

PICTURES THEY WANT TO MAKE — RECENT AUCKLAND PHOTOGRAPHY

By Chris Corson-Scott and Edward Hanfling

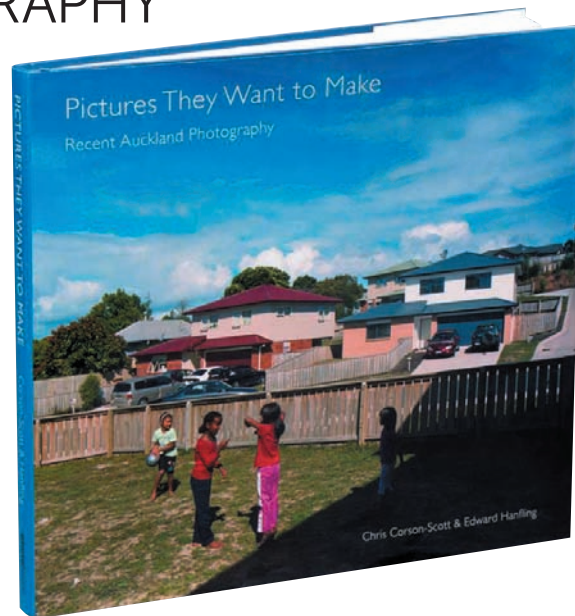
Photo books covering a range of artists are fairly rare in New Zealand, as are publications that actually use the format well. To have a new release that does both makes *Pictures They Want to Make* an exceptional treat indeed.

Those who made it to Northcote's Northart Gallery during the Auckland photo fest will have experienced a taste of what the book has to offer in an exhibition of the same name. What the exhibition hinted at the publication reveals in, a diversity and richness of talent collectively given the attention it deserves but is so often deprived of.

The book canvases 12 artists either from, or influenced in some way by, Auckland. The mix eschews the boundaries of age, influence or career trajectory — the average targeted reader will likely be familiar with some of the artists here, recognize the names of others and be meeting the rest for the first time. Even where the featured artist is well known, the work presented may be less so, and even previously unseen, which imbues the pages with the quiet excitement of discovery.

One thing that unites every photographer exhibited in *Pictures They Want to Make* is a conscientious appreciation for the space photography occupies (or should occupy) as art. Varied as they may be, every series here demands more from the viewer than a simple appreciation of aesthetic or technique, though readers with a lust for such will certainly get their fill. Instead they prompt questions about what's behind the making, rather than taking, of an image, which seems to be the authors' central motivation.

Each of the featured artists (among them Harvey Bengé, Derek Henderson and Geoffrey H Short) gets a brief but pointed one-page introduction before launching into a series of contemporary, complex



images engaging the ongoing 'art photography' discourse, flavoured by their place in the world. That the place happens to be Auckland makes things all the more rewarding to those familiar with the city.

Pictures They Want to Make is a sterling example of how a collective photo book might be put together, one that will hopefully inspire many more of similar kind. Around here we sure could use them.

PhotoForum, **\$59.95**

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