

AN EXHIBITION OF RECENT WORK BY

MARIANNA BULLMORE

SHANE COTTON

SÉRAPHINE PICK

R · E · C · O · G · N · I · T · I · O · N · S

KIM PIETERS

DAVID REID

PETER ROBINSON

11 APRIL - 7 MAY 1991

MCDUGALL ART ANNEX
ARTS CENTRE, ROLLESTON AVENUE
CHRISTCHURCH

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RECOGNITIONS

AN APPROACH TO THE EXHIBITION

RECOGNITIONS collects together and displays for a public audience recent work by six emergent artists, each of whom has spent his or her formative years working within the Canterbury region. While producing individually distinct and often highly idiosyncratic images and objects, the artists selected for inclusion in this exhibition may be loosely identified as a 'group' which shares similar thematic concerns and motivations. This exhibition, therefore, aims to identify one emerging direction in contemporary Canterbury art-making, through recognition of the work of six of the province's young artists.

There are interconnected and complementary themes and structures which can be identified in the artwork included in RECOGNITIONS. One is a concern for the organic, in subject matter and process: another is a predilection for the 'found', whereby the artists work with both 'found' imagery (images which already exist and which may be appropriated, transformed and redefined by a new approach), and with 'found' objects (using unconventional materials to produce an artwork which can be receptive to chance process). The artists in RECOGNITIONS could be seen to be searching for a relationship between these two concerns, the organic (natural/living) and the found (man-made/dead).

SÉRAPHINE PICK has borrowed from art-historical depictions of the feminine form, to create allegories which illustrate her feeling for contemporary female status and aspirations. **Lone Caryatid/Holding up the Fort** suggests the load-bearing function of female figures on the exterior of antique Greek architecture; in **Blue Velvet/Three Graces**, an anonymous female form embraces women of the past, through iconic images borrowed from Botticelli and from primitive fertility cults. Pick creates contemporary icons which refer to women's lives, whereby domestic paraphernalia (irons, cooking implements, pins, cushions covers) is elevated to a tongue-in-cheek mythological significance, formed in 'precious' material - gold paint, copper, velvet, brass - and encased within the pseudo-religious framework of the Gothic arch. Elsewhere (**Just Testing/Domestic Ritual**), Pick has continued her appropriation of female iconography, using as her starting point illustrations in a pamphlet encouraging women to examine themselves for signs of breast cancer: the implication is that self-examination is necessary for women to take control over their lives.

SHANE COTTON (Nga Puhī) also draws upon 'found' imagery as the starting point for his work. His decorative biomorphic images have their origin in photographic and illustrative replication of microscopic organisms. The organic forms which grow in these works appear as cross-sections through plant samples, or animal tissue: there are valves of shells, a brain, strange swirling crustacea, amoebic forms a million times larger than life. Cotton incises through the skin of his forms, penetrating and exposing the living tissue underneath, as if a biopsy is taking place on his canvas. Structuring his images with depictions of the building-

blocks of animal and vegetable life-forms, he examines the minutiae of growth and change through organic process.

MARIANNA BULLMORE employs 'found' objects as the structural basis for her works. Applying painstaking geometric surface decoration to 'dead', discarded wood found in a domestic setting (variously from fence palings, a chair back, a tea-trolley, a split and warping plank, even a broom-head worn to its base), Bullmore produces austere, impenetrable iconic images which both invite and defy interpretation. Bullmore's painted constructions contain a suggestively mystical import, like objects of devotion in a mysterious cult removed from their context. Spiral motifs and other repetitive forms suggest an abstracted organic symbolism: the result is as if a collector has isolated and displayed totemic trophies which function within a remote culture, suggestive of unnamed rituals and bizarrely fetichistic practices.

DAVID REID's colourful paintings in thick impasto allude to the organic process of growth and change. The molten surface of his **Stone Age** suggests primordial creation, for which explication may be couched in either religious or scientific terminology: from volcanic eruptions and massive physical forces, stone emerges, which in turn is shaped by human intervention into functional form. This process of creation and transformation of the found object into significant form, like a primitive alchemy, mirrors the artistic process.

The delicate, calligraphic line and patched and dribbled paint of KIM PIETERS's images abstracts itself from natural form. Patterns of growth swirl across Pieter's sparse surfaces: strange primeval forests and ghosted figures appear in and out of focus, spirits invoked through the meditative process. There is a certain reliance on the efficacy of the automatic gesture, the artist peeling back layers of the subconscious to reveal abstract dream-scapes, serene environments in which the personal mark assumes an intense significance, deciphered and given form through the personal involvement of the viewer.

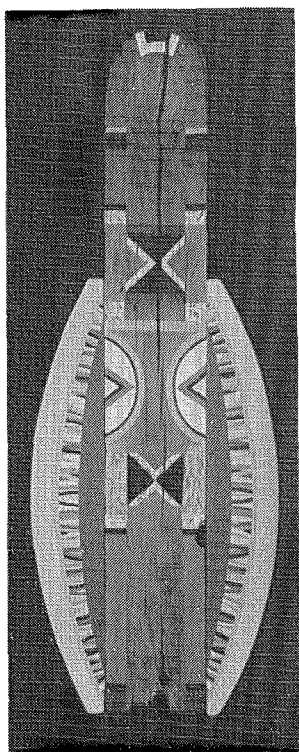
PETER ROBINSON's (Kai Tahu) works are vessels for Maori spirituality, 'speaking' pieces which refer to issues rooted deeply within the land, through the organic process of growth and decay. **Guardian**, like the small maquettes in his **Regeneration Series**, is a study towards a large-scale sculptural group. These works, constructed from both organic and 'unnatural' substances, comment upon the destruction of native New Zealand forests through fire and logging, and allude to the historical practice of placing a healing clay poultice over the stumps of newly-felled trees to aid regeneration of the forest, and as an offering to the tree god, Tanemahuta. Robinson locates his forms in traditional icons of Maori spirituality, tiki-wananga (god-sticks) and waka-tupapaku (burial chests). The 'eyes' and 'mouths' from the **Whenua Speaking Triptych** are taken from waka-tupapaku : these forms anthropomorphize the spirit of the land, recalling the concerns of traditional Maori art objects. Robinson's **Mediator** construction, in which purchased possum skins are nailed to a 'dead' tree trunk, refers to the destruction of native New Zealand forests by an imported European pest: like Robinson's other objects, **Mediator** is a 'speaking' piece, a tapu scarecrow which forms an aid to communication between the land and its people, warding off the modern-day taniwha (fabulous monster) of the forests, the destructive impulses of opossums.

MARIANNA BULLMORE

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

I create assemblages from discarded, found and crafted objects. My aim is to create a unity of forms so that the separate elements become essential parts of a new entity. An interest in African art has been the main source of influence in my work - exploring polarities: masculine and feminine, the old and the

new, and the contrast of weather worn, textured wood with flat clean surfaces of paint. I sometimes combine the elements of paint and wood by sanding back certain painted areas allowing the wood's texture to come through, thus utilising intentional and accidental processes. I find unconscious impulses are sometimes the factors which guide my decisions while working, however this intuition is accompanied by a sense of purpose in which form, line and colour are of great importance to the unity of the finished work.



Argus 1988 acrylic on wood
Collection: The Artist

SELECTED BIOGRAPHY

- 1962 Born to New Zealand parents, London
- 1969 Family returns to New Zealand
- 1981-83 Attends Ilam School of Fine Arts, majoring in painting
- 1984 Arts Employment Scheme; repainting shields from the Sign of the Takahe (an historic building), Christchurch
Arts Employment Scheme: painting murals in the city area, Christchurch
- 1985 Arts Employment Scheme: designing and executing a mural at the Christchurch Central Creche
- 1987 Two person show, James Paul Gallery, Christchurch
- 1988 Photoaccess Course: Introductory Course in Photography
- 1989 Introductory Course in Silversmithing, Silver smith's Guild, Christchurch
- 1990 The Bath House / Rotorua Art Museum
New Works, Christopher Moore Gallery
Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council Grant: New Artists Promotion Scheme

SHANE COTTON

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

I am enjoying in my painting the depiction of expansive and unfamiliar spaces that blend differences of light, place and form. In some cases the work is thematically based; in others it is simply descriptive. In **Departure and Entombment** remnants are laid to rest and forms seek to evolve. This contribution of opposites is a staple underlying a lot of my work. While the painting is directed at the depiction of particular status or events, the assemblages remain loose in their structure and content. The cutting and shaping of forms and spaces, their degree of definition, their placement and connection all allow the generation of new ideas and themes. This drawing process is immediate and amusing and contrasts the activity of painting.

SELECTED BIOGRAPHY

- 1964 Born in Upper Hutt [Nga Puhi]
1985-88 Bachelor of Fine Arts (Painting), School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury
1986 Bickerton-Widdowson Scholarship
1987 Seager Prize in Fine Arts
The Young Contemporaries, CSA Gallery
1988 Sawtell-Turner Prize in Painting
Ethel Rose Overton Scholarship
Irwin Allen Hunt Scholarship
1989 **Wilkins & Davies Finalists Exhibition**, CSA Gallery, Christchurch, and ASA Gallery, Auckland
Wilkins & Davies Award Judges Prize
1989-90 Part-time teaching, Art Department, Christ's College
1990 **Nature, Forms, Myth** (with Peter Robinson), Last Decade Gallery, Wellington
Christmas Show, group exhibition, Brooke-Gifford Gallery, Christchurch
New Works, solo exhibition, Brooke-Gifford Gallery, Christchurch
1991 **Kohia Ko Tiakaka Anake**, Contemporary Maori Art, National Art Gallery, Wellington
Preparations: 25 Canterbury Artists, Brooke-Gifford Gallery, Christchurch



Chamber 1991 oil and oilstick on paper
Collection: The Artist

SERAPHINE PICK

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

To me, this work is a development from the mythological into personal icons of a material world: involving the idea of preservation, isolation and symbolism present in Religious icons. I am interested in assemblage as an extension to the traditions of painting on canvas, by using contrasting 'suggestive' materials as the ground I paint figures upon. With the use of fabric, metals, photocopies and wood I hope to evoke a sense of the domestic rituals necessary to function in everyday life.



Lone Caryatid/ Holding up the fort 1991 oil on canvas
Collection: The Artist

SELECTED BIOGRAPHY

- 1964 Born in Kawakawa, Bay of Islands
- 1983 Attended life-drawing classes tutored by Murray Grimsdale, Rodney Fumpston and Carole Shepard in Auckland
- 1984-87 Bachelor of Fine Arts, School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury (majoring in painting)
- 1986 Group exhibition, James-Paul Gallery, Christchurch
- 1987 **The Young Contemporaries**, group exhibition, C.S.A. Gallery, Christchurch
Women's Show, Artists' Collective, Christchurch.
Travelled to Europe - extensive study of public collections
- 1989 Completed study in Drama, University of Canterbury
Almost but not Quite, solo exhibition, C.S.A. Gallery, Christchurch.
- 1990 Group exhibition, Goodman/Suter Biennale, Bishop Suter Art Gallery, Nelson
Works on Paper, group exhibition, Brooke-Gifford Gallery, Christchurch
Group exhibition, Joan Livingstone Art Exhibitions Gallery, Auckland
- 1991 **Paintings and Drawings**, solo exhibition, Brooke-Gifford Gallery, Christchurch

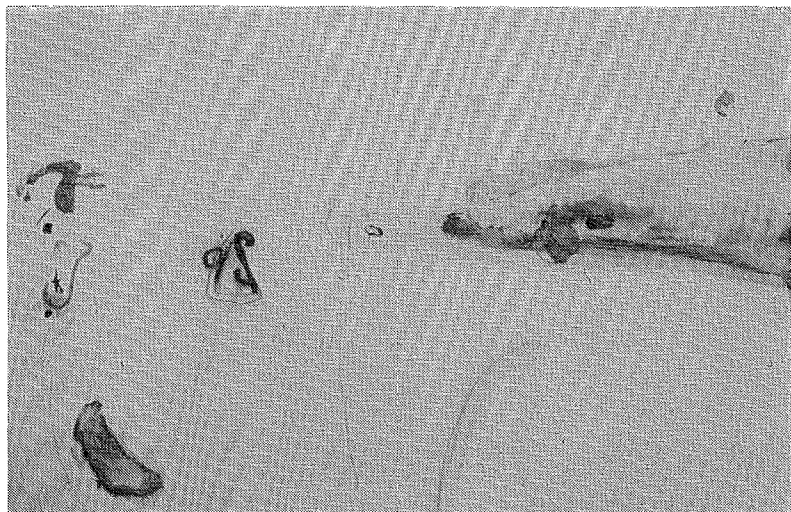
KIM PIETERS

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Firstly I would describe my work as informal abstraction. Aesthetically, among other things, there is a spatial concern akin to oriental work and a connection with the surrealist concept of automatic gesture. As for content I'm not sure where to draw parallels. There is much layering of ideas, dualities are explored quite extensively, generalities contrasted with specifics, intellect with physicality, beauty with horror and so on.

There are three areas (which often interconnect) that I tend to refer to. One is landscape, the other is the psychology of relationship, and the last is the tapping of a primal sense. (What could be called the unconscious.) The paintings hanging in this show allude to the psychology of relationship theme. The large painting is initially a light, almost comic, narrative. The amorphous forms have a more definite suggestion of figuration than usual, compositional play holds the eye and the uneasy sense of tragedy, always present in the comic, is not difficult to see. The two smaller works are elegant oriental pieces. The delicate use of space is important, the markings considered and mysterious.

The idea of 'no certainties' interests me a great deal. The first viewing of a painting will give an impression which won't necessarily be the same on second viewing. That a grouping of marks will evoke different meanings at different times makes the viewers position important. The dynamic created by this exchange forms a continuing dialogue between the painting and the viewer.



the Neutral city 1991 mixed media on board
Collection: The Artist

BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

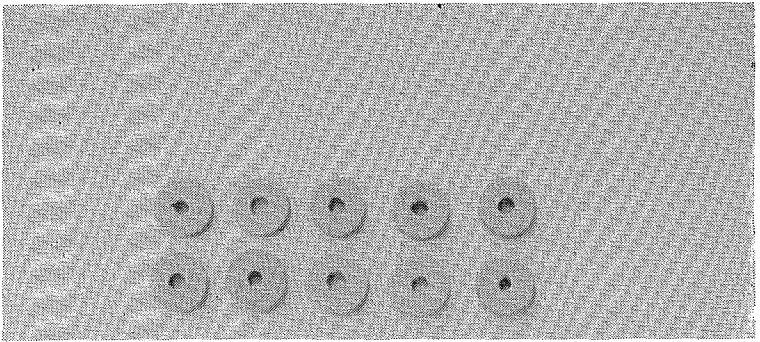
I am a self taught painter and have been working for eleven years. However, it is only in the last few years that I have considered my work mature enough to exhibit. I have had two shows here in Christchurch. One in November 1989 at the CSA, and again in August 1990 at a small gallery in the Arts Centre.

DAVID REID

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

It seems probable to me that God in the beginning formed matter in solid, massy, hard, impenetrable, movable particles, of such sizes and figures, and with such other properties, and in such proportion to space, as most conduced to the end for which he formed them; and that these primitive particles being solids, are incomparably harder than any porous bodies compounded of them; even so very hard, as never to wear or break into pieces; no ordinary power being able to divide what God himself made one in the first creation.

Isaac Newton



Detail from **Stone Age** 1991 oil on canvas with ten concrete wheels
Collection: The Artist

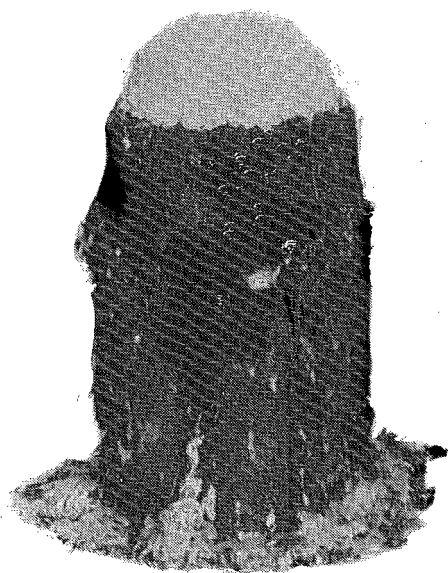
SELECTED BIOGRAPHY

- 1960 Born in Christchurch
- 1983 Diploma in Fine Arts, School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury
Sawtell/Turner Award for Painting
- 1984 **Four Young Painters**, Brooke-Gifford Gallery, Christchurch
- 1985 Moved to Auckland
- 1986 **Green Tea**, solo exhibition, DKD Café, Auckland
Finalist, Team McMillan Ford Art Award
- 1987 Stage design/conception, **Down the Really Road**, outdoor performance, Auckland University School of Architecture
- 1987-88 Travelled through Asia
- 1989 Group exhibition, Gallery Pacific
Solo exhibition, James Wallace Gallery
Two-person exhibition, CSA Gallery, Christchurch
- 1990 **Elam Centenary Exhibition**, Rita Webster Galleries, Auckland
Solo exhibition, Rita Webster Galleries, Auckland
Group exhibition, Rita Webster Galleries
- 1991 **The City, The CSA**, CSA Gallery, Christchurch

PETER ROBINSON

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Many Maori myths, legends and folk tales deal with the environment and man's relationship to it. The separation of Ranginui and Papatuanuku by their son Tanemahuta demonstrates the need for light, earth, air and water for a life-supporting environment. Much of my work is concerned with the essence of these stories in an attempt to relate them to the contemporary condition. We must heal and protect the environment to avoid the return of primal darkness.



Detail from **Regeneration Series** 1991 lead, wood, pigment, tacks, clay & ferns
Collection: The Artist

SELECTED BIOGRAPHY

- 1966 Born in Ashburton [Kai Tahu]
1985-88 Bachelor of Fine Arts (majoring in sculpture),
School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury
1986 Mid Canterbury Community Arts Council Scholarship
1988 Maori Education Foundation award
Irwin Allen Hunt Tertiary Scholarship
1989 **Recent Arrivals**, group exhibition, CSA Gallery,
Christchurch
Christmas Show, Timaruid Gallery, Wellington
1990 **Goodman-Suter Biennale**, Bishop Suter Art
Gallery, Nelson
On Task, group exhibition of eight art educators,
CSA Gallery, Christchurch
'Te Atinga' - Contemporary Maori Art, Uenuku
Marae, Moeraki
Opening Show, Joan Livingstone Art Exhibitions
Gallery, Auckland
Nature, Forms, Myth (with Shane Cotton), Last
Decade Gallery, Wellington
Kohia Ko Taikaka Aneke, National Art Gallery
and Museum, Wellington



CATALOGUE

MARIANNA BULLMORE

- Argus 1988 acrylic on wood
 Totem 1983 acrylic on wood
 Domino 1990 acrylic on wood
 Bristle Force 1991 acrylic on wood
 Torso with Spirals 1991 acrylic on wood
 Guardian 1990 acrylic on wood with brass nails
 Figure with Folded Wings 1991 acrylic on wood with brass
 tacks

SHANE COTTON

- Core 1991 oil on canvas
 Shallows 1991 oil and oilstick on paper
 Chamber 1991 oil and oilstick on paper
 Departure and Entombment 1991 oil on canvas
 Drawing Series 1990 - 1991 mixed media on board

SÉRAPHINE PICK

- Lone Caryatid/ Holding up the fort
 1991 oil on canvas
 Homemaker 1991 wood, woodcuts, gold paint,
 velvet, & metal pins
 Blue Velvet/ Three Graces 1991 wood, fabric, velvet,
 brass nails & oil paint
 Just Testing/ Domestic Ritual 1991 fabric, copper, lead
 & oil paint

KIM PIETERS

- The war 1991 mixed media on board
 the Neutral city 1991 mixed media on board
 the moderne Comedy 1991 mixed media on board

DAVID REID

- Small Yellow 1991 oil on canvas
 Small Lavender 1991 oil on canvas
 Formation of Masses 1991 oil on canvas
 Stone Age 1991 oil on canvas with ten concrete wheels

PETER ROBINSON

- Mediator 1991 wood, tacks & opossum skins
 Guardian 1991 earth, tar, pigment & oilstick on canvas
 Whenua Speaking Triptych 1991 earth & tar on paper
 Regeneration Series 1991 lead, wood, pigment, tacks, clay
 & ferns