
Exhibition Archive

Dieneke Jansen: Areas A & B

Offsite Project

04 March 2015 - 29 March 2015

G. I. Areas A & B: Hoardings, 68 Beach Rd, CBD Auckland, comming soon

G.I. Areas A & B: Housing in New Zealand (1946 -) [Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision](#), 300 Karangahape rd, Auckland, 4-13 March

G.I. Area B: Progressive Luncheon, 16 Taniwha st, Glen Innes, Saturday, 21 March, 12pm

Areas A&B by Dieneke Jansen responds to the major transformation of Tamaki, Glen Innes from a dedicated State Housing zone to being a private development of mid-rise apartment buildings with a mix of privately owned and socially assisted tenancy. In total, 156 classic 1950s and 60s weatherboard homes will be removed. These will in time be replaced by 260 intensified dwellings, 78 of which are reported to be purchased by Housing New Zealand and 39 by other social agencies. Jansen was one of a number of artists who have responded to this urban change since the first houses were removed in 2012. The artistic responses have varied greatly from documentary photography to activism which has directly participated in the controversy surrounding the eviction of tenants and subsequent protests. Jansen's approach has been one of long-term open-ended dialogue by developing projects that aim to encourage slow contemplation, facilitate social engagement and build an awareness of temporality. Her project consists of three parts a series of election style street hoardings, a video work and a progressive luncheon event. The three parts, sited both in Glenn Innes and in the CBD, are intended to traverse urban geography and collide past, present and future conceptions of Auckland.

The installed cluster of hoardings located on Beach Road complicates the method of election campaigning and building development advertising by presenting images of absence and presence. The photographs document the now empty lots where state houses once stood but also temporary sculptural interventions that respond to these sites. These subtle ephemeral inclusions stand as humble occupations that suggest the fragility of resistance against the state, city and corporate mechanisms that are ultimately the instigators of urban change. Located in close proximity to downtown high-rise apartments, Jansen's hoardings also connect with the broader issues of the city's planned intensification in expectation of a significant population rise of approximately 30% over the next 20 years -- a plan for the city that will expand the perimeter of 'central Auckland' to subsume the old small townships and outlying suburbs.

Showing at Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision, is a video work that documents a community evening event for the

local residents of East View Road in Glen Innes of which Jansen screened the 1946 film *Housing in New Zealand* onto an old state house soon to be removed. Created by the New Zealand National Film Unit and the Public Works Department Film Unit, the film embodies the social dream of post-war New Zealand to improve the living standards of the lower working class, to accommodate returned servicemen and stimulate the national economy. The goal, as promoted through the film, was to build "good commonsense houses" built for the New Zealand's climate using local materials but also houses that were planned with stable city infrastructure and design that encourages the development of community. Uncannily, the film describes the nation's housing problem that in many ways mirrors that of Auckland's current situation -- where poor families are forced into overcrowded dwellings, a real-estate market that is financially out of reach for young professionals, and rental properties that are overpriced and hard to come by. The development of the so called Areas A & B also share some of the aims promoted by this old show reel to achieve a modern standard of living for lower to middle income groups. The difference now being that the motivation is less about utopian notions of the social good and more about accommodating the city's need for intensification, together with the government's agenda of asset sales and encouraging private enterprise in a post-GFC economy. By screening this film, Jansen created a social occasion for local residents through which they could consider the current transitional phase of Glenn Innes within a historical context. The documentation of this event adds to this experience by sharing it with gallery visitors who might be able to gain yet another perspective being one step removed from the immediacy of the issue.

Through another free public event, Jansen attempts to draw focus back onto the Glen Innes community and the vacant spaces that have now come to define the neighbourhood. This time she is hosting a 'progressive luncheon' that will invite the public to mingle with the local community and to learn about the rapid change that has and is taking place in the area. Progressive meals are a 1970s American phenomenon in which neighbours walk from home to home serving different types of food in the spirit of social bonding within an otherwise detached suburban situation. For Jansen's event, it will be the absent homes that people will be invited to visit to share not just food but also the individual memories and collective social histories bound to each vacant lot. Through all three components, Jansen creates a constellation of interventions that seek to contribute opportunities of comparison, contemplation and conversation - from which, the ever shifting political and economic motivations that form the physical urban environment are brought into direct discussion with their impacts on established communities.

Bruce E. Phillips