

WHERE THE SEABIRDS GO - Overwintering Project 2021

Estuary Art Centre Exhibition

Artist: Ursula Christel

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Artist Statement:

Interconnectedness, environmental concerns, social cohesion and inclusion are topics that strongly influence my concepts and creative output. I work mostly as a social practice artist - addressing these topics through research, networking and collaborations; using art to help foster an understanding of each other and of our environment.

Artwork

Title: Winds of Change 2021

Media: repurposed metal bird-cage section, hand-made paper, lino print with water-soluble ink, movable magnetic letters, metal clips

Size: (approx.) 43cm x 50cm

One of the impacts of climate change is that ocean currents are shifting and weather patterns are becoming less predictable, with an increase in the incidence of hurricanes and storms.

Bar-tailed Godwits/Kuaka are migratory shorebirds, arriving in NZ every September after their March breeding season in western Alaska. Undergoing this trip as a non-stop 8-9 days flight, juveniles arrive after their first trans-Pacific flight when barely four months old. The role of wind in these long-distance migrations is paramount to their survival because they time their migration departures with weather conditions that provide essential tailwinds.

This incredible Arctic migrant is now a declining native in NZ, facing 4 major challenges – shifting wind patterns, declining breeding sites and food supplies (due to human activity and climate change), as well as predation.

Winds of Change 2021, points to the fragility and instability of our natural environment today. It is now a race for survival for all species, including humans - and the clock is ticking. Can we reverse this to regain some order and balance?