

... Isolate the seers, make their dream seem like a nightmare.
Fix their tongues so they can't get their story straight ...¹

Three years ago, I was spring lamb. Two years ago, a hogget. Now I am wretched mutton. My rectangular blackened pupils dart in schizophrenic swarm, likened to flies dancing across farm drain off. From the ground to the horizon, crazed by the circumstances that have brought me here, I am neither paralysis nor perfection, ambivalence nor certainty. From the outside, I am variations of endless possibility, livestock primed for the market and fenced in by the seduction of the lifestyle block. From within, tranquilised as a contested site of naturalised phenomenon.

Perfection, paralysis, ambivalence, and certainty are etched into four pillars, earthed into the corners of the sun-burnt paddock. They function as constant interruptions, depreciating the value of an imagined life elsewhere. The farmers corral me into the atmosphere of these conflicting dynamics, girded with the armature of the paddock and a smug look of satisfaction dripping from the chin. I see the grimace of the ghost within him. I am remedied by desire, and poisoned by the conditions of a freedom made for someone else. Afterall, I am only property; that is just an objective fact.

The paddock where I was birthed is known as Patapu; a 270 hectare property dotted with bush where the fairy people live. The paddock is equipped with a two story villa, cattle yards, a shearing shed, a Rotolactor and a home kill station. The property is run by a young Wakefield heir called Edward—he's a bit of an asshole, but that is what is expected in these parts.

Every day I chew on silage, watching the sun set and rise; metabolising a sentence rusted into the roller door of the station: *There is no panic button in the abattoir*. I don't really understand what is meant by this. There is a calmness as the herd walk through its entrance; it must have something to do with a puerile nature hypnotised by the grandeur of ritual. I have seen a lot of kin come and go. When they leave they are unrecognisable; once whole, now broken into parts by the machine.

I have only been sheared twice in this paddock. After that, nothing. This winter my fleece is pure and primed, awaiting the imprint of the Master. There's a few of 'my type' loitering around, we usually keep our distance from the rest. The farmer is adamant that our presence is just a business move, but I still don't understand how 'my life' can equate to business. I don't see many people coming to the farm to justify this relational set-up as a successful business strategy. But nonetheless, I am only a humble mutton primed for the chopping block.

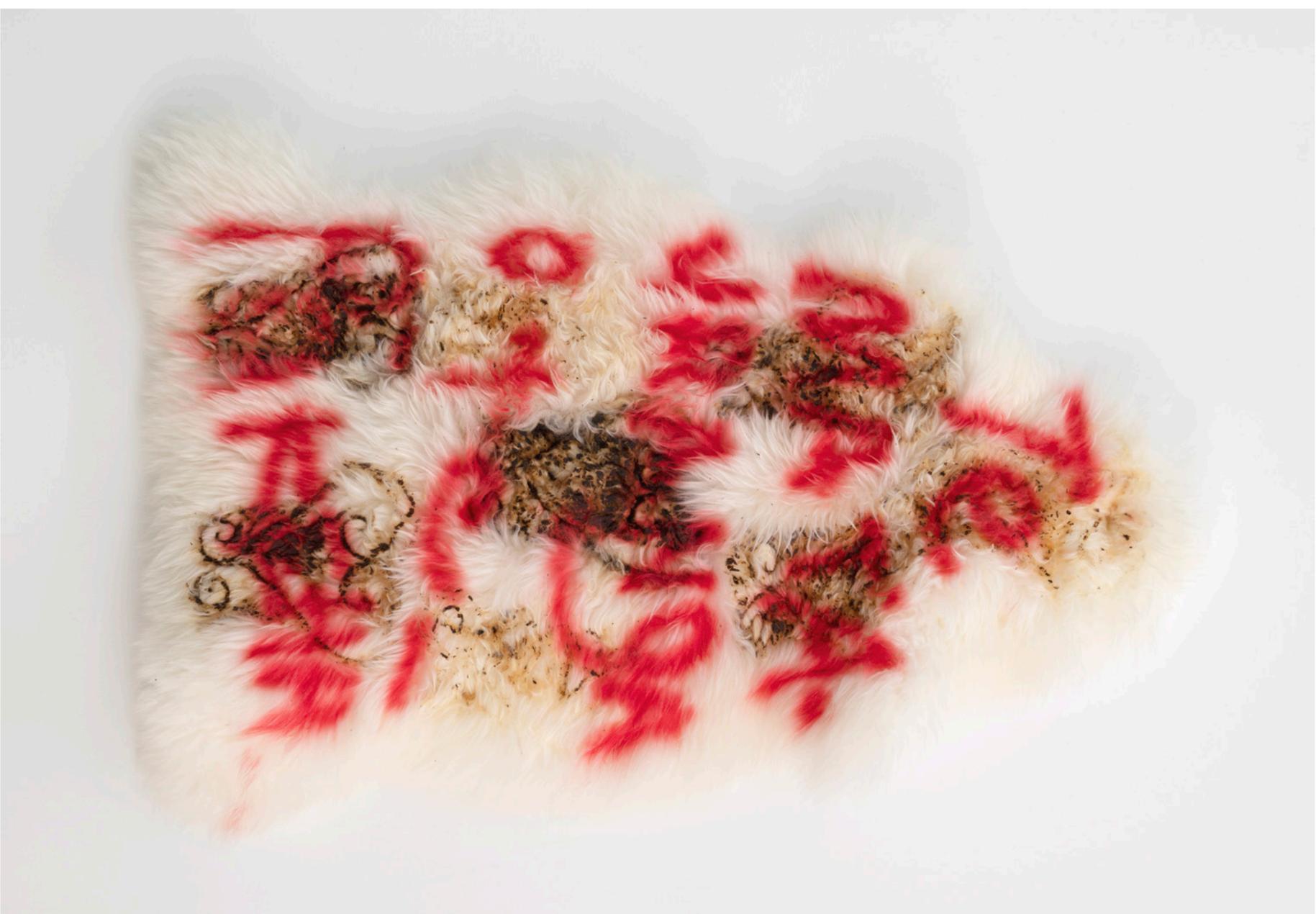
Around the paddock there are three churches; one Anglican, one Catholic, and one Fundamentalist Mormon. It's surprising how many different churches there are in such a small town. I've seen some interesting things happen there, some good and others not so good. In 1974, I saw a Mercedes Benz drive through the wrought iron gates, up to St Benedict's. The number plates spelt WIN.TOUR. The church was tessellated with black and white floor tiles. The driver had a platinum blonde bob, thick black sunglasses and sheepskin seat covers. I'm pretty sure that was once my friend, but I'm uncertain if that was their fate or *The Choice* they made.

Tyson Campbell

1 "Space: A Monologue" on Sekou Sundiata, *The Blue Oneness of Dreams*, Mercury 314 534 397-2, 1997, CD.



George Watson, *Brand 11 (Cross)*, 2023



Peter Simpson & George Watson, *Mō Hātana (For Satan)*, 2023