

Kathryn McCool (b.1966 New Zealand, lives Australia)

P.North

Archival Inkjet Prints (Hahnemühle Photorag Baryta)

Predominantly made in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as Kathryn McCool moved from teenager to adult, this exquisite series of photographs of people and places, was captured on black-and-white film with a Rolleiflex camera.

With little photographic experience, McCool set out to photograph her community, friends and family. The result is a set of unguarded, simple and eerie images. With the passing of time 'P.North' has become an engaging, poignant and sometimes humorous document of a photographer at the very start of her journey.

Exhibited for the first time in its entirety 'P.North' doesn't refer to a place, but rather to a dreamlike and dislocated moment in time. McCool's work shows shopkeepers, youths, churchgoers, young children and animals populating the nondescript landscapes of sleepy small towns amidst strangely loaded backdrops.

More a poetic essay than social documentary, the majority of 'P.North' was produced in the context of the neo-liberal restructuring of the New Zealand economy, and its devastating impact on the rural and working classes. A young McCool, aware of a country and a way of life undergoing drastic change, was driven to create a segue, an imagined borderland made up of her rich, peculiar and subjective imaginings. At the same time this period was one of her own transition from teenager to adulthood, and a visual reckoning with her own small corner of the world, and what might lie beyond.

After making these images, McCool did not make photographs for many years. Included in this exhibition, alongside the full suite of 'P.North', also features some more recent work, as McCool has recently taken up her Rolleiflex camera and is once again photographing her community.

This exhibition is supported by our Major Partners for 2024 Hahnemühle, Spicers Australia. All works in this exhibition have been printed on Hahnemühle Photorag Baryta (315 gsm), by Final Grade Printing. Postcards printed by HCPro and supplied by Spicers Australia. Labels printed by Colour Factory.



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Ex-Racehorse, Longburn, Aotearoa New Zealand, 1988.

When I was young I was convinced the song *Wichita Lineman* was about this very road; 'I am a lineman for the county and I drive the main road.' A lot of roads in the Manawatu were called Lines and this one ran eventually out to the beach. The clay soil got sandier until it was dunes, sometimes covered with pines.



The Way To Greendale, Canterbury, Aotearoa New Zealand, 1987.

Roads are characters- this is a portrait.



Miss Merit's very own 'Lord, Help Me Hang in There' Poster, Palmerston North 1988.

Miss Merit liked the idea of a dog version of the popular poster of a kitten dangling from a branch and so we tried this instead. I had no idea how old Miss Merit was. It was like time had stood still for her.



Elephant, Pony and Bird, Auckland, 1989.



Boy Alighting a Chrysler at Temuka Fair, Temuka, 1987.

His friends had been waiting for him to arrive after a big road trip. I was straight from working in the shearing sheds and so my friend Michael Stevenson and I drove right down to the end of the South Island and this was one of our first stops.



The Young Circus Performer, Auckland, 1989.

Either it was the school holidays or this is what she did because it was round midday and mid-week when this photo was taken. One of the rare photos in Auckland, as I almost always had to take the train home if I wanted to take a photo.



Afterschool Rabbit Shooters Walking Home in Winter, Ashhurst Pohangina, 1989.



Fifty Cent Train Rides, Temuka Fair, Temuka, 1987.

Also for fifty cents you could also take three swings at a Zephyr MkIII parked in the middle of the main street, with a sledgehammer.



Youth Group on The Friday Night, Deniliquin, NSW, 1987.

Not a member. Some youths showed up to see what Youth Group looked like but they didn't like to stop smoking long enough to go inside.



The Playhouse in Professor A. Roscoe's Backyard, Palmerston North, 1989.

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Miss Merit, Palmerston North, 1989.

Miss Merit hemmed my 6th form ball gown. She was a very distant relative although now mum can't remember how exactly. She drove a red VW and her dog always rode shotgun with his paws on the dash.



Go Kart like in The Flintstones, Palmerston North, 1991.



Amanda in the Plymouth Belonging to Ray, Bunnythorpe, 1989.

When Ray drove he sung 'There Stands the Glass' just like Webb Pierce, even better. I had never heard singing like that.



Security Guard, Manawatu Show, Palmerston North, 1986.



Coal and Trailer Waiting in Clinton, South Island, 1987.



Ralph at the Four Aces. Palmerston North, 1988.

Ralph, my landlord and the cook at Four Aces Restaurant, fried his sandwiches deep in Sunrise margarine. My darkroom was over the cafe in the former Cosmopolitan Club kitchen and the cloakroom was rented by a heavy metal drummer who liked to practice often.



Arcadia at The St David's Church Fair, Top O Broadway, Palmerston North, 1987.

He wore the sausage sizzle sandwich board for the whole day.



Bunnythorpe, 1990.

I put an ad out wanting to photograph a dog who could sit up and beg and she had a corgi cross all dressed up like Basil Brush who could.



Anna Marie, Wairarapa, 1989.

While I was working for Cousin Martin, we visited his friend. It got boring while they talked so I took photos of my young cousin Sally, and Anna Marie while we waited for them to stop. Children often reacted delightfully to the Rolleiflex as it was such a strange looking thing.



Some Pony Parties, QLD, 2016.

Seeing this started up my world all over again.

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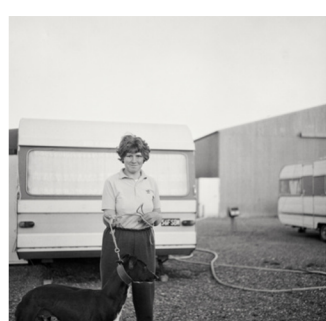
He knew he looked Like Glen Campbell, Waihi Caravan Park, 1986.
He would put up with the kiwifruit picking gangs all winter. My caravan was next to his and he supposed I wanted his picture on the account of his having one arm but I said it was because he looked like Glen Campbell when he sang *Wichita Lineman*.



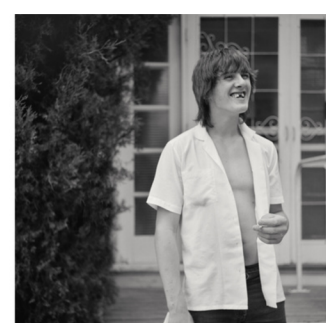
One Half of the Crossroads, Canterbury, Aotearoa New Zealand, 1987.



New Haircut, King Country, 1986.



Woman and Greyhound, Invercargill, 1987.
Her father had a tattoo of a naked lady on his forearm and I hadn't seen much like it. It was stretched beyond original size and blurry and I thought I needed glasses.



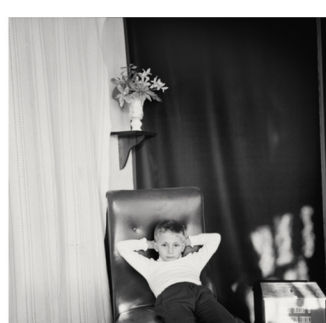
Youth Group on Friday Night, Deniliquin, NSW, 1988.



Anna Marie, Wairarapa, 1988.
I couldn't believe it when she said she had her own TV set.



The Sign, Canterbury Plains, 1987.
This was the first real vanishing point I had ever seen with my own eyes. It was spiritual.



Amanda's Son Luke in Michael Stevenson's Studio also over the Four Aces, Palmerston North, 1987.
Luke was my answer to the character 'Hunter' in Paris, Texas, a film that haunted my waking and sleeping hours.



A Very Good Yo-Yo Player, Melbourne, 1988.



The Wood Chopper Palmerston North, 1987.
He was the head of a mysterious family all with pale, pale blue eyes. I only ever saw them from afar - usually by the time I got up to them with my camera, they were gone. He thought a while before he agreed to have this picture taken. He worked hard.

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Two Brothers Waiting After School with House Slippers On, Lyttleton, 1987.



After Church in the Red Cross Rooms by the River, Deniliquin, 1988.



Playing Chicken, Waihi Beach, 1987.



Sonya's Boyfriend's Niece (Beautiful Child), Palmerston North, 1986.
She reminds me, now, of Juanita whom I had wanted to say sorry to since I was 8.



Caleb and Jacob, Hawkes Bay Show, Hastings, 2017.



Youth Group on the Friday Night, Deniliquin, NSW, 1988.
A member; he didn't want a copy just the photo taken.



Young Man About to Board the Bus to Hay, Melbourne, 1988.
I was catching the bus to work on a station on the Hay Plains.



Friendly Air Waves, 1988.



Guy Cutting Through the Caravan Park to The Racetrack, Invercargill, 1987.



Little Brother Circus Performer, Auckland, 1989.
Took him a while to be convinced he didn't have to tumble.

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Pretty Pines Rodeo, Deniliquin, 1988.
I rode out to Pretty Pines to see how it would feel under the different sky but it felt the same.



Luke in the Light in Michael Stevenson's Studio, Palmerston North, 1987.



Baptismal Pool and River Backdrop in A Church on Dominion Road, Auckland, 1989.



American Grandma, Auckland, 1989



Boy in Matching Track Suit on a Spring Morning, Waihi, 1986.



Kenneth, Neal and Alice Bunnythorpe, 1989.
I babysat these good and smart kids who never failed to go to bed when asked, even during daylight savings.



Untitled, 2023.

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