

Shoaling

Yolunda Hickman

Blue Oyster presents *Shoaling* a collection of work by Tāmaki Makaurau based artist Yolunda Hickman.

In "high semiotic traffic", image, meaning and content are slippery and, at times, collapse entirely. Yolunda Hickman's *Shoaling* aims to test both the macro and micro possibilities of image and visual communication.¹

Shoaling employs Jacques Rancière's idea that "incompatible" images are able to reveal the constituent elements of images that determine systems of meaning.² Horse, leopard, fish and eagle motifs are filled with different image and pattern contents. In *Clearings*, quilting fabrics are cut into different shapes. The outline edges often contrast the fabric patterns: horse shapes are filled with diggers, leopards are cut from dizzying paisley, eagle outline shapes contain sleeping tigers. A sort of double image is made where both the outside edges and the pictures within form meaning, sometimes at odds with each other.

Flotsam uses found objects from op-shops that are smothered in kitsch image films. The surface image and underlying objects jostle, obscuring and confusing one another and are, at times, unreadable. A porcelain elephant sits next to a seahorse, all coated in camouflage patterns; a turtle and teaspoon are wrapped in flames and poker chips. *Flotsam* presents a visual cacophony of content and images

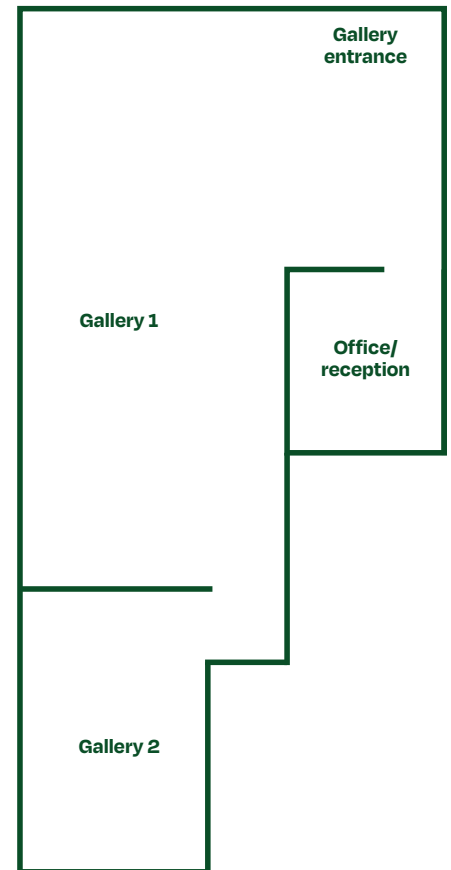
which disrupt the usual hierarchies of communication and meaning.

Both series in the exhibition use "clashes"² of incongruous image content, discordant aesthetic qualities and impossible spatial settings. The clashing of incompatible images and materials aims to test the conventional systems and limitations of visual communication.

Yolunda Hickman is an artist working in the wider fields of painting, addressing the nature of contemporary image and the limitations of communication. Recent works alter found image typologies by separating the communicative function from pictorial form, to test the possibilities of image, composition and materiality.

In 2016, she travelled to Canada for a residency at Banff Centre for the Arts and took part in the 2019 RM Summer Residency, Auckland. Selected exhibitions include *MEATWARE* (Sumer Gallery, Tauranga, 2019), *you had fun experience* (George Fraser Gallery, 2019), *Legend and Letters* (Window onsite and online, 2015), *Passed, repeating last* (Five Walls, Melbourne, 2016) and *Size* (Te Tuhi, 2014).

Hickman completed her Master of Fine Arts at Elam in 2013 and is a current Doctoral candidate there with a focus on the visual semiotics and limitations of communication systems in para-painting practices.



Gallery 1: *Clearings*, 2019-20, Cotton appliqué, 1500 x 1000mm each

Gallery 2: *Flotsam*, 2019 - 2020, found objects, resin plaster, gesso, wood, poly-vinyl alcohol film and clearcoat, 185 x 185mm each

1. Sarah Rich speaking on the paintings of Laura Owens. Rich, Sarah K. "Laura Owens," 17. *Artforum International*. April 2018. Vol. 56, No. 8. 17.

2. Rancière, Jacques. *The Future of the Image*. London, UK: Verso. 2007, 56, 61.

3. Rancière. *The Future of the Image*, 25.