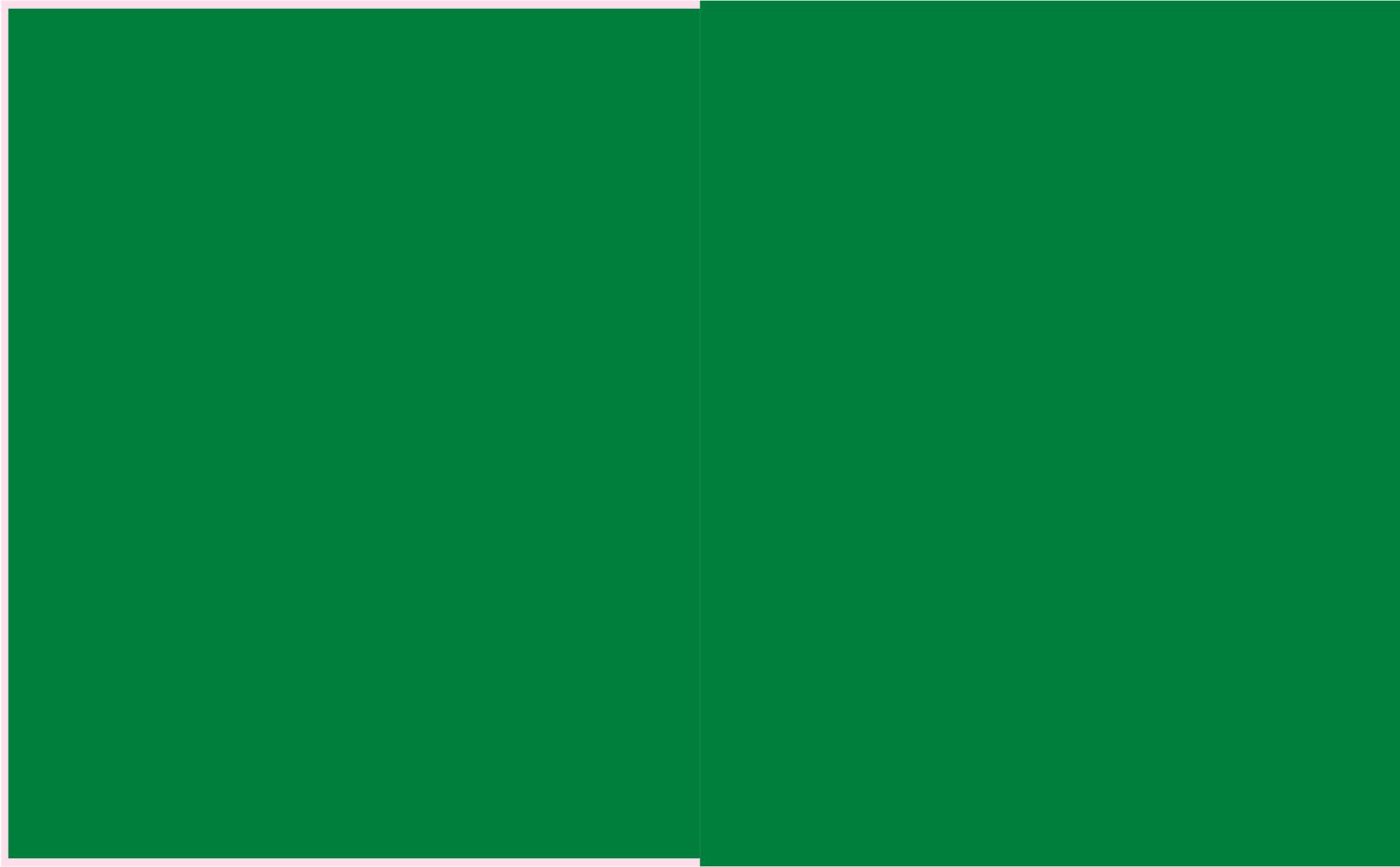
Energy Work
Kathy Barry
Sarah Smuts-Kennedy



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Foreword	7	
Christina Barton		
Introduction	11	
Robyn Maree Pickens		
Documentation	26	
Essays		
Performing the Possibility of Healing – The Work	30	
of Sarah Smuts Kennedy		
Jennifer Higgie		
Kathy Barry – Looking Beyond the Ferris Wheel	40	
Marcus Moore		
Sarah Smuts-Kennedy's Expanded Field	60	
Natasha Conland		
The Loom of Time: Kathy Barry and Moby Dick	90	
Adam Grener	70	
Artist biographies	100	
Kathy Barry Sarah Smuts-Kennedy		
outur omate remieuj		
List of works	102	
Contributors	105	
	100	

4 Foreword

I started with the universe – as an organization of regenerative principles frequently manifest as energy systems of which all our experiences, and possible experiences, are only local instances.

— Buckminster Fuller

Energy Work was the first substantial presentation of the work of Kathy Barry and Sarah Smuts-Kennedy. Though both artists have been working for two decades, neither have had the opportunity to survey their practices in a public institution in the country where they live and work. This publication documents their exhibition and extends it by commissioning and re-publishing writing on both artists. As director of Te Pātaka Toi Adam Art Gallery since 2007, I have worked hard to create opportunities for artists who have not enjoyed popular success, but who I consider are exploring ideas and building practices that offer diverse and critical contributions to the visual arts, carving different trajectories through history and inflecting and complicating received narratives. These two artists are exemplary candidates for this attention.

Barry and Smuts-Kennedy have each developed a visual, material, and formal practice that redirects our understanding of abstract art. Rather than positing the higher truth of ideal form, or expressing the artist's inner self, or giving shape to the drives of the unconscious, they suspend artistic intention to allow unseen energies and dimensions to take shape through their distinctive drawing practices and manipulation of materials in space. In particular

and personal ways, they have each chosen to relinquish control, to allow something else – something infinitely larger and less intangible – to show itself through them and to manifest in and work through the paintings, objects and installations they produce. I have learnt much by facilitating the *Energy Work* exhibition, most especially that both artists have a deep sense of purpose: they literally see their practices as doing good. By selflessly opening themselves to the world, in all its dimensions, and manifesting energies that lie latent, they allow us to envisage different and deeper relations between mind and world, spirit and nature, materials and meanings. Importantly, at this time of global reckoning, their work decentres and reorients us, so that we are opened to and become conduits for the workings of a universe within which humans are but one small part.

I am deeply grateful to the artists for engaging so willingly in the process of presenting their work, and in sharing their thinking at several points through the public programmes that accompanied the exhibition, as well as providing input and feedback as we have worked on this publication. Thanks, too, are due to Robyn Maree Pickens and Jennifer Higgie who so generously and insightfully responded to the artists and this exhibition.

I am very grateful also to Natasha Conland, Adam Grener, and Marcus Moore for allowing us to re-print the thoughtful responses they have already made to Barry's and Smuts-Kennedy's practices. Their essays take us beyond the confines of the Adam Art Gallery to provide a broader sense of how these artists are using their materials to connect us to the energies they so palpably feel.

I acknowledge and am grateful for the support provided to the artists by Creative New Zealand Toi Aotearoa; Bowen Galleries, Wellington, and the Adam Art Gallery Patrons. A special thanks to the Chartwell Trust for a substantial financial contribution, without which we would not have been able to stage an exhibition of this scale. Projects such as *Energy Work* are important not merely as milestones in an artist's career. They serve as platforms where we can be reminded of the power and purpose of art and where artists can be valued for and galvanised by the contributions they make. There is nothing more rewarding and energising – for both artists and institutions – than when art works are shown together with seriousness and intention, but also generosity and openness. This publication is the final outcome of that effort.

Christina Barton

Sarah Smuts-Kennedy, Harmonies, 2016



Introduction

Listen for a heart sound. (Affective)
—Pauline Oliveros

What is the feeling of being held within the sensate and sonic extension of a perfectly pitched tone? Does a human press into waves of sound, or do soundwaves imprint and absorb the human? When I listen to Pauline Oliveros's

waves imprint and absorb the human? When I listen to Pauline Oliveros's album *Deep Listening* (1989) via a YouTube upload, I hear the sound that reverbed into the cavern walls and underground silence; into the apparent density of rock and the slow time of the earth. I hear rock and deep-time in the recording. I am also the rock and the vibrations of sound. I travel effortlessly between the core silence of the earth, the Dan Harpole Cistern near Seattle in 1988, and the vibrations that precipitated the first eruptions of life.

Energy Work, the exhibition that brought together Kathy Barry and Sarah Smuts-Kennedy for the duration of its presence at Te Pātaka Toi Adam Art Gallery, feels like the interior of such a perfectly pitched note. It is as if the air, the dispersion of energy, and the sensation of electromagnetic fields have been calibrated to this note while simultaneously interacting with the ongoing energy emanations from the works, visitors, the space, the earth, and with subtle fields of energy within and beyond everyday sensory perception. The exhibition offers experiences of being held, of joy, of being at peace, and invites visceral encounters with expansive energy forces and fields. Barry's watercolour paintings and video work, and Smuts-Kennedy's works on paper and sculptural installations are simultaneously aesthetic artworks

and energetic activations. Their works are made to positively interact with the visitor using line, grid, pattern, colour, composition, and arrangement, but on levels and with fields of energy that western cultures are not accustomed to engaging.

Energy Work offers an experience of what artist Agnes Martin (1912–2004) would describe as "inspiration" and sound artist Oliveros (1932–2016) termed "Deep Listening" or "Quantum Listening." Martin's Taoist practice led her to propose that:

[o]ur inspirations come as a surprise to us. Following them our lives are fresh and unpredictable. [...] You can only be happy by being on the path of your unfolding potential. The path will be revealed to you by a request to your own mind.³

"Inspirations" can be understood here as a clear thought or voice that appears perfectly formed often unexpectedly in one's consciousness, while the "mind" Martin alludes to in this passage is the conscious mind; a type of "heart-mind," collective consciousness, or expanded consciousness. Martin suggests that sustained listening to inner knowing, or intuition enables a person to live their way towards an embodiment of perfect pitch. Oliveros similarly tenders Deep Listening as a practice of attention, "a heightened state of awareness [that] connects to all that there is." In an expanded definition of listening (deep and quantum), Oliveros writes:

Listening involves a reciprocity of energy flow; exchange of energy; sympathetic vibration: tuning into the web of mutually supportive interconnected thoughts, feelings, dreams, vital forces comprising our lives; empathy; the basis for compassion and love.⁵

If Martin's "inspiration" captures moments of recognition and knowing, Oliveros's listening-as-attunement proffers a method or practice by which a person can learn to quieten a fearful mind and take heed of inner guidance. The thought, voice, or guidance takes the form of a thought-feeling or a feeling-thought. It is less interested in satisfying the ego-mind, which is oriented towards status and conformist recognition and inclines more towards the growth of a person in service to the well-being of all life; to, as Martin writes, the "unfold[ing]" of "our potential as a contribution to life." Deep listening-as-attunement pays attention to internal site-feelings of focus; to the intensification of awareness, such as that of another being looking at you before you have yet turned your head, and to the recurrent voice that prompts openness to experiences beyond empirical reality.

10

Over the course of at least a decade, Barry and Smuts-Kennedy have independently focused their attention on approaches to being and making art that are less common in western cultures and the contemporary art world. In contrast to the emphasis on singular authorship in the (western) art historical canon and the hyper (western) fixation on what can be perceived empirically, *Energy Work* is an embodiment of collaborative authorship made manifest by sustained engagement with subtle energy forces and fields. In ways comparable to Martin, Oliveros, Swedish spiritualist artist Hilma af Klint (1862-1944) and Swiss healer-researcher Emma Kunz (1892–1963), Barry and Smuts-Kennedy make work in conversation with intuited guidance and alternative energetic dimensions. Martin frames guidance as processual, "[a]s we paint, we move along step by step. We realise that we are guided in our work by awareness of life. We are guided to greater expression of awareness and devotion to life." Each "step" in this commentary is perhaps akin to moments of "inspiration;" the unexpected thought-feeling that comes from within and in relation to the utter interconnectedness of all beings. The language of "steps" and "guidance' evokes and implies a sense of persistent endurance and an affective alignment with resolve and trust; to trust that the thought-feeling is truly in service to the wellness of all beings. In the context of performing, Oliveros describes her acquiescence to guidance:

When I arrive on stage, I am listening and expanding to the whole of the space/time continuum of perceptible sound. I have no preconceived ideas. What I perceive as the continuum of sound and energy takes my attention and informs what I play. What I play is recognized consciously by me slightly (milliseconds) after I have played any sound. [...] the music comes through as if I have nothing to do with it but allow it to emerge through my instrument voice.⁸

By incremental accretions of trust in her intuitive awareness and the relinquishment of her ego as the creator of the piece, Oliveros/not-only-Oliveros is able to bring through a quality, texture, dimension, and reach of sound that moves marrow. Kunz expresses the closely related dynamic of trust and surrender in an ecstatic register:

The whole conscious being is open to spiritual experiences of every kind. [...] [There is] a direct contact with cosmic forces and with the hidden movements of universal Nature, a psychic sympathy, union, inner communication and various kinds of reciprocal relationship with other beings and with Nature as a whole, illumination of the heart through love and devotion, through spiritual joy and ecstasy...⁹

These affects and experiences are outcomes of Kunz's attention to attuned listening, guidance, and the unfettering of a self perceived as a discrete fortress separated from the rest of the living earth. Instead she identifies "direct contact," "inner communication," and "reciprocal relationship with other beings" in a tone resonant with contemporary socio-ecological concerns.

Barry and Smuts-Kennedy, as with Kunz, accent the significance of collaborative authorship for the purpose of amplifying the healing potential of art-energy works. In an interview with Danish art historian and curator Lars Bang Larsen, Barry recounts her history of energy work, "I first began working this way in 2012 and it was a process that was incremental. [...] I made a decision to entirely forego my artistic agency to this guidance."10 Barry subsequently describes the outcomes of this process as "energy work for the viewer," that "carries frequencies that affect the viewer viscerally and energetically."11 In a conversation with the artist and the energy works in the exhibition space, Barry shared her belief that "we have so much more capacity, humanity can be guided [or] assisted from [...] aspects of their own being, [in order] to serve humanity and the earth."12 The four series of drawings and video work made over the ten-year period between 2012 and 2022 both document and activate (emanate) Barry's understanding and articulation of energetic patterns and dimensions beyond the four-dimensional apparatus of height, width, depth, and time/space. Chiming with research in quantum theory, Barry's series of drawings articulate life as multi-dimensional, "a world of light and frequency" in which "the human being [is] a multidimensional being that can access other dimensions and bring in information from these dimensions into the one that we are mostly operating in."13 This information can be understood as residing at higher energetic frequencies in alternate, yet accessible dimensions that are devoted to the wellbeing of all.

The simple physical act of moving one's arms across the chest while pivoting from side to side for only a few repetitions causes the release of endorphins in the physical body. The same action warms and activates the heart chakra felt in the body's subtle energy field. Different cultures call the presence and flow of life-force energy by many names: mauri, qi, prana, light, intelligence, and love. Anyone who has taken a class in tai chi, qi gong, or had a reiki treatment will have experienced the capacity of energy to well up, condense, and be distributed around the body. In many such balancing and healing practices, hands and especially palms dispel stagnant or blocked energy, and generate and redistribute fresh energy flows. As Barry writes, "hands can emit and magnetise energy, redirecting it from the field to allow flows of energy to come in and rejuvenate the body." The "field" in this context refers to unseen yet often palpable energetic presences. To adopt Or Koren's definition, "[t]he field is found everywhere and is the infrastructure of all the 'being' in the world. It may also be called the 'unified field.'"14 Working with these commentaries, the central offering of Barry's works is to document

12

and activate the energetic infrastructures that encase a body. Every being is held by energetic structures and has the potential to connect with other bodies, beings, and fields and to receive beneficial information. Barry's paintings document energy work practices analogous to reiki and infrastructures such as the Merkaba and Torus, but they are also collaboratively authored to engage with or activate the subtle energy fields of visitors. As Barry notes, "[b]eyond being symbolic or frameworks for raising energy or consciousness, they offer potential energetic responses in the viewer that can be felt in the body. They are energy fields." In so doing, the work "carries frequencies that affect the viewer viscerally and energetically and in that sense the gallery becomes more like a healing space." 16

Barry's presentation begins with *Epic Whirlpool* (2012), in the Adam's Window Gallery. This, together with three other works – the earliest in the exhibition – document energetic practices, actions, and interactions. In this sense they can be considered "diagrams" — a term that Barry uses intentionally, as did af Klint, while Kunz called her work "models" or "plans." The first diagram, *Epic Whirlpool*, was the first work Barry made with energetic guidance, a practice she recounts in the following passage:

I take the lead from a guidance system that is very other but feels too like an aspect of myself that is beyond a usual understanding of self. When I am guided in this way, I have no idea of outcome and there are no preliminary drawings. ... I now understand this process [guidance] to be an activation and expansion of what I would call 'the human light body.'18

Barry's account is similar to Oliveros' description of being on stage without knowing what she will play/what will be played through her. Both artists defer to a wider consciousness and alternate dimension of their being to bring through uniquely energised sonic and visual manifestations of the unseen.

The human light body that Barry envisages in *Epic Whirlpool* is the system of seven chakras or focal points that form a central line from the base of the spine to above the head. Originating in early Hindu traditions from the Sanskrit word meaning 'wheel' and 'energy centre,' "chakras are rotating vortexes of energy that draw in energy from the environment" and dispel stagnant energy outwards. According to Koren:

The system of chakras is a dynamic system that pulsates according to the emotions that flow in us. It opens and closes, influences the functioning of the bodily organs and serves as a mediator of sorts between the delicate bodies of energy and the physical body.²⁰

Rather than only depict the seven chakras, *Epic Whirlpool* presents an amalgamation of energy vortexes and forms. Geometric shapes, comprised

of squares or diamonds and stripes in three primary colours: blue, green, and red, approximate hands. Like rotating kaleidoscopic facets, the light streams in from all four corners, forms shards, refracts, and holds kites of stilled energy in the centre using blues of the cosmos and greens of the earth. These celestial and terrestrial spheres are shot through with reds of the body and heart to create a composition in which all three are interconnected.

Star Witness (2013) radiates softness like sunlight through a textured pink window despite the dynamic diagonal bands of pink that intersect red at junctures along a central vertical axis. Continuing the colour symbolism of *Epic Whirlpool*, the pinks and reds of the body and heart softly energise and nest within a gridded framework of cosmic blues and earthly greens. Barry describes the palette and architecture of *Star Witness* as one of unconditional love for self and others within a unified field. Distinct from 'self-care' or an egoic love of the self, the painting embodies love of the self as part of the whole; an embedded love that amplifies the capacity to love the world. According to Barry, this non-egoic love of (expanded) self is essential for healing.

In acknowledgment of Kunz' healing practice, AIONA (2013) gives presence to the movement and replenishing of energy in an Energy Work session. Kunz used her drawings as healing tools during consultations with patients.21 The title AIONA refers to a healing rock Kunz discovered in a Roman quarry and called AION A. Both can be experienced at the Emma Kunz Zentrum in Würenlos, Switzerland.²² AIONA articulates the practice shared by both artists: that healing energy can be accessed, brought in, and received by the patient or visitor. Dimensional Ecologies (2013) is a pivotal work in this exhibition as it visualises multiple dimensions as sources of healing energy. If the central proposition of Barry's works is to articulate and activate experiential awareness of energetic infrastructures that support all life forms, then Dimensional Ecologies instantiates the interrelated idea that these energetic infrastructures are multidimensional. Beings are multidimensional beings. "[M]odern-day physics speaks of a world that contains many more dimensions than the four we assume we know."23 Barry's work accents the potential of accessing selves and others existing in higher dimensions and frequencies in order to amplify love and healing.

In the series 12 Energy Diagrams (2015), the multidimensional energetic infrastructure Barry articulates is the Merkaba light body. Semantically originating in the Hebrew word for chariot (Hekhalot), "mer" corresponds to the fields of love and light that circulate the body, "ka" to spirit, or the ethereal part of the soul, and "ba" to the body — in this instance the physical human body in the third dimension.²⁴ Represented by two intersecting tetrahedrons, 12 Energy Diagrams conveys the multidimensional intensity of the Merkaba. Progressing from right to left as hung in the Gallery's Congreve Foyer, the series portrays the Merkaba as an ever-intensifying, ever-expanding energetic

14

Kathy Barry, Dimensional Ecologies, 2013

body in which consciousness can travel outside of space-time dimensions. In the first six diagrams, orange which symbolises the body, navy blue the environment, and yellow the all-pervasive light, document ways in which the latent Merkaba energetic body can be activated through listening-as-attunement. Monochromatism gives way, in the series' second six drawings, to a tricolour splintering of explosive energy that not only visualises the intersection of energy pulled down from the universe (yellow), up from the earth (blue) as it intensifies in the body (orange) but serves as an activating tool. As with all the works in this exhibition, the diagrams are tools for activating energetic responses in the subtle fields and frequencies of the visitor.²⁵

With chromatic variation in the shades of yellow, orange (rust red), and navy blue, *The Loom of Time* (2018–19) continues the mono- to poly-chromatic sequencing of 12 *Energy Diagrams*, but instead of the Merkaba infrastructure, this next series focuses on the Torus and the Toroidal field. As Koren notes:

[t]he torus and the singular point within it can be found around many bodies: atom (nucleus), living cell (nucleus), electromagnetic field (earth's core), solar system (earth), galaxy (Milky Way), micron (subatomic), galaxy (hypergalactic)²⁶

As a donut-shaped energetic infrastructure, "energy pours through a vertical axis into the structure from above and below and spills out into circular tubes in a constant flowing motion."²⁷ Both the Torus and the Merkaba can be described as infrastructural membranes that hold consciousness, spin in multiple dimensions, and enable energy to expand and travel across time and space – as Barry's diagrams depict in dazzling, splintering geometric meshes. One way to expand out into the universe and connect with higher frequencies and beneficent knowledge is through the Torus structure. The last diagrams articulate and activate the interweaving of frequencies and envisage a coherent integrated light structure that can be installed and expanded once heavy affective states are lifted. This series emphasises the consistent message throughout Barry's work: that we have the capacity to access other frequencies and dimensions other than the ones we reside in.

If the preceding series generate expansion beyond familiar realms, the twelve parts of *Search Engine for her Future Self* (2020–22), Barry's last series, concentrate on earthing the energy sourced from multidimensional worlds through the heart. The earth, universal energies, and the heart or love are triangulated by colour; terracotta orange embodies the earth, blue the universe and pink the unconditional love of the heart. *Search Engine for her Future Self* imagines and activates these energetic fields as harmoniously integrated. The (interconnected) self operates as a frequency of the heart, as unconditional

16 17

love. As such, this series offers the optimum embodied experience of the exhibition in which the diagrams emanate love and prompt remembrance of the heart and its role in radiating unconditional love. The light that expands out through the heart is also grounded in the earth.

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If the perfectly pitched tone of inspiration and wellbeing existed as a community of living organisms, shapes, and colours, it would take the sensate presence of Smuts-Kennedy's biodynamic garden Maunga Kereru. Oliveros asks, "[w]hat if you could hear the frequency of colors?"28 What if you could see and sense the pulsation of life itself? Maunga Kereru transports the visitor between synaesthetic states in which a flower is a radiating sound and sound is the colour of a yellow energetic field harmonising with other energies to which it is also connected. An insect can sense the force field and frequency of a plant. If a plant is emitting a weak frequency an insect knows the plant can offer little resistance to its foraging. Conversely, if a plant has a strong energetic force field an insect knows it will be killed by the high level of sugar in the sap fermenting in its stomach, and flies on. Collectively, the flowers, fruit trees, and vegetables in Sarah's garden resonate at a high frequency and create an energetic force field that feels like radiance. It can be felt in the physical body and in the energetic bodies that encircle and sustain the apparently impermeable skin. Perhaps like an orbit of sound, the energetic waves of the garden encase the visitor. The terms to describe energy embody the shape-shifting and multifaceted formations of energy itself. A wave becomes a particle within a field of energy that is composed of and composes particles and waves that can in turn feel like vibrations. The energetic and physical aliveness of the garden provoked Smuts-Kennedy to enquire whether it was possible for "lines, patterns, colours, and rhythms" of geometric abstract works to "affect the field itself in the same way a vibrant living system such as my syntropic garden at Maunga Kereru does?"29 Essentially, Smuts-Kennedy asks if an artwork can feed back into the fabric of life; if it can engage and activate the viewer as a radiant field of life; if it can emanate joy.

Martin offers some thoughts on joy, "[y]ou must want joy for all not just for yourself. The exact same joy, want it whole-heartedly for all." There are many opportunities to encounter joy in *Energy Work*, but Smuts-Kennedy's pigment pastel on paper works titled *Joy Field* provide a synergistic linguistic entry point into the artist's six interconnected works she installed in this exhibition. The *Joy Field* drawings are present in two installations: six in *Discharge* (2022) and nine in *Pieces on Earth* (2020–22). *Discharge*,

which comprises six large-scale drawings affixed to a brass hexagonal frame suspended from the ceiling, is the second work in Smuts-Kennedy's sequence, and Pieces on Earth, an installation of the nine largescale drawings and 36 brass squares hung from the ceiling on fine stainless-steel wire, is the last work visitors encounter. To experience Discharge in the sequence designed by Smuts-Kennedy, the visitor walks down a flight of stairs passing under Structure for the House of I (2016). Before starting their descent they are invited to adjust their viewpoint by dropping down to the level of a brass pin fixed to a freestanding wall. From this low observation point, the brass circle, square, and triangle of Structure for the House of I align to nest perfectly within each other. These three shapes, which Smuts-Kennedy describes as ancient tools of geometry, together with the brass notation, serve as the opening notes of the installation, their synergised geometric shapes transmitting a harmony to the visitor as they pass beneath. Descent brings the visitor closer to the suspended floating of the first Joy Field drawings. They are swifts flying over hazes of colour, quarks with auratic presences, stipples of sunlit wheat, fireflies, and traces of fireworks. They are joy; they are alive. For the artist, this energy work occupies the heart of the circuit and performs two interrelated energetic operations: it generates an intensification of positive energy and disperses discordant energetic traces and residues.

If the first set of *Joy Field* drawings release discordance, the next piece in Smuts-Kennedy's energy circuit, Harmonies (2016), works to "purify the energy within the field and open up dimensional pathways."³¹ In the slipstream between a scaled-up, elongated minim (musical notation) and an unknown instrument, the long brass rods of Harmonies hold at their base a blown glass bulb eternally compressing a hard white mineral within. Resembling a small, taut galaxy, the white mineral is a quartz crystal called a Herkimer diamond valued for its purification properties. Held within microcosmic glass universes, the qualities of each quartz galaxy are amplified and emanate from the work. Smuts-Kennedy conceives of Harmonies as an "instrument emitting non-audible sound,"32 one that nevertheless contributes to the perfect pitch of the entire exhibition as an energetic field. Perhaps there is a consonance of notes between that of the compressed mineral held in a cave of glass and the deep listening undertaken by Oliveros, Stuart Dempster, and Panaiotis in the seemingly endless reverb of the Walpole Cistern four metres beneath the earth. From the vantage of Harmonies on the second floor it is possible to look down onto Pieces of Earth, but sequentially Light Language is the next energetic focus, or flow, an instance of Oliveros's "reciprocity of energy flow" from or between entities.33

In conversation with the deep earth quartz, glass, and conductive properties of brass, the twenty drawings of *Light Language* exhibited in a grid formation on the wall opposite the base of the second staircase have been installed in relation to the earth's telluric grid; the naturally occurring electric

18

currents that flow above and below the surface of the earth. Smuts-Kennedy, like Kunz and Paul Klee (1879–1940) uses a pendulum to detect electromagnetic currents and to acquiesce to a particular colour, type, quantity, and density of mark-making in her drawings. As artist and psychoanalyst Bracha L. Ettinger (1948–) remarks, "[f]or Emma Kunz, as for Paul Klee, the pendulum is miraculous. Both artists worked out invisible spiritual laws and regularities using the pendulum."³⁴ In a different field, physicist Leon Foucault (1819-1868) demonstrated the rotation of the earth with a pendulum in an experiment conducted in 1851. For Smuts-Kennedy, "[t]he pendulum gives me the ability to expand the range of my answers."³⁵ In the guidance system developed by the artist, (deep) listening to the "yes" or "no" response of the pendulum is a collaborative process, one that delivers the most expansive answer. With regard to her drawings, she describes her acquiescence as one of surrender, "[t]he colours determined by the pendulum and the mark making are a performance of surrendering to a process where the mind and my eyes agree to stay out of the way."36 This process requires Smuts-Kennedy "to follow instructions I don't understand, having faith in the process and trust in myself. Surrendering to this system continues to generate surprising outcomes that I do not anticipate or foresee."37

First generated as a site-specific activation at the Methodist Church on Pitt Street, Auckland in 2016, and subsequently exhibited at Te Uru, Auckland in 2017, the Light Language drawings index the Joy Field drawings that would follow. The vibrant mark-making of Light Language encompasses a colour field of pecks, blushes, glissando, and startled murmurations. According to Smuts-Kennedy, "[m]ark-making gives expression to a certain quality of vibration that has been generated through me that allows me to function as a tool between the field and the substrate."38 The quarks and strings of energy on the substrate embody vibration pulsated into presence by the artist's attunement to energetic currents and fields beyond everyday sensory awareness. Yet vibration, as Oliveros notes, is also omnipresent, "[o]ur world is a complex matrix of vibrating energy, matter and air, just as we are made of vibrations. Vibration connects us to all things interdependently."³⁹ Given this means of interdependent connection, Smuts-Kennedy's purpose to increase "the vibration of the field [...] create[s] an opportunity for the viewer to sense how information impacts atmospheric energy."40 Her comment emphasises the proposition that these colourful marks are not only aesthetic gestures but energetic presences that the visitor, and even the energy field of the earth can encounter and engage with. In an annotation that includes Light Language, in conversation with the other interconnected works in Smuts-Kennedy's installation circuit, the works "interact and connect with the earth's energy field, the architecture of the Adam Art Gallery, and the human being."41 The significance of this multifaceted energetic alignment and activation is "to produce a balancing effect on multiple levels within the energetic field."42

In collaboration with Light Language, the presence of Ten Parts Whole (2014) works to raise the energetic vibrations of the gallery. Of all the constituent works in Smuts-Kennedy's installation circuit, Ten Parts Whole visualises most accessibly the unseen reality of grids and bounded fields that nevertheless overlap and nest amongst one another. Suspended on wire from the ceiling, each of the ten brass squares is hung at different heights and angles and lit to reveal the composition's cascade of shadows on the gallery floor. While the brass is heavy and solid, the shadows appear as weighty and significant as the suspended arrangement, as if poetically substantiating unseen energy grids. As important as visualisation and poetic substantiation of energetic fields are to understanding energy works, the composition of Ten Parts Whole is, as with all works in this exhibition, not only geometric abstraction as an aesthetic offering. In addition to aesthetic beauty, Smuts-Kennedy has calibrated this arrangement to align with the earth's telluric grids. According to the artist, this particular alignment raises the vibratory energy in the gallery and contributes to affective responses of balance and peace experienced by visitors.

On 9 July 2022, Smuts-Kennedy posted the following comment on her Instagram, "[t]ogether we are building a #joyfield for you to come and feel."43 The #joyfield encompasses the artist's entire installation circuit yet feels especially resonant amongst the Joy Field drawings and suspended brass rectangles that comprise Pieces on Earth (2020-2022). The structure, expanse, mark-making, and resonance of this installation reminds me of a work I know only by documentation; a social sculpture called The Park made and sustained by Smuts-Kennedy and artist Taarati Taiaroa (Te Āti Awa, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Ngāti Apa, Ngāti Kotimana) between 2014 and 2015. In many respects, this unexpected juxtaposition brings the discussion of Smuts-Kennedy's energy works at the Adam full circle. The Park was a vibrant living constellation of beehives, bees, and flowers grown on Victoria Park in central Auckland and the artist's original enquiry was whether artworks could pulsate with the aliveness of healthy biodiverse organisms. Like the beehives and the hexagonal-shaped flower gardens surrounding them, the drawings and brass rectangles of Pieces on Earth are a structure and an expanse. In full flower, the bee gardens were a swarm of colour assuming pointillist forms or soft hazes depending on proximity. The mark-making of the Joy Field drawings in turn oscillates between the scent-flight paths of bees and glimpses of flowers from the thousands of lenses that comprise their eyes. Pieces on Earth is alive; it hums. This experience resonates with Smuts-Kennedy's account of the installation as, "a composition to harness and amplify certain qualities from within the void to resonate in a way that supports and nurtures life."44 For the duration of the exhibition, visitors were invited to lie down on bolsters in the joy field. An interview leading up to this installation, records the artist as saying, "[t]he project I am giving attention to at the moment is to seed and manifest a field of joy."45



21

20

Sarah Smuts-Kennedy, Pieces of Earth (detail)

This entire field of joy was collaboratively installed by pendulum to align harmoniously with energy currents emanating from the earth and to balance the energy of the gallery. Additionally, Smuts-Kennedy worked with the chakras, or energy centres of gallery staff. As the artist writes:

Most of my work gets hung based on heart chakras. This week we have been using the heart chakras of all the installers helping manifest this huge energy installation... Our individual heart chakras are averaged out over the number of us.⁴⁶

At an energetic level therefore, Smuts-Kennedy's energy works were installed in correspondence with the energy bodies of all beings involved and at the frequency or vibration of the heart. In the context of collaborative authorship and the enlivenment of all spaces, the artist writes:

Our bodies, hearts and minds are reading and responding to the vibrations of the spaces we are in all the time. Simultaneously we are collectively putting vibrations into our common space through our thought forms and feelings – the objects we make or the processes we engage through the activities we are involved in. We are both receivers and broadcasters 24/7 in multidimensional forms across time and space.⁴⁷

As receivers and broadcasters of a quality and frequency of energetic vibration therefore, which tone, or register will we choose?

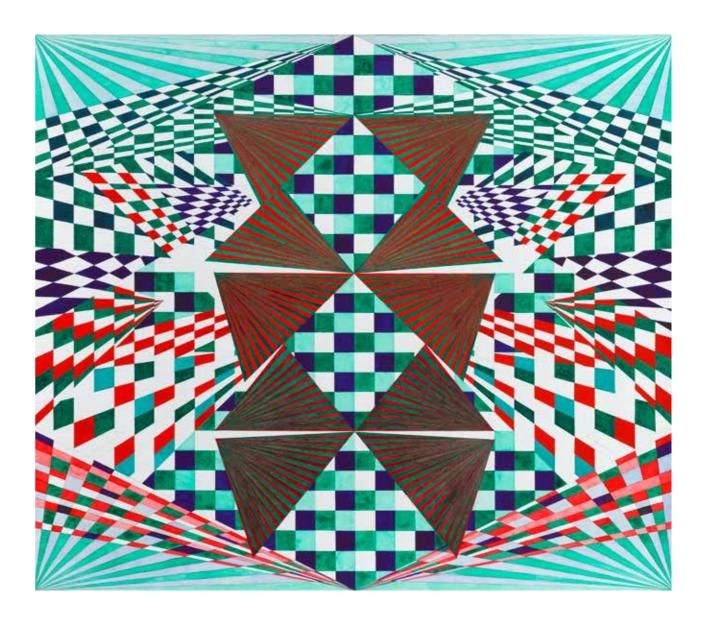
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- 6 Agnes Martin, op. cit., p. 115.
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- 8 Pauline Oliveros, Deep Listening: A Composer's Sound Practice, Lincoln, US, 2005, p. 12 (PDF pagination).
- 9 Emma Kunz quoted by Catherine de Zegher in Catherine de Zegher and Hendel Teicher, 3 × Abstraction: New Methods of Drawing: Hilma af Klint, Emma Kunz, Agnes Martin, The Drawing Center, New York and Yale University Press, New Haven, 2005, p. 29.
- 10 Kathy Barry quoted in an interview with Lars Bang Larsen and Marco Pasi (eds), forthcoming monograph on Georgiana Houghton, Fulgur Press, Lopen, Somerset (UK), 2024.

- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Robyn Maree Pickens in conversation with Kathy Barry at Te Pātaka Toi Adam Art Gallery, Wellington, 14 August 2022.
- 13 Kathy Barry interview, op. cit.
- 14 Or Koren, Quantum Listening, eBookPro Publishing, 2020, p. 46.
- 15 Emil McAvoy, "Kathy Barry: Dimensional Ecologies," Art News New Zealand, Winter 2022, p. 72.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Harald Szeemann, Emma Kunz, Zentrum, Würenlos, Switzerland, 1998, p. 80.
- 18 Kathy Barry, artist's notes, Energy Work: Kathy Barry, exhibition guide, Te Pātaka Toi Adam Art Gallery, Wellington, n. p.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Koren, Quantum Listening, p. 63.
- 21 Hendel Teicher in Catherine de Zegher and Hendel Teicher, 3 × Abstraction, p. 132.
- 22 See Emma Kunz Zentrum, https://www.emma-kunz.com/en/emma-kunz/, accessed 15 September 2022.
- 23 Koren, Quantum Listening, p. 46.
- 24 Ibid., pp. 302-303.
- 25 12 Energy Diagrams is accompanied by the video work 12-Minute Movement (2016), which operates in conversation with the vibrancy of the last six activating diagrams.
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- 27 Barry, artist's notes, op. cit.
- 28 Oliveros, op. cit., p. 40.
- 29 Dan du Bern, "A Field of Joy: Energy, Hyperobjects and Artefacts," The Art Paper, 13 October 2021, https://www.the-art-paper.com/journal/a-field-of-joy-energy-hyperobjects-and-artefacts, accessed 15 September 2022.
- 30 Martin, op. cit., p. 96.
- 31 Sarah Smuts-Kennedy, artist's notes Energy Work: Sarah Smuts-Kennedy, exhibition guide, Te Pātaka Toi Adam Art Gallery, Wellington, n. p.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Oliveros, op. cit., p. 57.
- 34 Bracha L. Ettinger in Catherine de Zegher and Hendel Teicher, 3 × Abstraction, p. 17.
- 35 Stella Brennan, "Re-enchanting the World: Projects by Sarah Smuts-Kennedy," Art New Zealand, 182, 2022, p. 71.
- 36 Sarah Smuts-Kennedy, Instagram post (@sarahsmutskennedy), 22 August 2022.
- 37 Smuts-Kennedy, artist's notes, op. cit.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Oliveros, op. cit., p. 38.
- 40 Smuts-Kennedy, artist's notes, op. cit.
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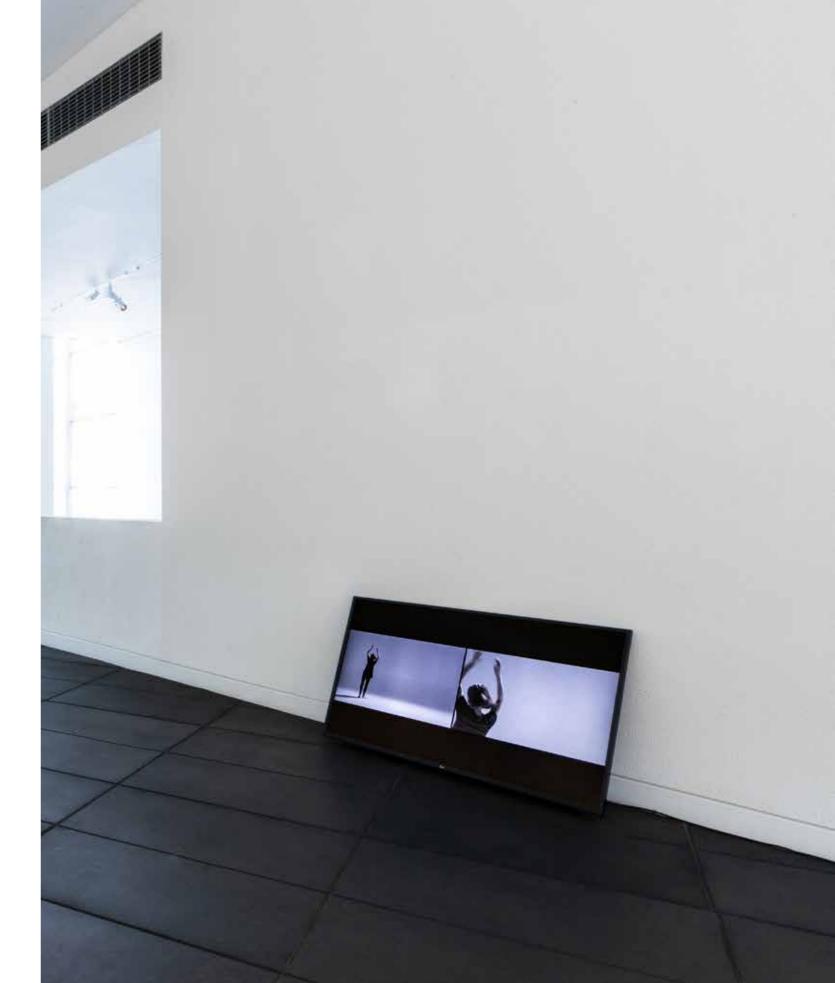










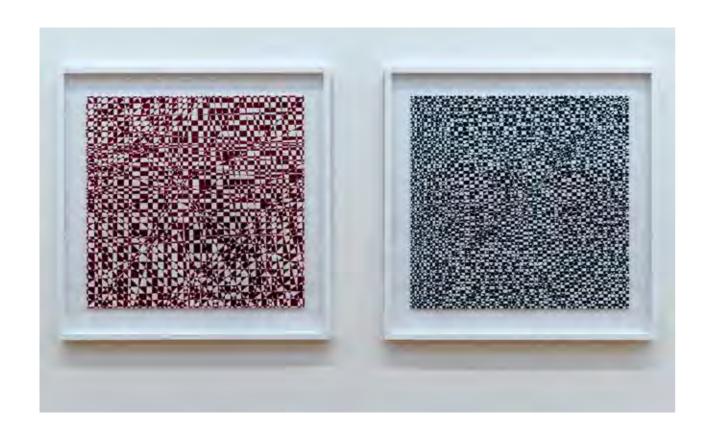








Kathy Barry, The Loom of Time, 2018–19





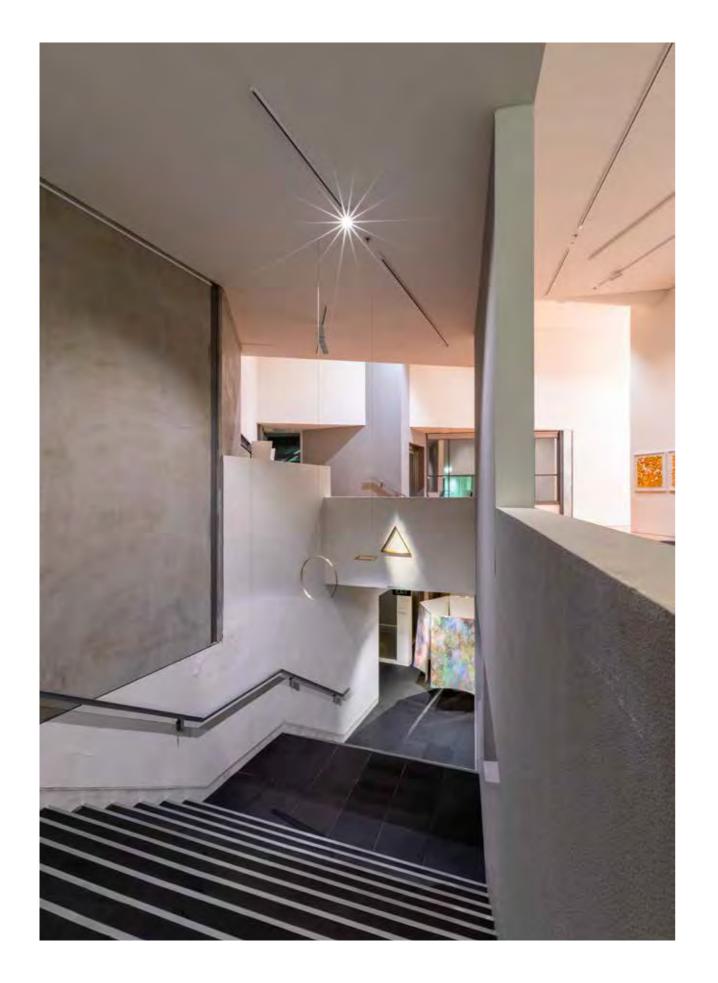
Kathy Barry, The Loom of Time, 2018–19 (details)













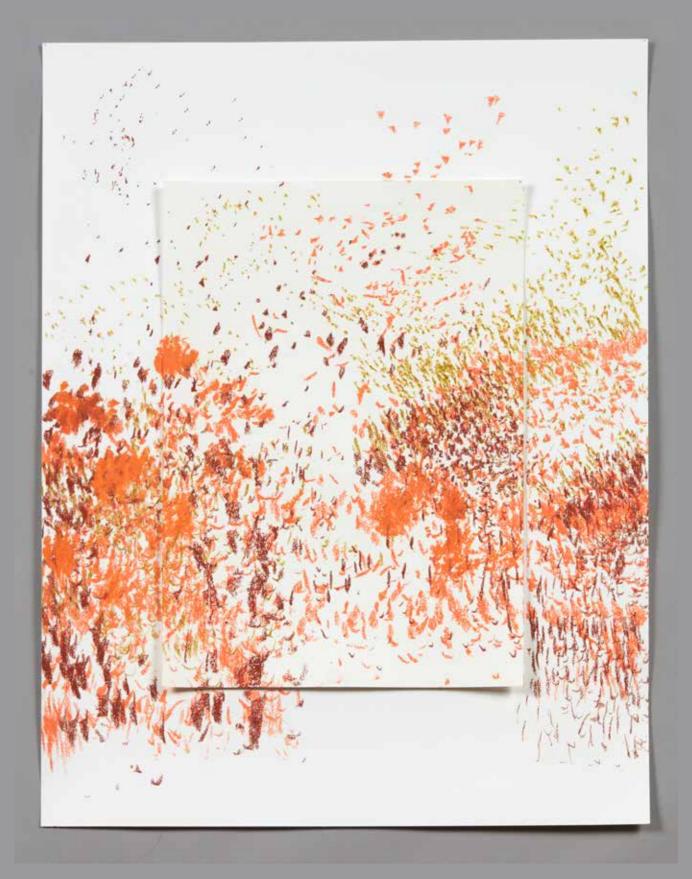






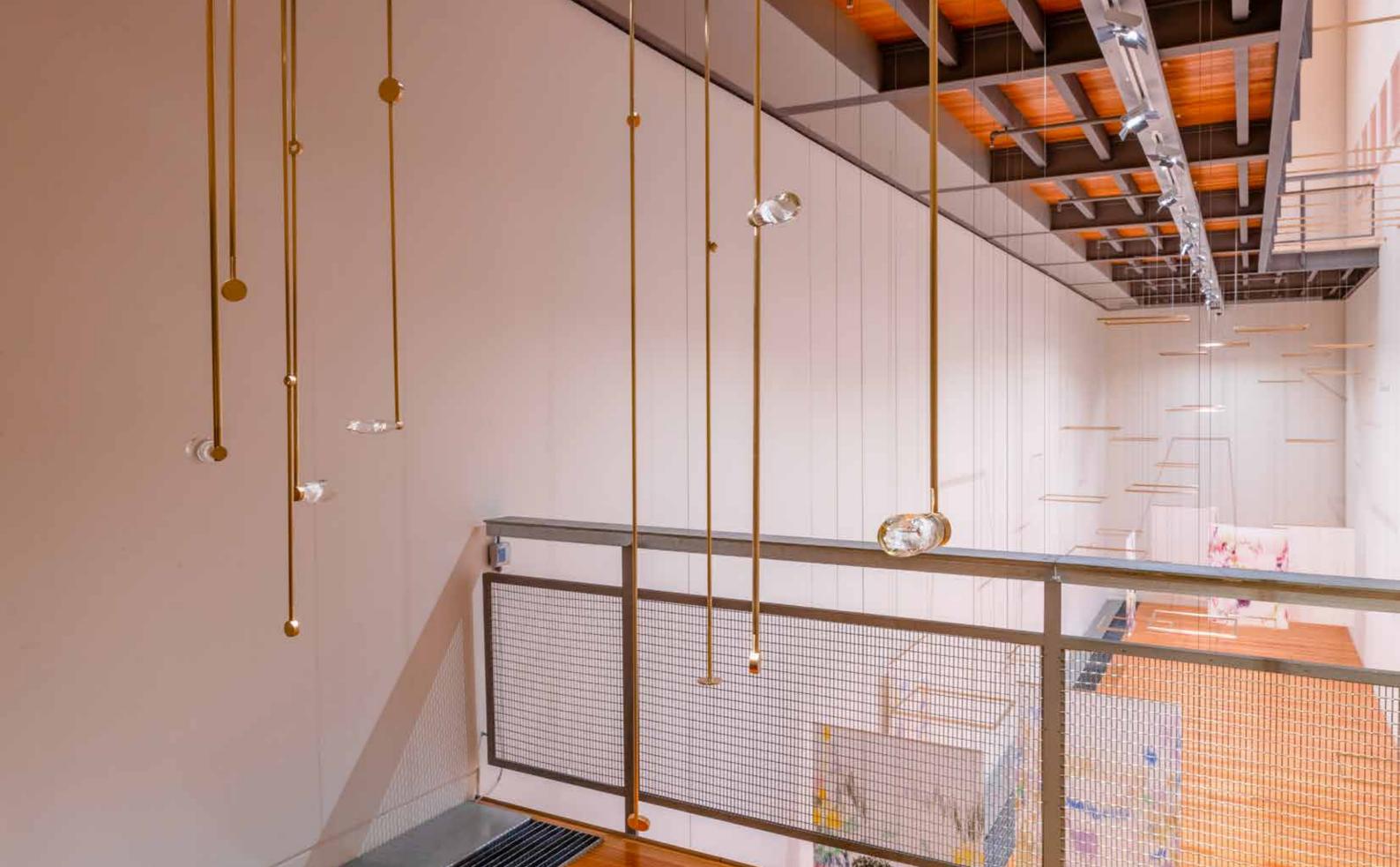






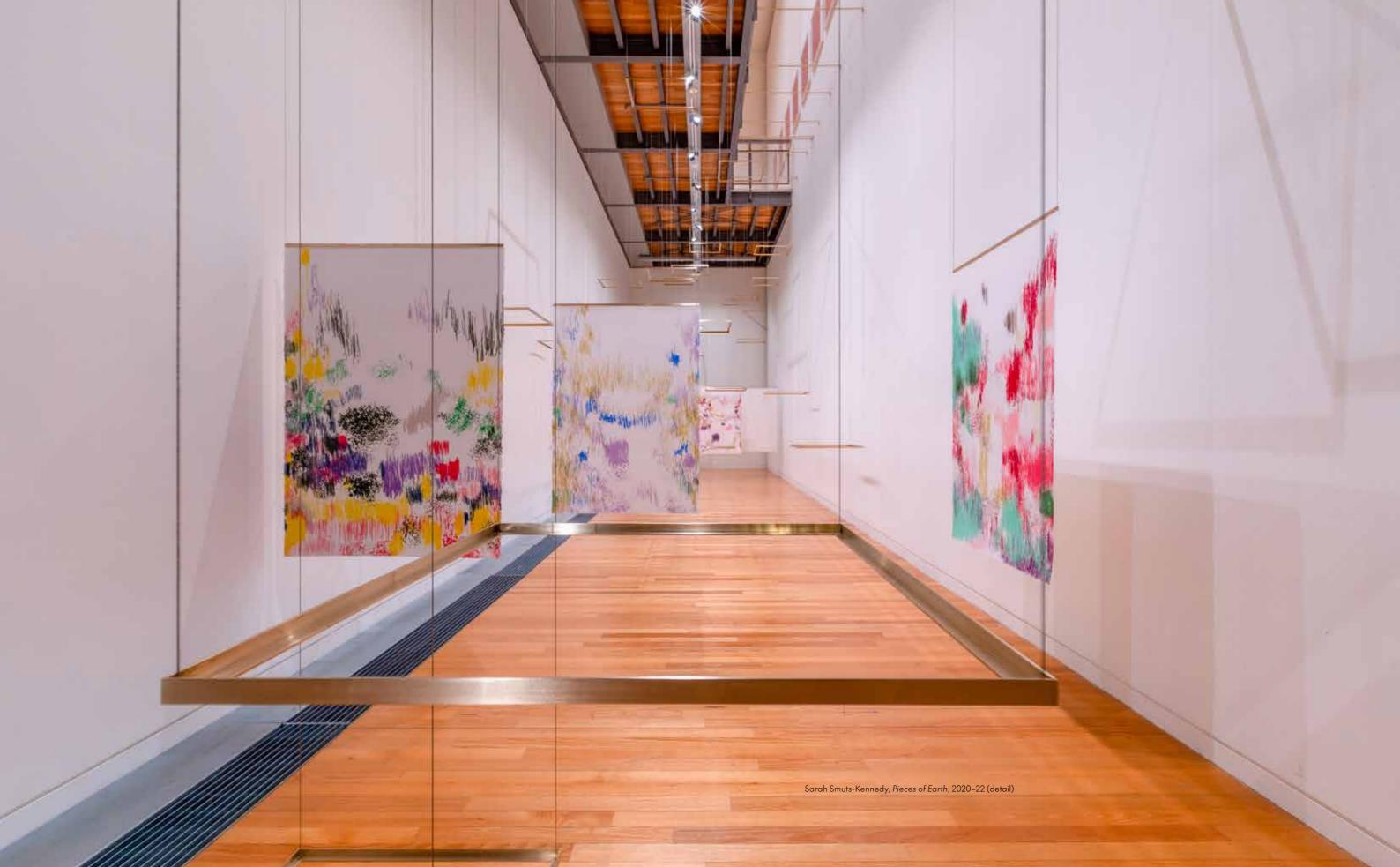




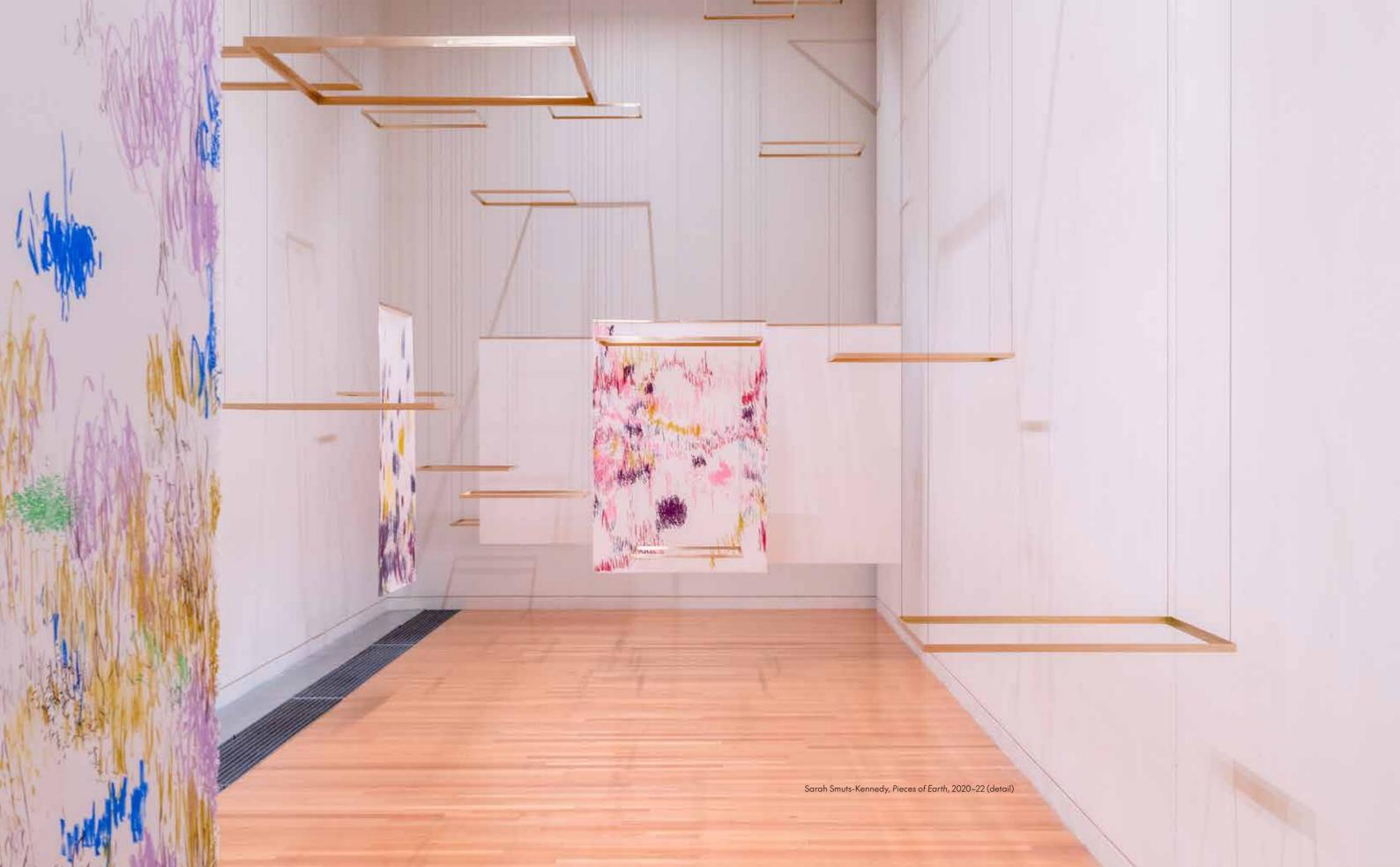






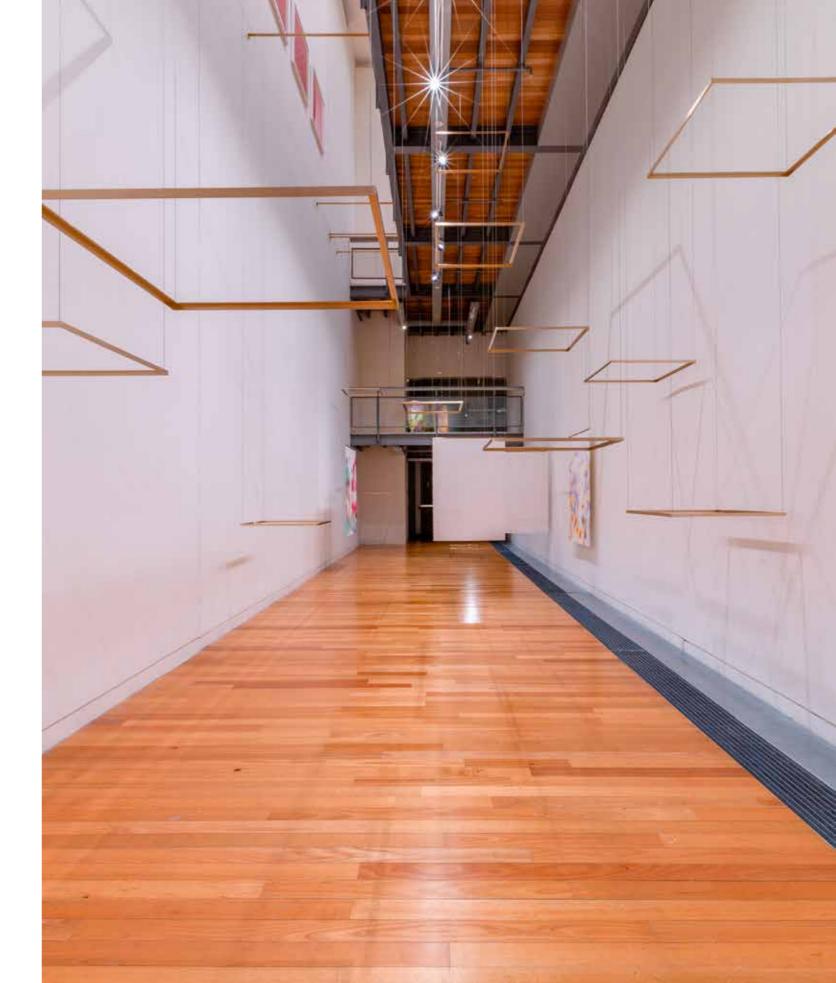




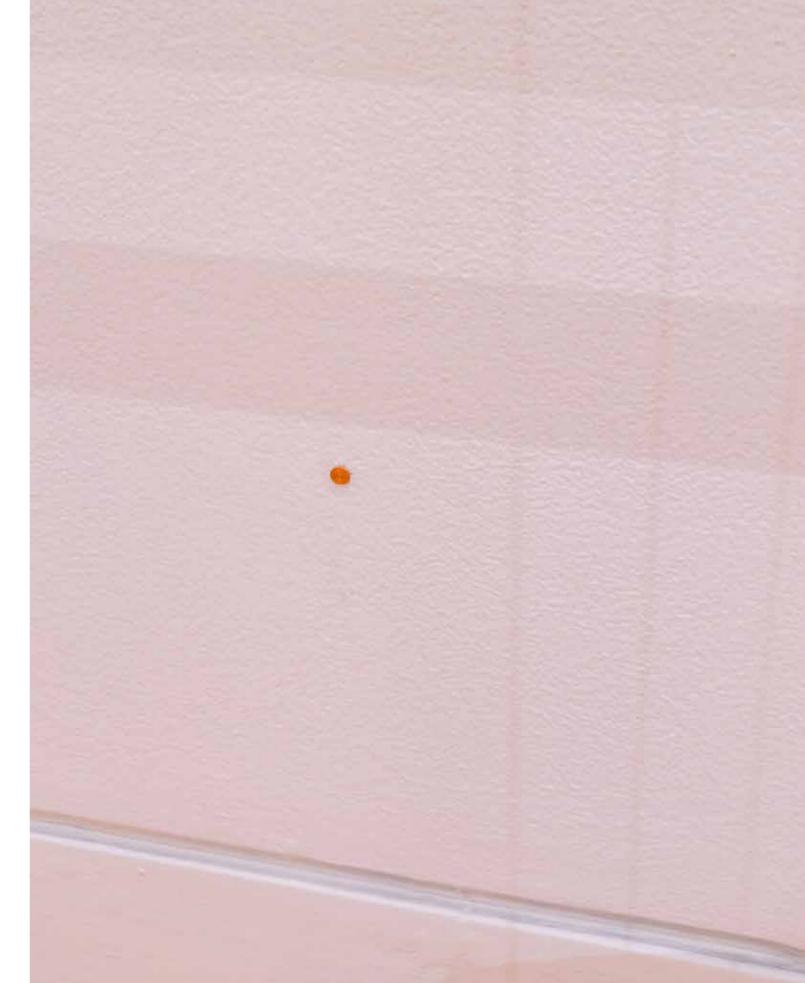


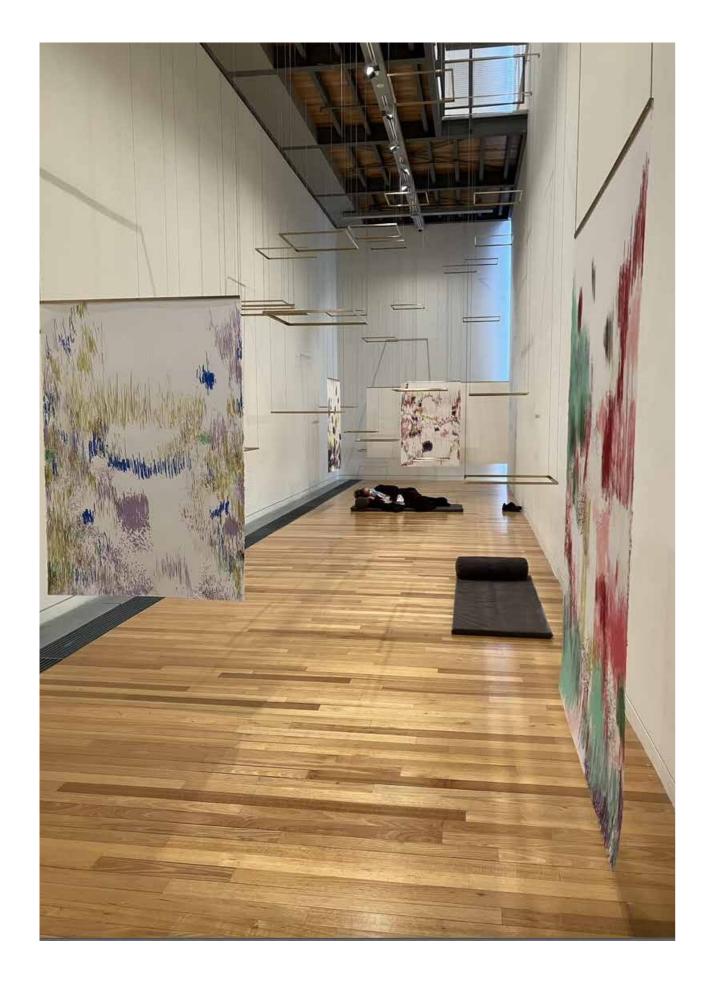












Performing the Possibility of Healing The Work of Sarah Smuts-Kennedy

79

Despite the visceral power of her sculptures and drawings – crystals hovering in glass domes, delicate geometric brass structures, swirling abstract works that sing and soar – art, for Sarah Smuts-Kennedy, is not simply a matter of optics. Rather, it's a conduit for transformation, a form of communication that is manifested via often cryptic energies that have, she believes, her best interests at heart. The word 'art' for her is interchangeable with 'tools' or 'energy work'. She is inspired by the artist Agnes Martin, who declared:

When *I think* of art *I think* of *beauty*. *Beauty* is the mystery of *life*. It is not in the eye it is in the mind. In our minds there is awareness of perfection.¹

For Smuts-Kennedy, creating objects and images is about "performing the possibility of healing;" she tells me she's "trying to learn from life every day."² After we speak, she emails me: "I have such a strong sense of a purpose of art making. Of bringing patterns and rhythms (vibrations) into being at this time for us to rest against. They are doing a job."

A biodynamic gardener – one who integrates scientific understanding with a recognition of spirit in nature – as well as an artist, Smuts-Kennedy is deeply attuned to the landscapes she works and rests in. She has spent over a decade committed to what she describes as 'active listening' – to the earth, the air, the realm of spirits and unseen energies. This has resulted in a personal philosophy that embraces an intertwining of life and art that transcends conventional

Joy Field Immersion

constraints. "There is," she tells me, "a big part of us that is not bound by gravity."

As with many artists, past and present, unseen forces guide Smuts-Kennedy's practice. In conversation, she mentions Rudolf Steiner – who inspired biodynamic gardening – listening to the souls of rocks and trees; Joseph Beuys's (1921–1986) proposal to plant 7000 oak trees in Kassel, Germany, which was bombed in World War II, in order to reconnect the city's traumatised citizens with the natural realm; and the Swiss researcher Emma Kunz's use of the pendulum to create her therapeutic drawings, which she thought of less as art than as spaces to enter and answers to questions – to do with illness, politics, the spirit, or philosophy. As with Smuts-Kennedy's work, you don't need to know anything about either art or mysticism to appreciate the luminous authority of these works.

Smuts-Kennedy recalls how the emphasis on the critical, rational mind during her time at art school a decade ago was a burden she has since had to overcome: although a deeply analytical and articulate artist, she now trusts in intuition, instinct, forces beyond her control – spirits, mentors, energies – in order to gain "knowledge beyond [her]self." Using a process called Divination or Radiesthesia, which she accesses via a pendulum – a tool she understands to be an extension of her own magnetic field - she holds a question in mind and 'a desire for a vibration'. The quality of the answers she receives reflects the quality of her questions. These range from requests for guidance on contemporary art to "what is the most useful thing to do next?" and "what artifacts will I use, do they already exist and do I need to emerge something new?" She reveals that "surrendering to this system continues to generate surprising outcomes that I do not anticipate or foresee. Feeling like an archaeologist of my own practice I slowly come to understand what each work is doing with a growing sensation that there is a larger logic at play that wants to bring beauty and harmony into the physical plane."³

When I ask her who or what she feels is guiding her, she describes "a couple of energies that come very distinctly" and one in particular, "a laughing man." As there is something ecstatic both about her work and her approach to making it, this does not surprise me. For the placement of the sculptures and drawings in the exhibition *Energy Work* at the Adam Art Gallery in Wellington, it was vital that Smuts-Kennedy trusted that the forms "given" to her had a logic that would be revealed during the course of the installation. If a problem arose, she rejected her critical judgement in order to be guided by her pendulum: she "wanted to work with material [she] couldn't see or understand" in order to extend the possibilities of learning. The show was hung at a height that was arrived at by taking an average measurement of the installation team's heart chakras, or energy points – a "simple strategy to weave art, architecture and intention." When the installation was complete, the artist felt it had to "be activated"

80 81

by placing a brass point at each end of the exhibition. She wasn't able to perform it herself, as she had contracted Covid 19, and so she asked a member of the installation team, Andy, to do it instead, and requested he recite a "heart poem." He went further, singing the Māori blessing *Te Aroha*:

Te aroha (love)
Te whakapono (faith)
Me te Rangimarie (peace)

Despite her disappointment at missing the opening, the experience was, Smuts-Kennedy explained, a lesson in letting go of attachment: sculptures and paintings she had dreamed up had become a community work. The song that was sung was beautiful. The exhibition was activated.

Smuts-Kennedy told me she had felt a spiritual "invitation" from the gallery since 2015. She's long been attracted to the building's unique structure over three levels. The architecture allowed her to weave her work through the gallery so that it might respond to the vibrational energies - from human to Earth and air - that charge the different spaces. In the stairwell hung Structure for the House of I (2016), a deceptively simple sculpture formed of what Smuts-Kennedy describes as the "ancient energy tools of geometry:" a triangle, square and circle. The shapes are forged in brass, which is an energy conductor, and suspended from thin strands of stainless steel. Smuts-Kennedy defines the three archetypes as symbolic of the "triangulation of the three selves and three suns:" the circle is at once a portal and a whole, the square, which floats on a horizontal plane, references the alignment of the earth and the "four corners" of being human. Although each element was created separately over time, they seem to magically merge as you walk down the stairs. The "I" of the title echoes the cosmic eye – the one becomes part of the whole. Smuts-Kennedy remarked that when she found herself beneath the sculpture, the energy she felt from it was "quite acute."

Ten Parts Whole (2014) was also chosen to respond to the architecture of the stairwell space. A group of square brass rectangles – which spark like gold as the light shifts – hang from the ceiling by near-invisible stainless-steel threads; they are stilled in the midst of floating upwards, as if time, as well as the sculptures, has been momentarily arrested.

The most recent work in the exhibition, *Discharge* (2022) was, Smuts-Kennedy told me, the most challenging for her to create. She experienced a vision of what was to become "the anchor" of the installation at the gallery when she was swimming: six large "joy field" drawings that form one work, hung together with brass bars in a hexagonal shape. ("Brass." she tells me, "is a really great divinational tool – it facilitates subtle energy.") With her eyes closed – what she describes as drawing "blind" – the artist works at

her easel after using a pendulum to choose "the mark-making tool" - mostly pigment pastel but sometimes pencil or other mediums. She favours heavy paper – 640gsm – which has a dense surface that "absorbs energy." During the creation of *Discharge* she was, she says, "pushed to her limits" in having to trust in a process which required her to surrender her critical judgement. The process involved her "spreading and rubbing the pigment across the plane." She kept hearing the words "lean in." She would constantly ask if her task was complete and was frequently told "no." But then there was a "distinct moment where [she] was suddenly aware it had stopped being a drawing and became an energetic, living force, somehow. At this moment [she] knew to stop." She described having to direct her mind "to get out of the way" as her soul asked her: "Do you want the drawings?" The end result is a resounding "yes:" while each picture is different, overall, the sense is one of intense rhythmic celebration: dense shimmering colours float in space – from a soft, dawn-like glow of yellows, pinks and oranges, to marks as dense as undergrowth and a twilight burst of aquatic indigos illuminated with sparks of cerulean. But despite the sheer beauty of each picture, they had a job to do. "Together they formed the discharge circuit. The concept of discharge is that there is too much unbalanced energy in our biosphere at the moment. Too much to transmute. It needs to be discharged for balance to be possible."

Even in reproduction, *Discharge* emits a feeling of ecstasy, an evocation of movement amid stasis. "A drawing is like dancing," Smuts-Kennedy tells me. "I have always felt music. You surrender and it emerges."

Smuts-Kennedy thinks of her enigmatic installation *Harmonies* (2016) as "a non-audible musical instrument" – a reference to the fact that Pythagoras introduced to the West "the ancient Egyptian way of correlating musical qualities with quantifiable, numerical values." The work comprises Herkimer diamonds – according to one website, the "high energy seekers of the crystal world" – which appear to be poised in glass containers hanging from 13 brass rods. Flickering with light, the combination of elements hover like a constellation of notes in space – I think of someone holding her breath before bursting into song. Smuts-Kennedy tells me that, like all of her work, *Harmonies* is "a tool." "For what?", I ask. She explains her primary project is "balance, which is healing; joy." Her sculpture evokes a sense of weightlessness, of something beyond the sum of its parts punctuated with harmony: the evocation of pure sound, of unity, of equilibrium.

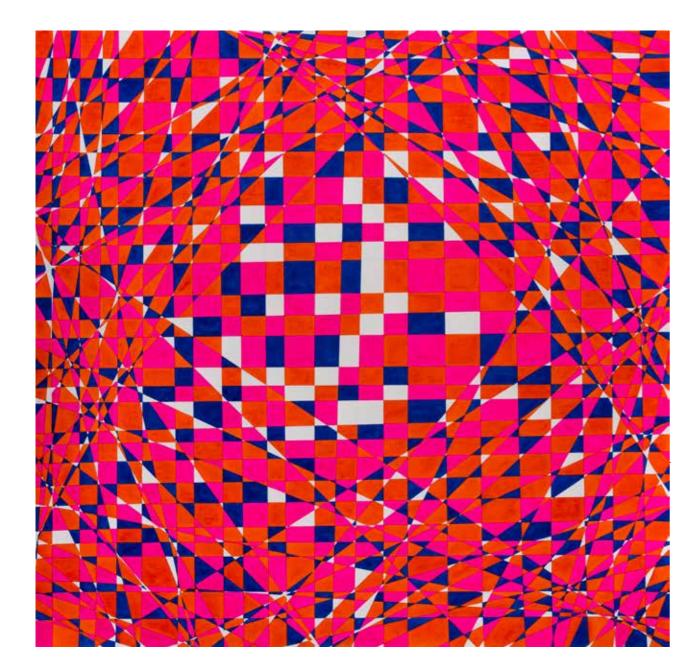
The largest work in the exhibition is *Pieces on Earth* (2020–22). An installation whose elements hang at various heights from the gallery's ceiling, it comprises nine, high-key *Joy Field* drawings which seem to vibrate amidst 36 delicate brass rectangles that "notate" the air as they swing gently in draughts. Explaining her processes, Smuts-Kennedy often returns to nature: for example, she writes that the notations of the drawing series *Light Language* "trace an energetic clearing over the twenty beats/drawings that tap into the Earth's

82 83

telluric grid." For *Pieces on Earth*, she says that the lines of the sculptures create "energetic eddies in the atmosphere in the same way rocks do in a river, as they impact on the flow, movement and sound of water." The gallery supplied matts and bolster cushions for visitors so they could rest beneath the installation, "lingering in the vibrational field," as the artist put it in an Instagram post. She added she spent an hour under different parts. "With the building moving in the wind, the pieces on earth were in subtle and perpetual movement. [...] It was beautiful and refreshing to take the time to have an embodied experience of this Joy Field. I felt tingly, clear headed and calm. I hope your experiences are beautiful, too."

Jennifer Higgie

- 1 Agnes Martin, "Beauty is the Mystery of Life," Agnes Martin, D.A.P/Tate, 2015, accessed online: https://tinyurl.com/yd69j7vw.
- 2 Unless otherwise mentioned, all quotes from a Zoom call between Jennifer Higgie and Sarah Smuts-Kennedy, 21 July 2022.
- 3 Sarah Smuts-Kennedy, artist's notes, Energy Work: Sarah Smuts-Kennedy, exhibition guide, Te Pātaka Toi Adam Art Gallery, Wellington, 2022, n. p.
- 4 Email from Sarah Smuts-Kennedy to Jennifer Higgie, 24 July 2022.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 https://www.crystalvaults.com/crystal-encyclopedia/herkimer-diamond/
- 7 Sarah Smuts-Kennedy, artist's notes, op. cit.
- 8 Sarah Smuts-Kennedy Instagram post, (@sarahsmutskennedy), 19 July 2022.



Kathy Barry – Looking Beyond the Ferris Wheel

She went to buy a ticket at the booth in front of the Ferris wheel. "We'll be closing pretty soon, Mademoiselle," the ticket seller, an old man, told her.... This will be the last ride. One time around and we're finished.

[...] "That's all right. Once is enough," Miu replied. She brought a ticket and stepped up on the platform.... Empty boxes swung idly through the air as they revolved as if the world itself were fizzling out towards its end.¹

—Haruki Murakami

As the artist sat at the window she was visited by her future self. Later there came a painting. Existing on a two-dimensional plane is carbon from a pencil, pigment from a paint-loaded brush. The work spins, rocking our physical world, orientating a higher plane of existence on a piece of watercolour paper.

The central character in the passage quoted above, from Murakami's *Sputnik Sweetheart*, gets trapped on a Ferris wheel. One can visualise a gondola swaying at night, suspended from a large radial structure. As in many of Murakami's novels, the moment precipitates a transcendence of space-time. Seated within the gondola – now become an observation capsule – Miu looks across the city toward the apartment in which she lives. Gazing in through its windows with the aid of a pair of binoculars, she sees herself in the bedroom. How can she be in two places at one and the same time?

As with other apparatuses found in his novels, for Murakami, the Ferris wheel is a metaphysical portal to another spatio-temporal plane. Miu does not see herself across the city, but a parallel self as a portent. Existing simultaneously within and beyond the gondola, her two selves activate the contradistinction of immanence and transcendence: being inherently within and beyond the range of normal human experience.²

The Ferris wheel is an apt mechanism for thinking about the work of Kathy Barry. Starting up, it rocks slightly forward-and-back on its axle, then revs up, reaching its zenith through ascending gears, then revolving at full velocity. The tiny biomechanics of the inner ear rush to stabilise the experience, a passenger feels the lurch in their innards, and the photoreceptor rods and cone cells behind the retina, not able to keep up with the passage of time, blur sight then adjust to the ride. Ferris amusements thrill us, making us giddy in exhilarating loops before returning us to the place we boarded.

Only by looking through the picture glass into Barry's works does the perceptual effect of her work take hold. Scanning the labyrinth of electric blues, hot pinks, burnt oranges and emerald greens, it is easy to overlook the effort spent on their production. In fact, there are hundreds and thousands of elongated rectangles, trapezoids, and triangles of various sizes, each a carefully delineated capsule travelling on intersecting radial lines, forming a web that suspends perception.

But perhaps an account of her works' aesthetics ought to be slowed down. Like the Ferris wheel turning at speed, we need to brake, descend through gears and come back down to earth, to pause and momentarily halt. Then after settling our equilibrium, we can start the second ride and climb toward the apex of a great spinning disk.

Rather than lift off, this time the geometries worm down deep into the two-dimensional plane, a multi-dimensional network extending beyond the paper surface, through the glass, past the frame, beyond even the room they're in. In a very real sense Barry's works record energy transmissions that reside outside the narrow band of human perception. As frequency diagrams, they work their effect on us, their optical energies building a bridge to our consciousness.³

Yet her watercolours do not immediately yield the secrets that their abstract geometries hold. To comprehend Barry's work is to appreciate a form where vibrations are vocalised on paper. Such an explanation shifts the orthodox understanding that there is nothing beyond the surface. Here space-time is opened up, revealing how energies are received. 'It is not things in themselves that are important but the transcendental dimensions beyond them.'

This transcendental and restorative practice corresponds to a pioneering form of abstract art produced in the early twentieth century, an art form arrived at through methods not bound by rational science though still responsive to scientific and technological innovations that, today, are understood as

paradigm shifting.⁵ These watercolours hold a mystical agency, attained by intertwining subtle universal energies with the corporeal. Here, the efficacy of the pattern is itself a form of *being*.

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Kathy Barry's propositions cannot be taken at all lightly. She joins a retinue of artists who have intuited or seen the logics of space-time and conveyed them with models and diagrams that demonstrate their ways of seeing. This is no la-la crazy land. It aligns with the findings of current-era quantum mechanics – which addresses the nature of particles that make up matter and the forces with which they interact – that now lists 26 dimensions, or the images captured by the Event Horizon Telescope. This array, linking together "eight existing radio observatories across the planet to form a single 'Earth-sized' virtual telescope," has shown us the light of a thing long dead: a picture of a collapsed star taken as the first 'photographic' evidence of a black hole. So that a lay person can make out the whirl in the infinite reaches of space, this image is slightly adjusted, heightening the curvature about an orange fiery glow, so we can see something impossible: a tear in the fabric of the universe.

87

86

Take a ride on a Ferris wheel or twirl an umbrella in your hands and the spokes will enmesh and visually entangle. The wheel revolves round and round on its axle. One cannot pinpoint exactly when, but a moment arrives when time stops and the spokes seem to still or even go backwards. Spinning through space the passenger is caught between future and past, and vice-versa. The longer one spends with Barry's work, the more powerful the influence their geometries exert.

Just 55 million light years away from Earth is that supermassive black hole in Galaxy Messier 87.7 The lurch of gravity is so strong out there that nothing is emitted, the velocity required to reach it would be equal to the speed of light. Beyond the end of light all knowledge evaporates. If a mass were to pass through the interior of the black hole, its molecular structure, its DNA, its code would reemerge reconstructed somewhere else in time. There is science fact and there is science fiction. To slip into a wormhole is one thing, but to reappear and be put back together on the other side, another. If the force of gravity bends light, then "pockets in other dimensions of time and space might be reached."

In the series 12 Energy Diagrams Barry shows us such a wormhole. She arrived here by activating the Merkaba light body. As she explains, this is "a system which lies dormant in the energy body but can be activated with

various meditative processes. The Merkaba are comprised of two intersecting tetrahedrons energetic in nature, containing 'zones of intensification', where focused energy is drawn from the sky and Earth and intersect in the human energy body." Watching herself from outside of herself she spins energy into art. This embodies the torus energy-flow, a field-patterning existing in everything at all scales from life forms, atoms, trees, and cosmic bodies such as stars and galaxies. The carbon compressed in a pencil stems from the stars and atoms can be in two places at once; like some theoretical quantum particle, her paintings show us these facts.

When producing her works, Barry draws on those rotational Merkaba and the surrounding Toroidal fields, which "act like containers that can move consciousness through time and space unhindered by the constraints of physicality and linear time." ¹⁴ In *Search Engine for her Future Self*, Barry acutely alludes to the infinite extension of the Internet and the logic of its predictive algorithms which enmesh human desire with the machine and consumer data. But her drawings prove her distrust in materialism, instead using her physical embodiment to cut through time.

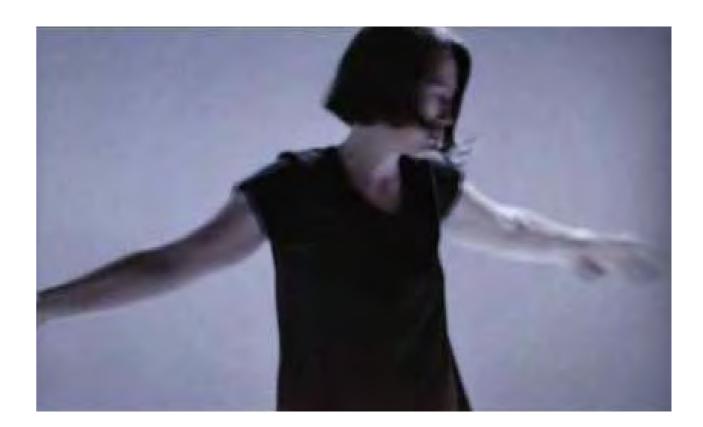
These watercolours are produced by other fractals of self. These encode intelligence in a complex visual representation that offers pathways for others to navigate. This idea is not as far-fetched as it might at first sound. Humans willingly accept and understand a spectrum of frequencies such as radio-waves or TV signals. These transmit to a receiver which displays pattern and information on screens or sounds aired through speakers. We are less accustomed to the idea that humans can themselves tap the spectrum of (higher) energy frequencies as sentient receivers. But by controlling one's senses and one's mind we can overcome doubt and limitations, opening new and broader patterns of existence. But the fact remains, most humans really don't perceive that much at all on a planet "fizzling out towards its end."

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It may be that believing in this world, in this life, becomes our most difficult task, or the task of a mode of existence still to be discovered on our plane of immanence today.¹⁵

—Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari

In "From Chaos to the Brain," Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari conceptualise how human imitation and opinion are planes which only serve to "protect" us from "chaos" (disorder and formless matter). These planes "shelter" us from letting other modalities and variables in. Providing an explanation



88

Kathy Barry, 12-Minute Movement, 2016

of the "plane of immanence," Deleuze and Guattari employ an everyday umbrella:

People are constantly putting up an umbrella that shelters them and on the underside of which they draw a firmament and write their convention and opinions. But poets, artists, make a slit in the umbrella, they tear open the firmament itself, to let in a bit of free and windy chaos and to frame in a sudden light a vision that appears through the rent.¹⁶

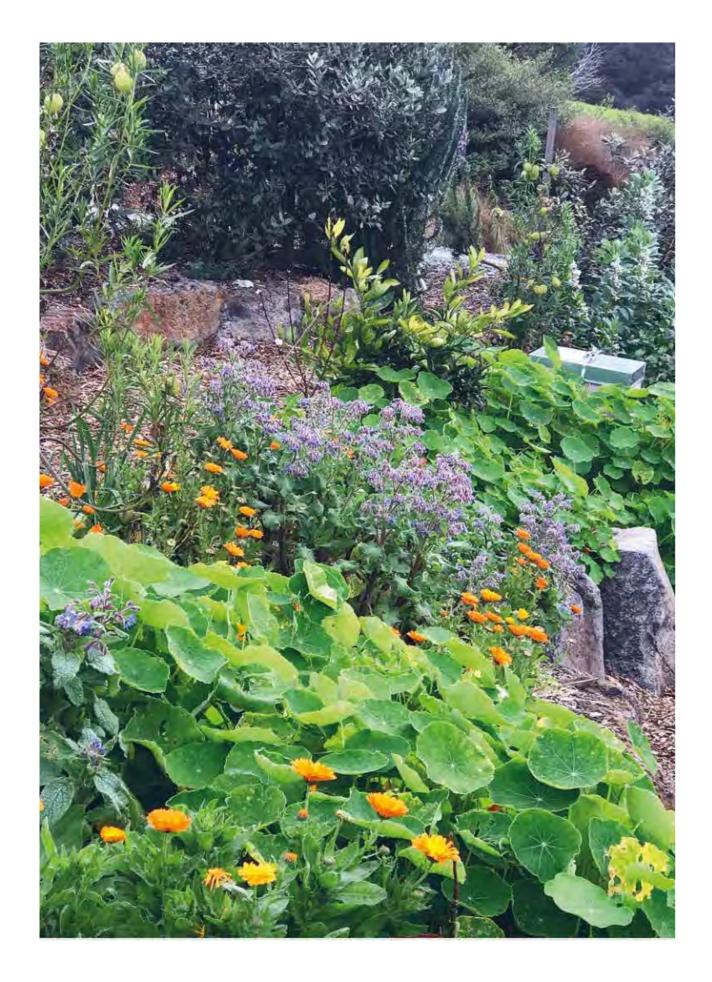
Illuminating this idea, the philosophers draw on various examples in the fields of science, mathematics, and philosophy. They also speak of art, especially, the artist capable of "bringing back from the chaos veracities that no longer constitute a reproduction of the sensory in the organ but set up a being of the sensory, a being of sensation, on an anorganic plane of composition that is able to restore the infinite." Barry's practice is without imitation: to draw geometries of existence we must embody the multiple dimensions of reality. The Ferris wheel spins while our eyes hold it still. On a two-dimensional plane is carbon from a pencil, pigment from paint-laden brush. As we plumb the depths of Barry's work we see something undoubtedly beyond: quite possibly, quite seriously, a greater good.

Marcus Moore

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- Haruki Murakami, "The Tale of Miu and the Ferris Wheel," in Sputnik Sweetheart, trans. Philip Gabriel, Vintage, London, 2002, pp. 158–176.
 I am indebted to Catherine Bagnall for introducing Murakami's novels to me in 2013.
- 2 Fredrika Spindler employs the verb "activating" in "Gilles Deleuze: A Philosophy of Immanence," in Phenomenology and Religion: New Frontiers, edited by Jonna Bornemark & Hans Ruin, Södertörns högskola, Huddinge, 2010, pp. 149–163.
- 3 Lars Bang Larsen discusses universal energy flows in the work of Kathy Barry, INCERTEZA VIVA/Live Uncertainty, 32nd Bienal de São Paolo, exhibition catalogue, Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil, 2016, p. 220.
- 4 See Anna Maria Bernitz, writing on the pioneering contribution of Hilma af Klint to abstract art, "Hilma af Klint and the New Art of Seeing," in A Cultural History of the Avant-Garde in the Nordic Countries 1900–1925, Journal of Avant-Garde Critical Studies, vol. 28, 2012, pp. 587–597.

- 5 Catherine de Zegher discussing the work of Hilma af Klint (1862–1944) and Emma Kunz (1892–1963), writes that their pioneering methods were "not as formalism, but as a means of structuring philosophical, scientific, and spiritual ideas ...crea[ting] diagrammatic drawings of their exploration of complex belief systems and restorative practices." See 3 × Abstraction: New Methods of Drawing: Hilma af Klint, Emma Kunz, Agnes Martin, The Drawing Center, New York and Yale University Press, London, 2005, p. 29.
- 6 Accessed Thursday 17 November 2022 from, https://eventhorizontelescope. org/blog/astronomers-reveal-first-image-black-hole-heart-ourgalaxy#:~:text=First%20image%20of%20the%20black%20hole%20at%20the%20 centre%20of%20the%20Milky%20Way&text=It%20was%20captured%20by%20 the,Earth%2Dsized%E2%80%9D%20virtual%20telescope.
- 7 Produced by the Event Horizon Telescope Collaboration, the image was published in April 2018.
- 8 This explanation is from Professor Brian Cox, see "Entangled States," https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/ninetonoon/audio/2018864820/brian-cox-entangled-states-and-black-holes, accessed 30 October 2022.
- 9 At the very edge of the hole something at the quantum level will occur which is on the threshold of understanding. Particles will exist in multiple states simultaneously.
- 10 Kathy Barry, artist's notes, Energy Work: Kathy Barry, exhibition guide, Te Pātaka Toi Adam Art Gallery, Wellington, 2022, n. p.
- 1 Ibid
- "Being present to a process that I can only understand by allowing a set of circumstances unfold is like watching an organic event the spinning of a spider's web; a bird's nest being built; a butterfly emerging from a suspended chrysalis with its own innate intelligence and logic." Kathy Barry, artist's notes, ibid.
- 13 The toroidal field is "the primary component that enables a seamless fractal embedding of energy flow from micro-atomic to macro-galactic wherein each individual entity has its unique identity while also being connected with all else. In the words of pioneering researcher Arthur Young: 'The self in a toroidal Universe can be both separate and connected with everything else.'", https://cosmometry.net/the-torus---dynamic-flow-process.html, accessed 21 February 2023.
- 14 Kathy Barry, artist's notes, ibid.
- 15 Giles Deleuze and Felix Guatarri, What is Philosophy?, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchill. Verso, London & New York, 1994, p. 75.
- 16 Their text at this point draws on D. H. Lawrence's description of what produces poetry. Deleuze and Guatarri, What is Philosophy?, ibid, pp. 203–204.
- 17 Ibid, pp. 202-203.



Sarah Smuts-Kennedy's Expanded Field

Toward the center of the field there is a slight mound, a swelling in the earth, which is the only warning given for the presence of the work.

—Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field" (1979)¹

It's a wretched day for writers and their texts when we hold them to account for all those lives ahead of them. Those who have read and re-read their thinking – arguing against them for not anticipating a shift in terms, or a changed set of perceptions fresh for a new era. Almost forty years from its publication, American art historian Rosalind Krauss's essay "Sculpture in the Expanded Field" reads like a case against the anything-goes approach to generalist accounts of the new art forms of the late 1960s. To do this Krauss labours her now familiar structuralist diagram to adjust the terms of reference and create, for the humanities, a logical and orderly explanation for the diffusion of modern form, support, viewer, architectural and landscape relationships.

The Klein diagram seems even now to offer some security for art's expansion. If it is not this or that, then it is part of the field of terms established by their relationship in opposition. Yet most of these terms are known, even when they are read by their negative value, they are in, as Krauss writes, "the outer limits of those terms of exclusion." But Krauss's own terms could not have anticipated a kind of practice to lift off the field altogether, as it were, into the space of esoteric practice, where the "field"

93

Maunga Kereru, 2020

is the unseen and unfamiliar field of energy – spiritual energy. A space where Sarah Smuts-Kennedy's garden might not just be landscape/not-landscape or architecture/not-architecture or sculpture/not sculpture, but a place to work practically on that energy. How did we get out of the diagram? Or as Krauss might argue: is this a redeployment of the postmodern, in which we have reorganised the terms that are held in opposition within a new cultural situation. Esoteric practice arises when the logic of 'sculpture,' let's just say even *within* the expanded field, follows a too-logical, too familiar course. As my dictionary says, the antonym of esoteric is *familiar*.

I might not have been thinking of Krauss even if I hadn't been grappling with 'the energetic field,' something Smuts-Kennedy has been working with since her completed postgraduate exhibition in 2012. So you see, even I am engaged in this dialectic, as I return the amorphous 'energy field,' back to the frame of references established in this formative poststructuralist text. So, we've expanded the field in the only place left – the outer, outer limit. Yet how helpful is this route? The implication that the growth of interest in 'mystical' subject matter or, in this case, energy fields, was not more than an exercise in the expansion of terms, is a too-reductive or even cynical evaluation of the genuine attempts on behalf of an artist to explore the "practical exercises that help extend our ability to perceive the nature of things. To help us pay attention to the subtle perceptions that we often ignore, yet which offer opening to a world of form, dynamic patterns and colour and more intimate relationships to our feelings, thoughts and impulses."²

In opening out her discussion Krauss begins with a description of a work made the year prior to her essay, *Perimeters/Pavilions/Decoys*, 1978, by Mary Miss. Outlining the basic elements of the work as if from a distance, piecing together the scene in the landscape before closing in on definitions, Krauss names the work as "of course a sculpture or, more precisely, an earthwork." What I want to differentiate here for Smuts-Kennedy is how her own large garden north of Auckland, built using biodynamic processes, functions both outside of the work and as a basis for the sculptural work that would later emerge. The garden is not sculpture nor earthwork. It does not behave as her artistic practice, but *in relation to* her artistic practice; it is the means for exercising the ideas basic to her practice, which I might describe as the exploration of forms that have the potential to practically influence energy fields and systems for productive outcomes.

By 1924, Rudolf Steiner's biodynamic farming was already responding to complaints of soil degradation by farmers and landowners in Germany. In many respects early organic farming was established internationally in response to the effects and impact of industrialisation. So, despite the practices derived from the more esoteric ends of Steiner's early association with the Theosophical Society, the emergence of his theory of agriculture was based in the modern period and amongst its discontents.

94 95

It's not so much of a stretch to compare other artists who have exercised their creative eye within the garden, including that most famous example of Claude Monet, the French Impressionist whose paintings of his garden at Giverny emerged in the industrial era. Experimenting with colour relationships in nature while also cultivating his compositional interest in Japonisme by way of the garden, Monet commented on the "magic" of the garden, "I had planted them for pleasure; I cultivated them without thinking of painting them. A landscape does not sink into you all at once. And then suddenly I had the revelation of the magic of my pond. I took up my palette. Since then I have hardly had another model." Here and elsewhere Monet describes what appears to be a symbiotic relationship between his cultivated landscape and the representation of it. But what to make of the presence of magic? The word occurs again, at the end of the century, in artist, filmmaker and writer Derek Jarman's thoughts on his garden at Dungeness, England, "At first, people thought I was building a garden for magical purposes – a white witch out to get the nuclear power station. It did have magic – the magic of surprise, the treasure hunt."4

At face value Smuts-Kennedy's garden appears to function less as an aesthetic device and more as a tool or an instrument for exploring synergistic systems in biology. She herself has said, "biodynamics is a practical way to practice working between energetic systems and biological systems." 5 Sitting somewhere between a commercial or market garden and a domestic-scaled vegetable patch, this garden is designed to feed (it's edible). Also, it is in every sense hand-reared, the original site was formed on a dense clay bed over which Smuts-Kennedy built up a thick fertile soil. Here the word energy could be exchanged with work. During the process of developing the garden's fertility Smuts-Kennedy was also undertaking postgraduate study focusing on the evolution of her sculptural form. In her first major exhibition in Auckland after graduation, Shape Analysis, 2013, she made highly polished bronze squares that hung elegantly from the ceiling on fine wire. Attached to each corner of the square frame, the wires made light and airy cubic and rectangular structures from the suspended bronze shapes, which, from a distance, looked like she was drawing volumes of air itself.

In the text for the exhibition Smuts-Kennedy wrote that the shapes were formed through the process of "mapping the room's electro-magnetic field, such as telluric currents, man-made electrical currents and electromagnetic radiation." So the forms demarcate sites of electrical energy. These fields were identified with the help of a guide, but that assistant did not in any way designate or suggest the visual form for these invisible zones within the architecture of the gallery. In what might otherwise appear to be an extension of minimalist sculptural language, Smuts-Kennedy gave them a form but also a context within the field of art. Their sculptural ancestor appears to be closer to American Donald Judd than Robert Smithson and his great environmental

works. Through his writing as much as his sculptural practice Judd still represents the height of sculptural Minimalism, despite his known resistance to the term. In an interview made the year after his first one-man show at the Green Gallery, New York, Judd commented in what now seems like quite general terms about his intention towards a "simplicity" that was also complex. Judd also defines simplicity by which it is not – it is non-naturalistic, non-imagistic and non-expressionist. As he saw it, the geometry in the work which included the free-standing cubic forms for which he has become best known, is also disassociated from "Geometric art.". In fact, Judd allowed for a kind of 'obscurity' in reading the work, something that was not so immediate for viewers, "I think what I'm trying to deal with is something more long range...more obscure perhaps, more involved with things that happen over a longer time perhaps. At least it's another area of experience."7 However he denies the association with Mondrian, and his "orderliness" or what he perceives to be a moral guide underpinning the work. In this way one reads the work as distinctly American. Mondrian was well known for his interest in Steiner's anthroposophy and theosophical roots even in late-twentieth-century America. For Judd, at least, this was an alienating matter.

Following on from Shape Analysis, and her work with electromagnetic or energy fields, Smuts-Kennedy appeared to travel closer to Mondrian's concerns for the spiritual in art. In particular, in her exhibition Field Work she introduced three-dimensional colour triangles and squares in overlapping geometrical forms. Taking the three dimensions available to sculptural and architectural space, Smuts-Kennedy appears to model diagrams or experimentations of Mondrian's theory of plasticity in which composition, colour and line are employed in the representation of essential harmonies. However, curiously, Smuts-Kennedy, whilst using similar language, is not pointing towards harmony but in many respects to a kind of disharmony. While the work both in its sculptural form and simplified colour relationships describes this harmonising impulse it is set in relationship to a natural field which is troubled, either with toxicity or erosion. In recognising what parts are in play here, we realise that Smuts-Kennedy has subtly inverted the principles of early-twentieth-century spiritualist tradition. Here, rather than art providing a representation of the unseen, or universal harmony in nature, and, let's say 'spirit', for want of a better word, form and colour are used in an attempt to balance or even heal a disrupted field. Therefore the 'art' is a tool that has an implicit job to do in relation to what we might more commonly call our environment. Included within that environment is not just the natural world but its less visible properties.

Smuts-Kennedy's work undergoes something of a transition through the course of her 2016 residency at the McCahon House that magnifies this inversion of classic spiritualist traditions in art. In her description of the residency outcomes, she proposed using the esoteric practice of Agnihotra

96 97

to experiment with the healing of the kauri trees surrounding the residency studio. These trees, the inspiration for some of artist Colin McCahon's most defining early Auckland works, are now widely known to be grievously in danger from a soil-borne disease. Smuts-Kennedy practiced the Vedic fire ceremony and its healing mantra at dawn and dusk in a real-world experiment to heal the kauri. Her actions were motivated not purely by Vedic science or spiritualism, but via the concerns of an artist operating with a fusion of healing systems as her resources.

Yet, realistically, how much can we separate the artist from her spheres of interest, whether they are visible in the end result or not? Even Mondrian knew as much, when he reminded readers "art is a duality of nature-and-man and not man alone."8 In her interview with Radio New Zealand's notoriously sceptical Kim Hill, Smuts-Kennedy skilfully argued: "that's the great thing about art work, it allows us to test and play with things we wouldn't otherwise give credence to." So, in much the same way that Joseph Beuys framed up his form of "social sculpture" influenced by Steiner's thinking, art might be deployed to mould society, even having a direct real-world positive outcome. Beuvs stated for example that "the concept of sculpting can be extended to the invisible materials used by everyone. That is why the nature of my sculpture is not fixed and finished. Processes continue in most of them: chemical reactions, fermentations, colour changes, decay, drying up. Everything is in a state of change."10 Beuys offers a model of art's relationship to society that interconnects esoteric thinking, something that has been mostly divorced from contemporary accounts of social sculpture. Following the residency, Smuts-Kennedy also ran an Agnihotra workshop at Artspace Aotearoa in Auckland, in association with her solo exhibition, which in the company of more traditional gallery visitor programmes was categorised as something closer to an artist's performance. Far from the Titirangi trees now on Auckland's Karangahape Road, the action had less 'real-world' implementation, but it was nonetheless utilised much like a teaching tool, to open out discussion on the trees and the energy field itself.

Smuts-Kennedy ran with several streams of activity in the studio during her McCahon House residency. One of these was the series of rhythmic drawings made using colour pastels drumming against paper pinned to the wall, executed in an almost meditative state. As she describes it, the colour palette is selected by pendulum, and the almost hypnotic rhythm of the pastel's application takes precedence over the artist's conscious decision making. They are clearly abstracts made in a state of abstraction, yet the "high key," to use Van Gogh's phrase, and the patternation are heavily reminiscent of the Impressionist's relationship to the emerging science of colour. However, these pastels are twenty-first-century tools and their colour range and capacity reflect the intricate developments in chemical colour, now long divorced from natural dyes and pigments. Yet the activity and integration of colours on the paper is

highly active and intuitive. They are perhaps the most seductive of her works to date. Why? Because colour - to steal from Michael Taussig who in turn borrows from William Burroughs – appears to walk off the page. Whatever the mind/hand combination was that made these works, they seemed to know about the blending of light that occurs in certain colour adjacencies. In his essay "What Color is the Sacred?" Taussig seeks to reinvigorate the investigations of early twentieth-century social anthropologist Michel Leiris. In the course of his text, understanding colour becomes analogous to understanding the bodily unconscious, "that which holds the future of the world in balance."11 He writes "we need to catch up with the way that history turned the senses against themselves so as to control them. The mystery of color lies in the fact that it evaded this fate because, while vital to human existence, it could never be understood."12 In the spectrum of examples he brings to bear on the problem of colour's relationship to the sacred, Taussig nonetheless positions himself – if not his examples – firmly in the twenty-first-century's problems and insights:

...the new nature of the new commodity world in which industry was gearing itself to fabricate cheap luxury goods. In mimicking nature, industry and most especially the chemical industry promised us utopias and fairylands beyond our wildest dreams, hence not merely colored, but magical, not merely colored, but poisonous. As the spirit of the gift, color is what sold and continues to sell modernity. As the gift that gives the commodity aura, color is both magical and poisonous, and this is perfectly in keeping with that view which sees color as both authentic and deceitful.¹³

There can be no doubt that the drawings point us into nature, with or without the remembered history of Pointillism and Impressionism. Their likeness to colour in motion is most certainly of our world, they have wind and weather and seasons even. They move off the page like a living thing and motion towards the window. If there is deceit in this action, it is peaceful and accepting. The world has been wronged, we no longer trust or delight in rainbows, we're thinking about pollution and pathogens in the atmosphere. Even as children are the last to delight in colourful magic within ancient intensity, they are taught about the ozone hole.

The drawings have been built in rapid development, and rather than essentialise colour relationships they are open to the viewer's own perceptual movements. In the span of the artist's practice, they are also the most recent in a series of inversions within which she situates her three-pronged hand – art, the healing tool, nature. This time one can't help feeling what we have in front of us is something like Monet's cosmic garden represented for us to stimulate

98

Sarah Smuts-Kennedy, Light Language 1–21, Methodist Church, Pitt Street, 2017



our own need for healing, as it did for Monet at Giverny and for Jarman at Dungeness. However, they are not explicitly 'in nature', while our relative consciousness may situate us there, these are without doubt representations of the inexplicable. They are allegories of a hopeful state, whether in wo/man or nature. Our responses to them are remote from logic but somehow engage the space between science and art. The colour field depicted is as close as Smuts-Kennedy has yet come to the representation of that unfamiliar space – the field of spiritual energy. Yet what of the white page? Is it enough? My sense is that this artist will keep recasting her pyramid of intentions until she finds the balance of the bodily unconscious, which directs her one way or another into art and life in the case of nature. Unlike the modernists she is under no illusion that we can escape the chemical pollution that has now altered our natural world and atmosphere. Instead, through social and formal mechanisms, she proposes that within art we might at least imagine it differently (which in this instance is analogous to imagining the unthinkable) in order to start productively effecting change.

Natasha Conland

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- Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," October, vol. 8, Spring 1979, pp. 30–44. All subsequent references are to this article.
- 2 Notes from the artist's journal, 2017.
- 3 Claude Monet cited in Jacqueline and Maurice Guillaud, Claude Monet at the Time of Giverny, Centre culturel du Marais, Paris, 1983, p. 150.
- 4 Derek Jarman in Derek Jarman's Garden, Thames & Hudson, London, 1995, p. 65.
- 5 Sarah Smuts-Kennedy in conversation with the author, July 2017.
- 6 Sarah Smuts-Kennedy in http://sarahsmutskennedy.com/project/shape-analysis-rm/, accessed 27 August, 2017.
- 7 Donald Judd in an interview with Bruce Hooton, 3 February 1965, for the Archives of American Art, https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-donaldjudd-11621, accessed 27 August, 2017.
- 8 Piet Mondrian, "Dialogue on the New Plastic," originally as "Dialoog over de Nieuwe Beelding," in De Stijl, 1919, reprinted in Art in Theory: 1900–1990, edited by Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, Blackwell, Oxford, 1992, p. 285.
- 9 Sarah Smuts-Kennedy in conversation with Kim Hill, http://www.radionz.co.nz/ national/ programmes/saturday/audio/201852032/sarah-smuts-kennedy-kauriand-mccahon, accessed 27 August, 2017.
- 10 Joseph Beuys, quoted by John F. Moffit, in Occultism in Avant-Garde Art: The Case of Joseph Beuys, UMI Research Press, Michigan, 1988, p. 109.
- Michael Taussig, "What Color Is the Sacred?", Critical Inquiry, vol. 33, no. 1, Autumn 2006, p. 32.
- 12 Ibid, p. 32.
- 13 Ibid, p. 36.



The Loom of Time: Kathy Barry and Moby Dick

103

What kind of figure – what form of text – can give shape to our entanglements within forces and flows beyond our ken and control? Kathy Barry's The Loom of Time is a series of sixteen watercolour and graphite drawings that offer a visual and perceptual field where contrasting forces are both mapped and held in suspension. As Barry notes, this title is taken from chapter 47 of Herman Melville's 1851 masterpiece Moby Dick, a chapter titled "The Mat-Maker." In this short chapter, Melville's narrator Ishmael deploys the phrase as he reflects on the operations of free will and fate while weaving a mat with his shipmate and former bedfellow Queequeg. As a scholar of nineteenth-century literature and culture, I come to Barry's work not as a historian of art but as a historian of the ideas it gestures toward, and I would like to draw out some of the ways in which this sequence taps into questions about the play between randomness and order, iteration and pattern, diachronic movement and synchronic stasis that are the object of Ishmael's speculations. These are questions that Melville's novel raises in historically emergent ways as both matters of philosophical reflection and, perhaps more importantly, aesthetic design. Barry's sequence both evokes these same questions and recontextualizes them in a different medium that offers a striking example of artistic form as a process of translation.

In her accompanying artist notes, Barry explains how the chapter from which her title *The Loom of Time* comes "evokes a sense of being outside of linear time: a moment of presence where the flow of time is suspended and replaced with a spaciousness like the sea itself." Before turning to *Moby*

Dick, it is worth noting how Barry characterises this work – and indeed many of the pieces in Energy Work – as "diagrams" that entail an explicit displacement of self. While The Loom of Time aims to capture a "bird's eye perspective" that renders the body within Toroidal energy flows, elsewhere Barry draws attention to how the order or structure of these diagrammatic works is a product not of intentional design but of textual practice itself. In the notes to Epic Whirlpool, for example, she elaborates a process that requires "forgo[ing] artistic decision making" and "allowing a set of circumstances to unfold ... like watching an organic event – the spinning of a spider's web."

If the pieces in *Energy Work* subordinate artistic will to unfolding material processes, it is a similar textual – or rather textile – unfurling that prompts Ishmael's philosophical reflections in "The Mat-Maker." The chapter presents not the spinning of a spider's web but rather the weaving of a mat. Chapter 47 can be read as a turning point in *Moby Dick* insofar as, falling just before the midpoint of the novel, the chapter culminates in the crew of the Pequod's first sighting of a sperm whale. It is also a turning point insofar as it marks Ishmael's explicit introduction of chance into the causal logic of his narrative. Like many chapters in the novel, it is a seeming pause or digression that provides Ishmael an opportunity to explain some of the mechanics of the whale ship and whaling. Yet as he abstracts from the material practices of the ship into the realm of dreamy speculations, his musings are interrupted by the sudden appearance of a whale on the horizon, which is hailed with an intensity befitting Ahab's domineering command of his crew's energies:

It was a cloudy, sultry afternoon; the seamen were lazily lounging about the decks, or vacantly gazing over into the lead-coloured waters. Queequeg and I were mildly employed weaving what is called a sword-mat, for an additional lashing to our boat. So still and subdued and yet somehow preluding was all the scene, and such an incantation of reverie lurked in the air, that each silent sailor seemed resolved into his own invisible self.

I was the attendant or page of Queequeg, while busy at the mat. As I kept passing and repassing the filling or woof of marline between the long yarns of the warp, using my own hand for the shuttle, and as Queequeg, standing sideways, ever and anon slid his heavy oaken sword between the threads, and idly looking off upon the water, carelessly and unthinkingly drove home every yarn: I say so strange a dreaminess did there then reign all over the ship and all over the sea, only broken by the intermitting dull sound of the sword, that it seemed

104 105

as if this were the Loom of Time, and I myself were a shuttle mechanically weaving and weaving away at the Fates. There lay the fixed threads of the warp subject to but one single, ever returning, unchanging vibration, and that vibration merely enough to admit of the crosswise interblending of other threads with its own. This warp seemed necessity; and here, thought I, with my own hand I ply my own shuttle and weave my own destiny into these unalterable threads. Meantime, Queequeg's impulsive, indifferent sword, sometimes hitting the woof slantingly, or crookedly, or strongly, or weakly, as the case might be; and by this difference in the concluding blow producing a corresponding contrast in the final aspect of the completed fabric; this savage's sword, thought I, which thus finally shapes and fashions both warp and woof; this easy, indifferent sword must be chance - aye, chance, free will, and necessity – nowise incompatible – all interweavingly working together. The straight warp of necessity, not to be swerved from its ultimate course – its every alternating vibration, indeed, only tending to that; free will still free to ply her shuttle between given threads; and chance, though restrained in its play within the right lines of necessity, and sideways in its motions directed by free will, though thus prescribed to by both, chance by turns rules either, and has the last featuring blow at events.2

Ishmael's description of the process of weaving sits in striking juxtaposition to Barry's sequence, most notably in the way that the vertical lines of the warp are crossed and transected by the horizontal lines of woof as the mat is brought into existence. Ishmael's invocation of this image as the "Loom of Time" seems to shift attention from the ultimate order or pattern of the final design onto the indeterminate process through which it comes into being. This process seems marked in Barry's sequence not only through the resonances that emerge from part to part, but also through the rotations, shifts, and distortions. We might read these as manifestations of the play of chance, which Ishmael brings to the foreground and which disrupt the determining force of both necessity and free expression of self. Indeed, it is on the introduction of this third term chance - against fate and free will - that I want to focus, not only because it draws attention to the variations in shape and pattern that emerge across Barry's sequence and raises larger questions of order and design, but also because it is the introduction of this term at this point in the novel that constitutes a break in Moby Dick. This is a break both with the causal logic governing Ishmael's narrative and, more broadly, with nineteenth-century thinking about causality and order in the world.

As Maurice Lee has argued, *Moby Dick* is a novel steeped in intellectual histories of chance and probability, and its tentative countenancing of chance positions it in the vanguard of changing notions of these terms that emerged with the rise of statistics in the first half of the nineteenth century and were codified over the course of the century.³ Writing in antebellum America, Melville lived in a world where Christian ideas of Providence reigned firmly. While it would have been nearly unthinkable for someone in Melville's position to reject outrightly Christian notions of teleology and determinism, Ishmael's ability to see chance as "nowise incompatible" with fate and free will moves him beyond conventional articulations of these terms in dualistic opposition. His phrase "The Loom of Time" recalls readers to the opening chapter novel – titled "Loomings" – where Ishmael not only explains the suicidal spleen that drove him to go to sea a-whaling, but also hints at the predetermined course of events that he encountered and that he is about to recount in his narrative:

Though I cannot tell why it was exactly that those stage managers, the Fates, put me down for this shabby part of a whaling voyage ... now that I recall all the circumstances, I think I can see a little into the springs and motives which being cunningly presented to me under various disguises, induced me to set about performing the part I did, besides cajoling me into the delusion that it was a choice resulting from my own unbiased freewill and discriminating judgment.⁴

If Ishmael from the outset of the novel has typically been read as aligned with fate, Captain Ahab has often been seen as a figure of free will in his monomaniacal pursuit of the white whale and the imposition of his purpose onto his cast of "meanest mariners, renegades, and castaways" aboard the Pequod.⁵

Ishmael's introduction of chance at this point in the novel destabilizes the opposition between fate and free will and highlights the novel's investment in an inductive and empirical logic that links it to changing notions of chance and probability in the period. Broadly speaking, the emergence of the frequentist theory of probability over the course of the nineteenth century reframed chance as a feature of the world itself. Prior to this point, chance was principally seen within the epistemological regimes of the Enlightenment as a manifestation of the limits of human knowledge in a deterministic universe – a name for causes that could not be known. Over the course of the nineteenth century, statistical thinking made space for randomness, variation, and distributed outcomes, and it did so by discovering that order nevertheless existed at a higher level of abstraction and aggregation. In other words, empirical observation revealed the variation, the randomness, even, of the material

106

world, but the accumulation of those observations revealed order at a higher level that some believed amounted to deterministic laws that need not be incompatible with providential order.⁶

Moby Dick presents a striking demonstration of this kind of inductive logic just a few chapters prior to "The Mat-Maker." In chapter 44, "The Chart," Ishmael details Ahab's obsessive practice of using old log-books and maps to chart prior sightings and killings of sperm whales in an effort to pinpoint the probable location of his nemesis Moby Dick. While Ishmael admits that "it might seem an absurdly hopeless task thus to seek out one solitary creature in the unhooped oceans of the planet," the regularity of the sperm whales' migratory patterns means that whalers like Ahab could "arrive at reasonable surmises, almost approaching to certainties, concern the timeliest day to be upon this or that ground in search of his prey."⁷ As Lee explains, Ishmael's "almost" is redolent of philosophical theories of chance and "points to the incremental and always incomplete work of inductive science, for ... one can refer to all the recorded sunrises in history to reasonably predict that tomorrow will come, but such inferential reasoning"8 can never amount to absolute certainty. Ahab's efforts here in "The Chart" end in mere frustration, but the Pequod's eventual encounter with Moby Dick - and the demise of Ahab and his crew that follows – ultimately raises the larger question about what kind of order governs Melville's novel and Ishmael's narrative.

While there are many threads in the novel we could pursue in this context, I'll just offer a summary account of the novel that draws attention to the retrospective nature of Ishmael's narrative. He begins his narrative, in other words, looking back on the events which leave him the sole survivor of Pequod's fatal and potentially fateful encounter with the white whale. One way of bringing some semblance of order to his extremely heterogenous narrative - which comprises chapters of action and event, of passing encounters with other ships, of cultural histories of whales and whaling, of scientific descriptions of whales and other marine life, and of the detailed mechanics of different aspects of whaling – is to see these constituting the different threads out of which the final text of Moby Dick is woven. After all, both "text" and "textile" derive from the Latin texere, "to weave," and each chapter of the novel might be seen as providing some clue or context for the Pequod's encounter with Moby Dick, while simultaneously leaving readers in suspension regarding questions of ultimate cause or order.9 We shuttle, in other words, between different perspectives and scales of abstraction, but individual parts are never subsumed or explained away by a definitive whole. Melville was, according to his friend Nathaniel Hawthorne, a man who could "neither believe, nor be comfortable in his unbelief,"10 and his novel seems to be a woven text in which, like Ishmael's mat, "chance, free will, and necessity – nowise incompatible – all interweavingly working together."

While The Loom of Time in Energy Work is not of course a woven textile,

it is a work that I think invites to us to view it as something unfolding in time – panel by panel, thread by thread. But it also presents us with a synchronic field of experience where the forces the artist is privy to are granted a diagrammatic structure that visualises the multi-dimensionality Barry is compelled to depict.

Adam Grener

This essay was first presented as a paper at the "Reflecting on Practice" day workshop staged by Te Pātaka Toi Adam Art Gallery on 3 September 2022 as part of the public programme accompanying the exhibition Energy Work: Kathy Barry/Sarah Smuts-Kennedy.

- Kathy Barry, artist's notes, Energy Work: Kathy Barry, exhibition guide, Te Pātaka Toi Adam Art Gallery, Wellington, 2022, n. p.
- 2 Herman Melville, Moby Dick, edited by Tony Tanner, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008, pp. 192-193.
- 3 Maurice S. Lee, "Moby-Dick and the Opposite of Providence," in Uncertain Chances: Science, Skepticism, and Belief in Nineteenth-Century America Literature, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2012, pp. 47-70.
- 4 Melville, op. cit., p. 5.
- 5 Ibid., p. 102.
- 6 Lorraine Daston's Classical Probability in the Enlightenment (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1995) and Ian Hacking's The Taming of Chance (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990) trace the evolution of probabilistic thinking over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
- 7 Melville, op. cit., p. 177.
- 8 Lee, op. cit., p. 57.
- 9 For a reading of Melville's novel that rehearses this argument with a focus on animal agency, see Philip Armstrong's "What Animals Mean, in Moby-Dick, For Example," in Textual Practice, vol. 19, no. 1, 2005, pp. 93-111.
- 10 Quoted in Lee, op. cit., p. 48.

Kathy Barry

Artist Biographies

108

Kathy Barry has a Postgraduate Diploma in Art History from Te Herenga Waka - Victoria University of Wellington (2001) and an MFA from Elam School of Fine Arts, The University of Auckland (2004). She has been exhibiting since 2001, but her practice took its current turn in 2012, when she began producing watercolour drawings that captured the energy fields she began to see and feel that have structured the series she has produced since that date. In 2012 she was awarded one of three McCahon House Residencies and later that year she was artist in resident at the Vermont Studio Center in Vermont, USA. Barry is based in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington. She is represented by Bowen Galleries, Wellington.

Solo exhibitions

2022	Energy Work, Te Patāka Toi Adam Art Gallery, Wellington
	(with Sarah Smuts-Kennedy)
2021	About Time, Bowen Galleries, Wellington
2020	Spaced Out, Bowen Galleries, Wellington
2019	Erasing Code Worlds, Bowen Galleries, Wellington
2017	Transmission, Bowen Galleries, Wellington
2015	Space Echo, Bowen Galleries, Wellington
2014	Homeworld, Te Uru Waitākere Contemporary Gallery, Aucklan

(with Isobel Thom)

2013 Tickets to the Paper World, Bowen Galleries, Wellington

- 2012 *Tickets to the Paper World*, Corbans Estate Art Centre, Waitākere City
- 2011 Paper, Gold, Silver, Bowen Galleries, Wellington Ensolite, Bowen Galleries Window, Wellington. Folded Room/ Paths Crossing, RM Gallery, Auckland
- 2010 Invisible Ink, A Drawing Installation, Bowen Galleries Window, Wellington.
 Porchlight, Recent Paintings, Bowen Galleries, Wellington
- 2009 *Happy the World so Made*, Snowhite Gallery, Unitec Institute of Technology, Auckland (with Sarah Munro)
- 2004 *Irma's Throat, A Paper Installation*, Elam School of Fine Arts, The University of Auckland, Auckland
- 2000 Botanical Drawings, Crema Gallery, Wellington.

Selected group exhibitions

- 2021 *Flat Earthers*, The Engine Room, Whiti o Rehua School of Art, College of Creative Arts, Massey University, Wellington
- 2020 Toi Poneke Residents Exhibition, Toi Poneke, Wellington
- 2019 The 28th Annual Wallace Art Awards, Pah Homestead, TSB Wallace Arts Centre, Auckland Parkin Drawing Prize, New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts, Wellington
- 2017 Midway: A Collectif Génération Collaboration, Objectspace,
 Auckland (with John Yau)
 On Paper: Drawings from the Wallace Arts Trust, Pah Homestead,
 TSB Bank Wallace Arts Centre, Auckland
- 2016 INCERTEZA VIVA (Live Uncertainty) 32nd Bienal de São Paulo, São Paulo
- 2015 Believe Not Every Spirit, But Try the Spirits, MUMA, Monash University, Melbourne
- 2014 National Contemporary Art Award, Waikato Museum, Hamilton
- 2012 Summer Show 2012, Antoinette Godkin Gallery, Auckland Group Show, Antoinette Godkin Gallery, Auckland Quattro, Antoinette Godkin Gallery, Auckland (with Monique Jansen, Alexandra Kennedy and Sarah Munro)
- 2011 Auckland Art Fair, The Cloud and Victoria Street billboard series, Auckland
- 2010 COCA Anthony Harper Award for Contemporary Art, Centre of Contemporary Art, Christchurch
- 2008 Fold-up, Works on Paper, Room 103 Gallery, Artist Project Space, Auckland The Pretty Show, High Street Project, Christchurch

110

National Drawing Award, Artspace, Auckland and Physics Room, Christchurch

The 17th Annual Wallace Art Awards, Aotea Centre, Auckland and The New Dowse, Hutt City

- 2006 *The Drawing Show*, The Engine Room, Whiti o Rehua School of Art, College of Creative Arts, Massey University, Wellington
- 2001 *Botanica*, Te Pataka Toi Adam Art Gallery, Te Herenga Waka

 Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington (touring to Gus
 Fisher Gallery, University of Auckland, 2022)
- 2000 *Practising Beauty*, City Gallery Wellington, Wellington (with Catherine Bagnall, Emma Febvre-Richards and Maddie Leach)

Selected bibliography (arranged chronologically)

By the artist

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About the artist

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Volz, Jochen, Júlia Rebouças, Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Gabi Ngcobo, Denise Ferreira da Silva, Lars Bang Larsen and Elizabeth Povinelli. *INCERTEZA VIVA/Live Uncertainty*, Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil, 2016.

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Happy the World so Made, with essay by Robyn Maree Pickens, Snowhite Gallery, Unitec, Auckland, 2009.

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Gardiner, Sue. "In Search of the Otherworldly," *Art News New Zealand*, Autumn 2016, pp. 100–103.

Bang Larsen, Lars. "New Forms of Agency", *Spike Art Quarterly*, issue 46, Winter 2015, pp. 50–57 (illustrated p. 52).

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Amery, Mark. "Furiously Competing Dissolving Grids", *Eye Contact*, 26 May 2010, https://eyecontactmagazine.com/2010/05/furiously-competing-grids

Hurrell, John. "Unitec Show", Eye Contact, 31 March 2009, https://eyecontactmagazine.com/2009/03/unitec-show

Sarah Smuts-Kennedy

113

112

Sarah Smuts-Kennedy completed her MFA at Elam School of Fine Arts at The University of Auckland in 2012. Her practice is grounded in a research-based investigation into fields of energy as they engage with conceptual thinking within art-based languages and other intuition-driven modes of enquiry. Maunga Kereru, her biodynamic, permaculture teaching garden, 45 minutes north of Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, is a central axis for her research and allows her to explore the potential of syntropic systems thinking. Her social sculptural commission *For the Love of Bees* (2016–2022) has triggered a resurgence of regenerative organic urban farms and community compost hubs across Aotearoa New Zealand. She was awarded one of three McCahon House Residencies in 2016. Her works are housed in private and public collections in Australia and New Zealand. She is currently working with Laree Payne Gallery, Hamilton, New Zealand.

Solo exhibitions

2022	Energy Work, Te Pātaka Toi Adam Art Gallery, Wellington
	(with Kathy Barry)

²⁰²² Leaning into the Shine, Laree Payne Gallery, Hamilton

²⁰²¹ Joy Field, Sumer, Tauranga

²⁰¹⁹ Energy in Quiescence, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne

²⁰¹⁷ Frequency of the Earth, Artspace Aotearoa, Auckland
Light Language, Te Uru Waitākere Contemporary Gallery, Auckland
Awake, McCahon House Museum

2016	Point to Periphery, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne					
2014	Events within Boundaries, RM Gallery, Auckland					
2014	Field Work, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne Shape Analysis, RM Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand					
2013	Principle of Hope, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne					
2012	Unearthed; Encroachment of The Commons, Wollongong Regional					
2011	Gallery, NSW					
2009	•					
2007	Pretty, as a Picture, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne					
	Pyramid Scheme, The John Paynter Gallery, Newcastle, NSW					
2008						
	Competing Continents of Bling, Kiosk, Physics Room, Christchurch					
2006						
	Ether, Nature Morte Gallery, New Delhi, India					
2005						
2004						
2003	Behold The Man, Gallery Barry Keldoulis, Sydney					
Selec	ted group exhibitions					
2021	When the Dust Settles, Artspace Aotearoa, Auckland	114	115			
2018	Unseen, Unknown, Unveiled, Malcolm Smith Gallery, Auckland					
2017	Video Easy, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne					
2016	Chain of Mountains, TCB, Melbourne					
	Weird Ceramics, Gippsland Art Gallery, Victoria					
	Soft Architecture, Malcolm Smith Gallery, Auckland					
2013	From Light, Forms, Breenspace, Sydney					
	Relief, Window, Auckland					
2012	Link, Snake Pit, Auckland					
2011	The New Arcadia, Lismore Regional Gallery, NSW					
	Black, Cessnock Regional Gallery, NSW					
2010	Shifting Sands, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery, NSW					
0000	Curious Colony, Newcastle Region Gallery, NSW					
2009	Wax On, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery, NSW					
2007	1 77					
0007	gbk @ Silvershot, Melbourne					
2006	, , , 1					
2005						
2004	Gallery Barry Keldoulis Group Show, Span Galleries, Melbourne					
2004	,					
	of the Year, Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney Portraiture: The Art of Social Commentary, Te Tuhi, Auckland					

Group Show, Gallery Barry Keldoulis, Sydney

Social sculpture

2016–2022 For the Love of Bees – A City Bee Collaboration,

Auckland City Council

Regenerate Now

Urban Farmers Alliance

2014–2015 The Park, Auckland City Council (with Taarati Taiaroa)

Selected bibliography (arranged chronologically)

Artist publications

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Problem Events: Fissure in the Rhythm between Things, 2012, https://sarahsmutskennedy.com/files/SarahSmuts-Kennedy-ProblemEvents2012.pdf

Books

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Essays

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Cole, Hannah, "Joy Field," *Island*, 2022, https://islandisland.co.nz/blogs/news/art-sarah-smuts-kennedy

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Hurrell, John. "Three Shows," Eye Contact, 30 June 2017, https://eyecontactmagazine.com/2017/06/three-shows

Hurrell, John. "Sarah Smuts-Kennedy at RM," *Eye Contact*, 17 June 2016, https://eyecontactmagazine.com/2016/06/sarah-smuts-kennedy-at-rm

Energy Work: Kathy Barry Sarah Smuts-Kennedy

List of works

116

Kathy Barry

Epic Whirlpool, 2012 watercolour and pencil on paper $700 \times 720 \text{ mm}$ courtesy of the artist and Bowen Galleries, Wellington

Star Witness, 2013 watercolour and graphite pencil on paper 609×705 mm courtesy of the artist and Bowen Galleries, Wellington

AIONA, 2013 watercolour and graphite pencil on paper 648 × 688 mm courtesy of the artist and Bowen Galleries, Wellington

Dimensional Ecologies, 2013 watercolour and graphite pencil on paper $700 \times 720 \text{ mm}$ courtesy of the artist and Bowen Galleries, Wellington

12 Energy Diagrams, 2015 watercolour and graphite pencil on paper, 12 parts 700×720 mm each courtesy of the artist and Bowen Galleries, Wellington

12-Minute Movement, 2016 single channel digital video, 12 mins 12 secs courtesy of the artist

The Loom of Time, 2018–19 watercolour and graphite pencil on paper, 16 parts 700×720 mm each courtesy of the artist and Bowen Galleries, Wellington

Search Engine for her Future Self, 2020–22 watercolour and graphite pencil on paper, 12 parts 700×720 mm each courtesy of the artist and Bowen Galleries, Wellington

Sarah Smuts-Kennedy

Structure for the House of I, 2016 brass, stainless steel $550 \times 550 \times 120$ mm, three parts courtesy of the artist

Discharge, 2022 six Joy Field drawings (pigment pastel on 640 gsm cotton rag paper, each panel $524 \times 1067 \times 25$ mm), brass, stainless steel wire dimensions variable courtesy of the artist

Harmonies, 2016
13 brass rods, glass, Herkimer diamonds dimensions variable courtesy of the artist

119

118

Light Language 1–21, Methodist Church, Pitt Street, 2017 21 drawings, pigment pastel on 640 gsm cotton rag paper 695 × 495 mm, each sheet courtesy of the artist

Ten Parts Whole, 2014 brass, stainless steel dimensions variable courtesy of the artist

Pieces on Earth, 2020–22
36 brass rectangles, nine Joy Field
drawings (pigment pastel on 640gsm
paper, each panel 524 × 1067 × 25 mm),
stainless steel wire
dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist

Sarah Smuts-Kennedy acknowledges the generous support of Creative New Zealand Toi Aotearoa in the production of her work for the exhibition. 120 Contributors

Christina Barton is Director of Te Pātaka Toi Adam Art Gallery,
Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington. She is curator of
Energy Work: Kathy Barry/Sarah Smuts-Kennedy and editor of this publication. She is an art historian, curator, writer and editor who has set out to contribute to a critical history of contemporary art from her situated perspective in Aotearoa New Zealand. A particular focus of her work has been on women artists and she has made exhibitions with Ruth Buchanan, Louise Henderson, Vivian Lynn, Kim Pieters, and Kate Newby (amongst others) and written about Frances Hodgkins, Pauline Rhodes, Maree Shannon, Ans Westra, and many more.

Natasha Conland is Senior Curator, Global Contemporary Art at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki. Over the past two decades, her research interests have focused on performance art practice, art in public space, and the dissemination of the historic avant-garde. Selected exhibitions she has curated at Auckland Art Gallery include *Mystic Truths* (2007), *Last Ride in a Hot Air Balloon: the 4th Auckland Triennial* (2010), *Made Active: The Chartwell Show*(2012), *Necessary Distraction: A Painting Show* (2016), *Shout Whisper Wail* (2017), *Groundswell: Avant Garde Auckland:* 1971–79 (2018), and *Walls to Live Beside*, *Rooms to Own – The Chartwell Show* (2022).

Adam Grener is a Senior Lecturer in the English Literatures and Creative Communication Programme at Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington. He is currently exploring the intersections of nineteenth-century literature and the environmental humanities.

Jennifer Higgie is is an Australian writer who lives in London. A former editor of *frieze* magazine, her latest books include: *The Mirror and the Palette: 500 Years of Women's Self-Portraits* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2021) and *The Other Side: A Journey into Women, Art and the Spirit World* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2023).

Marcus Moore is a Senior Lecturer, Whiti o Rehua School of Art, College of Creative Arts, Massey University, Wellington and co-convened the "Reflecting on Practice" day workshop that accompanied the Energy Work exhibition. He is currently writing a book on the legacy of Marcel Duchamp in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Robyn Maree Pickens is an art writer, poet, curator, and text-based practitioner based in Ōtepoti Dunedin. Her art writing has appeared online and in print, including *ArtNow, Art New Zealand, Contemporary HUM, The Art Paper, Art Asia Pacific online, ANZJA, Art + Australia online, The Pantograph Punch*, and in gallery publications for Te Pātaka Toi Adam Art Gallery, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Enjoy Gallery, Blue Oyster Art Project Space, and Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū. She was awarded her PhD on reparative ecopoetics from the University of Otago in 2022.

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