

Hawke's Bay Squares: Ocean Beach

Hawke's Bay Review 2006

Merit award

The ***Hawke's Bay Squares*** series of works addresses the scandalous purchase of over 20,000 acres of the Heretaunga Plains in the 1870's by several noted men. The decision of landowners at Ocean Beach to create up to 2000 sections at a beach that is wild and vulnerable is a contemporary example of the continued dicing up of land for personal profit, and one that generated a wave of opposition from the local community.

This series of works uses corrugated clay cubes, Aertex shirt material, Hawke's Bay land purchase history, contemporary land development, woolshed stencils to engage in the debate about development and conservation past, present and future. Aertex shirt material with its neat squares like the grid work of Hastings and the surrounding Heretaunga plains is used to smother and encase the earth material, acts as a metaphor for the slicing and dicing of land and has a laugh at the often square attitudes and tastes of those who wear the shirts.

The playful lettering blocks of ***Hawke's Bay Squares: Ocean Beach*** spell out *Haupouri* – the station proposing to sub divide its' long beach front for housing development – and *Waipuka* – the Maori name for Ocean Beach.

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Sculpture award

Selector's comment

Claire Regnault

I kept coming back to these weird building blocks snugly fitted with Aertex shirts – the fabric that speaks of farmer types. I like their strangeness, their soft-seeming yet hard undulating surfaces, their associations with children's building blocks, with quilting's tumbling blocks, with land blocks as well as shirts and moleskins. I can't quite pin down their meaning, but that's why I like them. They kept me guessing, kept calling me over to play with them, turn them over, and wonder. Parts of them are even a little annoying. I was left wanting to know more about them.