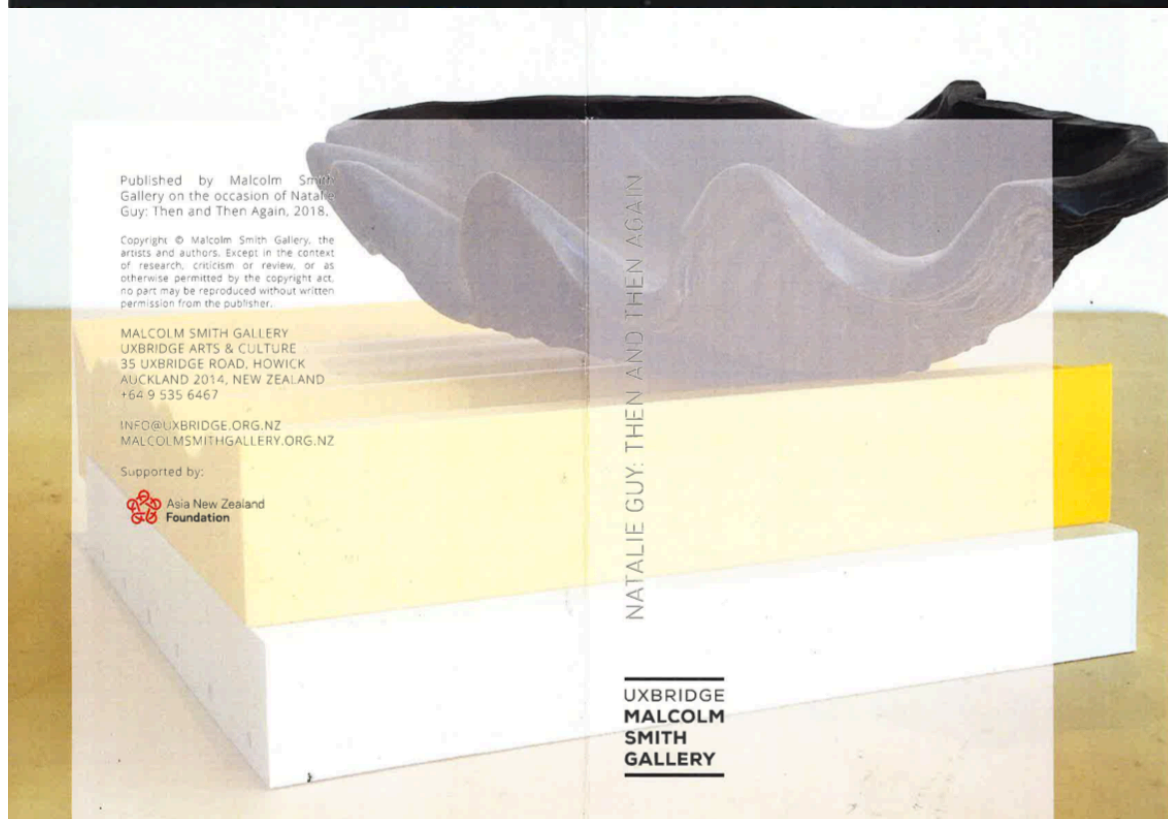
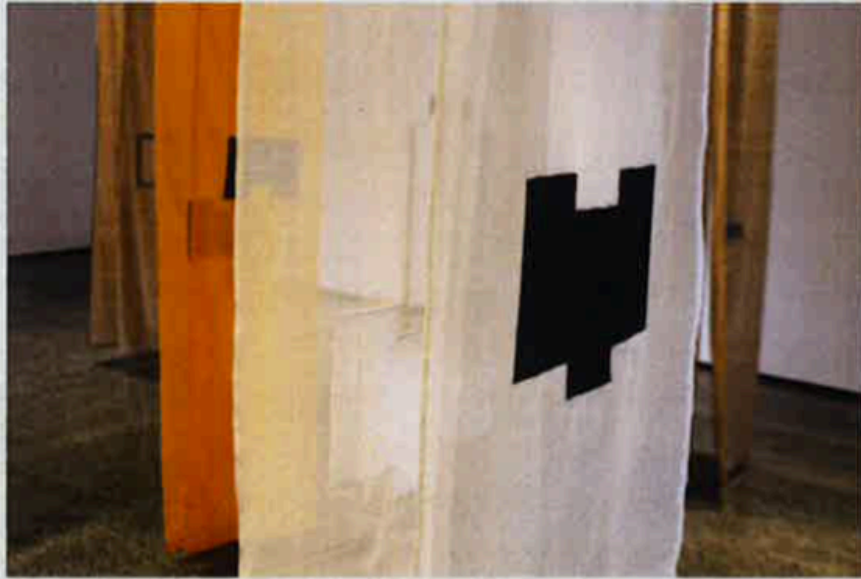


THE RECENT WORK OF NATALIE GUY, JANUARY 2018

In adopting the early-50s geometric motifs of Gordon Walters, Natalie Guy pulls at a thread of hard-edge abstraction that weaves back through the European masters who influenced Walters before his return to New Zealand. In her hands, these rationalised shapes, which once performed a moral commitment to purity, logic and progress, are claimed for her crafting of them into a domestic pattern. Here the histories of women at home, drudging or decorating with needle and thread, vie with a concurrent history of modernist man rethinking the world in his image. Guy lifts these forms from their gendered history and resituates them, so their old rhetoric is stifled under the silence of her body's labour. By poking, pushing, pulling, pressing, knotting and snipping at them their former qualities, delineating clarity and rationality, are complicated and made uneven. Hard-edged shapes that once loomed outside time in the minds of men are softened with puckered boundaries and fringed with remnant threads. Geometry lends itself well to scissor and stitch, and once worked into their banners, the forms participate in a world of light, shadow and air that folds in around us, as well as catching on warp and weft. These gauzy, diaphanous vales may infer some sense of the 'feminine,' but not just feminine in some soft, delicate way, though delicacy is certainly present. The banners show us a woman retracing a once idealised form and giving it the weight of cloth, making it touchable, physical, laboured. There is a gynecic authority at work, robustly reminding us that the controlled angles, logical grids, spiritual squares, strict lines and transcendent rectangles were once shapes of a disembodied mindset. For Humanism did not put on women's clothes.

Glen Snow





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