

The NETS Victoria Board of Management and curator Vikki McInnes warmly invite you to the opening of

EREWHON

A NETS VICTORIA TOURING EXHIBITION



BROOK ANDREW | MIKALA DWYER AND JUSTENE WILLIAMS | TONY GARIFALAKIS | CLAIRE LAMBE | CLARE MILLEDGE |

Iconoclastic English author Samuel Butler wrote his celebrated satirical novel *Erewhon* in 1872, a time when industrialisation and rapid population growth were redefining public and social structures, while the theories of Charles Darwin, Karl Marx and others were challenging traditional orthodoxies. It remains significant both for its prescience in anticipating future sociological trends as well as its acute protest against blind adherence to dominant ideas and attitudes. Set in an eponymous imaginary land – though one that closely resembled the Canterbury plains of New Zealand where its author lived as a young man – the story

provided a philosophical exploration of various aspects of Victorian society, most notably the judicial system, religion, education and science. For example, according to Erewhonian law, offenders were treated as if they were ill, whereas ill people were looked upon as criminals. Another feature of Erewhon was the absence of machines due to the widely shared belief by the Erewhonians that they were potentially dangerous. These ideas – among others, including the effects of colonisation, technological progress, the impossibility of utopias, discipline and control – form both the thesis and the point of departure for the exhibition *Erewhon*.

Thursday 1 September 5.30PM – 7.30PM | MARGARET LAWRENCE GALLERY

Victorian College of the Arts | University of Melbourne | 40 Dodds Street | Southbank Victoria 3006 | T: +613 9035 9400 | E: ml-gallery@unimelb.edu.au

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Clare Milledge, *The Bisionity of Self*, 2016
Mini scaffolding, various textiles, Klean Klay, ink,
horsehair, beeswax, cardboard, glass bottle.
Photograph: Zan Wimberley.
Courtesy The Commercial, Sydney