

The streets are paved with water

Olivia Chamberlain
Sam Towse



In *The streets are paved with water* Olivia Chamberlain and Sam Towse explore the surface of the city as their subject. Responding to central Ōtautahi, they embrace walking as a methodology, each taking cues from their nuanced observations of the city, and reimagining its urban vocabulary. Sidewalks, road-markings and spray painted arrows provide shared starting points. Instead of everlasting fixtures defined by their utility, they are examined as elements of the urban landscape susceptible to shifts in perspective. Through their individual processes of making, the artists extrapolate and re-contextualize found materials, silhouettes, and forms, creating structured paintings on canvas – that in some cases expand onto the gallery wall – and wall-mounted concrete-based works.

Critical to these transformations is a sense that the city is never static, but open to be made and re-made through our own personal experiences and idiosyncratic navigations. For the artists, this process begins with walking – sharing routes, shortcuts and observations – and in revealing these to someone else, finding new legibility within the cityscape.

Olivia Chamberlain is an artist based in Ōtautahi Christchurch. Her practice focusses on painting, observation and process. Referring to forms and colours found while navigating the city, structured compositions are revealed in her work by the staining of raw canvas with highly saturated, fluid paint. Recent solo shows include *Guidelines*, 2023 and *Offcuts*, 2022, both at City Art Depot, Ōtautahi. Olivia graduated with a BFA (Hons) from Ilam School of Fine Arts in 2015.

Sam Towse is an artist based in Ōtautahi. She recently completed a BFA (hons) at the Ilam School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury. Towse’s practice relates to the urban landscape, rearticulating built environments through in-depth material investigations. Recent shows include *Witness marks*, Paludal, Ōtautahi (2024); *The Moon and the Pavement*, Ashburton Art Gallery in partnership with The Physics Room, Ashburton (2022); *Found Bearings*, Ilam Campus gallery, Ōtautahi (2021); and *Bare Land*, Hot Lunch, Ōtautahi (2020).

The artists would like to thank Mike Boulden, Barbara Garrie, Luke Shaw, Earnest Art Services, Sarah, Jade and the CoCA team for their support.

1. Sam Towse

Untitled 1

Concrete, paint

340 x 470mm

2024
2. Olivia Chamberlain

Sequence 1

Acrylic on canvas, oak frame

270 x 220mm

2024
3. Sam Towse

Untitled 2

Concrete, paint

170 x 205mm

2024
4. Olivia Chamberlain

Sequence 2

Acrylic on canvas, oak frame

340 x 275mm

2024
5. Olivia Chamberlain

Purple, orange wall painting

Acrylic on wall

1000 x 1400mm

2024
6. Sam Towse

Untitled 3

Concrete, paint

315 x 230mm

2024
7. Sam Towse

Untitled 4

Concrete, paint

350 x 410mm

2024
8. Sam Towse

Untitled 5

Concrete, paint

205 x 170mm

2024
9. Olivia Chamberlain

Sequence 3

Acrylic on canvas, oak frame

270 x 220mm

2024
10. Olivia Chamberlain

Yellow, orange, pink wall painting

Acrylic on wall

1400 x 1150mm

2024
11. Sam Towse

Untitled 6

Concrete, paint

275 x 345mm

2024
12. Sam Towse

Untitled 7

Concrete, paint

200 x 155mm

2024
13. Olivia Chamberlain

Sequence 4

Acrylic on canvas, oak frame

340 x 275mm

2024
14. Sam Towse

Untitled 8

Concrete, paint

200 x 165mm

2024
15. Olivia Chamberlain

Green, purple wall painting

Acrylic on wall

1500 x 950mm

2024
16. Sam Towse

Untitled 9

Concrete, paint

280 x 280mm

2024
17. Olivia Chamberlain

Sequence 5

Acrylic on canvas, oak frame

270 x 220mm

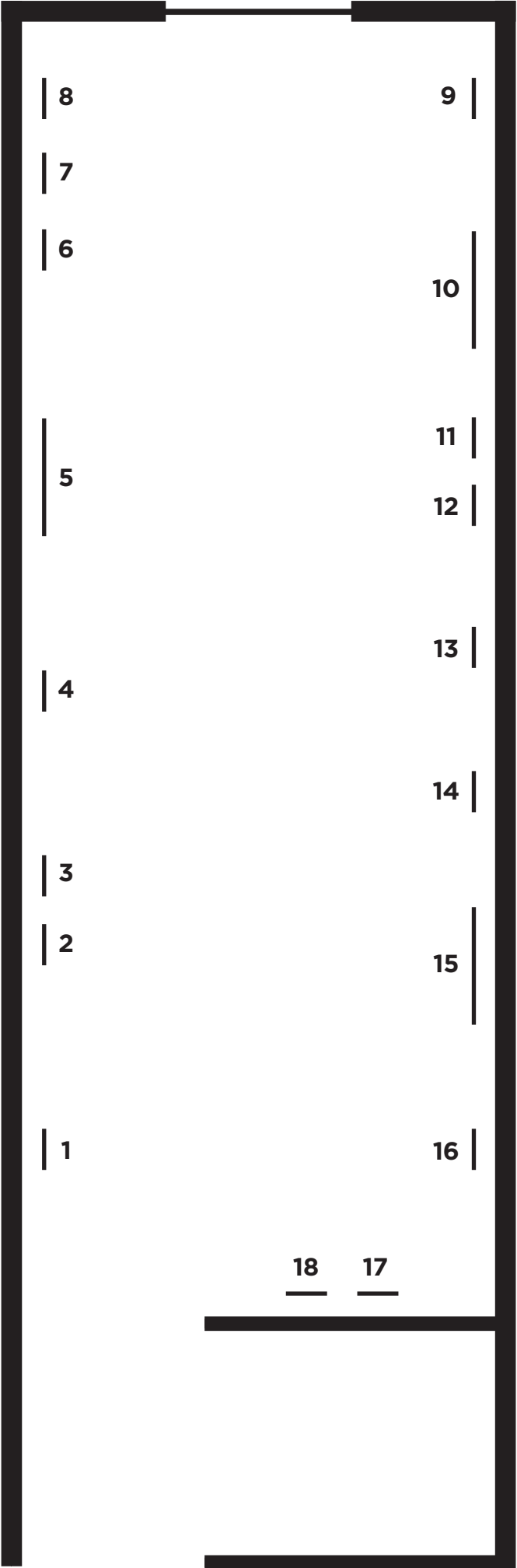
2024
18. Olivia Chamberlain

Sequence 6

Acrylic on canvas, oak frame

340 x 275mm

2024



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