

# B.164

Bulletin  
Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetu

Autumn  
March—May  
2011



**EDITOR**  
DAVID SIMPSON

**GALLERY CONTRIBUTORS**  
DIRECTOR: JENNY HARPER  
CURATORIAL TEAM: KEN HALL, FELICITY MILBURN,  
JUSTIN PATON, PETER VANGIONI  
PUBLIC PROGRAMMES: SARAH AMAZINIA,  
LANA COLES  
PHOTOGRAPHER: JOHN COLLIE

**OTHER CONTRIBUTORS**  
ROGER BOYCE, ROSS CALMAN,  
CHRISTIAN CAPURRO, JOHN COLEY,  
JASON GREIG, TRISH GRIBBEN, JULIE KING,  
QUENTIN MACFARLANE, ROY MONTGOMERY

TEL: (+64 3) 941 7300  
FAX: (+64 3) 941 7301  
EMAIL: BULLETIN@CCC.GOV.NZ,  
INFO@CHRISTCHURCHARTGALLERY.ORG.NZ

PLEASE SEE THE BACK COVER FOR MORE DETAILS.  
WE WELCOME YOUR FEEDBACK AND SUGGESTIONS  
FOR FUTURE ARTICLES.

**Christchurch**   
City Council

 cultural precinct

**CURRENT DIRECT SPONSORS  
OF THE GALLERY**

AALTO COLOUR  
CHARTWELL TRUST  
CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY TRUST  
CREATIVE NEW ZEALAND  
DUNCAN COTTERILL  
DUX DE LUX  
ERNST & YOUNG  
FRIENDS OF CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY  
GABRIELLE TASMAN  
GIESEN WINES  
HOLIDAY INN  
NEWSTALK ZB  
PERPETUAL TRUST  
PHILIP CARTER  
SKY ARTS CHANNEL  
SPECTRUM PRINT  
STRATEGY DESIGN & ADVERTISING  
THE PRESS  
THE ROYAL NETHERLANDS EMBASSY  
THE NZ NETHERLANDS FOUNDATION  
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

**STRATEGY**  
DESIGN & ADVERTISING

**DESIGN AND PRODUCTION**

ART DIRECTOR: GUY PASK  
EDITORIAL DESIGN: LEON WHITE  
PRODUCTION MANAGER: DAYLE DIREEN  
PRINTING: SPECTRUM PRINT  
ISSN 1176-0540 (PRINT)  
ISSN 1179-6715 (ONLINE)

**Bulletin**  
Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetu

Autumn  
March—May  
2011





TE PUNA O WAIWHETU  
CHRISTCHURCH  
ART GALLERY

Contents

# B.164



## Important Paintings and Contemporary Art

5 April 2011

ART  
+  
OBJECT

3 Abbey Street  
Newton, Auckland  
Telephone: +64 9 354 4646  
Freephone: 0 800 80 60 01  
www.artandobject.co.nz

Colin McCahon  
Necessary Protection  
synthetic polymer paint and  
graphite on paper, 1971  
1100 x 730mm  
\$160 000 – \$220 000

Don Driver  
Horizontal Relief  
acrylic on canvas and  
lacquered board, 1973  
1115 x 1680mm  
\$16 000 – \$24 000

Gordon Walters  
Untitled  
acrylic on canvas, 1989  
1020 x 762mm  
\$65 000 – \$85 000

Cover:  
Peter Robinson Cache (detail) 2011.  
Polystyrene, steel. Courtesy the artist  
and Sue Crockford Gallery, Auckland

4	DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD	A few words from director Jenny Harper
5	EXHIBITIONS PROGRAMME	What's on at the Gallery this season
6	DE-BUILDING	Justin Paton on four of the artists in the exhibition
12	SOMETHING LIKE US	Roger Boyce on Wayne Youle
18	TALKING BENSEMANN	Jenny Harper talks to John Coley and Quentin MacFarlane
24	BEFORE AFTER	Let's build a better Canterbury
25	MAKE A DONATION	Make a difference
26	OUTER SPACES	Kay Rosen's <i>Deep Beep</i>
28	OTIRA	It's a state of mind
34	STORYTELLING WITH HANLY	Trish Gribben on Pat Hanly and the fine art of protest
38	A TALE OF TWO CHIEFS	Ross Calman on the Ngāi Tahu tipuna in Fiona Pardington's portraits
40	STAFF PROFILE	The projects and facilitation team
41	PAGEWORK #10	Christian Capurro
44	MY FAVOURITE	Julie King makes her choice
46	NOTEWORTHY	News bites from around the Gallery
48	COMING SOON	Previewing <i>The Art of Chess</i> , John Pule: <i>Hauaga (Arrivals)</i> , Pieter Hugo: <i>Nollywood</i> , <i>Snake on a Train</i> , <i>Bad Hair Day</i> and <i>GREAT BRITTEN!</i>

Please note: The opinions put forward in this magazine are not necessarily those of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu. All images reproduced courtesy of the artist or copyright holder unless otherwise stated.



I CAN'T START MY FOREWORD this quarter without mentioning the Gallery's achievements in the last quarter. We certainly made headlines throughout the country, with record-breaking attendances for **Ron Mueck**, which finished its time here with a truly staggering 135,140 visitors. This makes it the most popular paid exhibition by a living artist ever to show in New Zealand, and is for us something to be really proud of.

Rather appropriately, as we farewell **Mueck**, we open **De-Building**—an exhibition about what happens when a show ends. As I write this the false walls installed for **Mueck** are being crowbarred apart. But unusually, they are not to be rebuilt or replaced. **De-Building** promises to aggravate the Gallery's internal architecture and reveal spaces usually hidden from view. With works by major national and international artists (including several major new acquisitions for the Gallery) now in place, it certainly does just that. It is also accompanied by a superb new publication by Justin Paton.

In the downstairs exhibition galleries we're showing two exhibitions on artists who could be described as Canterbury luminaries. Petrus van der Velden was a Dutch émigré who arrived in Canterbury in 1890. Already an established and well-respected artist in the Netherlands, he quickly became a highly regarded member of the city's artistic community. Coming from the flat polder landscapes of the Netherlands, he was drawn to the rugged, unspoiled terrain of the Southern Alps, and was to produce over thirty paintings of the spectacular Otira Gorge and its environs. **Van der Velden: Otira** brings together almost the entirety of this sublime series of works for the first time. This may be your only chance to judge the relative merits of the Gallery's *Mountain stream, Otira Gorge* versus those of Dunedin Public Art Gallery's *A waterfall in the Otira Gorge* in a face-to-face encounter, so don't miss it. The exhibition is accompanied by a stunning catalogue, which is available from the Gallery Shop, and we are delighted that Dr T.L. Rodney Wilson, a former director of this Gallery and a well-known van der Velden expert, has contributed to this publication as well as Dutch scholar Dieuwertje Dekkers and Gallery curator Peter Vangioni.

Leo Bensemann, born in Takaka and of German descent, was a painter, designer, typographer, printer, wood-engraver and musician, not to mention editor and publisher. However, this intuitive artist and craftsman is not as well known today as his output merits. **Leo Bensemann: A Fantastic Art Venture** aims to redress that, and looks at two major elements of his oeuvre—his painting (both landscape and portraiture) and his graphic work. We thank curators

Peter Simpson and Noel Waite for their lasting contribution to the scholarship necessary to resuscitate his place in New Zealand's art history. For this issue of *Bulletin*, I had the delightful opportunity to reminisce on Bensemann with two artists who knew him well, Quentin MacFarlane and John Coley.

Organised by Pataka Museum of Arts and Cultures, **10 Down: A Wayne Youle Survey** explores issues of race and perceptions of Māori culture, both historical and contemporary, through an eclectic selection of works—some challenging and some with tongue firmly in cheek. And in the Burdon Family Gallery, filling the family-friendly spot, is **Blast! Pat Hanly: the painter and his protests**. A talented painter who is represented in this Gallery's collection, and a keen sailor, Hanly was an important figure in the story of New Zealand's efforts to remain nuclear free. This exhibition aims to introduce a new generation to the fine art of protest.

Contributing to *Bulletin* this quarter is children's author Trish Gribben, who writes on Pat Hanly and the exhibition behind which she was the driving force. Ross Calman sheds some light on the subjects of Fiona Pardington's majestic portraits in the **He Taonga Rangatira: Noble Treasures** room of **Brought to Light**, and Roger Boyce looks at Wayne Youle's investigation of racial stereotypes and the exotic 'other'. Contributing their time and memories are Jason Greig and Roy Montgomery, who take a trip to the Otira Gorge with curator Peter Vangioni, and of course, Quentin MacFarlane and John Coley, another former director of the Gallery. 'Pagework' is supplied by Melbourne-based artist Christian Capurro, and 'My Favourite' is provided by local art historian Julie King.

**Jenny Harper**  
Director  
*February 2011*

MARCH, APRIL, MAY

#### DE-BUILDING

*Until 15 May*

An exhibition inspired by a moment usually hidden from gallery-goers—when the show ends, the doors close and the 'de-build' begins. Brought together from New Zealand, Australia, Europe and the United States, the artists in this exhibition make the gallery itself part of the art—puncturing walls, adjusting and aggravating the architecture and revealing spaces usually hidden from view.

**William A. Sutton and Ravenscar Galleries**

*Exhibition catalogue and iPod audio tour available*

#### LEO BENSEMANN: A FANTASTIC ART VENTURE

*Until 15 May*

A comprehensive retrospective of an influential and talented Canterbury artist and designer. A painter of portraits and landscapes and a prominent member of The Group, Bensemann is equally well known for his significant contribution to New Zealand graphic design and typography through his work with Christchurch's The Caxton Press.

**Touring Gallery C and Borg Henry Gallery**

*Exhibition catalogue and iPod audio tour available*

#### VAN DER VELDEN: OTIRA

*Until 15 May*

The wild, untouched natural splendour of the Otira Gorge has long been a source of inspiration for artists. This exhibition brings together for the first time a comprehensive selection of paintings and drawings from van der Velden's celebrated Otira series, illustrating his intensely personal and powerful vision of the region's beauty.

**Touring Galleries A and B**

*Exhibition catalogue and iPod audio tour available*

#### 10 DOWN: A WAYNE YOULE SURVEY

*4 March – 6 June*

Ten years of sharp-witted art making by North Canterbury artist Wayne Youle. Of Ngāti Whakaeke, Ngā Puhi and European descent, Youle tackles matters of race, religion and cultural diversity with humour and energy. This survey presents more than fifty-five works in many media in a dense salon-style hang that contains plenty to amuse, offend and inspire.

*Toured by Pataka Museum of Arts and Cultures*

**Monica Richards and Tait Electronics Galleries**

*iPod audio tour available*

#### BLAST! PAT HANLY: THE PAINTER AND HIS PROTESTS

*5 March – 29 May*

Introducing a new generation to Pat Hanly's anti-nuclear paintings, this boldly colourful exhibition highlights New Zealand's nuclear-free status and the protests of the past. Together with Gil Hanly's documentary photographs, Hanly's paintings celebrate an important period in our history.

*A Lopdell House Gallery touring exhibition*

**Burdon Family Gallery**

#### BROUGHT TO LIGHT: A NEW VIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Things are changing all the time in **Brought to Light**—from historical works on paper through to acquisitions purchased in the last few months. Don't miss **Storytellers**—a sumptuous new display of nineteenth-century narrative painting with many Victorian favourites as well as Petrus van der Velden's extraordinary *The Dutch funeral*. In the contemporary section, it's impossible to miss Judy Darragh's eye-popping installation *Cats and dogs*, along with fresh works by Max Gimblett from his recent major gift. *iPod video tour available*

#### OUTER SPACES

The Gallery's **Outer Spaces** are alive with exciting projects: Jae Hoon Lee creates a sublime hillscape for the Worcester Boulevard billboard, Kay Rosen unleashes a deep beep on the bunker and Mark Braunias lets loose his cast of characters in the education corridor.

#### SUBSONIC

The autumn **Subsonic** programme features a variety of sounds in the carpark stairwell from the Torlesse Supergroup.





FOR MANY PASSERS-BY, Christchurch Art Gallery is identified by its dramatic glass façade—the public face it presents to the world. But **De-Building** is an exhibition that offers a very different view. Bringing together the work of fourteen artists from New Zealand and farther afield, this group exhibition draws inspiration from the working spaces gallery-goers seldom see: the workshops, loading bays and back corridors; the scruffy, half-defined zones. Instead of resting contentedly inside the Gallery, this art itches to go *through* and *behind*—to sand, cut and hammer away at the skin of the building and see what’s uncovered in the process. Along the way, it seizes the right to make creative misuse of whatever is lying around, from display cases, tools and screws to crates and packing materials. If the Gallery seems a little rattled or even offended by all this attention, that’s only as it should be. Any fascinated inquiry is going to generate some friction and tension along the way.

What follows are closer looks at four works in the show, drawn from the **De-Building** handbook we’ve just published.

**Justin Paton**  
*Senior curator*





Left:  
Callum Morton *Monument #24: Goodies* 2011. Wood, pneumatic machinery, soundtrack, sound equipment. Courtesy the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne

Right:  
Susan Collis *As good as it gets* (detail) 2008/10. 18 carat white gold (hallmarked), white sapphire, turquoise, edition of 10. Courtesy the artist and Seventeen, London

## CALLUM MORTON

The crates in which expensive artworks travel are formidably well-built things. And the thing that they are built to do is keep the world out. Their security seals, vapour barriers and foil linings are all designed to repel any threat to the precious object within.

But there are also plenty of stories about crates and shipping boxes that have trouble on the inside—crates whose interiors have been infiltrated by drugs, weapons, nasty insects, smuggled creatures and (in the worst of these stories) human cargo. The post 9/11 terrorist panic has combined with the fevered imaginings of Hollywood thrillers (snakes on a plane!) to turn crates into up-to-the-minute objects of anxiety. Forget about endangered artworks, this paranoid point-of-view suggests. That big box in the loading bay could be a threat to you.

In Callum Morton's colossal new sculpture, those two fears—the threat to art from outside the crate, and the threat to us from inside it—are spectacularly and noisily combined. What connects

both threats in Morton's scenario is the fact they're more imagined than real. After all, a crate you can see inside is just a crate. A closed crate like Morton's, by contrast, is a mystery object, the start of a plot, a place for rumours and suspicions to germinate. And when the crate is big enough to park a small truck inside, our suspicions grow correspondingly grandiose. At once funny and fearful, *Monument #24: Goodies* turns the art gallery into a breeding box for anxiety—a place where mild and unthreatening things grow to tyrannical proportions, looming in the collective mind. Why's it so big? How did it come to be sitting in a room barely large enough to hold it? And why—this really is the unswervable question—does it shudder violently every few minutes and emit a very loud miaow? This is art-anxiety, supersized. Fear in a funhouse mirror.



Most gallery-goers will have a story of *The Show They Just Missed*—of trekking for miles across an unfamiliar city to see a wonderful exhibition, only to discover that it's just finished or hasn't yet started. The surest sign you've missed the main event is a row of screws on the wall—irrefutable evidence that the show is changing over and the art is somewhere offstage.

In the material world of Susan Collis, that kind of evidence should never be trusted. Since encountering her beautifully duplicitous sculptural variations on the lonely row of screws, I doubt I'll ever turn and leave a space where 'nothing' is on show without taking at least a quick second look. Collis's work

*As good as it gets* consists of nothing more than three blue Rawlplugs and a single screw embedded in the gallery wall. Except that the screw is not really a screw at all but a meticulously crafted dupe, an undercover artwork fashioned from no less a substance than 18 carat white gold. The Rawlplugs

are the product of an equally exotic bit of subterfuge, with turquoise doing its best imitation of hardware-store plastic.

Ever since Marcel Duchamp came up with his 'readymade' artworks in the 1910s, artists have been granting value to mass-produced objects by relocating them in the gallery context, short-circuiting the old expectation that artists should handcraft their work. But when Collis handcrafts an object that *pretends* to be mass-produced, the outcome is more wayward and perverse. Screws after all are worker objects, so cheap they're bought by the sack-full. So is Collis honouring the role of these humble items by recreating them in luxury metals? Or is she demonstrating the arbitrariness of that value by concealing precious metal as mass-produced steel—performing an act of reverse alchemy in which gold is forced to come down in the world and lead a normal life? Whatever the answer, there's no missing Collis's larger point, which is all about attention. In this artwork, riches only come to those who look very close.

## SUSAN COLLIS



When Fiona Connor came to Christchurch Art Gallery in mid 2010, one of the first things she asked about was the row of windows on the building's south façade. It took me a moment to remember which she meant—and for good reason. Though the windows in question were designed to connect the exhibition spaces with the flow of life outside, they've been walled up internally ever since the Gallery opened. In that state, they bluntly bear out Brian O'Doherty's famous assertion about galleries obeying 'laws as rigorous as those for building a medieval church. The outside world must not come in, so windows are usually sealed off.'

## FIONA CONNOR

Windows and what lies behind them were on Connor's mind for good reason. She was visiting the Gallery to look at a location for *What you bring with you to work*, her installation of facsimile domestic window frames that are inserted directly into gallery walls. The usual function of

windows in a building is to let the outside in, admitting light and air into the dark interior. What makes Connor's work so memorable is the clarity with which it reverses this equation, effectively letting the inside out. The homely ordinariness of the windows is startling enough in the institutional setting, as if a home-building demo yard had suddenly commandeered the Gallery as a showroom. But the real shock and delight occurs when you step closer and find yourself peering into the working space behind the wall, the dusty landscape of the de-build.

By opening new windows inside a building, Connor provides a giddy sense of how thin and provisional that thing called a gallery really is—a matter of white paint and some hastily buttressed walls. Yet it would be wrong to characterise Connor's work solely as a back-of-house exposé or hard-headed 'intervention'. These are not anonymous openings, after all, but specific domestic windows. In fact, the look of each window is the product of Connor's collaboration with some very specific viewers—a group of gallery attendants whose bedroom windows she has faithfully duplicated. With this back-story in place, approaching each window becomes an even stranger and more intimate business, as if you're looking into someone else's space through someone else's eyes. In addition to all the materials she reveals behind the scenes (sawdust, four-by-twos, paper), what Connor brings into play here are the 'immaterials' of gallery life—the thoughts, memories, imaginings and dreamlife of those who walk through and mind the exhibition.



Left:  
Fiona Connor *What you bring with you to work* (detail) 2010. Window frames, glass, timber, fittings, wax, paint, 7 windows exhibited from a group of 9. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 2010

Right:  
Peter Robinson *Cache* (detail) 2011. Polystyrene, steel. Courtesy the artist and Sue Crockford Gallery, Auckland



For many viewers, I suspect the most 'live' and memorably unstable work in *De-Building* will be Peter Robinson's installation—memorable precisely because it leaves viewers unsure of both the art's physical safety and their own.

Consisting of approximately 100 cubic metres of polystyrene and over 300 metres of steel reinforcing rod, and completed only days before opening after a week of *in situ* experimentation, *Cache* is the latest and most spectacular of Robinson's meditations on the strange objects that galleries employ to protect works of art.

The curious origin of this obsession was a trip Robinson took in the early 2000s to London's Tate Modern, where he saw Robert Morris's famous mirror box sculpture of 1965/71 fenced in by protective stanchions. Not only was the experience of the work, in Robinson's words, 'completely destroyed by the very device that was meant to protect it', he also found himself seized by anxiety that visitors would trip on the stanchions and thus do double damage—to the art and to themselves.

In a series of installations since then, Robinson has pushed this brand of institutional overprotectiveness into overdrive, creating worlds in which there is no longer any telling the protective devices from the things they protect. While much has been said about Robinson's spectacular deployment of that familiar packaging

## PETER ROBINSON

material, polystyrene, his *De-Building* installation marks the full-force arrival of a new preoccupation with steel reinforcing rod. Bent into abstract snarls and tangles, angling across the floor, rising up four metres and more in the form of shelves or two-footed 'super stanchions', mutely blocking our paths or threatening to snag us as we squeeze past, and generally filling the room with a kind of vibrant three-dimensional drawing, Robinson's new steelwork calls to mind a dizzying range of art historical precedents, from Picasso and Julio González through to Anthony Caro and Jesús Rafael Soto. But in its teetering height and jungle-gym profusion, and its constant combination with slabs and rocky lumps of polystyrene, what it calls to mind most forcefully is the look of half-completed buildings, where rusty steel rod protrudes in every direction from freshly laid concrete. Where the role of this steel in the construction industry is to hold buildings together, Robinson uses it here to opposite effect—creating a portrait of the gallery as a profoundly unstable place. A place where we need to watch our step. A de-building site.

*De-Building* appears in the William A. Sutton and Ravenscar Galleries as well as the Twinset monitors and Bunker mural until 15 May. The artists included are Billy Apple, Monica Bonvicini, Eddie Clemens, Susan Collis, Fiona Connor, Glen Hayward, Pierre Huyghe, Liz Larner, Gordon Matta-Clark, Callum Morton, Peter Robinson, Kay Rosen, Santiago Sierra and Rachel Whiteread.

### EVENT

SATURDAY 16 APRIL  
Friends / Art in the Morning / De-Building  
Senior curator Justin Paton leads a lively walk-and-talk through the show exploring the 'love/hate relationship' between contemporary artists and the gallery spaces they show in.  
8.30am / Alchemy / Friends \$18 / public \$28 / breakfast included / book by 13 April



Wayne Youle *When I Grow up I Want to be Black* 2006. Polaroid photograph. Private collection, Auckland. Reproduced courtesy of the artist

Roger Boyce

# Something Like Us

EARLY IN MY CAREER I was mentored by an artist who ‘happened to be a black woman’. As a result, I was exposed to a number of important North American artists—folk who happened to be ethnic-minorities. Their artworld coming-of-age myths were consistently punctuated with capstone stories of their youthfully dawning, fly-in-the-buttermilk awareness of coloured-folks’ near absence from fine-art depiction—that is, absent as anything more than irregular, exotic, ‘others’. Regularly cited as maiden art-museum-sightings of ‘folks who look something like us’ were Gauguin’s vahines, Delacroix’s North African odalisques, the lone black male on Gericault’s raft and Gérôme’s comely slave market chattel.

This scarcity or exotic-fringe status of darker human depiction persists from high art to tourist-trade postcards. The annexation of ideas about, and pictures of, post-colonial brown populations has guaranteed a steady stream of demonised (dusky rogue males), devotionally apotheosised (brown folk as ‘natural’ surrogates for birthing otherwise barren late-capitalist spirituality), nobly neutered (umber incarnations of Rousseau’s noble savage) or alluring (copper-skinned maidens) coloured-folk, who to this day populate Pākehā imagination.

Like the archetypal meeting of foot and banana peel, the questions of socio-cultural identity kicked up by artists of colour have slippery and sometimes unintended consequences. Wayne Youle—in step with a sure-footed group of tribally and ethnically affiliated artists—mulishly insists on carrying culturally charged content onto art’s contestable field; while doing so, he demonstrates a preternatural understanding of the perilous nature of crafting work that investigates the slithery properties of personal and corporate heritage.

Youle’s practice brings to mind a subset of celebrated artists whose works broadcast the ticklish ‘identity’ business they are engaged in frankly—while lithely avoiding clumsy artless scolding or preaching from some sort of fictive moral high ground. These artists fashion graceful visual-witticisms that serve as interference-running carriers for racial identity’s tragicomic politics and ungainly weight.

Over the last decade, Youle has paid irreverent and affectionate homage—in word and creative deed—to a long list of New Zealand and international contemporary artists. Artists as diverse as Michael Parekowhai, Shane Cotton, Peter Robinson, Kerry James Marshall and Kara Walker. But his announced kinships could just as easily include





**MAORI**



**PAKEHA**







**‘Youle’s story is a particular and personal yarn—bristling and informed by small sharp ideas that add up to a telling and intimately persuasive aggregate tale.’**

Above:  
Wayne Youle *Often Liked, Occasionally Beaten* (detail) 2004. Resin and cardboard sticks. Private collection, Auckland. Reproduced courtesy of the artist

Left:  
Wayne Youle *12 Shades of Bullshit* 2003. Enamel paint on acrylic. Newbold Collection, Masterton. Reproduced courtesy of the artist

Right:  
Wayne Youle *The Old Man’s Magic Wand* (detail) 2006. Mixed media. Private collection, Wellington. Reproduced courtesy of the artist

Previous page:  
Wayne Youle *I am what you make me (150 bags)* (detail) 2009. Unique pigment ink photograph, 150 hand-cut paper bags, wooden shelf. Reproduced courtesy of the artist and Tim Melville Gallery, Auckland



a previous generation of artists such as David Hammons, Jimmie Durham, James Luna and Robert Colescott, as well as contemporaries like Korean-American artist Byron Kim.

Byron Kim’s *Cosmetic Portrait Series* (skin-shade ovals) and Youle’s *12 Shades of Bullshit* (variously pigmented European and Māori silhouettes) systematically chart perceptual indices of colour and race with an allusive melanin palette. And Youle’s heretical re-colouring and re-utilisation of sacrosanct Kiwi icons, such as the impiously repurposed and atypically rainbow-hued heitikis in *Often Liked, Occasionally Beaten*, is at one in purpose with Robert Colescott’s farcically forced colour-mixing within the confines of sacrosanct American history painting.

At their best, Youle’s chromatic visual puns (*Ups and Downs*) approach the economical ad hoc nonchalance of David Hammons’s ‘coloured’ power-reversals (*How Ya Like Me Now* and *African American Flag*), whilst the artist’s conjuring of unlikely content through make-do and fetishistic ornamentation of otherwise insignificant consumerist stuff (such as the lethally and decoratively studded baseball bat of *The Old Man’s Magic Wand*) effortlessly evokes the finer hunting and gathering moments of James Luna and Jimmie Durham.

The exhibition’s toughest single work is *When I Grow up I Want to be Black*. Here we see the artist transformed cosmetically into an absurdist minstrel manqué—through the historically suspect expedience of blackface makeup. Youle’s self-portrait stares from its shadowy frame at minority-youth’s near-global and near-slavish adoption of commercially franchised African-American hip-hop styles. But more unflinchingly central to the work’s conceptual luminosity is the candid light it sheds on the relatively light-skinned, bicultural Youle’s visually ambiguous status as a person of colour and Ngāti Whakaeke, Ngā Puhi descendant.

In this work and others Youle performs feats of conceptual legerdemain—pulling ameliorative humour from the sad and battered coal-pail of racial stereotype—with what appears to be the greatest of ease. And, in doing so he joins a formidable cohort of artists who practice a globally ubiquitous ‘dark’ contemporary visual art.

Unlike the overarching and generalising master narratives constructed to explain (or explain away) various colonial expansions, diasporas, New World passages, assimilations and cultural extinctions, Youle’s story is a particular and personal

yarn—bristling and informed by small sharp ideas that add up to a telling and intimately persuasive aggregate tale.

Larger forces regularly attempt to rewrite tangata whenua’s stories. In the wake of colonial and post-colonial rewrites, individuals and groups of folk may adopt newly defined roles by stitching what’s left of old ways onto new. They may assimilate and adapt, try to stick to the original script (if not un-readably effaced), or pragmatically reconstruct (think Māori or Harlem Renaissance). A prime Aotearoan example of the latter strategy would be the long-standing Māori practice of setting te reo lyrics to ubiquitous, and popular, western melodies. Melodies adapted from sources as varied as the Methodist songbook, country-and-western chestnuts and Disney’s compositional archives. Youle’s practice is shot through with this same sort of enviable, make-do, magpie-syncretism.

Visual rallery is regularly employed by minority-group artists to repossess and re-publish pictures ‘in our own image’. It’s a long-playing strategy. Just as Moliere, Rabelais and Swift understood the audacious ability of social satire to address notions of difference, so does Youle employ similar devices to disrupt, interrupt, and pre-empt presumptuous social monologues about race and ethnicity. Prevailing and insubstantial ideas about exotic otherness may bind the imagination of both describer and described, but in that frozen moment of amusement or outrage an artist can interject comic (but content-bearing) notions of human concordance.

As an artist of colour, Wayne Youle takes his complicated experience as such and disregards prohibitions against trespassing sequestered reserves of mainstream and tribal tapu. In doing so he locates and makes manifest the elaborate root and branch from which grows our sundry, but consistently tragicomic, experience of the world and each other.

#### Roger Boyce

*Roger Boyce is an artist, critic, and educator living in Christchurch.*

**10 Down: A Wayne Youle Survey** is in the Monica Richards and Tait Electronics Galleries from 4 March until 6 June.

Toured by Pataka Museum of Arts and Cultures

#### EVENTS

-----  
WEDNESDAY 20 APRIL  
Meet the Artist /  
Wayne Youle  
There is plenty to amuse,  
offend and inspire in **10 Down:  
A Wayne Youle Survey**.  
Join the artist for a floortalk  
through the exhibition.  
6pm / meet at the front desk  
Sponsored by The Press

SATURDAY 21 MAY  
Friends / Art in the Morning /  
10 Years Working  
North Canterbury-artist  
Wayne Youle’s work addresses  
issues of identity, race and the  
commodification of cultural  
symbols with the iconoclastic  
sense of humour that has  
become his trademark. Join  
Wayne as he talks about the  
exhibition **10 Down: A Wayne  
Youle Survey**.  
8.30am / Alchemy / Friends \$18 /  
public \$28 / breakfast included /  
book by 18 May



Leo Bensemann was one of the most respected figures in the Christchurch arts scene, and played a pivotal role in influential arts collective The Group. Always something of an odd-man-out, he produced a large body of work across several different disciplines before his death in 1986. In an attempt to get a fuller picture of the man himself, Gallery director Jenny Harper spoke to two artists who knew him well, John Coley and Quentin MacFarlane.

# Talking Bensemann

**JENNY HARPER:** *How did you first come to know Leo Bensemann? As art students in Christchurch during the 1950s, were you particularly aware of his presence or reputation in the city's arts scene?*

**QUENTIN MACFARLANE:** I went to art school in 1954, a year ahead of John, and probably met Leo at a Group show, because otherwise there was no reason for us to go to The Caxton Press. At the time he would have been about forty-three. We got to know him and a number of other senior artists through Bill Sutton during our art school years, and they became our friends.

**JOHN COLEY:** I came from Palmerston North into what was a fairly vibrant cultural scene in Christchurch. The thing I noticed was that there was not only a colony of established artists, an amazing group of art students and a large, supportive arts community, but also a number of European émigrés—people like Rudi Gopas, Frank Gross and André Brooke. It was an interesting and exciting time.

Leo was highly respected and had a long history of cultural activity in the city. He was associated with Rita Angus and Doris Holland, was a leading member of The Group and was a noted typographer and print designer. Although a third-generation New Zealander, he was of German heritage, and I felt he was more in tune with the group of recent arrivals from Europe. They had a

different attitude to the kind of received English-oriented tuition of the art school. They would gather in coffee shops and argue about art, books and ideas generally.

**JH:** *John, you and Bensemann both painted each other's portraits—what was he like as a sitter? And conversely, how was it sitting for him?*

**JC:** Brian Muir, director of the Robert McDougall at the time, devised an exhibition called *Canterbury Confrontations* for the Pan Pacific Arts Festival. A group of local artists drew names out of a hat to be paired to paint each other. Carl Sydow exhibited an X-ray of Alan Pearson's skull while Pearson made a fine oil study of Sydow. I drew Leo's name and he drew mine and, although I had only done one head study since leaving art school, Leo came to sit for me. But he would have been on the sauce the night before and he'd nod off—his head would slowly droop, and I would actually have to follow him down drawing as I went. When he realised I was having a struggle he gave me some extra sittings. But I got the portrait done; it's now in the Gallery's collection. In his portrait I feel Leo got my essential character somehow—sort of a hawk-like bird peering out, looking stern but soft centred. Leo gave me the portrait, and we called it the 'Ayatollah Coley' in our family because of its resemblance to the Muslim cleric.



Leo Bensemann Self  
Portrait 1938. Oil on  
canvas. McLaughlin  
family foundation,  
New York. Reproduced  
with permission

**JH:** *As one of the older generation of artists in The Group, what did you feel his attitude was towards younger members?*

**JC:** We always appreciated Leo's praise when it came because we respected him greatly—he carried with him a kind of aura of knowledge and good judgement. He had a tremendous work ethic but he lived a fairly robust life as well. We used to marvel at his capacity to out-drink people and yet maintain his equilibrium and his intelligence. He was always interested in and encouraging of the younger artists.

The Group shows were a great attraction when I came to Christchurch as a student. Later, as a young man, to be invited to join The Group was a tremendous honour.

**QM:** When we joined The Group it was quite strange. There were divisions in it, and I think that some of the older artists resented the younger members (we were probably fairly pushy, being in our twenties) but Leo had our absolute admiration and was really keen on revitalising things. Of course, there were other people who championed the young too—Frank Gross was very warm hearted—and you soon got to know who these people were.

**JC:** They always popped around to see you at work, and have a talk to you about art.





Leo Bensemann *St Francis* c.1937. Oil on canvas board. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, Lawrence Baigent/Robert Erwin bequest 2003. Reproduced with permission

*‘He had a tremendous intellectual integrity and he was very much his own man. He wouldn’t be swayed by any ‘ism’ or movement or strong influence that came through.’*

**QM:** There was also the so-called ‘boozing’ culture. But going to the pub after work was going to see your friends and talk about art in general—it was part of Christchurch’s great strength, that people did get together. Leo and his printers’ circle would drink a couple of beers... they’d let the beer go flat and then drink it, and then they would follow that with what they called ‘stingos’—double whisky and water. In those days of 6 o’clock closing we would meet for a drink at the Market Hotel and all those rat bags would be in the back bar waiting for the pub to close so they could carry on behind closed doors after 6pm.

**JC:** The Market meetings were great tutorials actually. You could learn a lot from those fellows. I certainly did.

**JH:** *What was Bensemann like?*

**QM:** I always regarded him as fairly reserved, but years later I realised that he was quite a shy man.

**JC:** He had a tremendous intellectual integrity and he was very much his own man. He wouldn’t be swayed by any ‘ism’ or movement or strong influence that came through. Perhaps Rita Angus had an influence on him, but he really followed his own path, which was actually dictated by kind of a north German rigour and craftsmanship. Although Leo was born in New Zealand, he had strong ties with the region around Hamburg and it influenced the style of his work. You can see quite a Grimm Brothers’ fairy-tale fantasist in his illustrations.

**QM:** Those wonderful pencil drawings, they just take your breath away. And the sense of craftsmanship that he carried with him, that was one of the reasons you respected him, because he was self taught in almost everything he did. I don’t believe he ever attended a school of typography—I think he learned that on the job at The Caxton Press. I could be wrong there, but he certainly had an exquisite sense of design. He also taught himself to play the guitar, and was a very skilled classical guitarist. In fact, classical guitar performers giving concerts would stay with Leo. He would make them welcome and they respected him. He played an enormous range of music really.

**JC:** Leo’s generation were born around the First World War, brought up in difficult times when options were restricted. Quentin’s and my generation had much more freedom in

the post-War 1950s. Leo and the older artists appeared very mannerly, courtly almost in their interactions—a hint of Edwardian virtues. They had pretty good parties but were always in control. I think of them in well-tailored tweed jackets, Viyella shirts, knitted or club ties, Bedford cord trousers, desert boots—Rex Harrison, Michael Redgrave sort of chaps. Of course, Leo could get quite acerbic and you didn’t want to get on the wrong side of him—he could bite back sharply if something especially provocative was said. His eyebrows would get lower...

**QM:** They would join in the middle.

**JC:** ... and he would point his pipe and then shake it at the offender and say something like, ‘Do you really believe that? That’s nonsense! Now think of this...’ He wouldn’t let a fuzzy idea go unchallenged, but he would never hold a grudge.

But I used to worry about him. I worked nearby at the Teachers’ College, as indeed did Quentin, and I used to go to the Post Office over the road and I’d see ambulances going into the Caxton. And I always thought they would be there to pick up Leo and take him to hospital because I didn’t know how a human being could sustain the kind of life that he led. I mean, he drank a lot of beer, or appeared to, and certainly worked till late. So I thought he was due for a heart attack. He said, ‘You always seem to show great interest in my health, John’, and I said ‘Well I see the ambulances going in and I get terribly frightened that one might be for you dear chap’. To which he replied, ‘John, they are going to the automotive repair place next door to check up on their internal electronics.’

**QM:** I’ll give you an idea of what it was like when we went to the pub. We used to drink at the Market Hotel—all the artists used to go there—until they pulled the building down and we moved up to the New Albion, which was a family pub opposite Johnson’s Grocery in a little village-like enclave in Colombo Street. There would be Leo talking with Bill Sutton, Norman Barrett, myself, Trevor Moffitt, you sometimes...

**JC:** Trevor Moffitt was more a regular than me.

**QM:** And in would walk the stork-like figure of Rudi Gopas, forever smoking the same cherry-wood pipe. The artists talked about art, intermingled with people whose conversation centred around North Canterbury. Leo was inclined to get brisk with Gopas, and the situation would be managed by a gentlemanly



Leo Bensemann *Albion Wright* 1947. Oil on canvas on board. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, N. Barrett Bequest Collection, purchased 2010. Reproduced with permission

Mr Barrett, with Bill offering advice from the sideline. There was never a punch-up.

In the sixties and seventies, Leo would be wearing quite stout open-necked shirts with shorts; sometimes in the winter he would have a collar and tie with a tweed coat and corduroy trousers. He hadn’t really changed from the thirties. And he would be wearing these Riekers, but he had a curious sort of way of tying them up on the side (they didn’t have the laces on the front down the middle) that was very Germanic.

**JC:** The strange thing about Leo was that although he had been born here, he still had a strong spiritual connection to his ancestral homeland. There was no doubt that, to us as young people, he was in a way as foreign as Rudi Gopas or André Brooke were. Wonderfully exciting men because through their example, work and conversation they were enormously influential. Leo seemed to be a latter-day European immigrant in a way—and greatly respected.

He could speak German, and certainly read it. He had studied with his mother and probably his grandmother. He had a broad cultural view that seemed to be characteristic of the German migrant families in Nelson. In Leo’s time, and indeed today, only a small percentage of artists could live comfortably from painting alone. In his case it was printing that provided for his family, his wife and children.

**JH:** *Did you ever visit him at The Caxton Press?*

**QM:** Once or twice I had to go around to the Caxton to pick up the invitations, which always amazed me. We would take a handwritten copy around and he would handset the whole thing—he must have worked through the night to get the Group Show catalogues done.

I actually got to know Leo in a slightly different way when I first began teaching in Christchurch during the 1960s and taught three of his children. There were two girls and a boy, and I got to know Leo as a parent, as well as a well-respected friend. I set up the school magazine and I had to take all the copy over to Leo and he was wonderful. He would be there standing behind the



typesetter's 'stone', as they called it, and was always so helpful. He never got flustered.

He used to work for Bullivant's—the big advertising agency and printery—doing graphic art so it was quite a big move for him to go to Caxton, which certainly struggled in its early years. It had a bravely liberal reputation, taking chances on new novelists, poets, journals. Caxton published *Landfall* and *Acsent*.

**JC:** There was lot of heart in that business—everyone at Caxton took great pride in their work, largely due to Leo's and Dennis Donovan's attitudes and leadership.

**JH:** *Well, are there any good stories about Group shows or openings that you could share with us?*

**JC:** They were a great annual affair, the star show of the year, really. All the Canterbury Society of Art shows were seasonal ones, but then here was this marvellous show where artists invited their peers to exhibit with them, exposing all this new talent. You could come from anywhere: Colin McCahon, a member of The Group, might recommend Janet Paul and so she would send a number of works. A Group show was really a collection of self-curated one-person shows. One of the characteristics of the arts scene in Christchurch at the time was that you had this big exhibition space, the CSA, but no one artist could fill it adequately in a solo show without working for three or four years, so the alternative was to exhibit in the CSA group exhibitions. The Group had been formed as a kind of self-selecting democracy of artists to avoid this situation.

There were a lot of wonderful stories around hanging shows before an opening. An elaborate dance would be performed while the senior artists decided in which part of the gallery they would or could display their work, and who would hang where. Tantrums would erupt over the prime spaces.

**QM:** I have got to say that Leo never suffered from that.

**JC:** No, he was very accommodating but with one or two others there would almost inevitably be some kind of spat.

**QM:** Usually between Frank Gross and Rudi Gopas. If one of Rudi's star ex-pupils, perhaps Philip Clairmont, was showing, he would make sure that he was put in a good position, even if it meant he had to move someone else's work.

**JC:** It was always richly fascinating and I still think that they were



Leo Bensemann *Pass in Winter* 1971. Oil. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, Harry Courtney Archer estate 2002. Reproduced with permission

*‘Even if you couldn’t quite get on the same wavelength you respected the individuality of his vision, which stemmed from and grew entirely out of the core of his being.’*

extraordinarily important. Not only for developments in Canterbury art but as a contemporary art forum for the entire country.

**QM:** In the end though, I remember them being relieved in some respects that The Group was winding up because I think they were finding it difficult to maintain progress.

**JC:** I think Leo had something to do with that—he was a pragmatic man and a good businessman as well. He discerned that The Group idea was playing out. It had lasted almost forty years, but increasingly artists were saving their work for one-person shows at the dealer galleries that were springing up through the country. Even the highly respected Russell Clark only had his first one-man show at the CSA in 1957. I was astonished to find that was his first one-man show at around sixty years old.

**QM:** In Christchurch, the CSA was beginning to represent and promote individual artists. And the Brooke Gifford Gallery had opened two years before...

**JC:** The senior artists tended to get into other venues. Bill was showing some big works up in the Academy. Leo, who was a good friend of Barbara Brooke's, one of the owners of the Brooke Gifford Gallery, probably talked him into his first show there. It was a most successful show. It meant though that some of those people who had produced about five or six paintings a year had to really get down to it and produce more work if they planned a one-person exhibition.

**JH:** *As painters yourselves, what do you think of him as an artist?*

**QM:** When I remember his work in The Group I think I personally regarded it as being fairly strict and almost primitive. I didn't until years later realise that there were undertones of symbolism and surrealism in it, but it took me quite a while to get used to it. Everyone had a distinct handwriting to their work; Leo certainly did.

As Bill Sutton said, you didn't need to see a signature on a Leo Bensemann to know it. Years later I discovered that Leo had made his name as a portraitist—he was remarkably fast apparently at painting a portrait, but he would get the initial likeness and then give it the Bensemann stamp.

**JC:** He put a little bit of himself into the portrait. And he could actually paint women, which Bill Sutton said he, Bill, couldn't do.

Look at Leo's portrait of Rita Angus, a work of tremendous presence, absolutely marvellous.

I struggled sometimes with his landscapes, but then I struggled with other landscapes that I wasn't sure about. His were so out of left field that they were difficult to cope with—he made the mist over the Takaka Hills look like a tablecloth and he would make strange quirky things. He was a singular person with an original vision that demanded long, hard looking.

**QM:** That is exactly what I felt, admired or was intrigued by. Even if you couldn't quite get on the same wavelength you respected the individuality of his vision, which stemmed from and grew entirely out of the core of his being.

There was one aspect about Leo's painting that was interesting: he would listen to criticism about his work, but he had not the slightest intention to change. He never let a work out of his studio until he thought it was totally complete. Whenever we dealt with him at the Brooke Gifford Gallery, he would make sure that everything was varnished within an inch of its life so that it met his standards. On very rare occasions he would take a painting away, do something to it, and bring it back.

Some of the symbolism in the later works used to baffle me a bit, but then as I got to know more about his background after his death I began to see a lot more in it. Actually, later I used to enjoy going out to see the works in Parnell. There was a little gallery there that would show work by some of the older generation painters and they would acquire the odd Leo. They still looked pretty good.

*John Coley is an artist and former director of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch. Quentin MacFarlane is a marine and modernist artist. They were interviewed by Jenny Harper in Auckland on 22 December 2010.*

**Leo Bensemann: A Fantastic Art Venture** is in Touring Gallery C and the Borg Henry Gallery until 15 May. Coinciding with the opening of the exhibition, Auckland University Press have published *Fantastica: The World of Leo Bensemann* by Peter Simpson. This copiously illustrated hardback book includes all the works in the exhibition plus many more; it is the first comprehensive survey of Leo Bensemann as artist and printer.



# BEFORE AFTER

Let's build  
a better  
Canterbury



## What do we want our region to look like after the earthquake?

Canterbury has taken a battering from the forces of nature over the past six months and it's time to look ahead to rebuilding. **BEFORE AFTER: Let's build a better Canterbury** is a public exhibition that provides a forum to discuss and debate the way forward. The exhibition is structured around five key areas: environmental planning; urban design; heritage and character; residential; and transport and infrastructure. These are illustrated using photographs and a series of questions, prompting visitors to think about what was, what is and what could be.

The exhibition is accompanied by a series of public discussions with invited speakers, which aim to engage the people of Canterbury in mapping new directions for an inspiring and sustainable region. These events are moderated by Joe Bennett and focus on each of the five key areas, with a final event wrapping up the series and looking to the future. Comments and feedback will be collected at the venue and online.

Out of this process of public engagement will come a call for ideas aimed at providing solutions for areas within Canterbury that have been affected by the earthquake

and are seen as being crucial to the future development of the region. This is a unique opportunity to generate fresh, innovative thinking in relation to Canterbury-wide issues.

***BEFORE AFTER: Let's build a better Canterbury** has been initiated by the New Zealand Institute of Architects and generously supported by Christchurch City Council and The Warren Trust. The exhibition is in the Gallery foyer until 20 March, and will be accompanied by a free discussion series in the Philip Carter Family Auditorium. For further information and the discussion dates please visit [www.beforeafter.co.nz](http://www.beforeafter.co.nz).*

Above:  
461–9 Colombo Street. Sydenham Shops  
after the 4 September Canterbury  
earthquake. Image courtesy Christchurch  
City Council

# MAKE A DONATION, MAKE A DIFFERENCE

*We invite you to become a supporter of the Christchurch Art Gallery Trust. You can help the Trust support the Gallery as it continues to grow as an internationally recognised centre of excellence, providing a stimulating and culturally enriching experience for all who visit now and in the future.*

## WAYS YOU CAN MAKE A DONATION

The Christchurch Art Gallery Trust welcomes all contributions and offers a number of ways you can make a donation.

### Annual Giving

Our three-tiered programme for making annual donations allows you to choose the level that best suits your circumstances. Each level of giving confers a number of exclusive benefits, including private dinners and cocktail functions, personal invitations and special viewings of the collection.

*Patrons' Circle* (\$10,000 and above)

*Ambassadors' Circle* (\$5,000 – \$10,000)

*Benefactors' Circle* (\$1,000 – \$5,000)

### Collection Development

*The Challenge Grant and Challenge Grant Response Fund*

The Challenge Grant is a ten-year commitment by Christchurch City Council to supplement the collection development budget by matching dollar-for-dollar any amount raised by the Trust up to a set amount per annum.

*Target 2010–11: \$200,000*

*Total raised by 31 January 2011: \$142,802.50*

*\$57,197.50 to be raised by 30 June 2011*

### Special Donations

Making a special donation means you can stipulate what you would like your contribution to be used for.

### Bequests

This is your opportunity to leave an inspirational legacy for the future by including the Gallery in your will.

*Christchurch Art Gallery formally acknowledges the major donors who contributed to the building of the Gallery.*

Hon. Margaret Austin, Kiri Borg and Brian Henry, Hon. Philip and Mrs Ros Burdon, Philip Carter, Ben Danis, Sir Neil and Lady Isaac, Neil and Diane McKeeg, Monica Richards, Robert and Barbara Stewart, Sir Robertson and Lady Stewart, Stout Trust, W.A. Sutton Trust, Sir Angus and Lady Tait, Adriaan and Gabrielle Tasman, Jim and Susan Wakefield

Many continue to support the Gallery and we thank them.

## RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS AND GIFTS

### Annual Donors

*Patrons' Circle*

Theo and Janet Giesen

Gabrielle Tasman

*Benefactors' Circle*

Anonymous

### Special Donations

Friends of Christchurch Art Gallery

Philip Carter

COCA (2010 auction proceeds)

Worcester Trust

W.A. Sutton Trust

### Major Bequests

N. Barrett

### Artist Patron

Max Gimblett

### Christchurch Art Gallery Trust Trustees

Mike Stenhouse—Chairperson

Chris Bockett, Garth Gallaway, Jenny Harper,

Bruce Irvine, Stephen Montgomery,

Guy Pask, Monica Ryan, Alexandra Stewart,

Gabrielle Tasman

**CHRISTCHURCH  
ART GALLERY  
TRUST**

Tax Status—The Christchurch Art Gallery Trust is a charitable trust registered with the Charities Commission. The Trust has tax charity status as defined under the Income Tax Act 2007.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact the Gallery's development manager.  
Tel: (+64) 3 941 7348; email: [cagtrust@ccc.govt.nz](mailto:cagtrust@ccc.govt.nz)



## OUTER SPACES

Kay Rosen **Deep Beep** 2011.  
Acrylic paint on carpark  
bunker. Courtesy the artist  
and Sikkema Jenkins & Co.,  
New York







# OTIRA

*It's a state of mind*

A short road trip to the Otira Gorge was the scene for a conversation between Gallery curator Peter Vangioni and two of the artists included in **Van der Velden: Otira**, Jason Greig and the Torlesse Supergroup's Roy Montgomery.





*‘Van der Velden’s paintings of the Otira are enormously highly regarded in Christchurch. He’s one of the Gallery’s most popular artists... the undisputed superstar of Canterbury colonial art if you like.’*

ON 19 JANUARY 1891 Petrus van der Velden set off from Christchurch for the Otira Gorge. The journey through the gorge had already earned a reputation as one of the world’s most spectacular coach trips, and was popular with artists of the time. The Otira was to become almost an obsession for van der Velden, and in it he found the motifs for which he is now best known. Retracing the artist’s journey today are curator Peter Vangioni and artists Jason Greig and Roy Montgomery. Along for the ride are *Bulletin* and the Gallery’s photographer John Collie. The journey that van der Velden made could take three days in a canvas-covered wagon—our wagon is a Toyota Camry, and our time considerably shorter. We’re aiming to be back at the Gallery by four.

However, it’s still a long drive, so we make a few stops along the way. The first is at what would have been van der Velden’s first night’s rest—Porters Pass and Lake Lyndon. The hotel that he stayed in is now long gone. Here Montgomery, who lectures in environmental management at Lincoln University, points out the wilding pines that are spreading out across the landscape. Now classified as weeds, they were originally part of erosion control projects run in the Cragieburn Range; interestingly, they can be seen in Rita Angus’s *Cass*. According to

Montgomery, during the 1930s and 1940s the eroded slopes of the region were portrayed by some scientists and conservationists as directly analogous to the Dust Bowl in the US, with overgrazing the major problem. Later research demonstrated that the erosion had more to do with rainfall and natural factors than grazing, turning on its head much of the rhetoric of soil conservation in New Zealand, but by this time the tree planting had taken root, altering the landscape from that which van der Velden would have seen.

We pass through Castle Hill Village, close to the site of the Southern Oscillation—a 2005 sound performance event at which the Torlesse Supergroup’s *Transect*, from their forthcoming album, was performed. Once envisaged as becoming the ‘Aspen of the South Island’, it now appears frozen in time. Our next stop is Bealey, a cluster of houses, baches and a hotel, and van der Velden’s second night’s resting place. Just outside of Bealey we pass a line of pylons, stretching out across the braided expanse of the Waimakariri and down the Bealey river. These Greig points out as the fruits of his father’s work as a surveyor and the reason for his childhood visits to the region.

Through Arthurs Pass we finally reach Death’s Corner, and the viewpoint at the top of the Otira Gorge. With one notable exception the view is still pretty much as

illustrated in Charles Beken’s 1910 photograph. That exception of course is the viaduct that now snakes its way through the steepest section of the gorge—which Greig compares to a ‘self-medicating wound’. From here we can still walk a section of the old road, which appears to have been swept away by one of many landslides just a little further on. Greig collects a couple of small rocks, which he later explains will be used as source material for the piece he plans to exhibit.

At the bottom of the gorge we stop to look at Mount Rolleston and search for the plaque that marks the site of the old Cobb and Co. coach stop, the George Dyer Hotel, where van der Velden spent six weeks in 1891. We can’t find it, but the view is familiar as the Gallery’s *Mount Rolleston and the Otira River*, although it looks as though van der Velden chose to open his view out for dramatic effect. Just down river a crane is using a piledriver to work on the bridge, and the noise echoes around the entire valley in a way that appears totally disproportionate to the force it delivers. It adds to the faint air of claustrophobia that we have been feeling since entering the gorge.

From there we drive on to the Otira township. Vangioni explains that by the 1930s it had become a bustling railway town. Now, however, it has a sleepy, run-down air



about it. The station lies at the centre of the town, but with only the occasional coal train and the daily TranzAlpine running through it the underpass feels a little unnecessary. We look up the hillsides and it’s clear that soon they will be scarlet with rata.

‘Otira: it’s a state of mind’ is the slogan on the t-shirt for sale inside the Otira Hotel. What state isn’t made clear. Owners Bill and Christine Hennah talk ruefully of the old photographs of the region that they lost when they last leased out the business. When we show them the exhibition catalogue Christine lights upon Derek Henderson’s 2004 photograph of children sitting on a rusty Datsun outside one of the properties. ‘I remember them,’ she says, ‘We’ve painted that place since then, but it’ll need a bit of work before it’s ready to be lived in again. Not if we don’t want people to fall through the porch anyway.’ They tell us that there are now perhaps forty-three people living in the township, and maybe ten or so houses occupied.

Vangioni buys a t-shirt, and we sit down for a cheeseburger and chips. The door to the bar creaks ominously—it’s a noise that Greig seems quite taken with:

**JASON GREIG:** That’s a good creak.

**ROY MONTGOMERY:** The other thing this place does is that when the trains are hooking up it vibrates really nicely with their movements.

**PETER VANGIONI:** The whole valley shakes?

**RM:** No, I think it’s just this hotel.

**PV:** *I first came to this hotel in 1989 after moving down to Christchurch from Palmerston North. That first drive through the Otira Gorge had a profound effect on me, and I’ve returned regularly ever since. It’s such a dramatic landscape, and the way that it envelops the traveller—there’s nothing quite like it in the North Island. When were you last here Jason?*

**JG:** I must have been a very small child, so that’s probably forty or so years ago.

**PV:** *And what are your impressions now—does it live up to any expectations you might have had before the journey?*

**JG:** To be honest, I suppose as a kid the scale of things was more overwhelming. It was only when we got to the viaduct that the scale began to match up with my memories. I suppose I had this romantic ideal of the place, but it’s hard now to make the connection with what it would have been like without roads, and without the infrastructure that’s there now. How that challenge would have coloured the images and how they would have been seen by people.

**PV:** *Is the Otira township gothic? Would you recommend it for a weekend retreat?*

**JG:** Well, I would!

**RM:** I don’t know about gothic but I do regard it as genuinely West Coast, insofar as it only exists because of earlier government policies of frontier development. Its edge is that it once tried to be a real town in a trying location. Arthurs Pass is nice enough but it seems like the playful invention of relatively cultivated Cantabrians—I’d never visit Arthurs Pass without dropping in at Otira. I’d certainly recommend it as a stopover for a day or two if not as a



retreat spot. I think the town appeals for its deserted quality and tranquillity. I don't enjoy seeing bits of it gone between visits but nor would I like to see it too refurbished.

**PV:** *It's got a real edge to it, everything is decaying, falling down, submitting to the onslaught of the very wet environment... does the town appeal for its decaying qualities?*

**JG:** Always one of the themes with me is decay, and the inevitability of decay. You put up barriers but eventually they'll be knocked or worn down. Otira's a pretty perfect example of people trying to place themselves, and not only being knocked back by the inevitability of the climate but also by bureaucracy and social pressures. I was quite surprised by meeting the owners. Maybe after fighting something for so long, it's just total acceptance and the relief that that brings, but Christine certainly didn't seem particularly down in the dumps.

**RM:** I asked them once what on earth made them buy a town. They said they just drove through and thought there was 'something special about this place' or words to that effect. It's a wee principality. When they bought it they thought it would be reasonably easy to subdivide, but that has proved far from true.

**PV:** *One thing that is constantly reinforced to me as a curator at the Gallery is that van der Velden's paintings of the Otira are enormously highly regarded in Christchurch. He is one of the Gallery's most popular artists, with a wide fan base, young and old—the undisputed superstar of Canterbury colonial art if you like. Has he been influential on either of your work?*

**RM:** I think like many people in Christchurch I was first made aware of van der Velden's work through a couple of pieces at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, both large and rather gloomy in their own way. But beyond that I haven't had much exposure so I wouldn't say he has been influential. I can see why he painted the Otira area repeatedly in that rather unsentimental fashion though.

**JG:** And I see why you wanted me to make a work for the exhibition. There's a brooding romanticism, and I get that connection. Everybody goes on about this darkness, and I can understand that too. He's dealing with the gorge, and being in a new environment and the rawness and excitement of seeing something that hasn't been processed by humanity or tamed. I guess the



analogy for me would be forces beyond his control, whereas my work is sort of about inner forces—my art is a way of getting that out. Purging it. There's a feeling of being overwhelmed by something and sort of making a stand. But I don't know whether we should be talking about darkness as much as light—light creeping in in spite of overwhelming odds, in spite of the overwhelming size of the landscape. That's what I notice about his works, the light is still there in his drawings—it creeps through.

**PV:** *So Roy, your 1995 solo album Scenes from the South Island, was quite a departure from your previous work with bands such as the Pin Group, the Shallows and Dadamah. Many of the tracks from Scenes from the South Island are, to me, very evocative of the drive up here to Otira from Christchurch. What made you record that album, and where did those tracks come from? It seemed to me that you stopped playing music in the rock tradition and began to make sounds that directly responded to the landscape—something you continue to do with your current outfit, Torlesse Supergroup.*

**RM:** I think really the two things existed in parallel. I was doing the soundscape stuff and still doing song-based things at the same time. But I just kept them separate. I suppose the soundscape compositions suited albums more and the songs suited singles. I was trotting out singles roughly at the same time. It wasn't entirely a break from conventional song structure either—in a way it was a decision I made along the way of accumulating material. I thought these three-minute things belong on 45s and these are longer pieces or more connected in some way and they belong on an album. It wasn't really a big aesthetic leap or anything like that.

**PV:** *And when you create a work, do you start with a specific idea that you want it to convey? I'm thinking here of tracks like the Torlesse Supergroup's Transect, which is included in the Otira exhibition, or your earlier Winding it out in the high country, which really does remind me of the sensation of driving fast through high-country roads.*

**RM:** In my case, I think it's probably more about starting with something melodic. It might not be much more than a pattern, but once I start adding the layers to it, then it starts to evoke something visual or experiential. And

then I start to add the top layers of the sound. So, like *Nor-wester head-on*, it might have been more pastoral to begin with, but it ends up being more like trying to stand up in a really strong wind. But I didn't know at the start when I laid down the first track that it was going to sound like that.

**JG:** So is it spontaneous?

**RM:** I don't know. I'm trying to do an interview at the moment where I get asked that question about improvisation and I don't quite know how to answer it. I rely upon a basic motif, which is not improvised. It's quite melodic, and it anchors the work, but then what I do over the top I could probably never repeat. It's a little like trying to be a band by yourself, where you say I need something to keep it going; that has to be reliable and quite premeditated.

**JG:** How are you doing that? Do you loop it or...

**RM:** No, I've never looped a thing. I struggle with all that newfangled technology. Even analogue loop stuff I've never really engaged with. I play the thing, ad infinitum if necessary, and then I start adding elements over the top and maybe the middle section might be alright, or the end.

**JG:** Have you got your own recording gear?

**RM:** Just a little cassette four track, which I've never progressed beyond. It's starting to show its age, so when that gives up I'm stuck.

**JG:** To me, this whole landscape has its own soundtrack. I mean, when we were down by that wee creek, it was bloody noisy—you don't realise until you step away from it. And here, the railway. It's the only reason the place exists, and it's getting rattled around by it.

**PV:** *Jason, you and van der Velden both create incredibly moody landscape imagery through the use of dark tones. Do you draw the same parallels? You both seem to have a natural affinity with charcoal, which is a difficult medium—why were you drawn to it? Obviously you get similar dark tonal effects through your monoprints.*

**JG:** Well now the monoprints have taken over, because they embody the same characteristics. But there's a visceral quality to the ink, which I seem to have an affinity with for some reason—it just seems I can manifest images even quicker with it. However, the charcoal definitely came first. And it was the blacks—I just really enjoyed the blacks, and then the greys that were close to the blacks tonally. Working in that chiaroscuro way, I just stumbled upon a way of drawing that intrigued me.

**PV:** *How do you work with charcoal? Do you work towards darks, or do you carve the lights into the black?*

**JG:** That's exactly what I started to do. The pieces of paper that I started working on, they weren't \$10 sheets of Arches 88 or whatever, which I would have been freaked out about using. Initially, being on the dole when you come out of art school, you think about money, and you don't want to make expensive mistakes. So I got scrap bits of paper and just started experimenting. Working it and working it until you can't get whites because you've put so much charcoal on there—it's ingrained into the fibres of the paper. And you get this richness so that when something does come into focus an image just clicks. And then you realise that a piece of paper is actually wood and it's just as tough as old boots. So you start attacking it with sandpaper to open up the fibres so you can get the whites again. And then you start mucking around with sealing parts of the drawing halfway through to mummify them so that if you do smudge over areas you can easily remove that because there's a layer of lacquer. Then you realise that you can start really getting whites back by attacking drawings with razor blades. Subtly, and not so subtly at times. And you realise even more how tough the paper is. Not many people know that. You wind up with this catalogue of techniques that you can employ. It's the same with the monoprinting. There are endless possibilities for how to treat the ink, or the charcoal.

**PV:** *This visit allowed you to view the landscape at first hand—will there remain any imaginative elements in your representation of the Otira landscape? And why did you collect those rocks at the Arthurs Pass summit, Goat Creek and the Otira township? What's the working method involved?*

**JG:** Lately I was doing a wee maquette for my Jekyll and Hyde project and it just opened up some new possibilities. It seems like such a stupidly simple thing. But it's all about timing too I guess—when the time's right and the penny drops it might as well make a big clang. I just like the idea of making something in reality. So I'll use the rocks, build another wee maquette, light it up so I can get a physical idea of the landscape. But I kind of want it to be unreal. There's the thing—taking something that doesn't exist, and I suppose really couldn't exist, and making it tangible and as if it could really be real.

**Van der Velden: Otira is in Touring Galleries A and B until 15 May. It is accompanied by a major new exhibition catalogue by Peter Vangioni and Dieuwertje Dekkers, available from the Gallery Shop or online.**

#### EVENTS

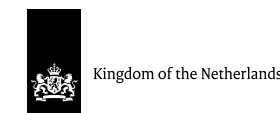
**SATURDAY 26 MARCH**  
Friends / Art in the Morning / Van der Velden: Otira  
Join curator Peter Vangioni for a floortalk on van der Velden's celebrated Otira series.  
8.30am / Alchemy / Friends \$18 / public \$28 / breakfast included / book by 23 March

**WEDNESDAY 6 APRIL**  
ArtBite / Petrus van der Velden's Mount Rolleston and the Otira River  
Join Gallery guide Margaux Warne for a short conversation in front of this iconic work.  
5.15pm / meet at the front desk

**WEDNESDAY 6 APRIL**  
Guest Speaker / Julie King: Painting Otira—The Colonial Context of Petrus van der Velden's Otira Paintings  
By the 1890s Otira was a destination for adventurous travellers, and one of New Zealand's most frequently depicted landscapes. Julie King explores the colonial context of van der Velden's Otira paintings.  
6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium  
Sponsored by The Press

**WEDNESDAY 27 APRIL**  
Guest Speaker / Neil Roberts: Petrus van der Velden—Eight Years in Canterbury  
Neil Roberts, independent art valuer and former Gallery senior curator, explores the eight years van der Velden spent in Canterbury. This formative experience led to a distinctive set of works that includes his Otira series.  
6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium  
Sponsored by The Press

**WEDNESDAY 11 MAY**  
NZ Music Month / Van der Velden Performance / Torlesse Supergroup  
Guitarists Roy Montgomery and Nick Guy are the Torlesse Supergroup. Their compositions often reflect and respond to specific geographic locations. This live performance takes place in the exhibition Van der Velden: Otira.  
6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium  
Sponsored by The Press



**FRIENDS**  
TE PUNGA O WHAREWETA  
CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY

Gabrielle Tasman

**Netherlands Foundation**  
making the dutch connection



Opposite page:  
Pat Hanly *Vessel*  
and *Blast* 1986.  
Oil on board.  
Private collection

# Storytelling with Hanly

*A show for all ages* TRISH GRIBBEN

*The exhibition **BLAST! Pat Hanly: the painter and his protests** provides a spectacular opportunity for young and old to view the work of one of New Zealand's most cherished artists together—and for precious stories to be shared with the growing generation.*

WHEN PAT HANLY DIED in September 2004 his friend, Christchurch artist John Coley, said 'It was as if his death turned a dimmer knob on daylight.' For so many of the generation who had grown up and into a love of New Zealand art in step with Pat's adventuring as an artist, those words rang deep and true. No matter how dark the subject he was treating in his art, he always managed to give his work a luminous quality, full of energy and light, often with joyous primary colours.

Pat had visited me just before he died, when I was checking the proofs of my first art book for children, *With My Little Eye—What Michael Smither sees*. I told him I wanted to follow up on that book with a similar one, based on his work. 'Too late,' he said. 'Too late. Can't be done.' But Gil, his wife, said 'Take no notice.'

When Pat died, I became all the more determined to do a book on his work for my grandchildren's generation. I so much wanted them to grow up with his vivid colours and quirky forms laid down early in their mindscapes—such images last a lifetime, I know. But where to start? Pat's body of work was so wide-ranging, from *The Fire Series*, *Figures in Light*, *Pacific*

*Ikons*, to his *Garden* series and *New Order*. His murals graced walls in Christchurch Town Hall, Auckland's Aotea Centre, Auckland Airport and many other public and private buildings. His vitality and generosity of spirit, combined with his constant artistic inventiveness, gave us iconic images that celebrate life, while warning us about the perils of how we live.

As a member of the Peace Foundation Council, I was aware that the twenty-first anniversary of the legislation making New Zealand nuclear free, passed on 8 June 1987, was approaching. And I knew at first-hand Pat Hanly's enthusiastic support for the Peace Squadron, the flotilla of small craft from surfboards to yachts and motor boats that did its best to block the visits of American nuclear-armed vessels to our harbours. (Some of the most colourful stories of Pat's life revolved around his love of the sea and sailing, even though he never learnt to swim and succeeded in terrifying most of the family and friends who dared to venture out in his little boats.) His long story of painting in protest about nuclear issues began in London in the early 1960s when he and Gil joined the marches for nuclear disarmament. Pat's paintings

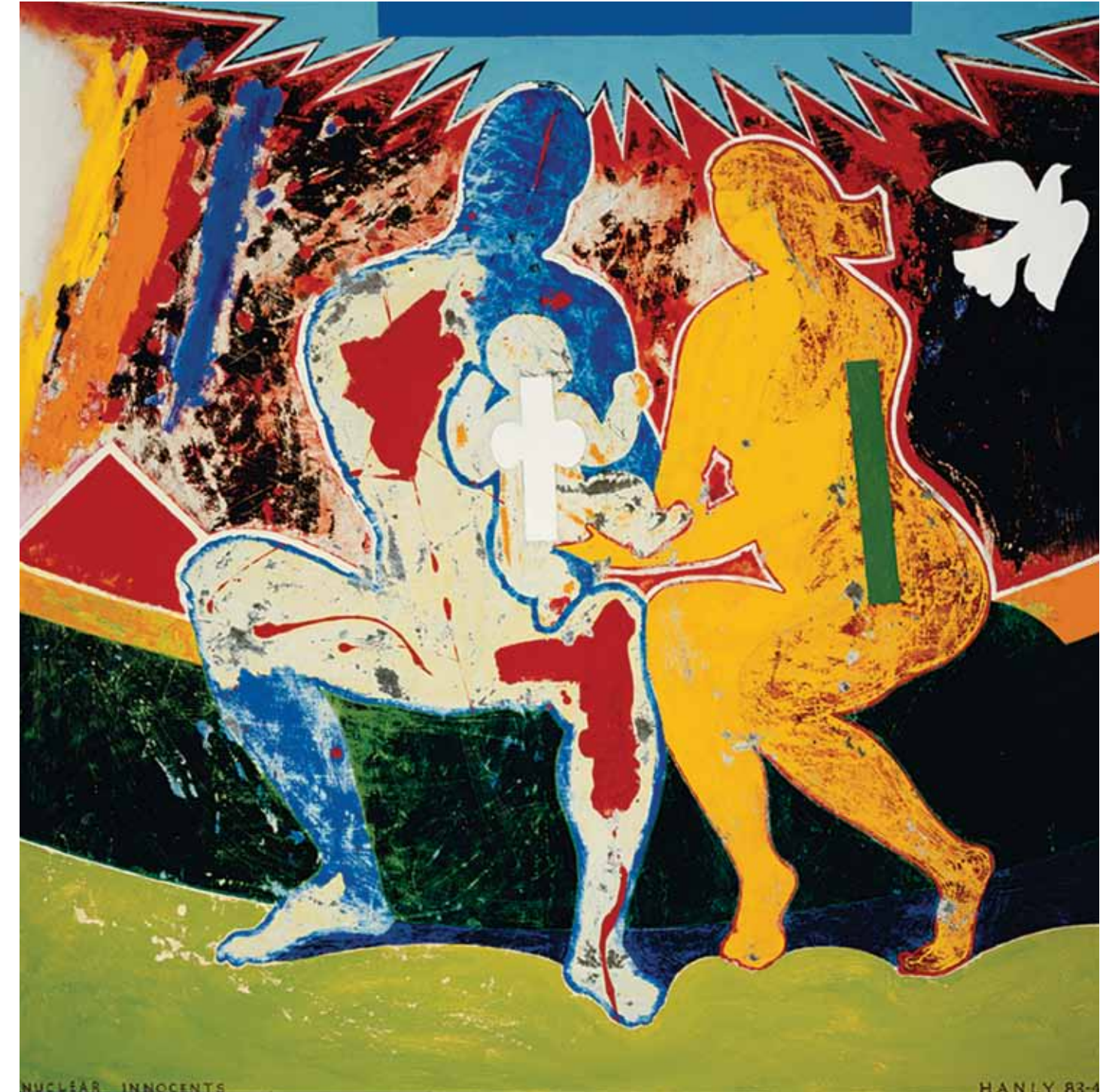






Far left:  
Pat Hanly *Escape Vessel*  
1960. Oil on board. Collection  
Hanly Family Trust

Left:  
Pat Hanly *Pintado Protest*  
1978. Oil and enamel on  
board. Private collection



Pat Hanly *Nuclear Innocents*  
1983-4. Oil and enamel  
on board. Collection Hanly  
Family Trust

then included *Deluge of Fire* and *Escape Vessel*, which are in the **BLAST!** exhibition.

I wanted to pay homage to an artist whose work I loved and admired, not least for the messages embedded in his brilliant surfaces. And what better way could I find to tell a new generation something of the anti-nuclear passions and protests than through the courage and colour of the man who is one of our most cherished artists? I was quite horrified during my informal market research to realise how few people under forty had heard of Pat Hanly or the anti-nuclear grassroots movement in New Zealand.

From the moment I took my precious project to Kate Wells, curator at Lopdell House Gallery, everything came together. There, at Titirangi on ‘the fringe of heaven’, where Colin McCahon cubed his kauri trees, the whole **BLAST!** package was picked up with vigour: Gil Hanly gave her endorsement and protest photographs, Claudia Pond Eyley her DVD *No Nukes is Good Nukes*, and willing loans were made by owners of some of Pat’s most powerful paintings. Lesley Smith, who multitasks as general manager of Lopdell House Gallery and designer for books (what a combination!) was terrific to work with. Kate Wells kept her curatorial eye

on us—and the resulting exhibition will now tour to ten galleries throughout the country over more than two years.

I still get tears pricking my eyes every time I walk into a gallery with these Hanly works hung together. The impact is overwhelming. And I am thrilled to report that, thanks to a grant from PADET, the Peace and Disarmament Education Trust set up with Rainbow Warrior compensation money from the French Government, a copy of *BLAST! Pat Hanly: the painter and his protests* has been sent to every primary and intermediate school in the country.

Thousands of school children have been to art workshops based on **BLAST!** Grandparents, parents and teachers are taking the young in hand; looking, talking. The story is still being written...

*Trish Gribben is author of BLAST! Pat Hanly: the painter and his protests, the book behind the exhibition.*

***BLAST! Pat Hanly: the painter and his protests* is in the Burdon Family Gallery from 5 March to 29 May. A Lopdell House Gallery touring exhibition.**

**‘No matter how dark the subject he was treating in his art, Pat Hanly always managed to give his work a luminous quality, full of energy and light, often with joyous primary colours.’**

**EVENTS**

**WEDNESDAY 16 MARCH**  
Guest Speaker / Hamish Keith on Pat Hanly  
Join Hamish Keith, cultural commentator, fellow art student and old friend of Pat Hanly’s.  
6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium  
Sponsored by The Press

**WEDNESDAY 25 MAY**  
Film / Departure and Return / Guest Speaker / Bunny McDiarmid and Claudia Pond Eyley  
The final journey of the Rainbow Warrior through the eyes of six women activists. The film is introduced by Bunny McDiarmid, executive director of Greenpeace International, and former Rainbow Warrior crew member and director/producer Claudia Pond Eyley, founding member of Visual Artists Against Nuclear Arms.  
6pm / 65mins, followed by a question and answer session / Philip Carter Family Auditorium  
Sponsored by The Press



# A tale of two chiefs

IF YOU HAVE RECENTLY VISITED **He Taonga Rangatira: Noble Treasures** at the Gallery you will have been struck by Fiona Pardington's two large photographic portraits of lifelike busts of Ngāi Tahu tipuna (ancestors). With the intricate tracings of moko clearly visible on their brow and cheeks, they have their eyes closed in patient repose. The closed eyes—a necessary part of the cast-making process—give these two rangatira (chiefs) a vulnerability that one feels they would have been careful not to show in their lifetime. This sense of intimacy and vulnerability makes sustained viewing of the portraits uncomfortable, almost in deference to the subjects. Maybe they make you feel that you are trespassing in a highly personal moment. Or, if these are your ancestors, your impulse may be to walk up and hongi the men.

The two busts that Pardington has photographed were made by Pierre-Marie Dumoutier, the assistant naturalist on Dumont d'Urville's second voyage to New Zealand. The casts for the busts were taken while d'Urville's ship the *Astrolabe* was in Otago Harbour, sometime between 30 March and 3 April 1840. Dumoutier made the casts as part of his work as



Fiona Pardington Portrait of a life-cast of Takatahara, Aotearoa/New Zealand 2010. Pigment inks on Hahnemühle Photo Rag. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, I whakamanahia e te whānau Tikao 2010. Reproduced with permission

a phrenologist—a now discredited 'pseudo-science' that sought to find a connection between the size and shape of a person's skull and a range of personal characteristics. In total, he made four busts while he was in New Zealand: three at Otago and one at Kororāreka (Russell). On the

voyage as a whole he made fifty busts of indigenous people, which are now in the Musée de l'Homme in Paris.

The ancestors depicted by Pardington have been identified as the closely related Ngāi Tahu rangatira Takatahara (also known as Tangatahara) and Piuraki (also known as John Love Tikao). For George Tikao, a direct descendant of Piuraki's brother Tāmāti and also closely related to Takatahara, seeing the portraits is like meeting his ancestors face-to-face: 'The images themselves, if I knew these old people at that age, I would say that those images would be very lifelike. When I see them today, I can see the very likeness of those people at the time.'

George was, however, surprised that the ancestors had allowed casts to be taken of their heads: 'I know that our people were very wary of their heads. The ūpoko, the head, was a very tapu part of the elders, of the chiefs, and it was quite a surprise to me that they allowed their heads to be shaved and casts to be taken.'

However, he says that they had had a lot of contact with Europeans by then, which may explain why they agreed to undergo the mould-making process: 'Piuraki had travelled the world. Even though they would have been a wee bit sceptical about having their heads placed in casts they wouldn't have been overly concerned.'

Of the Ngāti Irakehu hapū of Ngāi Tahu, Takatahara was one of the leading northern Ngāi Tahu fighting chiefs during the 1827 to 1839 wars with Ngāti Toa, and was responsible for the killing of Ngāti Toa ariki (paramount chief)

Te Pēhi Kupe at Kaiapoi in 1829/30. Although taken captive after the fall of Kaiapoi Pā in 1832, he soon managed to escape into the bush in the vicinity of Duvauchelle, at the northern end of Akaroa Harbour. He then became one of the leaders of the Taua Iti (1832–3) and Taua Nui (1833–4) expeditions against Ngāti Toa.

Although a Horomaka (Banks Peninsula) chief, Takatahara spent a considerable amount of time further south between 1836 and 1840. His final years were spent on the western shore of Akaroa Harbour, where he was buried on 13 December 1847. A monument to Takatahara was erected at Wairewa (Little River) in 1900 and a copy of the bust photographed by Pardington is on display at Akaroa Museum.

Piuraki could whakapapa (trace his genealogy) to many of the principal Ngāi Tahu hapū. Like Takatahara, Piuraki lived on the western shore of Akaroa Harbour and at other places on Banks Peninsula. According to his nephew, Teone Taare Tikao, he was a tall man, standing 1.93m, and proficient with the taiaha.

Piuraki was captured by Ngāti Toa at Kaiapoi in 1832, along with his mother, father and brothers. His mother, Hākeke, managed to escape but the rest of the family were taken to Kāpiti Island and imprisoned. Some time later Piuraki joined the crew of a whaling boat and sailed to Europe; he subsequently spent a number of years in France and England and is said to have become proficient in seven languages.



Fiona Pardington Portrait of a life-cast of Piuraki / John Love Tikao, Aotearoa/New Zealand 2010. Pigment inks on Hahnemühle Photo Rag. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, I whakamanahia e te whānau Tikao 2010. Reproduced with permission

Piuraki was one of two chiefs who signed the Treaty of Waitangi at Ōnuku (near Akaroa) on 30 May 1840, having returned to New Zealand shortly beforehand. Major Bunbury, the British officer responsible for treaty negotiations in the South Island, described him as 'an intelligent native', who

was well dressed and spoke English well. His knowledge of European commerce saw him take the lead in land negotiations—knowing the true worth of land in European terms he became an active opponent of land sales and a persistent thorn in the side of the government.

At the end of his life Piuraki returned to Banks Peninsula, and to Pigeon Bay, where his wife and children were buried, the victims of one of the many epidemics of European-introduced diseases to afflict the local population. He died at Pigeon Bay in June 1852 and was buried at Kaiapoi.

## Ross Calman

Ross Calman is a Christchurch-based writer and editor. He is of Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Toa and Ngāti Raukawa descent and is married to Ariana Tikao, who is a descendant of Piuraki's brother, Tāmāti.

**He Taonga Rangatira: Noble Treasures** is in the collection galleries.

## Sources:

George Tikao, interview 3 January 2011. Harry Evison, *Te Waipounamu: The Greenstone Island*, Christchurch: Aoraki Press, 1993. Marc Rochette, 'Dumont d'Urville's Phrenologist: Dumoutier and the Aesthetics of Races', in *The Journal of Pacific History*, vol.38, no.2, pp.251–68.

## Acknowledgements:

He mihi nui ki a Ariana Tikao rāua ko Christine Tremewan.



When will the works arrive? But we need to photograph them at this time, and they're not even being made until that time. And that needs to be up by then, but these exhibitions don't come down until *then*.

These are fairly generic art gallery conversations. We have them all the time. Like most galleries, Christchurch Art Gallery has a regular and fairly constant rotation of exhibitions, displays, publications, marketing materials, events... the list goes on. Each of these areas is handled by extremely competent members of staff with a keen eye on their deadlines. But what's needed is an overview—someone who knows how every deadline affects every other deadline, who realises that a late work here means a missed event there, a missing text here means a missing poster here. If a butterfly flaps its wings in the library, there's a storm in the conservation lab.

The Gallery's Projects and Facilitation Team fills that role. Tracy McCaw and Neil Semple look after the scheduling of the Gallery's exhibition programme, and all that it entails. Neil is projects manager, and has worked in art museums for the past twenty-two years. Prior to working at the Gallery he was exhibitions manager at City Gallery Wellington. Tracy completed a BFA in film at the University of Canterbury before starting work in the Gallery visitor services team in 2003. She began her current role as projects coordinator in 2006. Together they are responsible for helping to steer the Gallery through the myriad obstacles that can derail its smooth running. As Tracy says, 'projecting coordinates and delivering visions on a daily basis'.

Neil Semple and  
Tracy McCaw



# PAGEWORK #10

## CHRISTIAN CAPURRO

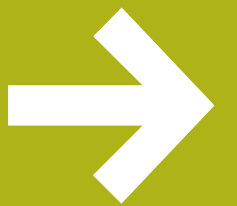
The following double-page spread is given over to the tenth instalment in our 'Pagework' series. Each quarter the Gallery commissions an artist to create a new and unique work of art especially for *Bulletin*. It's about actively supporting the generation of new work.

Christian Capurro is an artist from Melbourne who works a lot with magazines. But 'works with' isn't quite accurate. Better to say he works on them. Capurro's best-known projects have been heroic acts of erasure—projects in which he and collaborators bend to the task of rubbing out every page of certain glossy magazines. The results are highly ambivalent commentaries on photography, commerce and desire. On the one hand, Capurro's erasures seem to express a straightforwardly critical impulse—the artist systematically eradicating all those glossy come-ons and hollow seductions. On the other hand, the sheer quantity of time Capurro spends on these erasures suggests an odd and even excessive attachment to the magazines and the images within them. Add to that the fact that the 'erased' magazines themselves become unusually charged and seductive objects. Capurro's pagework for this issue belongs to a different body of work, in which correction fluid blooms and flows on mirrored

and printed surfaces. Far from eradicating the style-icons that appear on the two magazine pages overleaf, Capurro's corrections lend them a strange new presence—as if their heads are glowing with some excessive internal energy. Even as they comment upon the contemporary traffic in images, the results hark back to nineteenth-century 'spirit photography'—photographs doctored so that the people within them seemed to be surrounded by supernatural fields or disgorging streams of ectoplasm. Ghosts in the photographic machine.

Justin Paton

*'Pagework' has been generously supported by an anonymous donor.*



Over page:  
Christian Capurro *Studies*  
for *'The Waste of Breath'*  
2010. Correction fluid  
on magazine page.  
Reproduced courtesy  
of the artist

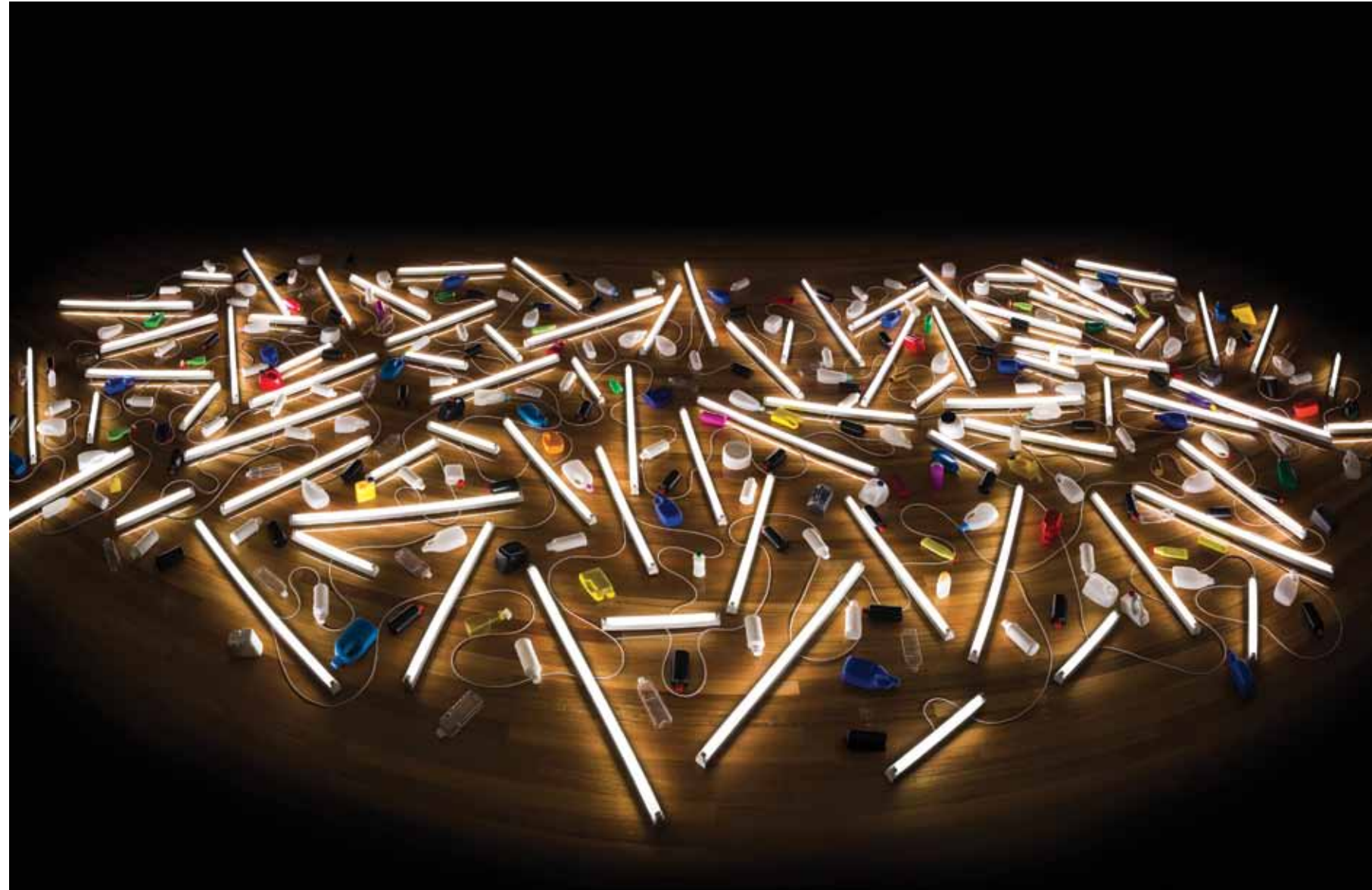






## My Favourite

Julie King



Bill Culbert **Pacific flotsam** 2007.  
Fluorescent light, electric wire,  
plastic bottles. Collection of  
Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna  
o Waiwhetu, purchased 2008.  
Reproduced courtesy of the artist



Julie King taught art history  
at the School of Fine Arts,  
University of Canterbury.  
She has published widely in  
the area of New Zealand art  
and is currently working on  
a publication about Olivia  
Spencer Bower.

I've many old and dear friends in the collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, but when I've thought about choosing my 'favourite' artwork over the years it's always been the one that I am just beginning to get to know. This time it's *Pacific flotsam* by Bill Culbert, a sculpture made out of fluorescent lights, electric wire, and over 200 left-over plastic bottles. So, as they say, does one person's rubbish become someone else's art? That's what I really like about *Pacific flotsam*, the way in which objects are transformed by the artist into an artwork that, when placed in the Gallery, invites us to come up with connections and associations, and to think about its meaning.

*Pacific flotsam* is probably the biggest artwork in the collection, almost certainly the one taking up the largest area of floor-space, and is installed in a room of its own. Displayed in the middle of the floor within the dark space of the gallery is a dramatic and intensely bright pool of light, made up

of sharply angled fluorescent tubes and, on second glance, trapped bottles encircled by coils of electric wire as if gathered together by ocean currents. But does this sculpture simply represent a sea of light? Or, is the artist also using light to point to something else—the patches of plastic waste and debris floating around the Pacific Ocean, gradually and partially decomposing, entering the food chain, and seemingly disappearing?

*Pacific flotsam* isn't an easy artwork but one that takes us out of the Gallery and raises wider and challenging questions about our relationship with the environment. And it's a sculpture that relates specifically to our location in the Pacific, a key theme in the current collection display that appears in the range of historical and contemporary works, which have been brought together to be looked at, and seen in new ways.



## Noteworthy

### Six New Works of Art Purchased with Norman Barrett Bequest

In January, almost a year to the day after Norman Barrett's surprise bequest of \$1.8 million was revealed by the executor of his estate, a function was held at the Gallery to announce the purchase of six new paintings by well-known Canterbury artists. The works were purchased largely from the interest generated by the donation.

Under the terms of Barrett's will, all works of art purchased are to be by local artists, or significant artists with a strong Canterbury connection, and made between 1940 and 1980.

Director Jenny Harper says two of the works were bought at auction and four from a private collection over the past year. 'It's been fantastic to have the extra funding available to purchase some important Canterbury paintings for our collection.'

The new works of art were revealed to friends of Christchurch man Norman Barrett, who left the money to the Gallery in his will in January 2010. The six new works are: *Wainui* and *Banks Peninsula Hills* by Rita Angus, *Albion Wright* by Leo Bensemann, *Hill top watcher* by Tony Fomison, *Hills from Annat* by Douglas MacDiarmid and *Japanese Planes, Rekata Bay, Santa Isabel* by Russell Clark.



Tony Fomison *Hill top watcher* 1976. Oil on canvas. N. Barrett Bequest Collection, purchased 2010

### Triple Opening a Runaround Success

On Thursday 10 February, the Gallery celebrated one new year, one major gift, one year of the challenge grant, one extraordinary bequest, two new attendance records, nine newly made works of art, three new publications and three major new exhibitions. The exhibitions were **Van der Velden: Otira**, **Leo Bensemann: A Fantastic Art Venture** and **De-Building**, and the entertainment for the evening came from local band, Runaround Sue, who provided 'country-tinged, punky folk' sounds for guests.

Runaround Sue performing in the Gallery foyer



### Three New Publications

From alpine waterfalls to architectural interventions and allegorical woodcuts, there's now an impressive array of new art publishing on our bookshelves. Published by the Gallery, *Van der Velden: Otira* explores the power and continuing impact of Petrus van der Velden's extraordinary landscapes. It's 96 pages, hardcover, full of fresh commentary by Peter Vangioni, Rodney Wilson and Dieuwertje Dekkers, and only \$49.99. Also from the Gallery, the *De-Building* handbook (96 pages, \$20) is an extremely readable guide to this show of sculptural surprises and architectural double-takes, written by senior curator Justin Paton. And from Auckland University Press, Peter Simpson's *Fantastica: The World of Leo Bensemann* (232 pages, \$75) is the first book to survey the life and work of this admired Canterbury artist.



### 6th SCAPE Public Programme

The 6th SCAPE Christchurch Biennial of Art in Public Space opens throughout the city on 4 March. The Gallery is the venue for the Opening Weekend, and a portion of the highly anticipated public programme. Featuring guest speakers and panellists, the weekend's events are free to attend and provide a great opportunity to meet the SCAPE artists and engage with their works.

Visit: [www.scapebiennial.org.nz](http://www.scapebiennial.org.nz) to see the full SCAPE programme of events and activities.



### Keeping Cool

We made some important improvements to the Gallery's air-conditioning system in January, helping us all stay cool by utilising a more sustainable energy source. Our electrical power and chilled water is now generated across the road by the Civic Office Tri-generator—a highly efficient system that runs on biogas. This makes us more energy efficient, and reduces our power bills.

Previously, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) boilers provided heating and electric chillers provided cooling in the Gallery. However, by utilising biogas from the Burwood landfill and wastewater treatment plant, we are now able to reduce our energy costs, reduce methane greenhouse gas emissions from waste streams and substantially reduce our reliance on fossil fuel sources.

### Ron Mueck Breaks All Records

The final count is in, and we're very proud to announce that a record 135,140 visitors saw Ron Mueck's sculptures at the Gallery. The 100,000 milestone was reached on 14 January, with six-year-old Henry King the proud recipient of a signed Mueck catalogue. Incredibly, that means that another 35,140 visitors saw the show in its final nine days. **Ron Mueck** is now believed to be the most popular paid-entry exhibition by a living artist to be held in New Zealand.



Visitors queuing to see Ron Mueck

### ART FOR FAMILIES School Holidays

#### PAINT YOUR OWN MASTERPIECE

Explore the Gallery collection and paint your own masterpiece. Weekdays only.

18–21 and 26–9 April / 10.30–11.30am / \$5 / education centre / bookings tel: (03) 941 7382

### Ellerslie Guided Tours

To celebrate the Ellerslie International Flower Show, a special guided tour exploring selected works from the Gallery's collection that feature flowers and gardens will be offered daily at 3pm from 9 to 13 March. Led by members of our volunteer guide team, the tour is free and includes works by Henri Fantin-Latour, George Dunlop Leslie, Frances Hodgkins and Rita Angus. Please meet at the information desk.

### Event Highlights

#### NZ MUSIC MONTH / LAUNCH GIG: LAWRENCE ARABIA

Firmly entrenched as part of our cultural landscape, NZ Music Month is a celebration of homegrown talent across the length and breadth of the country. The event begins on 1 May, with official launch gigs of all shapes and sizes taking place. Here at the Gallery, we're getting involved too, with a special performance from Lawrence Arabia—the pseudonym of Christchurch born, UK based James Milne—former multi-instrumentalist in Auckland pop band The Brunettes.

Lawrence Arabia has begun the recording of a new album and will be previewing songs at the Music Month launch gig in the Gallery foyer.

1 May / 6pm / foyer / free / table reservation available online at [www.christchurchartgallery.org.nz](http://www.christchurchartgallery.org.nz)

For a full list of Gallery events visit [christchurchartgallery.org.nz](http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz).

#### NZ MUSIC MONTH / MEET THE MUSICIAN: LAWRENCE ARABIA

Join Lawrence Arabia for a slideshow, chit-chat and the occasional song.

4 May / 7.30pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium

#### NZ MUSIC MONTH / VAN DER VELDEN PERFORMANCE / TORLESSE SUPERGROUP

Guitarists Roy Montgomery and Nick Guy are the Torlesse Supergroup. Their compositions often reflect and respond to specific geographic locations. This live performance takes place in the exhibition **Van der Velden: Otira**.

11 May / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium  
Sponsored by *The Press*

#### GUEST SPEAKER / PETER BEAVEN: ON BEAUTY

Renowned architect Peter Beaven argues that the qualities of beauty including harmony, proportion, scale and contrast are best understood first from a sense of place.

30 March / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium  
Sponsored by *The Press*

#### FILM AND PERFORMANCE / THE PASSION OF JOAN OF ARC WITH SILENCIO ENSEMBLE

This stunning silent film, produced in France in 1928, is based on the trial records of Joan of Arc. The large-format screening in the foyer is accompanied by Christchurch's leading ensemble musicians.

*In association with Canterbury Film Society*

19 and 21 April / 7.30pm / foyer / \$20, \$15 Friends and concession, \$10 Film Society full members / tickets available online / door sales from 7pm

#### GAYLENE PRESTON RETROSPECTIVE / OPENING FILM / HOME BY CHRISTMAS

For over thirty years, Gaylene Preston has been making feature films and documentaries. Her latest film *Home by Christmas* is a love story based on her parents' wartime marriage. For a full programme of the Gaylene Preston Retrospective, visit [christchurchartgallery.org.nz](http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz).

Presented in association with Cinema Studies, University of Canterbury.

18 May / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / 95mins, followed by a discussion with the director / PG  
Sponsored by *The Press*



Lawrence Arabia





Damien Hirst **Mental Escapology** 2003. Glass, silver, stainless steel, mirrored glass, enamel, silkscreen, timber, leather. Private collection, London. Image courtesy of RS&A Ltd, London

## The Art of Chess

28 May – 21 August

An ongoing project featuring chess sets designed by some of the world's leading contemporary artists in celebration of the game of chess and its continued relevance to the creative arts. Featuring sets created by Maurizio Cattelan, Jake and Dinos Chapman, Tom Friedman, Damien Hirst, Barbara Kruger, Yayoi Kusama, Paul McCarthy, Matthew Ronay, Tunga and Rachel Whiteread.

Organised by Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu in association with RS&A Ltd, London

## John Pule: Hauaga (Arrivals)

3 June – 21 August

John Pule is not only a significant New Zealand artist, he is a major presence in Pacific culture and plays a pivotal role in the presentation of that culture globally. Spanning twenty years and featuring over sixty works, this is the first monographic exhibition of Pule's art to be shown in a public gallery.

A City Gallery Wellington Te Whare Toi touring exhibition

## Pieter Hugo: Nollywood

11 June – 11 September

They say Nigeria's Nollywood is the world's third-largest film industry, releasing up to a thousand titles a year onto the local home-video market. South African photographer Pieter Hugo became intrigued by Nollywood's fictional worlds, and his resulting images of mummies, demons and zombies recreate the stereotypical characters that typify Nollywood productions.

On loan from the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane

## Snake on a Train

11 June – 11 September

Exhibited to accompany Pieter Hugo's striking **Nollywood**, this exhibition of hand-painted posters from a Christchurch private collection offers a provocative view of a movie industry far removed from Hollywood. Featuring Z-grade classics like *Camp Blood* and *Snake on a Train*, the unknown painters behind these posters chop up cinematic clichés to gory effect.

## Bad Hair Day

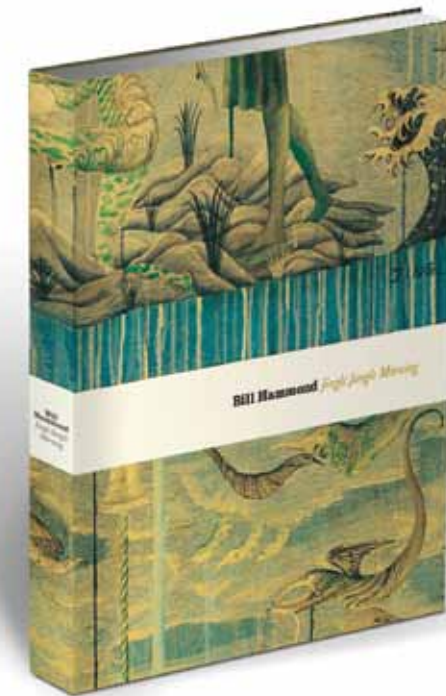
18 June – 20 May

A 'bad hair day', according to the *Compact Oxford English Dictionary*, is a day on which everything goes wrong. This exhibition investigates the wild and wonderful ways of hair—and human behaviour—through historical and contemporary painting, printmaking, sculpture, photography and video. Shaped with younger audiences in mind.

## GREAT BRITTEN!

24 June – 21 August

Billy Apple blurs the line between life and art with a new installation that celebrates the triumphant, record-shattering 1995 campaign of the world's most innovative motorcycle. Designed and built in Christchurch by John Britten and his small team, the Britten V1000 broke four world speed records and took the racing world by storm.

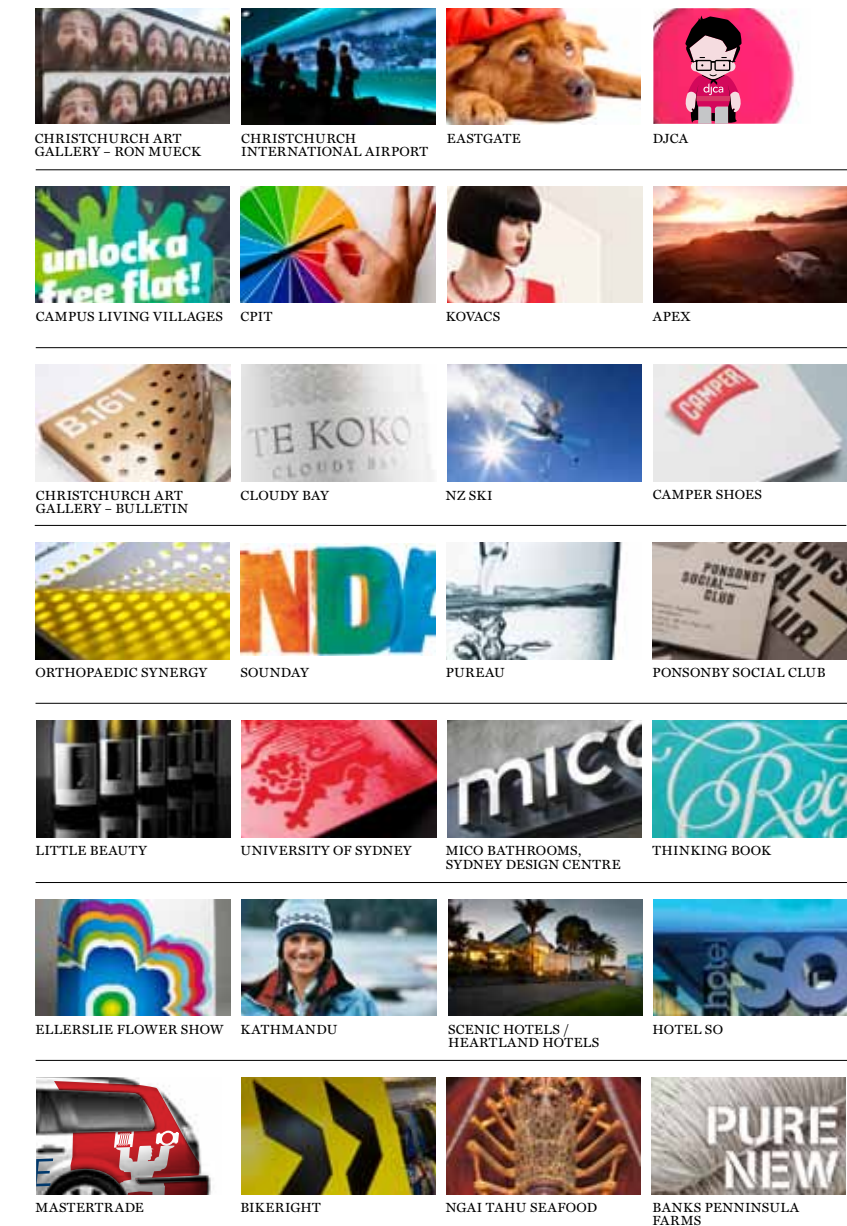


**Bill Hammond: Jingle Jangle Morning**  
Winner: Illustrative Section, Montana Book Awards  
BPANZ Book Design award winner

**SPECTRUMPRINT**

Spectrum Print, 134 Antigua Street, Christchurch  
Phone 03 365 0946, Facsimile 03 365 0947

## STRATEGY DESIGN & ADVERTISING



*Creative partners to Christchurch Art Gallery & much more...*

**www.strategy.co.nz**



**Open 9.30am-5pm daily**  
(from 3 April open 10am-5pm daily)  
Closed Christmas Day  
Late night every Wednesday until 9pm  
Admission free

CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY  
TE PUNA O WAIWHETU  
Cnr Worcester Boulevard and  
Montreal Street, PO Box 2626,  
Christchurch 8140, New Zealand  
Tel: (+64 3) 941 7300  
Fax: (+64 3) 941 7301  
[www.christchurchartgallery.org.nz](http://www.christchurchartgallery.org.nz)  
Email: [info@christchurchartgallery.org.nz](mailto:info@christchurchartgallery.org.nz)

GALLERY SHOP  
Tel: (+64 3) 941 7370

FORM GALLERY  
Tel: (+64 3) 377 1211

ALCHEMY CAFE & WINE BAR  
Tel: (+64 3) 941 7311

EDUCATION BOOKING LINE  
Tel: (+64 3) 941 8101

FRIENDS OF CHRISTCHURCH  
ART GALLERY  
Tel: (+64 3) 941 7356

CHRISTCHURCH ART  
GALLERY TRUST  
Tel: (+64 3) 353 4352

TE PUNA O WAIWHETU  
CHRISTCHURCH  
ART GALLERY



9 771463 073832