

LINK UP

From single letters to catch phrases, makers are using text to tell emotive stories, says **Lee Suckling**.

SHE'S GOT LEGS

Auckland, New Zealand

The Trestle Leg Series (right), which was designed in 2009 by Catherine Griffiths, and built in 2012, is featured on eight sequential columns beneath the Auckland Harbour Bridge. The work was commissioned by the New Zealand Transport Agency. Griffiths took selected works by Kiwi writers and poets such as Janet Frame and Bruce Mason, and a korero by a local Māori chief, and rendered them onto the steel structures by painting with the aid of a template.

“The extracts of prose wrap around two faces, while the poetry reaches around the four faces of the tapered steel columns,” says Griffiths. “The shape and form of each requires the reader to move with the work, spend time with the words, the sounds they make, meanings that are formed.”

After the project had begun, Griffiths learned the particular set of columns on which the words would be placed was known as the “eastern trestle legs of the west box girder. [It’s] a mouthful of words, hence the title of the work,” she says.

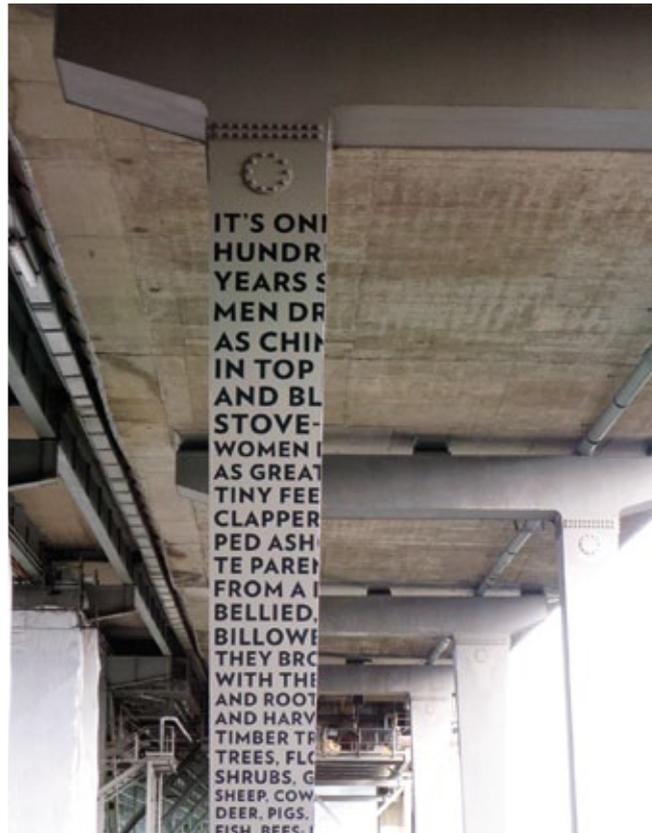
catherinegriffiths.co.nz

PILLOW TALK

London, United Kingdom

Whimsical typography is the M.O. for Swedish-born, London-based illustrator Karin Åkesson. “I am my own customer and I make things I like for myself,” she says, noting her range of textiles, from which each product includes screen-printed truisms. Hand-printed are phrases such as “Onward and upward” and “Behind the clouds, the sun is shining”.

“When I first came to England, I loved how English phrases and sayings made me feel more part of the English culture,” says Åkesson, who studied at Brighton University. “Some might be cheesy and overly wise... [but] a lot of



people have said clever things and I love highlighting them and bringing the optimism into the home.” For her white cotton pillowcase set (bottom left), which is available online, Åkesson used classic British expressions, including “I fancy you”.

“The inspiration behind this project was to create uplifting designs to make you smile when you wake up – or go to bed,” she says.

karinakesson.com

‘A’ BOMB

Auckland, New Zealand

A 10-channel video installation featuring three-metre-high letters comes to New Zealand in March (9 March – 14 July) at Te Tuhi Centre for the Arts in Pakuranga. *Destroyed Word*, by Spanish artist Santiago Sierra, is brought to Auckland Arts Festival by Te Tuhi, which was commissioned to create – and then destroy – an Arial Narrow Bold letter for the camera.

“Each [of the 10] letters was constructed out of a primary product or material significant to the economy of each location,” says Te Tuhi’s Bruce E Phillips. “Te Tuhi used 200 litres of milk in the creation of our letter, and over 500 rounds of ammunition in its destruction.”

Cameraman Ian Powell filmed Te Tuhi’s process (left) for Sierra, curator of the combined works that focus on themes of social, economic, and political power systems.

“Sierra’s current body of work features monumentally constructed words that, through their literal meaning and materialisation, resonate with the harsh economic realities of global capitalism,” says Phillips. “United as a multichannel video installation, the letters spell a word referencing the demise of the global economy.”

www.tetuhi.org.nz