

**EARTHBOUND: LONG MEMORY
EXHIBITION**

19 November 2005 to 15 January 2006

**Linda Bruce
Julia Van Helden
Claire McCormick**

Exhibition Opening Friday 18 November 2006 at 5.30 pm

Artists Floor Talk Saturday 19 November 2006 at 1.00pm

This exhibition brings together the work of Linda Bruce, Julia van Helden and Claire McCormick, artists in sculpture, paint and electronic media. Each starts with something real and earthbound. Linda began by shaping moulds of objects found discarded in the rural environment; Julia embarked on marks on a painting surface in response to the view of an unassuming bush-clad hill behind her home; Claire set out by inviting three Pukehou women to reflect on their lives.

"Everything carries a pattern, an imprint, a pulse. We each embody the existence we have had, but we are also a thread into a past beyond our own memory. The *Earthbound: Long Memory* exhibition is a snapshot of this continuum and our individual endeavours to understand our place. Each thread discloses its own quality by shaping, marking, articulating and weaving them together."

Linda Bruce, Julia van Helden
and Claire McCormick

**Hawke's Bay Exhibition Centre
201 Eastbourne Street East, HASTINGS Ph 06 876 2077**

List Of Works

Linda Bruce
Pulse
Ceramic sculpture

Julia van Helden
Media: oil, acrylic on board.

Continuity
Claire McCormick

"I always remember the end of the evening, the men getting out those big long brooms and sweeping up the hall and you as little kids running around and having to avoid the dust as they were sweeping up."

Interviews with Liz Graham, Leslie Hunter, and Gemma Schumacher from Pukehou.

Electronic media
NFS

Earthbound: Long Memory

An essay by Claire McCormick

Demonstrating a sense of continuity, of being rooted in this earth, might be deemed a subversive act, in a world obsessed with ephemeral popular culture. So why would three peace-loving women choose to pull the stake of post-modernism from the ground? Because there is a high cost to the seductions and distractions of consumer culture - anxiety, disorientation, dislocation and the suppression of our own experiences. If we are an anathema to certain current doctrines and practice, we are content to be so. *Earthbound: Long Memory* is about a sense of permanence through connection.

Somewhere between chaos and order, silence and sound, feeling and intellect, we translate our experiences into memory, and our lives begin to take shape. The place we live in and interact with is full of the past. We don't know it all. But we're all a thread of that past. Identity is not fixed, it is always in the process of becoming. Long memory has an aura of what we can't quite put our finger on, but it gives us pause.

The *Earthbound: Long Memory* artists, Claire McCormick, Linda Bruce and Julia van Helden, are connected by State Highway Two, which rolls across the land, linking seaside Napier with coastal Wellington. Like many routes routinely taken, the highway closely follows traditional walking tracks. Consciously or not, contemporary practice has an imprint of customary habits and values.

Part form and texture of the landscape, part labyrinthian workings of your brain, Julia's paintings come from a place of inner listening, where the internal and the external come together. The hill behind her home doesn't look like much. That very innocence makes her want to tune in. By her activity of patient observing and drawing, she joins the continuity of its presence. Moving calligraphically, in a space that has boundaries, there's always a way in and out, an opening or disclosing of something she has a hint of. These paintings don't pin down a static view of the land, they carry the pulse and endless variations of our most familiar places. From her place of listening, Julia traces the rhythms and variations in the jumble of complexity, composing paintings in which the earth seems to perform a tender and celebratory dance.

Linda's ceramic works are also listening to the rhythm of the earth, valuing the domestic and its repetitive patterns, affirming the feminine. Just as Julia attended to a quietly inconspicuous hill, Linda gathered objects found discarded in the countryside. Things that had served their purpose lay waiting to attract her eye. Back in the studio she made repetitions from hand built forms and moulds, seeking to make sense of what attracted her to these found objects. The forms are collective, resting on or supporting one other, folding and unfolding in motion - like primal forces, and cyclical patterns of growth and decay. Memory and feeling are reconstructed from industrial and domestic debris. Making art is like learning to speak any new language. There comes a point when you have to switch from your rational brain, which slowly translates from the known to the new, and trust that you have learnt enough to just open your mouth and magically, almost instinctively, speak. Linda's work discloses and translates the patterns of stories inherent within everyday, discarded objects.

To resituate herself in the landscape that these objects came from, Linda asked me to interview three treasured friends who live alongside State Highway Two at Pukehou. In the process of recording their memories; patterns, connections and variations emerged. You might wonder why I disembodied the women I interviewed? I could easily have set a camera on them, but I chose not to. I wanted to concentrate on their voices and stories. Using the voices of women, freely putting their history and experiences into words, frustrates a transfer from identity to image. I wanted the voices of real women to fill the void of constant, mute, obsessive imaging of women. Hearing Liz, Gemma and Leslie portray their inborn sense of continuity is grounding and freeing at the same time. Listening I found myself returning to earth, to the earth that dances in Julia's paintings.

If the dominant global idea of culture is considered universal then, by nature, speaking from the margins, our voices may jar. Our accent, our idiom reverberates with our sense of place - house, home and homeland - and our situation as women. Real women who are quite happy to be ourselves. Working together in our own dimensions 2-D, 3-D and sound, collaborating and playing off one another, bound together for *Earthbound: Long Memory*.

NOTES ON THE THREE PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

Linda Bruce

Linda was born in Hastings, New Zealand in 1956. From her Hastings studio she works as a sculptor using the medium of ceramics. She has deliberately taken her work in a new direction recently, collecting found objects to mould or hand-build forms. "I like man-made things that you can reference and make into an organic thing. I need that, I like structure. When you find things something triggers, almost like a future knowing, but you're not there yet. It's waiting to say something."

Academic

1993 Diploma in Visual Arts and Design, EIT-HB

1994-2005 Part-time tutor/lecturer Art Department, EIT-HB

Recent Exhibitions and Commissions

2005 *Green*, Masterworks, Auckland

2005 *Mud and moonstone*, Gallery VC, Queenstown

2001 *Equip with wings*, Masterworks, Auckland

2001 Ceramic work for The Providors, London, Peter Gordon's restaurant

2000 *Land of Plenty*, Form Gallery, Christchurch

1998 *Navigate*, Hawke's Bay Museum, Napier

Awards and Grants

2005 Sculpture Award, Hawke's Bay Review, HB Museum, Napier

1996 Winner Hawke's Bay Craft Review, HB Museum, Napier

1996 Winner Mary Vigor Brown Award, HB Museum, Napier

1994 Merit Award, Hawke's Bay Craft Review, HB Museum, Napier

2003 Creative New Zealand Grant to develop new work

Julia van Helden:

"Biography is the very thing I wanted to leave behind. I wanted to come to things on my own, to be in the unknown. As I move on, I see that everything that I grew up with has fallen into place. I was seeking to find things and they found me. In the process of looking I was given."

Academic

1989 Graduate Diploma of Art (ceramics), Tasmania State Institute of Technology.

1958 Diploma Fine Arts, Canterbury University.

Exhibitions, awards and residencies

1998 *Archivista*, EIT-HB tutors exhibition at Hawke's Bay Exhibition Centre.

1993 *No Mans Land*, group exhibition Dowse Art Museum.

1992 *Treasures of the Underworld*, commissioned to make ceramics for the NZ Expo Pavilion in Seville, Spain.

1991 Artist in residence at Otatara, Hawke's Bay.

1989 Solo exhibition, Tasmanian Institute of Technology.

1983 Winner of the Williams Award for Painting, NZ Academy of Fine Arts.

Tutoring

1992 - 2000 Tutor in the Visual Art and Design Diploma and Degree programmes, EIT, Hawke's Bay.

Claire McCormick

Claire was born in Dunedin, NZ in 1956.

"I was raised on stories of mum's family history, and driven into research on dad's because he was displaced from his ancestry. Those experiences have made me gravitate towards exploring connections between people and place. Working in electronic media, and with a strong nasal Kiwi accent myself, I am most interested in work that speaks with a distinctive "accented" voice.

- Currently Tutor in the Diploma of Video and Electronic Media, EIT, HB.
- B Arts-Film (First Class Hons)
- Prize for Film Studies, Victoria University, Wellington, 2004.
- Researcher/writer for Hawke's Bay's Mainland Island conservation walkway at Boundary Stream, HB, 2002.
- Studied oral history methodology with Judith Fyfe and Hugo Manson