

BOUQUET

ELEANOR COOPER

6 March – 4 April 2020



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The Blue Oyster Art Project Space is pleased to present a solo exhibition by Auckland-based artist Eleanor Cooper.

Cooper's work often articulates aspects of landscape neglected by Western landscape traditions of the scenic and picturesque. In doing so, it seeks to recreate landscape as a rich terrain of sensory experience, narrative and belonging.

Drawing on personal experiences as a field ranger in nature reserves, *Bouquet* presents new sculptures and photographs that recollect first-hand encounters, traces of human interaction and ecological findings. Delving into various pockets of land managed by the Department of Conservation—including the “earthly paradise” of Sir George Grey on Kawau Island and the marine mammal breeding grounds in the Subantarctic Islands—this project illuminates some of the beliefs and cultural imperatives that have both produced and upheld the conservation estate in Aotearoa.¹

“The gathering of the long-tailed cuckoo as if for migration has perhaps been seen. I have been told by an old bush-loving surveyor that on one occasion, when camped on a sharp ridge between Coromandel and Thames, he heard a great twittering; and, attracted by the sound, he investigated the cause. He found large numbers of the cuckoo gathered together; and suspecting from the time of year, that a gathering might be for migration, he watched during the night; but they remained that night, and the next day, when still more arrived. He said they were in hundreds. He watched next night, too, but must have dozed off, for in the morning all were gone.”²



1. Yarwood, Vaughan. “The Governor’s Island.” *New Zealand Geographic*. 39 (Jul–Sept 1998), <http://www.nzgeo.com/stories/the-governors-island/>

2. “Koekoeā, the long tailed cuckoo,” *NZ Birds*, last modified 2005, <https://www.nzbirds.com/birds/koekoea.html>

List of works:

Koekoeā (Long-tailed Cuckoos)

3D printed whistles, cork bark, seeds (pūriri, nīkau, mānuka), marine rope

Bō (fighting staff for working among rāpoka sea lion colonies)

Hand-planed and carved hardwood, charcoal, gesso, epoxy resin, made to the dimensions of an Okinawan karate bō staff, ornamented with subantarctic bladder kelp

Needles

Silver gelatin photogram of Pinus radiata needles collected on Kawau Island from descendant trees of the first Pinus radiata in New Zealand, in the garden of Sir George Grey; aluminium frame

Flyknit (basketball)

Polyester twine, basketball, jandal, laces, based on Nike Flyknit technology

Flyweave (white rice)

Rice sack, jandals (South Pacific flotsam), laces, based on Nike Flyweave technology

Untitled (wall treatment)

Grapevine charcoal, gum arabic

All works courtesy the artist and Mokopōpaki, Auckland



Eleanor Cooper (b. 1988, Auckland) works with installation, collected natural materials, 3D fabrication and elementary photography. Her research interests span ecology, walking, resourcefulness and the conservation estate. In 2019 she graduated with a Masters of Fine Arts from the University of Auckland, where she also completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts and Bachelor of Arts (Philosophy) in 2012. In 2013 she was awarded a black belt in Seishin Ryu karate. Recent shows include *Prelude:2020*, Gow Langsford Gallery (2020), *Domestic #3 Ahimaru*, Mokopōpaki (2019), *Occulture: the Dark Arts*, City Gallery Wellington (2017), *Everyday Lines*, Hastings City Art Gallery (2017) and *They say this island changes shape*, The Physics Room (2016). She has written essays on walking and the conservation estate for *Argos Aotearoa* and the recently published book *In Common*. Employed as a field ranger for the Department of Conservation, she has lived and worked in a number of nature reserves on remote islands including the Kermadec and Subantarctic Auckland Islands, and within Tikapa Moana/the Hauraki Gulf.



BOUQUET

Eleanor Cooper

Friday 6 March – Saturday 4 April 2020

Opening event: Thursday 5 March at 5.30pm

Artist talk: Friday 6 March at 12 noon

Blue Oyster Art Project Space

16 Dowling Street

Dunedin

Image: Eleanor Cooper, *live drawing of albatross from Enderby Island (2019)*

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