

Tātaki Whakakitenga
Exhibition Guide

MELTER OF LIMBS



Emerita Baik
Georgie Hill

23 Jul - 04 Sep 2026

NGUTU KĀKĀ

Melter of Limbs brings into conversation recent work by Emerita Baik and Georgie Hill. The exhibition explores curious convergences between their respective practices, guided by enquiries into dislocation and its inverse, entanglement. The works occasionally assume a symbolic dimension through mythical references: Hill's overlaying of Eros, 'melter of limbs', with the alluring and perilous siren, or Baik's exploration of Hans Christian Andersen's *Little Mermaid*, who wavers on the margins of two worlds.¹ The resulting pieces translate allegorical impulse and subjective experience into a sensorial language, one that asks how myth might persist in abstraction.

Guided by breath and atmosphere, Hill gives kaleidoscopic form to shifting sensory fields in *Signal Modulations / Sky in my Lungs* (2025). The series draws on material from Hill's 2024 research trip to Japan, including Kazunori Ozawa's anime drawings of explosions and the storyboard art of Kenzō Masaoka's 'The Little Mermaid's Crown'. Across each canvas and watercolour, Hill's pulsating gestures suggest recurring elemental phenomena: ocean currents; vapour surging, drifting and dispersing; electrical discharges; the eye of a storm. Their repetition echoes the predictive logic of weather forecasting—from ancient methods of divination to contemporary data collection.

A sense of pattern recognition builds and fades across *Signal Modulations*. Rhythmic forms that verge on familiarity shift through varying degrees of obstruction and opacity. In Hill's watercolour collages, this effect is achieved through discontinuous layers and careful incisions that unfold across the picture plane. Her unstretched canvases have been creased and folded - a process informed by the Japanese resist-dye technique *Arashi Shibori* - forming luminous channels that evade her paintbrush.² Each canvas and incised watercolour maps a complex negotiation between rational structure and creative disorder. Impulsive, aleatory mark-making conveys immediacy, while an almost diagrammatic repetition structures the viewer's encounter. Within this tension, air becomes a potent vehicle for the dissolution of established boundaries.

The exhibition brings this work together with Baik's screenprints and aluminium reliefs, materially vast yet derived from a single collection of photographs. Taken in her mother's home in Kirikiriroa Hamilton, the domestic images become proxies for care and intimacy across geographic distance. Yet these partial signifiers arrive already mediated by distance and unmoored by screens, subject to further fragmentation at the hands of the artist. The relationship between Baik's photomontage practice and her metal reliefs is symbiotic: torn images become paper maquettes for a sculptural relief, and each metal segment, once cut down, is photographed to form the basis of a new screenprint. Screenprinting reintroduces depth into her digital collages, just as airbrushed pigment adds an equivocal, dream-like quality to the surface of her sculptures. Testing the affective charge of compression, flattening, and digital manipulation becomes a way of distilling what remains in transit.

In 'The Agony of Eros', cultural theorist Byung-Chul Han characterises contemporary society as one of hypervisibility and transparency, an 'inferno of the same'.³ Lamenting the loss of thresholds and transition zones as sites of mystery and riddle, Han argues for alterity as a necessary precursor to authentic exchange: 'Without the negativity of thresholds or threshold-experiences, fantasy withers.'⁴ For Baik, an artist whose practice courts tension between folktale narratives and the textures of modernity, Han's sentiments find a visual echo in her work: enigmatic metal surfaces suggest an interiority that hovers just out of reach.

Baik's recent body of work *Inside my necklace* (2025) marks a shift towards visual reticence. Composed of a series of undulating aluminium planes that seem to suspend gravity, each new form is imbued with an aesthetic of deferral. Pigment and surface shift with the light, hinting at something withheld rather than simply hidden. The works play with apparent dualities; construction materials rendered in ribbon-like curves, open forms that expand into space and contract in on themselves.

Their abstract forms carry residues of the self: Baik's signature near-fluorescent green and clouded charcoals mingled with midnight purple produce a nostalgic effect. As with Hill's indeterminate and fluctuating paintings, *Inside my necklace* inhabits a dynamic of approach and withdrawal.

Where *Signal Modulations* uses atmosphere as a conduit of the sublime, Hill's *Sirens* (2024) returns to the siren in her archaic form. Throughout literary history, the allure of the siren's song presages a loss of control; she is an elusive force that overwhelms reason. *Siren / Melter of Limbs 1* and *2* draw the siren into equivalence with Eros, as imagined by the ancient Greek poet Sappho. In Anne Carson's reading, the magnetic pull of Eros emerges through the distance between self and other, desire and its object, organising desire itself around a 'radiant absence'.⁵ Like the siren, whose song binds and entangles those who hear it, Eros is sustained by the impossibility of possession. Hill's energetic paintings give form to this paradox through a precarious equilibrium, as though driven to a point of explosion or inward collapse by forces that exceed their physical limits.

Baik likens her weightless metal forms to shredded paper, unable to return to its former state. With titles like *Pearly seafoam into Dust* and *Rocks in the Moonlight*, her screenprints and earlier relief sculptures reference the *Little Mermaid*, refracted through the aesthetics of Toei Animation's 1975 film adaptation. Drawing on the 1837 telling by Hans Christian Andersen, Baik returns to the morbid, original tale rather than its sanitised retellings, reclaiming its themes of transformation, sacrifice, and misrecognition. Unlike the modern story - which allows the protagonist to overcome her mer-origins and join her prince in human form - Andersen's tragic conclusion sees her dissipate into seafoam and transform into a sylph. Caught in a state of purgatory, the mermaid cannot rejoin her family or her human beloved, her forced separation providing Baik a metaphor for existing between two cultures.

In *Melter of Limbs*, both Baik and Hill skirt the peripheries of recognisable form, favouring transformation and instability as conditions for the negotiation of self and other, visibility and concealment. Seen together, the works fluctuate between visceral revelation and formal control, unsettling systems of representation to articulate intangible forces and hidden feelings.

Nina Dyer, July 2026

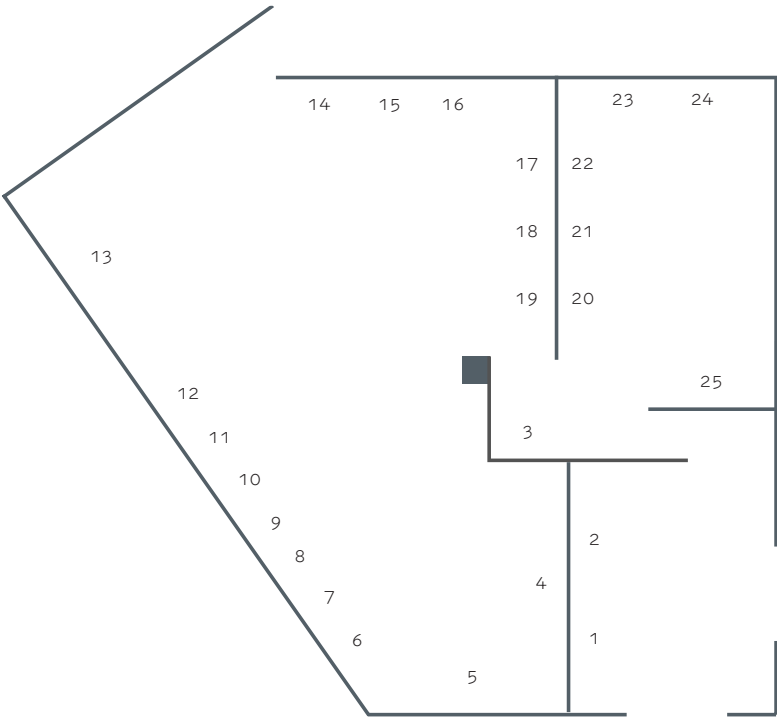
1. Sappho's fragment 130, as translated in Anne Carson, *If Not, Winter: Fragments of Sappho* (Vintage Books, 2003), 265.

2. Arashi, meaning storm, is a dyeing tradition that creates diagonal white stripes on indigo cloth, reminiscent of driving rain.

3. Byung-Chul Han, *The Agony of Eros*, translated by Erik Butler, (MIT Press, 2017), 41.

4. Ibid.

5. Anne Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet* (Princeton University Press, 1986), 18.



1	<u>SIREN / MELTER OF LIMBS (2),</u> 2024, acrylic on canvas, 800 × 750MM	6	<u>SIGNAL MODULATIONS / SKY IN MY LUNGS (1),</u> 2025, acrylic on canvas, 800 × 750MM
2	<u>SIREN / MELTER OF LIMBS (1),</u> 2024, acrylic on canvas, 800 × 750MM	7	<u>SIGNAL MODULATIONS / SKY IN MY LUNGS (9),</u> 2025, acrylic on canvas, 800 × 750MM
3	<u>ROCKS IN THE MOONLIGHT,</u> 2025, acrylic on aluminium, 380 × 584 × 150MM, courtesy of the artist and Robert Heald Gallery	8	<u>SIGNAL MODULATIONS / SKY IN MY LUNGS (3),</u> 2025, acrylic on canvas, 800 × 750MM
4	<u>THREE TAILS,</u> 2025, acrylic on aluminium, 1020 × 780 × 720MM, courtesy of the artist and Robert Heald Gallery	9	<u>SIGNAL MODULATIONS / SKY IN MY LUNGS (7),</u> 2025, acrylic on canvas, 800 × 750MM
5	<u>CHEWING GUM,</u> 2025, acrylic on aluminium, 720 × 810 × 700MM, courtesy of the artist and Robert Heald Gallery	10	<u>SIGNAL MODULATIONS / SKY IN MY LUNGS (6),</u> 2025, acrylic on canvas, 800 × 750MM

- | | | | |
|----|---|----|---|
| 11 | <u>SIGNAL MODULATIONS / SKY IN MY LUNGS (8).</u>
2025, acrylic on canvas,
800 x 750MM | 20 | <u>PEARLY SEAFORM INTO DUST.</u>
2024, acrylic on aluminium,
380 x 584 x 150MM,
courtesy of the artist and
Robert Heald Gallery |
| 12 | <u>SIGNAL MODULATIONS / SKY IN MY LUNGS (5).</u>
2025, acrylic on canvas,
800 x 750MM | 21 | <u>HEART OF THE PRINCE.</u>
2024, acrylic on aluminium,
380 x 584 x 150MM,
courtesy of the artist and
Robert Heald Gallery |
| 13 | <u>MORNING LIGHT.</u>
2025, acrylic on aluminium,
720 x 840 x 840MM,
courtesy of the artist and
Robert Heald Gallery | 22 | <u>ORANGE AND CITRON TREES.</u>
2024, acrylic on aluminium,
380 x 584 x 150MM,
courtesy of the artist and
Robert Heald Gallery |
| 14 | <u>MY LEMON TREE WARMED THE MARBLE STATUE.</u>
2024, ink and acrylic on
paper
560 x 760MM,
courtesy of the artist and
Robert Heald Gallery | 23 | <u>SIRENS (2).</u>
2024, watercolour on incised
paper,
590 x 500MM |
| 15 | <u>SEAFOAM BEYOND THE GLITTERING STARS.</u>
2024, ink and acrylic on
paper
560 x 760MM,
courtesy of the artist and
Robert Heald Gallery | 24 | <u>SIRENS (3).</u>
2024, watercolour on incised
paper,
590 x 500MM |
| 16 | <u>LAUNDRY ROSE FROM THE SEA.</u>
2024, ink and acrylic on
paper
560 x 760MM,
courtesy of the artist and
Robert Heald Gallery | 25 | <u>SIRENS (1).</u>
2024, watercolour on incised
paper,
590 x 500MM |
| 17 | <u>SKY IN MY LUNGS (5).</u>
2025, watercolour on incised
paper,
600 x 550MM | | |
| 18 | <u>SKY IN MY LUNGS (6).</u>
2025, watercolour on incised
paper,
600 x 550MM | | |
| 19 | <u>SKY IN MY LUNGS (7).</u>
2025, watercolour on incised
paper,
600 x 550MM | | |

Emerita Baik is an artist from Aotearoa currently living in New York City, who works across sculpture, printmaking, and installation. She holds a BFA (Hons) from Massey University and an MFA from Columbia University. Recent exhibitions include *Inside my necklace* (Robert Heald, 2025), *Spring Time is Heart-break: Contemporary Art in Aotearoa* (Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, 2023-24), Aotearoa Contemporary (Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, 2024), and *Folded Memory* (Te Pātaka Toi Adam Art Gallery, 2023). Her work is held in the collections of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, Massey University Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa, and Wellington City Council.

Georgie Hill is a painter who lives and works in Tāmaki Makaurau. She holds a BFA from the Elam School of Fine Arts and an MFA from Whitecliffe. Recent exhibitions include *Sirens* (Superpartner, 2024) and *Venus Marina / The Roses Came Roaring* (Sumer, 2023). Hill has received several awards and residencies, including the Olivia Spencer Bower Foundation Art Award (2011), the C Art Trust Award (2019), and the Youkobo Art Space residency in Tokyo (2020). Her work is held in the collections of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, the University of Auckland Waipapa Taumata Rau, and the Chartwell Collection. Key solo exhibitions include: *Feint* (City Gallery Wellington Te Whare Toi, 2013 / Gus Fisher Gallery, University of Auckland, 2014), and a solo presentation at the 2019 Beijing Contemporary Art Fair.

Published by Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery at
Te Kura Toi a Hoahoa – School of Art and
Design, Auckland University of Technology,
to accompany the exhibition:

Melter of Limbs
23 July - 04 September 2026

First printed in July 2026

© 2026 Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery and the
authors. All rights reserved. Except for
reasonable purposes of fair review, no part
may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval
system or transmitted by any means without
the prior written consent of the publishers.

Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery is the art gallery
of Auckland University of Technology,
Tāmaki Makaurau, Aotearoa New Zealand.

Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery
40 St Paul St
Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland 1010



Exhibition Guide

Te Wai Ngutu Kākā Gallery
Auckland University of Technology
2026

Wāhi

Level 1, WM Building
40 St Paul Street
Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland 1010

Kōrero Mai

ngutukaka@aut.ac.nz
@ngutukaakaa
ngutukaka.nz

