

# Art New Zealand

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Peter Robinson

*Five Maori Painters / Burster Flipper Wobbler Dripper Spinner Stacker Shaker Maker*

*Frances Hodgkins in Kapiti / Christine Webster / Bronwynne Cornish / Steve Carr*

*Catherine Griffiths / Liyen Chong / Artists' Music Books / Becky Nunes / The Waiting Room*

*Two Auckland Studio Photographers / Laurence Aberhart / Bohemian Impressionists*

*Alexis Hunter (1948 - 2014)*



Art NZ







## Hamilton

### David Ed Cooper, Thomas Hinton & James Wylie *RE: 400*

Pilot, 27 March-18 April

EDWARD HANFLING

Pilot is an artist-run space operating out of one of the many empty shops in central Hamilton. Its first exhibition will not have made a dent on the Chiefs' fan-base, but courts instead people who enjoy being perplexed, then minimally enlightened, then satisfied with having drawn some provisional conclusions while still having plenty of loose ends to chew on for a while. The title, *RE: 400*, presumably refers to the fact that for several years Hamilton hosted an Australian V8 street race, without noticeable benefit to residents or to the desolate inner-city landscape.

The exhibition is about three Auckland artists putting together an exhibition out of artworks that are struggling to become artworks—they

aspire to the conventions of still life, abstraction, performance, video, expressionist, found object. Materials were gleaned from Hamilton stores, duly marked on a map included in the show. Some of the works are pretentious and some irrelevant to anyone but the artists themselves, but they are also enthralling and have the kind of riotous austerity that gets me excited.

A leitmotif emerges in the form of a wavy line, 'drawn' by James Wylie onto the wall with paprika and glue (*Wave (~~~)*) and tattooed by Thomas Hinton into the skin of his gallant co-exhibitors (shown in the video *RE: 400 (~~~)*). It reminds me of the way innumerable logos and designs in Hamilton mindlessly mimic the vermicular path of the Waikato River.

The exhibition also relies heavily on pizza: it was apparently consumed at the exhibition opening; a concrete *Double Pepperoni* is tucked away under the window; an inkjet print of the

(left) *RE:400* at Pilot, March 2014

(below left) DAVID ED COOPER & JAMES WYLIE *Gala x 2* 2014

30 litre underbed storage unit & assorted fresh fruit

(below right)

THOMAS HINTON *Guinness* 2014

Pint of Guinness, Guinness T-shirt, hawthorn

Pizza Hut logo, minus the text, is held against the gallery wall by the blast from a standing fan (\$5 *Large Classic 0800 838383*). I am fond of takeaway pizzas myself, and also art about pizza (see my Steve Carr exhibition review in *Art New Zealand* 146).

Other food-and beverage-related media include Wylie's paprika and Hinton's pint of Guinness. (I am told that *Guinness*, which also includes part of a tree, is an elegiac tribute to the artist's father, but the work itself fails to convey that.) On the floor, Cooper and Wylie have filled two storage containers with water and floating apples, oranges and bananas. I wonder if it refers to supermarket produce kept in cold storage. The feeling is both clinical and seductive. Perhaps the artists are demonstrating how easily we succumb to the visual appeal of colour.

Indeed the exhibition equally draws on, or invokes, the senses of taste, touch and smell, though viewers experience them indirectly; the pot pourri of Cooper's *Scent (1)* and *Scent (2)* is trapped behind clear wrap; skin is cut and bleeds on screen; food is looked at rather than eaten. Things remain interesting so long as we cannot grasp or 'get' them. That is what makes art good.

