

2015 Commissioner's closing comments:

It is hard to believe that the 2015 New Zealand at Venice project has drawn to a close. *Simon Denny: Secret Power* has been an incredible success. It has drawn unprecedented international critical reception and media coverage, been a catalyst for indepth debate locally and internationally about evolving patterns of surveillance, geopolitical power and agency, and the visual language and management cultures of both state and corporate agencies. It has also enabled extraordinary opportunities for professional experience and growth for all members of the team, and raised the profile of contemporary New Zealand art on the international stage.

I am incredibly proud to have been a part of the extended team who have brought this project to fruition, and will watch with keen interest the ripples of ongoing engagement and impact the project has through the publication, ongoing critical review, subsequent showings of works from *Secret Power* in public and private collections, and new related developments within Simon Denny's work.

The most immediate of which is *Products for Organising*, the large solo exhibition that opened at the Serpentine Gallery, London on 24 November 2015, running through until 14 February 2016. If you are travelling to London during this time, please do pop to the Serpentine Sackler Gallery to check it out.

As has previously been announced four of the *Secret Power* vitrines are making their way back to the shores of Aotearoa New Zealand as part of the national collection at Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, which is very exciting, and further strengthens the representation of the Venice project within the visual and material culture of Aotearoa.

I would like to extend a huge vote of thanks to all of our pavilion attendants who have kept the home fires burning (not literally!) within the Marciana Library this past seven months. They have coped admirably with heatwaves, aqua alta, massive crowds, dodgy internet connections, tricky questions and the day to day management of cleaning and caring for the exhibition, six days a week.

We are especially pleased that the Honorable Maggie Barry was able to experience the Venice Biennale and the New Zealand pavilion in October, the first Minister of Arts, Culture and Heritage to do so. Ably hosted by our Ambassador to Italy H.E. Patrick John Rata and 2017 New Zealand at Venice Commissioner Alastair Carruthers, Minister Barry was able to get an excellent on the ground insight into the Biennale, its scale, breadth and significance.

It has been a real privilege to work with Simon Denny and his studio, with curator Robert Leonard, Assistant Curator Alex Davidson, Project Manager Jude Chambers, designer David Bennewith, co-editor of the publication Mary Barr, content adviser Nicky Hager, "our man in Venice" Diego Carpentiero, the highly skilled installation team led by Francesca Astesani, supported by Exhibition Registrar Amber Baldock, all of the attendants, all of the crew at Creative New

Zealand who have been juggling Venice alongside other projects (Cath Cardiff, Helen Isbister, Sarah Pomeroy, Matt Allen, Cassandra Wilson, Rose Campbell and Muriwai Ihakara) and I would like to extend special thanks to Chairman Dick Grant who extended the invitation to me to be Commissioner for the 2015 project, and who has been steadfast in his support of the project throughout its development and delivery.

The support we have received from the New Zealand at Venice Patrons, led by Leigh Melville has been so wonderful, and we were thrilled that there was such a strong posse of patrons at the vernissage and that many others have been able to see the exhibition under their own steam during the Biennale. The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa's ongoing support as Key Partner has been crucial to the project, and I thank Karen Mason and Sarah Farrar for their real commitment to the project. Also hearty thanks to both Massey University (my employer) and City Gallery Wellington (Robert Leonard and Amber Baldock's employer) for your support of us as individuals and the project as a whole. Alex Davidson's Assistant Curator role was supported by Dame Jenny Gibbs.

To Simon's gallerists, I extend a massive thank you, especially to Daniel Bucholz, Christopher Müller, Peter Currie and Fillipo Weck from Buchholz Galerie; Friedrich Petzel, Andrea Teschke and Andrew Black at Petzel Gallery, Michael Lett and Andrew Thomas from Michael Lett, Marco Altavilla and Paola Guadagnino at T293. The hospitality sponsorship in Venice and around New Zealand of Black Estate has been wonderful, and many an excellent conversation and welcome has been lubricated by your fine product. Also within New Zealand, Three Boys Brewery catered most ably for those who prefer grain to grape.

The Marco Polo Airport project would not have been possible without the incredible support of Arounder.com/Vrway communication (who shot the panoramic high resolution images of the Marciana Library walls and ceilings), the Save S.p.A Group (who operate the airport, especially Andrea Geretto and Alberto Baretta), and the extraordinary production and installation skills of ClearChannel. The Airport project received crucial support from private donors Liv Barrett, Lonti Ebers, Danny and Lisa Goldberg, Friedrich Petzel, Jackson Tang and others. Thank you all, without your belief in this project and in Simon's work, this aspect of the project would not have been possible.

I would also like to thank Dr. Maurizio Messina, Director of the Marciana Library and his staff, for welcoming this project so warmly.

The baton has already been passed to Alastair Carruthers, and the artist curator team of Lisa Reihana and Rhana Devenport for the 2017 project and I wish them all the best for the presentation of their project, which will be an elegant and compelling continuum of the ongoing New Zealand at Venice project. This, the eighth official national pavilion will build upon the incredible achievements of the artists and teams who have already presented their work so ably and adroitly within this very visible and demanding context. I tip my hat to all of the artists to date, Peter Robinson and Jacqueline Fraser, Michael Stevenson, et al, Judy Millar and Francis Upritchard, Michael Parekowhai, Bill Culbert, Simon

Denny and Lisa Reihana. We are incredibly proud of what you have achieved and salute your work and its ongoing relevance and criticality.

As for me, a new “durational” project begins with the birth of my first child which should have happened by the time this newsletter is dispatched. I will be following the evolution of the 2017 project with great interest and charge you all to have a prosecco on my behalf at the next vernissage!

Heather Galbraith

Commissioner, NZ at the Venice Biennale 2015: Simon Denny