

# Planet Obsolescence



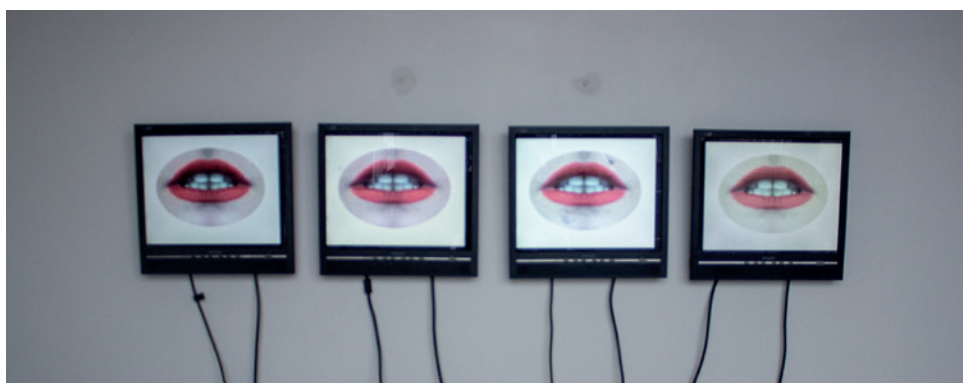
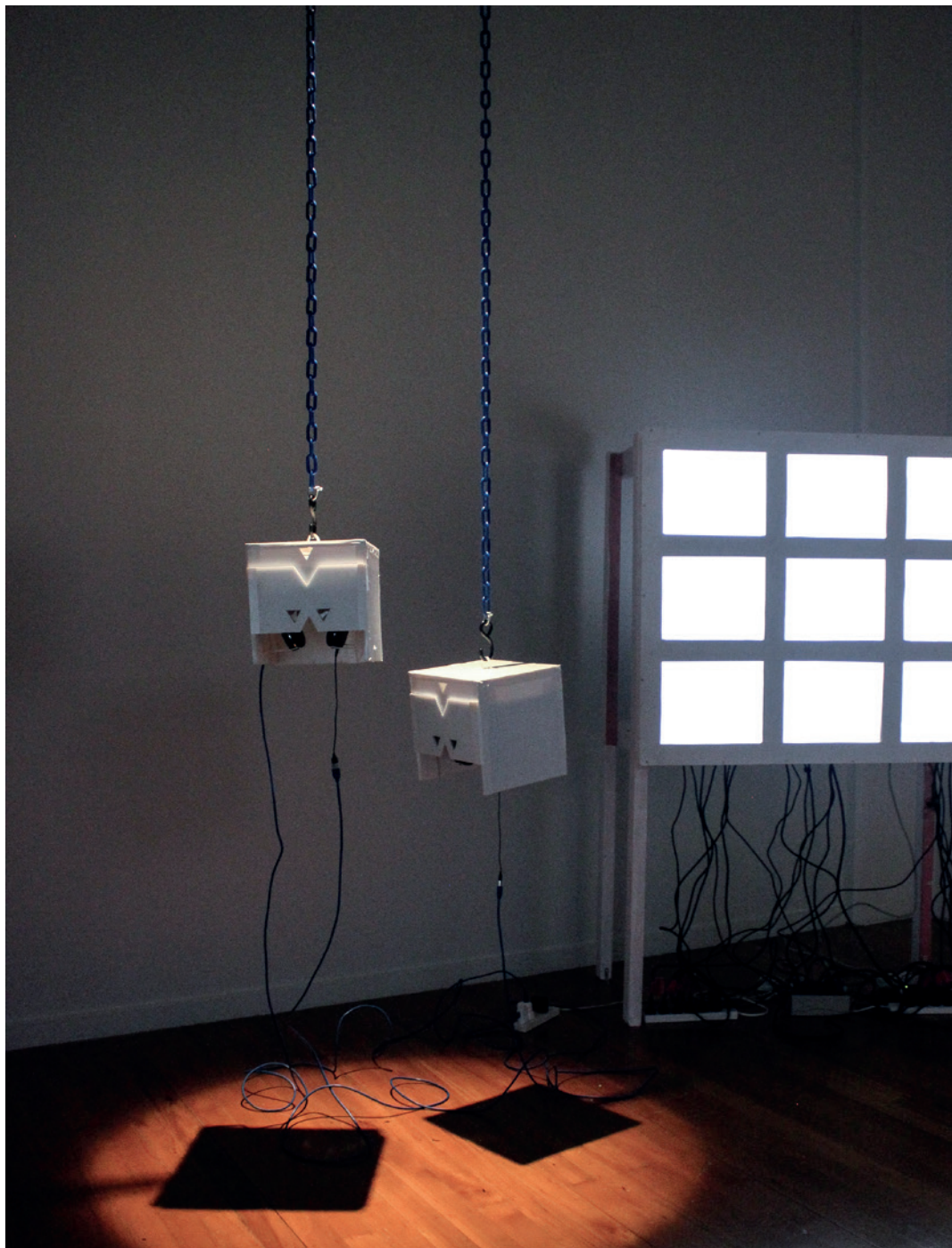
12 Mar - 12 Apr 2019

Erica Sklenars

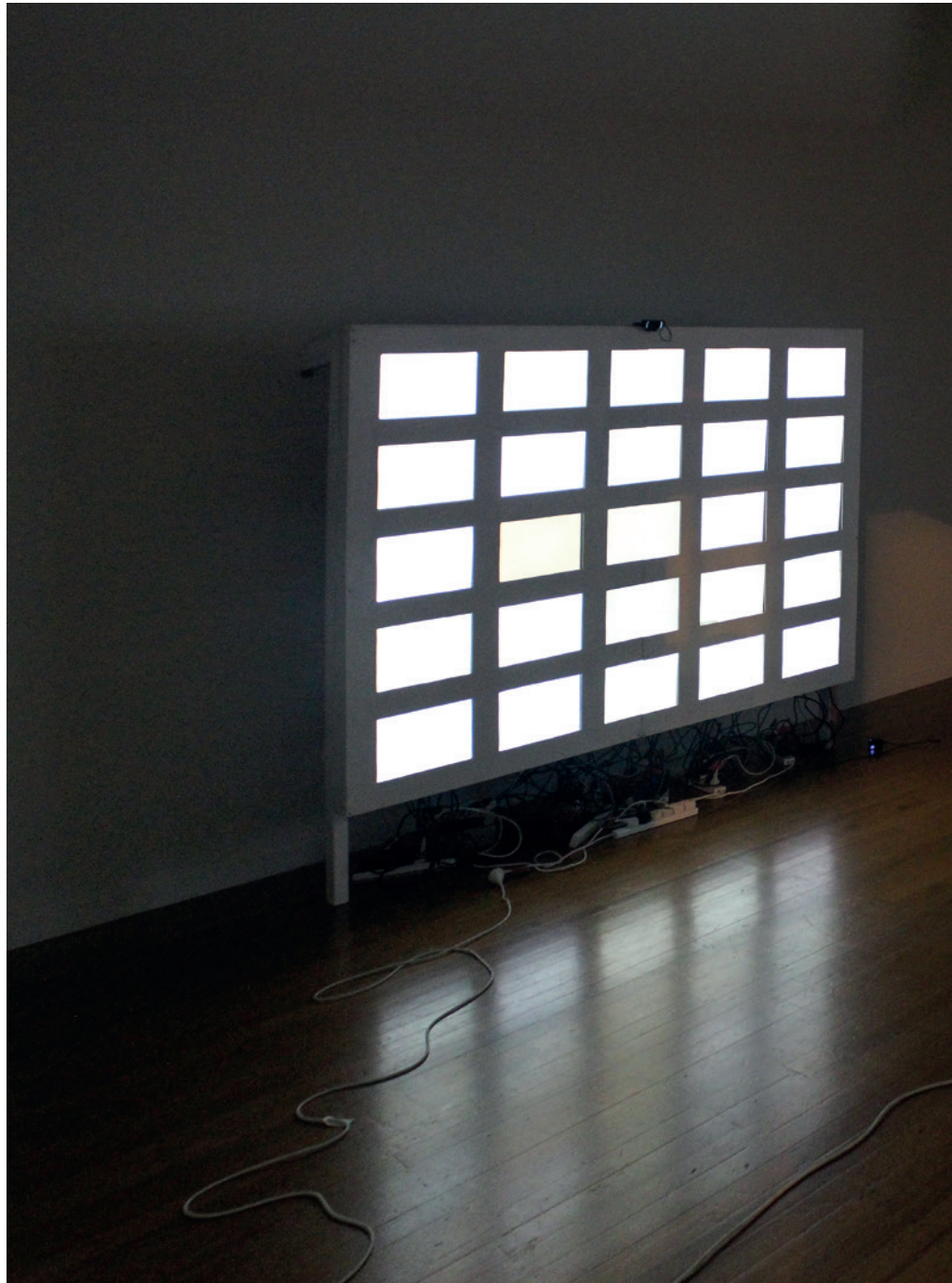


Erica  
Sklenars  
**Planet**  
**Obsolescence**  
2019  
at Ramp  
Gallery





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# Planned Obsolescence

Wendy Richdale

Obsolescence is a strange sounding word—meaning the process of becoming obsolete or outdated and no longer used. Obsolescence may just be the natural state of ‘things’ in a society, which tends towards efficiency and innovation. But it also has a seemingly cynical side—where for economic gain, obsolescence becomes a policy and is designed for. It is planned and deliberate.

One doesn’t have to look far to see how planned obsolescence has become ubiquitous in our society. The latest mobile phone isn’t long in the pocket before a newer, shinier version is being teased; building a sense of longing and ensuring a line of consumers is waiting for the moment of release. The appliance repair shops of a few years ago seem to have disappeared—we no longer take in our kettles, toasters or vacuum cleaners for a new lease of life.

We discard or send them to the op-shop and head off to buy another one, one that’s so cheap it almost seems criminal.

In the exhibition **Planet Obsolescence**, the artist Erica Sklenars’ recycles electronic waste in what she describes as an “audio-visual experiment in low fi hacking”. The interactive installation re-purposes walls of LCD screens, modified to conceal their content to the naked eye, unless one is wearing a special, hand-made headset.



The exhibition explores human relationships to technology, most specifically the 'screen'—as a tool for communication and censorship, voyeurism and surveillance, and a means of distorting and augmenting perceptions of reality. Content can be manipulated by the audience, encouraging light hearted play amongst the viewers. Yet the exhibition continues to talk about weightier themes, with viewers

never far from the reality of ever-growing environmental concerns, due to a global economy based on planned obsolescence and exponential development.

**Planet Obsolescence** should be a reminder to us all to look at the way we consume and how we interact with technology and its disposal.



"I first conceived of **Planet Obsolescence** when on a residency in Beijing, China (2015). The work was made for a site specific installation at I:Project Space, where I dismantled recycled LCD screens and stripped off their top polarising filters, resulting in the experiential exhibition seen in the gallery today (but on a smaller scale). The ideas that built this project were a result of research into the world's high turn-over of technology production, as well as censorship, controlled content, and the isolating effects of communication and language barriers I experienced while working abroad.

In 2017, this project was developed further, in collaboration with artist Nikolai Sim, as an immersive DIY/analogue augmented reality exhibition that was commissioned by Gig City Dunedin and Urban Dream Brokerage Dunedin. During this iteration, the scale of the project expanded, from 3 monitors to 60 which was a large

feat (they are very time consuming to hack). The monitors were sourced from the e-waste recycle centre at Cargill Enterprises, Dunedin. **Planet Obsolescence** was further developed and exhibited in early 2019 as part of "The Performance Arcade" in Wellington with the support of CNZ Creative Communities Scheme and provided a space for public interaction.

Each iteration of **Planet Obsolescence** develops these ideas further and is a chance for me to play and explore the themes that are top of mind. I often experiment and change the content of the screens, and at Ramp Gallery, the work in gallery two has been made for this site.

I would like to express sincere gratitude to all the above contributors for helping this project continuously develop, as well as Ramp Gallery's amazing staff and technicians. I would also like to acknowledge the contributions of my parents Jim and Gisella Sklenars, with many of the structures involved having been constructed by my father Jim."

—Erica Sklenars

Erica Sklenars  
**Planet Obsolescence**  
2017  
at Urban Dream Brokerage, Dunedin

Erica  
Sklenars  
**Planet  
Obsolescence**  
2019  
at Performance  
Arcade, Wellington





Erica Sklenars is a New Zealand based artist working across the fields of video art, installation, performance and intervention. Her practice is often collaborative, and explores modes of communication amongst various social groups and new media, as well as DIY adaptation or hacking of technology.

Often using humour, Sklenars' work subverts and contentedly inhabits personal human failures, and plays with future dystopian themes evident in current daily life. Sklenars regularly collaborates with musicians and sound artists under the name Lady Lazer Light, and exhibits and tours at galleries, festivals and music venues throughout New Zealand, Asia, and Europe. Sklenars has an MFA from Massey University and currently lives and works in Wellington, NZ.  
[www.ericasklenars.com](http://www.ericasklenars.com)

This page and cover:  
 Erica Sklenars  
**Planet**  
**Obsolescence**  
 2019  
 at Ramp Gallery