

Editorial Note for kmko #13

Michele Leggott

Australian poet, editor and critic Pam Brown was a Distinguished Visitor at the University of Auckland in September 2013. She talked to classes, gave readings and a seminar, and prepared material for the continuation of the Tapa Notebook deposited in Special Collections after her 2005 visit to Auckland. Her public lecture ‘Authentic Local,’ delivered 26 September, was the preliminary for Poetry as Social Action, a symposium focused on the roles of poetry in contemporary culture. Seven poets made presentations during the one-day symposium 27 September, then Pam MCed Word and World, an evening reading at Auckland City Central Library featuring the symposium speakers. Audio and video files of the presentations and readings, and of Pam’s lecture, have been uploaded to the NZ Electronic Poetry Centre (nzepec), along with the symposium programme and Pam’s Distinguished Visitor schedule.

Ka Mate Ka Ora is pleased to publish the text and visuals of ‘Authentic Local’ in this issue. Accompanying it are essays by Susan M Schultz and Jen Crawford derived from their symposium presentations. Also included are responses by Jack Ross and Chris Parr to editor Murray Edmond’s call for submissions relating to the symposium topic. The second and final section of the late Marcia Russell’s thesis research into the trans-Tasman career of Elizabeth Riddell contributes a historical dimension to the concentration here of poets and scholars interrogating the multifarious connections between poetry and social action.

Calling ourselves Generic Ghosts we compiled montaged pieces, first as an intervention into the linearity of academic papers given at a Cultural Conference at the University of Technology Sydney in 1986. These montages were the work of many writers and were constructed especially for public reading. They were a response to the writer as authoritative

voice, to the language of threat and terrorism and to the notions that feminist or women's writing be concerned only with the 'I' and the 'Other'. (Pam Brown)

It's that ability to witness, to be mindful of, to listen to what is there instead of what we want to be there, that enables us to see these wanderers—whether they be sufferers from Alzheimer's or “illegal aliens”--more as themselves and less as what we most fear about ourselves. (Susan M Schultz)

“Audience” in the line above can be understood as those who hear, and in making herself part of the world of audience, along with the trees, Berssenbrugge challenges the received subject-object relations that attend the “natural” landscape and the poet who sees it. More unusually yet, part of what she hears from her position in the audience is intention. (Jen Crawford)

By reading Leicester Kyle and Paul Celan together, I would contend, we can learn as much about our present crises as about their own historical circumstances, their respective choices of a place to stand. (Jack Ross)

Links

[Pam Brown in NZ](#)

[POETRY AS SOCIAL ACTION: A Symposium at the University of Auckland](#)

[Pam Brown's Tapa Notebook](#)

[Marcia Russell, Made in New Zealand: The Early Poetry of Elizabeth Riddell\(1907-1998\)](#)