



England

lives and works in Auckland

Bachelor of Creative
Enterprise, UNITEC, 2019

Oliver Cain is an English/ New Zealand Artist. His work covers a broad range of topics and is made from many different materials. His early works are highly floral which influenced later work upon moving to New Zealand. Cain embraced the new visual culture available to him and his work reflects the New Zealand images that imprinted on him as a young man: *“New Zealand may be a young country, but it is rich in culture and heritage I am trying to portray the images that struck me when arriving here. The symmetry of these designs all show the harmony of how our culture embraces different aspects of our heritage.”*

Recent work has touched on more confronting or challenging issues around sexual identity, gender and commodification, making work that is highly personal and deeply meaningful. Cain pushes ideas and feelings around using different materials, adding a physical and tactile feel to the work.

Cain produces very playful work which - on the surface - seems light hearted but as you dig deeper, serious undertones and multiple layers of readings are revealed. He typically enjoys making work which pushes the viewer into an uncomfortable space but not over the edge; wanting his audience to experience something different or to step back and think about a topic from another perspective.

Oliver graduated from Unitec in 2020 and has a bright future ahead of him. His work is already held in a number of distinguished private collections and he currently has ten works in The Wallace Arts Trust Collection, Auckland.

SELECTED AWARDS

2020 Finalist for the ECC student Craft Design Awards

2020 Finalist for The Wallace Art Awards



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2020 Molly Morpeth Canaday - Craig's Investment Partners Award

2019 ECC Awards - Overall Supreme Award

2019. Tuatara Ceramic Award (The Dowse Museum)

2019 Finalist for The Wallace Art Awards (Touring show)

2019 Eden Arts Award- Overall Winner

2018 Finalist for The Wallace Art Awards (Touring show)

2018 ECC NZ Student Design/ Craft Awards – Highly Commended

2018 Riley Consultant members competition – Merit Award

2018 Royal Easter Show – Merit Award

RECENT EXHIBITIONS

2020 Föenander Galleries: Semicolon

2020 Föenander Galleries: Relatively Fruity, solo show

2020 Föenander Galleries: Small Work Salon

2020 Millers O'Brien: The Graduation Show

2020 Molly Morpeth Canaday

2019 Föenander Galleries: Ida Soleil

2019 The Dowse Museum: ECC Awards

2019 Webbs - Eden Arts Award

2019 Pah Homestead - Wallace Art Awards 2019

2018 Lake House Arts - Ceramic Showcase

2018 ECC NZ Student Design/ Craft Awards – Dowse Museum

2018 Sculpture Onshore 2018

2018 Lake House Arts - Riley Consultants member exhibition

2018 MADE - Mt Albert Art + design Exhibition



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2018 Great Art Sale - Lake house Arts

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2018 Pah Homestead - Wallace Art Awards 2018

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2018 Suter Gallery, Nelson (Wallace Art Awards Finalist show)

2018 CoCA, Christchurch (Wallace Art Awards Finalist show)

2018 No.1 Parnell - Rawene, New Zealand

2018 VEFA - Exhibition of Fine Art

2018 Royal Easter Show - ASB Show ground (Awarded a Merit)

2018 Deport Artspace - Devonport, New Zealand

ARTICLES & REVIEWS

Art Review - The Nomadic Art Gallery

Eden Arts Review - Francis McWhannell

Molly Morpeth Canaday Review

Work & Award Review - Unitec

Eden Arts Review - Unitec

Eden Arts Art Graduate Award 2019

Winner : Oliver Cain

Work: Communal Conversation 2019

Transcription of judge - Francis McWhannell's comments:

"I think it is important to stress that this offering was very strong. Every finalist has produced work of integrity. To be selected by your teachers, who see extraordinary numbers of work, is no mean feat, and you all deserve a big round of applause. Having said that, I now have the pleasure and honour of speaking about the overall winner. That winner is Oliver Cain, who created Communal Conversation and Chewed Nipples.

Cain's presentation immediately impressed all three of us engaged in



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judging. The artist took something of a risk in presenting two works. I say that this was a risk, because more is so often less. It's very easy for one piece to diminish the power of another, and it's rather safer to go with a single work that has been carefully refined. Cain has managed to pull off something more challenging: a sort of mini show.

The most prominent element of the presentation is Communal Conversation, with its noticeable, but not overweening, use of light and sound. The work includes two toilet bowls, recontextualised—in what is surely a nod to the landmark Fountain (1917), conventionally credited to Marcel Duchamp—on top of two truly immaculate plinths (Cain's attention to detail here, as elsewhere, is exceptional). Communal Conversation strikes an excellent balance between seriousness and levity and brims with associations. The pairing of the entities, making them into a sort of gateway, but also putting me in mind of tanning beds and interactive scientific displays at places like MOTAT, is unusual, intriguing, and highly effective.

Ioana, Sara, and I were still more captivated by the second work, Chewed Nipples. Sara commented on the Dali-esque nature of the melty, chewing-gum forms, also noting that they echo paint skins (some of you might know Helen Calder, who drapes her paint-skin creations in a similar manner). Ioana observed that the work leans into the bodily, in contrast to Communal Conversation, which is of course more clinical, sterile. The installation of Chewed Nipples in the corridor leading to the Webb's toilets at once ties the two works together, suggests Cain's awareness of other artists who have recently played with similar spaces and concepts (for example, Shannon Novak), and adds an element of surprise. Chewed Nipples is sort of hidden away, and it's all the more appealing for being something you happen upon.

Great wit, great texture—a most deserving winner, whom we'll all be watching closely."

- Francis McWhannell, 2019. Webbs