

TRISH
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GALLERY

TRISH CLARK GALLERY PRESS RELEASE:

For Immediate Release

JENNIFER FRENCH | DUPLEX

Exhibition July 30 – August 29, 2014

Trish Clark Gallery is pleased to present two new bodies of work by Jennifer French in an exhibition entitled Duplex.

Graduating with a BFA from the University of Auckland's Elam School of Fine Arts in 1987, and an MFA in 2000 from RMIT, Melbourne, Australia, Jennifer French has carved a niche for herself as New Zealand's leading specialist photographer of art, undertaken alongside her art practice of sporadic production of discrete bodies of work during sabbaticals.

As well as photographically documenting New Zealand's projects at the Venice Biennale for Creative New Zealand, French remains Gallery Photographer at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, a position she has held both part- and full-time since 1987. It is this role that resulted in a commission by Auckland Art Gallery Toi O Tamaki to make the body of work in Trish Clark's central gallery, Decommission, her creative response to, and recording of, the demolition of the Edmiston Wing in 2008, to make way for the new gallery development.

French excels in observation and empathy. Light shafts penetrate the building for the first time in well over a century, the beautiful bones of the 1887 building are laid bare, the 1916 accretions are honoured; the grinding noise, dust and fear experienced by French as materials crashed around her are transmuted into images of great stillness, beauty and contemplation. French's approach is clearly asserted in these works. She has stated, "Photography, in the creation of the image, is an effect performed upon the object, by a photographer. It is a caress. It is a personal testament, a set of subjective mysteries. A use of image as metaphor for the act of looking."

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The dreamlike narrative of a road trip displays the same acute observation that is French's trademark – in the small gallery the same themes of interiority and exteriority are played out within the confines of a motor vehicle. The recurring motif of the mountain, the skewed perspective – these suggest the differing states of consciousness of those within the car – the sleeper, the dementia-sufferer, the focused driver – and again, French the observer affording the viewer the privileged position of being in the car, experiencing the dream state. To enhance this emotional state she has exploited and exploded the grain of the film (now becoming extinct) to an extreme point – these photographs are very painterly meditations that catch 'things that could escape back into the ether with no one the wiser, if someone wasn't there to arrest them.'

French lives and works in Auckland, New Zealand.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND QUERIES PLEASE
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