



Rural Women of Southland, ceramic, 2014



*"There is a crack
in everything....
that's how the
light gets in"*
Leonard Cohen

SAM MITCHELL

WILLIAM HODGES FELLOW 2014
19 JULY - 31 AUGUST 2014

"There is a crack in everything...that's how the light gets in."

Superheroes, monsters, demons and damsels in distress, soldiers, saints and unicorns – daring rescues, passionate kisses, bottom basement bargains and oral sex. From the cool blue skin of smiling or pensive innocents, graphic tales of corrupted virtue reveal the age-old struggle between good and evil.

Sam Mitchell's portraits get under the skin and expose the scares beneath, the marks or tattoos that can be laid-bare by her gaze as defining and permanent. It is through these cracks in exterior appearance that Mitchell observes and documents the often accidental illumination of dark forgotten corners "I'm an alligator, I'm a mama-papa coming for you" she says. With her penetrating gaze firmly fixed on Southland, glossy, glazed ceramic platters emerge bearing the confronting glares of topless women encircling a black swan. A muscular black singlet clad man looks us in the eye as he slits the neck of a sheep and floating portraits of illustrious leaders of the Invercargill Club float ominously in the fore of its grand façade alongside a portrait of a featureless woman.

"I'm the space invader, I'll be a rock 'n' rollin' bitch for you", Mitchell says. "Don't fake it baby, lay the real thing on me."

Quotes from David Bowie's "Moonage Daydream"

Kathryn Mitchell.



Foundation, ceramic, 2014

Everything...that's how the light gets in" Leonard Cohen



Foundation, ceramic, 2014

CV

Education

1994 – 97 BFA Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland

Selected Exhibitions

2014 *Sourcery: Sam Mitchell and Roger Mortimer*, Bartley & Co, Wellington
First is last, Last is first, Corbans Estate Art Centre, Auckland

2013 *Hips*, Bartley & Co, Wellington
Group show, Melanie Roger Gallery, Auckland

2012 *Members only*, Melanie Roger Gallery, Auckland
Group show, Melanie Roger Gallery, Auckland

2011 *Glean*, Melanie Roger Gallery, Auckland
New Romantics, University of Waikato, Hamilton, Curated by Karl Chitham
ISCP Residency show, Brooklyn, New York, USA
Point B Artist in residency show, Williamsburg, Brooklyn, NYC, USA
Auratica Fantastica, Window Gallery, University of Auckland
Curated by Graham Fletcher, Andrea Low
About Face, Curated by Rhoda Fowler, Papakura Art Gallery

2010 *Group Show*, Anna Bibby Gallery, Auckland

Residencies

2011 International Studio and Curatorial programme
New York, USA
PointB Residency programme
Williamsburg, Brooklyn, New York,

2010 The Lock – up Cultural Centre
John Payner Gallery
Newcastle, Australia

Awards

2010 20th Paramount Winner of the James Wallace Art Award.
Works are held in James Wallace Art Collection.

Private collections in New Zealand, New York City, Australia, Cairo, London
Sam Mitchell is represented by Melanie Roger Gallery, Auckland

SAM MITCHELL

Born 1971 Colorado Springs , Colorado USA, Lives in Auckland

Borrowing the visual style of kids' comics and cartoons, Mitchell's provocative paintings often have playful or dark subject matter. The underworld of tattoos is a visual language that Mitchell also borrows from. With a knack of pitching uncanny combinations and elements together, Mitchell's works are delicately and deftly painted but often have a seething undercurrent that takes you by surprise. Her virtuoso polite-society painting and sweet-as-pie titles are a foil for snarling innuendo or irreverent humor.

Working predominantly with watercolours or with reverse painting on perspex Mitchell paints imaginary character studies and hybrid animals. In her works, bodies or birds often float, with no painted background, like the cell of a cartoon, or a tattoo on the body, the images cut down to just the essential storytelling elements. The world depicted in Mitchell's work has a childlike reality, the salient parts are deeply observed and rendered in meticulous, loving detail, just as the background slips into blank anonymity.

Hanna Scott

1994 - 98 BFA Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland
Sam Mitchell has exhibited widely through out New Zealand.
2010 she won the paramount award for the James Wallace Art Award and spent six months at the ISCP (International Studio and Curatorial Program) in New York .



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