

Jim Allen

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Jim Allen

Born 1922, Wellington (NZ). Died 2023, Auckland (NZ)

Following service in World War II, Jim Allen studied art in Perugia and Florence, Italy before gaining a Diploma in Fine Arts from the University of Canterbury in 1951. He then studied at the Royal College of Art, London, returning to New Zealand in 1953 and becoming involved in arts education. Allen's tenure in the sculpture department at Elam School of Fine Arts, Auckland is regarded as a transformative moment for the development of conceptual and performance-based practices in Aotearoa New Zealand. From 1977–1987 he served as the Founding Head, School of Arts, Sydney College of the Arts (later amalgamated with the University of Sydney).

Since 2000 a number of Allen's early works have been re-staged, such as the two-part installation O-AR (1974) and the early performances Contact (1974), Poetry for Chainsaws (1976), News (1976) and On Planting a Native (1976) in Adelaide, Sydney, Auckland, New Plymouth, and Wellington. His video works have been shown widely in America, Germany, and the Netherlands.

Allen was awarded honorary doctorates from the University of Sydney (2007) and Auckland University of Technology (2007). In 2015 he was awarded with the Arts Foundation's Icon Award Whakamana Hiranga, an honour which recognises a living circle of twenty of New Zealand's most significant artists.

EDUCATION

1951
Associate Royal College of Art [ARCA London, England]

1948
Diploma of Fine Arts [DFA Cantab. NZ]

1945
Perugia University, Perugia, Italy
Istituto d' Arte Florence, Italy

AWARDS

Member New Zealand Order of Merit

2015
Arts Foundation Icon Award, Whakamana Hiranga

2007
Honorary Doctorate of Visual Arts, Sydney University, Sydney, Australia
Honorary Doctorate of Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand

2000
Installed as fifth Fellow, Australian Council of University Art and Design Schools

1987
Australia Council Research Grant, "Career Strategies for Visual Artists and Craftspeople"

1976
Artist in Residence, Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide, South Australia

1949
New Zealand National Travelling Scholarship in Art

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2022
Poetry for Chainsaws, Michael Lett 3 East St, Auckland (performance)
Horse and Buggy Days, Michael Lett, Auckland (solo)

2018-2019
Groundswell: Avant-Garde Auckland 1971-1979, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Auckland (group)

2016

Jim Allen, Dan Arps, Stella Corkery, Michael Lett, Auckland (group)
Jim Allen's News, Ramp Gallery, Hamilton (solo)

2014

News, Michael Lett, Auckland (solo)

2013

Contact, Michael Lett, Auckland (solo)

2012

The Skin of Years, Michael Lett, Auckland (solo)
Letter from Alice May Williams, Michael Lett, Auckland, New Zealand (group)

2011

Collecting Contemporary, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, New Zealand (group)

2010

Contact, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth; Adam Art Gallery, Wellington; Artspace, Auckland, New Zealand (solo)
Michael Lett, Auckland, New Zealand (solo)

2009

Auckland Art Fair, Michael Lett, Auckland, New Zealand (group)

2008

Michael Lett, Auckland, New Zealand (solo)
Noli Me Legere, Michael Lett, Auckland, New Zealand (group)

2007

AUT St. Pauls Street Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand (solo)
Michael Lett, Auckland, New Zealand (solo)
Primary Products, Adam Art Gallery, Victoria university, Wellington, New Zealand (group)

2002

Jim Allen and Kathleen Peacock, The Suter Art Gallery, Nelson, New Zealand (group)

2001

Fin De Siecle, Lesley Kreisler Gallery, New Plymouth, New Zealand 1999 (group)

2000

Project Programme 19-27th November 2000, Auckland, New Zealand (solo)
Artspace, Auckland, New Zealand (solo)
Ramp Gallery, Waikato Polytechnic, Hamilton, New Zealand (solo)
Fin De Siecle, Lesley Kreisler Gallery, New Plymouth, New Zealand 1999 (group)

1999

Fin De Siecle, Lesley Kreisler Gallery, New Plymouth, New Zealand 1999 (group)

1998

Action replay 1V, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth (group)
Action Replay, Artspace, Auckland, New Zealand (group)

1997

Switched On, Manawatu Art Gallery, Palmerston North, New Zealand (group)

1995

New Zealand Light, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, New Zealand (group)

1992

The enlightened Years, New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts, Wellington, New Zealand (group)

1990

A few years of New Zealand landscape Art, George Fraser Art Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand (group)

1979

A Survey of Contemporary Australian Artists, Franklin Furnace, New York, USA (group)

1976

Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide, Australia (solo)

Sydney Biennale, Australia (group)

Australian and New Zealand Post-Object Show Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide (group)

1975

Auckland City Art Gallery, New Zealand (solo)

Barry Lett/RKS Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand (solo)

Barry Lett/RKS Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand (group)

Mildura Sculpture Triennale, Mildura, Australia (group)

1974

Commonwealth Games exhibition, Christchurch, New Zealand (group)

1973

NZ Society of Painters and Sculptors, Osborne Galleries, Auckland, New Zealand (group)

Mildura Sculpture Triennale, Mildura, Australia (group)

1972

NZ Society of Painters and Sculptors, Osborne Galleries, Auckland, New Zealand (group)

1971

Barry Lett/RKS Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand (solo)

NZ Society of Painters and Sculptors, Osborne Galleries, Auckland, New Zealand (group)

1970

Barry Lett/RKS Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand (solo)

Five Sculptors, New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts, Wellington (group)

Mildura Sculpture Triennale, Mildura, Australia (group)

1969

Barry Lett/RKS Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand (solo)

Arts Council Travelling Exhibition, New Zealand (group)

1958

Auckland City Art Gallery, New Zealand (group)

1956

Auckland City Art Gallery, New Zealand (group)

1954

Auckland City Art Gallery, New Zealand (group)

1951

British Council Travelling Sculpture Exhibition London, England (group)

1950

Royal Academy, London, England (group)

PERFORMANCE WORKS

2019

“Contact (Parangole Capes)” Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Auckland

2014

On Planting a Native, Michael Lett, Auckland

2010-11

Contact: A performance in three parts including “Computer Dance”, “Parangole Capes”, “Body Articulation Imprint”, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth; Adam Art Gallery, Wellington; Artspace, Auckland, New Zealand

2007

Poetry for Chainsaws, curated by Leonhard Emmerling, St. Paul Street Gallery, AUT, Auckland, New Zealand

2006

Poetry for Chainsaws, curated by Ryan Moore, Michael Lett, Auckland, New Zealand

1992

Autopsy: a performance with three players (with Linda Earle and Sergio Areliano), presented at Soundwatch, Artspace, Auckland, New Zealand

1976

There are always Elephants to be made Drunk, Biennale of Sydney, Art Gallery of NSW, Australia

"Newspaper Piece", "Chainsaws", "The Elastic sided Boot", "On Planting a Native", "Sending and Receiving", and "Newspeak: a reading with Richard Tipping and Noel Sheridan", Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide, Australia

1974

Pavilion "K", Performance Works Auckland Showgrounds, New Zealand

Contact: A performance in three parts including "Computer Dance", "Parangole Capes", "Body Articulation Imprint" included in Four Men in a Boat exhibition Auckland City Art Gallery, New Zealand

1970-75

Contributor to the Antipodean Twig of the Scratch Orchestra

MAJOR COMMISSIONS

1975

Jaduran Bronze sculpture, Fiji

Aluminium Construction, metal Import Co. Auckland, New Zealand

1974

Commonwealth games sculpture, Queen Elizabeth 11 Park, Christchurch, New Zealand

1970

Stainless steel sculpture for "Expo 70 Osaka, Japan

Sculpture for Palmerston North Teacher's College, New Zealand

Aluminium Doors, aluminium and wood mural, Air New Zealand House, Auckland, New Zealand

1967

Timber and steel mural for Logan Park Motel. Auckland, New Zealand

1966

Bronze stature "Wiairaka" and kinetic water sculpture, Whakatane, New Zealand

Concrete mural, Otago University, Dunedin, New Zealand

1965

Concrete Mural for ICI House, Wellington, New Zealand

1964

Sculpture for Pakaranga Town Centre, Pakaranga, Auckland, New Zealand

1962

Concrete and stained glass, leaded lights, Baldochino, St. John's Church, Te Awamutu, New Zealand

1961

Crucifix, St. Andrew's Church, Papakura, Auckland, New Zealand

1960

Stained glass, Stations of the Cross, Crucifix, Futuna Chapel, Wellington, New Zealand

1959

Stained Glass, Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Havelock North, New Zealand

VIDEO TAPES

2009

Artspace Sydney DVD's: "News", "Poetry for Chainsaws"

2008

Artspace Sydney, DVD: "Hanging by a Thread"

Heidelberger Kunstverein, "Past – Present – Place" DVD "Contact" [also Copenhagen]

2000

Artspace Auckland: Public showing "Contact", "Post-Objective", "Hanging by a Thread"

"Hanging by a Thread" Jim Allen and Alice Carstenson

Alice Carstenson: "Jim Allen, Post-Objective" Biography, Auckland

1976

"On Planting a Native" Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide

1974

"Contact" "Four Men in a Boat" exhibition, Auckland City Art Gallery

1973

John Daly-Peoples, six interviews: Gretchen Albrecht, Jim Allen, Don Binney, Robert Ellis, Patrick Hanley, Greer Twiss

SELECTED REFERENCES

2019

Victoria Wynne-Jones, "Occasions & Situations for Seeing: Auckland's Avant-Garde 1971–1979" in *Art New Zealand* 169 (Autumn 2019)

2014

Jim Allen, Phil Dadson and Tony Green, *The Skin of Years*. Auckland: Clouds & Michael Lett.

2009

Leonhard Emmerling, *Poetry for Chainsaws & Hanging By a Thread II*, Michael Lett

2008

Stella Brennan and Sue Ballard (eds), *The Aotearoa Digital Arts Reader*, Aotearoa Digital Arts and Clouds, Auckland 2008 p66, 123-5, 132

2006

Charlotte Huddleston (ed), *Mostly Harmless* catalogue. Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, August-September 2006. News p32-33

Serena Bentley (curator) *O-AR 1 [1975] recreation*, documentation, purchased Auckland City Art Gallery 2006

Mercedes Vicente (curator) *Viewfinder: Four Decades of the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery Collection* including *New Zealand Environment* No. 5 1969

2002

Michael Dunn, *New Zealand Sculpture: A History*, AUP Auckland 2002 pp 9, 56, 72, 75-79, 82, 103-114, 118-124, 130, 160

Wystan Curnow, Christina Barton, John Hurrell, Robert Leonard, [Action Replay Curatorium] *Action Replay Post Script* Joint publishers, Gregory Burke, Director Govett-Brewster Art gallery New Plymouth: Robert Leonard, Director. Artspace Auckland 2002

2000

Wystan Curnow, Robert Leonard *Art New Zealand* No. 95. Contact: Jim Allen talks to Wystan Curnow and Robert Leonard p48-55

Tony Green, *New New Zealand 'New Art' Intervention, Post-Object and Performance Art in New Zealand in 1970 and Beyond*. Exhibition Catalogue. Robert McDougall Art Gallery and Annex, November-December 2000 p59-63

Blair French and Jim Allen: *From Elam to the Experimental Art Foundation Intervention, Post-Object and Performance Art in New Zealand in 1970 and beyond*. Exhibition catalogue. Robert McDougall Art Gallery and Annex. November-December 2000 p35-46

Mark Stocker, Francis Shurrock: *Shaping New Zealand Sculpture*, UOP Dunedin

1999

Tony Green, *Action Replay Art Asia Pacific: Focus on New Zealand*, Guest Editor Robert Leonard. Issue 23. P44-45

Terry Smith, *Peripheries in Motion: Conceptualism and Conceptual Art in Australia and New Zealand Catalogue: Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin 1950s – 1960s* Luis Camnitzer, Jane Farver, Rachel Weiss. Queens Museum of Art, New York 1999 p89-92

1997

Mark Stocker, Francis Shurrock Revisited, *Bulletin of New Zealand Art History* Vol. 18 1987 pp49-86

1996
Robin Woodward, Auckland 1971: The International Sculpture Symposium Art in New Zealand No. 76 Autumn. 1996 p86
1993
Anne Marsh, Body and Self: Performance Art in Australia 1969-1992, Oxford University Press, Australia, Melbourne 1993
p86

1992
Catalogue, Headlands New Zealand Art at the Museum of Contemporary Art Sydney
Tony Green, Modernism and Modernisation p156-158 See also pp 105, 173, 175, 209
Christina Barton, New Zealand Environment No. 5 Midwest, Vol. 1, No. 1. Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth

1989
Christina Barton, Post-Object Art in New Zealand 1969-1979; Experiments in Art and Life, Unpublished MA Thesis,
University of Auckland 1989

1987
Russell Walden, Voices of Silence, Victoria University Press. Wellington 1987

1986
Graeme Sturgeon, Sculpture at Mildura, The Story of the Mildura Triennale 1961-1982 Mildura City Council. 1986

1978
QE 11 Arts Council of New Zealand Sculptors at Mildura QE 11 Arts Council 1978

1977
Tony Green, A Map of New Zealand Sculpture Art New Zealand Vol. 5 April –May 1977 p29-30

1976
Wystan Curnow & Jim Allen (eds), New Art ; Some recent New Zealand Sculpture and Post-Object Art, Heinemann,
Auckland 1976
Noel Sheridan & Ian De Gruchy, EAF 1976 Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide

1975
Jim Allen, O-AR Recent Work Catalogue, Auckland City Art Gallery 1975

1972
Elwyn Richardson, In the Early World New Zealand Council for Educational Research, Wellington. 1972

1960
Peter Tomory, Art patterns in New Zealand Culture [ed. McLeod] Oxford University Press, 1960

1959
Landfall Vol. 13 Sept. 1959 p236

1955
Michael Nicholson, Sculpture in Auckland Landfall, Vol. 9 No. 3 1955 p245

1948
R. J. Waghorn, Travelling Scholarships in Art Arts Year Book, Arts in New Zealand No. 4, The Wingfield Press, Wellington
1948 p119-123

PUBLISHED WORKS AND PROFESSIONAL RESEARCH

Jim Allen, Phil Dadson and Tony Green, The Skin of Years. Auckland: Clouds & Michael Lett.

Allen, Jim and Curnow, Wystan: New Art Heinemann Educational books, Auckland, 1975.

Allen, Jim: Admission and Selection Procedures, SCA. 1982-83 Labyrinth, Tertiary Education Institute, University of
Queensland. 1984.

Reports: Techniques Employed in the Selection of Applicants for Tertiary Level Visual Art and Design Courses
Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission. 1987.

Career Strategies for Visual Artists and Crafts People Australia Council 1991.

AWARDS IN COMPETITION

1964 Sculpture for Pakaranga Town Centre, Auckland.

1972 Sculpture for Palmerston North Teachers College.

1974 Sculpture for Commonwealth games, Queen Elizabeth Park, Christchurch, NZ.

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, New Zealand

British Council, London, United Kingdom

Chartwell Collection, Auckland, New Zealand

City Art Gallery, Christchurch City Art Gallery, New Zealand

Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, New Zealand

Mildura Arts Centre, Australia

Osaka City Library, Osaka, Japan

Otago University, New Zealand

Royal College of Art, London, United Kingdom

Santa Barbara Art Gallery, California, USA

Te Papa Tongawera, Museum of New Zealand, Wellington, New Zealand