

THE ART PAPER



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Kirsten Roberts & Emma Smith, Firmament

EXHIBITION LISTINGS 11 SEP, 2022 • WRITTEN BY THE ART PAPER

Firmament

Kirsten Roberts & Emma Smith

Sanc Gallery

4D/30 Upper Queen Street
Tamaki Makaurau (Auckland)
Aotearoa (New Zealand)

9 – 24 September 2022



Kirsten Roberts, *Upraise*, 2022, oil on canvas, 120 x 100 cm

Kirsten Roberts

In Praise Of The End.

Heralded by a virus that was indiscriminate, survival was supposedly vested upon the fittest. The paintings of, 'In Praise of The End' are underpinned by my zealous rigour to follow an exercise regime. A plea bargain of sorts, to the exercise shaman brokering life and death from the comfort of my home.

There are surprising parallels to be drawn between a painting practice, and the practice of exercise. It is an unusual bow to draw between an artists life and a fervent fitness regime.

However, similarities lie in shared ritual; of time put aside - the daily repeat. The donning of appropriate clothing, comfortable kicks. The constant movement, up down, back forth, sequence and repetition. Visible improvement. Adrenaline. Pushing and pulling, wrestling with limitations and fatigue of mind and body. Disappointment. And, endorphins in the hallelujah moments. In Praise Of The End.

These paintings are an exercise in spatial ambiguity; paintings where a pathway is negotiated between what exists, and what we believe to exist.

Domestic curtaining is filtering the exterior, collapsing and expanding the spatial field. Fast and slow painting techniques contribute to an experience of simultaneous acceleration, and deceleration of time and movement.

This is painting as sport, engaging in the circuitous game of figure and field reversal.



Kirsten Roberts & Emma Smith, *Firmament*. Installation view, Sanc Gallery, Tamaki Makaurau, September 2022

Emma Smith

Charts that hiss and split.

In A.D 1552, on May the 17th such a terrible storm with hail descended on Dordrecht in Holland, that the people thought the Day of Judgement was coming. And it lasted half an hour. Several of the stones weighed up to a few pounds and 8 lot. And where they fell, they gave a frightful stench.(1)

I'm fascinated by the way paintings, from another time, place, ethos and social fabric can reveal profound insights to us about the experience of living now. I wonder what the paintings we make today will reveal to those who get to see them (should anyone get to) in the future. I like to try to imagine how our work about a myriad of things contemporaneous to us, might be interpreted quite strangely, an unknown reportage for a place we have no understanding of.

Forms are loosened from their immediate meaning in this context. They are suspended in a moment between two states, the transition is durational, but the entities are implacably still. They float in a liquid acuity where assumed laws of appearance have no binding; that which invites close scrutiny, unnervingly crisp and to the point, exists alongside vast, distant indistinct, ruinous forms. They hiss and split, caught as they are, in a chain reaction that no longer has a beginning or an end.



Emma Smith, *Fuselage*, 2022, oil on linen, 20 x 15 cm

(1) Joshua P. Waterman, Till-Holger Borchert, *The (Augsburg) Book of Miracles* [16th century illuminated manuscript]. Facsimile published by Taschen, 2017.



Kirsten Roberts, *Forum*, 2022, oil and acrylic on canvas, 100 x 140 cm



Emma Smith, *First light*, 2022, oil on canvas, 40 x 36 cm



Kirsten Roberts & Emma Smith, *Firmament*. Installation view, Sanc Gallery, Tamaki Makaurau, September 2022

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