

# Punching, stalking, listening, fighting, twitching\*

What does it mean to be human? Is it our ability to walk on two legs, to converse with one another, to feel emotion, or is being human more of a cellular experience? Perhaps it is our many millions of microscopic cells held together by membranes that contain millions of years of evolution, jiggling and vibrating between one and other giving us life.

Nicola Farquhar's paintings make these tiny containers of life visible, pushing us to consider the way in which our bodies come together. Are we simply a combination of arms, legs and organs, or are we enormous vessels brimming with microscopic colour, texture, shape and form? How do we see bodies? Can we fluidly move between the physical and the imagined body? In many ways we are not as whole as we think, but more a multiplicity of random pieces: the lower legs on one surface, the face on another.\*\*

While her paintings may reveal a hierarchy of shapes that resemble a human form or abstracted portrait, the works also challenge this established hierarchy. Moving through the exhibition from painting to painting reveals a critique of structure, as layers of abstract shapes, colours and textures dance across her canvases, personifying but also celebrating the seemingly alien organisms that live within us and make us human.

Within this exhibition there is also a nod to the passage of time, as Farquhar's works are infused with a sense that time is running out. It has long been understood that these tiny elements that have formed us will continue moving towards an unknown future, billions of years beyond our conscious thoughts, movements and emotions. But the expectation that cellular structures will continue to strengthen, to reform and to rebuild must be adjusted, as we start to think about the survival of our bodies during this ongoing climate crisis.

Being human is about the survival of all of these things, and how we as humans can come together like cells do, to recreate and rebuild our future. We must punch, stalk, listen, fight and twitch our way towards a more fluid existence in this world, sooner rather than later.

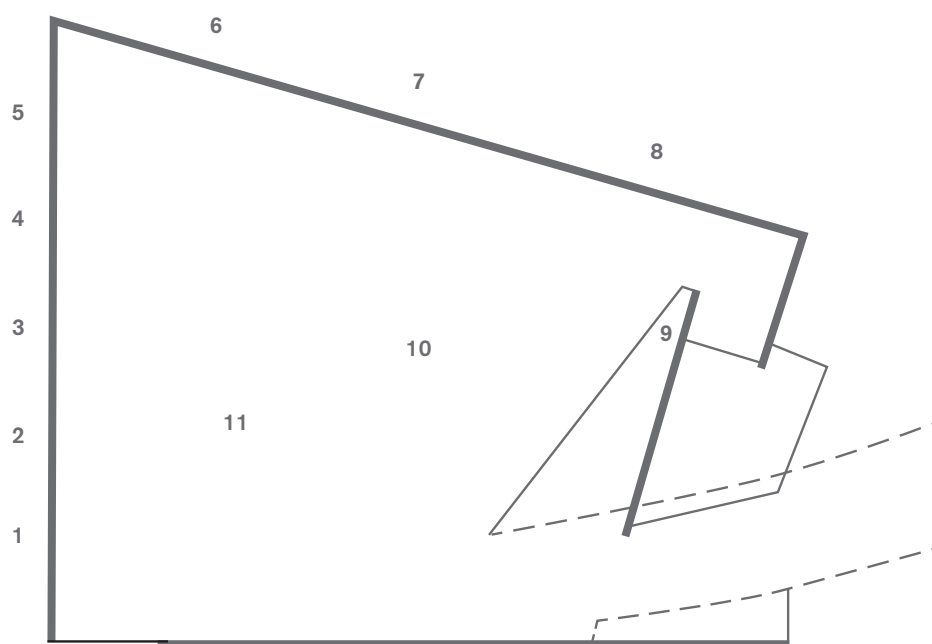
**Chloe Geoghegan**  
Curator | Kaitiaki Wakaaturanga

\* Lidija Haas on 'The hallucinatory realism of Rachel Ingalls' in *New Yorker Magazine*, February 25, 2019.

\*\* Caroline Busta, 'Body Doubles' in *Art and Subjecthood, The Return of the Human Figure in Semiocapitalism* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2011), 40.

# Nicola Farquhar: *Listening, twitching*

22 February – 17 May 2020



Clockwise from left:

*I.W.* 2020  
oil and acrylic on linen,  
500x500mm

*O.O.* 2020  
oil and acrylic on linen,  
500x500mm

*O.V.* 2019  
oil and acrylic on linen,  
500x500mm

*W.W.* 2020  
oil and acrylic on linen,  
500x500mm

*W.I.* 2019  
oil and acrylic on linen,  
500x500mm

*Joi*, 2020  
oil and acrylic on linen,  
1200x1200mm

*Ray-Jeh*, 2019  
oil and acrylic on linen,  
1000x1000mm

*Fayr*, 2020  
oil and acrylic on linen,  
900x900mm

*Hoop*, 2019  
oil on linen, 300x250mm

*Group therapy*, 2020  
plaster, pigment  
and paper mache,  
880x450x430mm

*Her soul yearned out of  
her eyeballs*, 2020  
plaster, paper, paper  
clay, pigment and linen,  
470x690x690mm

*Peachthief*, 2019  
oil and acrylic on linen,  
1000x900mm  
*on display in gallery reception*