

**Dane Mitchell** *The Imponderables*  
30th November 2024 - 1st March 2025

Artist: **Dane Mitchell**

Web: <https://www.danemitchell.co.nz/>

Insta: [@danemitchell](#)

Gallery: **The Renshaws'**

Web: <https://therenshaws.com.au/>

Insta: [@the.renshaws](#)

Dane Mitchell's exhibition *The Imponderables* explores loss, containment, and future contingent propositions via an island that is not and a place that does not.

Continuing Mitchell's long-standing exploration of loss, absence, and the porous boundaries between the natural and artificial worlds, *The Imponderables* offers a perspective on our relationship with matter and the environment and estranging attempts to protect the future from our present selves.

Mitchell's exhibition orbits Svalbard, a remote, stateless Arctic archipelago: a proto-heterotopia where birth and death are prohibited, an un-country that both reflects and upends, and a disappearing natural habitat for the polar bear, held captive in the manufactured facsimile of their Arctic home in Sea World, just 80km from the gallery.

The project includes a series of letter-works — a form the artist first employed in his work in the late 1990s — alongside new sculptures and photographic work, including high-resolution detailed scans of the doors to the Global Seed Vault — a doomsday vault buried in the side of a mountain in Svalbard — using a flatbed scanner to produce images of the threshold between our incendiary present and a buried future.

Through the innovative use of technology, performative gestures, sharp reflection, and vanished and entrapped materials, Mitchell's work draws connections between the containment of nature in zoos and museums to the Global Seed Vault's paradoxical status as both a hopeful safeguard and an apocalyptic proposition.

*The Imponderables* contends with legacies of preserving, apprehending and comprehending the world whilst reflecting on Svalbard as a place both on a precipice and in purgatory. It invites viewers to consider the complex interplay between preservation and loss, legibility and illegibility, and our place in a rapidly evolving present and future.

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Dane Mitchell (b. 1976, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland) lives and works in Naarm Melbourne and was Aotearoa New Zealand's representative at the 58th Venice Biennale in 2019. His work explores the tension between containment and the uncontainable — examining structures like museums and encyclopedias and the wilful encroachment upon these structures by contagious forces like vapours, aromas, and disappearances. He works with materials including technologies of material capture and dispersal, scents, remedies, glass, and dust.