

Incandescent Molecules

Linda Cook

Cat Fooks

Adrienne Vaughan

Exhibition Dates:

**8th – 26th August
2026**

**Toi O
Wairaraka**

Gallery hours: Mon – Fri, 9.30am – 4.30pm

Email: galler@unitec.ac.nz

**Building B108, Unitec, Carrington Rd,
Mt Albert, Auckland.**

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Growing up in the 1960s, I was impacted by the big questions on life, being in the world, awareness of political currents and global threats; this was a time when post-war promised hope was dissipating: mayhem was still hovering at the door. I witnessed the surge of growing realisations within society as the distrust of authorities and rulers grew. This zeitgeist of political change thus became integral to my own human-ness and creative consciousness. I am a painter, not a philosopher or politician, yet these key areas of thinking have always been relevant motivators and inspirational factors for my work.

Making for me has always involved mind-wandering or un-thinking. My mother said I was "away with the fairies" as I daubed in mud or spent time hand-painting cars with my father. While pursuing a master's programme at Dunedin School of Art, the immersive practice of new materiality, collaborating with material and environment, surfaced and resonated with me.

My painterly practice is secured within new materiality, I draw on the research of Jane Bennett, Barbara Bolt and Gregory Minissale, alongside those of Julia Kristeva, and the founder of "the Thing", Martin Heidegger.

This exhibition includes works by Unitec alumni Adrienne Vaughan and Cat Fooks, alongside my own. Collectively, as painters, we reinforce the enduring importance of painting within the context of contemporary art. The varied approaches to materiality and form exemplify the medium's capacity for innovation, adaptability, and expressive richness. The works on show celebrate painting's multifaceted presentation in order to highlight its ongoing relevance and vibrancy as a vehicle for artistic exploration and engagement in the present day.

Vaughan deftly invokes pattern and object which suggest an intimate setting. Unexpected objects nestle comfortably on painterly surfaces of gentle, muted tones and pattern. The quirky, off-kilter and seemingly unrefined forms are carefully considered and delightful.

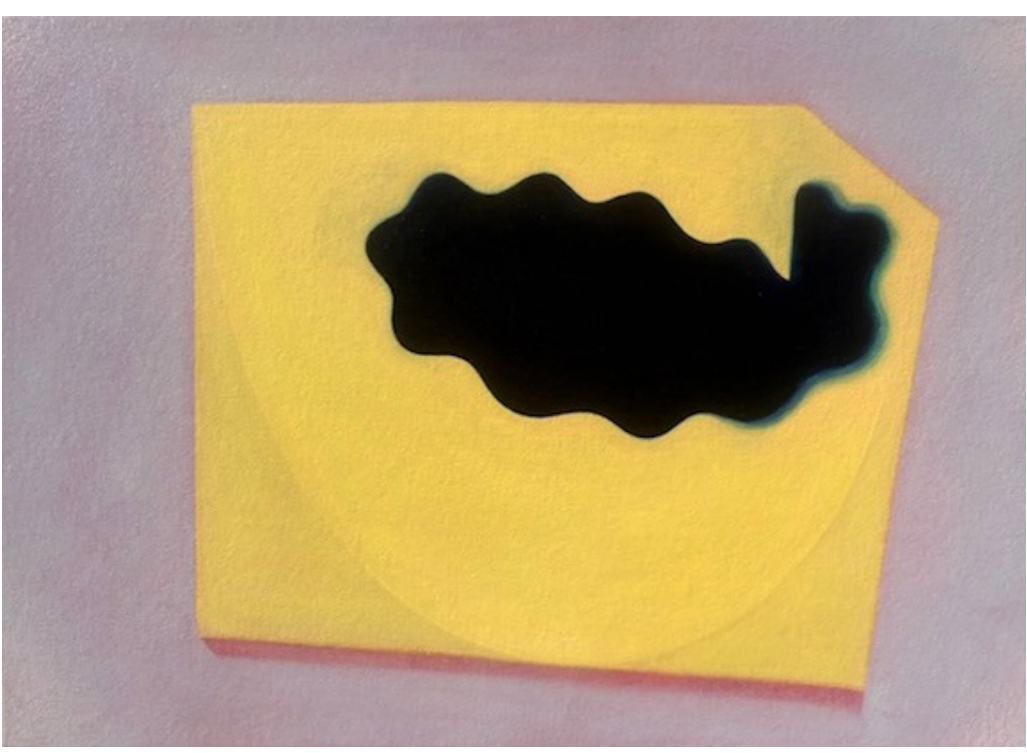
Fooks' exuberant constructions sit in the middle of the room, spilling vibrant hues in a manner that's both riotous and inviting – her forms tempt the senses, almost inviting the viewer to taste them. Cat Fooks' works take painting to another level of complexity. Placing at the centre and literally off the wall, Fooks' painted sculptural forms occupy a space which sits between. They are neither paintings nor sculpture: they are other.

Painting can feel like archaeology: a process of searching through a field of apparent emptiness for something not yet visible. In my research, materials are not passive supports for meaning: they have an agential presence of their own. Paint,

Cat Fooks
Kobold, 2022



Linda Cook
Metaphorical Hiccups, 2026



Adrienne Vaughan
Qwerly, 2026

Linda Cook

Amputate to Survive, 2026, oil and mixed media on board, 350 x 520mm

Mumble Snuffle, 2026, oil and mixed media on board, 300 x 400mm

Dislocate, 2026, oil and textile and mixed media on board, 400 x 500mm

Elemental Child, 2026, oil and mixed media on board, 460 x 500mm

Get a Grip, 2024, oil and mixed media on board, 310 x 470mm

Seeking the Commotion of Quiet, 2026, oil and mixed media on board, 240 x 320mm

Metaphorical Hiccups, 2026, oil and mixed media on board, 220 x 300mm

Swallows Lope, 2026, oil and mixed media on board, 300 x 400mm

Swivel your Coccyx, 2026, oil and mixed media on board, 300 x 500mm

Yellow is a Thing, 2026, oil and mixed media on board, 300 x 400mm

Adrienne Vaughan

Qwerty, 2026, oil on canvas, 430x 300 mm

Bladderwrack, 2025, 430x 300 mm

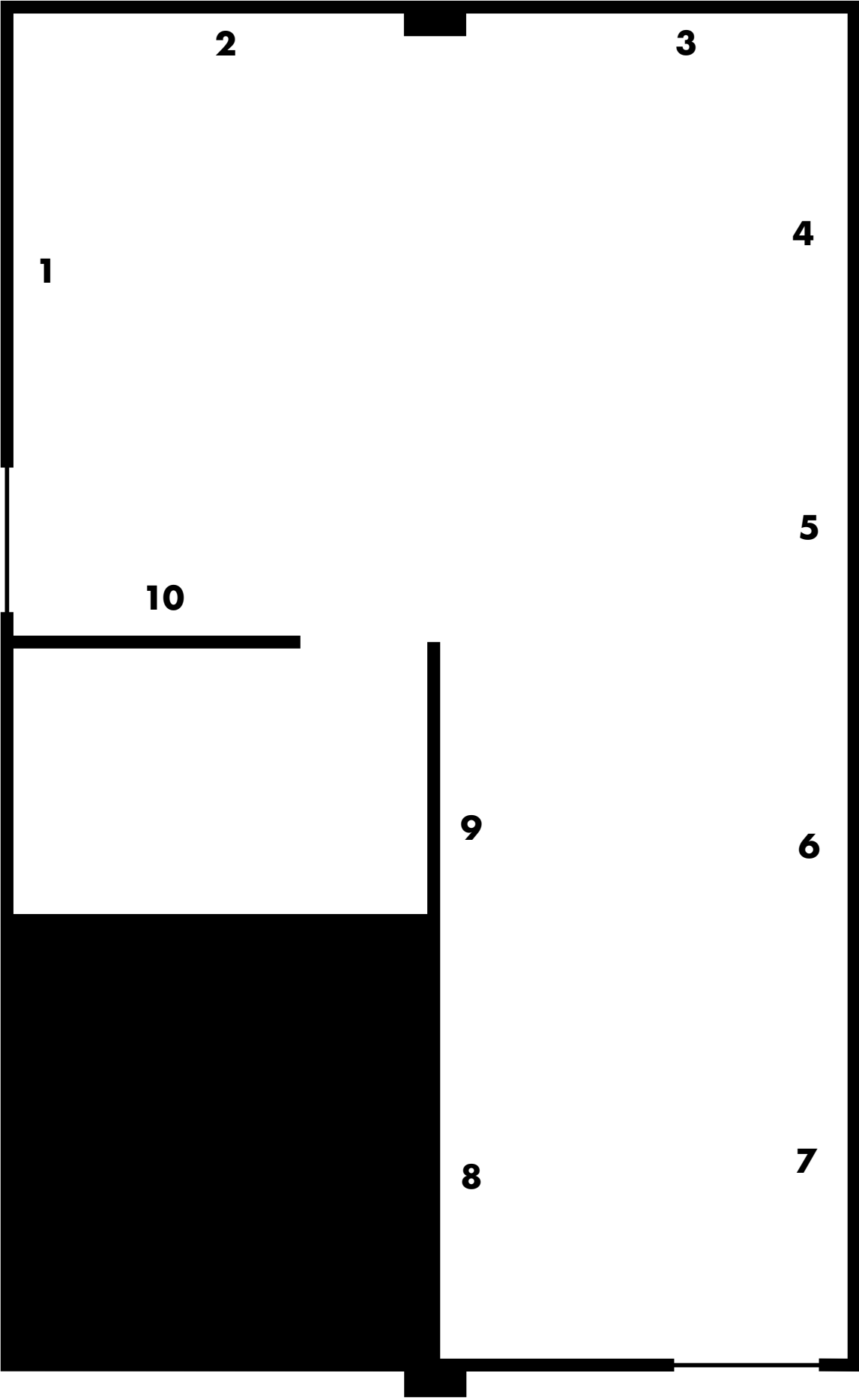
Blue Myrtle, 2025, 430x 300 mm

Cat Fooks

Kobold, 2022, mixed media, 610 x 300 x 300mm

Flumps, 2022, mixed media, 780 x 360 x 360mm

Pony Tail Pal, 2022, mixed media, 750 x 550 x 400mm





Linda Cook
Dislocate, 2026



Cat Fooks
Pony Tail Pal, 2022

glue, discarded fragments, surfaces and objects all participate in the work's becoming. Through digging, foraging, layering and waiting, the painter becomes attentive to what matter might do next. The works selected for this exhibition ask viewers to look closely at those material surprises – the unruly vitality of substances that refuse complete control, and the productive instability of a slippage, an off-kilter edge, or a form that resists easy resolution.

My research and practice align with painters who work with a relaxed purposefulness, rejecting forms of minimalist conceptualism that strip away the physical evidence of material and maker. My approach to making can be understood as a distilled refusal to conform – a little dab of anarchy, a touch of post-punk. I do not suggest that the abstract artists in this exhibition are political dissidents; rather, their methods raise questions through the materiality and presentation of the work. Each piece resists compliance and uniformity, addressing abstraction in its own distinctive manner while embracing an aesthetic that may include the quirky, the off-balance, and the anti-heroic.

All of these elements are central to my practice: from using subordinate materials more often associated with a skip than with a white cube, such as shredded drawings blended with paint and glue, to the finding of form in discarded packaging. My process centres on observation, consideration, and contemplation. I wait for something unexpected to arise from the mingling of matter and colour, seeking to harmonise discordant elements like form, surface or hue. Ultimately, I want to pique the viewers' curiosity.

The visual language of painting has changed little over 800 years, from Sassetta of the Sienese School in the 13th century to Philip Guston or Amy Sillman. While methods have evolved and new materials have been adopted and invented, the impulse to construct a dynamic space with what is essentially coloured mud remains. Reflecting on this is liberating: we use the same fundamental tools and explore the surface in much the same way as former artists. The use of colour and line to fascinate, arouse and engage the viewer in an atemporal space is a stimulus that drives painters. Then as now, the enduring focus in painting concerns the spatial dynamics offered by compositional tools such as line, form, space, colour et al.

On a good day, this divvying up of surface may prove successful; at other times it is wise to walk away for a coffee. This often proves more beneficial to the work. An underlying and integral truth in the creative process is that reflection offers a valuable perspective.

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Curators: Carly van Winkel and Gina Ferguson

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