

## **Hannah Ireland, *Wet Stairs***

### **A response by Delilah Te Aōrere Pārore-Southon (Te Roroa me Te Kuihi, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Whakatōhea, Ngāti Pūkenga)**

Hannah Ireland brings a potent conversation to the forefront in *Wet Stairs* — an ode to being and growing without restriction or constraint. *Wet Stairs* makes me aware of the unconscious mind, the delicacies in being, and the very-real intimacies of human experience. The works are vibrant, concise and speak of the deep connection with the personal encounters we have. It is a reminder of the spell cast when embracing the fact that the unknown looks like a new possibility.

The works compose together as if they are a rush of collective gathering. They form a selection of desires and fears and reflect the very parts of being that need reassurance. They call me to the altar of self-acceptance and let me in on their secrets. They let me know what they want me to know, and if I keep on trying, they give me what I came for. We can't listen to them, but they listen to us. They keep me engaged and held, and allow a perception of what drifting upon the structures of time can articulate.

The mana tangata — strong body — of this work gives off a reciprocal energy force that feels uncomfortable, and curiously confusing. It's like a 1950s banned-Māori-song, being played in a stark white gallery by physical human form atua wāhine, māori feminine deities. It holds the electricity of a night out on Karangahape Road and is a salute to the delicate, quiet strengths found in the community.

Through the boldness of unconventionality, *Wet Stairs* is a psychological play on the mind that turns the things once loved into the faces of a future reality. The duality of vibrant hues upon each work knows us by heart and continues this dance of curiosity across the mind. I feel the mana of Ireland's interactions and have developed a sense of the personalities that come into play in the normalities of day to day.

As a body of work, it has this rare type of alchemy — an enhanced poetic potency, that brings me back into myself, in this deliberate and ultimately visceral way — oozing my feet into broken ground. It forces the mind and wairua to focus. It stops the mind from leaking into other thoughts and reminds me of the bits I need to leave behind. It offers a proposed method of silence — a ringing sound, and the enhanced notion of what it means to be human. It plants seeds, as it breathes a fertilising, good type of creative rebirth. I feel the combination of two selves, weaving into place, burning out towards the ether. Soft, and hard — the dualities of aroha.

*Wet Stairs* holds a direct and confessional tone, offering a sense of Ireland's unfiltered, conversational voice — a strong, gentle intelligence, and rogue approach to the modern world. It takes a new direction, and forms new conversations between two realms — the forefront of curious minds and eager provocateurs.

*Wet Stairs* deems the powers of Mana Atua, Mana Tangata, and Mana Whenua — it looks to the future, while connecting us to the past, suggesting life is not always linear. It generously breaks the idea of portraiture, acting as a mirror reflecting society back to itself. It invites me to slow down, pause, empathise and reflect. Being in the presence of *Wet Stairs* is similar to a night spent in my own wairua, as I navigate the co-ordinance of being.

*Wet Stairs* is a reminder to appreciate the stillness in connection, the liminal space between two realms, and the generational conversations found when loitering amongst your own reflection.

Titiro whakamauri, kokiri whakamua — look back and reflect, so we can move forward.