

THE PHYSICS ROOM

CONTEMPORARY ART SPACE

Heavy trees, arms and legs
Nicola Farquhar and Sorawit Songsataya

In partnership with The Suter Art Gallery



Image: Sorawit Songsataya, studio work in progress, 2021. Courtesy of the artist.

Venue: The Suter Art Gallery Te Aratoi o Whakatu, Nelson

Exhibition preview: Friday 23 April, 5:30pm

Exhibition runs: 24 April – 18 July 2021

‘Heavy trees, arms and legs’ is a line from Rebecca Tamás’ poem *Palermo*. The weight of limbs—branches, bones, roots, tendons—anchors this exhibition of new works by Nicola Farquhar and Sorawit Songsataya. *Heavy trees, arms and legs* recognises gravity as a compositional force that shapes us as living bodies, and connects us with elements in the natural world. The exhibition considers the potential of imagined forms to generate more fluid understandings of the environment we are a part of.

In Farquhar's oil paintings recurring motifs—eyes, moons, stomachs, wax candles, birds, strawberries—irregular geometric structures and 'background' are deeply entangled. Plaster sculptures, often balancing on the canvases they accompany, suggest the dynamic state of all matter, the transformative possibilities of mould, melt, scab and fossil. Farquhar's works belong to a world in motion, a warming and climatically unstable planet. They hold the urgency of concentrated momentum: volume and weight.

Songsataya's sculptures are made from limestone, beeswax, fishbones and fake eyelashes, materials that are variously weighty, sealant, porous, remnant, useful. Without making a strong distinction between the organic and synthetic, human and nonhuman elements, in these works a relationship exists nonetheless in material and personal narrative.

In Tamás' poem the sense of heaviness occurs in a state of all-consuming physical pleasure, that of the "sea slug with its own containing joy". *Heavy trees, arms and legs*, too, acknowledges the substantial joy in our relationships with both our physical appetites and the natural world. There is also the heaviness of grief in the recognition that we live in an ecologically compromised world: that extractive capitalism exists in blunt violation of this relationship. In Farquhar and Songsataya's work the two senses are held, different forms of weight.

Heavy trees, arms and legs is a continuation of The Physics Room's itinerant programme partnering with public galleries across Te Waipounamu, the South Island to create collaborative exhibitions. This exhibition is a partnership between The Suter Art Gallery Te Aratoi o Whakatu and The Physics Room.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES:

Nicola Farquhar lives and works in Tamaki Makaurau Auckland. Recent exhibitions include *Listening, twitching*, Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery, Tamaki Makaurau (2020); *Superstimulus*, Tamaki Makaurau (2019); *A Holotype Heart*, Hopkinson Mossman, Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington (2018); *Folded Eyes*, Hopkinson Mossman, Tamaki Makaurau (2017) and *Necessary Distraction: A Painting Show*, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki (2015).

Sorawit Songsataya is a Thai-born artist who lives and works in Te Whanganui-a-tara Wellington. Recent exhibitions include *Come up for air*, The Lightship, Tamaki Makaurau (2020); *Rumours (mermaid)*, Govett Brewster Art Gallery, Ngāmotu New Plymouth (2020); *The Interior*, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki (2019); *Jupiter*, Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery, Tamaki Makaurau (2018); *Starling*, Artspace Aotearoa, Tamaki Makaurau (2018) and *Soon Enough: Art in Action*, Tensta Konsthall, Stockholm (2018).