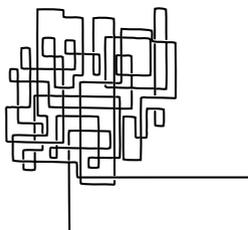


**CLUSTER 001**



# CLUSTER 001



*A Safe Little World Monograph*  
by Andrew Killick

shadow *press*

Cluster 001 (SLWM2)  
Published by Shadow Press  
New Zealand  
[www.shadowpress.co.nz](http://www.shadowpress.co.nz)

ISBN 978-0-9951189-2-8

Design and typesetting: Andrew Killick

Title typeface: Museo Slab designed by Jos Buivenga  
Body typeface: Skolar 10.5/15 designed by David Březina

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March 2020

Hello to the little worlds we live in.

- Pádraig Ó Tuama, *In the Shelter*



## Prologue

//Transit (191299 & 070220)

I don't want to photograph  
at all a space  
that's too big for me.

[it's a small empty studio  
with a shaft of white light  
that comes down from  
the ceiling &  
flares out at the bottom  
like white robes.]

*I can see it,  
don't want to ruin it,  
in my mind's eye, in my mind's eye.*

I move the mist off  
the mirror  
wipe clean refracting light;  
on a gallery wall, captured  
I glimpse a face reflected  
in a glass darkly, suspended, in a frame  
I say 'same old,  
same old,  
fancy meeting you here.'

[the ancient made-in-the-image-of?]

Everything's a dance...

—



## About the Work

This book is something of a flashback. It represents my first exhibited *Safe Little World* piece (sorry, did you say, 'world peace?'), which appeared in 2011, was named *Safe Little World Cluster 141111* (number coded for the date on which it was installed) and hung for one week in a gallery in central Hamilton called Draw Inc.

But its genesis is even older. Way back in 2000 I was editor of a poetry page in an Australasian Christian music magazine called *Transmission*. I'd been appearing for a few years as a poet at the Parachute Music Festival and was always looking for ways to make this more interesting (for myself, if not for the audience). Chances are, if you were attending Parachute in the late 1990s to early 2000s and recall seeing a bloke doing weird poetry stuff with a musical backing band, or with a dj, or wearing a white boiler suit and 'opening' for Tony Campolo, that bloke was me (with my mates). (It wasn't a fast-track to fame, but it wasn't all bad - it's how I met my wife.) For Parachute 2000 I decided to invite a couple of poets whose work I esteemed from the poetry page to perform with me. One of these was Cantabrian Eric Mould, the other was a Brisbanite named Jonathan Nalder.

In the months leading up to the event, Jonathan told me he had a stack of 35mm photographic slides (some taken by him, others courtesy of a friend, Nick Landbeck) and suggested that we project these during our performance.

Anyway, this sparked something in me, so I dusted off my old camera from high school photography classes and loaded it up with slide film.

In actual fact, that was the beginning of the end of my poetry-writing 'heyday' because to capture a mood visually is much more straightforward than to capture it in written language. My first roll of developed film was returned to me, frame-mounted and ready to project, and every frame (captured with the attentive economy that shooting on film required) was a joy. Those little framed images that revealed themselves when held to the light. Joy. My desire was ignited, then further set ablaze on a trip to the United Kingdom later the same year.

The earliest pictures in this book come from that period and had their first public screening at Parachute in January 2000... over 20 years ago. (The words that appear as the prologue of this book are a re-work of a poem from the same era.)

Those early images were shot on a Pentax P30 SLR, using Fuji stock. The Pentax was later replaced in my affections by a deadstock Russian Lomo LC-A point and shoot film camera (which I purchased from the Ukraine via Ebay) - famous for its vignettted images and responsible for my favourite of the images I have taken so far. And then, by dint of practicality, a no-name 3.5 megapixel digital camera, which gave way to my legendary workhorse, a Canon G10 (which sadly passed away in 2019 and made me feel like I'd lost part of my arm). Photos from that whole lineage of cameras appear in this book, and form part of the Safe Little World Archive.

Another evolution worth mentioning is the incorporation of graphic 'interventions' - graphical devices (and occasionally text) layered over the top of some of the photographs in a style I called 'photographic'. These graphics are a mixture of clip-art/wingdings, cave art, original illustrations and grid systems (illustrative of connections, circuits and circuitous pathways) drawn with an Etch A Sketch. A ghostly map of Tauranga CBD appears in one image.

The quintessential domestic suburban 'paradise' of Tauranga was an important breeding-ground for the Safe Little World concept.

I don't really have anything to say about what the series of images in *Cluster 001* might mean.

Back in the days of my poetry and the earliest of these photographs, I was all about creating an environment beyond the basic meanings of words, where the images (and the sounds of words and music) provided a backdrop, a context, a space or field. I liked deliberate mystery and wanted people to relax, move their meaning-making thought processes further down the order of priority, and get an allusive/elusive/illusory sense of a thing. It was more about atmosphere than concept. That tendency still remains in my work (I hope) though I like to write about it now (for better or worse). Not so much then.

To put aside our meaning-making faculties might be too big an ask, too much contra to the original design of the human spirit and psyche. We are meaning-making machines. We make sense of nearly everything through story. But let's see where it leads us, this dance between the suspension of storytelling on the one hand, and the weaving of connection and narrative on the other. They are both exciting propositions. Perhaps we can be agile in the space between and around them. Who knows? Perhaps we can begin to love the gifts of mystery and unknowing, recognising the limits and pitfalls of meaning-making and connecting dots, while also loving that very human gift and tendency to create stories. Enjoy the play and playing.

The best I can say is that the series of photos in this book aims to communicate a kind of 'safe-little-world-ness' with its various juxtapositions, paradoxes and ambiguities. Make of that what you will.

The other thing to mention is that the images (in exhibition format) were intended to appear as little framed 6×4 inch prints in a cluster (as the name implies). Though each frame is similar in size to that original format, here they appear in linear form rather than cluster. This means they will tend to ‘read’ consecutively, rather than as a network of associations, a field or group. That changes the viewing (feel free to flick back and forth at random from page to page). But I have also included material that documents the work as it appeared at Draw Inc in 2011.

In the interests of providing text for this volume, I have included some general writings on the Safe Little World concept that first appeared in a very limited not-for-sale publication called *The Safe Little World Reader*. So apart from being a bit of a flashback, this book might also serve as a kind of intro to the meta-concept of which I’m so fond.

I’ve also included a few quotes from other thinkers. These quotes were mainly selected because I liked something about their atmosphere and perception. On reading them as a group, I find they are about such things as home, imagination and desire, ambiguity, uncertainty and joy, connection, fragments and totality, fragmentation and unity, the wild, the domestic, shelter and sanctuary, awe, largeness and smallness, isolation and examination, mystery, the framed (contained/contextualised) and the out-of-frame, movement and stillness, silence and seeing. That sounds about right.

—

*Instructions for looking:* Turn your head on its side.  
(Or turn the book.)

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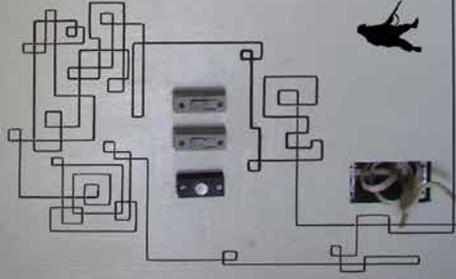
**Part One:  
Cluster**











plastic stag (bigged and mounted by  
a plastic hunter), because: noing  
safe little world.



