

# Natasha Matila-Smith

“As a shy person, my work arises from a sincere desire to connect with people and a frustration that I often can’t achieve this using whatever “social” tools I already possess. Through art, I am able to communicate this with an audience and have found that many people share my feelings of inadequacy and failure. As a title, I Think You Like Me, But I’ve Been Wrong About These Things Before perfectly encapsulates this contemporary condition of second guessing oneself whilst acknowledging the wider societal influences that cause us to doubt our own decision making. I’m beyond grateful to Artspace Aotearoa for providing me with the space to have these conversations and to introduce these ideas to a wider audience.”

Natasha Matila-Smith’s art practice interrogates the territory of online intimacy, through an exploration of the multitude of relationships implicated with digital spaces. Her work uses the vernacular of these spaces by combining text and imagery to present confessional statements that range from indifferent revelations to declarations of her innermost desires. In contrast to a tone of vulnerability, is a dead-pan humour and shrewd exploitation of online tropes. Matila-Smith’s manipulation of these online tropes and memes, duplicitous tactics of scripting and performativity are employed to devise entirely new personas of herself. At the core of Matila-Smith’s practice is the assertion that just like our offline spaces, our online-selves are contested. They are subject to the same pressures and systemic biases of race, capital, and gender. Moreover, these digital spaces reinforce those often-unchallenged societal demands of late-stage capitalism to be above all else, productive citizens.

Natasha Matila-Smith is an arts practitioner who lives and works in Tāmaki Makaurau. She graduated with a Master of Fine Arts degree in 2014 from Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland. Her practice modus operandi is through confessional text-based works that explore her personal experiences of loneliness and discomfort in the world, at the same time how they relate to larger socio-political structures. While Matila-Smith makes it known the works stem from an earnest desire to connect with others, her work is both ingenuous expressions of wistfulness and deadpan humour.

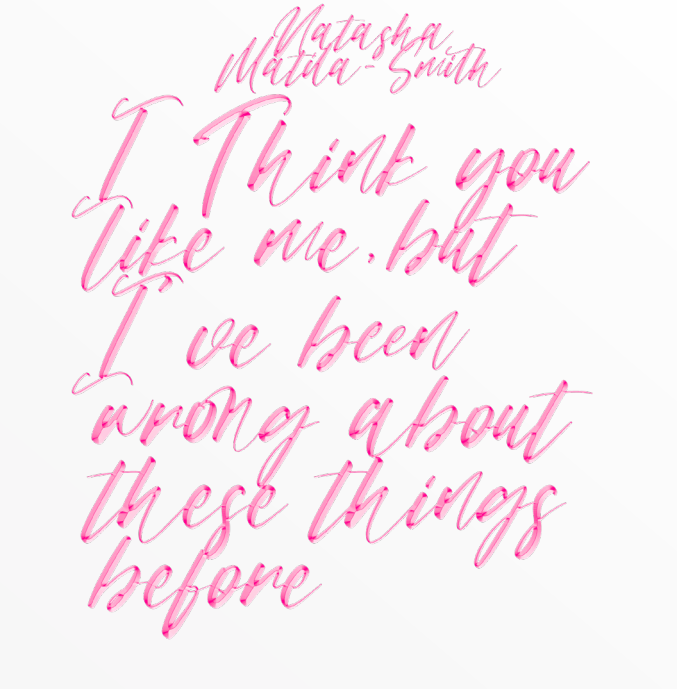
# Alice Sparrow

Alice Sparrow is a recent graduate of AUT in visual art and works across installation, painting, sculpture and sound. As a former registered Nurse, central to her practice is art’s ability to heal from multiple angles, with a heavy interest in colour; it’s language and spiritual qualities with a nod to the saturated joyful colours of the everyday. Often incorporating volcanic rock into live music performances, Alice is also very interested in the relationship between improvisation in sound and how this enriches visual art. Originally from Christchurch, Alice lives and works in Tamaki Makaurau.

Supported by:  
Creative New Zealand

Artspace Aotearoa  
292 Karangahape Road  
Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland, 1010  
Aotearoa New Zealand

# Artspace Aotearoa



Natasha Matila-Smith  
24 February - 1 May 2021  
Designed and produced by Georgina Brett and Tyson Campbell.

Artspace Aotearoa is delighted to present *I Think You Like Me, But I've Been Wrong About These Things Before*, the first major solo show by Tāmaki Makaurau based artist Natasha Matila-Smith, an exhibition installation in which the gallery presents itself as a sort of meta-space, through the intentional employment of obvious conceptual metaphors connected to the bedroom. The gallery exists as a parallel universe of the artist’s bedroom. A space in which for the artist, exists as both a psychological extension and material manifestation of her empirical reality with romance, sexual intimacy, and social anxiety.

Matila-Smith’s work, which is unsurprisingly conceived and fansided in her own bedroom, comprises short-form prose, audiovisual components and romantic iconography. However, the personal is only ever offered in the form of ambivalent declarations and anonymous imagery.

This body of work is informed by what Matila-Smith describes as monotonous hours scrolling through the internet while laying in her bed. An act symptomatic of the artist’s ongoing experience with ennui and restlessness, and her interest in a generational hedonistic condition (generally attributed to millennials), the pursuit for self-fulfilled desire, and self-deprecation attained via online platforms; online spaces become public virtual mirrors to externalise the private self into the world.

*I Think You Like Me, But I've Been Wrong About These Things Before*, interrogates states of melancholy and despair as a consequence of the failure to achieve self fulfillment. Moreover, it considers whether or not Matila-Smith’s feelings are personal or innate. That is, are her feelings of inadequacy in fact a distinctly contemporary circumstance, a personal struggle, or are they connected to something more akin to ‘the human condition’?

## Public Programme

*Soft Opening and Blessing*  
Wednesday 24 February 2021  
11am

*Opening Celebration*  
Friday 5 March 2021  
6pm - 8pm

*Sad Girls*  
Friday 12 March 2021  
7pm - 9pm

*Paloma and The Doof Death Puppet Show*  
Thursday 25 March 2021  
7pm - 8.30pm

*Curatorial Panel in Conversation*  
Thursday 22 April 2021  
7pm - 9pm

Special thanks to: The dedicated group of Artspace Aotearoa Supporters and Members, Tayla-Rose Campbell, Luke Boyle, Becky Hemus, Felix Henning-Tapley, Shannon Hoole, Sophia Laurie, Victoria McAdams, Ivan Mrsic, 'Uhila Moe Langi Kanongata’a Nai, Alice Sparrow, Luc Verstraeten, Benedict Quilter, Makeshop, Phantom, Protel, Signwise Auckland.

The Artspace Aotearoa Team: Geneva Alexander-Marsters, Georgina Brett, Tyson Campbell, Remco de Blaaij and Meijing He.

Core Funders: Creative New Zealand, Foundation North and Auckland Council.

## Artspace Aotearoa

292 Karangahape Road  
Tāmaki Makaurau  
Aotearoa New Zealand

Natasha  
Matila-Smith

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Natasha Matila-Smith

20 February – 01 May 2021  
Opening Friday 19 February 2021

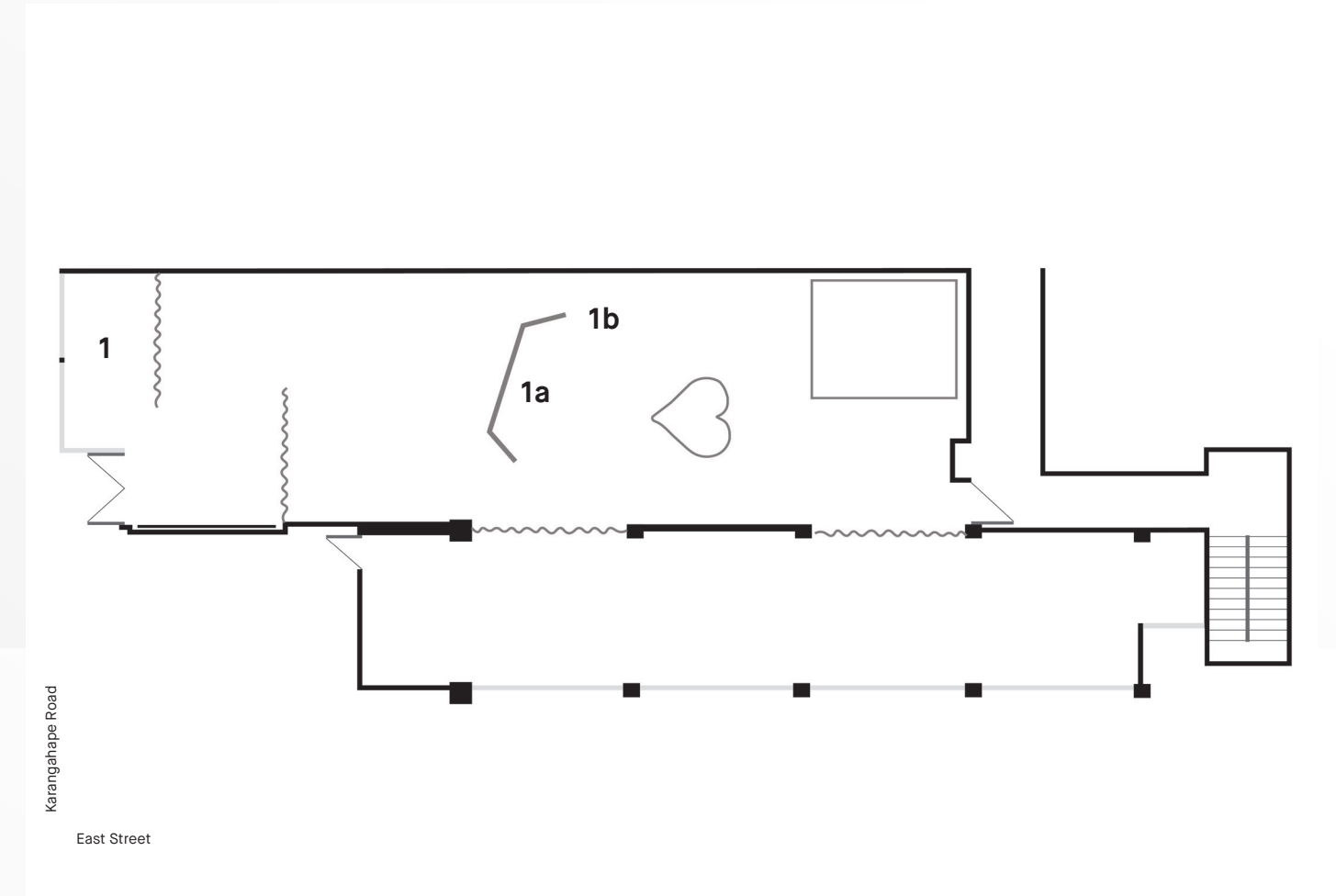
*I Think You Like Me, But I've Been  
Wrong About These Things Before*

[artspace-aotearoa.nz](http://artspace-aotearoa.nz)



## Gallery Map

### Ground Floor



[1]

*I Think You Like Me, But I've  
Been Wrong About These Things  
Before.*

Installation:

Digital Posters, acrylic paint,  
custom made PVC curtains,  
artist's own blanket, K-mart faux  
plushie, coloured gels, digital  
projection, text, tinted vinyl,  
custom MDF heart bed, laptop,  
marker, tape and paper

[1a]

*I'm tired of doing things on my  
own*

Natasha Matila-Smith  
Video 8.01 mins 2021

[1b]

*Love on a blue planet*  
Alice Sparrow  
11.36min, audio.