

Kumeu Arts Pip Window

24-26 Jan 2025

Arwen Flowers: 24th Jan – 7th Feb



(L). *Deep retrieval*, 2024. Paint and mediums on board, 900 mm x 1200 mm. \$1800

(R). *Palimpsest*, 2024. Paint and mediums on board, 800 mm x 1220 mm. \$1600

Arwen Flowers: 7th Feb – 26th Feb



(L). *Undone (but okay)*, 2024. Paint and mediums on board, 900 mm x 1200 mm. \$1800

(R). *Miscellanea*, 2024. Paint and mediums on board, 800 mm x 1220 mm. \$1600

ARWEN FLOWERS MVA

Unpacking

Boxes are designed to keep the contents safe. Yet, while sorting through family belongings stored in various boxes made from cardboard, I noticed each one had deteriorated, endangering the items inside. The damaged packaging jeopardised the preservation of objects representing my family history and, subsequently, my sense of self. I made these artworks using methods and materials that capture my feelings of concern in this context.

As an expression of body-held and felt memory, each painting expresses what it means to show care through movement. By applying mediums with sponges and cloths in slow and soft mark-making motions—layers of thin and thick paint have formed from the residues of added and subtracted material. In this manner, I have explored ideas of fragility, durability, and time’s cumulative and degradational effects. Parallels emerged between my body, the boxes and the artwork—each a vulnerable vessel containing, safeguarding, and relinquishing precious contents.

Through making these paintings, I have given my body room to express a response to the physical and social conventions of archiving¹ as a necessary method of preserving and sustaining family connections, personal identity, and a sense of belonging².

¹ West, Gabrielle Emma-Jean. “Why Keep It If You Can’t See It!: An Investigation into Public and Professional Attitudes Towards Collection Care, Access and Utilisation in New Zealand Museums”. Open Access Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington, January 1, 2011. <https://doi.org/10.26686/wgtn.16992898>.

² Woodham, Anna, Laura King, Liz Gloyn, Vicky Crewe, and Fiona Blair. 2017. “We Are What We Keep: The ‘Family Archive’, Identity and Public/Private Heritage.” *Heritage & Society* 10 (3): 203–20. doi:10.1080/2159032X.2018.1554405. 203.