



RUTH CLELAND

Concrete

SUMER FINE ART, TĀMAKI MAKAUROU
11 JUNE – 12 JULY 2025

Sumer is pleased to present *Concrete*, a solo exhibition of new and previously unexhibited works by Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland-based artist Ruth Cleland. This is the artist's second solo presentation with the gallery, and her first in our Tāmaki space.

Comprising four paintings in acrylic on panel and three framed diptychs in graphite on paper, the exhibition continues Cleland's sustained inquiry into image and grid—of subject, time, and value—as she traverses the hyperreal and abstract. As in previous works, she remains steadfastly focused on surfaces that (quite literally) underlie the mundane: floors and walkways—transitional spaces we seldom pause to consider.

If one were to choose a single word to describe the works in this exhibition, it might be *apropos*; and if not that, then certainly *uncanny*. Two of the paintings faithfully reproduce, with astonishing detail and true likeness, sections of polished concrete flooring that closely resemble that of the gallery itself. Yet these are not depictions of this space, but rather of a local supermarket (a site Cleland has returned to repeatedly over the years). Still, with its location remaining undisclosed and ultimately unimportant, Cleland makes no claim to site specificity. As Lucinda Bennett writes in her forthcoming text, "Cleland tells me the surfaces she paints could be from anywhere." The artist's attention to minutiae—pits, flecks, veining—blurs the source into abstraction.

Alongside these works are two gridded paintings: schematic renderings that map the internal logic and compositional geometry of the adjacent images. Obfuscated only by shifts in scale, orientation, and palette, these are not studies but responses—abstractions generated after the fact.

This pairing continues through three graphite diptychs, each comprising a meticulous drawing and its corresponding grid. Two depict Sumer's gallery floor, albeit from two years prior—mid-construction, complete with plaster splashes and temporary markings—ghosts of a transitional state since erased. The third turns toward the artist's home, rendering the exposed aggregate path that leads to her front door. Executed with Cleland's characteristic graphite precision, these drawings elevate the inconsequential, transmuting the overlooked into subjects of quiet focus.

Concrete signals a subtle but significant development in Cleland's practice, particularly in the growing clarity with which the grid articulates its relationship to the image. Far from preparatory or instructional, these structures act as interpretive overlays—gestures of analysis, not direction.

As Victoria Wynne-Jones has written, Cleland's works are "a record of time and attention." They are not merely representations of concrete, but transcriptions—evidence of the artist's labour, decision-making, and devotion. It is this quiet, persistent work that lends her surfaces their gravitas, endowing the banal with a presence that is at once elusive and profound.

Ruth Cleland (born 1976, Kirikiriroa Hamilton) currently lives and works in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. She graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1998 and a Master of Fine Arts (with distinction) in 2002 from the Dunedin School of Art, specialising in printmaking. Cleland has exhibited nationally and internationally in private galleries as well as public art institutions and has won several awards, including the Park Lane Wallace Trust Development Award (2008) and the NZ Painting and Printmaking Award (2003).



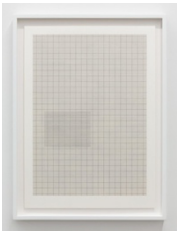
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WINDOW

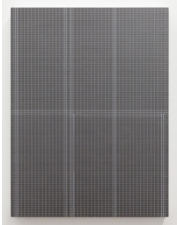


Ruth Cleland
Concrete Floor 2, 2024
Mars Lumograph black pencil on Bristol board in artists frame
65 x 46.5 cm
23 1/2 x 18 1/4 in
(RC-000028)



Ruth Cleland
Grid (Concrete Floor 2), 2025
Acrylic and graphite pencil on Bristol board in artists frame
65 x 46.5 cm
23 1/2 x 18 1/4 in
(RC-000024)

MAIN GALLERY



Ruth Cleland
Grid (Concrete Floor 4), 2025
Acrylic on board
60 x 45 cm
23 1/2 x 17 3/4 in
(RC-000030)



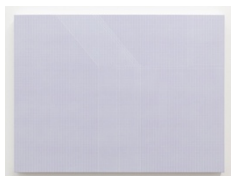
Ruth Cleland
Concrete Floor 1, 2024
Pitt graphite matt pencil on Bristol board in artists frame
65 x 46.5 cm
23 1/2 x 18 1/4 in
(RC-000027)



Ruth Cleland
Grid (Concrete Floor 1), 2025
Acrylic and graphite pencil on Bristol board in artists frame
65 x 46.5 cm
23 1/2 x 18 1/4 in
(RC-000025)



Ruth Cleland
Concrete Floor 4, 2025
Acrylic on board
60 x 80 cm
23 1/2 x 31 1/2 in
(RC-000031)



Ruth Cleland
Grid (Concrete Floor 3), 2025
Acrylic on board
60 x 80 cm
23 1/2 x 31 1/2 in
(RC-000032)



Ruth Cleland
Concrete 3, 2025
Acrylic on board
80 x 60 cm
31 1/2 x 23 1/2 in
(RC-000023)

OFFICE



Ruth Cleland
Concrete Path, 2023
Pitt graphite matt pencil on Bristol board in artists frame
65 x 46.5 cm
23 1/2 x 18 1/4 in
(RC-000026)



Ruth Cleland
Grid (Concrete Path), 2025
Acrylic and graphite pencil on Bristol board in artists frame
65 x 46.5 cm
23 1/2 x 18 1/4 in
(RC-000029)



Ruth Cleland
Floor 5, 2022
Lithograph on cotton rag in artist's frame
43.8 x 32.8 cm image ; 64.5 x 45 cm framed
Edition of 10
(RC-000006)