



Emily Parr *Flukeprint* 2021. 35mm film, digital scan.

Resource Card *At Thresholds*

**City
Gallery
Wellington**
Te WhareToi

Part of
experience
Wellington
wellingtonmuseumstrust

Principal Funder
**Absolutely Positively
Wellington City Council**
Me Heke Ki Pōneke

 **Foundation**

Civic Square, 101 Wakefield Street
Wellington 6140, New Zealand
T: +64 4 913 9029
E: citygalleryeducation@experiencewellington.org.nz

citygallery.org.nz

City Gallery Wellington's
Education Service is
supported by the Ministry
of Education's LEOTO fund.


MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
Te Tihiko o te Mātauranga

Resource Card

At Thresholds

About the Exhibition

At Thresholds explores humanity's place within the multispecies—a vibrant universe of lifeforms, including fungi, plants and animals. The exhibition brings together photography, video, painting, and sculpture by artists from Aotearoa. Through imaginative visual languages these artists consider how we might renew our awareness of living with our more-than-human cohabitants. They propose that much can be learned by shifting our attention from human-centred experience, considering our life as one amongst multitudes.

Selected Artists

Zina Swanson makes delicate watercolour paintings and sculptures that investigate relationships between humans and the natural world. Her works often draw on the myths and lore of plants, such as the ghosts of leaves believed to inhabit the flames of burning wood, or the strange faith we place in four-leafed clovers or forget-me-nots. Like an offbeat botanist, she collects and presses flowers and leaves and incorporates them into her work.

Olivia Blyth presents lei whose forms are based on the pattern of birdsong. Though a process of active listening she translates sounds into drawings which inform the pattern and shape of the lei. These lei were gifted in a ceremony to Māori and Pacific graduates of Elam University where the birdsong was heard.

Maureen Lander and **Denise Batchelor** bring together collaborative installations with jellyfish and seaweed as their subjects. Lander, who is a muka weaver, sculptor and 2022 Arts Foundation Laureate, suspends flutters of jellyfish made from repurposed plastic and harakeke, alongside Batchelor's video works and collections of bright pink and purple seaweed.

Vocabulary and Kupu Māori

- **Multispecies thinking**—rethinking human-centered experience to better consider the ecosystems we are part of.
- **Te taiao**—the natural world.
- **Manu**—bird.
- **Rau**—leaf.
- **Rākau**—tree.
- **Ngā Harore**—fungi.
- **Āta whakarongo**—listen carefully.

- **Whai whakaaro** to be thoughtful, attentive, mindful.

Pre-Visit Discussion

What do you think? Does humanity consider itself to be a part of or separate from the natural world? Make a list of actions you could take to increase your awareness of and connection to the natural world.

Post-Visit Activities

Reflect on your visit. Which artworks/ideas did you find interesting? What aspects could you explore in your own artwork?

Take a sound walk focusing on the natural environment. Pay careful attention to the sounds and rhythms around you, close by and far away. Āta whakarongo to the sounds made by the wind as it whistles through the trees; pebbles being thrown up the beach, the songs of birds, and noisy insects.

Describe the sounds, their volume and duration, with words, and drawings using shapes, colours or patterns.

These sounds inspired the creation of Taonga Pūoro (traditional Māori musical instruments). Find out more about Taonga Pūoro on Tales from Te Papa

www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXUb1YzQRvU

Develop the list of sound words generated on your walk to create a poem or short story using onomatopoeia.

Develop the sound drawings into an adornment or artifact inspired by the work of Olivia Blyth.

Make a mobile or suspended sculpture inspired by natural forms. Experiment with wire and papier-mâché like Deborah Bustin, or manipulate repurposed materials inspired by Maureen Lander. What did you notice about the use of repetition in many works throughout the exhibition? Add a repetitive aspect to the form or decoration of your artwork.

Further Research

Find out more about selected artists from the show.

Zina Swanson

thespinoff.co.nz/books/22-11-2020/50-years-ago-we-had-some-extremely-peculiar-notions-about-plants

Maureen Lander and Denise Batchelor

eyecontactmagazine.com/2020/03/the-beauties-of-seaweed-and-jellyfish

www.thearts.co.nz/artists/dr-maureen-lander