



## Meg Porteous

*The gift*

28 Sep – 25 Oct 2020

Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland

[thegiftimage.com](http://thegiftimage.com)

*The gift* is a new photographic work by Meg Porteous, displayed on three digital billboards in central Auckland from 28 September – 25 October 2020.

*The gift* is a series of fifteen images that co-opt the languages of stock photography and public space. Stock photographs are designed with amorphous intent: they are loose symbolic arrangements applicable to a wide range of commercial uses. They use pantomime and symbolism to illustrate simple questions or concepts. For stock photographers, the market dictates that they produce generalised images.

Online stock photography markets are ordered by “tags”. Tags can be content specific: for example, ‘woman eating salad’, ‘baby crawling’, or ‘men laughing’. Image tags can also be conceptual: ‘teamwork’, ‘banking’, ‘frustration’. The more unremarkable a stock image is, the more tags it will be assigned, and the higher chance it will be circulated. Because the same image cannot be used more than once in a given market, stock image marketplaces are flooded with ceaseless, superficial rearrangements of similar themes.

*The gift* aims to subtly disrupt the relentless flow of advertising and media typically displayed on digital billboards. Without text or any contextual information Porteous’s images speak from within a proliferated image economy, prompting us to consider its effects on us and the shared spaces we inhabit. *The gift* explores what makes images profitable and the dynamics of ‘stock’ at play in visual culture at large.

*The gift* can be viewed on digital billboards at:

27 Beach Rd, Auckland CBD, 1010  
114 Newton Rd, Eden Terrace, 1010  
319 New North Rd, Kingsland, 1021

The project is also available to view at [thegiftimage.com](http://thegiftimage.com) via livestream.

Meg Porteous (1991, Christchurch) lives and works in Auckland. Porteous’s practice explores common tropes within the traditions of photography to question the agency, authority and authenticity one has over one’s image. She gained her BFA (Photography) from Canterbury University Ilam School of Fine Arts, Christchurch, and has recently completed an MFA at Elam School of Fine Arts, Auckland. Porteous is the 2020 recipient of the Govett-Brewster, *In Residence*. Recent exhibitions include: *junction*, Neo Gracie, Auckland (2020), *Uncomfortable Silence*, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetū (2020), *Tears in Rain*, Hopkinson Mossman (2019), *Ἀλγος*, Mercy Pictures, Auckland (2019); *Tilt*, Hopkinson Mossman, Wellington (2018); *Departure Melody*, Parlour Projects (2017), *Sight, Unseen*, In Situ, Christchurch, (2017), *Ectoplasm*, Green Street Projects, Wellington (2017); *Apparatus*, Parlour Projects (2016); and Shiro Oni Studio (2016).

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