

From where she was standing

Maddie Leach

ST PAUL St Gallery Two

19 February – 24 March 2016

Maddie Leach's *From where she was standing* takes shape around a series of rocks – a boulder from Pinjarra, Western Australia, a meteorite which landed in the Western Australian desert near Pinjarra in 1984; a lithographic stone, and a monument to St Paul, patron of writers, public workers, and journalists amongst others. Brought into proximity within the gallery and its exterior spaces, the rocks become part of a narrative that materialises only temporarily, for the duration of this exhibition.

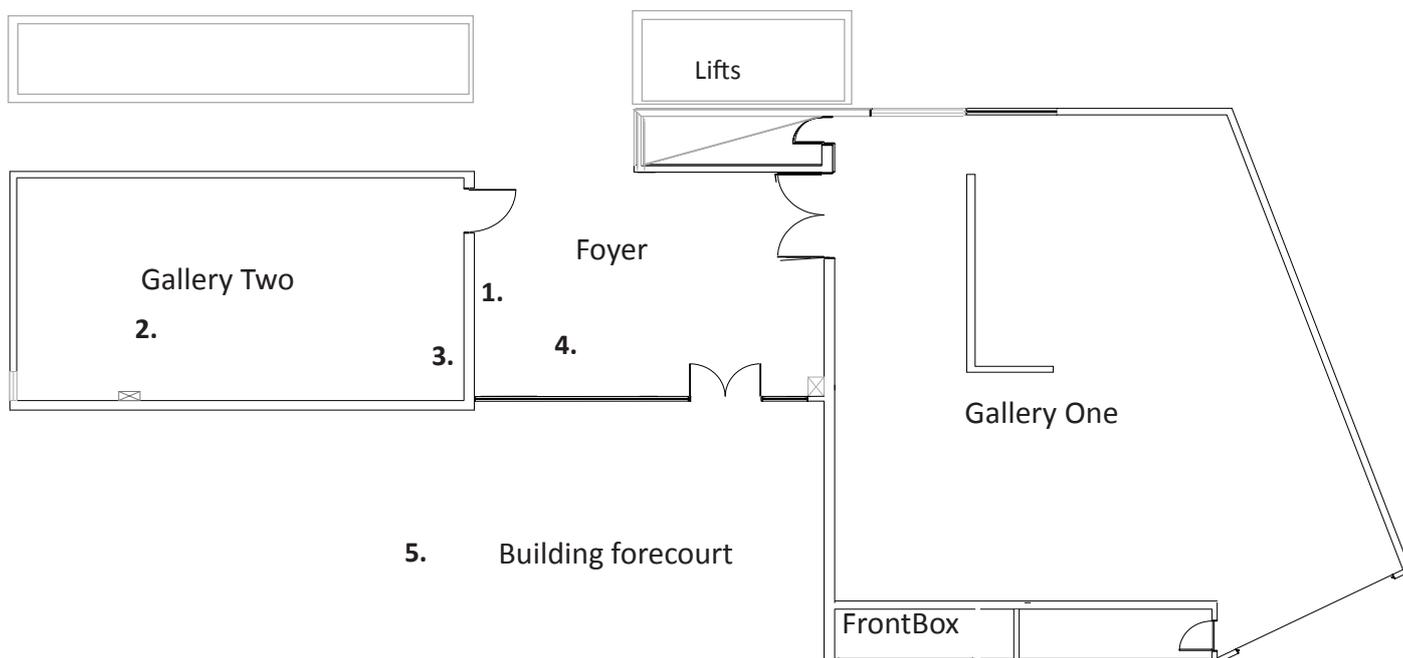
The work is an extension of Leach's 2014 residency in Mandurah, Western Australia as part of *Spaced: Future Recall*. During her research there she became aware of the Battle of Pinjarra, a colonial massacre of Noongar people in 1834. Today, this is commemorated by a large boulder monument donated by ALCOA, the US aluminium mining company that provides the major industry in the area, and a plaque, the wording of which continues to be locally contested. In the gallery this rock is reproduced as a three-dimensional scan, and projected; its materiality transformed from the tangible to the digital. Mandurah was also where Leach encountered the Binningup Meteorite in the Western Australian Museum. Classified as an 'ordinary chondrite', the meteorite flew over the town of Pinjarra in 1984 as a sonic-booming fire ball and landed on a beach, some 150 years after the massacre.

Leach's video work, *28th October 2834* (2015), documents the printing of a fax receipt for a new plaque memorialising the Battle of Pinjarra. Here the various material elements come together in an enigmatic transaction that zooms in on local government politics in Pinjarra, the wording and placement of the plaque, and then zooms out again to the print studio at Elam School of Art where the fax was reproduced on Auckland's largest lithographic stone, stone number #39, which purportedly comes from a quarry in Bavaria. During her time in Mandurah, Leach wrote a series of blog posts as part of her research process. A selection of these, relating to the content of the ST PAUL St project, have been made into a publication for the exhibition.

Outside the gallery, a rock, a temporary monument to St Paul, also stands as an anchor for the project – locating it in relation to this site, to a history of commemoration, and, through its acknowledgment of authors, publishers, writers, to the 'ephemeral' or written material fundamental to this work. The rock from the Coromandel sits within a series of displacements – replica meteorite from WA Museum, scanned monument from Mandurah, fax reproduction, and lithographic stone from Bavaria.

The plaque accompanying a rock – any plaque on any rock – stands as a ubiquitous signpost to an historical event as something enduring. In Aotearoa New Zealand, as in Australia, there are many of these markers to a history of colonial settlement, a history which has ongoing political consequences. While the wording of such plaques often suggests they are located in events of long ago, the rocks in this project suggest that even such 'timeless' and solid objects are far from still, and that historical narratives are conceivably no more fixed than the future.

Floorplan



List of works

1. *28th October 2834*, 2015, HD video (00:28:34).
Project credits: Iain Frenley (cinematography and post production), Struan Hamilton (lithography), Terry Maitland (drawing and type reproduction), Warren Olds (design).
2. *From where she was standing*, 2016, HD video.
3D Scan and render by RM Surveys Ltd., Perth.
3. *Binningup meteorite* (replica). Loaned by Dr Alex Bevan, Western Australia Museum.
4. *From where she was standing* publication, 2016.
5. *St Paul*, 2016, Maratoto rock and bronze plaque.
Rock loaned by Stone Direct, St Johns, Auckland.

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