

*Unknown Affinities* by Dane Mitchell might be considered the first wing of *The Museum of Without* — a museum of proxies and gaps — an unhinged museum held together by its hermeneutical framing practices alone. This enormous and ambitious project directly displays techniques of enclosure and addresses the museum's grasp of its artefacts and actively asks: what might a museum without artefacts be? What might a collection of losses hold and what might hold it?

The installation presents a sketch of such absences. It is a scattered monument of mounts, or armatures, each made to scale, to grasp every known extinct Aotearoa New Zealand bird species; holotype, fossil and full skeletal remains alike. Through this apparatus, which underwrites containment and reveals the museum as a place that presupposes the absence of what it aims to hold, keep and 'safeguard', we might imagine the potentiality in something being full of things at the same time as it is emptied.

*Unknown Affinities* is made up of two distinct elements: one is part of an ongoing investigation into *things that contain*, such as museums, encyclopaedias and lists and that which *cannot be contained*, such as vapours, spirit, contagions and in this instance, transmissions (of archival recordings of birdsong of now extinct species across FM bandwidth) and eradications (scaffold mounts to grasp that which is gone). Occupying the entire gallery floor space, *Unknown Affinities* presents itself to us in a full state of absent-hood and reminds us that all things are in constant movement and that all things are migratory and transitory, leaving nothing left to grasp.

Two Rooms has commissioned an essay by Dr Stephen Turner to accompany the exhibition.