



Historic post house becomes a gallery

MANDY TE

A group of Auckland flatmates have turned their historic rental into an art gallery.

Captcha gallery is named after a computer program which is used on websites to determine whether a user is human or a robot.

Located in Eden Terrace, the building was first used in 1897 as a pigeon-carrier postal service between Great Barrier Island and Auckland.

It was New Zealand's first regular air-mail service and lasted into the early 20th century.

It was also where the Architectural Designers New Zealand, originally called the Federation of Draughtsmen, was founded in 1966.

Now called The Pigeon Loft, the building is rented by Jerome Ngan-Kee, Loulou Callister-Baker, Maxi Quy and Grant Priest.

The idea of opening an art gallery first began to brew while

Ngan-Kee was studying at Elam School of Fine Arts at the University of Auckland.

He proposed it to his flatmates and they have since worked together to transform their lounge space into a gallery.

The flatmates share common creative interests.

They also have backgrounds in design, illustration, writing and art.

Creating Captcha was half motive and half luck, Ngan-Kee said.

Like many art graduates interested in exhibition practice, he had always toyed with the idea of having a gallery, he said.

"This happened to run parallel with living in a space which allows that to happen," Ngan-Kee said.

The gallery first opened its doors in May.

It has been a way of maintaining art practice for peers and the art community, he said.

Artists Ronan Lee and Jasper Owen recently had their pieces

exhibited in the historic building.

Most art galleries have white walls as it allows art to be experienced without distractions.

Captcha however has a white-painted ceiling, wooden floors, odd renovations and a kitchen on the other side of the room.

Having his art exhibited in Captcha was a good experience, Lee said.

He was grateful to have worked with the group, he said.

The gallery is open two days a week and exhibitions last about six weeks.



Jerome Ngan-Kee and his three flatmates have turned their lounge into an art gallery.

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