

Graduate Women New Zealand

June 22, 2019

Tēnā koe,

I am writing in thanks for the honour of being awarded the 2019 GWNZ Postgraduate Fellowship. The support of the Graduate Women New Zealand Charitable Trust has been an astonishing, vindicating, and empowering vote of confidence, and has made it possible for me to pursue a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing at The New School, New York City.

With the support of the first installment of the GWNZ Postgraduate Fellowship, I have completed the first year of my MFA. In that time, the courses, scholars, peers, and academic resources I have encountered here have radically extended my practice. For instance, taking a class with oral historian Suzanne Snider introduced me to a discipline in which narrative tools—listening, performance, reiteration—can be used to address and heal trauma. My research with Professor Snider resulted in “Party Line,” my installation currently on display in the exhibition *Wax Tablet* at Te Tuhi Gallery, Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. Combining the collaborative methodology of oral history with the interactive design of contemporary art, “Party Line” uses the interview format to respond to the legacy of medical malpractice at National Women’s Hospital (exposed by the 1987 investigative report “An Unfortunate Experiment” by Phillida Bunkle and Sandra Coney).

Other revelations have included my study with poet Camille Rankine, whose class on counter-narratives has given me a framework for interrogating my own position within contemporary poetry; a generous and diverse reading community forged in the close-knit workshops led by poet Mark Bibbins; and the opportunity to merge my academic, literary, and fine art research practices under the guidance of interdisciplinary scholars like hybrid text pioneer Shelley Jackson and curator and professor of visual culture Radhika Subramaniam. Studying in at The New School has also paved the way for immensely rewarding professional learning opportunities: alongside working as an editor at the publishing platform and intellectual commons *Public Seminar*, I am completing an editorial fellowship *Poets & Writers Magazine*. Both positions have honed my skills and confidence, and enormously expanded my insight into the publishing industry.

With the continuing support of the GWNZ Postgraduate Fellowship, I will be able to use my time at The New School to complete and publish a full-length poetry collection, draft of a hybrid prose manuscript, and have a new body of work underway. As I pursue conventional publishing, I will continue to explore alternative methods of presenting text through collaborative and interactive art work. This summer, I look forward to starting work on the Public Seminar podcast, *Exiles on 12<sup>th</sup> Street*—another opportunity to combine research, text, performance, and collaboration to foster political engagement and community.

The generosity of the Graduate Women New Zealand Charitable Trust makes my study at The New School possible—so granting me the opportunity to work to the upmost limits of my abilities, potential, and ambition, and allowing me to develop skills, research, and a body of work I will be proud to bring home to Aotearoa New Zealand.

Thank you.

Yours, with gratitude,



Evangeline Riddiford Graham