

**_OUR HOUSE
+ TRANSCODE**

_WORKS

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+ TRANSCODE**

**_TRENTON GARRATT
_CLINTON WATKINS**

This exhibition and performance are presented in partnership with City Gallery Wellington. We extend warm thanks to the artists Trenton and Clinton for your great works and unflagging commitment to this project, to our Gallery compadres from down the hill; curators Aaron Lister and Abby Cunnane, Registrars Amber Baldock and Kate Woods and the rest of the CGW crew.

I would also like to extend great thanks to the School of Fine Arts staff who have worked on this show; Eugene Hansen, Ilka Kapica, Mike Heynes, Tim Larkin, Shaun Waugh, Ann Shelton and The Engine Room Committee. Thanks also to ace student volunteers from SoFA.

Heather Galbraith

**_THE
ENGINE
ROOM**

TRENTON GARRATT
Oure house
2012
fired porcelain

All I want is you
2011
drawing

TRENTON GARRATT
CLINTON WATKINS
Transcode
2012
performance 24 February 2012

**_A MASSEY
SCHOOL OF
FINE ARTS
LITMUS
RESEARCH
INITIATIVE**

**_THE
ENGINE
ROOM**

EAST END BLOCK 1
ENTRANCE C
MASSEY UNIVERSITY
WALLACE STREET
WELLINGTON

T 801 5799 X 62337

TUESDAY – SATURDAY
12 – 4PM

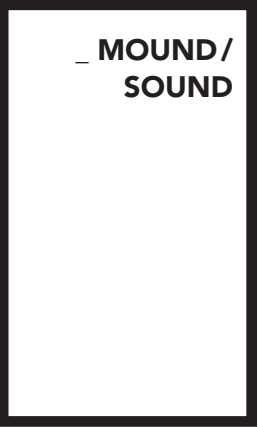
**24 FEBRUARY
– 17 MARCH
2012**

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MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF CREATIVE ARTS
TOI RAUWHARANGI



Auckland-based artists Trenton Garratt and Clinton Watkins have come to Wellington to install and perform works that remake and record a sculpture and a performance.

Our house, has been made multiple times in white procelain, white clay, and in terracotta, and it has been sited in Auckland, Wellington (within Enjoy Gallery) and Melbourne. Making the work requires methodical, labour intensive hand production. It is formed from the stuff of bricks, and domestic ware; fired clay. While the mound of ceramic shards has nest like qualities, it does not appear particularly hospitable, it does not scream ‘dwelling’. Or if it does, the dweller isn’t immediately apparent; a rodent, an insect, an invertebrate? The structure channels multiple contradictions – it is precise *and* feral, delicate *and* sharp. *Our house* looks like an improvisation born of compulsive making yet is deliberately constructed, by artist Trenton Garratt. It’s qualities when inert are quite distinct from when it is being played/activated by the artist.

Clinton Watkins and Trenton Garratt collaborated on a performance involving a previous iteration of *Our house* at Starkwhite Gallery Auckland in 2011. Just as the sculpture is making a return, so the performance *Transcode* involves a remaking of sorts, one that expands the transmission of the sonic resonance of the activated work much further than from one side of a large room on Karangahape Road to the other. In February the relay and looping spans a city.

This project joins two sites; Massey University in Mt Cook, and Civic Square in Te Aro, central Wellington, it exists as a hybrid across two exhibition spaces; The Engine Room and City Gallery Wellington. It is perhaps one of the most direct echoes of the title of Aaron Lister and Abby Cunneane’s curatorial project *The Obstinate Object: Contemporary New Zealand Sculpture*; in that the sculptural object is largely absent from that space. The performance will occupy both sites fleetingly, and documentation of it will take up residence in the portico and video monitors in Square² at the City Gallery. Our house, will for four weeks be resident in The Engine Room, before it gets repacked and its trace (ceramic dust and documentation of the performance) is all that remains.

Heather Galbraith
Associate Professor/Head of School

Aaron Lister reflects on Trenton Garratt and Clinton Watkins’, *Transcode*, 2012, video and audio recording of live performance, from the perspective of its presence at City Gallery Wellington within *The Obstinate Sculpture: Contemporary New Zealand Sculpture*.

Trenton Garratt’s sculpture *Our house* has no permanent home in the exhibition at the City Gallery. It is located elsewhere, until mid-March, at Massey University’s Engine Room gallery. This most physical of sculptures, a heaped mound of thousands of pieces of fired porcelain, enters The *Obstinate Object* in immaterial form. It is first heard in the entranceway to the gallery, then seen on the connected screens as documentation of a performance. The hypnotic chiming sounds echoing around this threshold space are a recording of Garratt performing or playing his sculpture by arranging and rearranging the pile of ceramic pieces by hand. This is the sound of a sculpture being made and unmade, materialising and dematerialising. At times it seems to issue screams of pain, at others screeches of pleasure.

Our house in fact only really appears here as subject or object for that performance, which Garratt carried out with collaborator Clinton Watkins. As Garratt played his sculpture Watkins recorded and transmitted this sound through a circuitous floor-based magnetic tape loop. The sound from Garratt’s performance becomes raw material for Watkins’ own work, which is both performative and sculptural. Titled *Transcode*, this dual performance, along with its documentation and the physical traces left behind, are all part of an ongoing collaborative project focused on extending the possibilities for physical encounter and experience beyond the traditional boundaries of the art object.

Garratt and Watkins first carried out this collaborative performance in a single space, in full view of each other. In this second iteration the performances were split across spaces to further extend the reach of the art object. Garratt performed at the Engine Room, while Watkins’ ‘response’ took place at City Gallery Wellington. A live transmission connected the performances across the city, allowing sculpture to reach far beyond its often closely guarded physical, material and spatial boundaries.

These concerns feed into the solo practices of each artist. Garratt’s paintings and sculptures push or transmit light and energies outwards from the object into the material world. Watkins’s recent installations harness sound as a tool to make immersive visual imagery that mimics the languages of painting. Both artists activate the synesthetic spaces between sound and visual matter. Where Garratt works outwards from the traditional art object, Watkins moves towards it. At the centre in this case sits *Our house*, a ceramic sculpture made of New Zealand porcelain. This material was selected for its brittle, vitreous surface which is formally registered as a brilliant white, while also emitting a clear, crisp sound.

Aaron Lister, Curator New Zealand Art
City Gallery Wellington