

# MINIMAL WAVE

***Adrian Jackman***



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**16 NOVEMBER 2013 – 2 MARCH 2014**

Adrian Jackman was the Tylee Cottage artist-in-residence from May-March 2012. *MINIMAL WAVE* is his post residency exhibition.

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## MINIMAL WAVE – Adrian Jackman

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### FRAMEWORK

One of the aims of the residency programme at Tylee Cottage is that the incumbent draws inspiration for a body of work from their new environs, whether that be via the immediate environment or the town's rich history. As with many past residents on arrival, Auckland-based painter Adrian Jackman set about exploring his temporary home. He chose to cycle and what struck him on his travels was that in comparison with his hometown, Whanganui's streets and buildings were relatively un-peopled. Other artists have commented that there is a wildness about the place, an unease, an undercurrent; for Jackman the feeling was something akin to being in an episode of one of the television programmes of his childhood - Doctor Who and Blake's 7. The synthesiser soundtracks that accompanied these science fiction programmes provided a kind of aural reference point for summing up how the place felt or might have sounded for Jackman.

What Jackman was looking for in his travels was a series of reference points and frameworks that would provide him with a skeleton for a new body of work and also a palette that was specific to the place. One way to do this was to look to Whanganui's impressive and diverse architectural heritage. One key building that struck the artist was the town's War Memorial Hall which is somewhat of an oddity for a provincial New Zealand centre. This much celebrated example of mid-century international modernist architecture, built between 1958–1960, is situated in the town's cultural precinct, adjacent to the Whanganui Regional Museum and the Sarjeant Gallery. Jackman was drawn to this building and its front facade of open block work as a potential diagrammatic framework. The hall, along with other local examples of architecture, including the Savage Club and the Durie Hill Elevator not only provided inroads for learning about the town's history, but also provided him with a colour palette for a new body of work.

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From digital photographs he took of his new environs, Jackman created a palette of eighteen colours that he gave local names: 'Savage Pink', 'Durie Hill Green', 'River Gold', 'Kai Iwi Ironsand', 'Velodrome Blue' and 'Papa Clay Ground'.

As well as finding a local palette of colours to use in his work, Jackman was looking for a rhythm and structure in the town itself that could inform his approach. He was also struck by the grid-like structure of the town's streets. Prior to and during his time in Whanganui Jackman was interested in exploring the idea of indeterminacy in his work. The term is primarily used in mathematics, physics, biology, linguistics, philosophy and music, and means "having inexact limits", "indefinite" and "indistinct". Applying these elements to his work offers a chance procedure that opens up ideas for him regarding the unforeseen and change.

## OBJECT FILES

For Jackman coming to Whanganui also brought back childhood memories of making the long trip from Auckland to visit relatives in the town. His Grandmother lived here and his mother was born and completed her training as a nurse in the town. Jackman's Grandfather who was killed in the second World War is also remembered in Whanganui during ANZAC Day Celebrations. As a result of the residency Jackman has also begun to explore his own family history and his mother's Maori heritage. Although this hasn't manifested itself in symbolism that specifically refers to his own tribal affiliations, Jackman has used an image of a tiki that also has connections with Tylee Cottage and the history of the residency.

The image is taken from a pair of bookends in the form of tikis that were gifted to the cottage in 1992 by John Perry, former Director of the

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Rotorua Museum of Art and History who was visiting then artist-in-residence, painter Dennis Turner. Knowing that Turner had taken inspiration from Maori motifs in his work, most notably in a series that focused on the tiki form and seeing that the cottage was bereft of objects, Perry saw fit to gift the bookends from his own collection. In 1998, photographer Peter Peryer stayed at Tylee Cottage and the bookends were beautifully captured in an image titled *Tahi Rua*. The following year ceramicist Bronwynne Cornish was in residence and in the spirit of gifting left a ceramic work on the mantelpiece at the cottage. This object is a curious amalgam of the garage at Tylee engraved with the outline of one of the bookends.

In turn Jackman has used the bookends as source material for his own work and in so doing he provides his own take on the object but also adds to the visual conversation around them.

*After Image* was the last painting produced for the exhibition; in it the tiki motif is central and clear, looking directly at us. For Jackman the residency has led him on an unexpected journey that is really only at the beginning - an exploration of his own family history and his affiliations with the Te Arawa tribe.

*Sequential Circuits* is a large scale work which was initially conceived through Jackman breaking down four images that he sourced in Whanganui: the open block work of the Memorial Hall façade; a plastic Mr. Potato Head toy; the garage at Tylee Cottage and a pinhole camera.

Each of these images were manipulated via photoshop to strip them down to outlines. All evidence of colour, shadow and light were removed, leaving just the skeletal framework. These 'drawings' were then laid over each other creating a complicated net of imagery, where each of the four planes come in and out of focus.

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This composite 'drawing' was then transferred onto twelve sheets of paper that form one image and then the colours were applied, and the application of these was completely intuitive. In bringing together such diverse imagery Jackman creates a dynamic tension between representation, structure and abstraction. Sometimes you see the pattern of colour and sometimes you see the images - a tension, that throws the whole painting into a state of flux. Like the American abstract painter Mark Rothko, Jackman uses colour on colour, shape on shape to create painterly vibrations. In contrast to the pure abstraction of Rothko, Jackman's work has the added complexity of recognisable imagery. The painting becomes a complicated x-ray of the body of Jackman's residency.

*Sequential Circuits* is a complex painting to read and unpack, as it is a curious blend - a clear approach to image selection but within its layering and palette there is a dizzying complexity that takes this

work beyond the parameters of pop or abstract practice and into a new realm. Although Jackman is influenced by heavyweights of art history like Piet Mondrian and Bridget Riley and - closer to home - Gordon Walters, he is as much influenced by graphic design, particularly poster designs for New Zealand tourism from the first half of the 20th Century. Also closer to 'home' is Jackman's use of the unexpected form of 'Mr. Potato Head', which is derived from a plastic toy which was lent to his daughter during her visit to the town. Prior to her arrival, Jackman had been focused on the formal elements of his proposed new paintings. The arrival of a toddler at the cottage brought about the disruption of clear headspace and provided an injection of chance and spontaneity to cottage life. Jackman also cites that the form is a subtle tongue and cheek reference to the cottage's original owner John Tylee who was in charge of the commissariat for British troops garrisoned in Whanganui. Tylee Cottage was

originally sited at nearby Cooks Gardens where the commissariat grew vegetables for the troops.

Two large scale diptych works *Oberheim Matrix* and *Vocoder* literally zoom into the surface of *Sequential Circuits*, thereby giving us an even closer insight into a work that was already complex. Rather than this magnification causing further confusion for the viewer to find reference points, it liberates the image to exist purely as abstract.

## MINIMAL WAVE

The title of the exhibition 'Minimal Wave' operates on a number of levels and takes its name from a genre of electronic music created in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The instrumental arrangements featured mechanical beats and short repetitive patterns. Musicians in the genre were often influenced by avant-garde movements such as futurism and constructivism, and by the literature of science fiction and existentialism. Having grown

up with this music, it has played an important part in Jackman's life and accordingly its structure - sampling, repetition and variation - has also informed his work. Two large diptych works *Roland Korg* and *Arp Moog* are named after famous synthesiser brands. During his time in Whanganui, Jackman was also woken one night by a small earthquake, which coming from Auckland was a relatively new experience. This small seismic wave, coupled with a sense of the town's history which Jackman felt was very present during his residence make for a title that is apt and suggestive that this new body of work is merely the beginning of new waters yet to be chartered by the artist.

### Greg Donson

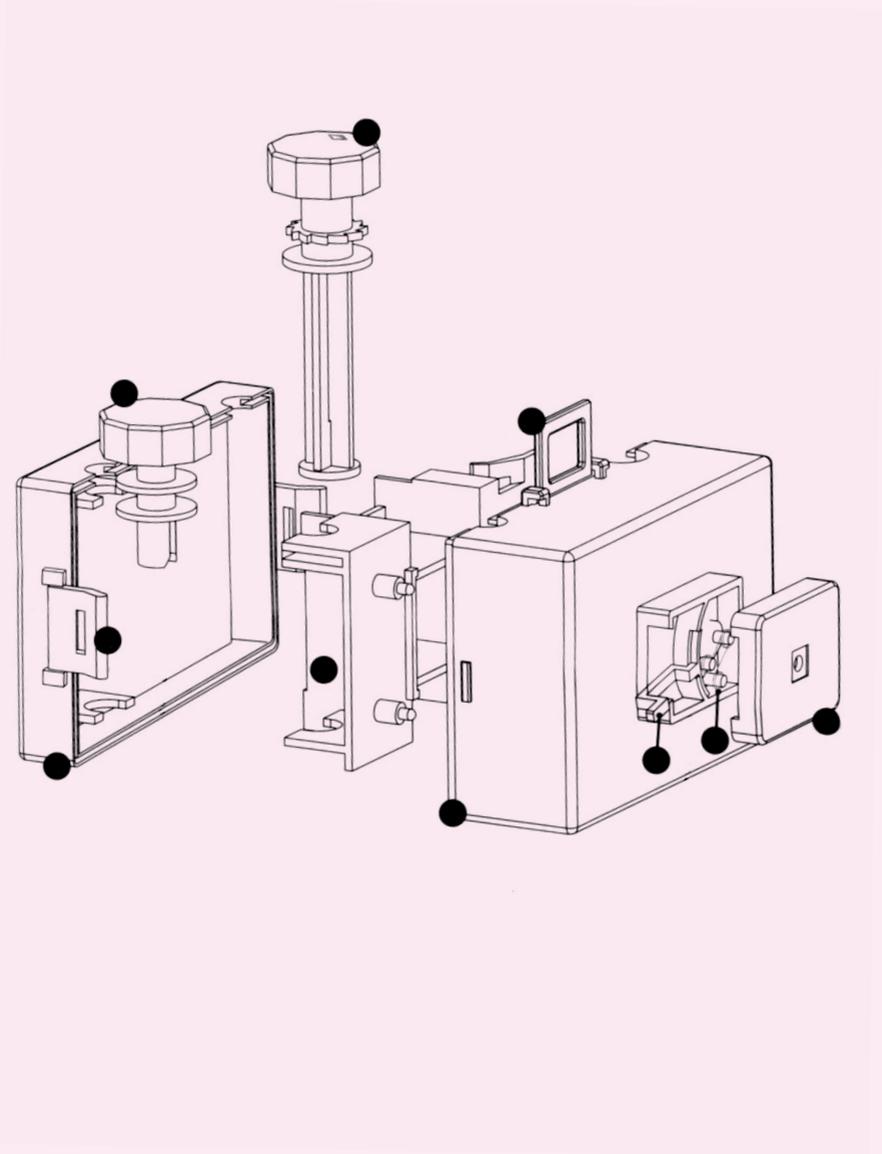
*Curator & Public Programmes Manager*



*Sequential Circuits*, 2013, vinyl acrylic on paper, 2240 x 2280mm



*After Image*, 2013, vinyl acrylic on board, 2250 x 2200mm



^ Pinhole camera, expanded diagram

*Tylee Temple*, Bronwynne Cornish, 1999 >



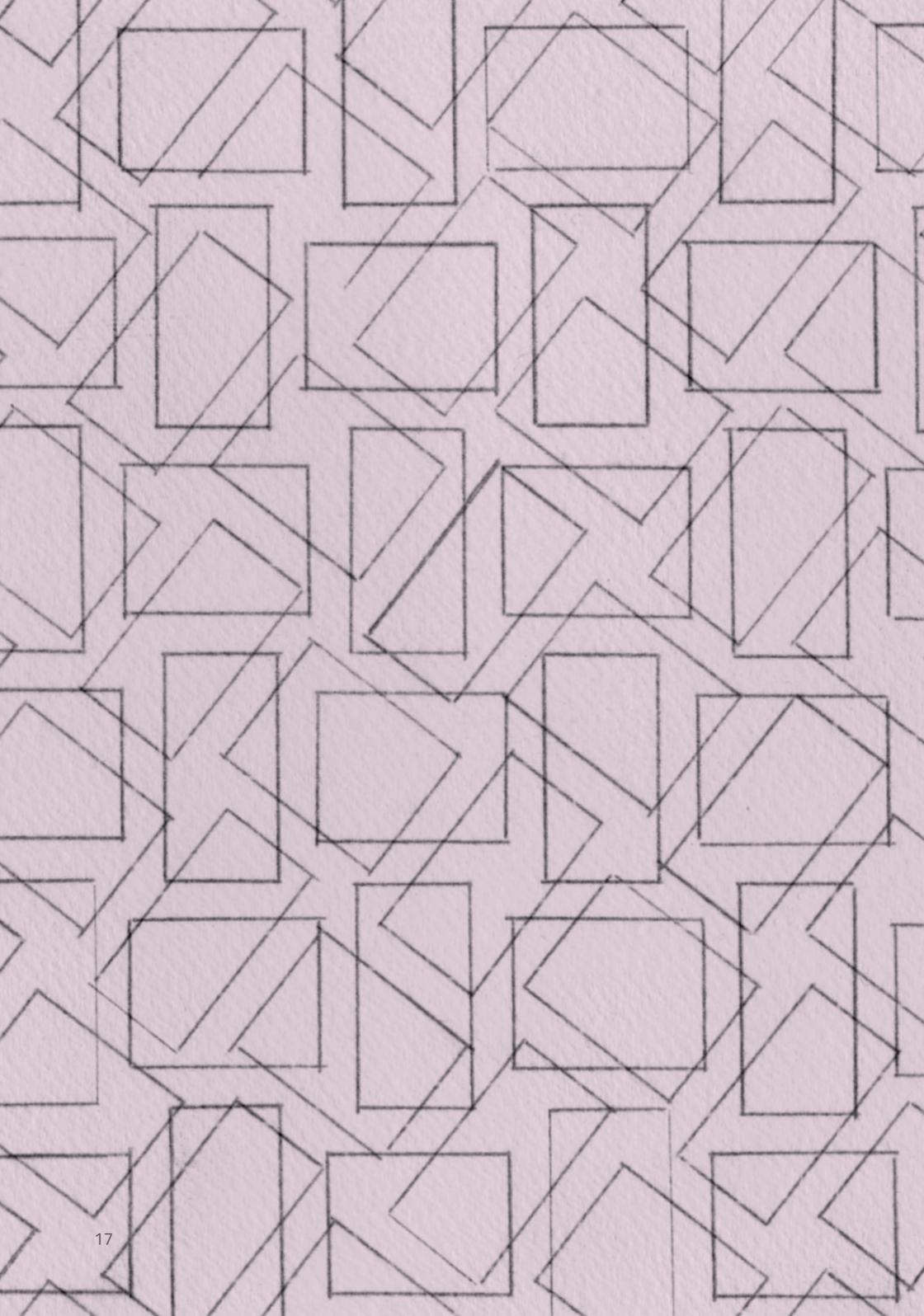




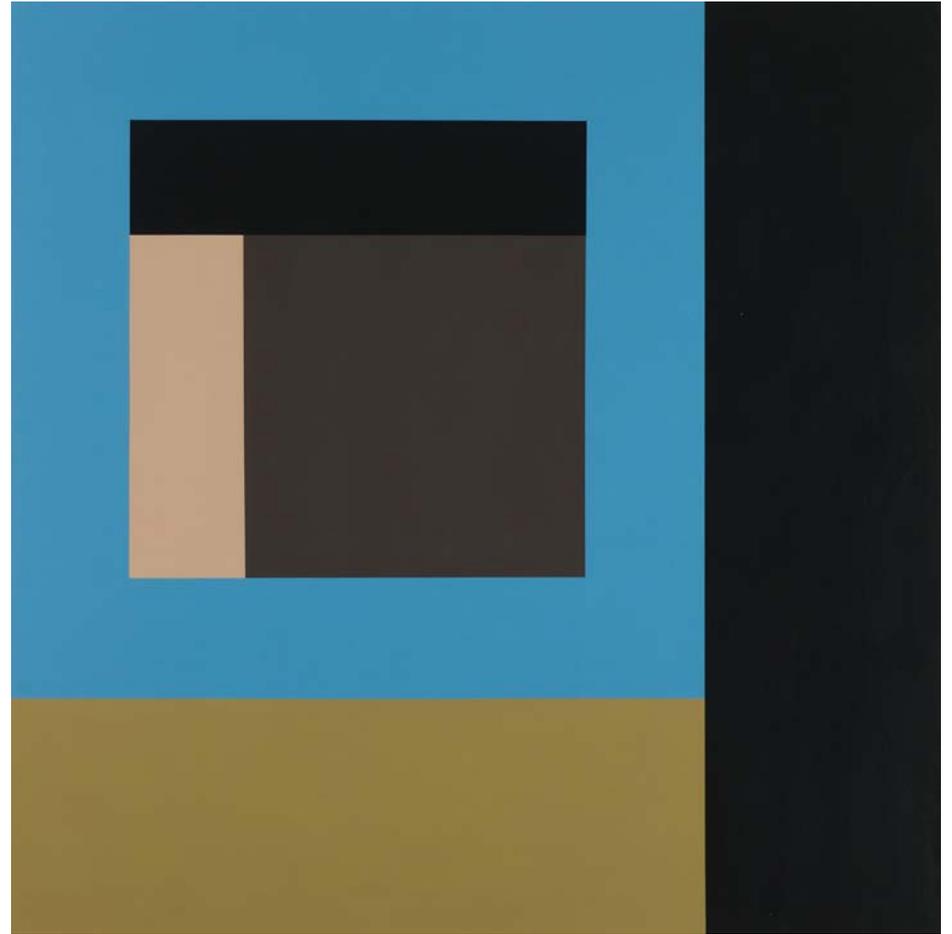
*Oberheim Matrix*, 2013, vinyl acrylic on linen, 1676 x 2744mm



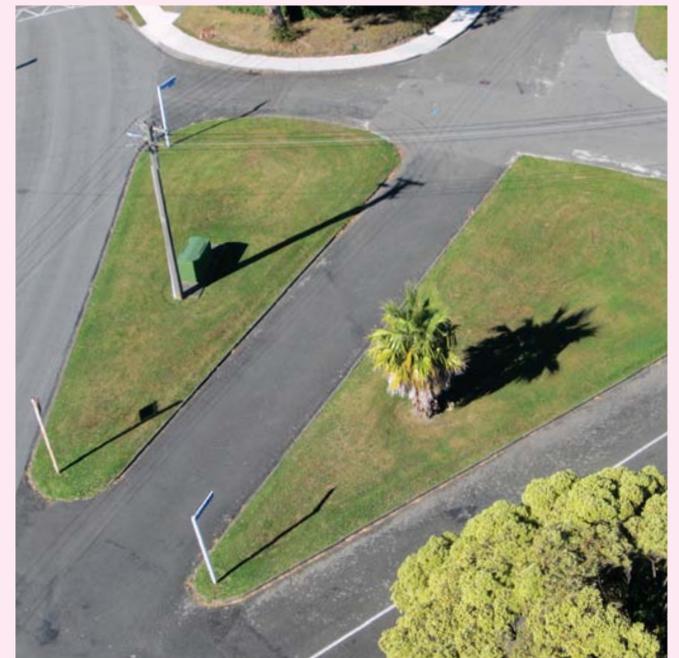
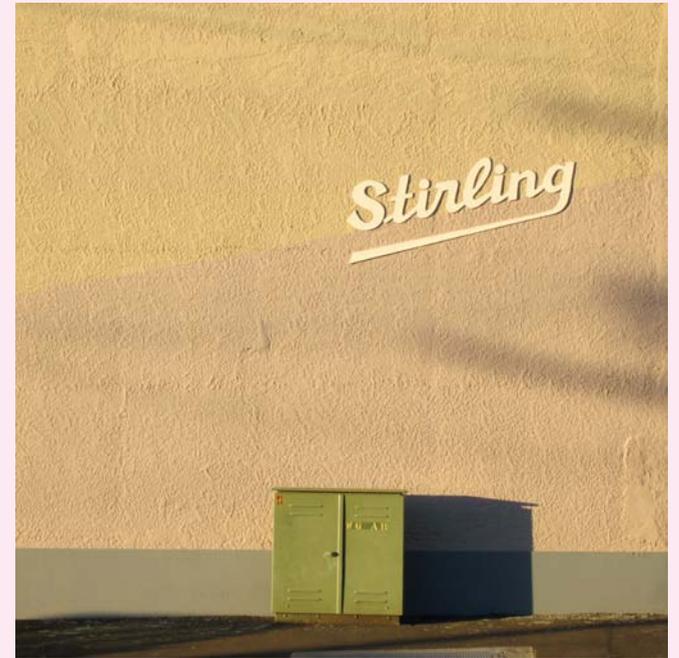
*Vocoder*, 2013, vinyl acrylic on linen, 1676 x 2744mm



^ North Mole, Whanganui River Mouth

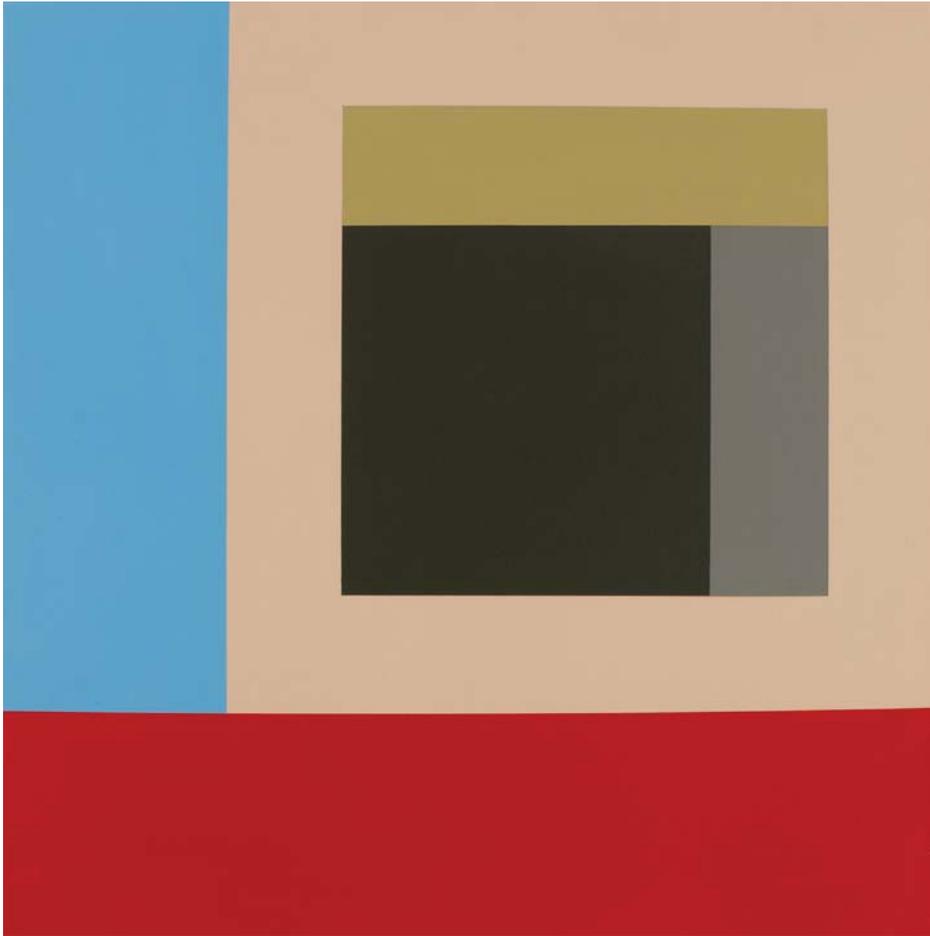








*Nieuwe Beelding (II)*, 2012, vinyl acrylic on linen, 450 x 450mm each



*Q.P.R.* 2012 vinyl acrylic on linen, 450 x 450mm



*The Soft Moon*, 2012, vinyl acrylic on linen, 450 x 450mm



Adrian Jackman was born in Te Kopuru, New Zealand in 1971. He graduated with a Masters Degree in Fine Arts from the Elam School of Arts, Auckland University in 1997. He currently lives and works in Auckland.

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#### SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2013** *Minimal Wave*, Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui  
**2012** *Apps*, Snowwhite Gallery, Unitec, Auckland  
**2009** *Mind The Gap*, Lopdell House Gallery, Auckland  
**2007** *Hermitage*, Northart Gallery, Auckland  
**2000** *Clone*, Bowen Galleries, Wellington  
**1995** *Pulp Fraction*, 23a Gallery, Auckland
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#### SELECTED GROUP SHOWS

- 2013** *Idyll*, NZ Steel Gallery, Franklin Arts Centre  
**2012** National Contemporary Art Award, Waikato Museum, Hamilton  
**2012** The New Zealand Painting & Printmaking Award, WSA, Hamilton  
Molly Morpeth Canaday Art Award, Whakatane  
**2011** Wallace Art Awards, The Pah Homstead, Auckland,  
The Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt, Wellington  
Group Show, Northart, Auckland  
**2010** Team McMillan BMW Art Award, Newmarket, Auckland  
Wallace Art Awards, The Pah Homstead, Auckland  
The Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt, Wellington  
**2009** The New Zealand Painting & Printmaking Award
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#### AWARDS

- 2002** Goldwater Art Award (Merit)  
**1996** James Wallace National Art Award (Runner Up)  
Mt Eden Young Artist Award (Premier Award)  
Joe Raynes Masters Scholarship, Auckland University  
**1995** Ida Eise Painting Prize, ASA Gallery, Auckland  
Rothmans Endowment Fund, Auckland University  
**1993** Senior Prize in Fine Arts, University of Auckland
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#### FURTHER READING

- Apps*, 16 June 2012, *Matt Blomeley*  
*Mind The Gap*, January 2009, *Matt Blomeley*  
*Fairways and fast cars*, April 2006, *Matt Blomeley*  
*Moving into Painting*, August 2007, *Sue Gardiner*

All essays available at; - [www.adrianjackman.com/texts.html](http://www.adrianjackman.com/texts.html)

