

Artists Ruth Buchanan and Matt Henry return to hometown for new projects at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery

Matt Henry: *Long Division* 27 Aug – 27 Nov 2016

Ruth Buchanan: *The actual and its document* 10 Sept - 4 Dec 2016

Two new exhibitions by Taranaki-born artists Ruth Buchanan and Matt Henry open at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery this season in response to its architecture and collection.



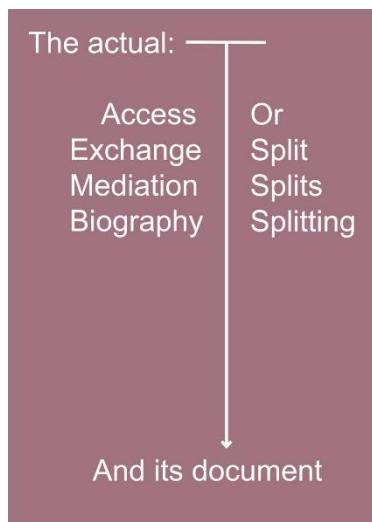
Matt Henry's solo exhibition at the Govett-Brewster, *Long Division*, alters the architecture of the gallery spaces in which the work is displayed. Following major renovations and the addition of the Len Lye Centre, Henry is rediscovering the spaces that were once so familiar to him.

Henry grew up in New Plymouth and has a strong connection with the Govett-Brewster. As a long-time visitor and an ex-installation technician at the gallery, his keen understanding of these spaces informs the careful design and production of his work for this exhibition.

Curator Chloe Cull says art and architecture, modernism and minimalism work together within Henry's painting and within the Govett-Brewster/Len Lye Centre's new galleries.

"Rather than simply installing his paintings in a series flat to the wall, Matt Henry turns them into objects. They can jut out at 90 degrees, act as wall in themselves, or pedestrian barriers – that turn the history and logic of hanging paintings on its head – and change the gallery's architecture," says Cull.

Long Division will be accompanied by a small publication featuring a commissioned essay by Auckland writer and artist Emil McAvoy.



The actual and its document is the outcome of Ruth Buchanan's three month Govett-Brewster residency in New Plymouth, funded by Creative New Zealand. During this time Buchanan worked in the gallery's archives, looking at primary research material from 1970 to 1983. These dates coincide with the Govett-Brewster's formation and the period of time that Buchanan's family lived in the city.

Buchanan was fascinated by *The Great De-accession Exhibition* of 1982, an initiative led by then-director Dick Bett. The exhibition saw the entire Govett-Brewster Art Gallery Collection, minus works on paper, on display for assessment by the general public and a board of past gallery directors. This was an in-depth and open discussion of what was

valuable in the collection and what the focus of the acquisitions policy should be for the future.

Like much of history, the narrative of this exhibition is a social one, filled with gaps and missing information, and often only existing in the memories of those people involved.

Curator Sophie O'Brien says that within *the actual and its document* Buchanan takes stock of this historical event while addressing the complex issues associated with building gallery collections.

"Buchanan thinks of collections as a form of biography. Here, she is making a series of spatial and display interventions, exhibiting works from the Govett-Brewster Collection in a way that articulates a sense of the histories of people in this place. It will evoke the unique, interwoven relationships that the Govett-Brewster has had with its location and its audiences," O'Brien says.

A companion to *the actual and its document* will be a comprehensive and carefully designed artist book, to be launched in early 2017.

Also opening at the Govett-Brewster is *Set in Motion* (3 Sep – 27 Nov), an exhibition that presents sculpture and film from the Len Lye Foundation Collection alongside kinetic art by contemporary artists Rebecca Baumann, Žilvinas Kempinas, Taree Mackenzie and Ross Manning.

Images:

Matt Henry *Voodoo Ray* 2015, acrylic on linen, cedar stretcher. Courtesy of the artist and Starkwhite, Auckland

Ruth Buchanan *The actual and its document* 2016, diagram. Courtesy the artist and Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland

Opening events:

Sat 10 Sep

10 am | Pōwhiri led by Ngāti Te Whiti and Te Pihipihinga Kākano mai i Rangiatea

11 am | Morning tea

12 pm | Kapa Haka performance by Te Pihipihinga Kākano mai i Rangiatea

2 pm | Art making in the Large Works gallery inspired by the work of WharehokaSmith

1 pm and 2 pm | Cinema screening – Projection Series #4: Man Without a Camera

3 pm | Artist talk – Ruth Buchanan

Sun 11 Sep

11 am Artist talk – Matt Henry and Emil McAvoy

1 pm and 2 pm Cinema Screening – Projection Series #4: Man Without a Camera

1 – 3 pm Family Art

Artists' bios

Matt Henry, born 1973 in New Plymouth, New Zealand, lives and works in Auckland, New Zealand. In 2008 Matt Henry graduated from Melbourne's RMIT University with a Master of Arts (Fine Arts). Selected solo exhibitions include: *Structural Relief*, Te Tuhi Centre for the Arts (2014-15), *High Fidelity*, Starkwhite, Auckland, New Zealand (2013), *From the series 16:9*, SNO Contemporary Art Projects, Sydney, Australia (2012), *User Friendly*, Te Tuhi Centre for the Arts, Auckland, New Zealand (2011) and *Fahrenheit*, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, New Zealand (2009). Henry's work is held in collections including the Chartwell Collection, Auckland Art Gallery, Toi o Tāmaki; Wallace Arts Trust; New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade; Elevation Capital Art Collection and the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Ruth Buchanan, born 1980 (Te Ātiawa, Taranaki) New Plymouth, New Zealand, lives and works in Berlin, Germany. In 2007 Ruth Buchanan completed a Master of Arts (Fine Arts) at the Piet Zwart Institute, Willem de Kooning Academie, in Rotterdam, Netherlands. In 2015/16 she was the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery Artist in Residence and in 2012 she completed the McCahon House Residency, Auckland, New Zealand. Solo exhibitions by the artist include *Or, a camera, Or, a building, Or, a screen*, Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof, Hamburg, 2015, *Sound Bow (with Milli Jannides)*, Johan Berggren Gallery, Malmö, 2014, *Ruth Buchanan / Ayse Erkmen*, Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland, 2014, *Put a curve, an arch, right through it*, Krome Gallery, Berlin, 2012.

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About Govett-Brewster Art Gallery/Len Lye Centre

The Govett-Brewster Art Gallery is New Zealand's contemporary art museum in the coastal city of New Plymouth, Taranaki on the North Island of Aotearoa New Zealand. Since opening in 1970, the Gallery has dedicated itself to innovative programming, focused collection development and audience engagement. It has earned a strong reputation nationally and internationally for its global vision and special commitment to contemporary art of the Pacific Rim. The Govett-Brewster is also home to the collection and archive of the seminal modernist filmmaker and kinetic sculptor Len Lye (1901–1980).

The Govett-Brewster Art Gallery was founded with a gift to the city of New Plymouth, from one of its greatest 'Friends' Monica Brewster (née Govett). A globetrotter before the age of air travel, Monica Brewster envisaged an art museum for her hometown that would be an international beacon for the art and ideas of the current day – the sort she had become familiar with on her global travels.

The Govett-Brewster continues in the legacy of Monica Brewster by taking on and presenting the most provocative, audacious and confident works of art in the global arts landscape.

The greatly expanded museum re-launched on 25 July 2015 with the addition of the Len Lye Centre. With its curved exterior walls of mirror-like stainless steel, the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery/Len Lye Centre is the country's first example of destination architecture linked to contemporary art.

This latest addition to the Govett-Brewster – the Len Lye Centre – is New Zealand's first institution dedicated to a single artist, the pioneering filmmaker and kinetic sculptor, Len Lye.

In 1964 Len Lye said "*Great architecture goes fifty-fifty with great art*".

The Len Lye Centre building, adjoining the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, is an example of innovative thinking in both engineering and architecture. The architects are Patterson Associates, one of New Zealand's most internationally recognised architectural firms.

The new Len Lye Centre features Lye's work in kinetic sculpture, film, painting, drawing, photography, batik and writing, as well as related work by contemporary and historical artists.

It also houses a state-of-the-art 62-seat cinema – a welcoming environment for audiences to experience Len Lye's films, local and international cinema, arthouse and experimental films, and regular film festival programming.

About Len Lye

A visionary New Zealander, an inspirational artist, a pioneer of film; Len Lye is one of the most important and influential artists to emerge from New Zealand.

Len Lye was an experimental filmmaker, poet, painter, kinetic sculptor and creative visionary ahead of his time. Most of his works were so revolutionary that technology literally had to catch up to him – meaning much of Lye's work was not realised in his own lifetime.

Lye's iconic 45-metre kinetic sculpture *Wind Wand* sways gently on New Plymouth's Coastal Walkway. The *Wind Wand* that glows red at night, is the first large outdoor sculpture to be built posthumously from his plans and drawings.

In 1977 Lye returned to his homeland to oversee the first New Zealand exhibition of his work at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery. He called it the "swingiest art gallery of the antipodes".

Shortly before his death in 1980, Lye and his supporters established the Len Lye Foundation, to which he gifted his entire collection. His collection was gifted on the condition that a suitable and permanent home be created in which his works could be fully realised.