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**TCG**  
TRISH CLARK GALLERY



PHIL DADSON | It's Never All Black and White

12 July – 7 September 2024

Press Release

## TRISH CLARK GALLERY PRESS RELEASE:

### PHIL DADSON | It's Never All Black and White 2 July – 10 August 2024



Unique in New Zealand's art history is Phil Dadson's durational performative 12-year visual music project, which he outlines thus: *Soundlooking, hearseeing, see hearing lines of sonic shape and form – texture, melody, rhythm, harmonies, polyrhythms conjured from contours, shapes and colours of things observed – is both the essence and impetus behind the twelve year, one month per year, visual-music project I set in motion with January Music in 2014.*

Having exhibited most of the visual scores made by Dadson in annual sequential months since 2014, the ten-year mark provides opportunity to reflect on the scale and ambition of this project. We present *September Music* from 2022 and *October Mantra* from 2023 in their entirety, accompanied by various works drawn from the earlier years of the project. These all represent a daily practice of a visual score, realised in drawing and painting on a variety of media and video; from the lyrical ink drawings on glassine of *January Music*, *April Music's* extraordinary video delivery of landscape meditations, *August Music's* jewel-like Mud-stamp series, to the large scale installations for *September Music* and *October Mantra*, the exhibition showcases Dadson's range of performative practice within a compelling conceptual framework that addresses his long-standing environmental concerns. At the same time, Chartwell Collection at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki celebrates their 50th anniversary with a publication of key works, including Dadson's *June Music*, 2019.

Phil Dadson is a seminal figure in the canon of contemporary art in New Zealand, recognised for pushing the boundaries of sound and intermedia art since the 1970s. His highly inventive trans-disciplinary approach encompasses experimental musical instruments and sonic objects, video/sound installation, music composition, graphic scores, drawing and graphics, sound sculptures and improv with invented instruments, and contributing significant influence on a generation of leading mid-career artists.

A member of the founding group for Scratch Orchestra in London, 1969 (with Cornelius Cardew, Michael Parsons and others), Dadson returned to New Zealand and in 1974 established From Scratch, the internationally renowned performance group. With other founding members Bruce Barber, Geoff Chapple, Gray Nicol, and later, Don McGlashan and Wayne Laird, From Scratch's legendary performances on original instruments at various international venues consolidated Dadson's conceptual rigour and excellence. Gregor Nicholas' film of From Scratch's nuclear protest work 'Pacific 3-2-1-Zero', was awarded the Croisette d'Or Grand Prix at the Cannes Music Film Awards in 1994, and together with his film 'Drum Sing' is now in the Permanent Film Collection of New York's MoMA.

Dadson continues to exhibit and perform regularly in New Zealand and internationally, and his films have been selected for International Film Festivals. He has received several major awards and commissions including a Fulbright travel award to the USA, residencies in Antarctica, Delhi, Venice, San Francisco, and numerous International research, exhibition and performance grants. 2013 brought exhibitions and performances in Aotearoa and Chile (Kermedecs conservation project), and Christchurch's Scape 7. In 2014 he toured with Taonga Puoro player



Rob Thorne and Chilean musician Enrique Siques in X-Currents, culminating in a performance at Audio Foundation (Auckland) as part of the S3D Invented Instrument minifest. The 2015 Fulbright residency period in San Francisco continues to reverberate through current performances and album releases. The year also saw the production of two new video works, one for the 56th Venice Biennale and one for WERK/ KUNST/WERK in Kassel, Germany. The From Scratch 546 Moons project (2018-20) included an array of new instruments in a major exhibition and performance series at Te Uru Contemporary Gallery, and Wellington City Gallery, followed by a South Island group tour. Through 2022/23 Dadson established the Breath of Weather Collective – commissioned for Te Tuhi Contemporary Art Trust's exhibition Huarere : Weather Eye, Weather Ear, in association with World Weather Network – to undertake a one year climate change recording project Kōea o Tāwhirimātea: Weather Choir. This year, 2024, marks fifty years in the evolving From Scratch project (1974-2024).

Appointed to the Sculpture Department at Auckland University's Elam School of Fine Arts in 1977, Dadson held the position of Head of Intermedia/Time based arts from 1986 – 2001 after which he undertook a full time art practise. In 2001 he received a New Zealand Arts Foundation Laureate award and in 2003, an Antarctic Artist Fellowship. Dadson was appointed an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM) in 2005. Dadson lives and works in Auckland, New Zealand.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND IMAGES PLEASE CONTACT THE GALLERY

[info@trishclark.co.nz](mailto:info@trishclark.co.nz)

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SOME USEFUL LINKS FOR FURTHER INSIGHT

[Phil Dadson | Parallel Harmonies, Circuit, review by Lance Pearce 2014](#)

[From Scratch Reviewed: The re-percussions of a hocket in a pocket, Review of From Scratch at Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery, by Graham Reid 2018](#)

[New Rhythms from a Private Universe, Eyeline Contemporary Visual Arts 62, essay by Andrew Clifford 2006/2007](#)

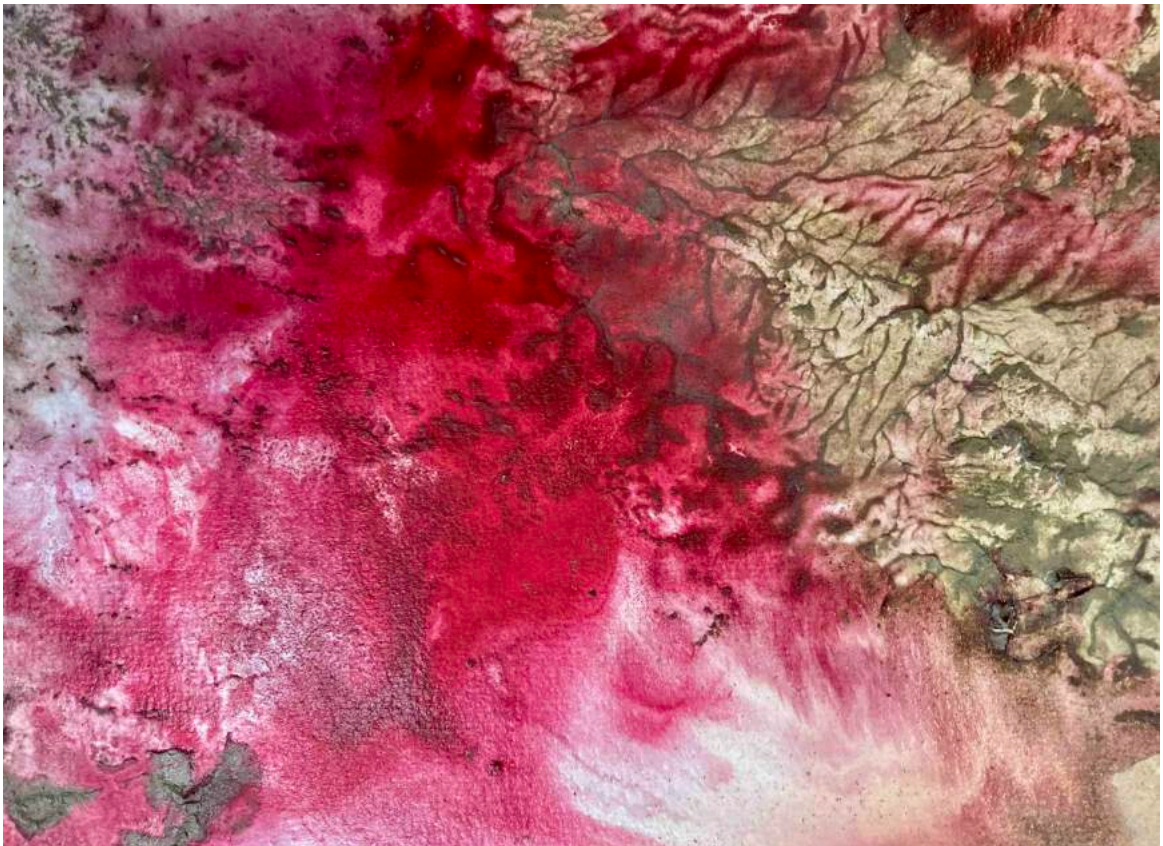
[Phil Dadson reflects on, the survey exhibition 'From Scratch: 555 Moons' at City Gallery Wellington 2019](#)

[Phil Dadson: Fulbright-Wallace Arts Trust Award, Phil speaks to RNZ about his plans for the fellowship and revisits some highlights from his long and varied career 2015](#)

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*August Music* (Mud-stamp series), 2020  
31 x mangrove mud, Indian ink, acrylic paint, pva on paper  
148 x 210 mm



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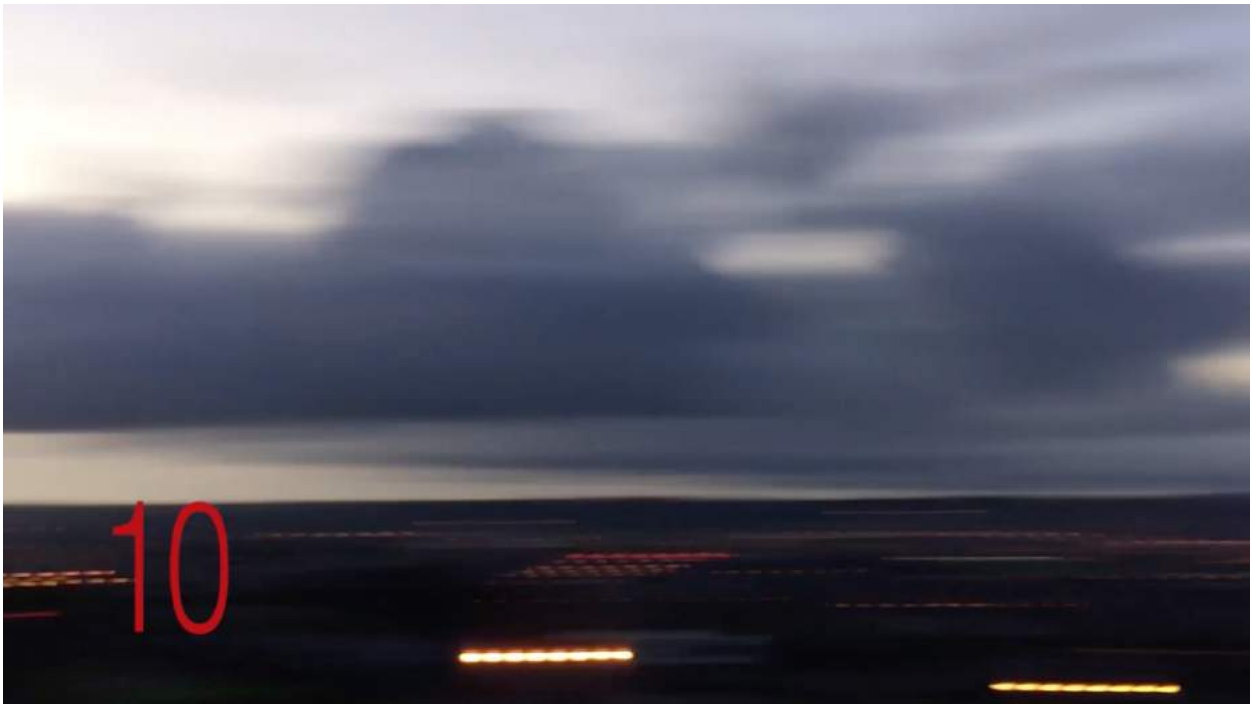


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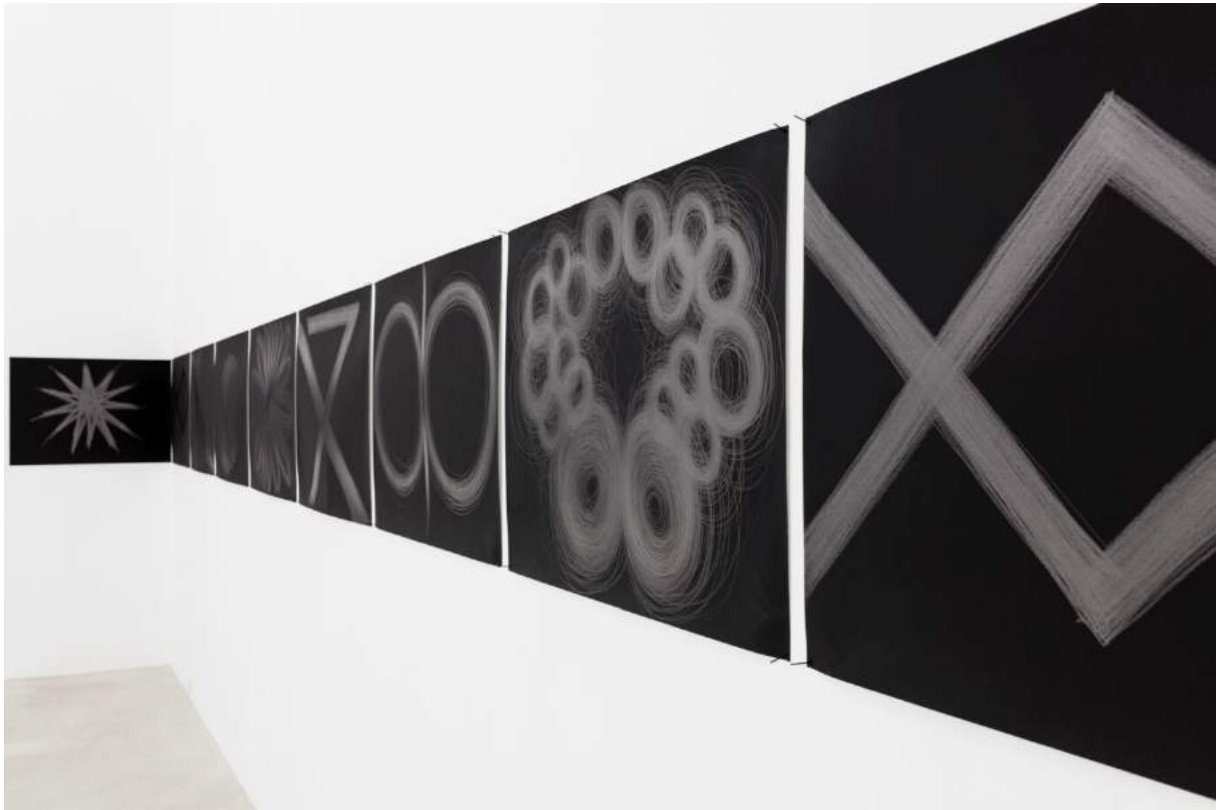


*April Music, 2017 (still)*  
Single channel video shot daily through April 2017, 21:21 Edition 1/3 (+1 AP)  
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*February Music (Installation image), February 2015*  
28 graphite drawings on black painted paper  
600 x 830 mm each

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*January Music (paper, hand, ink, eye, wind) (Installation image), 2014*  
Size India inks on 31 sheets of Japanese paper  
760 x 1020 mm each