

S raphine Pick

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Séraphine Pick
Midnight Sun
2021
oil on linen
3000 x 1900mm



Pages of Mercury: Rita Angus, Andrew Beck, Séraphine Pick
Installation view
City Gallery Wellington, 2022



Pages of Mercury: Rita Angus, Andrew Beck, Séraphine Pick
Installation view
City Gallery Wellington, 2022



S raphine Pick
Ordinary Pleasures
2021
oil on linen
300 x 200mm



Séraphine Pick with Jaime Jenkins
Coloured Mud
Installation view
Michael Lett, Auckland 2021

Michael Lett



Séraphine Pick
Forest Bathing
2021
oil on linen
2005 x 1600mm
SP6389



S raphine Pick
Blush Vase
2021
oil on linen
485 x 380mm
SP6398



S raphine Pick with Jaime Jenkins
Forest Vase
2021
hand-painted, wood-fired stoneware
373mm high
SP6433



Séraphine Pick
Path
2021
oil on linen
1300 x 1055mm
SP6391



Séraphine Pick
Seeress
2021
oil on board
425 x 325 mm (framed)
SP6396



Séraphine Pick
Hearth
2021
oil on linen
303 x 231mm



Séraphine Pick
Dark Bloom
2021
oil on linen
1300 x 1055mm
SP6392



S raphine Pick
Wall of Self
2018
oil on canvas
1300 x 1050mm
SP5414



Séraphine Pick
Untitled (Green Haze) / Untitled (Pink Haze)
2018
watercolour on paper
260 x 180mm
SP5413 / SP5412



Séraphine Pick
Party's Over
2016
gouache on paper
560 x 760mm
SP4505



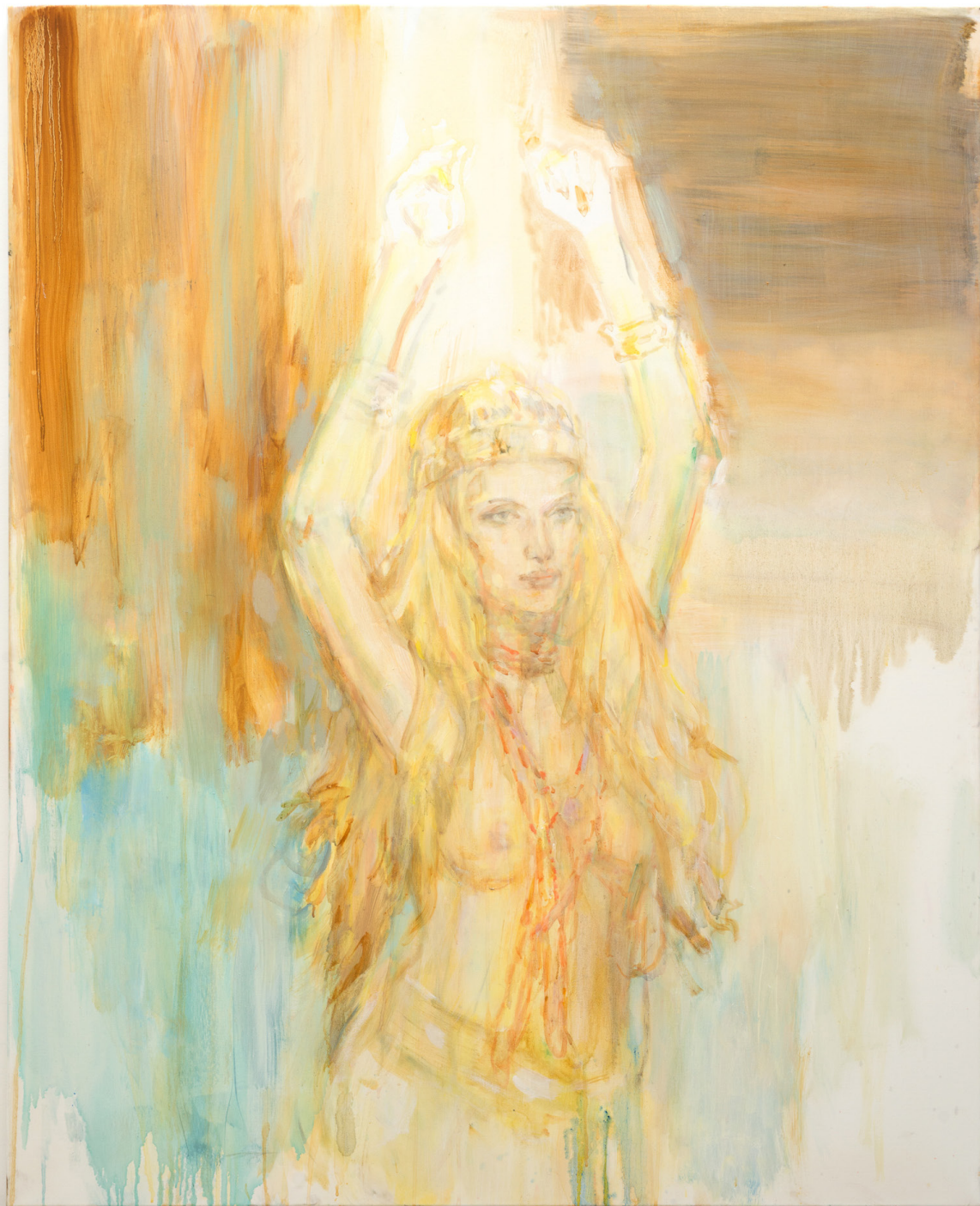
Séraphine Pick
Samadhi
2016
watercolour on paper
560 x 760mm
SP4509



Séraphine Pick
Dhyana
2016
gouache on paper
560 x 760mm
SP4508



S raphine Pick
Thoughts Arise
2016
oil on linen
1300 x 1050mm
SP4502



Séraphine Pick
White Lighting
2016
oil on linen
1300 x 1050mm
SP4501



S raphine Pick

Born 1964 in Kawakawa, Bay of Islands
Lives and works in Wellington, New Zealand

EDUCATION

1991
Dip Ed. Christchurch College of Education

1987
Bachelor of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury, New Zealand

AWARDS & RESIDENCIES

1999
Frances Hodgkins Fellow, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand

1995
Rita Angus Cottage Residency in Wellington

1994
Olivia Spencer-Bower Foundation Art Award

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2022
Sundogs, Station Gallery, Sydney (solo)
Pages of Mercury: Rita Angus, Andrew Beck, S raphine Pick City Gallery, Wellington
(three-person)

2021
Coloured Mud with Jaime Jenkins, Michael Lett, Auckland (two-person)

2020
Black White, Hamish McKay, Wellington (group)

2019
GRUPPENKRANKENHAUS, Hamish McKay, Wellington (group)

2018
God Helmet, Michael Lett, Auckland; Nadene Milne Gallery, Arrowtown and
Christchurch (solo)

2017
Super Natural, Station, Melbourne, Australia (solo)
Cavewomen, Brett McDowell Gallery, Dunedin (solo)
Katherine Mansfield: A Portrait NZ Portrait Gallery, Wellington (group)

2016
Calm the fuck down, Michael Lett, Auckland (solo)
Black Hush, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington (solo)
Undreamed Of...50 Years of the Frances Hodgkins Fellowship, Dunedin Public Art
Gallery, Dunedin; Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington (group)

2015
White Noise, The Dowse Art Museum, Wellington (solo)
Easy Living, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington (solo)

2014
Looking like someone else, Pataka Museum, Wellington (solo)
Paintings and Rings, Hamish McKay, Wellington (group)

2013
Wankered Again, Michael Lett, Auckland (solo)
S raphine Pick, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington (solo)

2012
Letter from Alice May Williams, Michael Lett, Auckland (group)
Her Painted Words Katherine Mansfield House, Wellington (group)

2011
Torn up phrases, Michael Lett, Auckland (solo)
The Woods, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington (solo)
36 years in the Zone, Brooke Gifford Gallery, Christchurch (group)

2010
Pocket Full of Rainbows, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington (solo)
Seraphine Pick, Uplands Gallery, Melbourne (solo)
Tell Me More, City Gallery, Wellington (solo)
Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin (solo)

Let in Light, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington (group)
Everything is near and inflorescent, forever and present, Michael Lett, Auckland (group)

2009

Tell Me More, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu (solo)
Fall and Trip Hazards, Michael Lett, Auckland (solo)
Seraphine Pick, Brooke Gifford Gallery, Christchurch (solo)
Private View, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington (group)
Christmas Show, Brooke Gifford Gallery, Christchurch (group)

2008

Seraphine Pick, Brooke Gifford Gallery, Christchurch (solo)
Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, Christchurch (solo)
A Winter Exhibition, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington (group)

2007

Burning the Furniture, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington (solo)
School of Fine Art University of Canterbury, 125th Anniversary Group Show, Brooke Gifford Gallery, Christchurch (group)
A Winter Show, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington (group)

2006

Hideout, Michael Lett, Auckland (solo)
Tall Tales and History Lessons, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin (group)
Recovered Memory, Suter Art Gallery, Nelson (group)
Four Artists, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington (group)

2006

Recovered Memory Suter Art Gallery, Nelson (group)
Hideout Michael Lett, Auckland (solo)
Tablelands Brooke Gifford Gallery, Christchurch (solo)

2005

Painted Faces, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington (solo)
Shared Air, Kaliman Gallery, Sydney (solo)
Seraphine Pick, Michael Lett, Auckland (solo)
30th Anniversary Show - Brooke Gifford Gallery, Christchurch (group)
NADA Art Fair, Michael Lett Stand, Miami, USA (group)
Commodity & Delight: Views of Home, Sarjeant Gallery, Whanganui (group)
Hothouse, Dunedin Public Gallery, Dunedin (group)

2004

Seraphine Pick, Michael Lett, Auckland (solo)

Future Ghosts, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington (solo)
No Rest For the Wicked, Brooke-Gifford Gallery, Christchurch (solo)
Prospect, Adam Art Gallery, Wellington (group)
Interior World, The Physics Room, Christchurch (group)

2003

My Life and Death Trip, Michael Lett, Auckland (solo)
Portraits, Brooke-Gifford Gallery, Christchurch (solo)
Opening Exhibiton, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, Christchurch (group)
Portraiture: The Art of Social Commentary, Te Tuhi - The Mark, Auckland (group)

2002

New Paintings, Brooke-Gifford Gallery, Christchurch (solo)
Paintings, Hamish Mckay Gallery, Wellington (solo)
Red White & Black Anna Bibby Gallery, Auckland (group)

2001

Multistylus programme: Recent Chartwell acquisitions, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, Auckland (group)
Fabrication, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin (group)
Beyond the Surface: Kim Pieters, Maryrose Crook, Séraphine Pick, Susan Ballard, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin (group)
Prospect 2001: New art New Zealand, City Gallery, Wellington (group)
Bright Paradise: Exotic history and sublime artifice, 1st Auckland Triennial, Auckland (group)
Alive, Still life into the 21st Century, Adam Gallery, Victoria University, Wellington curated by Zara Standhope (group)

2000

Earthly Possessions, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington (solo)
Where Have you been?, Hocken Library, University of Otago, Dunedin (solo)
Private Gardens, Anna Bibby Gallery, Auckland (solo)
Parihaka, The Art of Passive Resistance, Wellington City Art Gallery, Wellington (group)
Te Ao Tawhito, Te Ao Hou Old Worlds, New Worlds Art Museum of Missoula and Maui Arts Center, Hawaii (group)
25th Anniversary exhibition, Brooke-Gifford Gallery, Christchurch (group)
Old Worlds/New Worlds: Contemporary art from Aotearoa, New Zealand, Art Museum of Missoula, Missoula, Montana; Maui Arts and Cultural Centre, Hawaii (group)
Canterbury Paintings in the 1990s, Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch (group)

1999

Recent Paintings, Anna Bibby Gallery, Auckland (solo)
 Astral Plains, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington (solo)
 New paintings, Brooke-Gifford Gallery, Christchurch (solo)
 Who do you think you really are? Window installation, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, Auckland (solo)
 Fear and Beauty The Suter Te Aratoi o Whakatu, Nelson (group)
 Home and Away: Contemporary Australian and New Zealand art from the Chartwell Collection, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, Auckland; Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth; Waikato Museum of Art and History, Hamilton; Manawatu Art Gallery, Palmerston North; City Gallery, Wellington; Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin (group)

1998

Recent painting, Brooke-Gifford Gallery, Christchurch (solo)
 Scratching Skin, McDougall Art Annex, Christchurch; Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin (solo)
 Among Strangers, Window installation, Hungry Eyes series, Fiat Lux Gallery, Auckland (solo)
 Naked, Anna Bibby Gallery, Auckland (solo)
 Small Things, Lesley Kriesler Gallery, New Plymouth (solo)
 Skywriters and Earthmovers, McDougall Art Annex, Christchurch (group)
 Leap of Faith: Contemporary New Zealand art 1998, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth (group)

1997

Possibly, Anna Bibby Gallery, Auckland (solo)
 Looking like someone else, Manawatu Art Gallery, Palmerston North (solo)
 I Wish, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington (with Michael Harrison) (solo)
 Now showing: Artists go to the movies, Film Centre, Wellington, and touring (group)
 The Chartwell Collection: A selection, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, Auckland (group)

1996

Wonderlust, Anna Bibby Gallery, Auckland (solo)
 Impulse, Brooke-Gifford Gallery, Christchurch (solo)
 Recent Paintings, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington (solo)
 Visa Gold Art award, City Gallery Wellington; Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, Auckland (group)
 Drift North, McDougall Art Annex, Christchurch (group)
 Pins and Needles: Eight Christchurch artists, Bishop Suter Art Gallery, Nelson (group)

1995

Unveiled, City Gallery, Wellington (solo)
 In the Flesh, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington (solo)
 Recent Paintings, Claybrook Gallery, Auckland (solo)
 1994 Shadow Play, Claybrook Gallery, Auckland (solo)
 Headspace, Brooke-Gifford Gallery, Christchurch (solo)
 Paintings and Drawings, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington (solo)
 Scrum, Claybrook Gallery, Auckland (group)
 A Very Peculiar Practice: Aspects of recent New Zealand painting, City Gallery, Wellington (group)
 Residency No 9, KNSM Gallery, Amsterdam (group)
 Visa Gold Art award, City Gallery, Wellington (group)

1994

Giovanni Intra/S  raphine Pick, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin (group)
 Striptease, Teststrip Gallery, Auckland (group)

1993

Recent Works, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington (solo)
 Visa Gold Art award City Gallery, Wellington (group)
 Opening up the book, Manawatu Art Gallery, Palmerston North (group)
 From Liquid Darkness: Twenty five years of artists' books by women, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin (group)
 Womens Lives, McDougall Art Annex, Christchurch (group)
 White Camellias: A Century of women's artmaking in Canterbury, Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch (group)

1992

New Works, Brooke-Gifford Gallery, Christchurch (solo)
 Prospect Canterbury '92, Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch (group)
 Four Christchurch Artists, Claybrook Gallery, Auckland (group)
 Motif/Motive, CSA Gallery, Christchurch (group)
 Canvassing South, Gow Langsford Gallery, Wellington (group)
 emBody, CSA Gallery, Christchurch (group)

1991

Paintings and Drawings, Brooke-Gifford Gallery, Christchurch (solo)
 Preparations, Brooke-Gifford Gallery, Christchurch (group)
 Recognitions, McDougall Art Annex, Christchurch (group)

1989

Almost but not quite, CSA Gallery, Christchurch (solo)

2018

Bennett, Lucinda, Virtual Humanity, Art Collector Australia, July-September, 2018

2015

Dunn, Megan, White Noise, Catalogue Te Dowse Art Museum, Wellington

2013

Hurrell, John, Te Pains (or Pleasures) of Inebriation, Eye Contact

McNamara T J, Excess and exploitation, The New Zealand Herald, November 30

2001

Smith, Allan, et al., Bright paradise: exotic history and sublime artifice: the 1st Auckland Triennial, Auckland Gallery, in association with Artspace and the University of Auckland

1999

Simpson, Peter, Reverie and phantasmagoria: recent paintings by Séraphine Pick, Art New Zealand no.91

Smith, Allan, Fear and beauty, Te Suter Te Aratoi o Whakatu, Nelson

Strongman, Lara Séraphine Pick, Home and away: contemporary Australian and New Zealand art from Te Chartwell Collection, Auckland Art Gallery and David Bateman Ltd.

Caldwell, Elizabeth, ed., Skywriters and earthmovers, Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch

1998

Miburn, Felicity, Séraphine Pick: scratching skin, Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch

Strongman, Luke, Christchurch, Log Illustrated, Spring

1997

Caughey, Elizabeth and John Gow, Contemporary New Zealand art vol. 1, David Bateman Ltd., Auckland

Garrett, Louise, Exhibitions: Wellington, Art New Zealand no. 83, 1997

Neate, Robin and Stuart McKenzie, Now showing: artists go to the movies, Exhibitour, Wellington

Neate, Robin, Séraphine Pick: looking like someone else, Manawatu Art Gallery, Palmerston North

1996

Bywater, Jonathan, Pins and needles: eight Christchurch artists, Bishop Suter Art Gallery, Nelson

Caldwell, Elizabeth, Drift North, Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch

Dunn, Michael, Contemporary painting in New Zealand, Craftsman House, Sydney

1995

Poppelwell, Louise, Surreal and Grotesque, New Zealand Herald, pg B9, / 22 October 2003 Renault, Claire, Séraphine Pick: unveiled, City Gallery, Wellington

Ross, James, ed., New Zealand modernism: figuration and expressionism: paintings from the Gibbs collection, The Gibbs Collection, Auckland

Shand, Peter, Time spent in four chambers: A very peculiar practice, Art New Zealand, no. 77

Smith, Allan, Séraphine Pick, Flash art, December

Smith, Allan, et al., A very peculiar practice: aspects of recent New Zealand painting, City Gallery, Wellington

Stevenson, Sharon, In the minds eye, More Magazine, November, 1995

Strongman, Lara, True Confessions, Midwest, no 7

1994

Bywater, Jonathan, Shadow play, Claybrook Gallery, Auckland

O'Brien, Gregory, Booked and bound up: opening up the book at the Manawatu Art Gallery, Art New Zealand, no.70

1993

Jackson, Penelope and Lara Strongman eds. White camellias: A century of women's artmaking in Canterbury, Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch

1991

Beyond the surface: Kim Pieters, Maryrose Crook, Séraphine Pick, Susan Ballard, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Dunedin

Strongman, Lara, Recognitions, McDougall Art Annex

Strongman, Lara, Recognitions, Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

Chartwell Collection

Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu

Bank of New Zealand

National Bank

Gisborne Museum

Saatchi & Saatchi

Fletcher Trust

Robert McDougall Art Gallery

Manawatu Art Gallery

Dunedin Public Art Gallery

Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

Christ's College

Christchurch College of Education

Lincoln University

University of Canterbury

ARTIST PROFILE

VIRTUAL HUMANITY

New Zealand painter **S raphine Pick** has been wielding her visceral medium to explore virtual technologies, transforming the fantastic into something tangible.

WORDS: LUCINDA BENNETT

PHOTOGRAPHY: RUSSELL KLEYN

IT IS 2018 and reality is augmented. Physical and digital spaces are irreversibly enmeshed, with human lives tightly woven into this complex fabric. This is the world we live in, and the world **S raphine Pick** paints in.

Born in the Kawakawa, Bay of Islands in 1964, Pick studied at the University of Canterbury's Ilam School of Fine Arts, graduating in 1987. In the two decades since, Pick has secured her position as an artist of national significance – albeit one whose oeuvre is difficult to quantify, given her tendency to “continuously reinvent her practice”, as Christchurch Art Gallery curator **Felicity Milburn** has noted. Despite never sticking to one style or subject matter, Pick's work is always unmistakably her own, recognisable by an aura of strangeness and her singular, sensual mastery of paint.

Pick first began mining the internet for images in 2013. It began with a simple search for photographs of people lying down. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the images that came up were primarily of unconscious people, of people who were drunk or out of it. The ambiguity and uneasiness of these prone figures appealed to Pick and the paintings borne from this image search were shown at Auckland's Michael Lett for her exhibition *Wankered Again*. Pick refers to the dormant, drunken figures she found online as a kind of “tribe” – a group of people united by their desire to get wasted, to decorate the faces of their blacked-out friends with marker pens or stacks of beer cans, to document these actions and circulate the images online.

“People are putting photos up online all the time to be part of some group,” Pick tells me, “which in itself is interesting from a human behavioural perspective.”

What began as an uncomplicated search for an image of a specific bodily pose led to a fascination not only with the niche tribes that form online – those that can be identified through their habits – but





Séraphine Pick, *Everything Old is New Again*, 2011. Oil on linen, 3 panels, 250 x 540cm. COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND MICHAEL LETT, AUCKLAND.

also with what these habits suggest about humans as social creatures more generally: about the way we seek to belong.

For her 2015 exhibition *White Noise*, Pick again used the internet as a starting place to explore ideas around collective consciousness, popular culture, belonging and misrepresentation. She searched for images of crowds and became particularly interested in documentary photographs of hippie music festivals from the 1960s and 1970s – a time when Pick herself was a teenager. Drawing on these images, Pick created atmospheric, almost impressionist-style paintings of concert-goers crowded together, earnestly feeling the music, their expressions transcendent as though experiencing God – or at least the effects of LSD.

For me, these works (such as *Superstar* and *Guru*, both 2015) seem to emphasise the silence of paint, so absorbed are the figures in listening to some-

"I've always read and sensed paintings as sound."

SÉRAPHINE PICK

thing the viewer can't access. However, this is quite the opposite to how Pick experiences them, and to how she experiences paintings in general. "I've always read and sensed paintings as sound. This might be because I have no hearing in one ear and 60 per cent left in the other, so I have perhaps always compensated subconsciously with vision." The dissonance between our two experiences is precisely what makes being a painter so satisfying for Pick. "The viewer is reacting to the painting, and the pleasure of looking," she tells

me. "That's what I love about making art – you can't control the audience's reaction to what you do, and that interaction is what completes the artwork. It goes on to have a life of its own in the world."

For her upcoming exhibition (which will sprawl across Aotearoa, showing at Michael Lett as well as **Nadene Milne's** two South Island galleries), Pick will show a new body of work that delves even deeper into the question of what it is to be human in our augmented reality world by investigating virtual reality (VR) technologies. The exhibition title, *God Helmet*, refers to an experimental apparatus invented in the 1970s to aid the study of creative and religious experiences. It was dubbed the God Helmet by journalists when they learned that people participating in the experiments believed they were having mystical, out-of-body experiences. Pick describes the link between the helmet and VR, telling me that people who use VR often say

that they experience "presence": a feeling that they are really present in the virtual world, even to the extent that they experience motion sickness, or lose awareness of their body in the physical world.

Perhaps it seems antithetical for an artist working with so traditional a medium as paint to be exploring such fantastical technologies. But then again, what is paint if not a technology for making fantasies tangible? As Pick tells me, "painting is a process to create another world for your mind to journey into. It is bodily, visceral, tactile – it is transformative and made with the body and mind together."

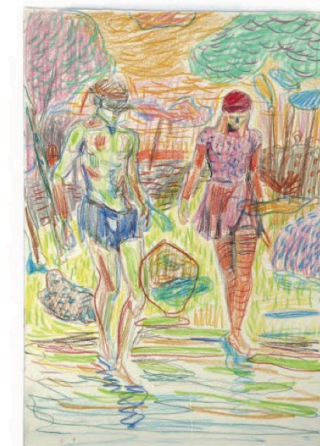
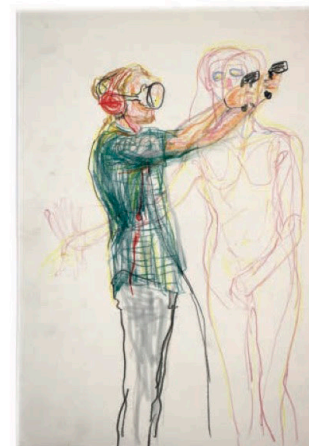
SÉRAPHINE PICK'S *GOD HELMET* SHOWS AT MICHAEL LETT, AUCKLAND, AND NADENE MILNE GALLERY, ARROWTOWN AND CHRISTCHURCH, FROM 5 SEPTEMBER TO 6 OCTOBER 2018.



ARTIST PROFILE

“We’re more likely to discuss her figures in relation to the identity creation taking place on Instagram and Snapchat than to palimpsests and dreamscapes.”

COURTNEY JOHNSTON



OPPOSITE PAGE: Séraphine Pick, *Immersion (the green watercolour)*, detail, 2018. Gouache on paper, 26 x 18cm.

ABOVE LEFT: Séraphine Pick, *Tethered (man with joystick)*, 2018. Coloured pencil on paper, 30 x 21cm.

ABOVE RIGHT: Séraphine Pick, *Riven (the couple in coloured pencil)*, 2018. Coloured pencil on paper, 30 x 21cm.

COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND MICHAEL LETT, AUCKLAND.

NADENE MILNE

Director, Nadene Milne Gallery, Arrowtown and Christchurch, New Zealand

“She’s highly collectible, one of the leading artists of her generation,” says **Nadene Milne**, who represents **Séraphine Pick** on New Zealand’s South Island. Milne describes her paintings as being “at once disarming, in their canny depictions of human character, and entertaining for their surface level frivolity. They are meditations on the interminably curious affair of human experience, and are the continuation of a decades-long exploration of painterly technique and style.”

God Helmet will be Pick’s first solo exhibition at Nadene Milne Gallery, and will be presented across both of her galleries in Arrowtown and Christchurch, simultaneously with Michael Lett in Auckland. When asked what initially attracted her to Pick’s work, Milne tells me that she was “drawn to her particular lens on the human condition, which is current and very focused on the now. But her work is hugely driven by process and it stands on the shoulders of the history of painting.”

“Good art records history as it is unfolding – that’s the kind of art that holds its value. Séraphine’s work isn’t fashion. She’s the real deal; a painter that has to paint.”

COURTNEY JOHNSTON

Director, The Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt, New Zealand

“As an artist who emerged in the early 1990s, **Séraphine Pick**’s career has evolved alongside a significant shift in the way we create, share and parse visual imagery. In her early works, writers saw the aesthetics and operations of the blackboard, and she was grouped into the pack of pencil-case painters. Pick has always drawn on art history and popular culture as much as on memory for her subject matter.”

In recent years, physical clippings have been joined by digital crumbs, as she mines the internet for kick-off points. Today, we’re more likely to discuss her figures in relation to the identity creation taking place on Instagram and Snapchat than to palimpsests and dreamscapes.

The most significant insight I took from working with Pick on her survey *White Noise* was that her paintings aren’t *about* her subject matter. Although the imagery is evocative, it is simply a vehicle to explore the formal concerns of her medium: colour, space, line. ■



Campbell Patterson, *call sick 1, 2, 3 and 4*, 2017, Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Iain Frengley



S raphine Pick, *Observed Woman*, 2017, oil on linen, Brett McDowell Gallery. Courtesy of the artist

DUNEDIN

Kebab sauce and coconut oil: if you wore the same pair of track pants as pyjamas continuously for five weeks these are just two of many possible substances that could drop, splatter, soak, and accumulate over that time. Campbell Patterson, in an artist talk to mark the opening of *call sick* at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, mentioned these substances amongst others, and the “nice sleeps” he was having after completing this, his latest time-and-object-constrained project.

Titled *call sick 1, 2, 3 and 4* (2017), each number represents a pair of grey track pants worn every night for a period of five weeks. For 20 weeks then, the length of time Patterson has been in Dunedin so far as the Frances Hodgkins Fellow, he has spent each night coiled in a pair of giant track pants. This last point is important. These track pants could comfortably house five or six Campbell Pattersons. He can hitch the waistband up over his head like a hood, and wrap the remainder around his shoulders like a cape. Or he can attempt to climb out windows while clasping the track pants to his otherwise naked body: which in fact he’s done, multiple times, out of three separate windows, and captured with his trademark static camera.

Titled *escape 1, 2 and 3* (2017), each of the looped three-channel video works records Patterson’s intensely focused moves to exit the window without losing his grasp on the track pants. Occasionally he stumbles, falls backwards, or loses the pants before walking out of frame, back into the house or studio, only to reappear again at the window. Despite the three separate windows, Patterson has edited each video so that he appears ready to climb out of each at the same time. It’s a nightmare of a sick day. Patterson’s complications of everyday environments and situations compound in *call sick* to unspool a day, an endeavour, that the protagonist cannot escape.

The body as abject, if striving, is similarly evident in S raphine Pick’s first exhibition at Brett McDowell Gallery – although here, as the title *Cavewomen* indicates, the cast is multiple. The thirteen individual women are variously, to draw on their titles, fractured, observed, subdued, stretching, bathing, chanting, slumped, shivering, bent, blue, purple, kneeling and cave (woman). While some of these titles suggest an archaeological or neo-primitivist source, it is equally plausible to see a re-presentation of ‘art historical’ women – women who have been painted throughout history, forever

stretching, bathing and kneeling. Perhaps there are also lingering traces of Pick’s engagement with internet images like those that peopled her 2015 show *White Noise*. Or those from pop culture: this is also the domain of 1970s female punk bands, and movie posters of semi-naked stars in the desert or rising out of the surf.

Where the figures in *Blue Woman* and *Purple Woman* (both 2016) with their arms stretched out above their heads or flung out wide share a sense of the exultant common to some of the ecstatic revellers in the *White Noise* suite, the eponymous work *Cave Woman* takes me right back to Andy Dufresne’s cell in *The Shawshank Redemption*, to the large poster of a buff woman wearing scraps of hide and not much else. That Pick can capture the insouciance of that pose in watercolour is testament to her skill in this medium. In fact, over half of the twenty-three works in *Cavewomen* are watercolours, which came as something of a (not unpleasant) surprise.

Three of the cavewomen – *Fractured Woman* (2016), *Observed Woman* and *Subdued Woman* (both 2017) – executed in oil on board or linen, are more immediately recognisable and emblematic of the artist’s ghost-symbolist style. Pick moves effortlessly between abstraction and figuration; blurring each mode, allowing each to breathe into each.

Shared breath, in the form of collaborations between artists and writers, is also the curatorial premise guiding Robyn Notman’s first exhibition at the Hocken Library, *Freefall*. Notman has picked over a broad range of collections in a number of institutions with a fine-toothed comb, producing an ambitious exhibition that includes paintings from the fourteenth century to the present day.

As the curators note in the accompanying catalogue, there are self-evident inclusions such as Colin McCahon’s *The Wake* (1958): sixteen unstretched canvases of poet John Caselberg’s elegy for his great dane Thor interspersed with slender painted canvases. Other choices are more oblique. The exhibition is a testament to the breadth of locally held collections, and perhaps the title, *Freefall*, is a wry acknowledgement of the generous array of works on display. Amongst such a range it was the quiet works on paper by Ralph Hotere for Hone Tuwhare’s poetry collection *Sapwood and Milk* (1972) that stood out for me.

/ Robyn Maree Pickens

Painter Seraphine Pick takes inspiration from the internet for her new show

TOM CARDY

Last updated 13:59, July 1 2015



Wellington artist Seraphine Pick with one of her works *Sevens*. Her exhibition *White Noise* has recently opened at the Dowse Art Museum. Kevin Stent/Fairfax

The internet gives access to billions of images, from fine art to candid photographs. For some users the sheer number can be overwhelming. But for Wellington artist Seraphine Pick, it's been a source of inspiration.

"The internet's just become a source for everybody really. We used to use magazines, now we use the internet. But the internet's different because it's a place where everybody is putting imagery. There's that concept of all our history going on the internet, all that personal stuff – and other people putting images [up] of other people. It's just endless and I find it quite fascinating," says Pick.

Those that have followed Pick's work and career, including a big retrospective survey at City Gallery in 2010, may be surprised at some of the paintings in her new exhibition *White Noise* at the Dowse Art Museum.

Pick, regarded as one of the country's best painters, is most widely-known for her surrealist dream-like works, with some echoing Rene Magritte and Frida Kahlo.

While *White Noise* is still recognisably Pick, even to the casual visitor it's obvious the artist has been pushing herself into new territory with works spanning five years, including a selection of significant work completed this year.

A few of the early paintings have previously been exhibited only in dealer galleries or overseas, so most of the 18 works are being shown in public for the first time.

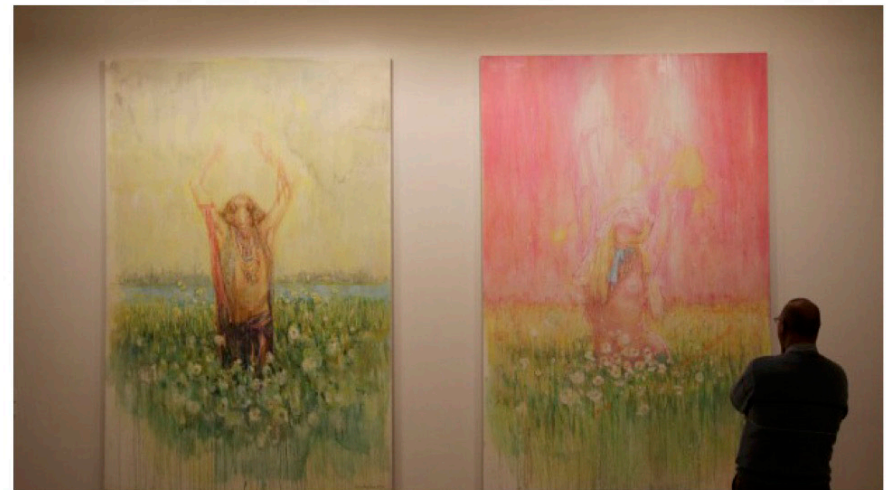


Retreat (left) and *Tape* (right) and by Wellington artist Seraphine Pick. Kevin Stent/Fairfax

"They all have similar ideas, but it can take years and years before you build up to do a whole show about it."

The paintings are in a rough chronological order, including 2010's *White Noise*, the painting from which the show gets its title, and 2011's *Torn Up Phrases*. and grouped into separate rooms in the gallery so visitors can see how Pick's ideas and experiments have evolved. "People are mostly familiar with [my] work done previously with the big survey show. This is to show what I've been doing since then, which people aren't familiar with."

Pick says it's also a reminder to people that she has never settled on one style or approach in her paintings. "I keep changing. I don't sit still for long. That's just me exploring painting really. There are just endless possibilities with it. I'm a figurative artist and there's just so many ways you can approach figuration, so I've always tried out lots of different things."



Easy Living II (left) and *Easy Living* by Wellington artist Seraphine Pick. Kevin Stent/Fairfax

The variety of approaches is evident with the some of the paintings. White Noise and Torn Up Phrases feature bearded, long-haired men seated in brightly coloured Monet-like tranquil landscapes. The images came from Pick looking at early 70s hippie-style photographs. "I'm taking things from the real world a bit more and seeing them as surrealistic things I suppose."

She'd begin, like most figurative painters. of searching for an image of a particular pose. She would then use an internet search engine to narrow it down not only to a pose, but a particular era.

In contrast in the same room are the comparatively smaller 2013 paintings Tape and Coat Hanger. Pick jokingly calls them her "drunk paintings" as they were inspired by the millions of photos posted online of people's drunken antics and pranks. The former is a man covered in masking tape lying asleep in a corner, the latter of a man, head down, with what appears to be a coat hanger sticking out his back.



Superstar by Wellington artist Seraphine Pick. Kevin Stent/Fairfax

The paintings use a more subdued pallet of colours than most of the Pick's other works on show, which was deliberate, she says. "They are more direct, straight 'painterly' paintings and I just decided to make them simple because the images were so powerful."

Pick says it's also a reminder of how notions of privacy have changed, with young people - including her own son - more relaxed about posting photographs online, while other generations are more reluctant. "Their sense of privacy is just covering their body as they come out of the shower or something. They are only just working out to be careful or conscious about that."

Everything Old is New Again is a giant triptych and one of the largest works Pick has ever produced. It took up the entire wall of her Lyall Bay studio.

The painting is festooned with people, with some peering out of the darkness, to others bathed in a pastoral light. "It could have gone on forever, this painting. It is a real crammed-full painting. I decided to push it over the top."

Others have a different impact. There's a painting of a figure walking down a street with a road cone covering his head. Pick says there are plenty of photographs on the internet of people playing with road cones. Another, in a painterly style like Tape and Coat Hanger, has a woman lying face down on a footpath. Pick jokes that it looks similar to what she's seen late at night on Courtenay Pl.

Another powerful large work looks like Pick's version of a scene from Dante or Boccaccio's The Decameron, but was in fact inspired by the "massive number" of images of costumed revellers at the Wellington Sevens.

Of the many most recent works, two of Pick's favourites are the large pastel-coloured 2015 paintings Easy Living and Easy Living II, featuring male and female hippie-like figures with their arms raised above their heads, echoing the imagery Pick saw when growing up in the 70s with her artist "sort of hippie" parents in the Bay of Islands.

"I was thinking of the human form and gestures and how gestures can communicate a lot," Pick says. "A lot of them were cliched hippie images, but it's a powerful gesture. Back in the 70s they had this utopian idea of the self-sufficient world."

"That just hasn't quite happened."

Seraphine Pick's White Noise is at the Dowse Art Museum in Lower Hutt until January 17.

Visitors can also see the show as part of Art Night on July 2, 4pm-11pm, which is offering free buses and tours of Wellington region galleries, Te Papa, the Dowse, City Gallery, Expressions and Pataka. The buses run between 4pm and 10pm from each venue.

- Stuff