



# Gill Gatfield, Glass Ceiling

NZ Aotearoa

**silopark**  
of wynyard quarter

LIP(S) 1 Feb –  
1 March 2019

'Gatfield's *Glass Ceiling* (NZ Aotearoa) possesses all the qualities anticipated in her work: an engaging physical experience of materials and site; a visual paradox about light, transparency and darkness; a metaphor about the politics of equality in the 21st century; and a celebration of and open-ended questions about the ideas and values of humanity.'

**Dr. Warren Feeney**

Art Historian | Critic

'A glass ceiling is a metaphor; a political term used to describe an invisible and unbreakable barrier that prevents women and minorities from reaching top levels of a career ladder or in political life, regardless of qualifications. Gill Gatfield makes the metaphor palpable - the audience can experience it with their own bodies. ... There is an uplifting sense of possibility in Gatfield's *Glass Ceiling* moving us to rethink structural frameworks and go beyond the limits. For those seeking higher goals, the work suggests we can do much more than enter the room.'

**Julie Rokkjær Birch**

Curator Women's Museum Denmark

Essay 'Do Not Enter - Transcend,  
Gill Gatfield, *Glass Ceiling* / *Glasloft*'



**Beneath the cavernous ceiling** of a disused Silo, 16 tonnes of smashed glass fill the floor and press against castle-thick concrete walls. A heaving mass of crystalline parts, *Glass Ceiling (NZ Aotearoa)* delivers a deep sensory experience and a potent political metaphor.

The symbolic glass ceiling is shattered and silo-ed in a seditious act that serves to liberate yet reveals circularity and obstruction anew.

The space entices but entry is forbidden. Arched doorways offer safe havens and portals into the work. An undulating landscape, *Glass Ceiling* glistens in the sun and catches the moonlight raking through the openings, tracking the passage of time. As the sky darkens, the body of glass blackens and condenses, weighed down by its own mass and the hollow darkness of the void above.

An industrial scale monument, the work reflects on systemic constraints and the sensual push and pull of fear and desire. A glittering bed of faux diamonds, *Glass Ceiling (NZ Aotearoa)* seduces and intoxicates, offering a glimpse of beauty in the sublime.

### **Glass Ceiling (NZ Aotearoa) 2019**

Silo, broken glass.

6.7m Dia x 30m H



**Artist Gill Gatfield** (LLB, MFA Hons) creates abstract sculptures and installations that combine sensory materials with narratives about humanity, nature and place. Her work is exhibited widely in NZ, Australia, USA and Europe; held in public and private collections; gained national and international recognition, and commissions for

place-making art. For the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale exhibition 'Time, Space, Existence', Gill created *Zealandia*, a 2.3m X figure and symbol of human DNA, carved from a single block of New Zealand stone over 100 million years old. In 2018 her work was also presented in New York at A'18 American Institute of Architecture by global art network CODAworx and at Chicago Expo 2018 by the International Sculpture Centre. In 2017, *The Kiss*, a monumental black granite love-mark exhibited at Sculpture by the Sea Denmark 2015 and SCAPE Public Art 2016 in Christchurch NZ, won an international public art CODAAward.

A human rights advocate, Gill is author of the landmark text *Without Prejudice: Women in the Law* (Brooker's 1996, Heritage Title 2011, Thomson Reuters 2018) reissued in 2018 in response to #Metoo. She was Artist in Residence at the national Women's Museum Denmark commemorating the Danish suffrage centenary in 2015, and sole Juror of 18th International Open 2015 Chicago, an open competition for women artists worldwide. Gill is a member of Global Women, a multi-sector organisation advancing diversity and inclusion. She chaired the NZ Women in Law Summit 2018, advised the NZLS Regulatory Working Group 2018, and was awarded a 2019 Sculpture Fellowship and residency at the Vermont Studio Centre USA.

[www.gillgatfield.com](http://www.gillgatfield.com)

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