

To watch, with your mind's eye, the world floating quiet.

Becky Richards

Wednesday 5 April – Saturday 29 April

Artist Talk | Wednesday 5 April, 12pm

Around roundness.

To watch, with your mind's eye, the world floating quiet; a workshop and exhibition initiated by Auckland based artist, Becky Richards, will exist as a shared, contemplative exploration of roundness, and its intrinsic appeal.

Richards borrows from processes used to form hikaru dorodango (shining dumplings, or mudballs), a traditional Japanese earth craft. Here, she utilises the production of aggregate mudballs as a sensate method of exploring the nature of the Moeraki boulders, and other sources of organic roundness.

This project currently exists as the result of two strains of research - one tactile and physical, the other cerebral, reflective, and linguistic. As a means of growing and enriching this body of research, Becky Richards and Blue Oyster have invited interested contributors to come and spend time; engaging with making, thinking, talking and writing - around roundness - in a way that suits them. Their contributions to a series of collective activities will form the body of the exhibition.

Becky Richards is a Christchurch born artist, based in Auckland and is currently undertaking her MFA at Elam School of Fine Arts. Favouring analog, tactile processes and natural materials, Richards seeks to describe and encourage a close and curious engagement with the organic world. She is interested in how such engagement can induce energetic, cognitive and emotional changes of state in humans; focusing on rhythms of weather, seasons, botanical presence, elemental flux, interconnectivity and the liveliness of organic matter.

She looks for simple activities, ways of thinking, and states of being that can help generate balance and well-being, particularly in increasingly screen-oriented, digitally-saturated societies. Richards' previous exhibitions include; *Three Nights in the desert*, C3 Contemporary Artspace, 2013 (solo); *Temple of shapes*, Seventh Gallery, 2013 (group); *Domestos*, Tinning St Gallery, 2014 (solo); *The wee shocial*, Christchurch Exchange, 2015 (group).

With special thanks Lucinda Bennett, Becky Cameron, Rua McCallum, Sam Clague, Jake Fairweather, Julie-Ann and Philip Fleming, Kirsty Glengarry, James Hope, Hayley Rata Heyes, Liam Hoffman, Madison Kelly, Lisa Peniskie, Robyn Maree Pickens, Jenny Powell, Rosie Richards, Ed Ritchie, Fran Tyrell, Anna van Hattum, Yuki Watanabe, Daegan Wells, Jill, Robyn and Michael.

An incomplete list of round contemplations:

1. Becoming aware of the sky as a vast, upturned dome, filled with shifting cloud and breeze. Continuous blue, glittering dark space-bowl.

2. Holding the dimpled body of an orange in your palm. Cupping an egg. Grasping the curves of a kumara. Carrying a melon.

3. Gazing at a lone thing. A solitary bird, or tree. Noticing how, in isolation, the thing becomes round; its vital force turned inward, concentrated and contained.ⁱ

4. Inhabiting a moment completely. Losing oneself in a view of open water, the warm press and shift of sand, a fresh lick of clean air. Causing a droplet of time to fill and swell; a round fruit, close to bursting.

5. Thinking of the earth turning slowly in space. A round rock, its surface covered with scrolling wet ripples, and the flux and bubble of growing things, rivers, slow-rising mountains. To watch, with your mind's eye, the world floating quiet.

6. Finding roundness in the land. In the plush-bristled curves of dry hills, in lumpen boulders, bulging cliff faces. In ponds and the soft russet-green balls of trees, viewed from high above.

7. Catching sight of a full moon while walking home, or sitting on your doorstep. Eating it with your eyes; low, fat and ripe, glowing peach above the tree line.

8. Making a round thing. A biscuit dough-ball, a clay bead, a rissole. Rolling soft matter, moist between palms.

9. Eating from a bowl. Glazed curves warm in your hands; its round void and inner surface more apparent with each bite, emptying as you fill.

10. Finishing a round day. When an arc of the sun is filled and thorough; swollen with a rich mixture of experiential matter. When a day, like a breath, is full, deep and complete.

ⁱ 'The Poetics of Space', Gaston Bachelard, Chapter 10: 'The phenomenology of roundness'.