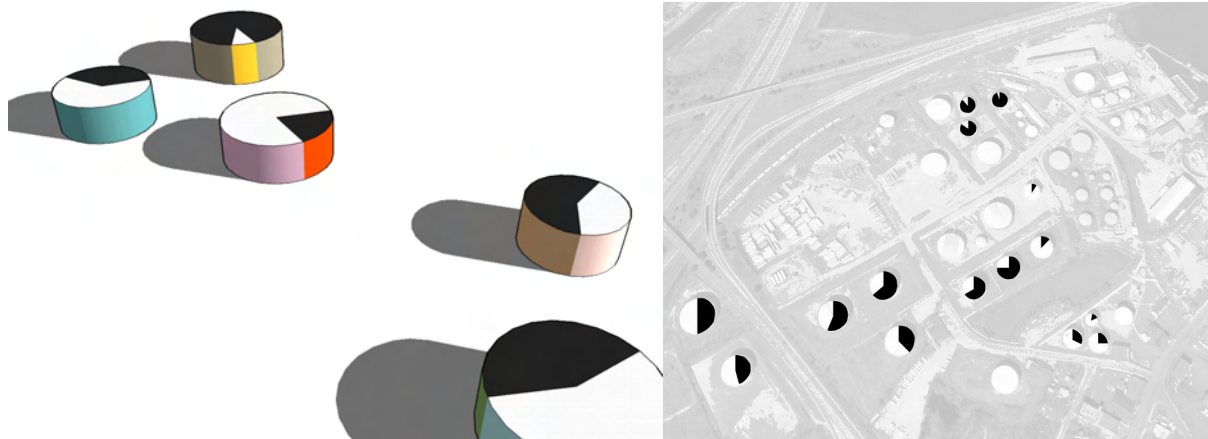


ARTIST STATEMENT: *The 16-Hour Day*

The first impression of this large industrial site inhabited by oil tanks is one of familiarity; Auckland New Zealand has got its own tank farm and I've always enjoyed driving, cycling through this big space as if being inside an oversized De Chirico painting. It is a visually powerful landscape and strangely compelling, but not necessarily an aesthetic that everyone shares.

When asked to participate in this competition I asked myself what could change the perception and the experience of what many see as a series of 'ugly' industrial buildings in varying degrees of 'boring' whites and greys inhabiting a large urban site that potentially could have a far better use. The approach to this project is guided by a number of concerns, thoughts and ideas.

1. Concept of *The 16-Hour Day*: cram more hours in the working day



The request for all tops of the 16 tanks to be painted made me wonder how I could link them all and make them visually clearly readable from the air, yet different from each other. This consideration combined with viewing the oil industry as a symbol that fuels our ambitious consumer society created the idea of 'the 16-hour day'. Can we cram more hours in the day? At the same time asking the unavoidable question of whether we are forcing nature by squeezing too many reserves from the planet. The face of the clock can be read as a reflection of the 16 hours but also as a gauge for the tank or our reserves as a whole: are they being used with care or are we just running them dry? Is man's desire to control without regard still dominant, or are we learning from nature in order for us to read the cup as half full instead of half empty?

2. Celebration of Form and Colour as Transformer

Rather than transforming the tanks into something they are not, I propose to use the intrinsically beautiful abstract form of the cylinders as a starting point and a canvas for a three dimensional interactive play of colours, with a maximum of two colours per cylinder (the singular forms of the cylinders relating to each other and needing each other for the concept to work) It will create a strong urban environment where the effect and power of colour is experienced because of its scale. The proposal conceives of possible future addition of more tanks, the experience will become richer and more engaging as more tanks can participate. It is a big site which needs a big simple but strong overarching approach.

Driving past or through the site now will make your eye aware of all the subtle complexities of colour behaviour particular for these local weather and ever changing light conditions at the same time modifying the way you perceive the oil tank as a generic industrial object; one colour might affirm the materiality of the tank, another might dematerialise it as it merges with the sky behind, adding an element of poetry. The desire to create a platform for the observation and experience of colour in this specific location could not have been met by a more appropriate site and the tanks which inhabit it.



3. Sharing Control of the Creative Process

The practical requirement of painting this large number of storage tanks, which would involve many people, combined with the fact that I am an outsider suggested the possibility to work with the painters and possibly other people who are closely related to the project. I propose running a workshop whereby they have a real say into the colours chosen for the project. It seems to me that local knowledge (of site, context and weather patterns) could have a real impact on the colours chosen. The atmosphere that different colours carry varies enormously. Also the juxtaposition of the different colours on the tanks sitting next to each other can create a different reading depending on the choice made. Having worked with architectural students for many years, I do appreciate the benefit and sense of involvement that comes with working with a team. Being an immigrant myself, (from the Netherlands to New Zealand) I feel more comfortable getting to know the people in the new environment by working with them, thus acquiring a level of trust and understanding for the project, it's locale and each other.

4. How pedestrians, cyclists, vehicular passengers, boaters, and plane passengers will view the proposal

The proposal is based on the idea that the viewer is moving and the tanks are static (whether they are any of the viewers mentioned above). The different colours on the individual tanks will come into view or move out of view as the viewer moves.

The **viewer on the ground/water** will experience the surface of the cylinders as a subtle interplay of colours (most of the colours on the colour chart are fairly muted) with possible accents of stronger colour. Even although the viewer on the ground/water can't see the tops of the tanks, the width of the smaller colour band on the side of the tank will reveal its connection with the top and its degree of fullness or emptiness.

The **viewer from the air** will get an added experience and different reading of the work. The graphically strong black (or bronzetone on the colour chart) and white composition of the hour face/gauge on the tops of the tanks will allow for clear reading from an aeroplane and will create an interesting and intriguing contrast to the colourful experience on the ground.

There is more to the work than meets the eye. The composition of the tops reveals the composition on the sides of the cylinders. Also reading colours from a long distance and in dramatically different seasonal weather conditions will create a different experience for the air traveller. Lastly, only from this position can the tops and the sides of the cylinders be seen at the same time.

5. How the proposal will wear comfortably with the everyday experience of residents, and have impact on one-time visitors

The presence of the work gains its interest from the symphony the colours create together and the conditions in which you experience them. This will be subtly different depending on the time of day, whether the sun is rising or setting, whether it is raining or snowing and how it is lit at night. Driving past it everyday, flying over it or just visiting once, will add a visual experience you will not have had before. The everyday visitor's eye will start to notice the subtle changes and will have a depth of experience and appreciation that only comes with time.

6. How the proposal will be viewed in different seasons, in different weather and in various lighting conditions

Because of its abstract nature, (basic composition of 2 colour fields per tank) the work absorbs and reflects site specific conditions much more readily than lets say an approach of a more representational nature. As I mentioned above, varying seasons and their inherent changing light qualities will vary dramatically; this will give the work magical interest in the short and the long term.



Artificially lighting the work at night will add a whole new and dynamic dimension. It would give the site an imaginative quality quite different from the natural light conditions during the day. It would convey a different energy and life.

One could think of projecting moving images onto the coloured surface but my personal appreciation of a tank farm is that there is a kind of quiet beauty, the way the cylinders all stand so orderly and so still. They have a neutral quality contrasting significantly with our visually overloaded lives.

7. Keeping it simple

A driving force for the design and the concept was the awareness that someone had to get up the metaphoric ladder and paint it and then maintain it. Limiting the colours to two for the tops and two for the vertical face I trust it will be easy to apply without losing the integrity of the design.

8. Following the colour guidelines and keeping shading to a minimum

No shading will be required. The colours will be applied as a solid colour fields. The colour chart is extensive enough to have some accents of stronger/brighter colours and bigger areas in slightly more subtle tones.

