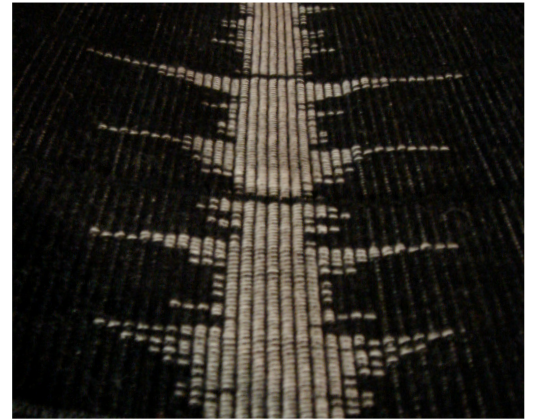
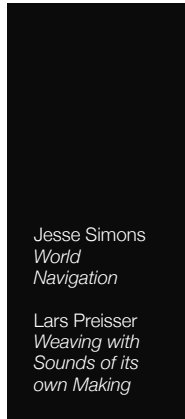


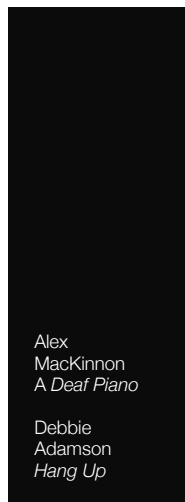
# 2010 GRAD SHOW

26 Jan - 20 Feb 2010

An artist can transform and manipulate the things around them in ways that intrigue, surprise and even test their audiences. This is the thread that ties the works in the *2010 Grad Show* together, showcasing six innovative art works created by recent graduates of the Otago Polytechnic School of Fine Arts. The change or transformation of materials, concepts, expectations or processes links together the works of Jesse Simons, Lars Preisser, Debbie Adamson, Alex MacKinnon, Gwen Hudson, and John Paxie, leading the viewer to ask questions of how they came to be, how they function and what assumptions they are based on. These works encourage us to expand our assumptions of what is possible.



The pixelated photographic series entitled *World Navigation* created by Jesse Simons has undergone a number of transformations, digitally, spatially and physically. He is exploring the distribution and proliferation of images in the digital age by layering images of tourist icons readily found on the internet. His work illustrates the shift in the way we experience the world through the ever increasing mediation by technologies. Fragmentation and pixelisation gives the images a painterly finish; perhaps not a predictable effect for a photograph but one that challenges the viewers expectations of the medium. The images themselves move into focus the further away the viewer is. The tourist icons which feature in Simons' work are well known and well documented but here they have been represented in a new and exciting way through pixelation and layering. In contrast to a normal photograph this new representation changes our view of these often mundane images.



As Simons has shifted the operation and expectations of his medium with the use of pixelised and found images, Lars Preisser has also twists the assumptions of his medium. He presents a large (8m x 1m) suspended textile sculpture entitled *Weaving with Sounds of its own Making*. The title is in reference to Robert Morris's 1961 work *Box with the Sound of its own Making*, which like Preisser's, incorporates spatial, theatrical and sonic elements. While referencing the industrial looms Preisser saw as a child, this sculptural piece was woven on a computer aided, but still manual loom. Using sound as a medium Preisser adds another dimension to this work. The sound travels through a series of cables woven through the fabric and is then accessed by the viewer through headphones. As the title suggests it is the sound of its own making, the sound of looms weaving gives the viewer a deeper insight into the transformation from thread to woven structure. This sound, which is referenced on the textile in the form of black waves, echoes its past, process and origin.

Process and origin are also important theories in Debbie Adamson's piece *Hang Up*, which navigates meaning through a subversion of materials. For Adamson, process allows the freedom for ideas to take tangible forms, and move in different directions. The viewer is presented with 5 used gumboots, varying in size, make and condition, which have been laboriously cut and hand sawed into lengths of barbed wire then coiled on coat hooks. It is in this transformation of the subject, from gumboots to barbed wire, that the artist believes the boots become mixed representations of people and places. Informed by her own rural background the viewer gets a glimpse into the the artist's past.

Adamson is not the only artist in the show to modify ready-made materials, Alex MacKinnon has also used the same strategy. *A Deaf Piano* is an installation comprised of audio speakers of varying sizes, from which run wires that power a motley collection of audio equipment on the floor, stereos, cd players, walkmans...anything. MacKinnon uses audio components to illustrate the connections between audio reproductive technology and human perception, and the bio-acoustic origins of electro-acoustic technologies. The separate wire channels and the fluctuating pitch of the recordings form a moving tonal sound-scape that can be moved through spatially by the viewer to create their own composition; an exploded, real-time, and durationless sound composition. It is intriguing for the viewer when the functioning medium itself becomes a challenge to decipher and this is also what happens with the work of John Paxie.



In *Hanging Ellipses* Paxie extends possibilities of clay which twists assumptions about the medium. Although it may seem that his works are soft rubber-like loops that droop of the rails and appear as if they could droop further, they are in fact made of clay. In extending his medium Paxie removed the clay from the wheel and put it through additional processes to stretch and shape the structures. He has then presented eight glazed and eight unglazed loops showing further stages of transformation from incompleteness to completion, the unglazed allowing for further transformation and growth. Paxie has transformed this hard, brittle, solid medium into a soft pliable display.

In a similar way to Paxie, the work *Les Champignons* by Gwen Hudson not only transforms the material into sculptural objects but she also transforms the very structure of her chosen material. The material she uses, felt, was used in both wet and dry states to create her pieces. There are a number of transformations inherent in this piece, physical, subject matter and transformations of the self. The physical transformation lies in the processing of the wool, from an animal product to a commercial product, from dirty and oily to soft and clean, then into felted and moulded sculptural representations. The subject matter, which reference actual fungi species, is transformed as Hudson presents imagined extensions and potential consequences of current genetic engineering of botanical species. Finally, the transformation of self for the artist, Hudson said "the wool becomes the link that gives me contact with my ancestors, the thread that joins together people and things."

Challenging the stability of assumptions around materials, subject matter and processes within art has endless possibilities as; even a small twist in the use of a material can create something entirely new. This is a strategy not only used by the artists in this show, but can be found widely within creative practice. - Lauren Gutsell