

Each year we orbit one question in the company of artists through exhibitions and other events. Across the year we explore what this question offers us and what artworks and their authors can weave together. In 2024 we ask “do I need territory?” You can think of this as one exhibition in four parts, as a score played across a calendar, or maybe even as a forest. Join us.

2024
Do I need territory?

Priorities Charlotte Posenenske, Peter Robinson 10 February – 6 April, 2024

The work of seminal German artist Charlotte Posenenske and leading Aotearoa practitioner Peter Robinson establish grammars of expression by testing out systems of assembly, seriality, and repetition. To that end they push at the intrinsic nature of space and its undeniably social potential, in that to produce space is to conjure a body in relation. In this process they ask fundamental questions of us as an audience: what are the rules of engagement here? How do we relate to one another? Do we want to participate in this? What happens next?

Expanding on this, both artists have necessarily wrestled with the legitimacy of art and the artworld as a territory where change can happen. In late 1968, following rapid and significant success in Germany, Posenenske began her withdrawal from the artworld to study the sociology of labour and work with unions while Robinson continues to work with the potentials found in productive doubt. Their strident investigations into the edge of art’s ability to produce relationships of action sit at the centre of this exhibition which hones in on core strategies in the work of both artists: the minimum signal required to communicate, the pushing at the limits of material, and the impulse to escape the existing parameters.

Spanning sculpture, painting, film, and archival documentation, in this exhibition we encounter an arc of contemporary art that calls up its very emergence as a Western construct in mid 20th-century Europe to our present-day Aotearoa. This arc opens a line of exchange between two contexts essentially defined by tumult. Consider the radical uprisings of 1968 and the destabilisation of international world order that produced them. Consider the increasing precarious access to and protection of resources, natural or otherwise, experienced today. It can be said that both artists pull open the fundamental mechanisms that make the artworld part of the world per se.

Artspace Aotearoa is a non-profit contemporary art gallery founded in 1987 by artists and arts workers, it continues to be artist-led. We work within a specific city context, and spiral out into national and international conversations that promote practices that present emancipatory world views.

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In this artworld-in-the-world we are invited to consider our bodies in relation to edges, where one thing ends and another begins. This activates the spatio-political quality of time with both artists tapping into this ambiguity: time as a monetizable measure, as an expressive singularity, as a language. Prior to engaging with visual art Posenenske trained in stage design and dramaturgy. This origin presents an interesting lens to review her decision to leave the artworld, while Robinson’s knotted grids require both positive and negative forces to stay together. Timing and tension can be everything: what is the best way to express the creative and political potential of the imagination? What is the best way to connect? For Posenenske the impulse to explore the potential of the imagination opened a door to another field, for Robinson it is an ongoing commitment to arts education and the exploration of the fundamental structures found in our world: the koru, the grid, the tear. This exhibition dives into form: waka, or tongues, or chimneys, or motorways, as well as the labour that it takes to produce all of this—our world, in which we live together.



Charlotte Posenenske (1930–1985) was a German artist and sociologist. Born in Wiesbaden she trained under Willi Baumeister in Stuttgart during the early 1950s and worked briefly as a costume and set designer before turning her attention to the visual arts. Her working life is bracketed between her youth, which was spent under the threat of deportation, and her professional commitment to the sociology of labour from 1968 until her death. Prior to withdrawing from the artworld she exhibited extensively with her peers including Hanne Darboven, Donald Judd, and Sol LeWitt. Since her death, her work has received ongoing attention through presentations at, amongst others, Museum MMK für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (1990), Documenta, Kassel (2007), Museum of Modern Art, New York (2009), Artists Space, New York (2010), São Paulo Biennial (2012), and Dia Beacon, New York (2019).

Peter Robinson is an artist of Ngāi Tahu living in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. With a strong focus on studio practice, Robinson has exhibited consistently since the mid 1990s both in Aotearoa and abroad. He has participated in numerous internationally significant exhibitions including the 9th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (2018), the Jakarta Biennial (2015), 13th Istanbul Biennale (2013), 11th and 18th Biennale of Sydney (1998 and 2012), and he was New Zealand’s representative at the 49th Venice Biennale (2001). In 2008 he was the winner of the Walters Prize, Aotearoa New Zealand’s preeminent contemporary art award. He is a committed arts educator and is an associate professor and Dean Māori at Te Waka Tūhura Elam School of Fine Arts and Design.

1

Charlotte Posenenske
Statement, 1968

English translation of statement published in Art International 12, no 5 (May 1968)
Courtesy the Estate of Charlotte Posenenske and Mehdi Chouakri, Berlin

2

Charlotte Posenenske,
Vierkantrohre Serie DW (Square Tube Series DW), 1967

Corrugated cards, screws
Estate certified reconstruction
Dimensions variable
Courtesy the Estate of Charlotte Posenenske and Mehdi Chouakri, Berlin

3

Peter Robinson
Te Atakura, 2024

Die-cut felt
260cm x 220cm x 40cm
Courtesy the artist and Coastal Signs, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland

4

Peter Robinson
Easy Action Painting, 2023

Gesso on canvas
240cm x 180cm
Courtesy the artist and Coastal Signs, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland

5

Peter Robinson,
Driftwood 1, 2023

Powder-coated aluminium
794cm x 12cm x 124.5cm
Courtesy the artist and Coastal Signs, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland

6

Peter Robinson,
Ki Uta Ki Tai, 2024

Die-cut felt
260cm x 660cm x 260cm
Courtesy the artist and Coastal Signs, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland

7

Charlotte Posenenske,
Vierkantrohre Serie DW (Square Tube Series DW), 1967

Corrugated cards, screws
Estate certified reconstruction
Dimensions variable
Courtesy the Estate of Charlotte Posenenske and Mehdi Chouakri, Berlin

8

Charlotte Posenenske
Monotonie ist schön (Monotony is Nice), 1968

Super 8 film transferred to data, colour.
Filmed from a car driving through the Netherlands
14’22’’ minutes (looped)
Courtesy the Estate of Charlotte Posenenske and Mehdi Chouakri, Berlin

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Reproduced archival documentation of artist Charlotte Posenenske carrying *Vierkantrohre Serie DW* (Square Tube Series DW, 1967) during *Dies alles Herzchen wird einmal Dir gehören* (All This Darling Will One Day Be Yours), Galerie Dorothea Loehr, Frankfurt am Main, September 9, 1967
Courtesy the Estate of Charlotte Posenenske and Mehdi Chouakri, Berlin

