

Photography

Two prestigious photography festivals hit Auckland this month, both baring an LGBT+ edge. Oliver Hall talks to commissioned Kiwi artist Alex Plumb.

The Auckland festival of photography is a city-wide contemporary art and cultural event which takes place within Auckland's major galleries: non-gallery spaces and public sites during June each year. The programme includes a mix of emerging and established artists and comprises existing works and the creation of new work.

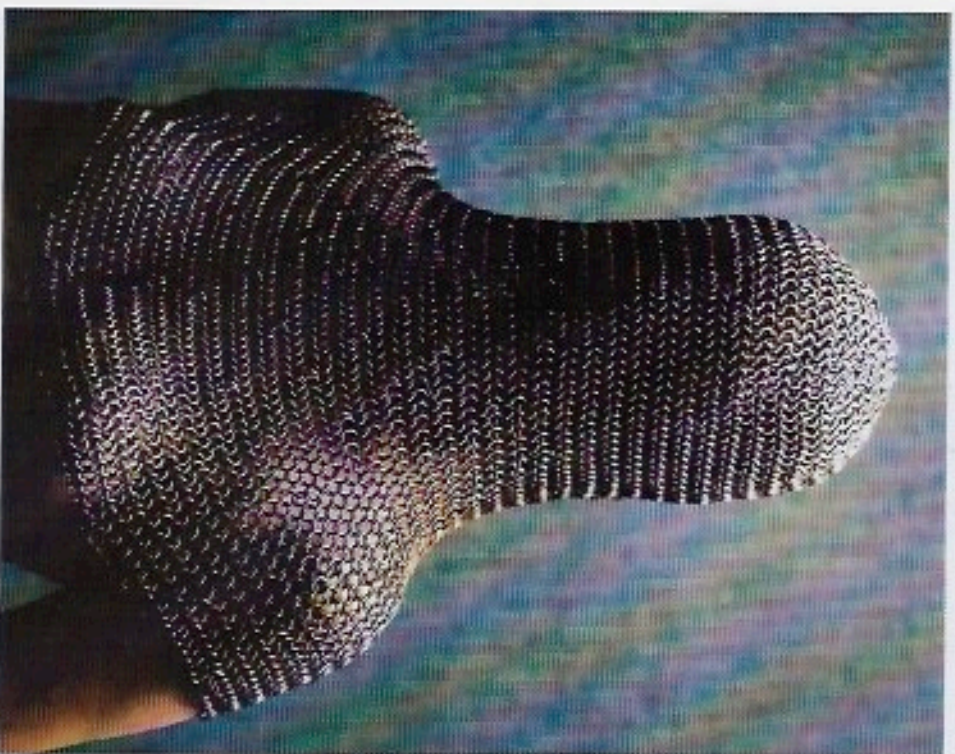
The 2018 festival features the 8th Annual Commission, where an Auckland-based artist is hired to create a new body of work. This year's commissioned artist, Alex Plumb, specialises in multi-channel videos that attempt to amplify questions about the psychological interplay between the subject, the viewer and the site of performance. He graduated with a Master of Art & Design in 2014 from AUT University. His work is held in collections including The James Wallace Arts Trust.

'For the Baker Douglas commission, I made a short art film set in a suburban house in NZ and centered around one Latin American family. The short visual narrative is told through the perspective of the grandmother. I filmed it in Auckland over three weekends,' he tells express. 'The work deals with notions of otherness and subconscious desire and it's part of an ongoing investigation with groups of people and their environments.'

'I place my characters against seemingly ordinary yet heightened everyday landscapes in the hopes of slowly drawing out the emotional and psychological relationships they have to their environments. Arrangity is key in my work as it allows the characters and the narrative to stay open, presenting only a slice of these worlds: a moment in time. In a way that's what these moments and scenes are — moments of suspension, where the characters appear

vulnerable and exposed to face their own intention. And in doing so I hope they become a provocation for the viewer, an opportunity to be confronted by their own inner space.'

The concept of his work seems to reflect Alex's life as he tells express that growing gay, he always felt like an outsider. 'At first it was dealing with the



The Veil of the Soul

PHOTO | CONOR CLARKE



Alex Plumb



Elena Better (2018)

PHOTO | ALEX PLUMB