harmful, or dissonant in order to transform my encounter with it, not to reproduce its violence. This is where love becomes methodological.

In my practice, love functions as a kind of elastic tether, an enduring, responsive force that pulls me back into relation with the work even when my capacity to respond becomes interrupted. It is not a romantic ideal but a methodological orientation, one that

recognises how attention, care, and responsiveness fluctuate under the conditions of life-living. Love stretches to accommodate these fluctuations; it does not break when gaps in practice appear. This elasticity accounts for the uneven pace at which the work unfolds. Although I describe the project as a form of daily engagement, its rhythms have included interruptions, pauses, and returns. For example, my Leave of Absence (LoA) of a year from this project, taken to give birth to my child, marked a significant interruption. A LoA is often treated as a blank in the timeline, a period where the work ‘waits’ while life-things are attended to elsewhere. However, in a practice such as mine, which lives cumulatively and durationally across quasi-public-social modes, the pause leaves its own material trace. During that time, I stepped back from artworks such as *@miletheorange*, not out of disinterest but because experiencing chronic sickness as a result of pregnancy radically reduced my capacity to respond. Love, as a method, honours this reality: it allows the work and the artist to engage when they *can*, and it generates the conditions for return when returning becomes possible. The artwork makes this tangible more broadly through materials—paper, tape, textiles—that carry marks and layers of processual engagement, wherein more quiet moments and subtle material shifts become folded into the bigger methodological picture, conducive to Haraway’s “staying with the trouble.”⁸⁹

2.2 An Ethic of Care: Ordinary Attention

Thinking with care becomes a form of doing, an action enacted through and within language. I recall early on in this project having a subtle “aha!” type moment, while reading poet and novelist Ocean Vuong’s *On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous* (2019). In this novel, Vuong describes the type of thinking-with care across absence and presence, linked to experiences of language. Vuong writes:

But why can’t the language for creativity be the language of regeneration?

You killed that poem, we say. You came in to that novel guns blazing. I am hammering this paragraph, I am banging them out, we say. I owned that workshop. I shut it down. I crushed them. We smashed the competition. I’m wrestling with the muse. The state, where people live, is a battleground state. The audience a target audience. ‘Good for you man,’ a man once said to me at a party, ‘you’re making a killing with poetry. You’re knocking ‘em dead.’⁹⁰

Language, as Vuong observes, is rarely neutral, but operates as both material and conceptual terrain in which power, care, and harm are negotiated. His examples of

⁸⁹ Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*.

⁹⁰ Ocean Vuong, *On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous: A Novel* (Penguin Press, 2019), 179.

combative metaphors in poetry—“killing that poem,” “hammering this paragraph,” “making a killing”—reveal how even creative acts are often framed in imperialised terms of destruction, violence, and warfare. For my practice, these observations highlight how language can simultaneously express desire, tenderness, or care, while reproducing subtle or systemic harm. By attending to how different ways of languaging enable or foreclose particular logics, I am challenged to imagine what it might mean, and what it might relationally enable, for language to depart from such imperialistic frameworks in favour of care and its more regenerative logics, as well as the processes of listening and response that would be required to collectively prioritise care and its ethically driven practices. Remaining with this challenge has fostered a generative, day-to-day approach to making that recursively activates my project’s key modality and method of noticing. Even during extraordinary times, such as lockdowns, or through more personal experiences of grief, pregnancy, and early parenthood, it has offered me a way to approach the practice both my practice, but also the present temporal moment, with persistence and processual openness.

This attention to language also resonates with Sandra Laugier’s understanding of care as an ethics of the ordinary. Laugier situates care’s significance within daily activities of speech and dialogical practice. Stating that care “corresponds to a quite ordinary reality: the fact that people look after one another, take care of one another, and thus are attentive to the functioning of the world, which depends on this kind of care,”⁹¹ Laugier highlights how attending to ordinary language, from a feminist perspective, is not a neutral action, but emphasises the experiences and voices of those often excluded from dominant discourses, further revealing ethical responsibilities embedded in everyday interactions. Care, in this sense, is both practical and political, and is enacted through routine linguistic and social practices, while simultaneously offering a method for understanding and transforming the relational and power structures that shape daily life. For Laugier, language is not only a vehicle for communication but the everyday medium through which care is enacted: in the ways people speak, listen, and respond to one another. Attending to the ordinary uses of language becomes, for her, a form of ethical attention that makes the moral dimensions of everyday life perceptible.

What Laugier describes as an ethics of the ordinary directly parallels my project’s understanding of thinking with care through language as a method. While this method often manifests in conventionally communicative ways—textually through a banner, verbally through an event-based performance, or dialogically within a chance conversation—it also extends materially through the physical and affective translations of language that surface more subtly throughout the artworks. Language is both medium and matter: the method through which care’s gestures of attention, maintenance, and

⁹¹ Laugier, “The Ethics of Care,” 219.

repair are enacted. These gestures often arise in response to specific stimuli, like a phrase from a news report or article. The stimulus, in this sense, becomes active from an emotional scope within my own felt sensations, which arise from listening.

For example, in a Radio New Zealand interview between Māori journalist Mihingarangi Forbes (Ngāti Paoa, Ngāti Maniapoto) and Canadian political scientist Tom Flanagan, Forbes questioned Flanagan's understanding of what ACT Party leader and coalition member David Seymour has taken from Flanagan's Indigenous political policy. Flanagan replied:

There'd be a number. One is that people have to create prosperity for themselves. It can't be given. The government can get out of the way, but the government, no matter how much it engages in transfer payments, can't actually create sustaining prosperity. Another point is that there's a difference between civilised and non-civilised peoples, which used to be called savagery, although we wouldn't use that term today. So the civilised peoples are, in the long run enormously more powerful than uncivilised people. And so the task of a government today is not to indulge in continual breastfeeding about colonialism but to invite people whose ancestors lacked these elements of civilisation to invite them into the tent and so called you can call that assimilation if you like. Um, it has to happen.⁹²

Listening to the way Flanagan's language advances a civilisational hierarchy empowered by colonial, imperial, and hegemonic logics deeply unsettled me. To be extremely clear, Flanagan's socio-political positioning runs directly counter to the ethics this project stands for, and I found it impossible to listen without a growing sense of anger, shaped sharply and immediately in my embodied response to his insistence on dividing people into what he names as civilised and uncivilised. However, at the time of listening, I had a sleeping infant on my chest, and thus, felt a responsibility to meet my overwhelming anger quietly, attentively, and without causing extra disruption. This ordinary, embodied condition shaped how that anger could be expressed via me, as the conduit who felt it. In other circumstances, this anger might have moved me into overt action—a responsive banner, a makeshift sign, or a public gesture. Instead, the immediacy of care limited my range of physical response. Rather than suppressing the affective charge of the moment, I treated this limitation as a generative constraint. I turned to language as a way of tracing the response that had been activated in my body. Reaching for my phone, I opened the notes app and, under a list titled: Memorandum (*Memo*), began to record the words and phrases Flanagan had set circulating in my mind, using writing as a method to register, hold, and work through the encounter (fig. 28).

⁹² RNZ [Radio New Zealand], "MATA Reports: ACT; The Foreign Influences That Have Shaped David Seymour's Political Agenda" May 21, 2025, YouTube, 39 min. Viewable online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QLOjiiC3P1Y>. See timestamp 10:45 sec for quote.

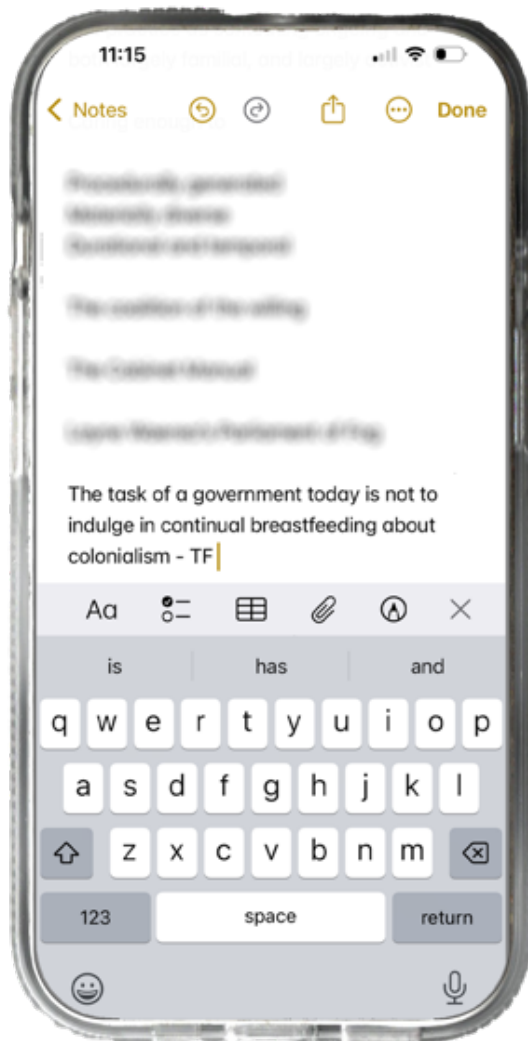


Figure 28. My phone, with a screenshot of *Memo*, showing the entry made while listening to Tom Flanagan (taken June 2025)

Attending to Vuong’s analysis of imperialist metaphor highlights the way that Flanagan’s rhetoric reproduces imperial logics even at the level of casual speech, while Laugier’s ethics of care clarifies the ethical stakes of this ordinary reproduction, revealing how the language of care can be co-opted to legitimise coercive power relations rather than foster relational response-ability. By framing civility as a measurable standard, Flanagan mobilises symbolic and paternalistic metaphors (tents, breastfeeding, and governmentally centralised authority) that attempt to naturalise hierarchy and recast assimilation as care rather than coercion. My anger was directed not only at Flanagan’s use of language but also at the fact that such a political position continues to circulate with legitimacy in 2025, remaining materially entangled with contemporary conditions in Aotearoa via figures such as David Seymour, as evidenced through his Treaty Principles Bill.

A year earlier, Te Pāti Māori MP Hana-Rawhiti Maipi-Clarke interrupted parliamentary voting on David Seymour’s Treaty Principles Bill, during its first reading. As she stood to perform the *Ka Mate* haka (ceremonial posture, dance, or challenge), members of the opposition and the public gallery rose in support, and Maipi-Clarke tore the proposed Treaty Principles document in two. Met with both criticism and affirmation internationally, this moment carries significant symbolic, cultural, and political weight. I have watched the official parliamentary footage of this action upwards of fifty times. Each time, the transition as parliamentary speech becomes enfolded into Maipi-Clarke’s opening karanga (call)⁹³ unsettles me, particularly in the shift from linguistic political efficiency to an embodied mode of address that demands a different kind of listening and response. It is here, in hearing Maipi-Clarke’s call, that I feel most acutely and reparatively called into my response-abilities as Pākehā. Maipi-Clarke’s haka and act of tearing a paper document transforms narrow parliamentary forms of address as collectively embodied rather than individualised. Her actions refuse the usual MP-responds-directly-to-Speaker format, instead calling in everyone present, including ancestors and those who have passed. This effect extends beyond the chamber and reaches me digitally as a news article read, watched, and listened to from my phone; because the haka was live-streamed and widely shared online, the address reaches multiple audiences both nationally and globally, reconfiguring parliamentary space into a relational, participatory encounter for more than just political figures.⁹⁴

⁹³ *Te Aka Māori Dictionary*, under “karanga”. See: <https://maoridictionary.co.nz/word/karanga>.

⁹⁴ Maipi-Clarke was “named” for this activity within parliament. Within Parliamentary terms, “naming” functions as a form of disciplinary action, marking political participation that is designed for public visibility and sanction rather than part of the political process. Maipi-Clarke received this naming alongside a temporary suspension from Parliament, along with other Te Pāti Māori MPs.

I read Maipi-Clarke's haka, her action of tearing of the bill, as a response-able and proportionate act of political address, rather than a breach of decorum.⁹⁵ From my position—both personally and within this research—haka does not register as misbehaviour or political disruption, but as an embodied response that resituates parliamentary and democratic processes as culturally situated and contested. Grounded in tikanga Māori, this action operates as reparative, refusing procedural abstraction and the neutralising claims of hegemonic order. In bringing tikanga Māori into a space that asserts neutrality while enacting harm, Maipi-Clarke establishes a form of political disagreement grounded in embodied response-ability and care. Read this way, her actions present as hopeful: they affirm that a haka, like any language, requires listening to, and in doing so, they reveal the possibility of more responsive and relational modes of political engagement.



Figure 29. My phone, with a screenshot of Miles being drawn in support of Hana-Rawhiti Maipi-Clarke for sharing via @milestheorange (taken November 2024)

⁹⁵ *The Spinoff* editor Toby Manhire told RNZ's *Midday Report* that the video had been viewed about 700 million times as of November 18, 2024. Giles Dexter, "Treaty Principles Bill: Te Pāti Māori, ACT both claim victory over response to haka in Parliament," *RNZ News*, November 18, 2024, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/te-manu-korihi/534043/treaty-principles-bill-te-pati-maori-act-both-claim-victory-over-response-to-haka-in-parliament>.

In this instance, @milestheorange became a means through which that support could be articulated. A post was drawn up, featuring *Miles*' digitally drawn form, holding a red foil heart-shaped balloon with the iconic thumbnail image of Maipi-Clarke tearing Seymour's proposed Treaty Principles Bill document in two (fig. 29). Assembling the post in this way allowed my embodied response to take form in real time, translating a felt, embodied reaction into a public, shareable gesture. Similar to my earlier entry in *Memo*, rather than resolving the feeling, the post functioned as a way of staying with it, holding space for solidarity, attention, and acknowledgment within the everyday conditions of my life and practice.

Taken together, these examples reveal how methodologies and ethics are inseparable in engaging with language and power, which become active through corresponding connections between care and listening. Furthermore, I position my noticing of language as a mode of attention and as a practice of listening, through which ordinary engagements, especially those shaped by language, form the basis of my project's daily actions. By foregrounding care as relational and ethical, I find that these methodologies suggest that response-ability extends beyond attention: it encompasses repair, creating practices that actively respond to harm and cultivate more equitable, accountable relationships.

2.3 Worlding Dynamics; Loving, Reparative and Caring Logics

Arriving in Stages is wilfully committed to being materially and conceptually attuned to the world's movements—its tensions, urgencies, and small shifts—allowing the various artworks to respond ethically and in real time. For Haraway, to world is to take response-ability for the webs of relation one participates within. Throughout *Staying with the Trouble*, Haraway describes worlding as both recognising one's own entanglement and attending to the “ongoingness” of earthly processes. As such, worlding is never neutral. Any act of “making-with”—communicating, narrating, imagining, sensing, interpreting—becomes a process that brings worlds into being. The implications of Haraway's position are huge. It means that every act participates in an ethics-in-practice of shaping who gets to live ‘well,’ who is recognised, and what futures become possible.⁹⁶ Rather than retreating from the challenges, Haraway encourages readers to remain engaged with the world's troubles. Haraway does not provide a specific definition of those troubles; however, she consistently assembles trouble as a dynamic set of interconnected political, ecological, economic, and historical crises.

⁹⁶ Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 29, 49, 56.

Across the text, Haraway frames the “trouble” as “more-than-human,” which is described as both historically layered and materially urgent.⁹⁷ These are the conditions that make “staying with the trouble” necessary. As such, worlding involves more than simply reflecting on or representing the world; it brings the world into being through ethically situated and embodied understandings of practice, encounter, storytelling and material relations. Haraway explains:

Each time I trace a tangle and add a few threads that at first seemed whimsical but turned out to be essential to the fabric, I get a bit straighter that staying with the trouble of complex worlding is the name of the game of living and dying well together on terra, in Terrapolis. We are all responsible to and for shaping conditions for multispecies flourishing in the face of terrible histories, and sometimes joyful histories too, but we are not all response-able in the same ways. The differences matter—in ecologies, economies, species, lives.⁹⁸

While Haraway articulates worlding as a multispecies endeavour in concurrent response to the world’s present states of trouble, my research is more explicitly aligned to a politicised understanding of civic-social response-abilities relevant to my everyday encounters in and with the world. This sideways shift critically links Haraway’s concept to *Arriving in Stages*’ focus on the ordinary and collective practices that shape social and political realities.

Read through a politicised civic-social register, worlding becomes my way of methodologically accounting for how various social and political worlds and their corresponding structures are continually reproduced in ordinary ways through the shared practices, relationships, and acts of collective and attentive maintenance that my artworks negotiate. Response-ability, in this civic sense, refers to the capacity to recognise and inhabit multiple relational positions within social and political structures, and to act in ways that cultivate more equitable and sustainable forms of coexistence. Rather than emphasising multispecies entanglement alone, a civic-social perspective foregrounds the ordinary and everyday labour of building solidarities, negotiating power, and sustaining forms of mutual support within communities. Worlding becomes a practice of shaping civic conditions—economic, cultural, interpersonal—under which diverse social groups might live and organise well together, even amidst structural inequities and ongoing political troubles. Through establishing a sense of kinship and embracing worlding, Haraway suggests that readers might reimagine ways of living that are more interconnected, ethical, and responsive.

⁹⁷ Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 43.

⁹⁸ Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 29.

When I reflect on this project's activity across this research, I often think of it as becoming methodologically activated in ways that critically synthesise Haraway's notion of worlding alongside my own evolving methods. Across makeshift signage, banner-making, ephemera dispersal, and digital and performative engagements with *Miles*, my project has increasingly shifted from the production of what could be described as more discrete objects (such as banners), enabled by daily support systems (such as *Things Happen*, *Memo* and *In Progress*), toward a more processual focus on daily and durational rhythms of practice, which in itself becomes an artistic form of material worlding. This shift enacts a critical synthesis between Haraway's emphasis on worlding as lived, embodied practice and the specific material realities of my own artistic labour. Over time, my role as artistic conduit has become more pronounced: the work no longer 'arrives' to a viewer as a finalised or singular form but is folded and unfolded through sustained acts, gestures, and movements. Rather than treating this project as singular artworks, the longevity of the project resides in the continuous circulation of care, repair, and loving response that passes through me and brings each of these works into being, incrementally, and in a system of interdependent support of each other.

This process of artmaking is itself a critical synthesis of internal and external worlding that ultimately begins with me: my experiences, my feelings, and my noticing of things, all happening within my internal realms. The work then moves out into the world, usually through a kind of temporal artistic system I have installed, such as a sign, an event, as printed matter, as an Instagram post. I feel that *Arriving in Stages* can be read as frequent material worlding of my internal doings, in which the work has become increasingly materialised within more public realms, both on and offline, and in addition to regular studio-based installation practice. This movement between the personal and public materially enacts the kind of relationality Haraway's worlding theorises, while also foregrounding methodologies of care, repair, and, ultimately, love as ethical engagements, which translate within my project to an ethics-in-practice. In essence, across all forms of my making, I am the one who determines both the frequency of action, the tone of response, and the process of material realisation. The whole purpose of this project is to have ethics drive my response in a way that translates to ordinary, everyday acts of invitation to listen, read, and feel, acts which function to connect my experiences, feelings, and sensations to others. My capacity to respond to the world and its continuity shapes how frequently I create, the materials I use, how methods develop and change, and how my artistic commentary ultimately positions itself within the broader world of human activity. Incrementally, I have recognised that it is care, repair, and love that each move me into caring action, sharpen my reparative attention, and set up my role as a loving conduit. My methodological engagement with each aspect sets the pace of my project through me, and it is care, repair, and love that inform my corresponding artistic methods.

In this project, methodology is inseparable from ethics and embodiment: my experiences of care, repair, and love become the very rhythms through which I test my project's multimedia methods. The artworks made within this practice-led project all attempt to enact the same caring, reparative, loving logics through varying frequencies of activity and different material and media-based registers. As the project has developed, I have come to realise that the connective tissue between its forms is apparent via the ongoing rhythm of my participation, which, through the elastic reach of love, occurs in materially makeshift and conceptually provisional ways. Due to my repeated acts of noticing, translating material, and circulating through signs, messages, encounters, and performances, the project coheres as a world 'in motion,' versus isolated works. They are more than the documentation of a world and events that have happened. In this sense, my artistic labour becomes a form of civic-social worlding through love: a practice of maintaining relations, tending to everyday life, and creating meaning through cumulative gestures.

This chapter has outlined the layered methodologies of care, repair, and love as the ethical and methodological foundations that guide my artistic research. By engaging with feminist theorists and adopting iterative, materially responsive practices, I have articulated how care operates not only as an ethic but as an everyday method of listening, attending, and responding. Repair, as explored through reparative reading, extends this ethic into acts of noticing and holding space for possibility and transformation in the face of harm or difficulty. Love, meanwhile, emerges as the generative force that sustains my engagement, cultivating a practice of staying with complexity, discomfort, and difference as part of my ongoing processual mode of participation. These three intertwined methodologies have shaped my approach to artmaking as an ongoing negotiation of ethical responsibility and relational practice, materialised in acts of attentive listening, reparative reading, and affective feeling. As the project has unfolded, it is increasingly evident that language and text are inherently relevant outcomes of care. The following chapter, *Chapter Three: Finding a Language*, deepens this inquiry by exploring the connection between care and text as corresponding artistic approaches. Building on my project's practices of writing, reading, and textual engagement, I further explore how an ethical engagement with care throughout *Arriving in Stages* foregrounds the way language and its text offer a generative artistic site for enacting, sustaining, and expanding methodologies of care, as well as practising care's corresponding method of listening.

CHAPTER THREE: FINDING A LANGUAGE

Attending to the social, political, and emotional registers embedded in language and its text, this chapter considers how language operates as an invitational method of care within my artmaking. Grounded in everyday civic, social, and political vernaculars, I explore text as a practice-based method that cultivates artistic response-ability, focusing on an ethic of care as my central orientation. I am always thinking about the ways language, and the very structure of text itself, can enact care, responsively shaping whether a caring orientation is supported, strained, or denied. I look, read, and listen to language constantly, noticing how even subtle and improvised language choices carry ethical weight. The idea that improvised, iterative, and daily engagement with language is formative of conditions, contexts, and habits of attention that are each shaped by power relations is both politically meaningful and a methodological focus of my research. I have a deep interest in how noticing and working with language can be an ordinary act of feminist, political, and ethically oriented care in artmaking. As such, I view language as a relational tool with a large scope of activity relevant to both internal and external registers of process and action, shaping how response-ability becomes sensed and, perhaps more importantly, enacted as practice. Whether I am listening to the radio, reading motorway signage, engaging in casual conversation, or researching scholarship, I am always noticing how language (both in my listening, but also my registering and forming of a response) distributes attention and value. This noticing becomes an improvised moment for rethinking how care can be variously extended or withheld relationally. I am interested in how language, and my artistic engagement with it as text within this project, carries a sense of response-ability.

This chapter navigates my project's ongoing engagement with care, language, and text. Beginning with an articulation of the way language both drives and is a core method of this project in daily ways, I discuss the ways in which my project's text-based methods, involving lists, signs, sewn banners, and printed ephemera, exist on a spectrum between subtle methods of engaging in personal support structures and systems of increasingly accessible semi-public visibility. A feminist ethics of care frames my ongoing listening and attentiveness to language as not only a method of observation but as an ethical commitment to relational responsibility: listening is an act of care that shapes how I respond and relate to the world.



Figure 30. Scan of *Things Happen*, printed on thermal paper. 5.4cm x 85cm (December 2025)

3.1 Textual Support Structures

My project is founded via early textual engagement through multiple methods, moving between internal support structures, such as my keeping of lists, and increasingly semi-public systems of engagement, such as my making of banners. I describe *Things Happen* and *Memo* (both 2019-ongoing) as more subtly engaged methods, where I iteratively add to digital lists of texts stored in the ‘notes’ section of my mobile phone. Both rely on language, but in distinctly different ways.⁹⁹ *Things Happen* is a formal list, organised chronologically and segmented by year (2020–2026) with 160 entries as of February 2026. It functions as an accumulating archive of events, personal, national, and global, collected in the ‘news-headline’ style of collective context. The entries range from a few reflections on emotions (experiences of grief; the city I live in facing a weather event; the birth of my baby) to, more frequently, large-scale developments (government policy shifts, global pandemic outbreaks, declarations of warfare, climate-driven disasters). While expansive, *Things Happen* does not list every event in the media but draws on the ‘headlines’ of events that I feel have a particularly huge political implication: things that are somewhat overwhelming to me, in my recognition of the scale and urgency of the care I feel they require in that moment. By sustaining this list ongoing, my simple act of recording becomes an iterative practice of caring attention. Unlike merely noticing and moving on, *Things Happen* serves as a record that employs text-based methods to enable me to revisit and reflect on these events repeatedly. It becomes a site where I can examine how events and contexts interrelate, as not just temporal markers but through shared social and civic conditions. The sum of these events in list form isn’t an attempt to reduce them, but a commitment to remaining with them, in a personal and quietly supportive way. Furthermore, in the listing and positioning the personal alongside the global, I treat them indiscriminately as events and temporal markers that matter, as things that activate my positions of caring both for and about things.

⁹⁹ Working with lists within artmaking is a well-established field of practice. Of note to my project is artist Lenka Clayton’s thermal receipt work *100 Bananas* (2014), which functions as a document to the artists act of purchasing 100 individual bananas from a supermarket; also artist Dane Michell’s *Post hoc* (2019, shown as part of Venice Biennale) which pivots conceptually around a gargantuan list of things which have variously disappeared, become obsolete, or vanished. This list was broadcast continuously over the full course of the Biennale without repetition, and made accessible to the public via radio signals accessible to mobile phones, embedded within artificial trees installed across four public sites within Venice. Simultaneously these lists were also presented physically. Lines of text were printed onto rolls of paper in sync with the recordings, gradually filling the space over the six months of the Biennale. I find a productive distinction between my own lists and these examples, wherein I recognise how my approach diverges from that of a more ‘cool’ conceptualism. Rather than foregrounding detachment or systemic abstraction, I employ listing as a mode of embodied noticing and ethical relation, where language remains tethered to lived experience and response-ability.

Memo

Between bodies

Pākehā response-ability

Less about mapping, more about
learning the boundaries and what
their stories are

Urgent-hopeful

Imagine that this is already
achieved: is there a purpose for my
project in a recolonised future?

Time out

— getting closer:

_naming as a reparative act is not a
rule:

Call for finding the boundaries
//individualising, exposing, naming
can be costly

Side note

will an unnamed/identity protected
victim ever hold power? anonymity
and ultimately privacy come at a
cost of power.

Forged in and from colonial stories

Making meaning/social meanings,
protecting and interpreting them

Relational contract, between crown
and Māori

Taking care, giving care, care-giving

There is anti-racism work, but there
is also treaty work, and also Te Tiriti
o Waitangi work

Mahi mahi mahi

_boundaries not necessarily as
fixed barricades, but as threshold
zones, places to meet.

They are soft, but they are strong

Is reparative action looking to give
mana/ through: everyday gestures,
activities and communication?

Criticality that gives mana

...list power.

Figure 31. Scan of *Memo*,
printed on thermal paper.
5.4cm x 708cm (December
2025)

While I add to *Things Happen* in a rhythm of frequency formed and informed by world events, *Memo* functions more as a collection of short format ‘notebook’ type textual entries. *Memo* is a generative site for my internal and embodied processing of the uses of language surrounding events. It involves significantly more entries,¹⁰⁰ which range from single words, etymological tracings, lines of poetry, and quotes from parliamentary speeches to hypothetical musings: all things I describe as the textual residue of my ordinary and daily experiencing of both care and concern. I think of *Memo* as an ongoing practice of making and tracing process notes. These notes materialise moments of my inner dialogue through iterative textual engagement, temporally connected to my grappling with how hegemonic power systems—such as imperialism, colonialism, capitalism, patriarchy, homophobia, racism, and classism—come to function as the dominant rhythms and scales of everyday life.

These systems establish the ‘ordinary’ terms and conditions that all living agents, from leaders to citizens, must negotiate in different ways. Guided by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s reparative reading, I approach *Memo* as an ongoing, iterative process of engaging with language that moves beyond critique to repair and accumulation—where texts and words become sites of generative potential for understanding and responding to the socio-political complexities of my lived experience in real time. Additionally, the text assembled within *Memo* functions as an important site of the project, where my practices of noticing, tracing, and recording language become drawn on to operate both materially and conceptually as art. *Memo* operates across multiple scales of encounter: directly, as accumulated text that can be printed and read sequentially, such as its direct translation as a ‘list’ within my large scale printed paper work series *Doomscroll*, made annually between 2021-2023 (figs. 32-33), and more subtly, where individual words or fragments are isolated and re-sited, such as a single word appearing on a banner.

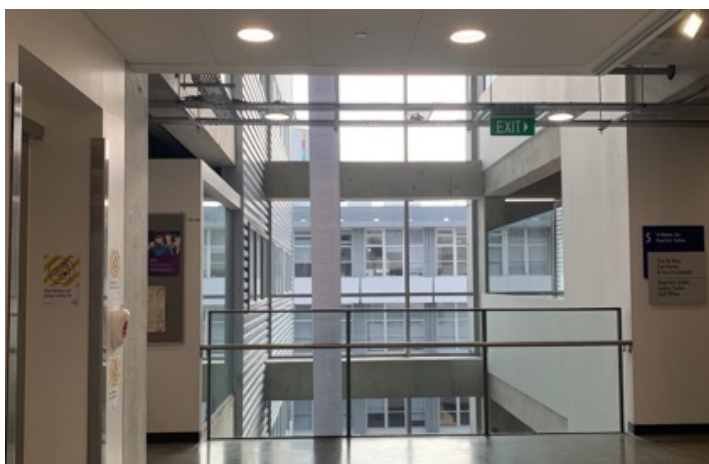


Figure 32. *Memo*, printed and installed as *Doomscroll (I)* (October 2021). Digitally printed paper scroll. 29cm x 7.3m

¹⁰⁰ Because of its format as a list, it is difficult to ascertain a precise tally, however, *Memo* contains well over a thousand entries.

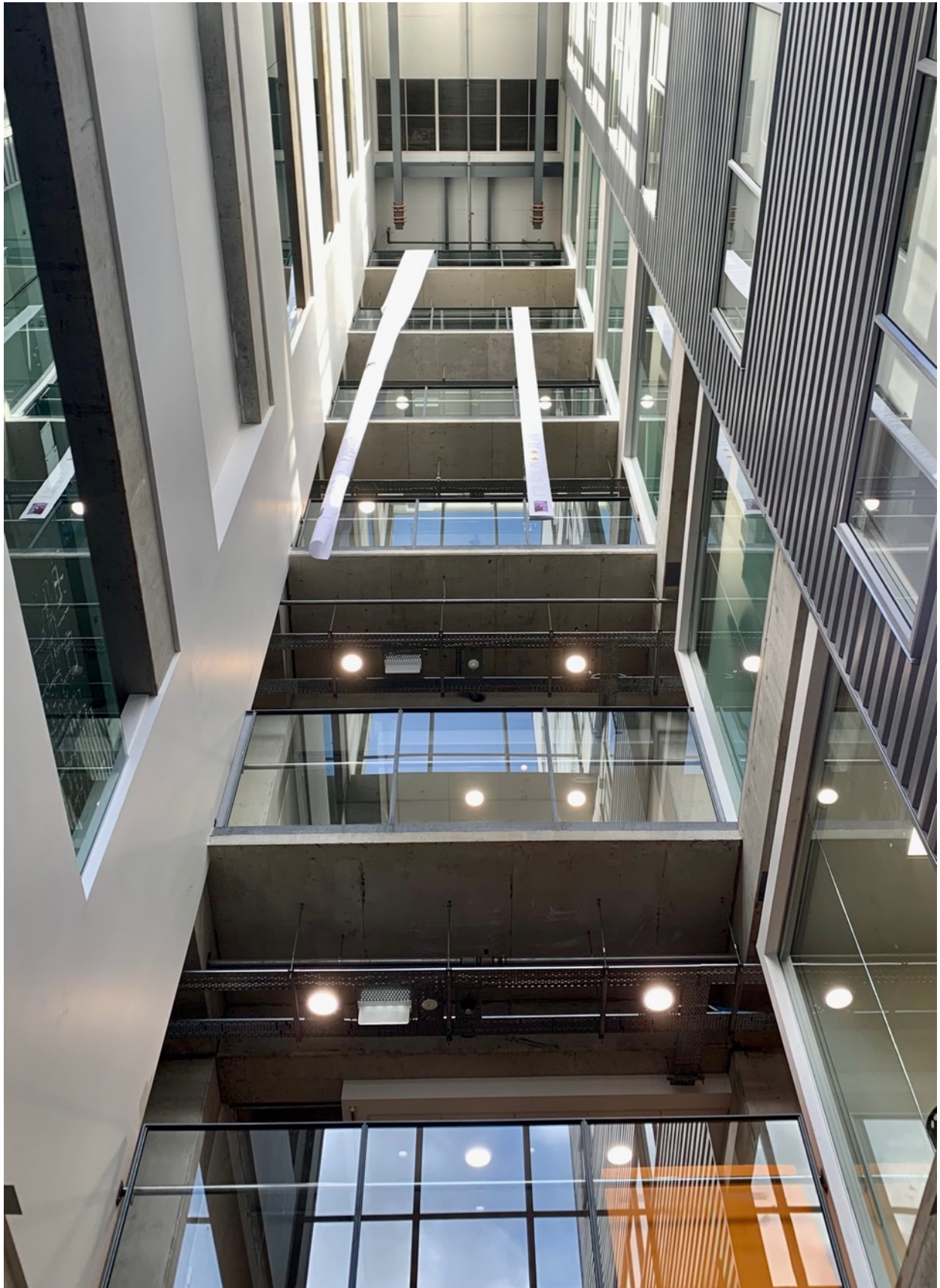


Figure 33. *Memo*, printed and installed in AUT WM building as *Doomscroll (I)* (right) and *Doomscroll (II)* (left) (March 2022)

In early November 2025, I overheard a radio segment saying that Aotearoa is under-prepared for an era of space terrorism, partly because the nation lacks solid “protocols” for response. I am less concerned with the specifics of space terrorism, yet the word *protocol* stood out to me. I stayed with the word, considering how often I use it (rarely) compared with how often I hear it. Moments like this—when I pause to think about *how* and *why* a word is used—happen often. When they do, I almost always open three tabs: Merriam-Webster, Etymology Online, and Google Ngram. I usually check them in an order that reflects how I understand a word’s everyday use.

Looking up *protocol* in all three, I was drawn immediately to its Ngram graph.¹⁰¹ From 1800 to the mid-20th century, the word appears infrequently and stays relatively stable. It begins to rise gradually, then sharply, from the 1960s through the early 2000s, peaking around 2005. After 2010, it declines, with a smaller surge in 2020, which I assume is pandemic related. Wondering what might explain the 2005 peak, I thought of two possible contexts: the rise of internet and computer technologies, and the post-9/11 focus on security. Both feel like global temporal markers, and seeing *protocol* attached to them made me question whether I fully understood the word. So, I looked up its definition.

Protocol (noun):

1. A system of rules or customs that guide correct behaviour and procedures in formal or social situations.
2. A set of rules that control how data is formatted and transmitted in electronic communication systems.
3. A detailed plan for a scientific, medical, or experimental procedure.
4. An official record, draft, or preliminary document—especially in diplomatic contexts, such as the notes or agreements produced during treaty negotiations.¹⁰²

The scope of *protocol* definitions interests me as something that might exist as an object—a paper document—but, equally, as a kind of adopted system that guides people to respond in a particular way. The fourth point of the definition piques my attention. I think of my use of *Memo* as a type of record, a preliminary document, that functions as ‘fodder’ for my larger project. As an ongoing note, it is produced iteratively and cumulatively, in temporal linkage with my own experienced negotiations of language. Etymonline offers me another avenue for wondering. Upon searching the word protocol, I find that it originally meant a ‘first sheet’ that was glued to the front of a manuscript. This sheet listed important information, like contents or notes, so it became associated with official records or drafts: the entering of ‘minutes’ as a method of note-taking. Over time, the word shifted in meaning from a physical sheet to an official document, and

¹⁰¹ An n-gram is a contiguous sequence of *n* items (typically words) drawn from a body of text. An n-gram graph, such as those provided by Google Ngram, visualises the relative frequency of word sequences across published texts over time.

¹⁰² Merriam-Webster Dictionary, under “protocol,” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/protocol>.

then to the rules or procedures that guide official institutional and state-supported actions, the use I most commonly associate with it. In tracing this word—its frequency of use, its definitions, and its trajectory of meaning—I also think of the way language is a lived and living process, animated by the plurality of the hands that write it, the voices that speak it, and the shifting contexts that keep meaning in motion. I add a note to *Memo* (fig. 34).

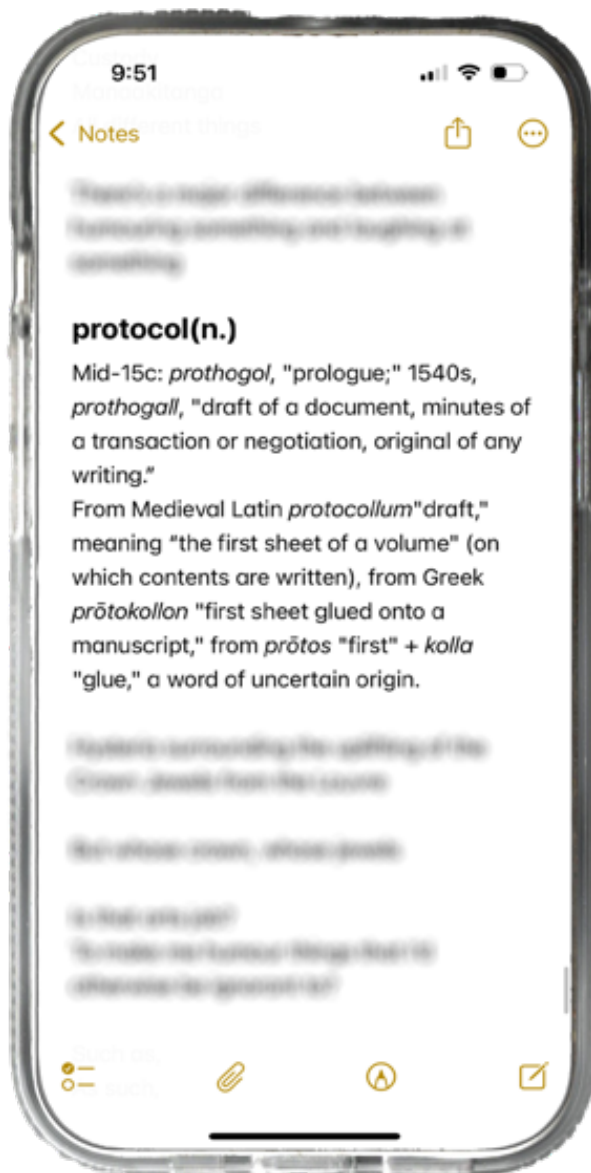


Figure 34. My phone, with a screenshot of *Memo*. Showing entry for 'protocol' (taken November 2025)

I notice the jug has boiled, and I can hear the ‘ding’ of an email arriving in my inbox. I carry on throughout my day, thinking in and around the word protocol. While this is just one recent example of the ways in which I engage with *Memo*, it is this kind of noticing in my thinking, listening, reading and feeling that becomes the quiet, generative, and almost constant negotiation throughout my project, where I notice a word used in a particular way that sets me off on a train of thought. I am almost always following a curious and intuitive arc: a chance encounter with a word becomes an inquiry, which becomes an entry within *Memo*, which ultimately returns me to my daily life in materially and conceptually recursive ways. It is precisely this ordinary and embodied feeling of noticing language that drives *Memo* as a supportive internal project system, which notes and collects my various engagements with language across the duration of this project.

Over time, *Memo* accumulates my project’s more critical structural cues, words, questions, contexts, and associations, which feed into other activities, such as influencing specific textual content within my banner and ephemera making, as well as in event-based performances. In the framework of my practice, *Things Happen* and *Memo* involve methods that are processual and ongoing. Together, they function as quick and subtle, low-visibility support systems: *Things Happen* charts the external field of events, while *Memo* traces my internal terrain of processing language, feeling and structure. Together, they form my project’s supportive wayfinding system that extends to other artworks within this project.

In Progress (figs. 35-37) is a simple plywood sandwich board sign with a handle. It is the same scale, shape and form as the yellow industrial “Caution: Slippery When Wet” signs that signal immediate danger: a slick floor, a pipeline leak, a spill in a public walk space. Its simplicity, agility of movement, clarity of communication, and urgency of spatial mediation are designed to draw in attention and understanding of conditions, quickly and on the spot. *In Progress* functions as a method for my ongoing engagement with language, situated within the ‘slippery’ material–conceptual terrain of public discourse, structural inequities, and systemic values of relation. The plywood material can be read in distinct tactile contrast to mass-produced, plastic commercial signboards; the visible grain, the lumpy hand cut handle, and the application of simple red vinyl lettering ‘IN PROGRESS’ all function to turn the commodified motif into a more provisional and means-to-an-ends object. By taping written or printed notes to its surface,



Figure 35. Studio documentation of *In Progress* (September 2019 – August 2020)

In Progress has literally and repeatedly propped up the evolving terms and conditions of my project's iterative and durational phases. Central to *In Progress* is its ongoing presence in my making: a quickly activated daily studio tool, an installation component, and a mobile, visible marker that 'languages' my project's day-to-day movements. I update, carry, place, photograph, and reposition it in response to shifting conditions of the work and, by extension, the ways my practice negotiates the world and its systems.

The ways and frequencies through which I engage *In Progress* vary. One week, I might update the textual paper sign daily, or even hourly. Another week, the text might remain unchanged, yet its position shifts (for example, from desk, to wall, to doorway), maintaining a subtle yet dynamic presence in my working space. Occasionally, an urgent event, context, or research insight prompts an update or a spatial shift; at other times, the board sits as a quiet marker of ongoing navigation, simply visible. That ebb and flow of engagement, sometimes rapid, sometimes minimal, establishes a responsive rhythm of attention that reflects the ongoing processes of my making: reflecting, pausing, re-engaging.

As I have been adding to *In Progress* frequently since the beginning of my research, there are now stacks of taped sheets that, when they grow too heavy, begin to detach from the plywood surface (fig. 36). This unsticking becomes a visible trace of my methods of accumulation, marking time and layered engagement. Furthermore, this unsticking also allows the surface to remain active and usable. While *In Progress* has consistently employed a format of makeshift paper signs secured with tape as a type of logic, it does not have a 'rule,' so to speak. The types of paper, methods of creating text, and kinds of tape used shift over time. For example, one note may be a hastily handwritten singular word, attached with the 'warning-edge' end of a tape roll; the next might be a clearly printed question with that word embedded, and applied with a clean strip of a different tape. These material changes reflect ongoing use, fluctuations in urgency, attention, and intention, embedding the act of making with subtle signals of the moment-to-moment.

I feel *In Progress* is less about making a final statement, and more about finding a language within the frequency of care: each update, each movement of the board, each moment of interaction records an act of attentiveness and presence. In terms of activation, *In Progress* moves both in and around my studio, and, sometimes, it moves beyond it and into more public-facing institutional spaces (such as lobbies, lift landings, and hallways). When positioned in the studio it acts as a constant, quiet marker of process; when installed in an institutional setting, the sign shifts into the realm of public discourse, its form familiar in such settings as a caution board, yet re-purposed as a civic-socially minded prompt.

Through sustained, daily engagement with *In Progress* as a textual and spatial practice, I found that its methods establish a shared point of entry into the project. For me, it functions as a method of working through language in real time; for viewers, it offers an accessible invitation into the project through the pairing of written language with the sign's capacity to make meaning visible and communicable. My interest in this work is durationally linked to both *how* the work functions as well as *when*. Through repeated daily activation and attention to language, I see *In Progress* as a temporal support structure and a prop that visualises what feels otherwise like an invisible process within my project. I find that it operates less as a declaration than as a listening-and-noticing device. In this way, *In Progress* functions as a practice of repair by creating conditions for attention, shared presence, and continued negotiation.

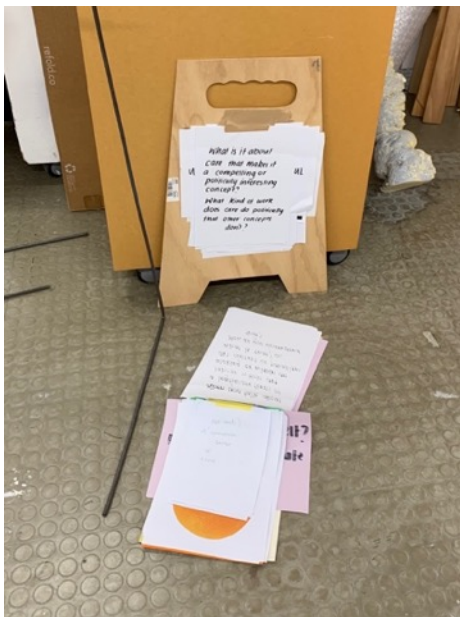


Figure 36. (left) Studio documentation. Paper signs, detached from *In Progress* (March 2023)

Figure 37. (right) *In Progress* displaying *Arriving in Stages Newsletter*. Issue #9: "Every Day Carry (EDC)," Monday 16 May 2025

3.2 Banner-Making

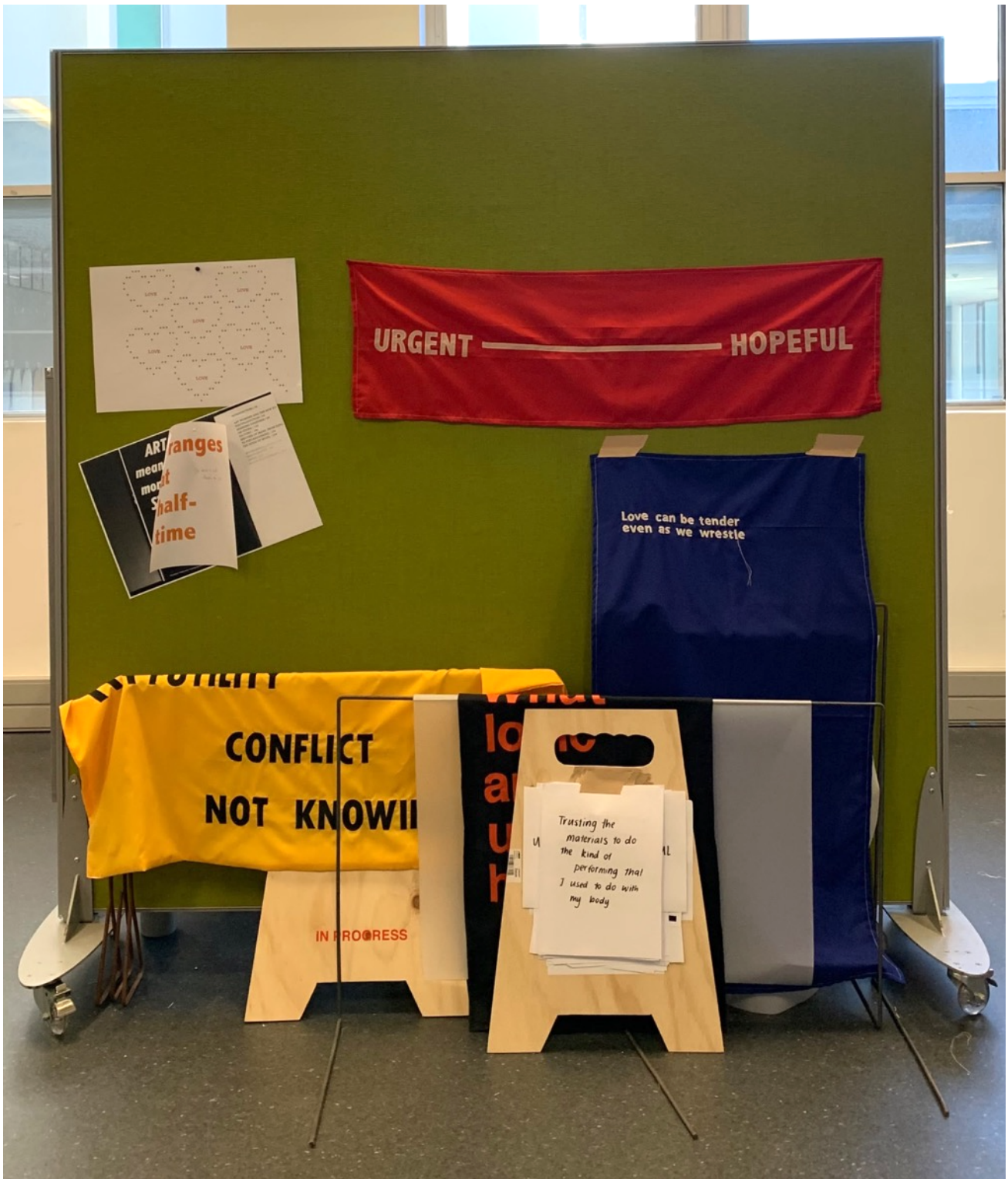


Figure 38. Studio documentation (February 2020). Various banners, ephemera and *In Progress*.

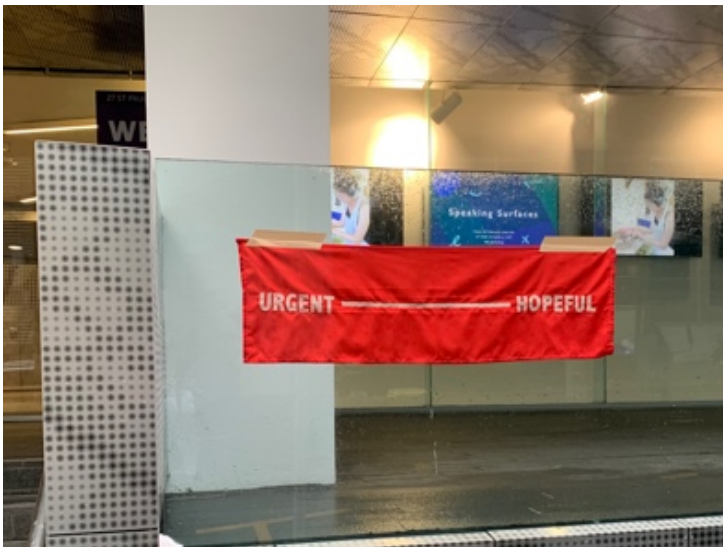
Early in my research process, I grounded my work through the methods most familiar to me: lens-based, filmic, and installational approaches. I thought I would make a quick banner as a prop and get back to filming the next day. I hauled out my craft box of fabric scraps and thread, which I keep handy for creating protest signs and banners, and on January 20, 2020, drawing text from the fourth note down on *Memo*, I created the first textile banner, titled *Urgent-Hopeful* (fig. 39). Using a simple assemblage of machine and hand-sewn red cloth with off-white applique text, *Urgent-Hopeful*, in its continued presence in my (then) studio space, brought my artistic practice into closer proximity with textual and protest-based methods of visual communication. In making this work, I was specifically considering the ways in which an embodied experience of care extends beyond scales of interpersonal experiences of tenderness and into the terrain of civic, social, and political response-ability.

Urgent and hopeful are words I still use to describe what it feels like to be inside the making rhythms of this project. Reading the news, I often feel overwhelmed by the scale of urgency described in the headlines. At the same time, I feel hopeful that the care embedded in ordinary daily gestures—through language, text, or material making—can create spaces of connection and responsiveness. My project is grounded in this tension, linking methodologies of care with artistic practices of caring response. *Urgent-Hopeful*'s ongoing presence in space challenges me to notice my feelings each time I encounter this work within my studio, where time and time again it challenges me to think about what it means to live and make art in times of increasing socio-political urgency.

As stated, *Urgent-Hopeful* has operated as a steady presence throughout my project and its methods. At times it has been materially appropriated and woven into more durational works—such as *(Lockdown) Fence Banners*, 2021 (fig. 42)—and within other project aspects like *Miles*' felt-body and via the Instagram account *@milestheorange* (fig. 43). It has also surfaced across printed ephemera projects (for example in the *Arriving in Stages* newsletter, fig. 74), and through various installation points within the project—such as *Setting the Table* (fig. 106). What began as a single, intuitive act—to make a banner as a way to shake loose from earlier material frustrations—became, unexpectedly, a longer phase of banner-making and engaging with textual languages of care. It enabled me to materialise the temporal, processual, and relational qualities that had always underpinned my thinking about care.



39



40

Figure 39. *Urgent-Hopeful* (2020), taped to my studio wall. White cotton text appliqué on red cotton. 108cm x 32cm (January 2020)

Figure 40. *Urgent-Hopeful* installed outside AUT Art & Design office, 27 St Paul Street (July 2020)

Figure 41. Studio documentation. Making *Urgent-Hopeful* to the size of a table (January 2020)



41



Figure 42. (above) A version of *Urgent-Hopeful* made for *(Lockdown) Fence Banners* (September-December 2021). MDF board, red and white acrylic paint. 100cm x 25cm. A series of six, installed sequentially on my road-facing home fence. Additional fence banners within this series include weather text like "sunny" and "rainy", and others note lockdown levels

Figure 43. (left) Miles drawing for @milestheorange (February 2025)

This particular banner's continued significance within my project points to the ways in which my research trajectory has been shaped by ordinary ways of accumulating meaning and significance, layered through ongoing temporal connection with socio-political phenomena, both nationally within Aotearoa and globally. For me, *Urgent-Hopeful* visually and conceptually enables and regenerates a tension between positions of urgency and hope. The line—an elongated hyphen—functions as a temporal gesture that pivots between duration and a continuum. Whereas my artistic sense of urgency arises from external conditions, hope, in this context, extends urgency further into relational, embodied, and collective accounts of experience. Making this banner, and later, working beneath it as it moved around my studio, became a way of staying with the feelings and complexities that care entails. In this sense, the hyphen becomes the primary site of my own relational, material, and conceptual negotiations: an experience of artmaking that shapes how I consider what care might mean for viewers of my work. It guides my practice toward a more open encounter, closely attuned to care as both method and methodology.

Following *Urgent-Hopeful*, I created in quick succession a series of banners that employed related methods of hand and machine sewing with text and textiles. These banners used text as a method, which helped me navigate ideas that felt conceptually heavy and were linked to even heavier ongoing social and political issues. Works like *Hard Hat Thinking Terrain*, 2020, (figs. 44-45), *Reckon-Remember* and *Sibling Kinship*, 2020 (figs. 46, 47-48) represent an early, intensive, and exploratory phase of the project. In creating them, I sought artistic methods that could enact feminist frameworks of care: attentive listening, politicising everyday experience, and staying temporally and situationally attuned to the voices and concerns present in both material and social worlds.

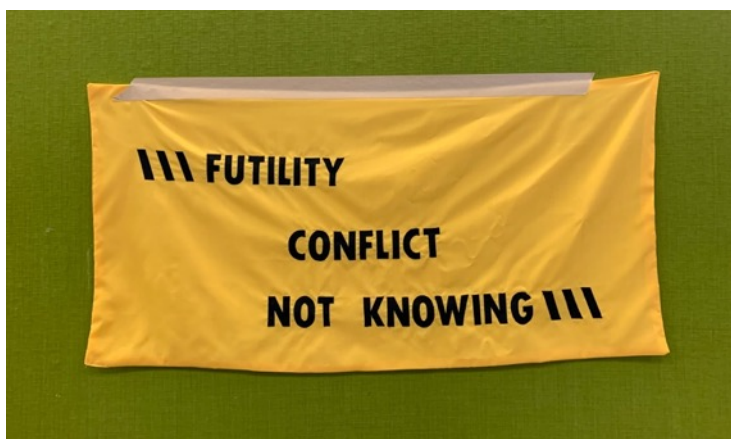


Figure 44. *Hard Hat Thinking Terrain*, 2020. Banner, black text applique on yellow cotton, 107cm x 53cm



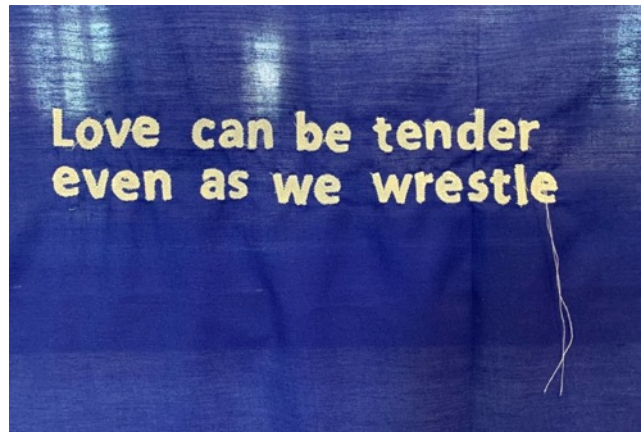
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46



47



48

Figure 45. *What Logic?* 2020. Banner, orange text appliqué on black cotton banner, 48cm x 76cm

Figure 46. *Reckoning-Remembering* 2020. Banner, yellow text applique on blue cotton, 195cm x 48cm

Figures 47-48. *Sibling Kinship* 2020. Banner, off-white cotton applique on blue cotton, loose thread, 59cm x 105cm

Additionally, *The Weight of Care*, 2020 (fig. 49) deepened my understanding of the material performativity made accessible by banner-making and textile formats. *The Weight of Care* departs from my earlier banner works both materially and spatially. Unlike my earlier banners, this work is much larger—too large to be held up by my own arms in the way previous banners could—complicating its visual language from an object of direct address to a type of textile object that occupies and divides space. Functioning more like a panel, a curtain, or something that could be wrapped around oneself, *The Weight of Care* is constructed from thin polyester satin, which contributes to this transformation. The fabric, when hung, is visibly light with a sense of slip, drape, and ambient movement, offering minimal structural support on its own.

Using the same appliqué method on a lightweight, magenta polyester satin created a tension between solidity and fragility that visually enacted the conceptual weight of care. Drawing on Puig de la Bellacasa's framing of care as "a burdened word, a contested word,"¹⁰³ the methods utilised were attuned to care, not as an idealised or abstract concept but as a politically charged, complex, and situated practice. In staging these material contrasts, the work foregrounds care as an active negotiation, attentive to how meanings are enacted through material and temporal relations rather than being explicitly stated. Like earlier banners, this work lived in my studio over time, but, unlike the others, *The Weight of Care* developed a durational quality of its own, a slow-paced undoing: the weight of the text gradually created fissures and ladders in the more fragile polyester satin weave. In this way, the material and gravitational deterioration stages a performance (that quite literally, arrives in stages) akin to my intention of the piece's meaning, embodying both the fragility of care and the ongoing labour of performance it involves.

This work marks a turning point in my methods, shifting from a rapid process of articulating care through banner-making—by arranging text on textiles—to an exploration of how text can enable process-driven material exploration through a range of media and material choices. I recognise that my project is fundamentally invested in language and text for its capacity to enact care as an interrelational practice. Working with text as a method allows me to foreground care in layers: through self-reflexivity, attention to material consequences, and a shared recognition of the conditions that sustain my understanding of care's significance in the world, here and now. This shift resonates throughout my project, reconfiguring care as dynamic and continuously enacted, much like language itself.

¹⁰³ Puig de la Bellacasa, *Matters of Care*, 1.



Figure 49. (above) *The Weight of Care* 2020. Banner, white cotton appliqué on pink polyester satin, 140cm x 186cm

Figures 50-51. (left) *The Weight of Care* 2020. Banner text details

3.3 Collective Capacities

Aotearoa artist Fiona Jack's cumulative use of banner-making practices is significant to my project as it is grounded in contemporary community engagement and informed by processes of research and dialogue, treating banners as collective tools for visibility and connection. For example, Jack's exhibition *The Will of the People* (2016)¹⁰⁴ focused exclusively on banner-making, engaging an expansive scope of formats. Important to my project's interest in this work is the way it draws upon a single banner first shown in Jack's prior exhibition, titled *The Heraldry of Presence*.¹⁰⁵ Bearing the bold, capitalised declaration "THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE IS LAW," the particulars of this banner are drawn from Jack's encounter with the text on a placard visible in a historical photograph of women participating in the 1915 rent strikes, in Glasgow.¹⁰⁶ Although the artist shares a personal and direct familial connection with this event, Jack's focus on the specific placard syntax is generative of engagement with a wider audience, capable of resonating with multiple collective sentiments from a scope of ideological positions.

The Will of the People becomes an expanded material exploration of the statement "THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE IS LAW." While the text maintains both legibility and conceptual centralism, each banner is assembled via a different logic of approach, ranging from the quick mark-making of spray-painted text to carefully stitched and skilfully decorated banners. Exhibited together, her various banners within *The Will of the People* emphasise the scope and adaptability of banner-making as a method of relational artmaking, informed by layered histories of politicised civic-social activism. Consequently, the banners' materiality becomes an ethical gesture across Jack's work, where labour-intensive stitching languages a sustained attentiveness and relational engagement, while more rapid, means-to-an-end markings prioritise accessibility and more temporally immediate forms of public legibility. Creating a tension between intimate labour and public-facing urgency, Jack's scope of making within this format guides my project's understanding of how artistic care can be both context-sensitive and responsive to multiple audiences. The iterative and repeated nature of the text also emphasises how care and attention function via corresponding gestural methods.

¹⁰⁴ Jack's *The Will of the People* was shown as part of *AND PER SE AND: Galería Perdida*, Fiona Jack, and Aram Saroyan, exhibition, Commonwealth & Council, Chicago, April 23–May 28, 2016.

¹⁰⁵ *The Heraldry of Presence*, exhibition by Fiona Jack, Fresh Gallery Ōtara, Auckland, October 10–November 8, 2014.

¹⁰⁶ Additionally, in 2018, Jack produced an exhibition titled *Our Red Aunt*, which details the artist's personal-familial connection to this event. Fiona Jack, *Our Red Aunt*, solo exhibition, Glasgow Women's Library, Glasgow, February 6–March 17, 2018, featuring works responding to the life and work of Helen Crawford, Scottish activist and suffragette.



Figures 52-53. Fiona Jack, *The Will Of The People* (2016), installation view. Shown as part of *AND PER SE AND* exhibition at Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles. April 23–May 28, 2016

Perhaps more importantly, the centrality of text enables a material coherence that reflects my project's understanding that there is never one singular method of activating or reading care. Each iteration of the banner's syntax accumulates through layers of attention, engagement, and reflection, illustrating that practices of care, like activism, are not singular acts but ongoing processes enacted by "the people," who together constitute a whole scope of caring responses.

I consider this phase of my project as one where I could create banners in what might be seen as slow, methodical, and labour-intensive ways, because I was able to do so. It is conditional: not everyone has the time to sew banners, nor would everyone see that as a good use of time. Those responsible for childcare, working forty-hour weeks, or lacking access to spare fabric might rightly feel they don't have the capacity to sew a banner. These conditions highlight the contingencies of care: how care is connected to material, temporal, and social conditions. As such, I find the consideration of conditions points to a generative problem: my aim is not simply to evidence that I can care, but to ask how care becomes a collective action. Recognising the conditionality of my own practice opens my inquiry into the ways care be enacted as a civic-social doing, rather than through only individual capacity.

Aotearoa artist Holli McEntegart's *Inhabit Posters* (2022) project, and its more recent iteration as *Inhabit Banners* (2023-ongoing), provide a useful, additional framework for considering care's collective capacity, both materially and conceptually. While McEntegart's artwork resonates with Jack's in its cumulative attention to both banner-making and text, it is through their shared approach to community-based and civic-social modes of making that my project is able to recognise the potency of text as a corresponding method of care. While McEntegart's work differs from my own in that she focuses on parental experiences and support for motherhood, I recognise how her methods of making can also be read in connection with broader feminist care ethics, which emphasise attentive listening, relational engagement, and responsive presence.

The *Inhabit Posters* series (fig. 54) developed from McEntegart's earlier community-based event, *Inhabit: Postpartum* (2022), an eleven-day programme facilitated by perinatal professionals and artists. Attendees were invited to add their thoughts or feelings via pen and post-it note to a collaborative and supportive dialogue wall, reflecting on personal experiences or sending messages to their past, present, or future postpartum selves, friends, or whānau. While my own practice is not participatory in the same way, I am interested in how McEntegart's treatment of language becomes active through ordinary and embodied acts of feeling, thinking, writing into more materially expansive gestures of care, solidarity, and relational attentiveness.

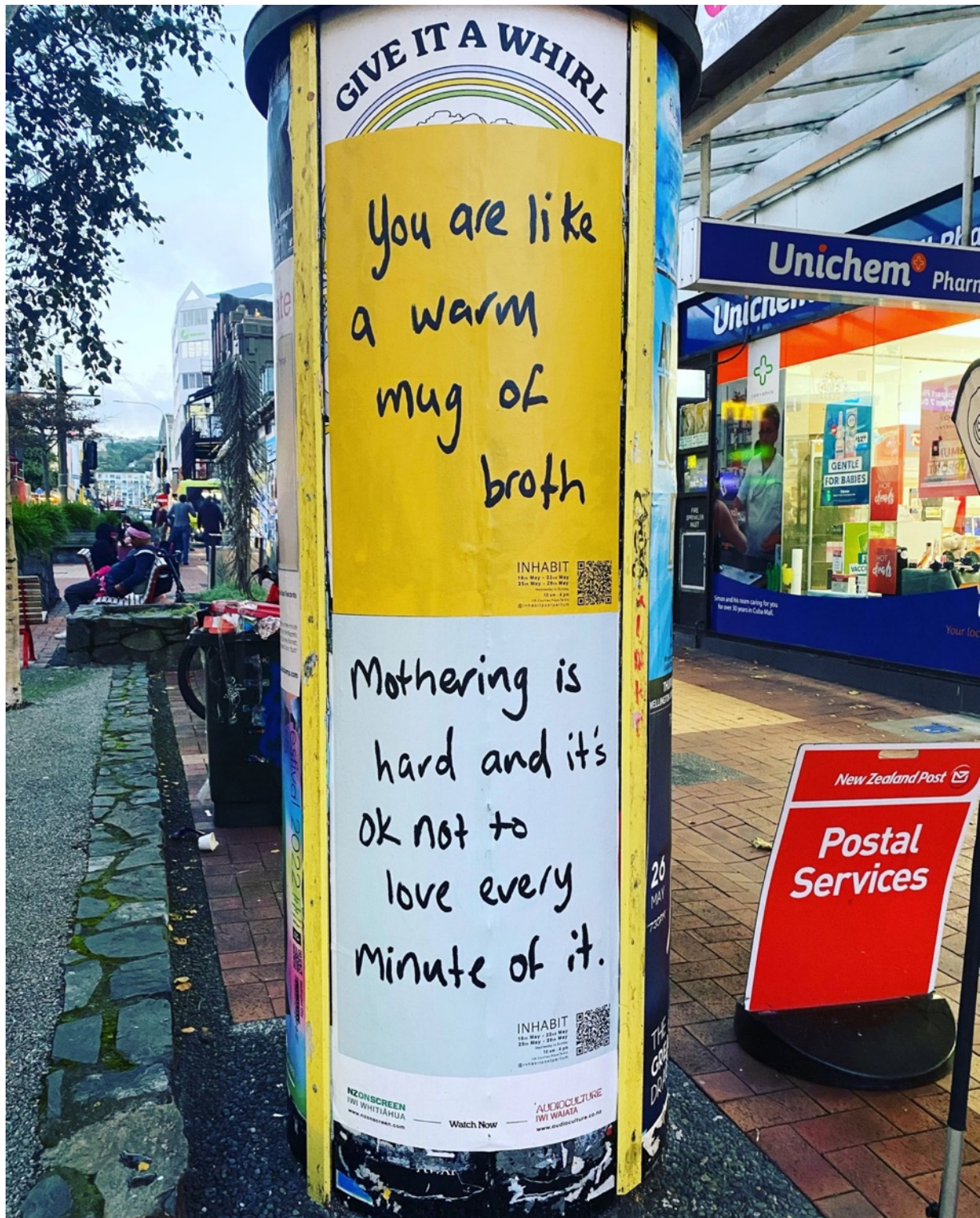


Figure 54. Holli McEntegart, *Inhabit Posters* (2022). A series of fifty post-it note style posters displayed throughout Te-Whanganui-a-Tara (Wellington) CBD. 18-29 May 2022.



Figures 55-56. Holli McEntegart, *Inhabit Banners* (2024) installation view. Installed as part of *Inhabit (III)*, exhibited in an empty shop in Tāmaki Makaurau, 8-30 June 2024

Drawing on the written content and pragmatic aesthetics of post-it notes, *Inhabit Posters* (figs. 55-66) extends this method by translating intimate handwritten notes into fifty enlarged A3 prints, distributed throughout central Pōneke (Wellington). Retaining the coloured backing and informal handwriting of the original post-its, the posters sustain the personal, provisional tone of everyday notes. Messages like “I love seeing you... even when things are hard” or “Mothering is hard, and it’s ok not to love every minute of it” carry intimate affirmation into public spaces, fostering collective recognition, relational engagement, and solidarity. In this way, the text itself becomes a vehicle for care, circulating support materially and conceptually through urban space. While Jack’s work frequently adopts the language and force of collective political action—drawing on slogans, banners, and activist histories—McEntegart’s practice extends my exploration of more intimate and associative registers of language and its text. Rather than addressing a perceived general public through a politicised statement, McEntegart foregrounds the language of personal experiences and communication, allowing political meaning to emerge through proximity, vulnerability, and a supportive sense of encounter. The work’s power, as such, lies not in declaration but in its quiet insistence on caring support.

McEntegart’s *Inhabit Banners* series produced between 2023 and 2025, again extends this methodology through different material means, by translating participants’ post-it messages into 101 stitched text-based banners, made from iconic cotton nappies coloured with natural pigments in the artist’s kitchen. Messages are cut from felt and hand or machine-stitched onto fabric, transforming ephemeral post-it text, now scaled-up and translated into a soft, bodily, domestic register and an enduring material form. Each banner retains a tactile, improvised-intuitive quality within its application of text, with visible stitching and uneven edges that value continued process, pragmatism, and participation over formal neatness. Considered together, these material qualities reflect the disordered yet functional labours of care present in many experiences of early parenthood. They recall parental actions made in improvised moments of decision and response, gradually stitched together over time. When understood as banners, the works underscore their role as both symbolic and literal carriers of care.

I am particularly interested in how both Jack’s and McEntegart’s projects enacts modes of care through process, materiality, dialogue, and text. While Jack works with text through systemic and structural forms, and McEntegart through a more personal and intimate register, *Arriving in Stages* departs from both practices by not requiring activation through direct public interaction or community-led processes. Nevertheless, the project remains informed by everyday socio-political terms and conditions, drawing from the language of news media and public discourse in order to arrive at its own mode of address. The works of my own discussed in this chapter are early examples of how care and its corresponding method of text might take on a scope of registers, both in

embodied sensation and in media. Within *Arriving in Stages*, the iterative development and material transformation of banner-making resonates with a caring emphasis on accumulation, relationality, and process. As such, through my engagement with banner-making, my project determines that text operates as a potent method of care: it connects, sustains, and structures the work, fostering events as well as practices of support, attention, and reflection. In this sense, this phase of my project determines that language and its text offer both a relational medium as well as a caring practice. This understanding opens the path to broadening the project's textual scope, incorporating other forms and techniques of writing and inscription. Through this expansion, I investigate how text, in its various manifestations and registers, can continue to function as a caring practice: one that is capable of both generating and sustaining relationships, inviting participation, and structuring ongoing processes of attention and support.

My project engages with multiple ways of working with text, as both format and material. My works, such as *Memo*, *Things Happen*, and *In Progress* (all 2019–present), explore the foundational connection between care and the uses of language within my practice. They are the support structures I draw upon in order to assemble my project's method of banner-making. Importantly, this early work revealed how language, for me, operates as a key framework through which care is both engaged internally and enacted externally, as text. I am less wedded to the formats of fabric and sewn text, and more curious about how an expanded understanding of care moves across conceptual, aesthetic, dialogical, and grammatical registers. As such, I find interconnections between what I describe as my projects' textual support structures (*Memo*, *Things Happen*, and *In Progress*) and my project's series of banners. Each mode of making offers a distinct way of holding relation, attention, and feeling; these textual gestures, whether brief or sustained, enact care as a process of noticing, responding, and maintaining connection.

Making these artworks enabled me to shift from questioning the banner directly as a surface for text, towards exploring how additional media and methods of using text might connect artists and viewers together, as civic-social participants within current temporal and spatial conditions. While a sewn banner can effectively signal care within the artist's studio, in my own home, or at a protest, I additionally consider how more provisional and ephemeral materials, such as printed matter, vinyl installation, and balloons, can allow text to operate across a scope of embodied registers and modes of encounter.

This shift raises questions: not what I, individually, can do with the time I have and the language I participate in, but how care might be collectively enacted across various registers of language, as a daily political and civic-social action. Therefore, in the following chapter, I explore how language, in its material and spatial presence, can circulate, invite response, and redistribute attention and response-ability across multiple bodies and contexts. In this way, text becomes not merely an inscription or a direction to listen to, but a method of relational practice, a way of reading and feeling, a way to make visible and tangible the ethics and politics of collective care.

CHAPTER FOUR: LANGUAGE AND ITS TEXT (EXPANDED)

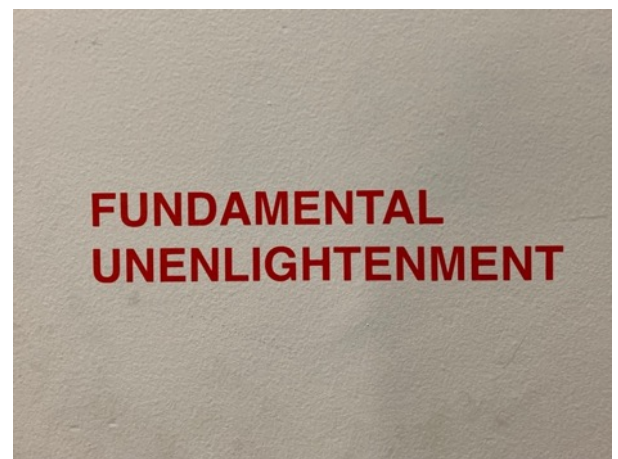
This chapter builds on an understanding of language and its articulation as text as a key processual focus of my artistic practice, turning toward subversive and humorous registers of language as methods for unsettling authority, diffusing hegemonic certainties, and rethinking relations of care. Building on the idea of text as a process of relational invitation, this chapter examines the way text also operates as a method that addresses viewers and readers directly, by treating language as something that structures relational labour in response to existing social and political tropes. Throughout this research, I have developed methods that test various approaches to working with text. Initially, my methods were developed through durational and cumulative works and banner-making; I then considered how text shifts registers according to its material conditions and contexts of use. Working across multiple media, *Arriving in Stages* further aims to test how text activates different embodied and sensorial experiences, while also shaping distinct modes of encounter between practice-led artistic work and its activation of audiences.

A distinct moment of realisation occurred one morning when I turned on the lights in my studio. I was met immediately by the text of fifteen banners of my own making, and I felt as though I had stepped into a critical cacophony of my own mind. Each banner offered something important to think through, asserting its own urgency before I had even fully arrived. The banners, taken together, seemed to be shouting—when (metaphorically) reading the room suggested that such volume was not required. Following this experience, I began to question how text might take on additional registers of engagement and relation by conceiving of an art audience as participants. By treating language as a key medium and material, text becomes a shared practice through which meaning is negotiated, sustained, and collectively produced. Correspondingly, I consider how text might also absorb some of the weight of response-ability, rather than merely directing it outward, as my banners previously did.

4.1 Conceptually Reflexive Registers

Office-Place Morale 2020 (figs. 58-60) is an example of my project's navigation of more subversive approaches to language. Installed as red vinyl text in my studio, the methods utilised attempt to spatially reflect my modality of noticing language curiously. Drawing upon entries from *Memo*, phrases such as "FUNDAMENTAL UNENLIGHTENMENT," "IN PROGRESS," and the question, "*How to be ok with conflict?*" were installed in my studio space on walls, floors, and cupboards. More visually subtle and typographically precise than my banners, *Office-Place Morale* treated text as a spatial and conceptual tool to shape how viewers might move through a relationship with text and language in subtle ways. As a vinyl text-based installation, *Office-Place Morale* offered an additional method for examining text that is both provisional and semi-permanent. I am interested in how text can operate both internally and externally to question frameworks of productivity, communication, and authority that are embedded within daily political and vernacular uses of language. In this artwork, a subversive approach to language is used in an attempt to transform the words and associated meanings of institutional or motivational signage into something at once ironic and conceptually reflexive. My use of industrially cut vinyl text introduces a bureaucratic material register—one associated with office environments and corporate branding—to the understanding of language as a construct. This method enables my project to take the position that engaging care through artmaking is not about mastery or transcendence of conditions, instead it is about working within limitations of materials, circumstances, and context.

Office-Place Morale further shifted my project's registers of care from the overtly affective and collective to quietly critical and contextually embedded. Through its understated presence and bureaucratic aesthetic, the work repositions care as an act of subtle resistance that operates through irony, humour, and interruption rather than interrogation and declaration. In this sense, *Office-Place Morale* expands on how care can inhabit more unexpected forms and materials, emerging not only through gestures of explicit support or solidarity but also through more subtle acts that question, disrupt, or draw attention to the affective economies of creative and institutional labour. These textual methods position an important project coherence within my project, evidencing the ways it demonstrates that care can operate through subtle, process-based, or material interventions, rather than only through explicitly emotional gestures and languages of support or solidarity.



Figures 58-60. Studio documentation.
How to be ok with conflict? And
Fundamental Unenlightenment.
 Red Vinyl adhesive text installation in
 my AUT studio (February 2020)

The balloon-based work *Critic and Conscience* 2024 (with ongoing activations) adopts similar methods and aesthetics to those first developed within *Office-Place Morale*'s subversive approach to language, particularly in how text is materialised quickly and provisionally, and activated spatially. However, where *Office-Place Morale* leverages irony and parody to subvert and deflate the authority of corporate or institutional language, *Critic and Conscience* is invested in a more earnest, spatially buoyant attempt to inhabit institutional rhetoric in caring and ethically responsive ways. Exploring whether care and criticality together can still be articulated from within bureaucratic or educational frameworks, this work foregrounds my interest in the tensions between institutional critique and ethical participation, centred through my inquiry into how language can serve as both a site of resistance and a framework for ethical practice.



Figure 61. Scan of balloons from the *Critic and Conscience* series, 2024-ongoing. Back text: section 162 (4) (a) (v). Front text: the role of critic and conscience of society. Screen printed 30cm yellow latex balloons with black text

Key to this work is the way I have utilised these balloons differently over time. I might inflate a single balloon and discreetly place it within commonly used areas of the university, allowing it to quietly inhabit institutional spaces. At other times, I might hold an event and give out as many helium-filled balloons as I can, as I did in *Come, Complain!* 2024 (figs. 63-64). This dynamic and intuitive approach is key to my project as a whole and enables the work to breathe in and out of institutional space, according to its own internal rhythms of policy and action. By blowing these balloons up within the university, I was attempting to perform a kind of materially discursive act that sought to highlight ethical connections between government and educational institutions. I was attempting to literally and figuratively inflate the New Zealand Education Act (1989) which states that tertiary institutions “accept a role as critic and conscience of society.”¹⁰⁷ Understanding this clause as affirming the institution’s duty not only to produce knowledge but to engage critically and ethically with social, political, and cultural issues, I am interested in how its framing of roles and response-abilities resonates with my project’s understanding of how care and critique might coexist within acts of communication. I recognise this gesture as a subtle yet more materially playful activation of artistic care: an attempt to animate a phrase through physical labour and absurd repetition, exposing the tension between institutional ideals and their lived realities.¹⁰⁸

The material lightness and temporary nature of these balloons allow them to be both portable and inviting. Both after holding an event or placing a balloon, I often notice it moves on its own, carried by drafts from opening and closing doors, or is taken by others to new locations, such as offices, studios, cars and elevators (figs. 65-66). Often, in the hours, days and weeks after engaging an event or distributing a balloon, I receive a text or email image of balloons in situ. What I find compelling is the delayed yet responsive nature of these messages. They arrive after ‘the event’ itself has passed, indicating the ways that the work continues to register in participants’ daily lives.

This mobility transforms the balloons from static objects into dynamic carriers of text, inviting spontaneous interactions and extending the reach of the messages beyond my original intent. Unlike other parts of my artmaking (such as banners and vinyl-cut text), the balloons’ tactile and fragile qualities encourage a sense of touch and participatory engagement with them directly, fostering what Haraway refers to as a “worlding,” specifically connected with the relationship between viewer, text, and experience.¹⁰⁹ This shift in materiality—from fixed, sewn, and provisionally installed textiles methods

¹⁰⁷ Education Act 1989. Public Act 80 (New Zealand), Section 162 (4) (a) (v). Accessible online, see: <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1989/0080/latest/DLM183668.html>

¹⁰⁸ Relevant to this modality and method of making is artist Layne Waerea, and specifically her work *Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi Bill* (2025), which is presented as a vinyl wall text that states the points of law regarding Waerea’s playful subversion of language that reconfigures concurrent political happenings. See Chapter One, pages 53-54.

¹⁰⁹ Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*

to ephemeral, floating balloons—opens up new possibilities for how language can function as a living, shared experience within my project, making the text not just seen or read but felt and moved through communal, embodied interaction.



Figure 62. Studio documentation, *Critic and Conscience* inflated and held by my hand.
(August 2024)



63



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Figures 63-64. Installational invitation ahead of event, *Come, Complain!* and event poster for *Come, Complain!* (both August 2024).

Figures 65-66. *Critic and Conscience* taped (by others) to studio door. Image by Monique Redmond (September 2024) and *Critic and Conscience* parked at a supermarket. Image by Layne Waerea (both August 2024).



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Figure 67. Miles drawing for @milestheorange, depicting ACT party as a metaphorical pin bursting a *Critic and Conscience* balloon (posted December 2024).

Relevant to this way of working with subversive and conceptually reflexive registers of text and materiality is Aotearoa multimedia artist Elisabeth Pointon. In *Special Offer* (2018), *Would You Look at That* (2019), and *Best Wishes* (2019), Pointon employs subversive humour grammatically and materially, as a central textual strategy across media and formats. *Special Offer*, for example, takes the form of a large, red, PVC, inflatable advertising blimp, two metres in diameter. In white, centrally positioned text, the blimp features the single-word sentence, “*Special.*” (fig. 68). Its lightweight, inflatable form and commercial aesthetic reflect advertising strategies, while also rendering text spatially and temporally present. In contrast to my own use of text, which often emerges from empirical or documentary sources, such as news, policy, and vernacular language, Pointon’s blimp foregrounds the more insidious performativity of corporate language, exposing its constructed and pervasive formulaic nature through irony and playful material interventions.

Would You Look at That similarly emerges via Pointon’s materially humorous reconfiguration of corporate language. *Would You Look at That* is a 3-minute, 45-second video documenting a plane towing an aerial banner that reads *SPECTACULAR*, set against a generic, call-centre-style soundtrack. Pointon’s combination of the spectacular visual display of aerial advertising with the dull, generic music creates a subtle and ironic parody, emphasising the absurdity of corporate rhetoric while highlighting the playful, fleeting, and performative nature of the message in the sky. Building on her interest in language, accessibility, and representation, *Would You Look at That* serves as Pointon’s response to a previous Miami Art Basel project titled *Plane Text* (2012), in which predominantly white male artists were invited to create text works flown across the Miami skyline by a small plane.¹¹⁰ Drawing a parallel between the commonalities of corporate jargon and the art world, equally active in the perpetuation of exclusivity, authority, value, and hierarchy, Pointon’s work guides my understanding of how text can function as a method of care by playfully intervening within systems of power. While, for Pointon, the use of text is related to specific contexts of her working environment, the text within my project is drawn from my empirical activations of listening and reading to news reports and parliamentary press, education policy texts, and casual conversations.

¹¹⁰ Morgans Hotel Group commissioned *Plane Text*, a project in which fifteen well-known text artists—including Ed Ruscha, Jenny Holzer, Lawrence Weiner, and the Estate of Sol LeWitt—flew banners over Art Basel Miami Beach in four-hour increments over four days. Hannah Mandel, “It’s in the Air at Art Basel,” *Interview Magazine*, November 27, 2012, <https://www.interviewmagazine.com/art/plane-text-miami>.

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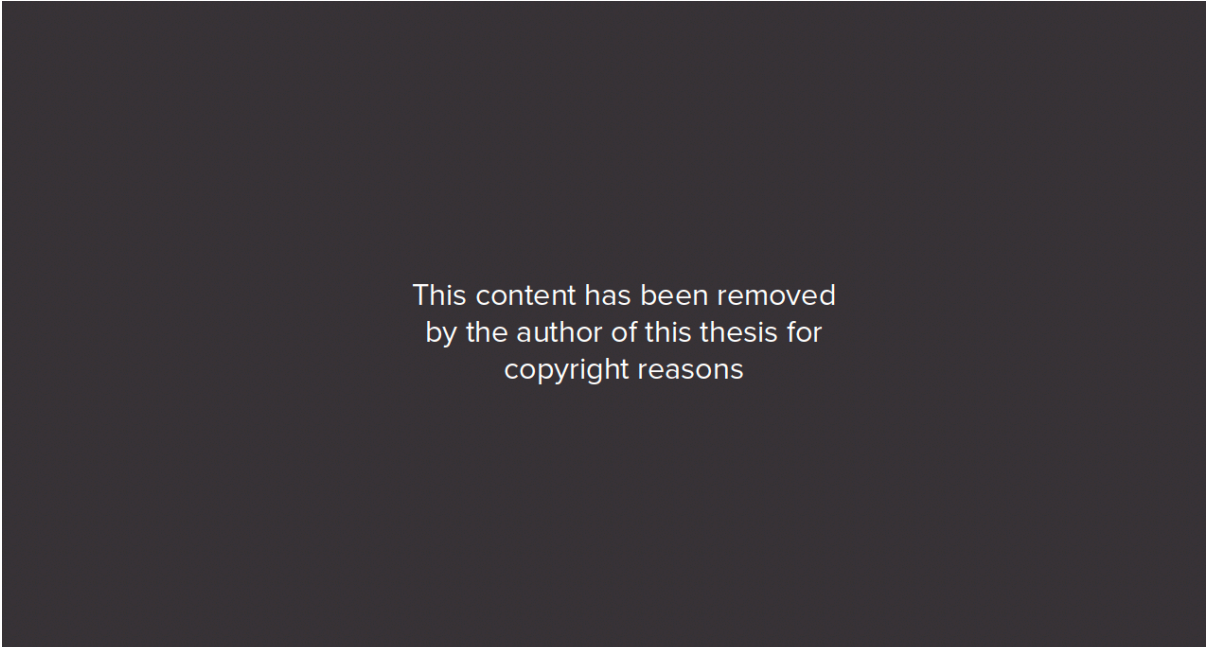
Figure 68. Elisabeth Pointon, *Special offer* (2018). Inflatable blimp and gold paint, commissioned by Te Tuhi Gallery, Auckland. 1 December 2018-10 March 2019. Image by Sam Hartnett.

Figure 69. Elisabeth Pointon, *Would You Look At That* (2019). Single channel digital video, colour, sound. 3minutes 45seconds. Still taken 2:10. Viewable online: <https://www.circuit.org.nz/work/would-you-look-at-that>

Pointon's *Best Wishes* is a large-scale inflatable text work made from red oxford cloth, spelling out the phrase, "GET IT RIGHT." Specific to this work is its context within on-and-off lockdown conditions within Aotearoa at the time, when there was a general sense of being under pressure to 'get it right' on both personal and national scales. I am interested in how Pointon manifests this phrase to reveal the pressure of such contexts, in which mistakes feel intolerable, highlighting the tensions of expectation and compliance. When read alongside Pointon's ongoing engagement with corporate rhetoric, "GET IT RIGHT." additionally takes on a more ominous, 'top-down' tone. The inflatable form of *Best Wishes* humorously undercuts this authority. By literally 'blowing up' the words, the act of articulation becomes spatial and dynamic, transforming a command into something buoyant and absurd. The work's gargantuan, red cloth, textual form oscillates between menace and play, revealing how language can both enforce and deflate power materially and conceptually. In this sense, *Best Wishes* offers my project an expanded understanding of how text might operate as a method of care that critiques societal pressures, while inviting a tactile, critical, and light-hearted engagement with language itself.

I recognise a shared processual quality across Pointon's and my own approach to practice, in that both draw upon a critical modality of listening to ordinary and colloquial speech for the ways language creates conditions of meaning. In this sense, attentiveness to daily verbatim diverges from the goal of clarifying or representing language, instead aiming to regenerate positions that enable its structures to be perceived for their ethical capacities. This critical modality of listening attends to the rhythms, hesitations, and tonal inflections of ordinary speech, whether textual or spoken, and works to foreground the aesthetics of textual legibility, indicative of how language becomes readable as a material and social construction rather than an impartial carrier of meaning. While Pointon's work often mobilises humour as a critical device in the face of capitalist culture, I additionally recognise how modes of maintaining material restraint allow linguistic structures to be apprehended with relative immediacy. By contrast, my methods extend this process through a more sensorially dense engagement with verbatim material as everyday socio-political conditions and subject matter.

By focusing on a wider range of linguistic and textual registers, inclusive of subversive humour, but also registers of urgency, hope, and care, my artworks expand from a central notion of ‘humouring.’ In this sense, humouring operates less as comic engagement, and more as a ‘sometimes’ strategy conducive to the endurance of care. Through this distinction between Pointon’s practice and my own, I find that language and its text offer a way of remaining with difficult material without becoming overwhelmed by it.



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Figure 70. Elisabeth Pointon, *Best Wishes* (2019). Red oxford cloth, blower. Installed as part of *Uncomfortable Silence* at Christchurch Art Gallery, Christchurch. 7 March-19 July 2020

4.2 The Expanded Scope of Text

Further to my ongoing explorations of the expanded material potential of text is my iterative project *Arriving in Stages (Newsletter)*. Beginning in late 2019 as a way to hold and manage the wide scope of care's significance, both materially and conceptually, these newsletters were initially created to keep people abreast of the project—primarily my supervisors, but also friends and whānau—and regularly updated with its material and conceptual movements. Originally distributed via email as digital documents, this is the more subtle work from which my project takes its overarching title. Containing images of artworks-in-progress, reflections on current socio-political phenomena, and personal writing, this activity initially sat as an 'aside' to the project, as part of its organisational structure rather than its core making. As physical meetings became impossible in lockdown conditions, these digital correspondences began to highlight how a civic body could still meet in action, and through formats of language, without necessarily gathering in person.

From March 2020, and throughout the first COVID-19 lockdown event, I developed a new rhythm of producing them weekly, shifting their mode of address toward concurrently responsive socio-political content. The surrounding social conditions of that time—including the intensification of national and global news cycles and movements such as Black Lives Matter and Stop Asian Hate—became vital contexts through which my artistic practice and its navigation of care felt increasingly responsive. Because language and text shape each other, they became central to how I think about feminist and ethical frameworks of care, which led me to work with text in both short- and long-form formats: as protest slogans, reports, written reflections, and essay writing.

A particularly important iteration of *Arriving in Stages (Newsletter)* occurred across and between February and May 2025 (figs. 71-73), when I committed to a semester-long series of weekly publications, produced as takeaway ephemera. This iteration and material 'push' emerged from a growing sense of binary political division within Aotearoa as a type of political material, particularly surrounding ACT Party Leader and Coalition Member David Seymour's proposed Treaty Principles Bill. Motivated by this context, I shifted the newsletters into printed and folded forms that could circulate physically as a reparative material response, firstly to this Bill, and ongoingly to subsequent significant socio-political 'events' which occurred throughout its various iterations.

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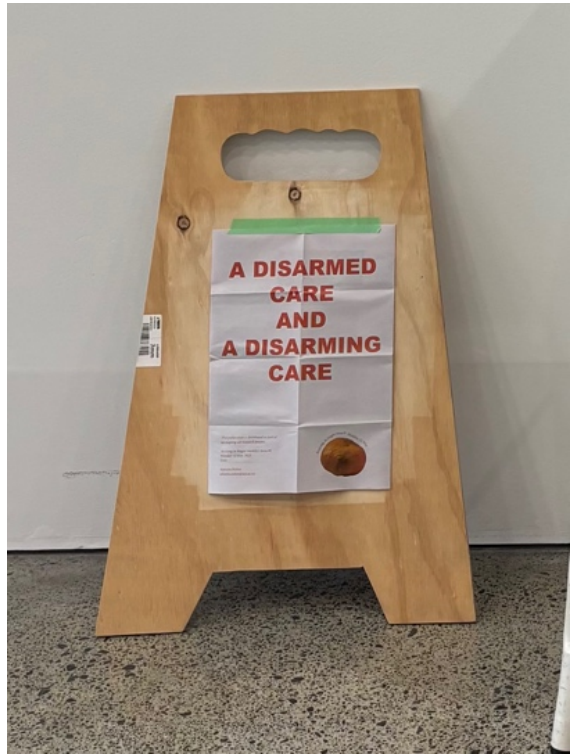


Figure 73. Scan of various folded *Arriving in Stages* (Newsletter) issues (March-May 2025)

Created using double-sided, colour-printed, folded newsprint sheets in A4 and A3 paper sizes, each newsletter conceptually pivots around a central textual element, with the text often becoming superimposed onto an image of a balloon. Like earlier iterations, this 2025 series blends core texts, ideas, slogans, images, and artworks—both my own and those of others—with current political happenings and references such as The Doomsday Clock and song lyrics. It also features relevant extracts from archival newspapers, recipes, word searches, and a roughly 500-word column that varies in format, including diary entries, analytical reports, opinion pieces, essays, and poetry, providing additional depth and perspective to each slogan's context. Furthermore, each issue includes a weekly 'dashboard' that monitors parliamentary activity and weather reports for Tāmaki Makaurau, thinking across both daily life and institutional actions, as interconnected forces shaping social and emotional environments.

Through its format and tone, *Arriving in Stages (Newsletter)* aims to transform care into a participatory, layered, and relational experience for the reader-participant. While its content encompasses political, personal, and cultural references, I recognise that the real work of care occurs through the act of reading itself—an invitation to spend time thinking with care across one's own ways of living, to attend, and to share in the ongoing rhythm of noticing. The newsletter's recurring structure, familiar visual layout, and weekly publishing schedule fostered a sense of continuity and closeness between the newsletter and those who read or encountered it. Despite its usefulness as a space for connection and reflection, the processes that sustain *Arriving in Stages (Newsletter)*—such as collecting, assembling, printing, and folding—became increasingly laborious and demanding. The project's temporal demands began to reflect, and sometimes strain, the very conditions of care it aimed to nurture. I realised that my responses, both artistic and personal, were shifting in tandem; how acts of making, tending, and maintaining could no longer be clearly separated. I think of this work as akin to protesting every day—an exhausting, yet *sometimes* necessary, task.

Acknowledging these constraints, the newsletter becomes a record of its own recognition of my limits and capacities for care: an artefact of my care reaching its limits, and of the need to reimagine what artistic continuity might look like within lived cycles of exhaustion, attention, and renewal. These conditions clarified my inquiry into text as a method of care that accommodates interruption, slowness, and partial presence as integral rather than deficient. Instead of a constant output, the newsletter now appears in intervals, remaining relative to what is occurring within socio-political worlds. Its improvised irregularity feels truer, to me, to the lived pace of care, allowing practice to follow capacity.



Figures 74-76. *In Progress* displaying various *Arriving in Stages* (Newsletter) offered weekly as “takeaway” ephemera (March-May 2025)

Rather than demanding active participation or immediate actions, *Arriving in Stages* (Newsletter) fosters a quieter form of engagement grounded in attention, reflection, and relational awareness. In this way, care, via the corresponding method of text, is activated not necessarily through direct instructions or spectacle but through the cumulative and sustained act of communication, each issue offering a small act of connection across distance, time, and differing perspectives.

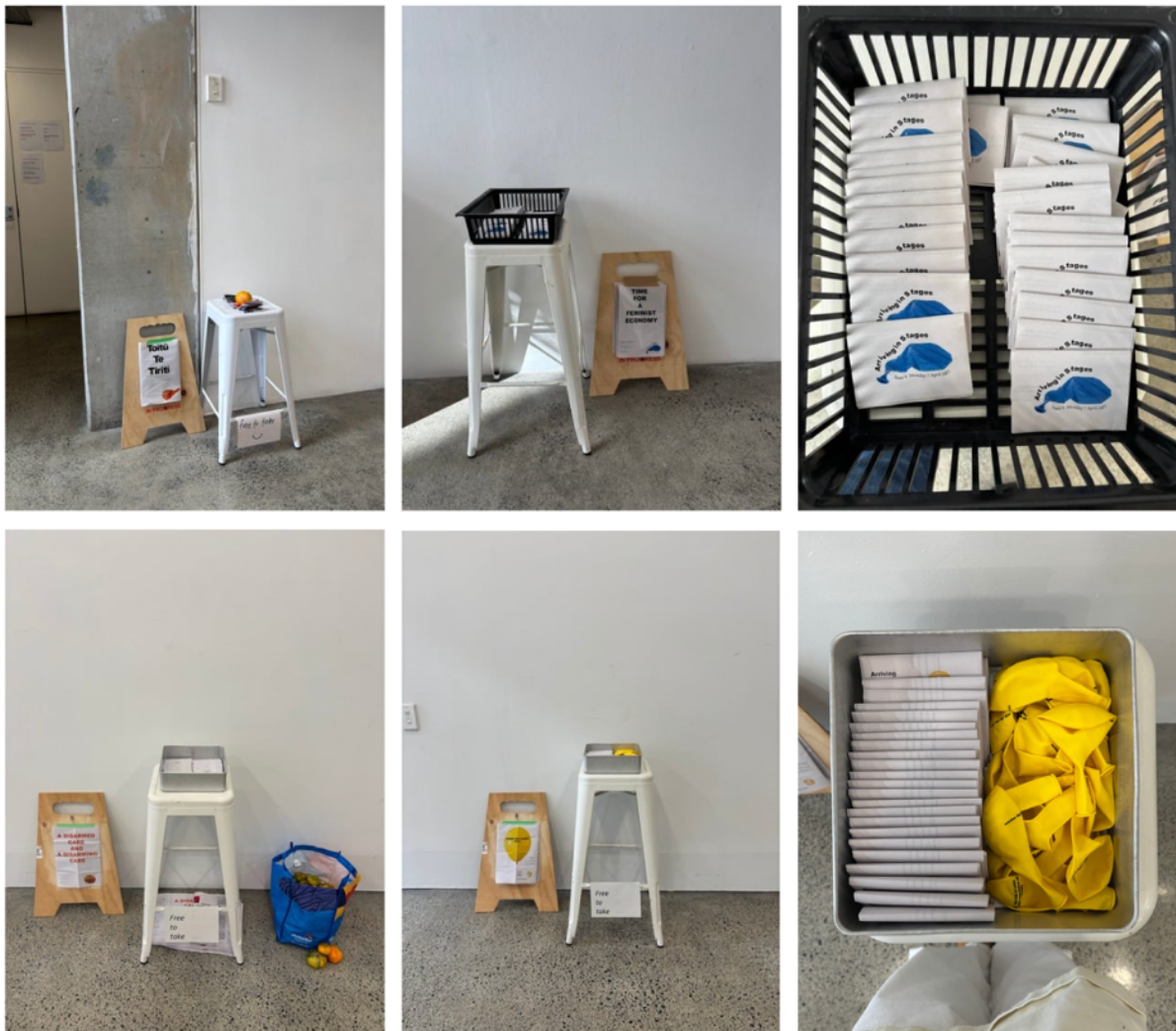


Figure 77. Various *Arriving in Stages* (Newsletter) distribution installations (March-May 2025)

4.3 Partial Arrivals

Australian artist Kate Just's approach to text-based processes of making significantly broadens my project's understanding of text as an artistic method capable of enacting and generating care. Just's practice is informed by banner-making and craft processes, as well as histories of civic and socio-political activism. Her methods involve working with text, textiles, and knitting to address contemporary socio-political happenings. The exhibition *CONSTRUCTION / WORK* (2025) uses both hand-knitted and industrially produced textual signs to address a range of ongoing socio-political and ecological concerns. Developed through Just's process of archival research into feminist political texts, contexts, and activist histories, her methods reconfigure construction signs and knitted work as forms of feminist protest. A key reference for Just is the 1980 exhibition *Women at Work*, curated by Aleks Danko and Judy Annear at George Paton Gallery (Naarm/Melbourne). Just's *CONSTRUCTION / WORK* draws on *Women at Work*'s consideration of gendered labour and feminist artistic performance, extending these concerns textually and materially toward contemporary feminist engagements, trans rights, and reproductive rights. The exhibition broadly draws upon the original *Women at Work* promotional poster, which represented functional construction signage with bold black text framed by a square of high-visibility yellow. This aesthetic is reworked and extended across a variety of textual slogans, media, forms, and scales across Just's installation. She includes large-scale, machine-knitted banner panels (which also read as blankets), knitted panels, industrially fabricated 'warning'-type signs, and a spinning knitted jumper, all featuring short, highly legible, repeated, or singular lines of text. By adopting and recontextualising the aesthetic and conceptual languages of industrial-type signage, Just reconfigures 'construction language' and invites a consideration of construction work as a conceptual and aesthetic metaphor for feminist frameworks of care, as a hands-on, process-based form of political and social labour.

Throughout the exhibition, slogans such as "CONSTRUCTION," "WORK WORK WORK," "WOMEN AT WORK," and "FEMINISM IN PROGRESS" take knitted forms in dual colours associated with traditional signage (yellow-black, red-white, green-white), each displayed as capitalised, declarative text. Industrial signage with phrases like "PROTECT TRANS LIVES," "DANGER: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION UNDER THREAT," and "CAUTION: CRITICAL ART," adopt the clear, imperative tone of hazard warnings to reframe feminist and queer politics within a language of urgency, safety, and collective response-ability. Just's use of industrial and declarative language highlights how hegemonic ideals—the frameworks that uphold structural norms of labour, gender, and safety—are themselves constructs.



Figures 78-79. Kate Just, *CONSTRUCTION / WORK* (2025) installation views. Installed at Seventh Gallery, Richmond, Victoria. 9 July-16 August 2025

By visually referencing and recontextualising these authoritative forms, Just makes the artifice of institutional power visible and creates a space for critical reassembly. And, in combining both the grammatical syntax and visual logic of warning systems, she turns bureaucratic and institutional modes of address into tangible tools for reparative engagement with socio-political issues of care and critique.

Just's work locates artistic practice within a continuum of collective making and labour politics. I see how both *CONSTRUCTION / WORK* and *Arriving in Stages* similarly draw on existing vernacular aesthetic economies of protest and civic support, where each is responding to socially and politically contingent contexts and conditions of power. Through this looping of temporalities, I find that both practices also language forms of resistance to the linear narratives of progress and productivity that underpin state-oriented ideas of care and belonging. Where Just's methods foreground lived experiences of protest and the recoding of institutional language into forms of feminist resistance, my own engagement with text often reflects a negotiation between public address and personal process, oscillating between direct socio-political critique and quieter, introspective acts of care. In each case, text becomes a site of labour through which I enact what Puig de la Bellacasa terms "thinking with care."¹¹¹ Through subverting the conventional typology of signage, Just's text emphasises how the layered political precarity and significance of thinking with care continues to be of urgency within a 2025 socio-political context. Just's work ethically responds to contexts in which certainty and consensus are continually undermined by shifting narratives of care, response-ability, and control. By textually and aesthetically reclaiming the visual language of authority and embodied redirection, Just translates texts' more normative, legible, and authoritative systems into feminist and reparative languages of attention, response-ability, and collective care. Her works, therefore, share a primary concern with my own project: text, when made and remade through feminist labour, becomes not only a method for messaging but a means of practising care as repetitive, relational, reciprocal, and explicitly politically attentive.

While my methods differ from Just's, I am nonetheless aware of a shared aesthetic and methodological consonance between my project's early phase of banner-making, my expanded approach to text, and Just's throughout *CONSTRUCTION / WORK*. Both practices utilise language as a representational content and as a material and epistemic instrument through which artistic thinking is enacted. My project, therefore, links a feminist relational ethic and methodology of care with a material practice where linguistic, bodily, and affective artistic processes are interwoven across various registers of text. I recognise a shared approach to the discursive materiality of language and texts' capacity to register, mediate, and transform socio-political conditions. Rendered

¹¹¹ Puig de la Bellacasa, *Matters of Care*.

variously as fabric, thread, printed, inflated, or knitted surfaces, I find that language acquires a scope of active and embodied relationships with labour and care. Importantly, I find that occupying this scope via a multiplicity of media and emotional registers enables a reflective position from which attention, empathy, value, and recognition are distributed individually and collectively. The materialisation of text throughout my practice offers both a speculative and generative approach to ethical practice: a process that rethinks and reconfigures care as a methodological necessity. By situating language as both subject and material, my practice opens possibilities for art to function as a reparative intermission within lived and alive conditions, enabling a space and a process that is attentive to the politics of representation, embodiment, and care.

Ultimately, my project's multimedia use of text establishes how it can function as a generative and responsive method of care in artmaking, actively engaging with and enacting the principles of care ethics through a wide range of registers. Through a methodological focus on care and my iterative, material, and durational use of language, my project finds that text becomes a means of attending to and sustaining relational, ethical, and affective responsibilities—making the work of care both tangible and perceptible. Moreover, my project recognises a crucial gap in how care and language can be considered frameworks for knowledge production: both are always partial, intentional, and directed, and language, in particular, is inherently subjective, shaped by perspective, context, and interpretation. Both require connection to something beyond themselves. Care and language require connection to something beyond themselves. By working within this incompleteness, I treat them as interdependent practices of attention and relation—reparative rather than paranoid modes of knowing that remain responsive to the social, political, and affective conditions from which they emerge.

The methodologies of care that underpin my work are not fixed outcomes, but ongoing, process-driven responses to social, institutional, and personal conditions. By situating language as a reparative and relational tool, I foreground the significance of attentive engagement, critical reflection, and the cumulative power of small, sustained gestures. The next chapter, *The Emergence of Miles*, develops this thinking; however, the focus shifts from examining language and text as methods of care towards an analysis of how these practices of attention and relationality extend into collective, participatory, and experience-oriented forms of artmaking.

CHAPTER FIVE:

THE EMERGENCE OF MILES

At my grandparents' home in Papakura, Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland), there are big citrus trees: oranges, grapefruits, and mandarins. For as long as I can remember, I have picked fruit from the trees in their backyard. Their backyard orchard bears a few oranges year-round, but the oranges ripen fully toward the end of summer and into the spring months. My grandmother – My Grannie's birthday falls in early January, coinciding with the oranges, and Mother's Day in May, coincides with the mandarins. In January and May, we pick fruit from the ground, and in September, My Grandfathers birthday, we pick directly from the trees. These events have always been family occasions held at my grandparents' house—and each are times I spend hours with these citrus trees.

When we arrive, my Grannie always gives the same two options: take a pre-filled bread bag of oranges (or five), or go and pick your own. It is a rule I take as seriously as I take my Grannie herself. Inevitably, I spend most of my visit around the tree.

When I was younger, I picked fruit alongside my mother, my aunty, and my Grannie. In doing so, I became proximate to the way they spoke with one another—with care, concern, and ease. Their conversations moved between what to send to my uncle's new baby in Hong Kong, what to do about the rattling sound in the car engine, and what was happening politically in the world. These moments were ordinary, but they remain among the most formative experiences of my childhood.

As the first-born granddaughter and with a ten-year gap between myself and most of my cousins, I gradually witnessed this activity change with each new addition to the family. What had once been a matter of listening in on the rhythm of their dialogue has, over time, become something I now help facilitate—passing conversations between cousins, reaching high for oranges they point out, and continuing, in our own ways, the shared language of care that, for me, has always surrounded this tree.

Figure 80. Scan image of *The story about the citrus trees* (May 2025). A4 inkjet print, black and white.

This chapter explores the emergence of *Miles* as an orange with a voice, personality, an Instagram account, and a felted material body through methods of drawing, wearing, and improvising as a mode of response. Exploring the conceptual and methodological frameworks underpinning my project, I grapple with the analogy of the half-time orange as both a material gesture and a guiding metaphor for considering how a reparative methodology becomes generative of shared conditions for response, in which agency is considered visually and response-ability is collectively held.

Drawing from Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's idea of reparative reading and Sandra Laugier's methodology of caring language, I examine how ordinary, vernacular acts such as sharing an orange segment or distributing an image online can become central strategies for artistic inquiry and civic-social engagement. By tracing the evolution of my project's key motifs and figures, particularly via the emergence of *Miles* as an active persona, I examine how my practice foregrounds subtle, provisional, and relational forms of attention. Through an analysis of works that span methods of drawing, social media, performance, events, and quasi-anthropomorphic wearable garments, this chapter situates my approach within wider discourses of contemporary art, highlighting the significance of process, participation, and the politics of the ordinary. Ultimately, I demonstrate how the half-time orange, via *Miles*, becomes a generative site for reimagining the capacities of art to hold space for care, as well as inviting repair as a central process that sets the conditions for collectively meaningful response.



Figure 81. The citrus trees at my grandparents house, in non-fruiting season. Image taken November 2025

5.1 Half-Time Oranges

In 2020, I was visiting my grandparents' home for a whānau celebration. I took home four bags of oranges. One went to the flat fruit bowl, another with a flatmate to their workplace, the third became orange juice, and the fourth bag became an artwork, although I did not recognise it as such at the time. I had a casual yet intentional plan for these oranges: I intended to cut them up and share them with my studio mates, under a banner I had made the week before—*YEAH! This Sucks! Half-Time Oranges*, 2020 (fig. 82-83). We ended up sharing the orange segments during one of our usual impromptu tea breaks, while engaging in casual conversation. At the time, it seemed like a simple, ordinary occurrence. In retrospect, this moment has become significant in the emergence of *Miles*, a voice and persona central to my implementation of half-time oranges as an ongoing analogy that is significant across both the material and conceptual doings of my research. What was then a casually participatory activity of sharing orange segments now stands out as an early gesture towards relational and reflective methods of listening, reading, and ultimately feeling, which underpin my wider project.



Figure 82. (left) Studio documentation of *YEAH! This Sucks! Half-Time Oranges* banner (March 2020)

Figure 83. (right) Studio documentation. A plate of cut orange segments to share with studio mates (March 2020)

I'm interested in the idea of half-time oranges as an analogy for the artwork I want to make. I enjoy this analogy because of its scope and simplicity; the image of sitting beside the field with others, on a bench, tired, listening in, with an orange-segment 'smile,' even when the odds seem stacked against me, so to speak. At the heart of this analogy is the orange segment itself: a small offering, full of sweet and bitter juice, meant to give a quick, natural sugar boost to keep going. In this sense, I think of the half-time orange as both visual language and method for enacting what Donna Haraway calls "staying with the trouble."¹¹² Rather than working toward a resolution or the completion of artworks, or retreating from the conceptual and ethical complexity embedded in ordinary, everyday structures of experience, the *half-time orange* functions through connected layers of making and experiencing. It offers a means by which response-ability can be read, practised, generated, enabled, sustained, and, at times, strengthened—like a muscle—for coping with a "thick present."¹¹³ This analogy resonates with Haraway's description of staying with the trouble in that it "requires learning to be truly present, not as a vanishing pivot between awful or edenic pasts and apocalyptic or salvific futures, but as mortal critters entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings."¹¹⁴

Correspondingly, the halftime orange is a core material-conceptual strategy for realising my response-ability within this project, and, by proxy, the world in which it is situated. Within my practice, this analogy conceptually orbits around the orange segment itself. Primarily, the orange segment situates my project in a specific kind of temporal register: not the start, when things may feel exciting, energetic, and buzzing with potential, nor the end, when it might feel like 'too little, too late' to give it one's all. Different from game-time, yet conducive to its endurance, a half-time orange both conceptually and materially invites and becomes supportive of liminal moments of active, critical, and reflexive recalibration, regardless of how things play out. It's that space where something has already happened, and something is yet to happen. As an intermission, it acknowledges prior effort and regroups commitment for what might emerge next.

¹¹² Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*.

¹¹³ Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 55.

¹¹⁴ Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 1.

5.2 The Role of *Miles*

Miles is an orange. *Miles* is me, and I am *Miles*, but we also have distinct differences. When I am *Miles*, I am practising art. When I am me, I can be practising art, but I am also doing many other things: running errands, working a job, taking care of my infant, and/or mowing the lawn. This isn't to say that *Miles* doesn't do these things (they do), but rather that *Miles* does them as a way of expressing care and concern for collective conditions, whereas I do them out of necessity. When I am me, *Miles* is often with me: physically, as an inhabitable felt-body riding in the front passenger seat of my car (in case something happens and I need them to help me respond); digitally, as a growing visual 'map' of doings and as an Instagram account on my phone. *Miles* is also always within me, internally, as a voice in my head that asks me to read and respond to 'things' in the world with a 'reparative' logic. Importantly, when I am *Miles*, I do things I wouldn't do as myself: blowing up a giant balloon on the beach with a leaf blower, for instance. It's not that I don't want to do the things *Miles* does; I do. It's just that I can't always find the reason for doing them as clearly as *Miles* can.

Playfully naming the 'voice' of my project 'Miles,' in addition to its more formal title, was a way of acknowledging how inseparable this project's methodology had become from my own ways of noticing and responding to the world, so much so that it was beginning to act as a voice in my head and in my heart that asked me to address the world in critically reparative ways. The name Miles is drawn from a casual conversation with my Grannie about the state of the world and political divisiveness, especially in response to the then occurring storming of the U.S. Capitol—wherein she remarked that, "in terms of caring for each other as citizens, we have *miles to go*."

As I reflected on my Grannie's remark during the drive home, I realised I don't actually know how long a mile is. Yet, like my Grannie, I recognise that there are many ahead of us. More than that, I found myself wondering how many miles I have already travelled conceptually: through acts of noticing, responding, and recalibrating already embedded as processes in my project. This consideration is less about measuring time or distance, but about how my artistic practice might inhabit more temporal and emotional terrains through the iterative and ongoing accumulation of subtle shifts of perspective, gestures of care, and methodologies of repair. By imagining *Miles* in this way, the journey of *Miles* becomes a sustained path of attention and response, not solely a trajectory towards a finish line.

Sedgwick's concept of reparative reading guides my approach to making *Miles*. Repair, as Sedgwick describes it, is an orientation toward texts, images, and phenomena that emphasises connection, pleasure, and generativity rather than critique or exposure.¹¹⁵ Likewise, feminist queer theorist Heather Love contends that "reparation ... is on the side of multiplicity, surprise, rich divergence, consolation, creativity, and love."¹¹⁶ In this sense, I share Love's approach that, "if reparative reading is better at the level of ethics and affect—and there is really no doubt that it is—it also looks better at the level of epistemology and knowledge."¹¹⁷ For my practice, thinking of repair as an ethic means actively applying it time and time again to the everyday. I frequently draw upon language that circulates within public vernaculars as news, signage, and political verbatim as texts. I am less concerned with recognising language through either a reparative or paranoid split, and more interested in the ways that language can function to enable me to manoeuvre in/between positions of care.¹¹⁸ Key to my project's working understanding of paranoia and repair are is how repair prioritises an ethics of response-ability, a kind of ethical and epistemic capacity to respond to what I encounter through points of connection, even amid conditions that instantiate paranoia.

Applying this reparative synthesis between Sedgwick and Love to my practice as a methodology, I consider how external materials and my own modes of engagement enable nourishing, sustaining, or opening of relational possibilities. *Miles* operates within this reparative framework as a conduit for attentiveness: a personified, iterative voice that amplifies care, guides reflection, and extends my attention to the relational, ethical, and affective dimensions of making. Through *Miles*, repair becomes a practice of noticing, responding, and sustaining relations, which offers something critically different to mastery or problem-solving. Like the half-time orange, *Miles* provides temporary but vital sustenance, facilitating endurance, connection, and gently participatory engagement, as something shared between bodies. In this way, my project operationalises Sedgwick's reparative methodology as an ongoing, iterative, and relational process, where *Miles* functions as a mediator, co-participant, and guide for reading, thinking, feeling, and acting with attentiveness to both self and others, reparatively.

¹¹⁵ Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*.

¹¹⁶ Heather Love, "Truth and Consequences: On Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading," *Criticism* 52, no. Spring (2010): 235–241

¹¹⁷ Love, "Truth and Consequences," 237

¹¹⁸ Paranoia, in this sense, can be read in extension of Nel Nodding's "caring-about," while repair engages through "caring-for." See Nodding: *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (1986)

By aligning *Miles* with a reparative methodology, I am intentionally asking how artmaking might attend, sustain, and connect, increasing my capacity for responsibility through daily practice. This alignment is closely tied to the concept of the half-time orange: an analogy for how repair attends not only to grand global systems but also to the functioning of the world in ordinary, provisional, ephemeral ways, and through methods of artmaking. *Miles*, built from my idea of the half-time orange, amplifies this attentiveness, acting as a conduit for small, sustained practices of care, repair, and relational engagement within the studio and beyond.



Figure 85. My phone with screenshot of the centre of *Miles Map* (taken December 2025)

Nearly two years passed between the initial event of half-time oranges consumed under a banner and the more formal activation of *Miles* as a named persona. This period of ‘incubation’ allowed *Miles* to gradually emerge as a personal reference point within my project, woven into my daily life and creative processes. Still grounding my work in the idea of art as an orange segment at half-time, I set about making *Miles* more tangible. During this period, as Aotearoa cycled through pandemic-induced lockdowns, *Miles* offered a flexible and immediate form of practice—an accessible drawing method that maintained connection and continuity amidst social and material constraints.

Miles arrived iteratively over time and in a deeply personal way, shifting from a private voice in my head to a more active presence in the world, as visual art process. Using the modest method of an orange-dot sticker and a fine-liner pen on paper, I began to map the connections between *Miles*—as persona, as methodological logic of care and repair—and my understandings of the temporal and affective register of the half-time orange, as in these surfaced through daily routines. While these existed as drawings on paper, they also became digital images: I photographed each drawing as it was made and shared it on an Instagram account, *@milesheorange*. Making *Miles* in this way became a deliberate enactment of relational, durational practice. I aimed to bridge the gap between the immediacy of my ordinarily responsive projects—*In Progress* and *Memo* and the slower, more meditative processes of sewing. For instance, while I might feel an immediate impulse to respond to something heard on the radio through banner-making, the reality of time and resources meant waiting for an opportunity to act. This contrast between urgency and latency became central to my understanding of care, attention, and artistic response, and *Miles* helped me navigate this dynamic. In this way, the process of making *Miles* became a study in tempo: a reparative pacing that neither rushed toward resolution nor disengaged from urgency but lingered in the interval between them. *Miles* helped me hold that in-between, a kind of half-time, where responsiveness could be sustained, not exhausted. *Miles* offers my project a material and immediate practice in which provisionality and response-ability are structural qualities rather than circumstantial ones—a means of staying with the world as it unfolds rather than retreating from it.

5.3 @milestheorange

While *Miles* is a voice in my head and a drawing in and of the world, they are most often dispersed through social media, specifically Instagram. From 2022, Instagram offered my project a cumulative provisional method through which *Miles* could exist in a way that corresponds with my internal experience of them as a visual and dialogical presence, as well as iterative and ephemeral in form. I think of the platform's temporal structure, its constant flow, repetition, and sometimes disappearance of voices, through the analogy of a personal (yet, partially curated) town square. While the general idea of Instagram might be an app, a place to upload a curated selection of one's personal photos, I am interested in how 'participating' within the metaphorical digital town square actually requires much less. Drawing on my earlier naming of *Miles*, I quite literally wanted to make a version of *Miles* for me to share with others 'on the go.' Each post, like a small act of noticing—or like a small orange segment—carries the modest scale of a half-time orange: a gesture of sustenance and continuation rather than completion. In this way, Instagram offers not just a site of dispersal, but an extension of the work's reparative logic, holding space for provisionality, responsiveness, and the subtle rhythms of attention and methods of noticing that drive my artmaking.

My intention in starting @milestheorange was to make *Miles* more material and more active, to give form to ongoing conversations and observations I was having within my studio making. Importantly, the quickness of *Miles* approaches my Grannie's phrase of "miles to go" playfully and renders a version of *Miles* that can be literally made and viewed while on the go within my own everyday life. This format also meant that @milestheorange became supportive of and connected to my slower ways of making without attempting to replace them. *Miles*'s Instagram account became a way to fold the immediacy of drawing, writing, and reflection into a more public-facing, process-oriented form of practice. As I continued to post to @milestheorange, *Miles*' emergence became a key point of intersection between my methods and methodologies—where the conceptual frameworks of care, repair, and relationality could meet the material acts of attention, noticing, and response. Through this convergence, *Miles* functioned as both a methodological tool and a mode of reflection, holding open a space where the boundaries between thinking, making, and sharing remained deliberately close.

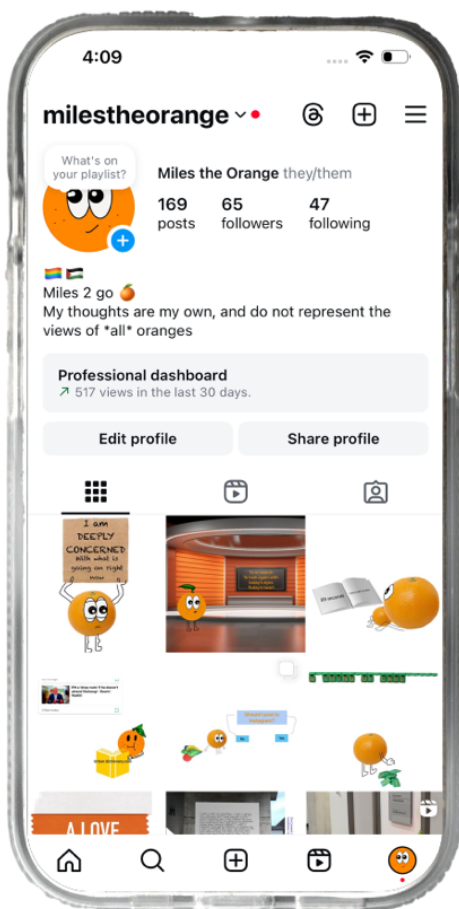
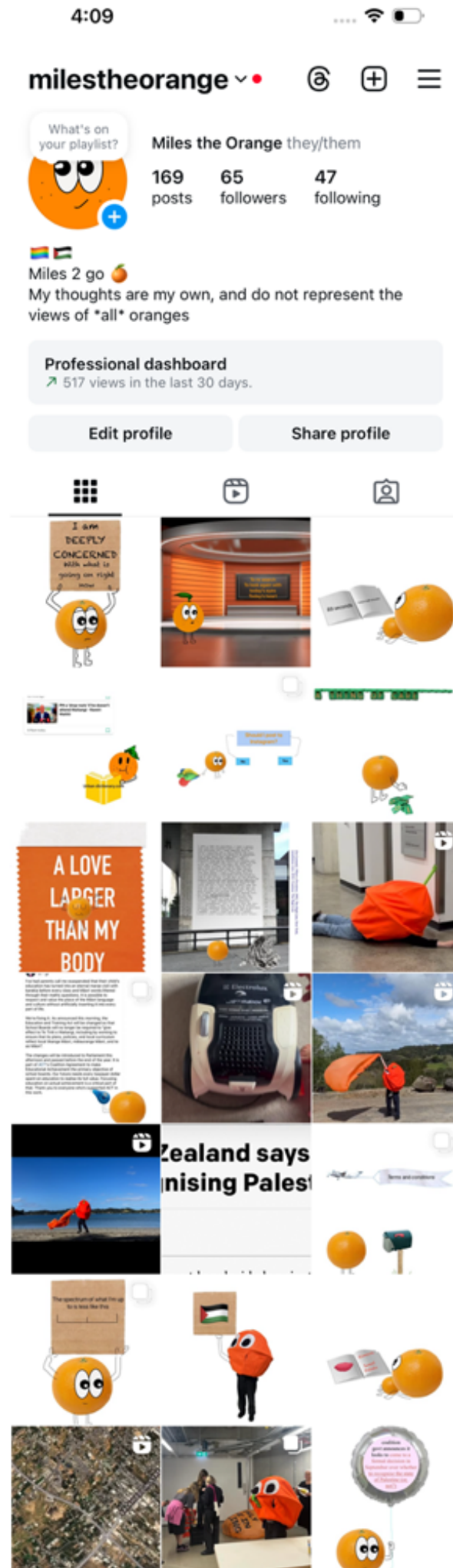


Figure 86. My phone, with a screenshot of @milestheorange's Instagram account (taken January 2026)



The chronology of *@mylestheorange* functions as both an index and a mapping of *Miles*' iterative emergence. Each post traces the ongoing development of *Miles* as a persona, showing how their voice, visual forms, and gestures 'matter' for my project, iteratively and accumulatively over time. Simultaneously, *@mylestheorange* documents the broader constellation of phenomena and events to which *Miles* responds: from fleeting and more banal observations present within daily life (such as an annoyance with the slipping straps on tote bags) to larger social, political, or cultural moments, such as the building of *Miles*' position as tangata Tiriti (a personified orange who exists in support of the ti Tiriti). In this way, the Instagram 'feed' becomes a layered temporal archive that indexes *Miles*' arrival in stages, as a reparative methodology, while also encompassing the wide-ranging field of attention, care, and responsiveness that shapes their emergence as both artwork and methodological device in connection with my larger project. This process of arriving over time and in stages is what enables *Miles* to become folded into my multimedia practice, becoming what Haraway names a "worlding" force, alongside my other activities, such as banner-making, constructing makeshift signage, or assembling newsletters.¹¹⁹

Tempo is important to *@mylestheorange* as a format of making. I would describe *Miles* as a vernacular method: on some days, *Miles* posts multiple times, but mostly, *Miles* posts every couple of days or so. Other times, a week or two passes between posts. This rhythm allows *Miles* to be a responsive method rather than a rigid everyday rule, which, for me, more accurately reflects the realities of my response-ability, especially in periods when my capacity to act is constrained by life events. These moments of pause are not signs of inactivity or disengagement from the broader work of *Miles*, but part of the flexibility of this particular method, which acknowledges how response-ability is also shaped by physical, emotional, and contextual limits. This conditional limitation is an important tension within the project, wherein it helps me identify a gap or temporal interval between the project-internal logics of method (where the tempo is responsive, embodied, and reflexive) and realms of external perception (such as the ways in which viewers perceive, interpret, and experience an artwork, both in the moment and over time). People who observe *Miles* only see their outputs: the posts, their frequencies, their tone, their content, and their gaps. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge the ways in which viewers, for the most part, cannot know the broader contexts in which *@mylestheorange* is made—life circumstances, intentionality, embodied limits—unless I make an attempt to language that influence via text or image within *@mylestheorange* posts.

¹¹⁹ Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 10-14, 48.

This acknowledgement reveals the tensions between the lived logic of the practice and how it is received. Rather than resolving this dilemma, I consider it part of the work. When I'm not posting as *@milestheorange*, I do various things that mean I am occupied in other ways: at the sewing machine, inside *Miles'* felt-body, or undertaking project-related response-abilities.

Each post within *@milestheorange* is a provisional gesture. The accumulation of posts allows *Miles* to begin in one material and conceptual form—such as the original hand-drawn orange dot sticker—and, over time, take on new visual logics, such as *Miles'* more recent look as a realistic orange with digitally drawn cartoon appendages. Furthermore, as *Miles'* posts have quite literally arrived in stages, so has their use and connection to other areas of my project, such as their use of text on balloons (*Critic and Conscience*), their activation of banner works (*Urgent-Hopeful*), their use of makeshift signs, and, later, their service of giving out oranges both personally and by post (iterative extensions of *Half-Time Orange Events*, figs. 88-91). In this sense, *@milestheorange* offers both a means of dispersal and an archive of practice contexts, but it also functions to structure a rhythm of attention, reflection, and activation that is central to *Miles'* iterative emergence over time, in response to the lived conditions my research is concerned with. The durational nature of posting within Instagram permits both continuity and change, where the provisional allows for sustained engagement over time.

Through *@milestheorange*, my project hosts a subtle kind of public-facing, social, and gently participatory engagement. As such, *Miles* also becomes experienced by others: seen, perhaps followed and liked, and at times reposted and recirculated. In this way *Miles* expands beyond my more private studio processes into a digitised social context, opening relational space for reparative attention in a distributed network of other voices and positions. While *@milestheorange* offers my project a generative, processually driven tracing of my project's cares and concerns, I am also interested in how *Miles* might also take on a multiplicity of roles through engaging multiple materialities.

Half-time oranges
(Talk Week Edition)

Reprint Authorised 28/05/25
Miles Orange

M.O

(Original attached)

For the Month of June
*I shared individually picked
and packed half-time oranges
– delivered personally or by
post.*

*This is an an extension of
that project for Talk Week.*

**Thank you for receiving
this orange.**
**It's already been a big
year.**

**This is just a small
pause – a half-time
moment – to catch your
breath.**

Fine print:

Oranges are picked and packed in
Ōpahi Bay, Mahurangi West, 0983
Oranges and delivery are
completely free.

Each orange is individually
packaged, with **care taken** to
ensure it arrives safely.
Oranges outside of Tāmaki
Makaurau will be sent via
overnight courier using the NZ
postal service.

Oranges are spray-free,
homegrown, organic.

Oranges may be **enjoyed solo, or
shared in segments with others,**



89



90



91

Figure 88. Scan of printed thermal paper that accompanied *Half-time Orange* event (Authorised by Miles, June 2025)

Figures 89-91. Process images of packing *Half-time Orange* event (June 2025)



Figures 92-93. *Miles* felt-body inhabited in studio (August 2025), image by Monique Redmond, and studio documentation, *Miles* felt-body (uninhabited) on the floor (August 2025)



5.4 *Miles*' Felt-body

There are times when the urgency or weight of the situation calls for methods that go beyond an Instagram post. Through my noticing of these instances, when I feel it is within my response-ability to do more, I devised a method which enables me to make *Miles* into a real-world, real-time entity, through a mascot-style costume. I first made *Miles* as a wearable garment akin to a mascot in June 2024, following my hunch that I wanted them to be more physical. *Miles*, in this form, becomes an inhabitable felt-body: a simple, hand-made, orange acrylic-felt sphere with cut out armholes, worn over my head and down over the body's abdomen. Unlike the glamorous, highly-engineered style of commercial mascots (with oversized heads, moulded foam, and professional finishing), this costume is visually humble: rippled, lumpy and with signs of wear—closer to the aesthetics of school-play costuming than stadium-scale spectacle. This aesthetic material modesty is intentional and aligns with the provisional methods of *@milestheorange*, but, at the same time, it extends my exploration of *Miles*' text-based reparative logic, examining how a reparative logic functions to inform my project's more immediately physical, material spheres. Like my engagement with *@milestheorange*, I would describe my use of the *Miles* felt-body as frequently active, yet not driven by a fixed schedule of making. While I value *Miles*' Instagram format for daily potential, I inhabit *Miles*' felt-body method weekly, on average, depending on context and physical availability. The activities I undertake as *Miles* encompass a material realisation and extension of *Miles*' digital activities, such as recreating the act of holding a large balloon, and more event-specific, organised, and time-bound actions which could not exist through a digital format alone, like giving out single boxed oranges.



Figure 94. *Miles*' first public activity test (July 2024).
Image by Layne Waerea

This range of seemingly ordinary, and at times, banal activity matters because it shifts *Miles* from purely representational methods into lived, material experience. In doing so, I am able to create a space where digitally configured logics extend to take on an immediate and material tangibility, where encounter and participation become performatively enlarged, even when their methods appear futile. For example, while @milestheorange might be able to successfully hold a printed balloon twice their body size on the weather-free platform of Instagram, the real-life conditions in which I might try to achieve the same task in *Miles*' costume would inevitably yield a different result, one that could be more accurately described as an exercise in trying. Yet, I find this futility part of its appeal: the gestures are endearing in their earnestness and playful exaggeration, while also generatively reparative, producing moments of reflection, attention, and subtle engagement that ripple beyond their immediate material outcome. Additionally, by moving into physical space, *Miles* not only embodies the logic of their previous iterations but also opens moments of interaction, reflection, and attention that are impossible online. In doing so, the costume becomes more than a method of visual translation. It is a way of exploring presence, agency, and the gentle interactivity between performer and viewer. As such, there are multiple ways to critically approach how *Miles* and viewers interact. Primary to my understanding of *Miles*' methods are the ways in which their actions treat reparative response as contingent, partial, and situational.

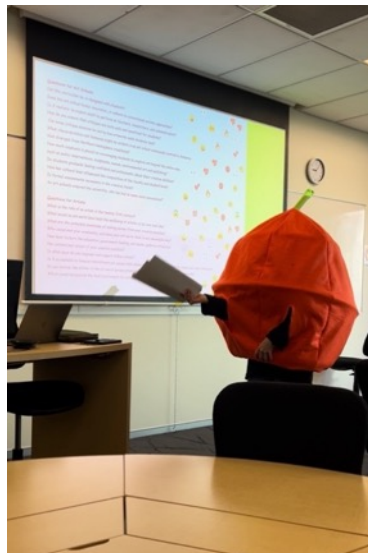


Figure 95. *Miles* sharing artist Richard Orjis' 'Questions for Art Schools' and 'Questions for Artists' from "Art Makers Aotearoa Hand Book 2024" with second year visual arts theory students (July 2024).



Figure 96. *Miles* felt-body, inhabited by myself and my infant simultaneously (October 2025)



Figures 97-98. *An Exercise in Trying* 2025. Miles felt-body, attempting to blow up a balloon at Opahi Bay, Mahurangi West). HD digital video, single channel, colour, sound. 4 minutes 28 seconds. Stills taken at 38 seconds and 2 minutes 36 seconds.

Intrinsic to my understanding of *Miles*' emerging set of methods is the idea that not every viewer interacts with *Miles* directly or in the same ways. Some see @milestheorange online; some encounter the costume while it sits, static, in the passenger seat of my car; some receive oranges, balloons, or newspapers directly from *Miles*; some only see *Miles* in passing within other projects, such as my *Arriving in Stages Newsletter* series. In this way, *Miles* is not a guaranteed or predefined action; they function via interactive methods that concurrently emerge through daily contexts and across various media. As such, *Miles*' interaction occurs at various scales and frequencies, wherein the inconsistencies become read as temporal unpredictability. Furthermore, the question of who gets to see *Miles* becomes an important and productive point in my research. It leads me to further questions around access (physical, digital, and geographical), privilege and constraint, the politics of where performances happen (both on and offline), as well as the ethics of who becomes invited into *Miles*' encounters. Moreover, *Miles* does not appear equally to all, recognising that inequality is itself a condition of this project. Not everyone will meet *Miles* in all their forms, and this uneven visibility offers both a generative constraint and a defining aspect of my project. I, therefore, find it important that the work operates through a scope of inviting partial encounters, chance proximities, and situated forms of attention, acknowledging that presence, like response-ability, is always shaped by availability, context, and my body's own limits.

Miles' inhabitable felt-body reads less as a corporate icon and more as a community-scale civic agent, a presence occupying space in ordinary yet exceptional ways. Because the costume is hand-made and not built for high-performance spectacle, it remains legible as a type of frequent doing; the marks, the pilling in the fabric, the stretches and sags of the *Miles* costume suggest prior frequent use; the strained seams, the marked surface, and the minimal structural apparatus are not cosmetic decisions but meaningful indications of *Miles*' various engagements. The costume itself registers labour, improvisation, presence, and a sense of intervention as intermission. In this mode, *Miles* is not just a mascot but, importantly, a method-figure: one that is simultaneously an artefact and a modality for engaging both performance and participation.

Miles' felt-body option extends the generative methods I explored within @milestheorange into realms of immediate experience and embodied action. As such, *Miles*' felt-body functions as a prop to extend and expand my own sense of response-ability, as well as inviting a gentle type of participatory engagement from those who encounter *Miles*. Witnessing, noticing, or simply sharing space with *Miles* becomes a form of interaction that does not demand active participation, yet allows viewers to experience the work through presence and attention. *Miles*' felt-body works as a strategy for creating a pause in support of ongoing collective attention to the world. In doing so, it occupies a temporal space where presence, attention, and awareness arise as the main

modes of engagement. Through this method, *Miles* extends my practice from drawing and digital dissemination into the realms of lived experience. By enabling *Miles* to have a physical form that engages in live action, events can also be photographed or filmed and subsequently recirculated digitally, whereby *Miles* functions as an inhabitable and active type of ‘prop’. This formulation of *Miles*’ circulation means that *Miles*’ felt-body is not separate from *@milesheorange* but actively supports and extends my ongoing exploration across both, creating a processual and generative feedback loop that layers within and between online and real-life practices.



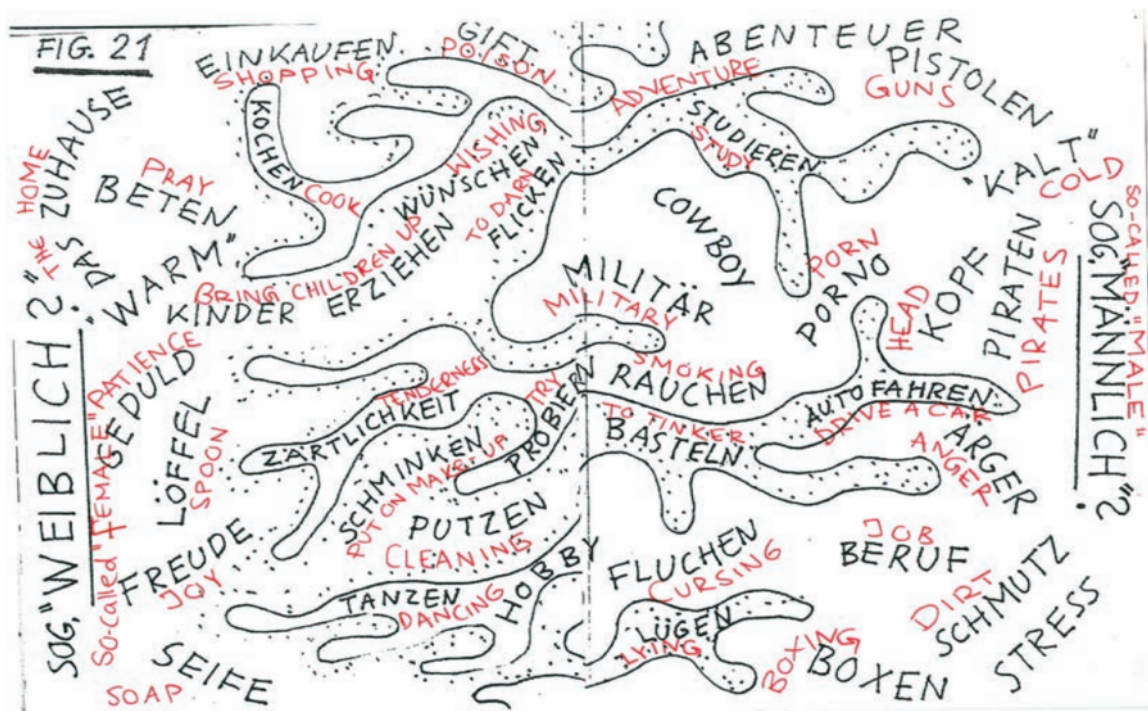
Figure 99. *Miles* felt-body in transit (September 2025)

5.5 *Miles*' (Quasi-Anthropomorphic) Relations

Miles functions as a quasi-anthropomorphic character: an entity that takes on human traits (such as arms, legs, and language) while still being an orange. When I inhabit *Miles*' felt-body, the orange covers my head and abdomen, leaving my legs and feet visible as human. This partial personhood, enabled by my own body both physically and emotionally, allows *Miles* to move fluidly between object, image, and performer, enabling a playful yet critical distance through which questions of care, response-ability, and material agency can be tested. My working through *Miles* aims explore how character-based methods can hold together play, critique, and material experimentation, and how performance can become a tool for navigating ordinary, political, and affective conditions.

The recurring figures and relational dynamics between Rat and Bear, created by the Swiss artist duo Peter Fischli and David Weiss (known collaboratively as Fischli/Weiss), serve as a key comparative reference for *Miles*' performative methods. Rat and Bear first appeared in 1981, in Fischli/Weiss' short film *The Point of Least Resistance* (*Der Geringste Widerstand*, 1981), as well as in the artists' printed booklet series *Order and Cleanliness* (*Ordnung und Reinlichkeit*, 1981), two interrelated works that established the artists' parodic and philosophically humorous approach to character-based artmaking. *The Point of Least Resistance* (1981) is a 30-minute film in which Fischli and Weiss, performing as Rat and Bear, parody artistic ambition, capitalism, and moral compromise through a loosely structured pseudo-crime narrative. Its aftermath extended into *Order and Cleanliness* (1981), a series of photocopied diagrammatic drawings that humorously attempt to impose conceptual order on the social, emotional, and ideological chaos encountered in the film.

As with *Miles*, Fischli/Weiss' creation of Rat and Bear enabled a productive slippage between sincerity and satire, performance and reflection. In the film, Rat functions as the instigator and opportunist, while Bear embodies a slower, more anxious, ethically ambivalent orientation—a dynamic that mirrors the oscillations within my own work of *Miles*, who pivots between critique and care, assertion and hesitation. I find it generative to consider the ways in which Rat and Bear operate as artistic conduits, through which the work becomes animated allegorically, and across various filmic and ephemeral formats.



I am specifically interested in how, like *Miles*, Fischli/Weiss' Rat and Bear also function as quasi-anthropomorphic characters who enable a comic yet absurd register of actions, opening up a distinct aesthetic and critical space. Due to the connected use of animals and wearable garments, when characters are given a quasi-anthropomorphic aesthetic, it produces a mode of representation that loosens the constraints of realism and social expectation. As a result, the artwork has the potential to mobilise physical comedy, absurdity, and visual metaphor with increased reach, allowing actions, gestures, and scenarios to operate simultaneously on literal and symbolic levels. Rat, Bear, and *Miles* each exist allegorically as non-human forms. This allegory allows them to navigate critiques of hegemony, capitalism, or institutional power without being reduced to an individual human subject or stereotype.

The non-human figure offers a site where meaning becomes intensified rather than diluted: where behaviour reads as both narrative (what the character is 'doing') and conceptual (what the character 'stands for,' in human terms). While *Miles*, Rat, and Bear each 'do' and stand for different things, I am interested in how they jointly examine the way banal and absurd actions can become materially and conceptually exaggerated (and thereby experiential and embodied) when activated by an animal or an orange. Each of their characters reveals the strangeness of social norms, the instability of institutional systems, or the arbitrariness of hierarchies more sharply than a naturalistic human portrayal could. In this sense, quasi-anthropomorphic and wearable modes of art can function as devices that make visible the hidden logics of power and social organisation. As such, I find that translating hegemonic 'strangeness' into a wearable and occupiable form allows registers of making to slide across and between sincerity and parody, both visually and conceptually, creating a form of embodied thinking that is accessible and ethically rigorous.



Figures 102-103. Catherine Bagnall, *White Dress with Tail*; and Catherine Bagnall, *Brown Dress with Tail* (both 2011)

Contextually closer to my own research, Aotearoa artist Catherine Bagnall creates objects specifically designed for wearing as garments on the body, which are activated through performative methods. Her performances utilise worn garments to establish a sense of kinship between humans and non-human creatures. Combining practice formats of experiential performance and ‘dressing up’ to explore experiences of pleasure, Bagnall offers an examination of how perceived connections to one’s environment become materially significant, emerging through connection to the land. Focusing on Aotearoa’s national parks as state protected environmental landscapes, Bagnall’s works, such as *Dress With Tail* (2011) and *Becoming Penguin (Performance Walk)* (2016), likewise draw on quasi-animalistic garments. I recognise a shared approach across *Miles* and Bagnall’s *Dress With Tail* series, in that they both use dressing up not as a disguise but as a device that heightens bodily and spatial awareness, and, in turn, becomes a way of accessing and reconfiguring hierarchal, relational modes of encountering the world. Correspondingly, I am interested in how Bagnall’s *Dress With Tail* series activates Amelia Jones’ description of performative artmaking, which Jones describes as a process that “mobilises materials to enable complex identifications that open out temporal relations.”¹²⁰ This complexity leads me to consider what it means to have human response-abilities and sensibilities—such as self-reflective consciousness, symbolic imagination, ethical reasoning, aesthetic awareness, and cultural memory—which can be understood as central to artmaking. Importantly for me as an artmaker, these capacities are vital for how they enable my approach to practice that attempts to foster meaningful engagement, critical reflection, and care within the relational and social dimensions of my work.

Miles, as a mascot-like felt-body prop, differs from both Bagnall’s work and Fischli/Weiss’s Rat and Bear. While Rat and Bear operate as full-body encasements, and Bagnall’s methods sit closer to ordinary garment forms, *Miles* occupies the ‘in between,’ as the felt-body does not fully obscure the human body underneath. In each case, these quasi-animalistic entities—Rat, Bear, penguin, tailed creature, and *Miles*—retain unmistakably human tendencies. They walk upright; they move through the world on human terms, and, with the exception of *Dress With Tail*, they all navigate what could be recognised as modern human environments and structures. They do not strive to convincingly mimic animals but instead use anthropomorphism as a strategy for opening up new ways of perceiving and experiencing the self, within one’s environment.

¹²⁰ Jones, *Seeing Differently*, 6.

Essentially, what *Miles*' multiple material forms demonstrate within my project is how the same methodological concerns of care, repair, and commitment can be played out across different registers, and through provisional and vernacular means. Perhaps more importantly, I notice how this realisation also extends to the rest of project, in that the different material and conceptual registers I use throughout *Arriving in Stages* all function to point to the same act: of holding ethics and response-ability together in the same hand. This synthesis becomes key to my building of *Miles*' non-human, mascot-like presence, for the ways it allows my practice to shift interchangeably between material approaches that offer different ways of accessing a reparative methodology in real-time: through social media or through event-based performance formats. With *Miles* as a conduit, my methodologies of care, repair, and love become mobile and adaptable: they can be enacted through gestures as small as offering an orange segment, posting an image, performing a digital interaction, or blowing up a balloon. All resonate with broader questions around power, collectivism, and resistance. *Miles* demonstrates that complex theoretical positions do not necessarily need to be staged through monumental forms or didactic statements; they can emerge through small acts, engaged provisionally over time, that accumulate into a textured, relational mapping of how one navigates systems and sustains opposition. In this sense, *Miles* becomes a means of grounding conceptual inquiry in accessible, vernacular practices, while still opening a space for critical, playful, and reparative thinking. The next chapter shifts the focus from grounding to accumulation, examining how provisional responses—repeated, sustained, and enacted over time—begin to take on structural and material force.



Figure 104. The front pocket of my backpack, full of oranges to share with studio mates (April 2024)

CHAPTER SIX: THE TABLE

This chapter focuses on the ongoing artwork titled *Prop Table* (2025) which offers a partial, externalised realisation of my internal envisioning of ‘The Table’ which opens this exegesis via “Prologue: Setting; The Table/Two Minutes” (see page 5). The short story that opens this exegesis links The Table to an imagined space that constitutes the various ethical positions, conditions and voices, as a setting in which all of humanity is tasked with variously responding to The Doomsday Clock’s warnings that the world is rapidly spinning toward a catastrophic breaking point. Building on *Arriving in Stages*’ interest in multimedia and embodied registers of artistic response, I trace how provisional modes of artmaking offer access points and supportive conditions that enable my artistic response to become materially scaled up to function via provisional spatial, installational and structural methods. I explore how provisionality functions by experimenting with a range of scales, sizes, materials and media. Considering The Table via this sense of multiplicity, as both an imagined space as well as a physical site through the artwork of *Prop Table*, I further examine how tables function as installational and participatory elements of artmaking, that are made meaningful through a spectrum of both hopeful and disparate feelings. This chapter aims to expand my research methods by examining how tables, as spatial and installational structures, offer various avenues for participation, reflection, and relational engagement, particularly in response to collectively experienced conditions. Considering how care, repair, and love function provisionally—that is, they must be specific to context yet remain flexible in their response-abilities—I question how their everyday relevance within ethical, organisational, relational, and context-specific frameworks might actually point toward something large-scaled and structural, through a sense of my ongoing return to this projects core methodologies, which occurs both imaginatively and conceptually as well materially through my methods of artmaking. Beyond being interpersonal or incidental, care, repair and love suggest an ongoing form of organisation that is frequently—and perhaps at times strategically—overlooked or obscured by hegemonic power systems. Within this chapter I further consider how care, repair, and love demand return precisely because they are partial to hope, as well as being responsive to conditions of urgency and despair.

6.1 (Re)Setting: The Table Scene

Approximately halfway through this project, I wrote a short story about an imagined table.¹²¹ In this story, I was trying to describe a recurring imagined vision where the spectrum of the project's cares and concerns felt present, all at once. In an imagined space, I picture myself seated at a gargantuan round table (the size of a rugby field) within a dimly lit room. As soon as I imagine this space, I am also imagining countless others seated at The Table, their presence producing a busy, cacophonous atmosphere. Imaginatively tasked with responding to the Doomsday Clock's repeated warnings of humanity's trajectory toward metaphorical midnight, certain voices recur with particular frequency. My friends and whānau are all present: talking about the world, listening to its happenings, and keeping an eye on the clock. Significantly, so too are Donna Haraway, Kelly Oliver, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Lauren Berlant, and Sarah Ahmed, who I often imagine as rising to stand in response to the wider Table; not to offer answers, but to redirect attention to relational obligations, and to the work of staying with what feels difficult rather than turning away. Rather than appearing as discrete voices, these thinkers emerge as inter-active participants, and, within this vision, I feel I am sitting with them. In sitting with them, I am quite literally thinking with them, while also imaginatively listening, reading, and feeling alongside them. As such, whenever I envision The Table setting, I am also curiously speculating about how their various ideas and positions press, challenge, and complicate my understanding of the world. This vision becomes provisionally attached to lived and alive conditions, becoming a navigation point between my internalised understanding and practicing of response-ability, as well as my external and more material activation of it. Correspondingly, each of these thinkers remains a key presence that defines my relationship to The Table and, therefore, to the broader world, reflecting the extent to which their work methodologically structures my thinking.

At other times, my imagining of The Table becomes animated by my engagement within this project (such as imagining *Miles* sitting quietly amongst The Table's business with a banner that reads "I only live in feelings"). Additionally, personal experiences encountered through media—such as reading the news of 'another' derogatory statement by Brian Tamaki, or hearing a radio snippet explaining a further divisive political positioning by David Seymour—are examples that also spur into motion my envisioning of the table, for the ways I notice them as troubling. I imagine that what is said in the real world, by political figures such as these, is also their contribution to The Table, and, by proxy, the present and future conditions for society. These respective troubles created by Brian Tamaki and David Seymour, from my position at The Table, read as attempts to deflect socio-political response-ability, which ultimately feel like an urgent

¹²¹ See Prologue: Setting: The Table / Two Minutes, 5.

compression of the Clock's already subsiding time. Important to the scope of participants and voices at The Table is the way that, although I name particular thinkers and relations at the table, this naming is not a gesture of exclusion. These are simply the figures whose presence I can most readily name and articulate in connection with a politicised civic-social vernacular. The Table itself remains open-ended, connective, and invitational, shaped by language and my attention to it, rather than by fixed membership. In this sense, I can, and do, imagine almost anyone at The Table, contingent on how they speak, listen, and relate within the broader ethical entanglements of being human in 2026.

As such, the participants and voices of The Table scene are always arriving, through simultaneous events, media, and my own everyday thoughts. Rather than disappearing, these voices become layered and embedded over time. Each arrival leaves a conceptual residue, altering the tone of The Table scene, rather than replacing what came before. Crucially, this accumulation is not neutral. Where I understand myself to be seated conditions how each arrival is received. It is through sustained attention to these voices that the troubles brought to the table are consistently inflected by methodologies of care, repair, and love, shaping the atmosphere of committed ethical response even as new urgencies emerge. I think of The Table as a vision that is both episodic and chronological, in step with my experience of the world.

Of course, despite the relational and spatial configurations this story imagines, there is no world in which literary critic, poet and educator Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick could physically sit at the same table as contemporary Aotearoa political figures such as David Seymour, and world-famous Drag Queens like RuPaul are unlikely to sit alongside religious leaders such as Brian Tamaki. Yet in the conceptual space of my prologue scene, their differing stances, values, and cultural impacts are all present: just as they are within my real life. As such, the idea and the short story of The Table become a site for provisionally and iteratively enacting what Haraway describes as the task of "becoming capable with each other in all of our bumptious kinds, of response"¹²² in extemporaneous ways.

¹²² Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 1.

6.2 Accruing Mechanisms: Tabling

A table structures the making of meaning by providing a space for writing, reading, gathering, and deliberation. A table is therefore both a literal platform and a metaphor for the spatial, political, and social arrangements that produce knowledge. This fluidity of definition resonates with the conceptual logic of my practice. The different registers in my artworks operate as constellations of objects that enumerate, organise, or list. They assemble fragments into a field of relational meaning. In this way, they perform a kind of *tabling*: laying out material, ideas, and histories so they can co-exist, be negotiated, or be read together. *Tabling* becomes a mode of ‘worlding,’ not only the representation of a world already given, but the active construction of one through arrangement, relation, and attention. My methods, therefore, treat objects not as isolated entities but as components in a provisional world, made thinkable through their being tabled.

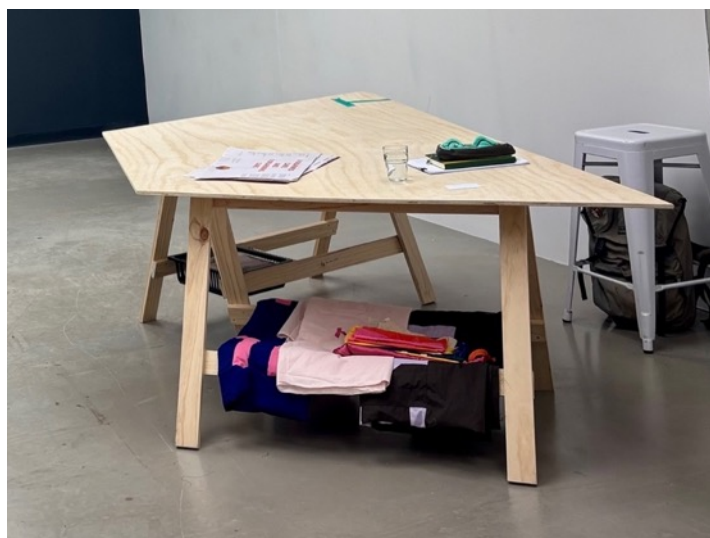
Phenomenologist and independent scholar Sara Ahmed’s examination of the table as a “supporting device for queer gatherings” is generative for how I consider the role of the table throughout my project.¹²³ By insisting the table can function as a queer device, Ahmed refers to the ways objects or spaces can be taken up by people they were not specifically intended for, or used in purposes that they otherwise were not intended to serve. Noting that “for many of us, activism, fighting for a different world, happens where we already are, *at the kitchen table*, sustaining and being sustained by others,”¹²⁴ Ahmed takes a specific interest in the kitchen table as a feminist, queer, and grassroots typology of site through which people engage with cultural, social, and political power structures.

While my focus diverges from the socio-political specifics linked to the kitchen table, I am interested in how a table, in its various ordinary, spatially-present, structural, make-shift, and artistic ways, operates as a spatial device that stages negotiation between people, perspectives, and practices, an apparatus that shapes how ideas are assembled, held in relation, and made available for collective meaning-making. A table, in this sense, becomes not only an object but a surface in which one begins to ‘work’ with words, ingredients, policies, or ideas. Important too is the way a table holds up and organises materials, but can also accommodate improvisation; it can support established uses while simultaneously enabling alternative or unexpected ones. Thinking about the table in this way allows me to imagine how my project creates a surface for assembling influences, negotiating competing demands, and exploring how practices might be

¹²³ Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Duke University Press, 2006). 179

¹²⁴ Sara Ahmed, “Setting the Table, Some Reflections on Why Tables Matter,” *Feminist Killjoys*, June 28, 2024, <https://feministkilljoys.com/2024/06/28/setting-the-table-some-reflections-on-why-tables-matter/>. [emphasis original]

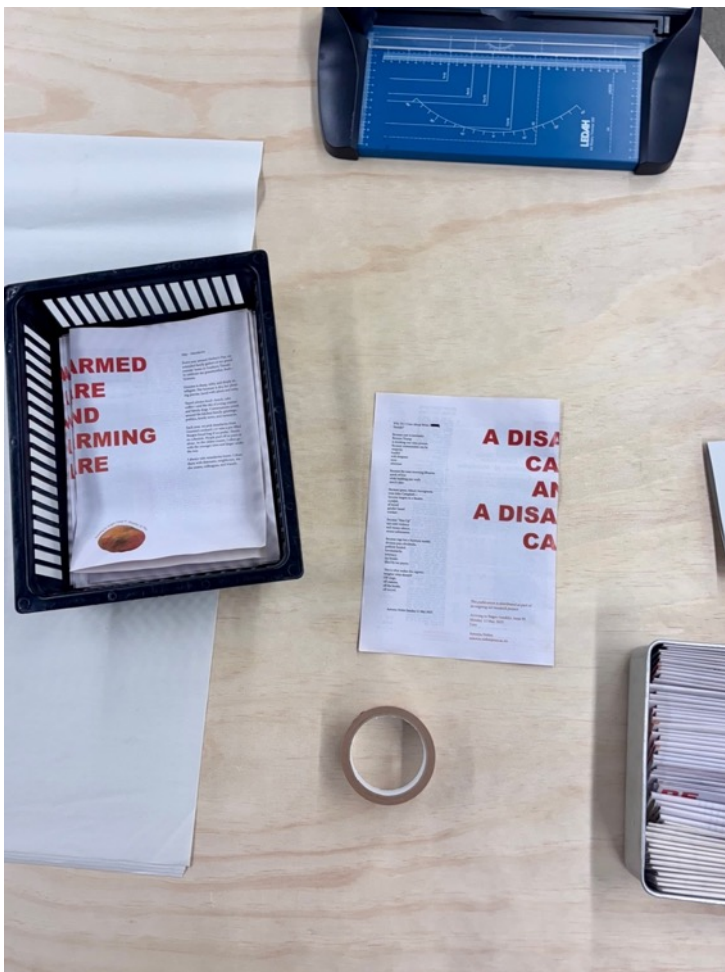
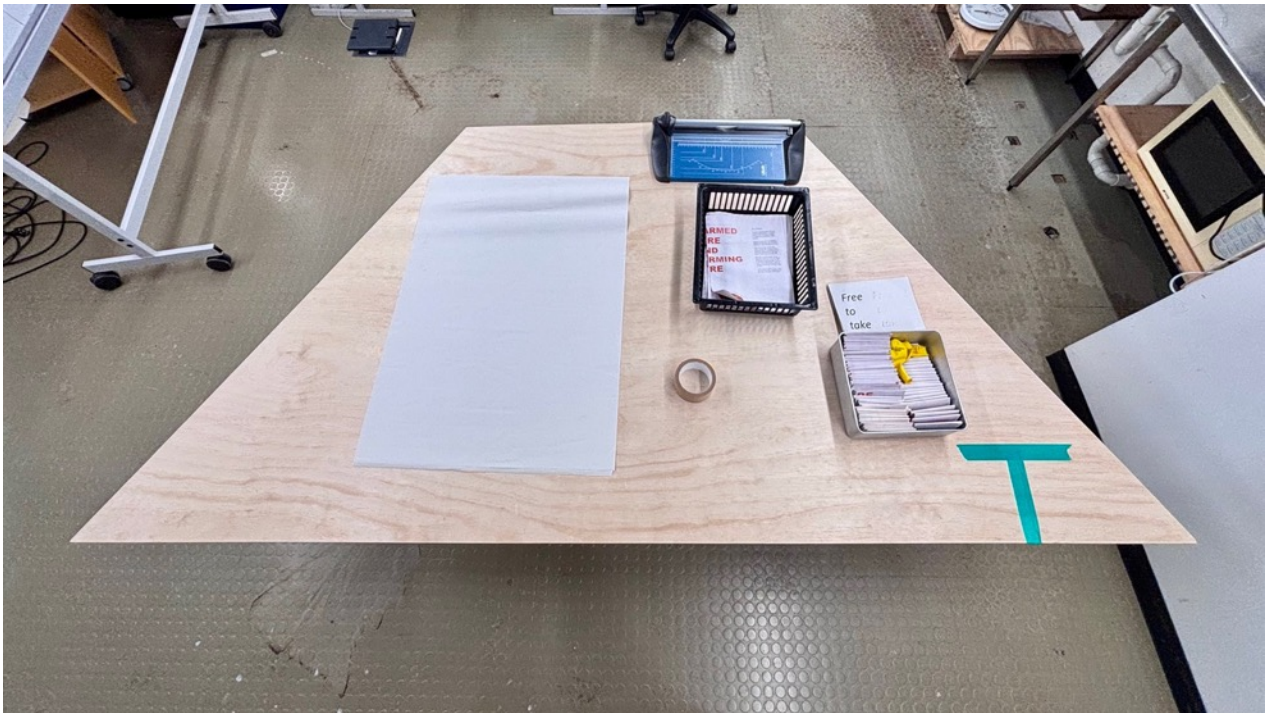
reoriented, repurposed, or reconfigured, spatially and conceptually, in the process of my artmaking.



Figures 105-106. *Prop Table*, in use as part of installation *Setting the Table* (October 2025)

Prop Table 2025 is both a functional table within my studio and an artwork. While The Table that I described earlier is imagined as much larger, I see *Prop Table* as a means-to-an-end; a material realisation of my place within that larger imagined Table scene, brought into real time and made portable. As such, *Prop Table* consists of two trestle legs and a large trapezoid surface, made to the maximum capacity in weight and size of my body (and my car's internal space), so that it is manoeuvrable and therefore installable on my own.

Constructed from a single rectangular sheet of plywood, with two precise 30-degree cuts at each end to make a trapezoid surface, I made this table in a way that visually motions, through its specific shape, towards a larger structure. Supported by trestle legs that bring the working surface to adjustable heights, *Prop Table*, like other elements of my project, is both temporal and provisional, yet also reads as physically formal and constructively precise, materially expanding my work toward more enduring structural considerations. While *Prop Table* is a structural piece of furniture, it is still provisional, both in the way it can be made portable (with effort), and in the way it continuously enables an access point that brokers the interconnecting methodologies at play across and between my practice-led doings and my conceptual imagining of the Table scene. *Prop Table*, like other works within my project (banners, *In Progress*, and *Miles'* felt-body) takes a spatial form. However, unlike previous works, this work navigates how provisionality might also be relevant to more lasting structures. Gesturing toward my project's wider systems of support and relation, *Prop Table* deliberately adopts a form that is already structural and designed to consistently hold weight, gather bodies, and organise space. Unlike my other works, *Prop Table* doesn't need me to activate it through constant use to keep it alive. It has its own presence and continues to shape how I think and work within the project. Rather than being just an object to look at or use, it acts as a structure or framework that supports and organises my practice.



Figures 107-108. *Prop Table*
in use in my AUT studio
(February 2026)

Throughout the latter stages of my project, *Prop Table* has largely existed within a studio context, where it also functioned as my working base. On its surface, I might lay out and assemble text for a banner, write a story, fold newspapers (fig. 107-108), or sit behind it while activating *Miles* as a wearable felt-body. In this sense, *Prop Table* takes on layered roles within the project, operating across both daily processes of making and modes of installation. Within my daily practice, *Prop Table* enables me to gather the project's materials into visual and physical reach. Folded banners, reams of newsprint, and other working materials are placed both on its surface and within its trestle-leg support structures, allowing elements to accumulate and remain accessible over time (figs. 109-110).

The Table is thereby often the scene in which I find myself, both physically and conceptually. While I have engaged The Table as a setting and a conceptual scene from the beginnings of *Arriving in Stages*, *Prop Table*, in its specificity of form and shape, could only be realised during the latter stages of my project, after sustained periods of thinking, making, and living with the broader modalities of this work (banners, *Miles*, and use of takeaway ephemera). Over time, the accumulation of materials, questions, cares, concerns, and methods concretised and revealed themselves as capable of durable, structural forms when activated as ordinary practice. In this sense, *Prop Table* emerges not as a starting point but as a conceptually layered structure that attempts to quite literally hold the weight of what has come before, as well as giving both form and place to ongoing processes of care, attention, and engagement. Importantly, although *Prop Table* becomes realised as a distinct form emerging within the latter stages of research, the idea, function, and daily use of the table has always been quietly present throughout the project. A table, in its general form (inclusive of desks and benches), has served as a site for my participation within various modes of my practice. In this way, the table has long existed as a provisional yet structural support, a dynamic and relational surface where thinking and making have unfolded together over time, even before it took on its current, more formal, and structural presence.

As an active surface within my studio making context *Prop Table* often feels like an enlarged small table. When I am seated or working at the table on my own, its surface feels like an expansive site that enables me to work across various media and scales, from managing and arranging banners, to folding and organising ephemera. At the same time, there is enough space for water, orange segments, books and devices. Because of its trapezoid shape, I can move things around the table to accommodate these various modes of working. Often the materials and objects near the longer edge of the trapezoid become enfolded into my active working; and I might push other things that support my working (my phone playing the radio, a glass of water, or a bowl of orange segments) towards its shorter edge. This relationship to scale is significant because it positions *Prop Table* between my personal working process and how it functions in other

contexts, such as an exhibition. It creates a working environment in which small acts of handling and large acts of arrangement can coexist simultaneously.

At other times, *Prop Table* has become a gathering point for both casual and organised conversations. While I am working on its surface, I often have others joining me; for tea and meal breaks, friendly conversation, and to discuss what I happen to be working on. In this arrangement, everyone is visible to everyone around *Prop Table*, so participation feels dialogical, immediate and reciprocal. Yet while *Prop Table* for the most part exists and functions as a personal working space, it is conceptually imagined in linkage with The Table setting, as an imaginative site for the whole of humanity to have a place. In its singular form, it therefore has a limited capacity for gatherings. This disjunction between its present physical capacity and conceptual ambition generates a productive tension of scale for the practice. The imagined ‘universality’ of the table is therefore always also mediated by the realities of space, inter-personal proximity, and structural form. If a table’s smallness stages the limits of inclusion, then the question becomes connected with how those limits might be worked with materially, conceptually, and spatially. Thus, the culminative stages of this project therefore involve my extending of *Prop Table* in size and scale, from a personal working surface towards an exhibition device that continues to host my project’s various methods and processes in a way that makes them more immediately visible to viewers.



Figures 109. Studio documentation. *Prop Table*'s trestle legs, used as storage space (February 2026)



Figure 110. Studio documentation. *Prop Table* in use within my AUT studio (October 2025)

Tables have long been used in contemporary art as both functional objects and conceptual devices, offering artists a way to explore relationality, participation, and the structuring of social and spatial experience.¹²⁵ Of note to my research is Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party*, 1974–79 (fig. 111), which presents a critical moment within feminist artmaking. It consists of a large-scale table in triangular configuration, each side 48 feet long with 39 elaborate place settings, where each place is dedicated to a historically significant woman. These women range from ancient mythological figures (such as Ishtar) to major writers, artists, and activists (such as Virginia Woolf, Sojourner Truth, and Georgia O'Keeffe).¹²⁶ *The Dinner Party* uses a table not as a furnishing but as a conceptual device, which performs a ceremonial banquet to rewrite cultural history from a feminist perspective. Each setting includes a carefully embroidered table runner bearing a woman's name, along with imagery linked to her achievements, accompanied by a napkin, cutlery, a glass or goblet, and a plate. Many of the plates are adorned with sculptural forms (often butterfly-shaped or flower-like) that evoke shapes akin to vulva. While I depart from Chicago's aesthetic interest in anatomy as a device for feminist critique, I am interested in how *The Dinner Party* reconfigures the table as a gathering device for feminist work. At its core, the work addresses the absence of women from dominant historical narratives, highlighting the gendered and patriarchal framework of power structures.



Figure 111. Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party* (1974–79). Ceramic, porcelain, textile, triangular table 14.63mx14.63m. Ongoing installation at the Brooklyn Museum. Brooklyn, New York.

¹²⁵ Though distinct in methods from my own project, performance artist Marina Abramović's *The Artist is Present* (2009) and Mary Kelly's *Post-Partum Document* (1973–79) provide additional examples of tables as performative, experiential and organisation structures with artistic exhibition.

¹²⁶ Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party: Judy Chicago* (Penguin, 1999).

By giving each named woman a symbolic “seat at the table,” Chicago stages what could be argued is a reparative device to ongoing systems of patriarchal omission. As such, Chicago’s table insists that women’s contributions (political, intellectual, artistic, and spiritual) deserve public recognition, via a dedicated site of celebration: a dinner party and a table. Chicago’s table embodies a gendered, feminist inclusivity that differs from the methodologies of my own project, I am drawn to the ways its static, aesthetic configuration—framed as a ‘dinner party’—takes on a conceptually performative edge. Even without an actual gathering of people, the installation stages an imagined encounter: the table invites viewers to move around it, to witness, to read, and to symbolically participate in the ritual of commemoration. In this sense, the work enacts performance not through temporal action but through relational and spatial choreography, prompting reflection on presence, attention, and engagement.

The Dinner Party operates as a monumental and symbolic table, functioning primarily through commemorative recognition. My making of *Prop Table* extends this approach toward a functional, ongoing, and relational structure. Rather than remaining a representational device, *Prop Table* is designed to be ‘in use,’ activated through daily practice. Where Chicago’s table stages recognition, my own hosts my project’s ongoing engagement with labour, care, and response through repeated attendance. In this way, repetition becomes a mode of commitment: a wilful practice of persistently returning to the work, in resonance with Haraway’s notion of “staying with the trouble.”¹²⁷ Positioned within *The Dinner Party*’s feminist lineage, *Prop Table* shifts the emphasis from visibility to usability, reconfiguring the table from monument to method. This reading is reinforced visually: the objects atop of my own table are not ‘presented’ as finished or resolved but as materially and temporally in process (figs. 109-110). Their arrangement signals ongoing work rather than arrival, positioning the table as a site of becoming, not display.

Importantly, while I distinguish Chicago’s *The Dinner Party* from *Prop Table*, based on their differing functionalities, I find it more generative to consider how both tables operate at a material-conceptual pivot—where imagining a feminist-informed paradigm of relating intersects with creating a visual and spatial site activated through feminist voices. Correspondingly, Chicago’s table invites viewers into a commemorative and speculative mode of engagement—one that both envisions and honours the complex, layered history of feminism. At its core, this use of a table prioritises a viewer’s active role, inviting a viewer to look and, in turn, imagine, connect, and co-create meaning. My work builds on this relationship of looking and imagining by grounding it in

¹²⁷ Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*

participation. My table enacts almost an inverse process: it is informed by an imagined, speculative zone—a conceptual scene of being ‘at the table’ with all of humanity.

The various formats of the table as a functional device, as employed throughout Public Share collective’s installations, also provide a generative reference point for my practice.¹²⁸ In projects such as *Workers Club* (2017) and *Good to Go* (2025), the table enables viewers to spend time in ways that are materially ordinary yet attuned to the collective’s broader practices of engaging the public. Not positioned as ‘the’ artwork in and of itself, the table becomes conducive to methods of facilitating participation, display, and ordinary actions, becoming a device that functionally props up and supports wider associated activities, such as gifting ceramics, enjoying beverages, and making available take-away printed ephemera. I am interested in Public Share’s installation approach, specifically how their various iterations of the table each adopt a functional and aesthetic relationship rooted in notions of interpersonal engagement and reciprocity. In this sense, the table itself becomes a surface that gathers interaction, reflection, and subtle modes of participation.

Public Share’s *Good to Go* (figs. 112-113) features a custom-built wooden table that occupies what is usually the ‘staff only’ area of a gallery’s working space.¹²⁹ Designed specifically for this site, the table is large and elongated, formed by joining two rectangular wooden sheets cut at angles to create an ‘elbow’ shape that follows the spatial logic of the room. Supported by industrial metal sawhorses, the table asserts itself as both a functional workspace and a temporal yet robust sculptural object. By placing this table in a typically restricted zone, the installation effectively invites viewers to linger in a space that functions between public and private, work and exhibition, display and use, encouraging visitors to spend time, inhabit, and engage with the space in ways that feel akin to taking a break. Public Share’s use of the table highlights its potential as a device that structures attention and encounter without dictating form or hierarchy, offering a model for how a surface can facilitate provisional and participatory modes of co-presence.

¹²⁸ Public Share is an Aotearoa artist collective whose practice engages with ideas linked to production, exchange, and workplace rituals. Through functional ceramic objects and site-responsive projects, the collective foregrounds “pause, conviviality, and reflection,” often working within contexts of labour and changing workplace conditions to highlight the social and political significance of rest and workers’ rights. See <https://www.publicshare.co.nz/about>.

¹²⁹ *A Time of Waiting: Public Share, Good to Go*, part of *A Time of Waiting*, Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery, Auckland University of Technology, 4 April–23 May 2025, installation by Public Share.



Figures 112-113. Public Share, *Good to Go* (2025), social event, installation view. Installed as part of *A Time of Waiting* at Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery, Auckland, 4 April-25 May 2025

There is a clear aesthetic and formal resonance between Public Share's *Good To Go* table and my own *Prop Table*. Elements such as the precisely angled cuts, the light materiality evident in the choice of exposed plywood surfaces, and the practical trestle-leg support system collectively reflect a shared commitment to pragmatism. These aesthetic and functional choices prioritise approachability and adaptability, underscoring a flexible yet purposeful approach to making and hosting viewers that aligns both works within a civic-social and participatory context. Different to how *Prop Table* functions within my studio context, Public Share's use of the table within *Good to Go Table* develops through the act of making the table public, transforming it into a site where viewers are actively invited to participate.

The key differences between my *Prop Table* and the examples referenced reside across scale as well as their modes of public engagement. *Prop Table* is built to the scale of my own studio and, for the most part, operates within that context through my own quiet, everyday use. In its singular form and location, it has a limited capacity for gatherings. These differences reveal a productive tension between personal and collective engagement. On one hand, *Prop Table* supports my own quiet, everyday use; on the other, the larger project is concerned with how to extend that invitation outward by other means, enabling others to also inhabit and activate the work. Accordingly, I want others to continue to join me at *Prop Table*, and through casual modes of reading, listening, and feeling. Importantly, I also want this joining—between myself as the artist and viewer-participants—to occur more expansively. The relational possibilities of tables as installation elements emerge precisely within this oscillation. This recognition of contradictory limitations is prompting a shift in my thinking from the table as a self-contained working surface to the possibility of extension, that being an increase in size as a means of more gently and generously inviting others in to quite literally share the table. I recognise how this aspect is indicative of recurring method-based concerns across the project: I am always searching for how to host others within these practices of care, love, and repair, in ways that remain responsive to their needs, capacities, and boundaries.

As such, the final stages of this PhD project have involved thinking about *Prop Table* in an expanded sense. *Prop Table* gives the other aspects of my project a site through which they might be seen in a way that is akin to what Haraway names as “worlding.”¹³⁰ Thinking of both *The Table* (as an imaginary setting) and *Prop Table* (as a physical site and an artwork) together as a world-in-motion is key to this inquiry. I see *Prop Table* as a physical artwork that has hosted the dynamic ‘business’ of my project’s making. As each aspect of my making unfolds through durational and accumulative processes, I

¹³⁰ Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*. For contextual discussion on “worlding” within *Arriving in Stages* See Chapter Two, Section 2.3, 72-25.

understand *Prop Table* similarly as an ongoing artwork. I, therefore, continue to see *Prop Table* as a key site that hosts the ongoing-ness of this research. I am investigating how, in its expanded form, *Prop Table* can operate as a participatory site of practice, rather than a fixed display. In doing so, *Prop Table* seeks to expand and extend the scale of participation, and my capacity to host others in ways that support their engagements of thinking, reading, listening and feeling with and about the world.

CONCLUSION

(07/01/2026, 8:46pm)

As I write this conclusion, I find myself in the midst of measuring and cutting plywood for tables, checking the weather forecast, creating letter stencils, and doing minor repairs on *Miles*' felt-body. Alongside this, I am baking a birthday cake, hanging celebratory bunting, cutting out cardboard party hats from used breakfast cereal boxes, and taping balloons to the hands of stuffed animals and plastic dinosaurs.

On the eve of my child's second birthday, and in the culminative stages of this project, I feel like I am living in and experiencing a particularly reflective register. The 'things' I am using to assemble a sense of care at home: tape, balloons, textile banners, an imaginative cast of characters, alongside an edible offering, are the same as those I reach for within artistic practice. In the convergence point between these two temporal markers, I recognise how my human-ness becomes the underpinning condition of making itself. The practice-led work of *Arriving in Stages* is shaped by provisional materials that are scaled to serve and support human bodies as thinking bodies, listening bodies, reading bodies, and, ultimately, feeling bodies. Across the project, the use of provisional materials functions as a way of leaning more fully into the enabling role that my practice often visually takes on. Materials such as paper, cardboard, tape, balloons, textiles, plywood, and makeshift signage resist the authority of finish or permanence, instead signalling processual openness, adaptability, and the reciprocities of care. Their familiarity as domestic, institutional, and cultural "consumables" emphasise this threshold of encounter, allowing myself, as the artist, and those who meet the work to recognise something of their own everyday worlds within it.

In this sense, I feel that the work of this project is to wilfully practice from the reach of my own human-ness in such a way that allows a viewer-participant to be seen for theirs. Material provisionality, as such, becomes an active ethical strategy: by remaining adjustable and responsive, *hopefully* the work can accommodate difference, hesitation, and need, creating conditions in which people might experience themselves as seen for their ethics, rather than evaluated.

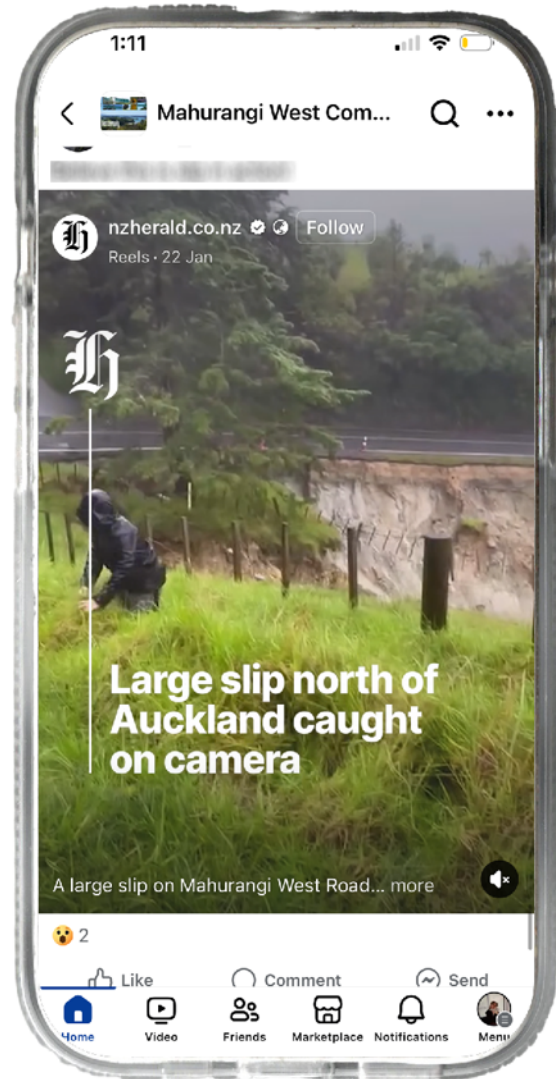
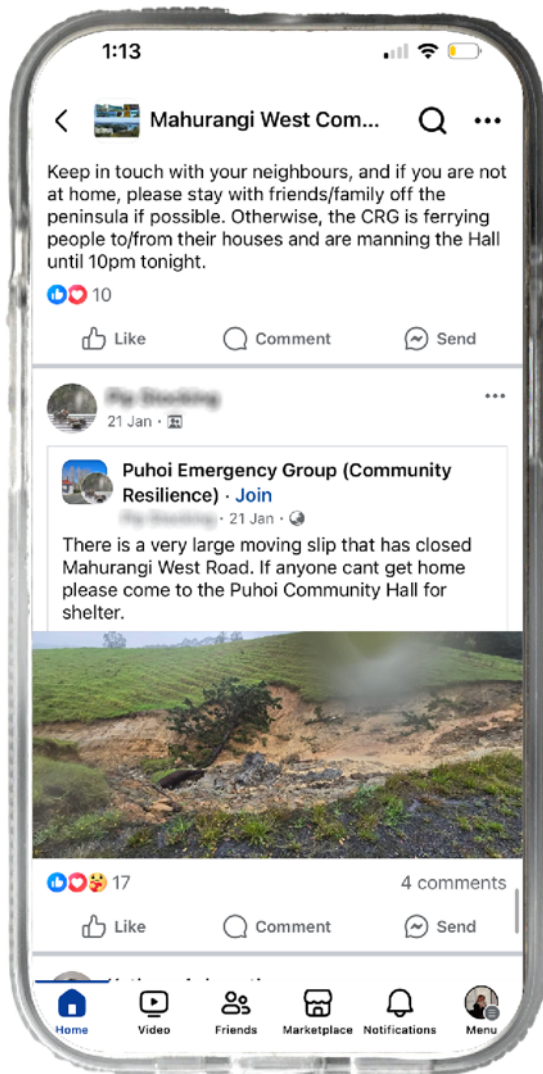
Alongside this reflective register, I am also anticipating The Doomsday Clock's 2026 statement, set to be announced on January 28 (NZDT), 2026.

(22/01/2026, 3:02pm)

As it happens, I am writing during a red heavy-rain warning, covering multiple parts of the motu (island). A chorus of tropical cyclones has brought warm and wet air across Te Ika-a-Māui (North Island) and the east coast of Aotearoa. The power has been out for the last eight hours. I still have 27% battery on my laptop.

Mid-morning, I walked to the top of Opahi Bay Road to gain cell phone reception, eager to text my wider whānau and read the news. The news is devastating. This storm has triggered widespread flooding, slips and landslides, forcing evacuations, washing out roads and isolating communities. Close to home, a person remains missing after attempting to cross a flooded section the Mahurangi awa (river), on the road behind my old high school - the very same awa that I have watched the tidal flow of daily while writing this exegesis. In the Bay of Plenty, a landslide at a Mount Maunganui campground tragically buried people, with a recovery underway, while other flood and slip incidents claimed additional lives.

My mum is the first to reply to my texts. She sends me a screenshot from the local community Facebook page. It is an image of the main road to my house, washed out in a slip (fig. 114): “I think you’re stuck there!” I suddenly realise I haven’t seen or heard any vehicles in hours.



Figures 114-115. My phone, showing screenshot images of the slip on Mahurangi West Road where I live (taken January 2026).

(27/01/2026, 8:09pm)

I woke up in a sweat. I had a dream that my house was being evacuated during more heavy rain. The image of carrying my now 2-year-old infant, two dogs, a parrot (my long-time pet, a Lorikeet named Kea), a car seat, and *Miles*' felt-body across the slip zone in pouring rain during the peak of the night continues to follow me as I do mundane tasks.

Today I was able to leave home by car, for the first time in over a week. Since I last wrote, a video of slip in action has been circulating via news and social media (fig. 115), and our road out has been permanently closed to non-essential travel.

While I knew that our exit would be rough, I didn't quite anticipate the profound sadness I would feel on seeing the incoming lane of the road lying 15 metres below where it originally was. While driving carefully to the edge, I was suddenly struck with the feeling that "things will never be the same", as well as the idea that the relationship between the structural and the provisional is really important.

Driving out of Mahurangi West Road, I notice what used to be a deep gutter has been filled in to extend the width of the remaining lane, while a series of cones and sandbags mark out the 'safe' edge, preventing drivers from getting too close.

(28/01/2026, 10:27pm)

The Doomsday Clock has announced there is 85 seconds to midnight. A decrease of 4 seconds from 2025's statement.

The Clock's opening statement reads:

A year ago, we warned that the world was perilously close to global disaster and that any delay in reversing course increased the probability of catastrophe. Rather than heed this warning, Russia, China, the United States, and other major countries have instead become increasingly aggressive, adversarial, and nationalistic. Hard-won global understandings are collapsing, accelerating a winner-takes-all great power competition and undermining the international cooperation critical to reducing the risks of nuclear war, climate change, the misuse of biotechnology, the potential threat of artificial intelligence, and other apocalyptic dangers. Far too many leaders have grown complacent and indifferent, in many cases adopting rhetoric and policies that accelerate rather than mitigate these existential risks. Because of this failure of leadership, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists Science and Security Board today sets the Doomsday Clock at 85 seconds to midnight, the closest it has ever been to catastrophe.¹³¹

Reading this statement, I find myself thinking less about the failure it names and more about where responsibility, care, and agency continue to reside despite it. If political leadership has grown increasingly detached, adversarial, or divisive, then the question and response-ability of hope shifts away from institutions and political leaders, toward civic and social bodies: toward communities, artists, activists and everyday forms of caring coordination that continue to act in the absence of ethical leadership. In the lived and alive contexts of existential risk, I am thinking about how acts of care, repair and love function to reassert humanity as a lived practice grounded in intersectional yet mutual obligations. What remains hopeful, then, is not the absence of danger, nor the threat of a avoiding a temporal aftermath, but the continued capacity to act collectively, and ethically within it.

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¹³¹ Science and Security Board, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, "2026 Doomsday Clock Statement. January 27, 2026. The Bulletin. Available online: <https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/2026-statement/>

This research has positioned artmaking and life-living as inseparable from politics. Approaching artmaking as a form of civic-social engagement—within a world experiencing intensifying climate emergency, racial injustice, colonial and capitalist violence, and renewed militarisation—facilitates the enactment of care, repair, and love as tangible political response-abilities. As such, artmaking in provisional, makeshift, and response-able based ways has enabled the practice to connect with and respond to the realities of contemporary, politicised civic-social life. From a core idea of response-ability, this research established a sense of connection between feminist care ethics, reparative methodologies, and processes of love. Taken together, this framework enabled artistic response as a site of ethical practice. What emerged across my project's body of work is a growing register of response, operating both materially and conceptually. Through specific methods of thinking, listening, reading, and feeling, response-ability is determined as significant across a continuum of media and practices, which together constitute my project's key modality of noticing. Noticing when, how and by what means I am enabled to respond to socio-political subject matter, and how that response becomes materialised as art, has resulted in a practice that is durational, accumulative, and temporally connected.

The central contribution of this project lies in explicitly linking the concept of response-ability to practice-led processes of artmaking, as linked to ethical and methodological frameworks of care, repair, and love. *Arriving in Stages*' methodological coherence was developed through methods that were, for the most part, materially ordinary, accessible, affordable, and provisionally responsive. Incorporating lists, banners, printed ephemera, inhabitable felt-bodies, photographic images, video documentation, balloons, social-media posts, makeshift signage, *Arriving in Stages* has demonstrated how response-ability can take shape through an expansive range of artistic modalities and media. These practices have offered a dynamic space through which I was able to access, confront and repeatedly navigate my ethical commitments, meaning how I want to live as an ethically informed artist and member of society, and how—along with *what* and *when*—that living manifests as art.

Circling back to my initial research question, this study has shown that material-conceptual languages of love, care, and repair are connected as well as methodologically relevant to understandings of response-ability. I have found that care offers a generative, connective, and situated approach to practice that simultaneously calls towards and is produced by methods of noticing. Through an examination of care's partiality, its need to be attached to something (such as an object, text, or practice), I have linked care, and its activities, to ordinary practices and processes that in turn refuse abstraction or romanticism. Instead, care is embedded in how we—both myself and others—arrive to one another, through speech, protest, reading, writing, and attending. Through my treatment of care as something enacted within an everyday ethics-in-practice, my

research ultimately clarifies how care's corresponding methods of thinking and listening are capable of shaping personal, political and civic-social relationships. My research perceives care's significance as an ethics-in-practice, which has resulted in an understanding of care as a form of doing as much as it is a form of making and relating. By linking care to everyday activities that are situated in my use of language and text, *Arriving in Stages* has emphasised care's significance as both personally and politically meaningful practices. This finding is crucial for the ways it enables a vision of care that simultaneously recognises its value as a method, as well as a methodological practice and a relational force capable of shaping approaches and understandings for both personal and political life.

The artworks of *Arriving in Stages* have explored how care can be extended into a layered relation with repair. In response to my ongoing questioning regarding repair of civic-social response-ability, my research has clarified how a reparative approach deepens care's temporal reach by foregrounding interpersonal accountability and sustaining its transformative, processual potential within everyday life. Where care emphasises attentiveness and response, repair insists upon noticing what those responses produce within civic-social realms, as well as personally and politically. Together, this critical synthesis establishes how ordinary activities of reading and listening can emerge as interconnected ethical practices. Through this layered approach, my research contends that love, in extension to care and repair, offers a process that has sustained my wilfulness and commitment to staying with and attending to complexity, trouble, and difference. Moreover, my project has found that this sense of sustaining can be offered to others via a range of registers, through activations of text, ephemera, inhabitable felt bodies, and installation.

My project's examination of love has navigated the inevitable gap between what my project hopes for—a paradigm shift in which caring for each other becomes primary to everyday ethics in practice—and the incommensurability of that hope, even as the world continues to face accelerating levels of crisis. Accordingly, my project has found that love tolerates that incommensurability between hope and reality by allowing me to occupy both dynamically. My research has demonstrated how love operates as a modality of feeling that, more importantly, offers a way of organising attention as well as staging the conditions for my wilful commitment to artistic and civic-social response. The implications of these findings are crucial to the ways my project has conceived of an art audience as viewer-participants. In practice, this understanding of love communicates how the various conditions and material registers within my artworks all function in relation to one another. More significantly, my project has found a relational coherence that also extends both beyond me personally and, more significantly, this project. In my thinking of love as a structural form of hope, I have shifted its normative value as private or 'good' feelings by linking it to the relational structures that have informed my

artmaking and civic-social responsibility. I have explored how love is significant for how individuals relate, assemble collectively, and sustain one another within shared contexts. As a result, this study manifests how the coherence of love as a civic-social and political alignment is revealed most vividly within practice, in the ways it informs my interactions and commitments with others, especially under conditions of uncertainty or crisis.

Together, the interdependent methodologies of care, repair and love have shaped my artmaking as a relational and ethically guided process. Across the research, my questioning of the relationship between response-ability and civic-social practices has been answered by multimedia, visual, installational, sometimes digital, and frequently textual means. Inter-layered methods of thinking, listening, reading, writing and feeling constituted my project's primary daily modality of noticing language and its material-conceptual doings. I have discovered that the artworks of *Arriving in Stages* occupy a scope of civic-social activity oriented toward hosting, noticing, and holding space for others in ways that acknowledge their presence, labour, and humanness, with the intention of stimulating a shared sense of civic-social agency. My methods enable this holding and extending of the invitation to participate in various ways by allowing multiple points of encounter. They situate around the immediacy of interacting with *Miles'* felt-body, or reading a banner, or encountering a newsletter at a table, as well as occupying a more latent potentiality, such as the ability to take away printed matter and ephemera, the viewing of a social-media post or the receiving of a half-time orange. These material-conceptual practices (care, repair and love) have worked together to instantiate a structural form of love: a durable orientation that organises attention, sustains engagement, and cultivates civic-social and political alignments with response-ability that are hopeful. In this way, the project artworks have determined how languages of care, repair, and love are not only theoretical concepts, but significant practical forces that inform how individuals relate, act, and respond to one another and their shared contexts in material ways.

Arriving in Stages resists separating art from ethics and politics. Instead, creative practice is positioned as essential to enacting transformative possibilities for both myself as the maker and those who engage with the artworks, the viewer-participants. Rather than treating art as solely representational, ethics as philosophical, and politics as discursive, the project has continually positioned these domains as interlinked. My formal and material decisions make this interconnection visible in the practice and corresponding artworks. For example, artistic decisions about scale, access, aesthetics and process, viewer-participant experience, and the ethical and political significance of artmaking within an era of overlapping and accelerating crises. Across the project, text, ephemera, wearable felt bodies, social-media and installational elements have functioned as interdependent methods that collectively stage conditions for encounters that support

viewers to see themselves as participants who are also engaged in their own navigation of response-abilities. Ultimately, *Arriving in Stages* has ascertained how artmaking can function as a dynamic site where ethical and political relations are materially lived.

Across this research, I developed my project-specific term of ‘civic-social’ as a means to describe the ways I approached my roles and response-abilities as an artist throughout *Arriving in Stages*. As a result, this project demonstrates artistic response-ability as dynamically connected to everyday socio-political subject matter. Through attending to this present temporal context in iterative, accumulative and durational ways, I have established how both material and textual vernaculars become key sites through which artists, such as myself, can engage with socio-political response-ability. The result of this approach not only foregrounds the ethical dimension of artistic engagement, but also insists on the artist’s active role in shaping civic-social realities through studio-based, socially-engaged, participatory and installational practice. This insistence is important because it affirms how artistic practice is capable of enacting observation and commentary on socio-political conditions, but more crucially, determines how artmaking is always materially embedded within them. By positioning response-ability as a lived, iterative practice rather than a thematic concern, this research has challenged any sense of separating studio work from civic life.

Throughout *Arriving in Stages*, I have traced the discursive materiality of language and the capacity of texts to register, mediate, and co-produce meaning. Through testing various sewn, printed, handwritten, digital, inflatable, and listed forms, my project has explored how text functions as an expansive method that is able to take on a range of material-conceptual registers. As a result, my ongoing noticing of language and its text has enabled me to artistically create conditions through which an ethic of care can be valued, enacted and supported. Accordingly, my research has demonstrated how language and its text is able to variously enable forms of staying with unfolding crisis, for both myself and viewer-participants. This particular enactment of what Haraway calls “staying with the trouble” is distinctive to *Arriving in Stages*, for the way it has emerged over time from the interplay of experience, scale, and material-relational cares and concerns.¹³²

My engagement with provisional materials across this research has shown how ‘provisional’ is a fitting term for examining the value of material–conceptual practice that spans both vernacular gestures *and* more eventful, momentous, enduring, and structurally sound methods of working. In other words, provisionality opens the conditions for contributions that are sometimes large-scale or overt, such as *Miles’* felt-body or *Prop Table*, but more frequently subtle, as well as temporally, materially,

¹³² Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*.

spatially and socio-politically consequential. Furthermore, my project has found how provisionality is key to recognising the importance of daily forms of engagement. Rather than positioning the artist's 'work' as somehow aside from structures of response-ability, my project's materiality highlights how every human person participates—variously, through their own daily, even mundane actions—in forms of lived and ongoing ethics-in-practice through individual and therefore varied engagement of response-ability. By working with provisional materials—those that are accessible, affordable, ordinary, or everyday—my project highlights participation as an ordinary ethical and civic-social practice.

The ordinary, accessible and often consumable components (photocopy paper, tape, textiles, balloons, and plywood) that iteratively built *Arriving in Stages* have functioned to make the resulting artworks both materially and conceptually accessible. I think these materials enable an expansive sense of viewer-participatory involvement, which includes modes of thinking, listening, reading and feeling that are important contextual responses to a world in crisis. Specifically, my artworks that involve banners, balloons, printed ephemera, and *@mylestheorange* exemplify ways in which viewer-participants can feel moved and supported by elements of artistic practice within everyday contexts. The familiarity and ordinariness of the employed materials encouraged my improvised response to socio-political happenings, making participation relational, temporal, and processual rather than performative or passive. Because these materials belong to a related material vernacular that is drawn from everyday life, they do not require specialised knowledge to approach. Their familiarity and ordinariness crucially allow viewer-participants to recognise traces of their own life-living and response-abilities within the work. By responding in near-real time to socio-political events, the work itself unfolds within the same temporal markers that have collectively informed lived experience. To this end, my project locates how material provisionality enables my ongoing and improvised response to shared temporalities, determining how artmaking is able to invite participation as co-presence within present contexts of a world in crisis.

Furthermore, the provisional materials have left tangible traces of my own human engagement, whether through use of text, marks, creases, tears, folds, inflation, rearrangements, or take-away ephemera. Through these provisional, everyday materials, my project has directly addressed its overarching research question by showing how material-conceptual practices of care, repair, and love can enable participants to engage in civic-social and political alignment within relational and situated contexts, in materially ordinary and accessible ways.

Through engaging a range of materials, scales and methods with my specific focus on everyday socio-political subject matter, this research has demonstrated how daily activities both underpin and are constitutive of an ethics-in-practice. Consequently, this

ethics-in-practice negotiates and becomes connected with larger structural decisions to realise artworks that function through material continuity. My research has found how materiality, process, ethics and aesthetics function together to shape how viewers are imagined, firstly by myself as the artist, and subsequently addressed through the work. More importantly, my research has articulated how each co-constitutes various forms of response-enabling participation across various material-conceptual registers. Accordingly, I feel that this recognition of different material engagements and configurations enables multiple access points for viewers to realise themselves as participants, which is a key contribution of my research. This recognition is significant because participation within socio-politically engaged art can risk functioning as potentially demanding towards participants, putting them on-the-spot, which produces a different relationship to response-ability. By attending to how different material configurations enable multiple access points, this research demonstrates how participation can be structured, supported, and diversified rather than assumed. By creating multiple points of entry, my artworks support viewer-participants in recognising themselves as agents within a relational field rather than as passive observers of it. This framing of audiences has implications for how civic-social and political engagement can be cultivated through art. My project has variously invited viewers to become participants through multiple, overlapping registers: sensory and embodied; material and provisional; temporal and latent; cognitive and conceptual; ethical and relational. Holding all of these at once is demanding, both for me as the artist and for viewer-participants.

Arriving in Stages opens future pathways for thinking the interconnections between life-living and artmaking through conditions of constraint, care, and response-ability. The methods developed across this project, inter-layered forms of noticing, listening, reading, writing, feeling, and engaging with provisional materials, can be applied in future research to create accessible, participatory, and responsive engagements within future practice-led research. Specific actionable research possibilities include a prioritisation of queer methodologies, as well as a focus on art-activism practices. In the direction of queer methodologies, there is scope to question how additional forms of relation become possible when response-ability is approached through queer temporalities of experience. Additionally, extending this research toward art-activism practices may enable a renewed focus on civic-social participation that explicitly attends to the role and response-ability of collective action.

This research has established artmaking and life-living as ethical practices that constitute meaningful political and civic-social contributions within a world shaped by accelerating and intersecting crises. Through interconnected registers of noticing, experiencing, and feeling, my project has developed materially responsive and conceptually inclusive modes of engagement that position viewer-participants as civic-social agents rather than

passive observers. Each element and making-point extends a caring, reparative, and loving orientation toward practice, insisting that artistic work can operate as a sustained form of ethical relation within troubled conditions. Correspondingly, I find that by placing myself as a central conduit, through my role as an artist, enables me to do this holding in a way that digests, filters, and cushions the impacts of everyday crisis for participants, while still emphasising the critical rigours and ethics necessary for enacting a “staying with the trouble”.¹³³

Arriving in Stages affirms the importance of what can be described as a hopeful human logic. This logic translates into the invitational and relational structures used throughout the project. In experiencing the artworks, their various registers of materiality and text invite both myself and viewer-participants in—to think, listen, read, look, and feel—to develop an embodied coherence of our shared humanness and capacity for imagining how humanity might occupy the remaining 85 seconds. In partial arrival, and from the temporal framework of 85 seconds to midnight, this research ultimately argues that the work of response-ability, here and now, takes many forms. What matters most is the capacity to stay with what is at hand—to notice, respond, and commit—materially and conceptually.

¹³³ Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*

Epilogue—

PhD Exhibition

Arriving in Stages

23 April—23 May 2026

Te Wai Ngutu Kākā, Gallery Two

The exhibition *Arriving in Stages* assembled the key durational artworks that have been in process throughout the PhD from 2019–2026. This was the first time these works were presented together in an exhibition, which ran for four weeks. The artworks presented included:

The Table

Miles felt-body

Balloons 2 go (take-away ephemera: *I ONLY LIVE IN FEELINGS* / *Critic and Conscience of Society* / *Urgent—Hopeful*)

Half-Time Oranges (prepared daily)

Newsletters (take-away ephemera)

Things Happen (printed list)

Memo (scrolling screen-based text)

The Net (and, its holding of balloons)

Felt Bodies are as Felt Bodies do (newsprint and video projection)

I think of these artworks as an interrelated system, with each element offering me a way of staying close to my own civic-social response-abilities. Central to the realisation of this presentation of practice was the enlargement and multiplication of *The Table*, and the inclusion of stools which enabled me and viewer-participants to sit around it. Each table segment functioned as its own station, offering various points of observation or participation within the installation. What I enjoyed most was how *The Table* enabled viewer-participants to spend time with the artworks, which is akin to the ways I have been engaging with them through my ongoing practice.

The Table functioned as a host for not only my and Miles' activity but also afforded viewers various modes of participation via modalities of thinking, feeling, reading and listening. For example, a viewer-participant might physically sit with *Miles felt-body*. In doing so, they also had a direct line of sight to my and Miles' doings, shown via the video *Felt Bodies are as Felt Bodies do*, which was projected onto a provisional green masking tape and A2 newsprint 'screen' (Figure 116). Throughout the exhibition, *Miles felt-body*, when uninhabited, was most often positioned at *The Table*, where I would regularly fill a chosen balloon with helium, attaching it to Miles' orange cotton hands with white acrylic celebration ribbon (Figures 117-118).|

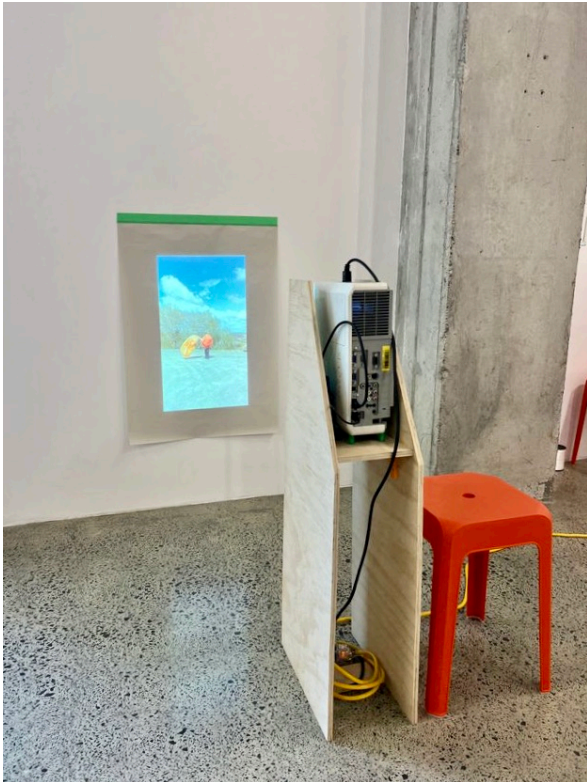


Figure 116. *Felt Bodies are as Felt Bodies do*, plywood projector stand, newsprint and masking tape screen (April 2026)

Figures 117-118. *Miles' felt body* (unoccupied) at *The Table* with helium balloons (Critic and Conscience-yellow, I Only Live in Feelings-orange, May 2026)



Moving further into the gallery space, *Balloons 2 Go*, consisting of text printed on two hundred of each red, orange and yellow latex balloons, were placed within three red buckets (Figure 117). This mode of presentation established an extended activity zone between balloons as an ephemeral and take-away offering, and the presence of inflated balloons, held gently within the hand-knotted net.

The Net, made via a process of hand-knotting red wool yarn, had a job to do: it held the direct and serious nature of the text-printed balloons – *Urgent Hopeful / The role of critic and conscience of society / I Only Live In Feelings* (Figure 120). *The Net* also evidenced its own process of making, containing loose threads from the practical joins that constitute and afford its sense of scale. Its installation, affixed by circular rings to wall-mounted hooks, remains in keeping with the project's sense of provisionality (Figure 120).

I am excited by the ways the maintenance of the artworks enabled care to be afforded to viewer-participants across the duration of the exhibition. For example, the daily inclusion of *Half Time Oranges* (Figure 119) emphasised the necessity of maintaining care as a shared and largely social modality of practice. The role of maintaining care for viewer-participants, through the preparing and offering of orange segments, was shared between myself, as well as by those who work and volunteer within the gallery. Each time the segments were refreshed, the day and time of their cutting was specified via handwritten vivid and green masking tape labels, placed immediately in front of the oranges. Specifically, the maintenance of activating care in the space, importantly, supported viewer-participants to be with the complexities of the durational artworks. *Half-Time Oranges*, in these ways, functioned as a key site for offering others a sense of intermission and respite amidst the enormity of the project's content.



Figure 119 (left). *Half Time Oranges* atop of *The Table*, with masking tape details (April 2026)

Figure 120 (above). *The Net*, with balloons and loose yarn detail (May 2026)

Specific newsletters enabled analogue forms of discursive engagement with everyday events and phenomena (Figure 121). The paper and print-based newsletters functioned as both a way to spend time in-situ at The Table, but also as take-away ephemera. *The Table* also held banners, reams of newsprint, and functioned as a site of gathering at specific points, such as during gallery events and talks (Figure 122). This gathering also occurred more casually at times, such as the intermittent offering of inflating *Balloons 2 Go* with helium and tethering them with curling ribbon for viewer-participants to take away.

From the different segments of *The Table*, the various artworks became visually and practically accessible. I often found viewers taking a place at the table, seated on the provided stools, to spend time with the artworks. For example, *Things Happen*, the large-scale printed list of events, and *Memo*, a scrolling text on screen, remained connected as important systems within the project while taking materially distinct forms. Inviting viewers to read across each of these works as text-based lists highlights the inseparability between aesthetic form and civic-social concerns, demonstrating how political attention can be afforded and structured through artistic practice. Additionally, the trestle legs of *The Table* served as a site where my project's sense of activity and chronology remained active. For example, beneath one table segment, a pile of folded banners rested atop a provisional masking-tape support structure. Beneath others, there were boxes of whole oranges and reams of newsprint.



Figure 121. Various works around *The Table* (April 2026)

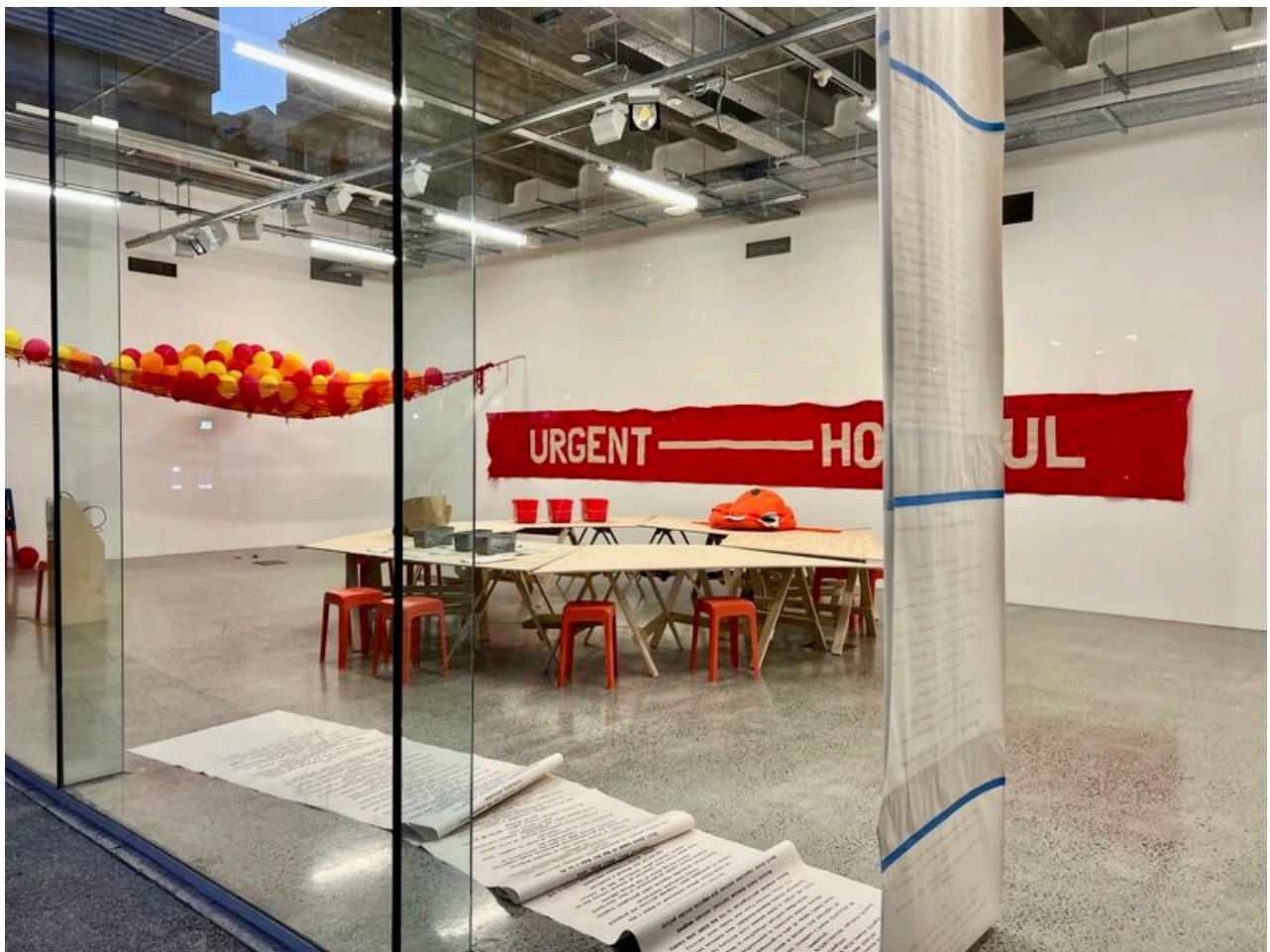


Figure 122 (above). *The Table* being used during a gallery event (May 2026)

Figure 123 (below). View of *Arriving in Stages* through the street-facing Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery window (April 2026).

Images by Monique Redmond

Visible from outside the gallery, the large-scale *Urgent-Hopeful* banner and the printed list of *Things Happen* meant these elements were legible and accessible, even if one didn't directly enter the gallery space. The large scale of *Things Happen* was afforded via a series of printed A0 newsprint panels, joined together with blue masking tape (Figure 123). Across the duration of the exhibition, I would see people stopping to read the list of events, or taking a photo of the *Urgent-Hopeful* banner through the gallery windows. The more porous and dispersed nature of accessing these works, for me, evidenced the ways socially engaged artistic practice is constituted through ongoing intersections between aesthetic experience and civic-social life-living.

In keeping with the project's ongoing rhythm of activity, the *Arriving in Stages* exhibition involved a series of recurring tasks. In addition to the fresh-cut orange segments, there was also the filling of balloons; collecting deflated balloons that had fallen below the net; and reflecting on whether the paper sign taped to *In Progress* required updating. Weekly, I updated the video projections of *Miles (Felt Bodies are as Felt Bodies do)* and *Memo's* scrolling text. Some days, I filled helium balloons, sometimes as myself, and sometimes while inhabiting *Miles felt-body*. Important to these ongoing activities was my realisation of how these artworks, though different in scale and pace, continued to relate to one another. In other words, like the project as a whole, everything is still in action. I continue noticing, receiving, and communicating, akin to each of these artworks' different rhythms.

Ultimately, this presentation of the practice gave me and viewer-participants, the means of being able to sit with, recognise, feel and navigate the enormity of the stakes of our present temporal moment. I believe this navigation is the fundamental contribution of this project. Above all, the work of this project has been to approach these contexts with care, repair, and love. Methods and ethics are inseparable, as evidenced through the project's material processes. Ongoingly, urgency and hope continue as the key experiential spectrum through which artworks are iteratively made.



Figure 124. *Miles felt-body*, holding helium balloons (March 2026).

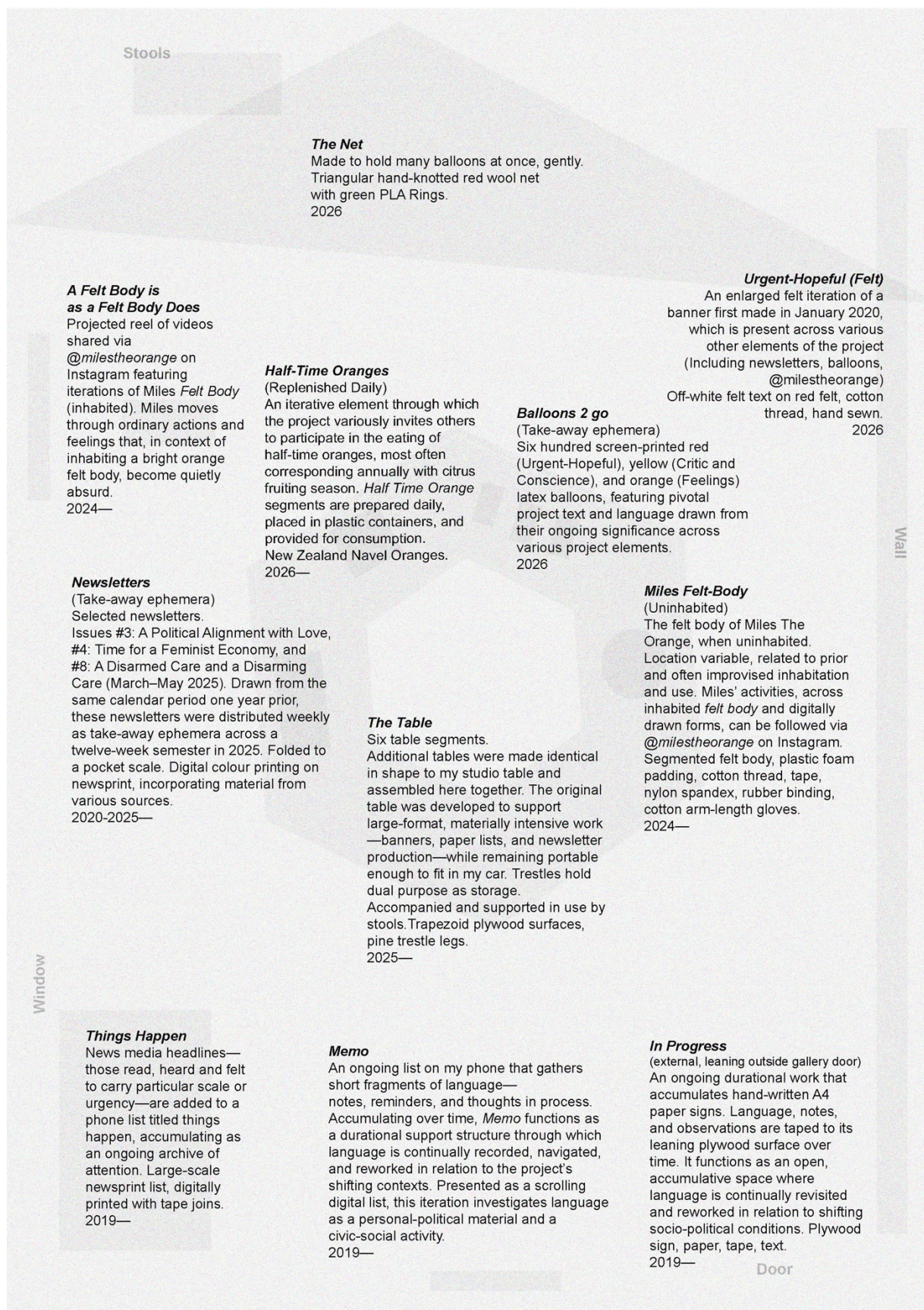


Figure 125. The back of the unfolded guide to *Arriving in Stages* exhibition, showing the floor plan. 2026



Figures 126-127. *Arriving in Stages* exhibition views, Images by Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery (May 2026)





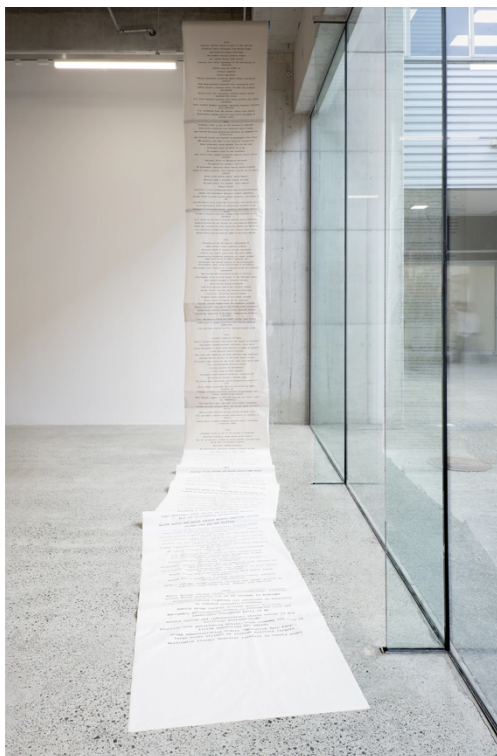
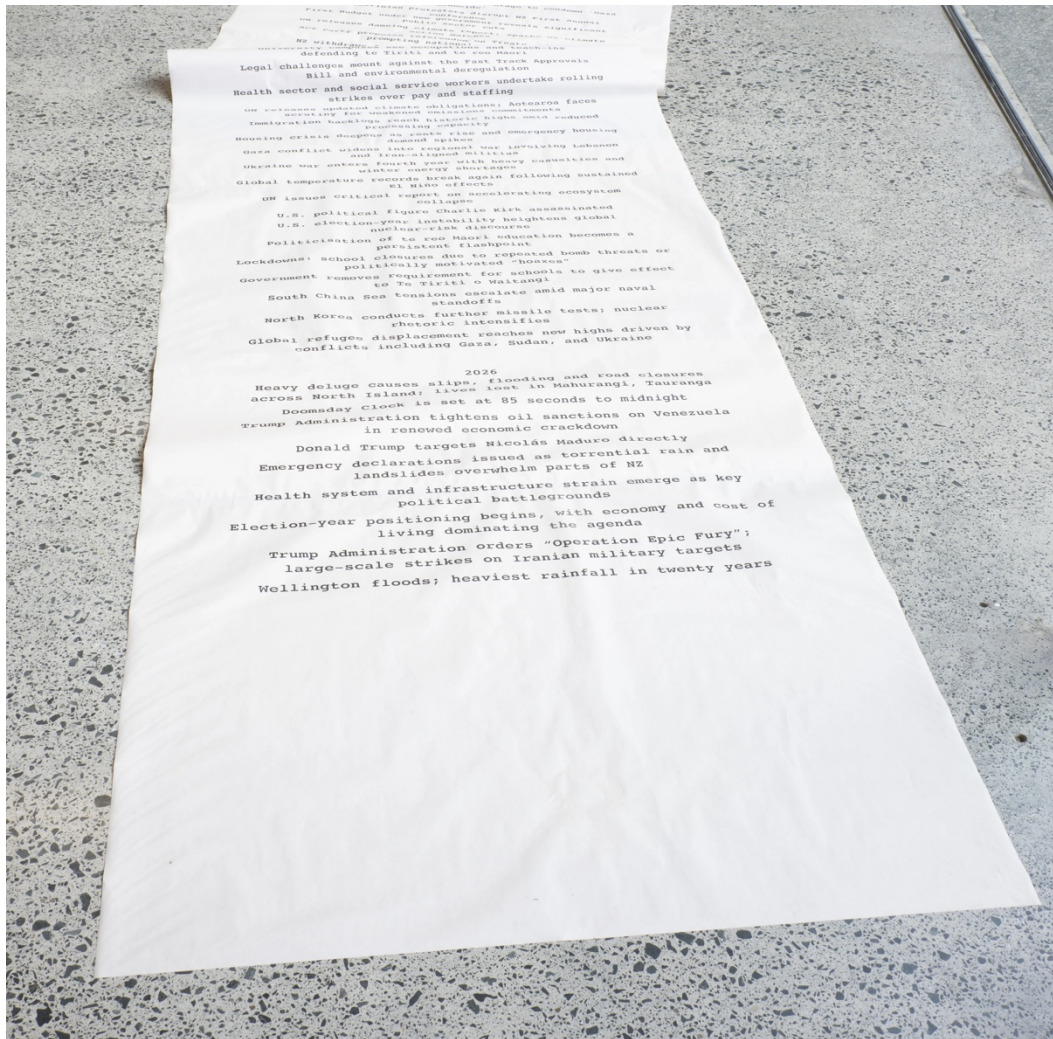
Figure 128. *Arriving in Stages* exhibition view. Image by Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery (May 2026)



Figure #129. *Urgent-Hopeful*. Hand-sewn felt banner with text, 8 x 9.2m (May 2026)



Figures 130-131. *The Net*. Installational details. Red wool, green PLA rings, 7.2 x 4.5m. Images by Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery (May 2026)



Figures 132-134. *Things Happen*. Digitally printed list on newsprint, with masking tape joins. 8.5 x .8m. Images by Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery (May 2026)

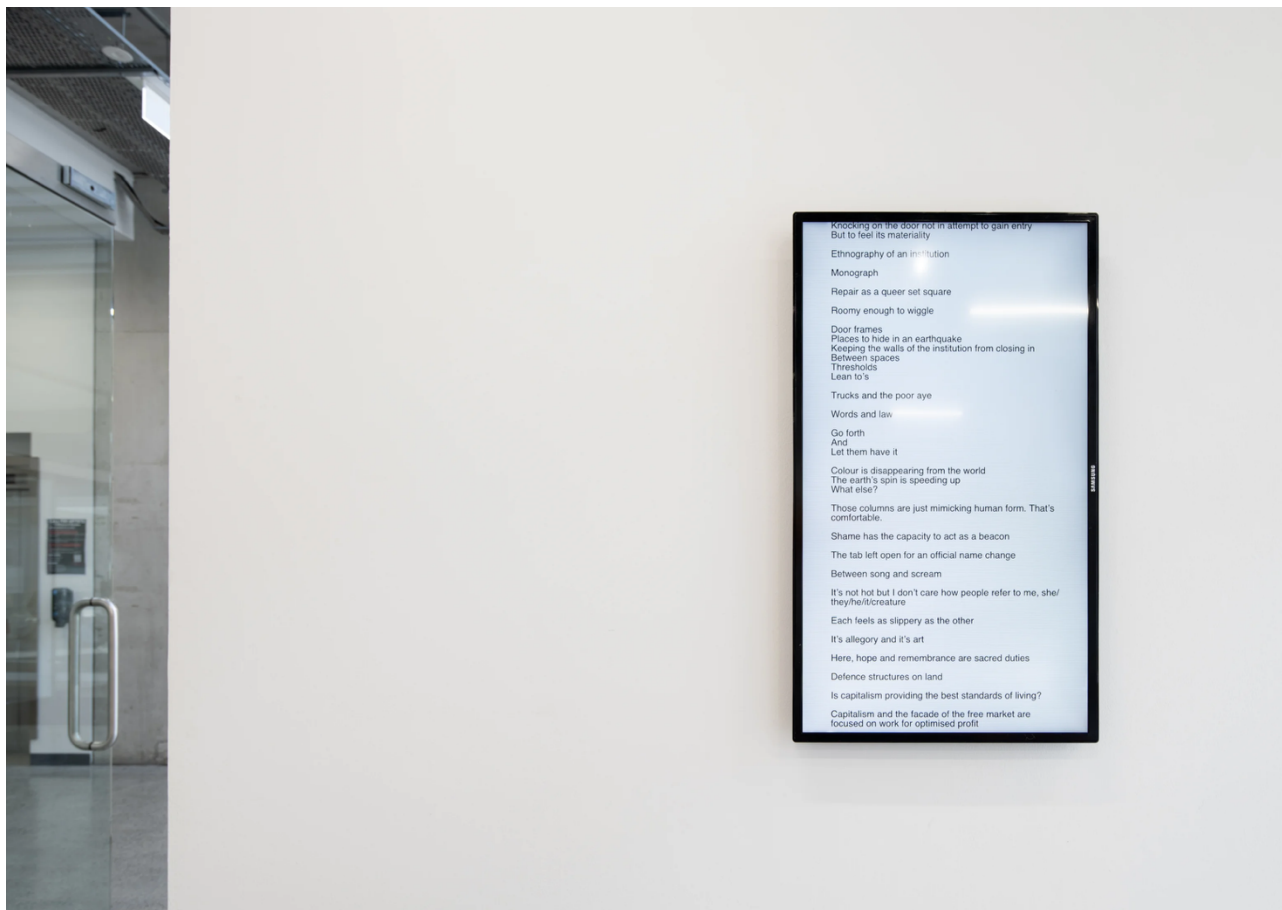


Figure 135. *Memo*. Scrolling text on screen. 22 min 16 sec, accumulating duration, updated weekly. Image by Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery (May 2026)



Figure 136. *Felt Bodies are as Felt Bodies do*. Digital video projection of 61 Instagram videos compiled within a single reel. 26 minutes, accumulating duration. Provisional newsprint and tape screen, updated weekly. Image by Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery (May 2026)

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