

SCAPE PUBLIC ART CONFESSIONAL IN HAGLEY PARK

Natasha Matila-Smith's confessional messages, ranging from off-hand revelations to innermost desires, will be on display in Hagley Park as part of SCAPE's Public Art Season 2020 which starts on Saturday, 3 October.

The six billboards that make up *Frank, Love and the apocalypse 2020* within Hagley Park transpose the personal and intimate onto spaces used for leisure and socialising.

Consisting of six still billboards and a short time-based work, they sometimes read like a diary entry, sometimes like a conversation, and yet other times because of the scale and location, like an advertisement.

The work runs counter to narratives of self-improvement prevalent in both online and offline media—especially during the COVID crisis—and gives voice to anxiety; which while often acknowledged in discourse around mental health is seldom articulated directly. A number of other statements on the work reinforce this feeling, creating a cacophony of self-doubt.

Matila-Smith says “My practice addresses themes such as unrequited love, limerence, modern intimacy and online identities; it's also littered with pop-culture references and nostalgia for things that may not have ever been real, like the perfect French boyfriend...”

She continues, “I want the work for SCAPE to be accessible to people, whether they are arts educated or not. But also, I'm hoping that they won't take everything at face value and can come to some of their own conclusions and fill in the quite literal blanks. Because I never present a full story, more of an excerpt, I like that the viewer can choose if they are a voyeur or an active player. I enjoy the spectrum of audience interpretations of the works.”

This is the fourth year in a row that SCAPE has included billboards in Hagley Park as part of its Season. “It's a great way of extending the reach of the SCAPE Seasons to new audiences and the billboards provide an ideal platform for artists,” says SCAPE Executive Director Deborah McCormick who has led SCAPE for 22 years.

“This year has certainly had its challenges, as have many others, but we are delighted to present a strong Ōtautahi Christchurch and Aotearoa New Zealand focused artists' programme with eight new temporary artworks for presentation over an extended season.” The SCAPE Public Art Walkway will offer a compact, inner-city, safe, walkable route for exploring and experiencing fourteen legacy and eight new public artworks and an invitation for locals and visitors from all over New Zealand to art explore the city

ENDS

Natasha Matila-Smith's *Frank, Love and the apocalypse 2020*

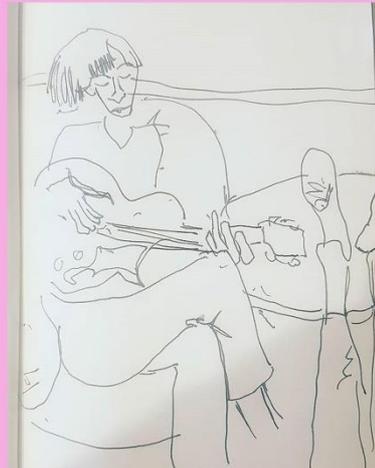
[Full suite of images here](#)

*Frank,
I think you're lovely.*

I tried to learn one of your songs on the ukelele. I tagged you on Instagram. It sounds terrible. I'm sorry. I also made a line drawing of you (pictured right).

I'm such an amateur but maybe you'll like my fan art anyway.

Please be kind.



About the artist

Natasha Matila-Smith (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Hine, Samoan, Pākehā) is an arts practitioner based in Tāmaki Makaurau. Matila-Smith has developed a series of confessional text-based works that explore her experiences of loneliness and discomfort, and how they relate to larger social and economic structures. She frequently speaks from her position as an Indigenous woman of colour, an aging millennial, and a person who is alive in this strange era, using her art to vocalise this position which has developed out of a desire to connect with others.

Matila-Smith has written extensively about the impulse of New Zealand art institutions to define and exoticise Indigenous bodies and cultures. In raising discourse around the disconnection between digital interfaces and their underlying structures, she's also suggesting the disconnect is so intuitive it's the tacit knowledge that governs and connects us all.

About the SCAPE Public Art Season 2020

SCAPE will present a strong Ōtautahi Christchurch and Aotearoa New Zealand focused artists' programme with eight new temporary artworks for presentation over an extended season. The programme will be linked to an in-depth Art, Learning, and Wellbeing offering promoted on-line with a base at Tūranga, our central city library.

Jamie Hanton will curate three SCAPE Seasons, 2020-2022, his overarching theme is *Fictions*. *Fictions* uses the privileged position that public art holds to confront and challenge our lived realities. Our daily engagements and encounters, which make up the fullness of our lives, can provide small openings to harness the power of imagination and think through alternatives to the status quo.

Taking the city as its starting point, *Secrets and Lies* provides moments of surprise and revelation as it excavates and explores site-specific histories around the city. Audiences will have the opportunity to learn about local stories and encounter creative interventions in the built environment.

The invited artists are: Jacquelyn Greenbank, Martin Awa Clarke Langdon, Melissa Macleod, Natasha Matila-Smith, Dane Mitchell, Kate Newby, Louise Palmer and Sorawit Songsataya.

The selection seeks to deliver a wide and diverse range of stories, viewpoints and perspectives from different backgrounds as the title *Secrets and Lies* suggests

About the SCAPE Public Art Trust

SCAPE Public Art installs public art in Christchurch all year round, with a focus on the annual public art festival Seasons. SCAPE is the Christchurch expert in the installation of public art, and the SCAPE Public Art Seasons are New Zealand's premier public art events.

Held in Christchurch's central city public spaces and supported through a range of partnerships, the Seasons showcase leading national and international contemporary artists, and provide a springboard for emerging local talent. Artworks in the Seasons are created as a result of close collaboration between art and business. This is a highly regarded model world-wide.

Our Seasons provide an opportunity to focus on the introduction of new artworks, while maintaining focus on the impressive base of legacy pieces www.scapepublicart.org.nz

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