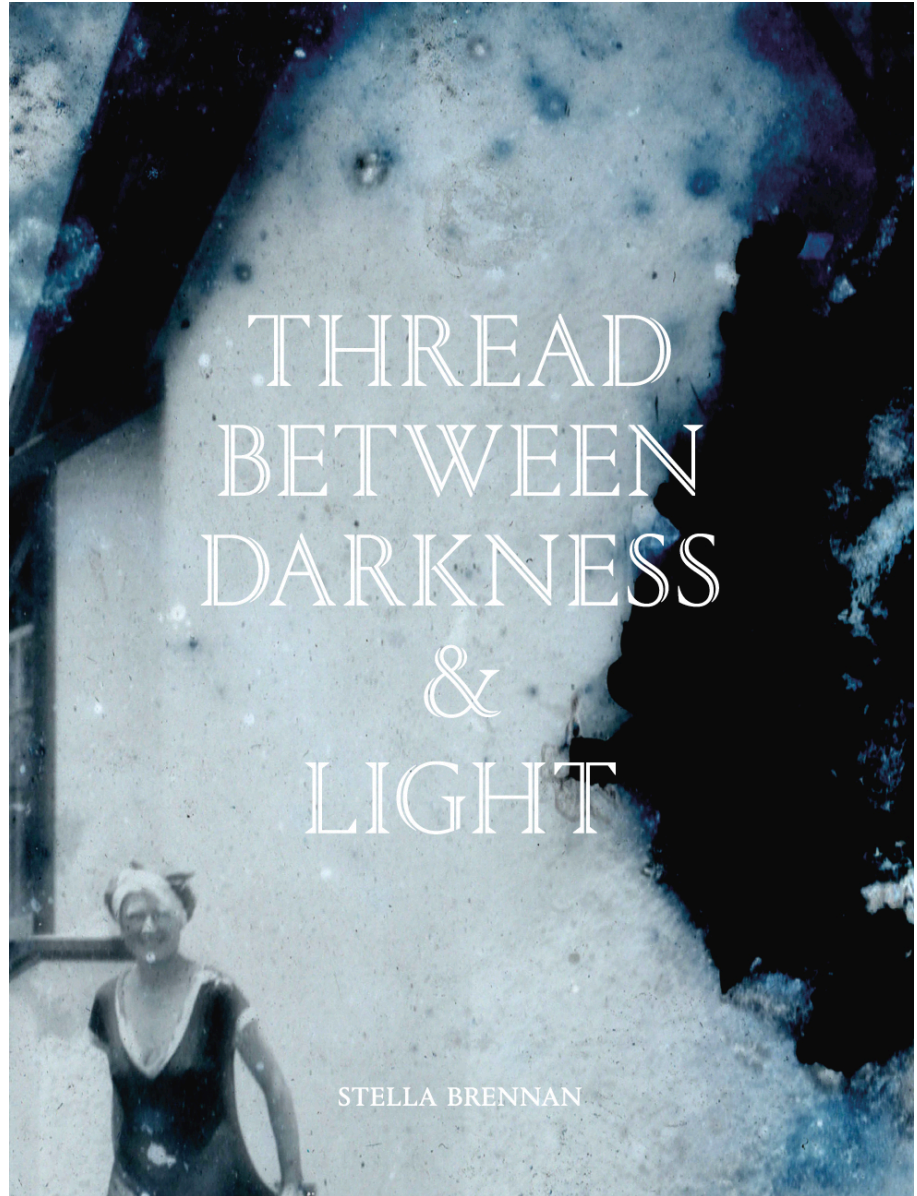


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2024 UPCOMING RIM BOOKS PUBLICATION  
Thread Between Darkness & Light



*Thread between Darkness and Light* reveals a previously unpublished archive of 100-year-old glass negatives. Artist Stella Brennan first began investigating her great-great-aunt Louise Laurent when her elderly uncle gifted her a mysterious painting: a view of Rangitoto with a ruined church in the foreground. Tracing its maker revealed an 1897 studio photograph of Louise, posed amongst her fellow female painting students. Cold-calling long lost cousins then led to this family archive which Brennan spent months digitising.

The intimate everyday images taken by both Louise and her husband William Winn have a casualness and informality that makes them almost like shots off a smartphone. There is even a string-assisted selfie of Louise and William together. But extreme damage sustained by the negatives, the cracked glass, peeling emulsion and blooms of mould speak to the time between then and now. It is this superimposition of time and place the book celebrates and investigates.

The book evolves from Brennan's immersive sculptural installation of the photographs, first exhibited in 2023 at City Gallery Wellington Te Whare Toi. With an introduction by the artist, the book presents selected images from the archive together with a collaborative, exploratory, essay by experts Lissa Mitchell (Curator of Historical Photography at Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa), Dr Susan Ballard (Art History Professor Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington) and Dr Kirsty Baker (Curator City Gallery Wellington Te Whare Toi). Historian Dr Ross Galbreath, whose forty years of research connects Louise, her mother and sisters with events from the Paris Commune to the Women's Suffrage Petition, contributes a final text.

Beautifully designed by Alice Bonifant, this book unravels the spooky magic of photography, the layers of silver, gelatin and glass that allow the faces and days of our ancestors to re-enter our world.

**Lissa Mitchell** is a photographic historian and curator of photography at Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. She is the author of *Through Shaded Glass - women and photography in Aotearoa New Zealand 1860 to 1960* (2023) and contributed to *An Alternative History of Photography* (Prestel, 2022) and *Flora - Celebrating Our Botanical World* (Te Papa Press, 2023).

**Kirsty Baker** is a writer, art historian and curator at City Gallery Wellington Te Whare Toi, where her recent exhibitions include Ana Iti's *I must shroud myself in a stinging nettle* (2022), Stella Brennan's *Ancestor Technologies* (2023), Ngahua Harrison's *Coastal Cannibals* (2023) and Julia Morison's *Ode to Hilma* (2024). Her writing on contemporary art has been published widely. Her book *Sight Lines: Women and Art in Aotearoa* will be published by Auckland University Press in 2024.

**Susan Ballard** is an art writer, curator and Professor of art history at Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington. Her work spans the fields of art history, creative nonfiction, and environmental humanities. Recent books include *Alliances in the Anthropocene* (with Christine Eriksen, Palgrave 2020) and *Art and Nature in the Anthropocene: Planetary Aesthetics* (Routledge 2021). Her curated exhibitions include *Listening Stones Jumping Rocks* (2021) and *Folded Memory* (2023) both at Te Pātaka Toi Adam Art Gallery. Her new book *Shift Work: Art and Life in the Third Millennium* (with Liz Linden) will be published by Punctum in 2025.

**Ross Galbreath** is an independent researcher and historian. He began as a scientist in DSIR, the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, but a few years before DSIR disappeared in the reforms of the 1980s he left to pursue what had previously been a part-time interest in history. After completing another Ph.D. he has written in various fields including environmental history (*Working for Wildlife*, 1993), history of science (*DSIR: Making Science Work for New Zealand*, 1998), business history (*Energy and Enterprise: the Todd Family*, 2010), and biographies of



scientists G.M. and J.A. Thomson (*Scholars and Gentlemen Both*, 2002) and Walter Buller (*The Reluctant Conservationist*, 1989). It was during his research for this biography that he discovered an enigmatic Laurent figure and began a long quest to find who she was – which led fortuitously to his part in the present project. He continues to research and write in these and other fields in both science and history.

**Stella Brennan** is a writer and sculptor based in Tāmaki Makaurau. With a research-focussed practice spanning from the handmade to the highly mediated, her work prises open history, its losses and possibilities, interrogating colonialism, industrialisation and computerisation. Her video has screened at festivals including: the New Zealand International Film Festival; the Short Film Festival Oberhausen; Videotage Hong Kong; Recontres Internationales, George Pompidou Centre and been included in the Sydney and Liverpool Biennials. Her installation *Wet Social Sculpture*, featuring whale song, psychedelic film and a fully operational spa pool was a nominated finalist in the 2006 Walters Prize. *Ancestor Technologies*, curated by Kirsty Baker at the City Gallery Wellington (2023) gathered together 20 years of work, and was the first exhibition of the installation *Thread Between Darkness and Light*. Her works are held in the collections of Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa and the Chartwell Trust.