

**Contemplating the Shape of Things, Women's Work to unveil new exhibition at Ellen Melville Centre in Tāmaki Makaurau ,**

Celebrating the unique and often unrepresented way of viewing the world, Women's Work's latest exhibition, **The Shape of Things**, comes exclusively to Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland), opening on Saturday 4th March 2023 at Ellen Melville Centre.

Featuring over 50 thought-provoking images, LED window displays, and panel discussions on the need for sharp, diverse and original work, The Shape of Things is a collaboration of over 30 professional female and non-binary photographers working hard to increase representation across the industry.

Now in its third year, Briar Pacey, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Pacey Productions Company, says the chance to showcase and celebrate photographic work over International Women's Day is crucial.

"As the photo industry changes and clients' purse strings tighten, there is a greater need to connect with people in considered and interesting ways. A very small percentage of the top advertising photographers I have worked with worldwide have been female. This opportunity helps our wāhine connect with the world, and gives the public a moment to ponder The Shape of Things for women in 2023."

Executive Creative Director of Ogilvy, Kristal Knight, says: "When choosing photographers for jobs, clients and agencies will often make the selections off portfolios that are categorised and limited by what the photographer has done in the past, not by what they are capable of doing.

There is a huge opportunity in breaking this convention and looking at what female photographers are capable of, that can be transferred to commercial work. That way we can all create fresher work and change the shape of the industry. The campaign we're working on to support Women's Work highlights this very notion, and challenges our ad-land audience to see what others can't!"

While improvements in diversity have been made across the industry, Equal Lens found that less than [25 percent](#) of commercial photographers represented by 70 of the world's largest leading agencies are female or non-binary. When Women's Work started work to highlight this, Aotearoa was sitting at 14%, and is slowly climbing with some way to go.

Coupled with the fact that women and non-binary photographers are earning, on average, [40% less](#) than their male counterparts, the collective behind Women's Work says we still have a long way to go.

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“While the industry might be ready for change, we still see a lack of diversity in campaigns and work across Aotearoa,” says Victoria Baldwin, Women’s Work Co-Founder, photographer and Executive Producer at Film Construction.

“This exhibition will highlight some of the roadblocks we face as women and non-binary photographers and will give everyone a chance to discuss how we can collectively work together to change the shape of things for a better and more creative future”, she adds.

This year, Women’s Work will also feature a new open category for female and non-binary photographers who are not yet able to call photography their sole profession yet. Selected work will be displayed on a Sony screen during the show with individuals also invited to attend the private opening ceremony, giving them a chance to celebrate and network with the Women’s Work Community.

A special thanks to all our supporters: AIPA (Advertising and Illustrative Photographers Association), Sony, Auckland Council, Ellen Melville Centre, Ogilvy, Omni Graphics, Pacey Production Company, and IDC (Image Driven Content).

### **Exhibition Details - Women’s Work | The Shape of Things**

Location: Pioneer Women’s Hall, Ellen Melville Centre

Cnr High St & Freyberg Place, Auckland 1010

Dates: Saturday 4th March 2023 - 12th March 2023

Times: Sat - Sun 10-5pm, Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm

Cost: Free

-ENDS-

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**Additional Information:**

Available Imagery

Please see [linked images](#), from exhibiting photographers Kate Grewal, Virginia Woolf, Saskia Koerner, Camilla Rutherford, Jodie James, Victoria Baldwin.

(JPEG 2,500 pixels on the long edge, 300 DPI, please advise if you require different specs).

Please note images are for the promotion of the Women's Work exhibition only, and not to be kept on file or used for any other purpose.

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Online:

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## **Additional Quotes from the Photographers**

### **Victoria Baldwin, Founder of Women's Work and Photographer, Executive Producer at Film Construction.**

Victoria Baldwin is a food and product photographer based in Auckland. A community leader in Aotearoa, Victoria is the founder of Women's Work, The Executive Producer for Stills at Film Construction, and a busy photographer in her own right.

"With the success of our inaugural show in 2020, I learned just how ready our industry is for change. We had so much support across the industry and have experienced much the same this year."

"I wanted to create something to bring everyone together. As women, we're taught to be competitive with each other, and the collective, we're all sole traders with our own businesses. Collaborating breaks down the barriers and helps us to support each other and lift each other up."

### **Virginia Woolf**

A natural creator since she was a child, Virginia studied photographic design and trained as a press photographer for a national newspaper honing her craft shooting people in all sorts of situations and from all walks of life, and since then has travelled the world seeking adventure - her commitment to tell stories through her lens photographing people, places, and capturing the stories she finds.

*Q. What is your biggest obstacle in achieving your next goals in our industry?*

The biggest obstacle is gender disparity/imbalance, and the effect of the white gaze also does not help being a woman of colour.

Examples of such shocking experiences include being told by a male creative that if he ever got married that he would hire me.

I've actually had someone question my name as they couldn't believe my surname was of non-Asian origin. I have a drive to work such personal projects centred on multiculturalism and NZ Chinese Identity.

As a female photographer there is always a constant challenge juggling family life as a mum and pursuing a career in photography which still remains a male dominated space, although attitudes are gradually improving and I've had clients comment on the differences they've seen when comparing me to prior male counterparts that they've worked with. Some of the comments are greater attention to detail, don't sexualise people, humility, gentle energy and kindness with quiet confidence that relaxes subjects, the steely technical expertise is underneath with people/person skills relating to subjects coming first.

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**Saskia Koerner**

Saskia Koerner is a commercial lifestyle and fashion photographer with a strong focus on women's social documentary photography, exploring women's empowerment. Having studied at Brooks Institute in California and worked in New York City for Mary Ellen Mark, she is currently based between Auckland and Aotea/Great Barrier Island where she is working on her 'Women Rise' project.

*Q. How does your identity as a woman impact your photographic work?*

Identifying as a female photographer my ultimate goal is to give voice to all women and other female photographers. Gender inequality in the visual arts is very strong still and I strive to help change that. I endeavor to create an environment for the women I photograph to express themselves in a safe space and get in touch with their own power and beauty. As a female photographer I feel I can encourage a totally different response from my female subjects compared to the male gaze because a level of comfort and ease that exists for women by women.

**Kate Grewal**

Kate Grewal is a commercial food, beverage, and product photographer. She is best known for her playful use of color in her textural and bold compositions.

*Q. What has changed in our industry in the past 5 years?*

I believe there has been a huge shift in our industry over the last 5 years from competition to community. There is much more transparency amongst photographers today. In an industry that used to be very guarded, today you'll find that we are now eachothers sounding boards and cheerleaders. It's very refreshing.

**Camilla Rutherford:**

I am a freelance photographer and director based down near Wanaka in the South Island, but I am originally from Scotland. I studied film and theatre at St Martins Collage of Art in London. I thrive on shooting outdoors, working with people to create emotive stories in natural environments.

*Q. How does your identity as a woman impact your photographic work?*

I believe being a female to be my super power that has helped me shape the work that I am now known for. As a female and a mother I feel like I can connect with people on a deeper level to gain their trust to be in front of my lens. I strive to make people feel comfortable, good about themselves to gain authentic imagery that is true to the story I am trying to tell. I love working with children, and being a mother of two young boys I understand how to engage with kids to earn their trust. To me it

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is all about connection and relationships, as with my work, if it is not believable how can I sell a genuine story?

On the flip side it has been a struggle to keep my name front of mind in the industry as I navigate being the primary care giver to our children as well as running my photography business. Any multi tasking female will tell you the juggle is real and ultimately the kids come first. I have struggled to keep my body in shape so I can be fit to carry gear on location, be it hike, bike or ski. I have suffered injuries as a result of neglecting to look after myself. But I believe that the powers of being a multi tasking mother, running a household and a business, I am able to take on anything, think on my feet and problem solve on the fly in any given situation. Everyday I strive to use my superpowers of being a female to my advantage.

### **Jodie James**

Based in Wanaka in the South Island, a former marketer, Jodie understands the power an expertly crafted visual has to move audiences into action. Down to earth, happy to go the extra mile, and full of unique insights gleaned from living and working around the globe,

Jodie works hand-in-hand with her clients to capture images that provoke emotions and create a connection between the viewer and the narrative behind the image.

*Q. What is your hope for the next generation of photographers?*

I hope that the next generation of photographers will have the confidence to develop their own sense of style & embrace their creativity to produce something that they love & not try and bend to what they think society (and instagram) is looking for. Shooting personal work allows photographers to push their own boundaries & likely fulfil the urge that got them into the creative industry in the first place. I love seeing new work that is different, that provokes some sort of emotion & is something I haven't seen before. I am hoping up & coming photographers will feel the confidence & freedom to create a little more than what I feel the current state of the industry is due to a combination of self doubt & social pressure.

*END of additional information*

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