EREWHON
A NETS VICTORIA TOURING EXHIBITION

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

This exhibition has been developed by National Exhibitions Touring Support (NETS) Victoria and will tour Victoria throughout 2017–2018. NETS Victoria is supported by the Victorian Government through Arts Victoria and the Community Support Fund, by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, and through the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments.