

New exhibition showcases 1970s experimental art scene in Auckland



Jim Allen *Contact* 1974
three-part performance, 35mm colour photograph
of 'Parangole Capes', at Auckland City Art Gallery.
Jim Allen Archive, image photographer unknown

The dynamic energy of 1970s avant-garde art in Auckland is explored in a new exhibition, *Groundswell: Avant-garde Auckland 1971–1979*, opening Saturday 8 December at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki with free entry for New Zealand residents.

Groundswell maps out the seldom-seen practices of a group of artists who changed the face of contemporary art in the city. Building new art for new spaces, this was a group who liberated art from its traditional forms and locations, incorporating performance and new media into their work.

Groundswell centres on the influential role of leading artist and educator Jim Allen (born 1922), who is largely responsible for changing how art was taught at Elam School of Fine Arts in the 1970s. Allen enabled a series of student-led art initiatives that spurred on the development of a new local scene in contemporary art of a previously unseen scale and intensity.

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Allen helped foster exhibition spaces outside the art school, into the city and suburban areas of Auckland fostering major city-wide exhibitions, including the first exhibition of performance art at Auckland Art Gallery in 1974.

Local and International critics at the time were to observe that Auckland now had an art scene on a par with movements internationally.

To reveal the reach and evolution of the 1970s Auckland art scene, *Groundswell* presents archival material, as well as sculpture, video and installation work by 17 artists. The exhibition will also include the restaging of four pivotal 1974 performances by Jim Allen, Bruce Barber, Philip Dadson and Kieran Lyons through collaborations with a new generation of artists. The first of these, Bruce Barber's *Bucket Action*, will be performed by artist Hannah Valentine in a one-off event on Sunday 9 December at 2pm.

Curator of Contemporary Art, Auckland Art Gallery, Natasha Conland says: 'During the 1970s art became increasingly improvised, immediate and performative. In many ways this is an exhibition about the transition of sculpture into an ephemeral form, into performance, video and new technology.'

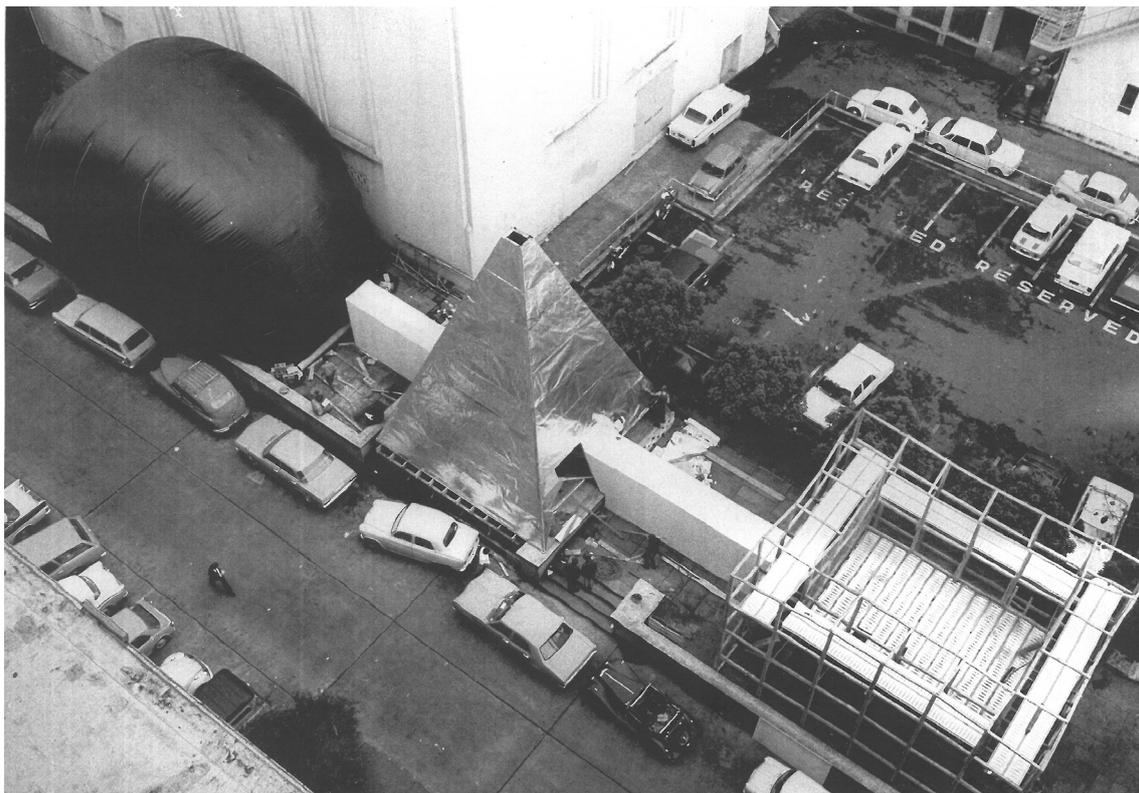
'*Groundswell* will map out how this new experimental art scene began to build in Auckland, as well as sharing how it looked and what it was shaped from.'

Conland adds: 'Because of the recent expansion of our collections, we can share a more complete picture of what took place in Auckland in the 1970s and invite audiences to reflect on the avant-garde of a previous generation.'

Artists whose work is shown in *Groundswell: Avant-garde Auckland 1971–1979*:

- Jim Allen
- Billy Apple
- Bruce Barber
- Fiona Clark
- Philip Dadson
- Kimberly Gray
- Adrian Hall
- Maree Horner
- Kieran Lyons
- Parbhu Makan
- Ian Macdonald
- Matt McLean
- David Mealing
- Gray Nicol
- Roger Peters
- Malcolm Ross
- Nick Spill

ENDS



Bruce Barber, David Brown, Maree Horner
Three Situations 1971, Bledisloe Lane, Auckland.
 Jim Allen Archive, E.H McCormick Reserach Library,
 Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
 Photographer Adrian Hall.

For images and interviews

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Exhibition details

*Groundswell: Avant-garde Auckland
 1971–1979*

When:
 Saturday 8 December 2018
 to Sunday 31 March 2019
 10am – 5pm daily. Except Christmas Day.

Where:
 Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki
 Cnr Kitchener and Wellesley Streets
 Auckland, New Zealand

Admission:
 New Zealand Residents..... **Free**
 International Visitors. **Free with Gallery entry**
 (children 12 and under Free)