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**Interfield antagonisms: An examination of the  
New Zealand journalistic and visual arts fields in the  
case of the mainstream media coverage of et al. and  
the 2005 Venice Biennale**

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## ABSTRACT

In June 2004, when Creative New Zealand announced that the artist collective et al. had been selected as New Zealand's representative at the 2005 Venice Biennale, much of the country's mainstream media engaged in a critical representation of the case that resulted in unprecedented national attention to a visual art news story. Using Bourdieu's field theory as its primary analytical framework, this thesis focuses on the coverage of et al. during the reporting period of June 2004 to December 2005 by a selected sample of mainstream New Zealand media outlets, including broadcast television and major metropolitan newspapers, to examine the antagonisms that structured the most high profile journalistic field representations of the controversy.

This study of the interfield relations of the journalistic and visual arts fields is primarily an examination of journalism's power. This power derives from the journalistic field's domination as a centralised mediator of a range of information and discourses to a general public, including the specialized knowledge of particular fields like the visual arts. Highlighting the capacity of the journalistic field to symbolically dominate other fields, this study examines how this power is reproduced through symbolic violent forms of representation and considers how the field's increasingly commercial (heteronomous) concerns constrain other fields, in this case, the visual arts field. Analysis of the case highlights the discursive logic of the New Zealand journalistic field's dominant narrative demonstrating values aligned with the populist sensibilities of an imagined mainstream public and represented through common-sense appeals such as those concerning political accountability, the funding cost to taxpayers, the representation of a national identity and an anti-intellectualist stance opposed to the elitist and even "bizarre" values of the artists and their associates.

Applying Bourdieu's approach to understanding this interfield relationship requires a consideration of the structure of the fields' social spaces in terms of their agents (the artists, journalists, politicians and other field participants), their products (textual and visual) and their consumers (readers and viewers) and to describe them, not in terms of causality, but in relation to each other and to their social, cultural and economic conditions. To examine various aspects of the fields' relational dynamics, this study employs the investigative approaches of content analysis and surveys and draws on different textual analytical methods, including critical discourse analysis and aspects of

conversation analysis, to analyse different print media and television representations of the case.

This study's analysis shows that a marketplace logic governed the media's construction of the et al. case with an emphasis on discursive appeals aligned to the populist sensibilities of an imagined mainstream readership. Furthermore, this thesis will show that an interfield analysis provides a more useful interpretive framework for understanding media power than a singular focus on internal journalistic field structures.

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**List of Abbreviations**

AJNZ	Arts Journalism in New Zealand survey
CNZ	Creative New Zealand
NAJP	National Arts Journalism Program
NZSEI	New Zealand Socioeconomic Index of Occupational Status
TVNZ	Television New Zealand
VAF	Visual Arts Field Survey of Visual Arts Journalism in New Zealand

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