

The Gallery is currently closed to the public.
Our off-site exhibition space is upstairs at
212 Madras Street and the Gallery Shop is
now open at 40 Lichfield Street.

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TE PUNA O WAIWHETU
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ART GALLERY

Bulletin
Christchurch Art Gallery
Te Puna o Waiwhetu

Summer
December 2012—
February 2013

B.170



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WE WELCOME YOUR FEEDBACK AND SUGGESTIONS
FOR FUTURE ARTICLES.

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Christchurch Art Gallery
Te Puna o Waiwhetu

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TE PUNA O WAIWHETU
CHRISTCHURCH
ART GALLERY

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— ESTD 1949 —

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Cover: Shane Cotton **The
Hanging Sky** 2007. Acrylic on
linen. Collection of Peggy Scott
and David Teplitzky

Inside cover: Ash Keating
Concrete Propositions
2012. Acrylic house paint
on concrete. © the artist.
Courtesy the artist and Fehily
Contemporary, Melbourne
Australia. Photo: John Collie

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I LISTENED TO A BROADCAST CONCERT THE OTHER EVENING. The NZSO was playing Richard Strauss's *Metamorphosen*, and I found myself in awe at the emotional power of this work. Turning up the volume, I thought about how good it would be to have the creative ability, and the freedom, to express personal grief and despair in such a public and lasting way. Strauss is said to have composed the work in response to the destruction of some of his favourite cities in Europe during the Second World War; the politics of his time aside, how much I wished I could be similarly elegiac and profound. As the Gallery's prolonged closure continues, there is nothing for it but to express my personal frustration at delays to our necessary repairs (can someone please 'zap' and have them done!) and my continuing gratitude to the Gallery team in these few words.

To an extent our *Bulletin* has become freer and more journal-like without the previously full range of programmes and events we needed to document. Enjoyable though this may be, it seems something of a 'second order good'—like bravery in war. Nevertheless, it's also tangible evidence that, while we can't yet welcome you into our main gallery spaces, nor indicate with confidence when we will reopen, we're doing excellent and energetic things. So it's very gratifying that some are being recognised by our peers, as Christchurch Art Gallery gains further awards and commendations in both local and wider Australasian contexts. We're always pleased with recognition of this sort—but perhaps especially now when we're unable to provide our full range of services.

This quarter we approach the end of our involvement with NG space on Madras Street. We've been exhibiting there for the past year, but a number of factors—in particular, our need to provide access for disabled visitors—have meant

that we've been searching for an alternative exhibition space better suited to our needs. Our time at NG has been amazing, and some great moments and short-lived projects have been orchestrated in this space. In particular, I think of the poignancy of Julia Morison's **Meet me on the other side**, and the breathtaking views out the windows to Michael Parekowhai's bronze bulls, which stood against a background of rubble as the carved red grand piano inside was played by the many pianists who completed his work for the thousands of visitors.

We're presently in negotiations with the trustees of CoCA about taking a lease on their building, with our fingers crossed in hope that their repair schedule dovetails with our requirements. It's an exciting prospect and we have strong historical connections with the former CSA. A larger, secure space will give us greater flexibility with our exhibition programme; the potential to house a number of exhibitions as well as some education and public programmes all under one roof takes us a step closer to operating as we did before the earthquakes. Ever hungry, we're also looking at exhibiting in the old Tuam Street Post Office building, below Physics Room and above C1. I look forward to confirming details in the autumn issue of this magazine, with all the (now) usual disclaimers applying.

We are also excited at the prospect of **Shane Cotton: The Hanging Sky**, an exhibition that Christchurch Art Gallery presents at the Institute of Modern Art in Brisbane from 8 December. This much-delayed touring project was originally planned to open in Christchurch in 2011, but now we envisage it will finish its run with us. It is, however, a major undertaking for the Gallery, and for Cotton it represents a significant career achievement. To mark the opening we're featuring an edited transcript of a public talk between

senior curator Justin Paton and Cotton, held in the Hagley Park Geo Dome last year, in what we then thought was the run up to the exhibition. The catalogue accompanying the exhibition will be available in March 2013.

This quarter also marks the end of our **Rolling Maul** programme. This series of artist projects and exhibitions has been running at the NG space since March 2012, and when it finishes in January will have encompassed nine exhibitions and eighteen artists. With a new opening most months, it has been a rather frenetic pace to maintain, so I'd like to offer thanks to our team for all their work in the many changeovers it necessitated. The series was supported by Creative New Zealand's Canterbury Earthquake Relief Fund, for which we are extremely grateful.

Following on from **Rolling Maul**, it's the turn of three of Christchurch's mid-career artists, Bill Hammond, Tony de Lautour and Jason Greig, all of whom are providing new or recent work. In this issue of *Bulletin*, artist and lecturer at UC School of Fine Arts Robin Neate looks at the work of all three.

Our **Outer Spaces** programme continues at full pace—look out for the map on the next few pages of this magazine which shows where in the city you can find us. However, new projects are happening regularly and, as some are short-lived, our website is still the best way to keep up with progress.

Lastly, we wish all our readers a safe and happy summer holiday and, from January, a Happy New Year.

Jenny Harper

Director

November 2012

Explore Outer Spaces

The Gallery is closed, so we're bringing art into the city. **Outer Spaces** introduces moments of surprise, humour, colour and wonder to post-quake Christchurch streetscapes.



MATT AKEHURST: YOU ARE HERE
Ongoing
Pablo Picasso, Marcel Duchamp, Damien Hirst, Robert Smithson, Michelangelo... Yes, all the big names can be found on the Christchurch Art Gallery forecourt.
Matt Akehurst *You are here* 2011. Aluminium, steel, paint, vinyl. Courtesy of the artist



TIM J. VELING: BEDFORD ROW
Ongoing
When is a door not a door? That's the wry question posed in this light-hearted architectural intervention by local photographer Tim J. Veling. The entrance he has bricked up opens into the Christchurch Art Gallery, but as with so many others in Christchurch it has been temporarily closed by 'recent events'
Tim J. Veling *Bedford Row*, 2012 - from *Adaptation*, 2011-12. Photograph



JULIA MORISON: AIBOHPHOBIA
Ongoing
Julia Morison has turned the Gallery's squat grey bunker into a dizzying vision in dayglo green.
Julia Morison *Aibohphobia* 2011. Acrylic paint. Reproduced courtesy of the artist



STEREOSCOPE: KRISTIN HOLLIS
Until 14 December
The *Survival Kit* series had its beginnings in a sketchbook through which Kristin Hollis tried to make sense of post-earthquake existence. Small comforts and temporary adaptations, they are a reminder of how lives, like landscapes, have been shaped by circumstance.
Kristin Hollis *Survival Kit: Bombay Sapphire and Survival Kit: Water Bottle* 2011. Digital prints from graphite and watercolour on paper originals. Courtesy of the artist and PaperGraphica



STEREOSCOPE: ROBIN NEATE
14 December - 11 February
Christchurch artist Robin Neate's recent series of energised paintings interpret the landscape in a highly personal manner, transforming it into abstract fusions of overlaid colour and shape.
Robin Neate *Paysage (detail)* 2012. Oil on canvas. Reproduced courtesy of the artist and Hamish McKay Gallery



STEREOSCOPE: TOSHI ENDO
11 February - 5 March
Christchurch-based artist Toshi Endo provides the next instalment in the **Stereoscope** series.
Toshi Endo *Automaton (detail)* 2012



KAY ROSEN: HERE ARE THE PEOPLE AND THERE IS THE STEEPLE
Ongoing
This mural project for the Gallery's east rear wall, inspired by the shape of the wall, the words 'people' and 'steeple', the history of the city and the children's finger game, sends a large-scale message about rebuilding a city by, and upon the foundation of, its people.
Kay Rosen *Here are the people and there is the steeple* 2012. Acrylic paint on wall



JAE HOON LEE: ANNAPURNA
Ongoing
Jae Hoon Lee's immense and oddly surreal landscape glows out from the **Springboard** over Worcester Boulevard.
Jae Hoon Lee *Annapurna* 2010. Digital photograph. Commissioned in 2010 for Springboard



JUSTENE WILLIAMS: SHE CAME OVER SINGING LIKE A DRAINPIPE SHAKING SPOON INFUSED MIXERS
Until 2 March
Australian artist Justene Williams uses performance and ephemeral materials to produce a sensory overload of shapes, patterns and colours.
Justene Williams *She Came Over Singing Like a Drainpipe Shaking Spoon Infused Mixer* 2011. Digital video. Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney

As the Gallery remains closed, projects will happen at a range of locations throughout the city. Check the website for detailed maps and follow us on Facebook and Twitter to make sure you don't miss anything.



Explore Outer Spaces



JAMES ORAM: BUT IT'S WORTH IT
 Until 16 December
 Manipulating found footage of the infamous 'Black Friday' sales held by American chain stores, James Oram isolates and magnifies smaller physical gestures amidst the crush. Video works and found object sculptures test the survival (or otherwise) of the personal amid frenzied mass consumption.

NG space, 212 Madras Street

James Oram *While supplies last* (detail) 2012. Video. Reproduced courtesy of the artist and Chalk Horse



TRICKSTERS
 22 December – 27 January
 Expect the rug to be pulled out from under your feet with the last exhibition in the **Rolling Maul** series. Featuring playful works in a range of media (including Wayne Youle's supersized take on a classic coin-slot machine) **Tricksters** examines the role of the artist as magician, prankster, con-artist and leg-puller.

NG space, 212 Madras Street

Robert Hood *Brick* 2011. Cast lead and Dolce and Gabbana perfume. Courtesy of the artist



DE LAUTOUR / GREIG / HAMMOND
 2 February – 10 March
 Christchurch Art Gallery presents new work from Canterbury artists Tony de Lautour, Jason Greig and Bill Hammond. Featuring selections of De Lautour's recent geometric abstract paintings, Greig's exquisitely executed dreamscape monoprnts and photo-relief montages and Hammond's iconic morphed birds.

NG space, 212 Madras Street

Jason Greig *Farewell Italica... say goodnight Gracie* 2012. Monoprint. Reproduced courtesy of the artist and Hamish McKay Gallery



WAYNE YOULE: I SEEM TO HAVE TEMPORARILY MISPLACED MY SENSE OF HUMOUR
 Ongoing
 Wayne Youle's gigantic shadowboard is a homage to all those involved in rebuilding Christchurch, and a remembrance of the many precious things lost in the earthquakes.

Colombo Street, between Carlye and Byron streets

Wayne Youle *I seem to have temporarily misplaced my sense of humour* 2011. Mural presented by Christchurch Art Gallery and Gap Filler. Reproduced courtesy the artist



RICHARD KILLEEN: THE INNER BINDING
 Ongoing
 Laden with associations, but buoyant with possibility, this huge window commission by renowned New Zealand artist Richard Killeen features a richly layered composition that hints at systems of knowledge and classification.

Central Library Peterborough

Richard Killeen *The inner binding* 2012. Translucent vinyl. Courtesy of the artist. A Christchurch Art Gallery Outer Spaces project in association with Christchurch City Libraries



A CAXTON MISCELLANY: THE CAXTON PRESS 1933 – 1958
 13 February – 17 March
 This exhibition examines the relationships between typographers, book designers, poets, writers and artists through a selection of beautifully printed books produced at the Caxton Press over a 25-year period.

Central Library Peterborough

Leo Bensemann *The Mad Prince* from *Fantastica*, Caxton Press, Christchurch (detail) 1937. Peter Dunbar Collection, Robert and Barbara Stewart Library and Archives, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, reproduced courtesy of the Bensemann Family



ASH KEATING: CONCRETE PROPOSITIONS
 Ongoing
 Christchurch Art Gallery again joins forces with Gapfiller to present a high-impact wall work. Melbourne-based artist Ash Keating creates a huge, abstract painting on a central city wall by spraying and firing paint from weed sprayers and fire extinguishers.

117-19 Worcester Street

Ash Keating *Concrete Propositions* 2012. Acrylic house paint on concrete. Copyright the artist. Courtesy the artist and Fehily Contemporary, Melbourne Australia. Photo: John Collie



STEREOSCOPE: ROBERT HOOD
 14 December – 11 February
 With an absurdist humour, Hood repurposes photographs culled from art and fashion magazines, creating striking new images that confuse and compel the eye.

26E Lichfield Street

Robert Hood *from the Year of the Cyclops* series (detail), 2011. Scanned prints of folded collages. Courtesy of the artist



STEREOSCOPE: JASON GREIG
 11 February – 5 March
 Jason Greig's two larger-than-life oval portraits are drawn from the key characters, Jekyll and Hyde in Robert Louis Stevenson's classic novel of 1886, *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

26E Lichfield Street

Jason Greig *Mr Hyde* (detail) 2010. Monoprint. Courtesy of the artist and Brett McDowell Gallery



EMILY HARTLEY-SKUDDER: SHOWHOME PROJECT
 February – March
 Emily Hartley-Skudder's eerily precise tableaux of everyday household objects play on the idea of the 'artificial ordinary'. For three weeks, they will provide the finishing touches to a furnished showhome at Wigram Skies, fulfilling their ultimate destiny as the aspirational props for a perfect life.

Wigram

Emily Hartley-Skudder *Still Life with Vegetables and Spatula* 2012. Oil on canvas. Courtesy of the artist

Outer Spaces Programme

December, January, February



* CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY SHOP / 40 LICHFIELD STREET



Shane Cotton: Stamina, surprise and suspense

Shane Cotton **Red Shift**
2006-7. Acrylic on linen.
Collection of Queensland
Art Gallery. Purchased
2007. The Queensland
Government's Gallery of
Modern Art Acquisitions
Fund (acc. 2007.183)

Back on 20 September 2011, when our public programmes team began setting up the Hagley Park Geo Dome for a talk with Shane Cotton, they put out about sixty chairs and would have been glad to fill them. After all, it was a cold night in Christchurch, the roads were rough, the Geo Dome was off the beaten track and the quake had long since broken the rhythm of the Gallery's old Wednesday night programme of public talks.

As it happened, several hundred more seats were called for, as people kept flooding in for what turned out to be one of the biggest public programme attendances on record at Christchurch Art Gallery—around four hundred people. You could put the turnout down to a dearth of cultural options in the post-quake city. But the real reason, surely, was the powerful sense of connection and interest inspired by the paintings of Shane Cotton, who trained at the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts and is now one of Australasia's most esteemed contemporary painters.

Well before the quake, senior curator Justin Paton was working with Cotton on a show that combined some brand-new paintings with a selection of skylscapes from the last half-decade—many of which have not been seen in New Zealand. Several years and many aftershocks later, that show, titled *The Hanging Sky*, is about to open in Brisbane at the Institute of Modern Art, then to travel to Campbelltown Arts Centre in Sydney, before returning to New Zealand and (cross all your fingers, please) the newly reopened Christchurch Art Gallery—where we hope to connect again with all the people who braved the cold for Shane's talk back in 2011.

Here's some of what they heard that night.

Shane Cotton *Takarangi* 2007.
Acrylic on linen. Collection of
Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o
Waiwhetu, purchased 2007



Shane Cotton *Lying in the Black Land* 1998. Oil on canvas. Private collection, Auckland

JUSTIN PATON: *I want to start by singling out three qualities that I think characterise Shane's art and give us good reasons to look at it and think about it and care about it. And those are stamina, surprise and suspense. Stamina, because Shane's been producing powerhouse work across more than two decades now. Surprise, because at key moments throughout those decades, often just when a consensus had settled about the content of his work or where it was going, Shane put his head down, changed up a gear and turned his painting and his art in an unexpected direction. And suspense, because his paintings so often seem to put us on the threshold of an event or transformation—something about which we feel both uncertain and intensely curious. With luck the conversation tonight will be a chance to press a bit closer to some of those transformations.*

*Shane, the earliest work in the exhibition we're planning is from around 2006, but I thought we'd jump back to a work called *Lying in the Black Land*. It's from 1998 and in some ways feels like it's from another time. The nineties was a period when a lot happened for you, so how does it feel to look back on this moment?*

SHANE COTTON: It's always a wee bit scary looking back at old work. I went to art school here in Christchurch, and when I came down from the North Island I didn't know a hell of a lot about painting. I went in with a view of just wanting to learn—to learn about the process and the history of painting. I didn't have any inner demons or internal conflicts I was fighting within myself, I just wanted to immerse myself in the whole practice of painting—what it was to be a painter, what it was to make images, what it was to try and invest power in an image. So when I left art school the world was my oyster, and I started doing very organic, very painterly work. I was throwing lots of information and visual material in just so I could keep up the thing I was doing at art school, which was finding out what it was to make a painting.

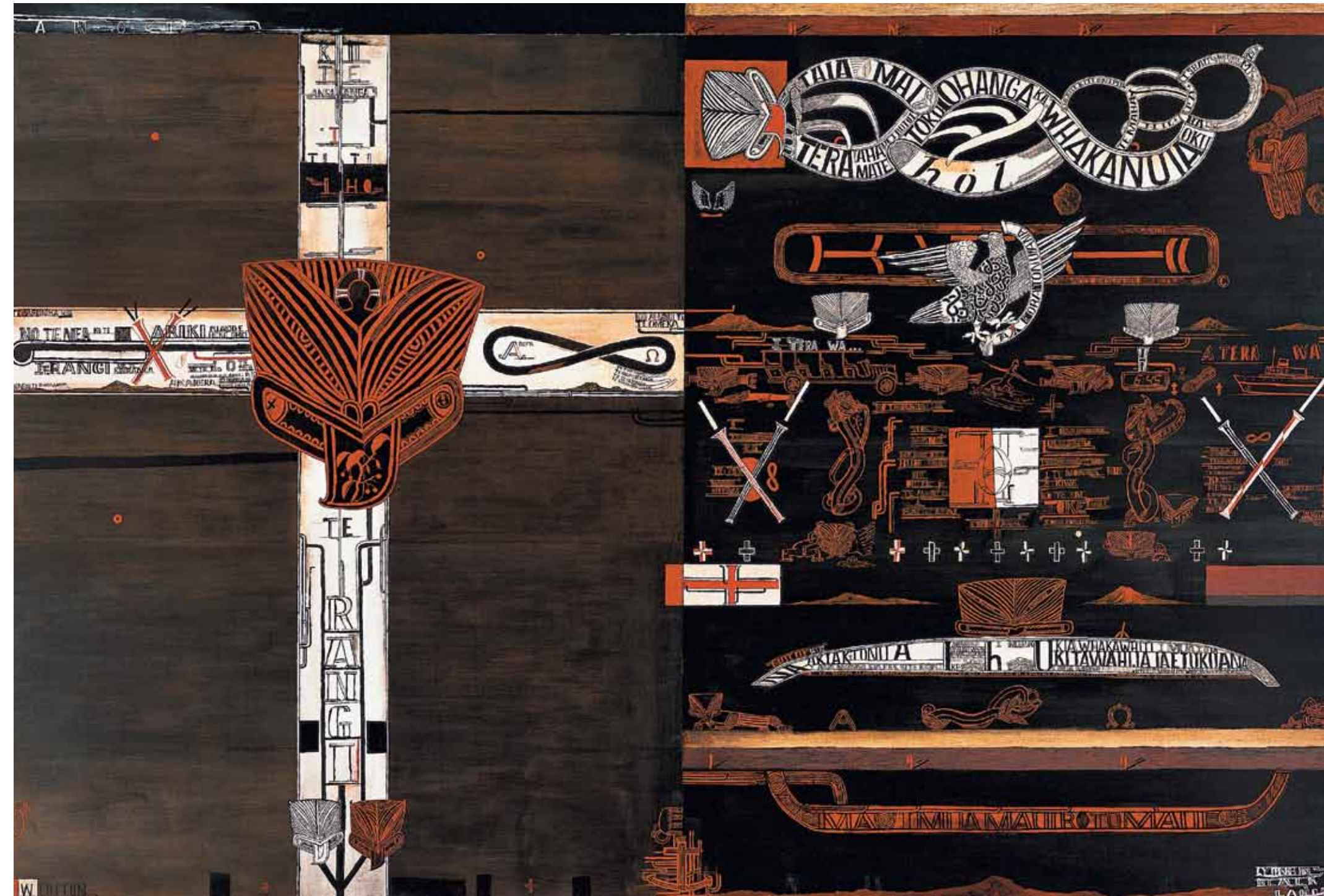
Then I shifted to Palmerston North and I took up a lectureship in the Māori Studies department and all of a sudden I was exposed to a different kind of history, a Māori colonial history—it was something that I didn't know about in any great depth but I had to try to teach the stuff. I was learning, teaching, learning, teaching, all at speed, and it started feeding into my painting.

So a lot of the work through the nineties was dense; it was dense with biblical scripture and dense with Māori history, which was new to me. I wasn't so much trying to teach people about this stuff as trying to understand

'... as a painter, once you know how to do something there's no point going back to do the same thing. What's the point? You know how to do it, you know the result you're going to get, you want to try something different.'

it for myself. And because I was interested in the painting process, and because I had become interested in New Zealand history and the way that it was momentous and caused huge shifts and changes for both the Pākehā and Māori, I just couldn't get away from it.

I suppose in many ways I made the mistake, as a painter, of not knowing when to stop. I was trying to fit all this stuff in and then somehow get it out and expose it. I wanted to see what the audience was going to make of it—what they had to say about it, if they would learn something new from it. It was one of those times in a painter's career where certain things come together—you have your moment and the culture around the work supports it. The polemic, the dialogue, the postcolonial argument, everything was about those kinds of debates. We were coming hard off the *Headlands* [*Thinking through New Zealand Art*, 1992] show and the whole conversation about cultural appropriation and what it means for a white person to use a Māori image, what a 'Māori image' means, what it means for a Māori person to be influenced by contemporary art forms from around the world—is it still Māori art? All these questions were being posed and I was like a sponge, absorbing it and feeding off it and working out some kind of reaction to it.





Shane Cotton *The Hanging Sky* 2007.
Acrylic on linen. Collection of Peggy
Scott and David Teplitzky

But by the time I got to *Lying in the Black Land* I'd gotten through a lot of that. And as a painter, once you know how to do something there's no point going back to do the same thing. What's the point? You know how to do it, you know the result you're going to get, you want to try something different. One of the painters I admire is the American Agnes Martin, who has devoted her career to making very subtle, very refined, abstract paintings. I love the way some painters have this ability to sustain one kind of style or obsession or interest in work over a period of, say, six decades. I find that incredible, but it's not what I can do. I'm a bit of a magpie, flying around pinching stuff. I want to experience what it's like to make different kinds of images, so I don't have any problem with how different a new painting might look or how it sits against earlier work—that's the curators' job. They're the ones who say it's right or wrong or he's gone bloody haywire. I don't worry too much about it. If you worry about those sorts of things, you're going to get long periods of procrastination and painter's block. Just put it out there and see how it's received...

JP: *So between the 1990s and a work like Red Shift in 2007, what happened? You had been carrying so much cultural baggage and in Red Shift it's all been jettisoned. You've taken off, you're flying. Why did that happen?*

sc: I wanted it to be minimal. I was trying to make an image in a very economical way. And I was trying to present something that had a sense of purpose about it. But I didn't want to labour over it. Another painter I really admire is Ed Ruscha, and if you look at a Ruscha canvas it's the concept you register first and the practice thing comes after. I really admire the gravity of those works, yet if you look at the surface, it's a bit of a let-down—very, very light on the canvas. It's almost as though if he doesn't get it right in the first stroke, he doesn't labour over it; he just puts it aside and tries again. I like the fluidity and the ease with which he makes that heavy statement, the contrast between lightness and weight. And because I was working with acrylic after using oils for a long time, I was experimenting with that kind of feel in the work and how it was actually made.

JP: *One thing that really stands out in the paintings of the mid 2000s is your constant engagement, one might even say your obsession, with the colour blue. What led you to that?*

sc: I was thinking about this the other night, wondering why the hell did I start painting blue? I just couldn't remember. It was my wife who reminded me that it was because of the word 'kikorangi'. I sometimes use biblical scripture in my work and I referenced Genesis—that moment,

that Christian moment, of the beginning of humanity, where life on earth as we know it unfolds. In the Māori translation the word for firmament is *kikorangi*, which I think is a really interesting word. *Kikorangi* is the colour blue. But it's made up of two words—'kiko' is flesh and 'rangi' is sky and I've always wondered why that relationship is used to describe the colour of the sky. I think, and I'm guessing, that it's something to do with the use of *moko*, because when you place *moko* under the skin it turns a particular blue. But anyway, because of my interest in that translation I started painting everything blue. It became like an anchor for me, a way to reference that moment or schematic shift as one story is translated into another. I was also going back to the economy thing—trying to limit the way I was making the paintings, limiting my palette...

JP: *Speaking of blueness and tattooing, can we look at the painting from which the show takes its title, The Hanging Sky. Can you tell us about this particular face—where it's from, why it's played such a part in your art, and how you've transformed it?*

sc: This is based on Hongi Hika's carved self-portrait bust that he did when he was in Sydney. It's a very intricate carving and I started painting it because, one, I was interested in the pattern itself, the beauty and the symmetry. The presentation of the photograph that this is based on is frontal, so it meets you straight on, and you can see the pattern perfectly.

He's a Ngā Puhi leader so that's obviously important to me because of Ngā Puhi narrative, but for me this image really matters because it symbolises a moment of change. He lived in a time where he saw Māori custom change into the world of colonial New Zealand. He saw momentous change and shifting in society and so to me he's symbolic of that idea of

transformation, be it cultural transformation or identity transformation or whatever. I started painting him in lots of situations where he's not static—where he's fluid and things are happening in and around him. It's this idea that everything's in play and nothing stays the same.

JP: *And what about the many heads that float in Tradition, History and Incidents?*

sc: Most of the heads I use come out of the Major-General Horatio Robley collection of mokomōkai that he assembled in the late eighteenth, early nineteenth century. I've done a few from photographs of heads in collections but mostly the heads that I've used have had some kind of connection to Robley and I think that's because there is a very famous picture of him sitting in front of his collection. It's a really odd picture, but my position is that in a way what he did was good because it kept a kind of record. But you know, when I remade this image I didn't take a position on it. I was interested in the image and the way it was captured and I just wanted to re-present it—to re-present the heads in a surreal unknown state and remove them from that original position.

JP: *And beyond the faces, how about the spaces they hover in—the deep, dark skies that start to open up around 2006? The earlier works, Lying in the Black Land among them, tend to put us in quite a stable position as viewers. We feel a bit like surveyors looking out towards a steady horizon, or museum visitors looking into a cabinet. What were you after, with the new and much more open spaces?*

sc: You know if you see a bird flying through a landscape you sort of see its motion; you don't actually stop it at all. But in the new paintings the birds were suspended in space and it was like the rocks were starting to move—that's how I was starting to see it. It happens in *Takarangi*, this reversal of things, and I became interested in the way that elements were swapping places. The birds were stopped and it was the mountains that were moving or, in terms of the way the marks were flowing, had the potential to move.

JP: *So to ask a probably unanswerable question, where are we in these works? What is this space for you?*

sc: I wouldn't say it's a dreamscape necessarily, it's more of a surreal space. If I think about surrealist art generally, it's about the uncanny—it has this familiarity about it, but it's presented in such a way that something strange is also occurring. I think these works are a bit like that. My family comes from the north and we're very superstitious people, and I like this idea of superstition in my work—it's not something that I talk about a lot but I think there's something in my work that alludes to that, this sort of uncanny unknown, where you become very wary or very suspicious. For me that's what it's about. In *Takarangi* the space is a naturalistic space in a sense—it's a real-time space—but then in behind the birds are those very light graphic lines. They're like little manaia figures, little sort of

doodles, but they frustrate the space a bit. And I sometimes do things like that because I want to remind the viewer that it ain't all that real. That it's a space that potentially is not of the real world—not of the natural world. That it's constructed, that it's personalised in some way.

JP: *I'll hit you with the big question. Someone might say, 'I'd like to explore all this through a photograph'; someone else might say, 'I'd like to explore it through film'. Why are you a painter and not another kind of artist? What is it that painting does for you, or lets you do, that you couldn't do in those other media?*

sc: I just like the process of painting. I like remaking images in paint. If I'm trying to develop a work, it often comes from seeing an image. I might see an image of a cliffscape and use that as a starting point. And quite often, when you're covering large areas with singular marks, and you're trying to build up this density to give the

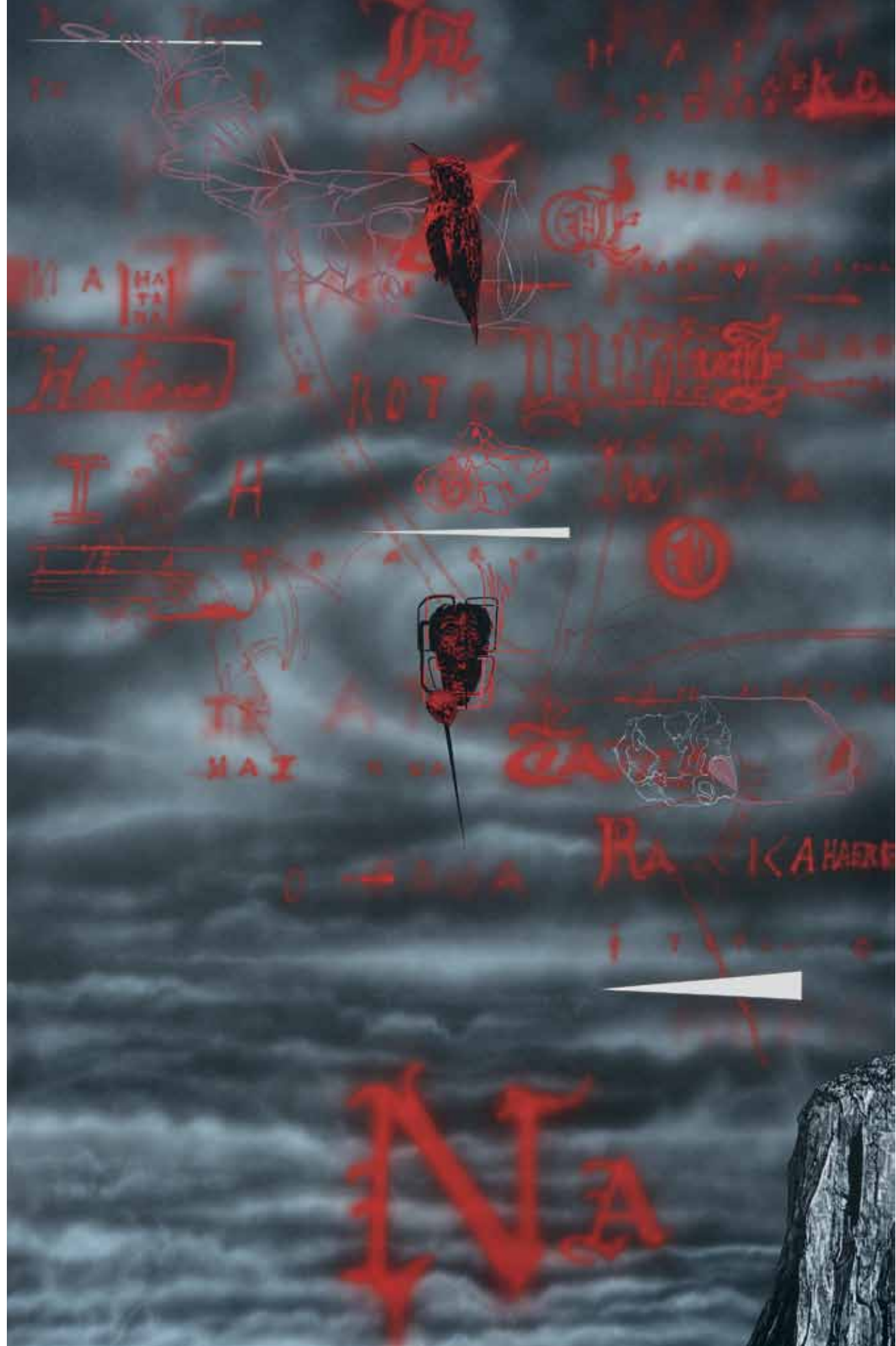
'I just like the process of painting. I like remaking images in paint.'

impression of the cliff, it becomes like a Chuck Close painting. You look at a Chuck Close painting and he's got this grid system—he only ever considers one point on the canvas at a time before moving to the next point and then he stands back and takes in the enormity of the whole process that actually makes the image. That's how I work sometimes, and I don't know of any other art form that allows you to do that.



Shane Cotton Coloured Dirt 2008. Acrylic on linen. Cotton collection, Palmerston North

Shane Cotton *Na* 2010.
Acrylic on linen. Courtesy the
artist, Anna Schwartz Gallery



‘I like it when you get to the point of beginning to admire it, and then the next day you go in and you get the spray-gun out and you start wrecking it a bit. That takes the painting somewhere else...’

You could probably do it with a computer but then you’d miss the physicality of it, the physicality of dipping the brush into the goo and trying to see how far it goes before it runs out, so you reload the brush and you’re constantly adjusting. That’s the process of painting and that’s the thing I still enjoy doing. Sometimes when you’re working on big canvases you go into a studio and you’ve got all the energy in the world so you start down in the corner, and a few hours later you find yourself thinking this ain’t gonna work... But I like hanging in there and grafting it and working it out. And as I start to get into the process and the density starts to build, it opens up a whole lot of other ways you can get into it—will you take to it with a spray-can? What does the thing as a whole tell you about where you are going to place an image? You’re working it out as you go, sniffing around to see if it’s going to work, and sometimes it doesn’t. I like it when you get to the point of beginning to admire it, and then the next day you go in and you get the spray-gun out and you start wrecking it a bit. That takes the painting somewhere else and you try and deal with that and get through the problem you’ve created for yourself.

JP: *With you living in Palmerston North I’m not in your studio very often at all, so I’ve got to admit the last few visits have been almost shocking...* [sc: Thanks, mate.] *There was one occasion in particular where you’d painted a beautiful sequence of skylines—they were lyrical, they were eerie, and I thought, ‘That looks fantastic.’ And when I came back again you’d vandalised them with red spray-painted words. Do you have strategies you use to keep yourself on your toes in this way, to deliver these sorts of small shocks to your viewers?*

sc: A strategy? No, I just kind of go with the flow. You get to a point in your work, I think, when you know how to do something and it doesn’t fill your creative cup any more. So one of the things I started doing was wrecking my own work a bit. I wanted to jar it.

If you go back to a work like *Coloured Dirt* you see that I wanted it to be well crafted, I wanted it to look super-natural—to be captured like a photograph. I love the way a painting can be a vehicle for tricking the viewer; I’m still fascinated by paintings like that myself. But when you know how to do that, you get tired of it, so I started doing these other things with graffiti—I wanted to disrupt the perfect environment or world that I was painting. After airbrushing in some skylines, one day I just started writing text all over, really getting into it. It was a fine line between ‘Is this thing getting better?’ or ‘Is it getting worse?’ and for quite a while it wasn’t getting good at all. But as you come to understand the painting conceptually you make it right; I felt comfortable with the way the paintings were disrupting themselves and so I started showing them.

JP: *On the one hand you seem to hold out the lure of something to read, but, on the other, this red skywriting is very hard to read. It’s often in another language, a language many viewers won’t understand. There are layers; the words fade out raggedly. Why is it important to make it hard for us to read?*

sc: If you look at a McCahon, his use of text was very much about the idea of reading a painting—he wanted you to read it. I don’t. The text in my work is more like an interference pattern. There may be keywords—for instance, the text in many of those works is from the Book of Job; it’s at the beginning and God and Satan have a conversation, they have a

wager. Satan says, ‘You know, I reckon if you give this guy a hard time he’s going to come over to the dark side.’ But before that God says to Satan, ‘Where have you been?’ And there’s this lovely series of sentences where he describes how he’s been drifting through earth, walking through the earth and walking through the sky, toing and froing in the earth. If you consider how, as a Māori person, you might think about the land, you quite often tend to personify it through its name. And if you think that something bad is wandering though you, it’s somehow affecting you. I’ve always thought that kind of creepy. I’m interested in that piece of text so I painted it in English and then I painted another one, which is the Māori translation. I’ve given them the same treatment—I use words like an image. I want them to operate like the birds or the clouds but at moments you can make out a word—you might make out the words ‘Satan’ and ‘earth’. You might see the words coming to you, from you, through you. I’m alluding to the possibilities of something else instead of demanding a literal reading.

Shane Cotton: *The Hanging Sky* is on display at the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, from 8 December 2012 until 2 March 2013. Organised and toured by Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu in association with the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane.

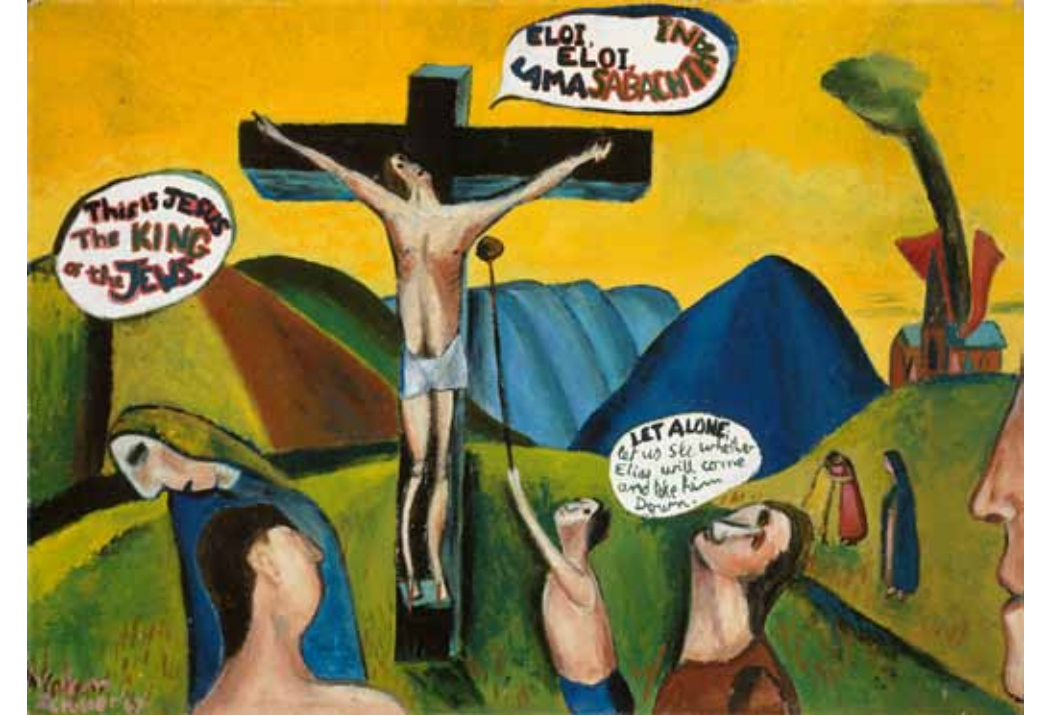
IMA
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Falling Through the Cracks

Collecting McCahon

Colin McCahon *There is only one direction* 1952. Oil on hardboard. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, N. Barrett Bequest Collection, purchased 2011. Purchase supported by Christchurch City Council's Challenge Grant to Christchurch Art Gallery Trust. Reproduced courtesy of the Colin McCahon Research and Publication Trust

Colin McCahon *Crucifixion according to St Mark* 1947. Oil on canvas on board. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, presented by Colin McCahon on the death of Ron O'Reilly, 1982. Reproduced courtesy of the Colin McCahon Research and Publication Trust

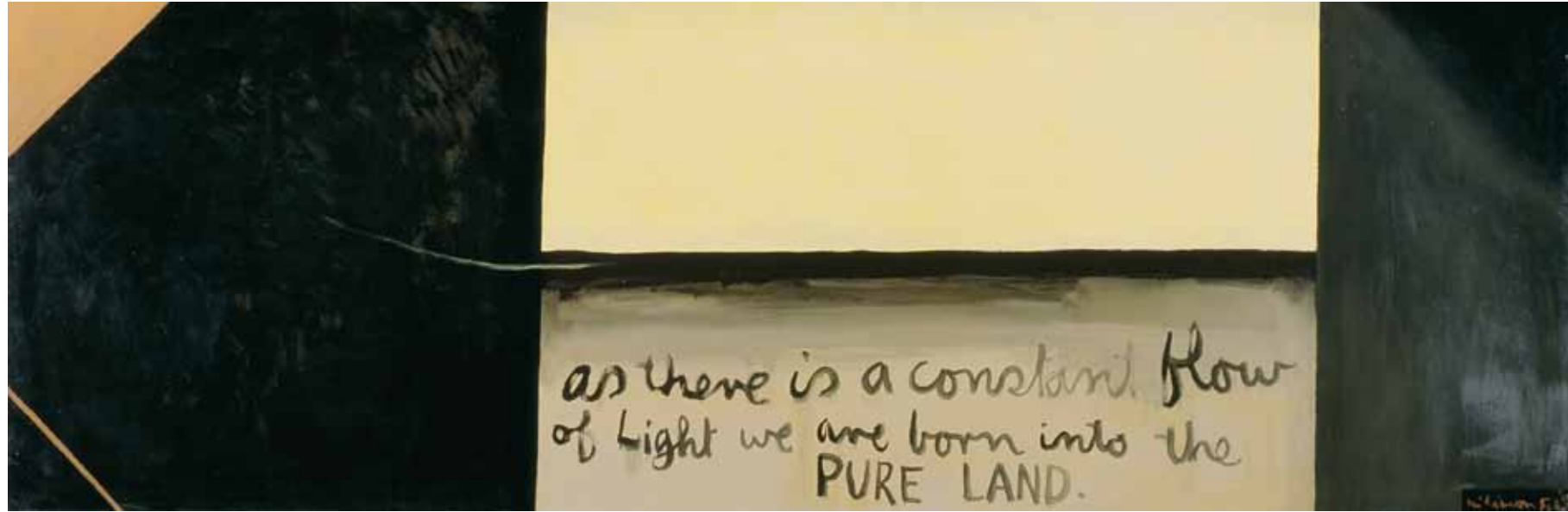


THE RECENT PURCHASE of Colin McCahon's *There is only one direction* (1952) was a timely reminder that acquisitions of paintings by one of New Zealand's most significant twentieth-century painters have been few and far between at Christchurch Art Gallery. The last McCahon painting was purchased thirty years ago, in 1982, and the Gallery holds just eight paintings by the artist.

This lean collection is attributable to various factors, not least a disdain for McCahon, from the 1950s to the 1980s, on the part of the Christchurch public. The personal involvement of city councillors in acquisitions by this Gallery's predecessor, the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, also led to some questionable decisions. The first painting by McCahon to be considered for the McDougall was *Painting 1958*. A co-winner of the 1960 Hay's Ltd Art Competition, it was offered as a gift by the department store in 1961, but declined by the

council; the mayor, George Manning, describing it as not suitable for the Gallery. This stunning abstraction in black and white is now a key work in the Fletcher Trust Collection, but at the time, the thought of it hanging in the McDougall upset many Christchurch residents. As McCahon later recalled, it was the most disliked painting in New Zealand.¹

Following quickly on the heels of that debacle, and as a result of it, came an offer to present *Tomorrow will be the same but not as this is* (1958–9), which had been purchased by a group of McCahon's supporters. This was the first painting by the artist to be accepted into the Gallery's collection, but only after much deliberation and opposition—one member of the council's Art Advisory Committee called it a 'monstrosity that should not be permitted to hang in our beautiful gallery'.² Thankfully his opinions were in the minority and this fine work entered the city's art collection in 1962.



In the early 1970s McDougall director Brian Muir purchased two more McCahon paintings, *Light Falling through a dark landscape (A)* (1972) and *Blind V* (1974), with little fuss. However, when in 1982, director John Coley decided to acquire *As there is a constant flow of light we are born into the pure land* (1965), there was again a determined effort by some Cantabrians to shun McCahon's work. Thankfully Coley stood his ground and the work is now a major highlight of the collection. And in that same year the artist himself donated one of the most accomplished works from his figurative religious period to the Gallery, *Crucifixion according to St Mark* (1947). It was a generous gesture from a man whose work had been ridiculed and derided in Christchurch.

In contrast to the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, the Canterbury Public Library, thanks to its enlightened librarian, Ron O'Reilly, had an active art lending programme that included several of McCahon's paintings. Library subscribers could borrow these for a nominal fee: the going rate to hire an original McCahon painting in 1967 was 45 cents per month. Two of these paintings are now in Christchurch Art Gallery's collection.

Thankfully there have been no public grumblings regarding the acquisition of *There is only one direction* (1952). The work depicts a Madonna and child. A subdued palette contributes to its starkness, its piercing impact. If *There is only one direction* were seen in a room of more conventional Madonnas, the viewer would be even more aware of its strength of purpose, for this painting is completely without props: there are no haloes, no rich fabrics, no saints in attendance as the young Christ child unswervingly faces his future, the journey ahead. His large dark eyes, each with its dot of white, compel us to consider the future. It is impossible to miss the sense of connection between mother and child, her protective form in the framing oval.

There is only one direction was painted while McCahon was living and working in Christchurch. In 1952, when this work was completed, McCahon and his family were residing in Barbour Street in Phillipstown, by the Linwood railway station, in a house he described in 1972:

A place almost without night and day as the super floodlights of the railway goods-yard kept us always in perpetual light. The trunks of the trees were black with soot. We eventually had a small but lovely garden. To

*the right a pickle factory; behind, a grinding icing sugar plant. Twenty-two rail-tracks to the left. A lovely view of the Port Hills and industry from the front room and across the road an embryo female bagpipe-player learning hard.*³

Purchased through the Norman Barrett Bequest, supported by the Christchurch City Council's Challenge Grant to the Christchurch Art Gallery Trust, this work dovetails perfectly with Barrett's wish that his bequest be used to acquire significant works with a Canterbury connection produced between 1940 and 1980. An example from McCahon's Christchurch period was glaringly absent from the collection so this acquisition is a milestone for the Gallery. Let's hope that we don't have to wait another thirty years for the next one.

Peter Vangioni
Curator

Overdue Notice: Would the library user who borrowed Colin McCahon's painting *French Bay* (c.1957; cat. #80036) from the Canterbury Public Library in 1961 please return it to your local library or drop it off at the Gallery. We promise to waive any overdue fees.

Colin McCahon *As there is a constant flow of light we are born into the pure land* 1965. Acrylic. Purchased with assistance from QE II Arts Council, 1982. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, reproduced courtesy of the Colin McCahon Research and Publication Trust

NOTES

1. *Colin McCahon/a survey exhibition*, Auckland, 1972, p.24.
2. Neil Roberts, *Good Works*, Christchurch, 1994, p.32.
3. *Colin McCahon/a survey exhibition*, p.20.

MAKE A DONATION, MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Following the Canterbury earthquakes, Christchurch Art Gallery needs your support more than ever. By becoming a supporter of the Christchurch Art Gallery Trust you can help the Gallery continue to grow as an internationally recognised centre of excellence, providing a stimulating and culturally enriching experience for all who visit in the future.

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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 2012–13: \$211,000 to be raised by 30 June 2013

Raised to date: \$152,400

Still to be raised: \$58,600

Special Donations

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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 McKegg, 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.

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**CHRISTCHURCH
ART GALLERY
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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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THE EAST INDIA COMPANY MAN

Brigadier-General Alexander Walker

KEN HALL

Sir Henry Raeburn *Brigadier-General Alexander Walker of Bowland* (detail) 1819. Oil on canvas. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, presented by the Walker family 1984



GETTING TO KNOW PEOPLE CAN TAKE TIME. WHILE PREPARING FOR A FUTURE EXHIBITION OF EARLY PORTRAITS FROM THE COLLECTION, I'M BECOMING ACQUAINTED WITH ALEXANDER WALKER, AND FINDING HIM A REWARDING SUBJECT. PAINTED IN 1819 BY THE LEADING SCOTTISH PORTRAITIST OF HIS DAY, SIR HENRY RAEBURN, WALKER'S PORTRAIT IS WROUGHT WITH RAEBURN'S CHARACTERISTIC BLEND OF PAINTERLY VIGOUR AND ATTENTIVE CARE, AND CONVEYS THE IMPRESSION OF A WELL-CAPTURED LIKENESS.

Above left: William Daniell *Troops crossing a river in India* c.1790. Watercolour. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu

Above right: Unknown artist *Tipu Sultan* undated. Ink, gouache and gold on paper. UC Berkeley, Berkeley Art Museum

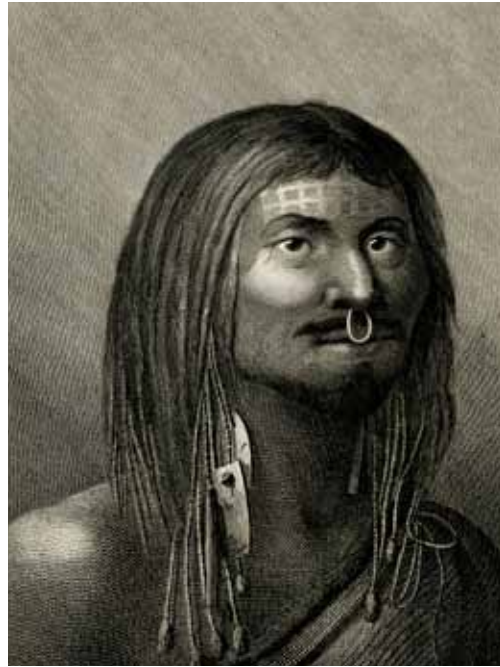
ALEXANDER WALKER'S STEADY GAZE inhabits craggy, lived-in features. Although well accustomed to leadership, he wears a stoic humility; he appears thoughtful and humane. Indeed, he is a man who has weighed significant matters. Walker's far-reaching experiences and observations have also been preserved within his substantial body of writings, most of which are unpublished. Yet his remarkable story remains hardly told.

Walker was born in 1764 in Collessie, Scotland, the eldest of five children. His father William, a Church of Scotland minister, died when the boy was seven. Although he was able to study at the grammar school and university at St Andrews, he later recalled that 'poverty was vouchsafed... as a Counter balance to Family Pride [and its] younger Branches had to seek their fortunes in distant lands'.¹ His transition to adulthood would occur in India.

A cadet in the East India Company from 1780, Walker sailed to Bombay in 1781. The following year he became an ensign and took part in a campaign against the forts of the Muslim military ruler, Hyder Ali, on the Malabar Coast. He also fought with the 8th Battalion in defence of the fort at Mangalore against a siege led by Ali's son, Tipu Sultan. When the British surrendered on 30 January 1784, though severely wounded, he offered himself as one of two required hostages during a truce, 'notwithstanding the reputation of Tippoo at

that period ... for cruelty and perfidy'. For four months they 'were subjected to a variety of privations and insults, and even considered their lives in danger'.²

The National Library of Scotland holds a vast archive of Walker's correspondence and papers, running to almost 600 large volumes, many of which he had prepared for publication. Among these is a hefty journal titled *Voyage to America, 1785*, which was finally published nearly 200 years after the event.³ Ensign Walker was barely twenty-one when he was chosen to accompany a private expedition to the north-west coast of America, 'the object [of which] was to collect furs and to establish a military post at Nootka Sound, which it was intended he should command'.⁴ Fur was required for the China market and in the hope of opening trade with Japan. Inspired and guided by an account of James Cook's third voyage, published in 1784, Walker and his companions spent most of their time at Friendly Village (Yuquot), a seasonal settlement in Nootka Sound on the west coast of Vancouver Island, purchasing mainly sea otter pelts from the local population. 'Experience showed us,' Walker wrote, 'that the best method of Trading with these People was to wait patiently on board, where the Canoes never failed to flock from all quarters. We never had any success, when we pursued them ashore.' The most desired commodities for the Nootka were copper and iron.



William Sharp, after John Webber
A Man of Nootka Sound 1784.
Engraving. British Museum

William Sharp, after John Webber
The interior of a house in Nootka
Sound 1784. Engraving. British
Museum

An illustration by John Webber, *A Man of Nootka Sound*, mirrors Walker's description of an individual who captured his attention upon their arrival:

A person in one of the largest Canoes, whom we supposed to be a chief, from the superior ferocity of his looks, and the exclusive privilege, that he seemed to enjoy, of sitting idle. He was about 35 Years old, and apparently possessed of much strength. He had his face eminently disfigured, and his Hair plaistered with red ochre, thick powdered with feathers, and tied in a bunch over his forehead with a Straw rope.⁵

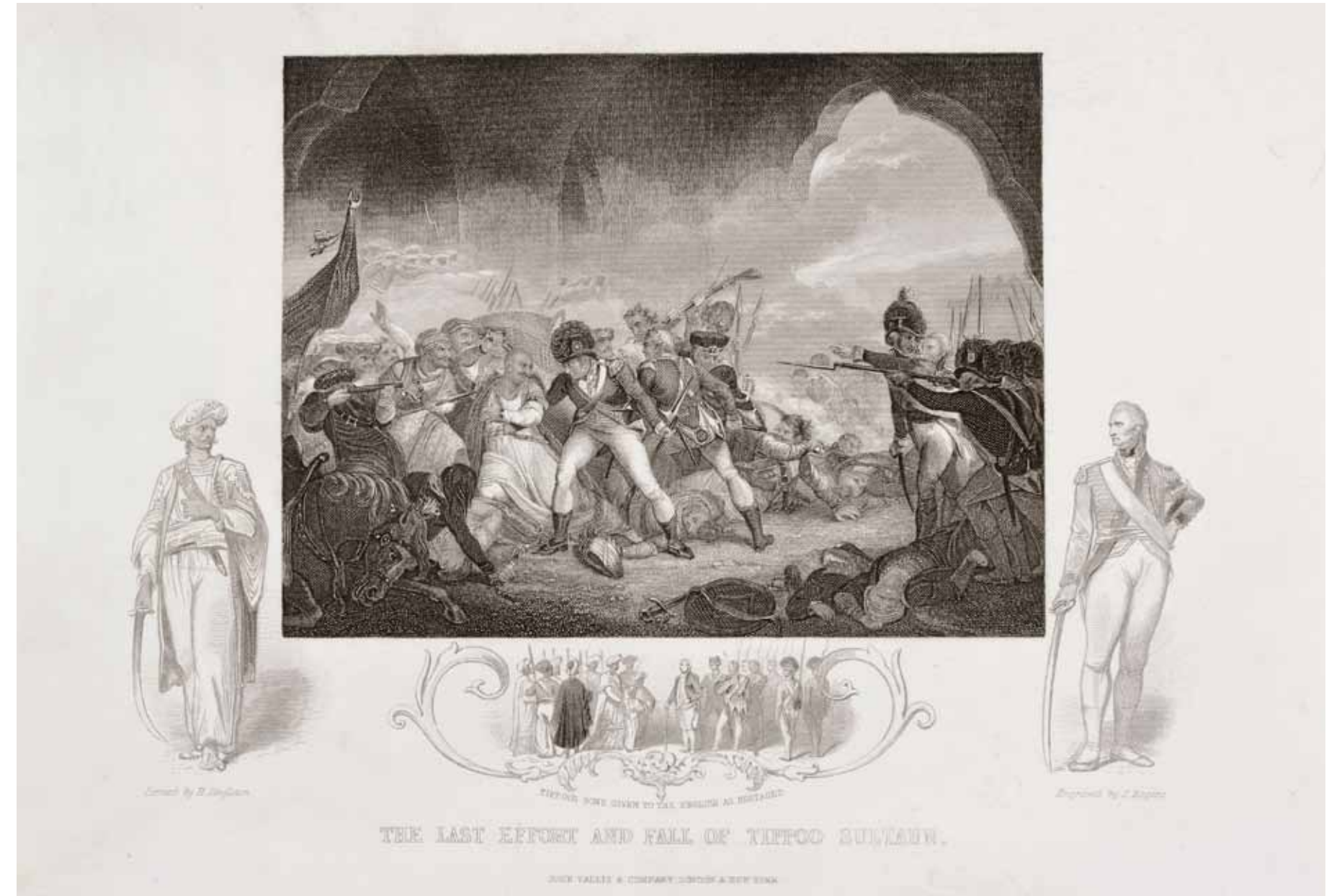
Familiarity with the Nootka grew: 'We were daily among them, and lived in a manner in their Society. We saw their usual course of Life, and often mixed in their Occupations, or Amusements.'⁶ Although a trading post was not established, Walker's intrinsic interest in people and love of learning led him to build a valuable ethnological record, gathering much detail about Nootka life and adding significantly to vocabularies collected by Cook. Although he could see the profitable potential of the region's vast forests, Walker also foresaw that benefits to the indigenous inhabitants through European contact would be few.

Rejoining the Grenadier Battalion at the Bombay garrison, Walker began his advance through the East India Company ranks. Promoted to lieutenant in 1788, he was adjutant in a 1790 expedition sent to relieve the Rajah of Travancore; in 1791 he was adjutant of the 10th Native Infantry in a campaign against the dreaded Tipu. In 1797 he became a regimental captain and was appointed deputy quartermaster-general of the Bombay army, with the rank of major. He became deputy auditor-general in 1798, and quartermaster-general in 1799, when he took part in the final war against Tipu at Seringapatam and their adversary was killed. Walker was awarded an honorary gold medal; the East India Company gained territory and valuable spoils.

Based on the west coast of India through the 1790s, Walker maintained his interest in observation and learning. Among his manuscripts and correspondence in the National Library of Scotland is a significant collection of his sketchbooks of people and ships of the Malabar Coast; Edinburgh University Library holds two large volumes of his drawings of Malabar plants and trees. A vast collection of Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit and

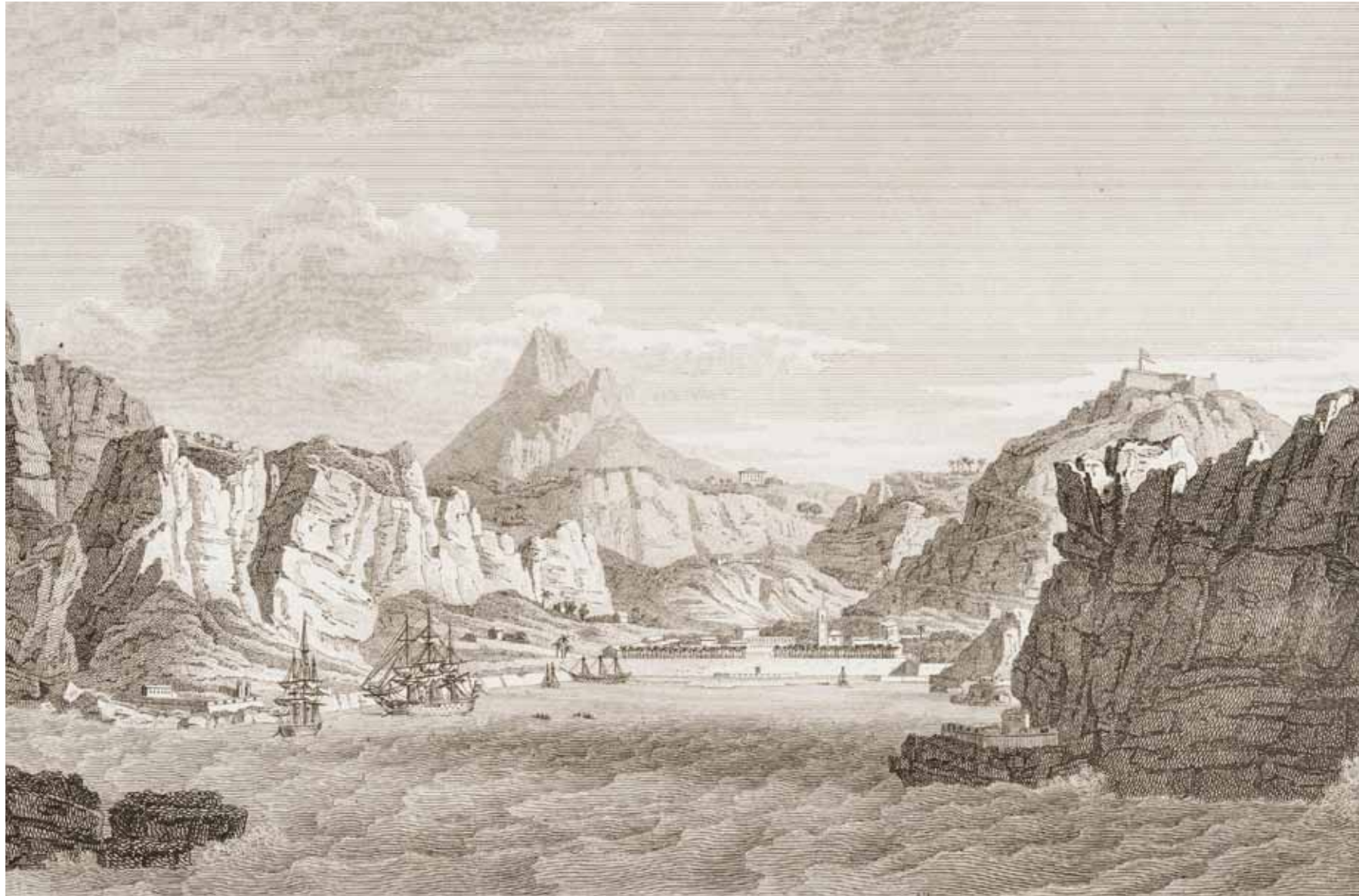
Hindi manuscripts acquired during his years in India is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

In 1800, Major Walker was sent to the Mahratta states to bring peace to the region and reform to the ruling confederacy, aims that he achieved; a period of attendance on the commanding officer, Sir Arthur Wellesley (later Duke of Wellington), followed. In 1802, he was appointed political resident at the court of the Gaekwad of Baroda, with whom he later negotiated a defensive alliance. In 1807, he led an expedition into Kathiawar in Gujarat, where he succeeded in restoring order and, more notably, in ending the Jhareja Rajputs' customary practice of female infanticide.⁷ It was later said that 'his military achievements, his civil successes, sank to nothing in his estimation, compared with this nobler triumph. Be it remembered, too, that it was a victory ... solely effected by persuasion and reason.'⁸ Walker was promoted to lieutenant-colonel in 1808. The following year, when he returned to Gujarat, 'he was gratified by the visits of crowds of parents, bringing to him the children whose lives he had been the means of saving'.⁹ In 1810, he obtained leave to quit India in pursuit of a more settled life at his newly purchased Bowland estate near Galashiels and Edinburgh. He married Barbara Montgomery on 12 July 1811.



Above: John Rogers, after Henry Singleton
The last effort and fall of Tippoo Sultaun undated. Engraving. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery library archives

Left: Sir Henry Raeburn *Mrs Barbara Walker of Bowland* 1819. Oil on canvas. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, presented by the Walker family 1984



Far Left: Nuttall, Fisher & Co. Liverpool The island & forts of St Helena 1816. Engraving. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery library archives

Left: Sanderson Stationer, Stow Bowland, Stow c.1908. Chromolithographic postcard. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery library archives

Walker retired in 1812 and, as one biographer puts it, ‘fixed himself in his native country, where he lived most happily in the bosom of his amiable family, attending with ardour to the varied pursuits of agriculture, and the improvement of his estates.’¹⁰ Two sons, William Stuart and James Scott, were born in 1813 and 1814. In these years, too, Bowland House was reworked by architect James Gillespie Graham in splendid Tudor Gothic revival style. Alexander and Barbara Walker’s portraits were probably painted in 1819.¹¹ The commission was likely arranged through Barbara’s connections: Raeburn also painted her brother, Sir James Montgomery, second baronet of Stanhope; her sister-in-law, Helen Graham, Lady Montgomery; and her sister Margaret, with her husband Robert Campbell of Kailzie. Barbara’s mother, Margaret Scott, had been painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Her father Sir James Montgomery, who was Lord Advocate from 1766, an MP and Chief Baron of the Scottish Exchequer from 1775 to 1881, had been painted by several artists.

Sir James’s obituary, in 1803, noted that Barbara ‘had devoted herself to attendance upon the declining years of her father, in preference to the formations of other connections.’¹² Her marriage eight years later, at the age of forty-one, must then have been unexpected, as would have been the births of her two sons. Her recently cleaned and conserved portrait is fresh testimony to the power of Raeburn’s art. Like Alexander’s, her watchful gaze is both direct and reticent. A spectacularly well painted gold chain adorns pale shoulders and a stately bust, from which silvery fabric tumbles in fashionable Regency lines.

Bowland House, with its many Indian curiosities, ‘notably of representatives of the Hindoo pantheon’,¹³ was an ideal setting for Walker to work on his various Indian histories, and his accounts of Indian customs and beliefs. He also revisited his concerns about Britain’s role in India, adding to the thoughts he had penned in 1811 during his passage home.¹⁴ Noting then that the East India Company, with its 200,000 men, was £30 million in debt, he reflected that British power in India was ‘maintained at the expense of the parent state...

guaranteed not only by the blood but the treasure of England’.¹⁵ In a private correspondence from 1817 to 1819 he built a compelling case for ‘an unusual and unpopular expedient. A proposal to contract the bounds of our territories, and to relinquish the fruits of conquest...’¹⁶ Although opening the argument with fiscal concerns, Walker’s proposal for radical reform broadened as he acknowledged a deep-rooted hostility and degrading dependence among the subjugated Indian populace: ‘We have left wounds in every quarter, and produced everywhere discontent: the confidence which was once reposed in our moderation and justice is gone. We have made use of treaties, contracted solely for protection, as the means of making violent demands... Every individual almost above the common artizan and labourer suffers by our system of government.’¹⁷

In 1822 Walker was coaxed from retirement to become governor of St Helena, then still under East India Company rule. Arriving on the island as a brigadier-general on 11 March 1823, almost two years after Napoleon’s death there in exile, he lived at Plantation House, the governor’s residence, perched high on a hill above the capital of Jamestown. There he remained active, ‘promoting schools and libraries, improving the agriculture and horticulture of the island, by the formation of societies, the abolition of slavery, and the amelioration of the lower classes’.¹⁸ The phased emancipation of the island’s slaves occurred between 1827 and 1832 (slavery was abolished in British colonies in 1833). He also continued with his writing, including revisions to his North American manuscript. Failing health, however, brought on by an apoplexy from which he never fully recovered, meant a return to Bowland in 1828; Walker died in Scotland on 5 March 1831. Barbara died the same year.¹⁹ Alexander’s full correspondence on British rule in India was published in the House of Commons papers in 1832. Its incisive contents, if heeded, would have changed history.

Ken Hall
Curator

NOTES

1. J.M. Bumsted, ‘Walker, Alexander’, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, University of Toronto, http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=3186&&PHPSESSID=yhzfqkvzape
2. ‘Brigadier General Alexander Walker’, *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British and Foreign India...*, 1832, p.204.
3. Robin Fisher and J.M. Bumsted (eds.), *An Account of a Voyage to the North West Coast of America in 1785 & 1786*, 1982, p.111.
4. ‘Deaths, March 5th’, *The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine, Part Two*, H. Colburn, 1831, p.582.
5. Robin Fisher and J.M. Bumsted (eds.), *An Account of a Voyage to the North West Coast of America in 1785 & 1786*, 1982, pp.42-3.
6. *Ibid.*, p.81.
7. See Alexander Walker and J.P. Willoughby, *Measures Adopted for the Suppression of Female Infanticide in the Province of Kattywar, &c.*, Bombay, 1856.
8. ‘Brigadier General Alexander Walker’, *The Asiatic Journal*, p.206.
9. Thomas Henry Brooke, *A History of the Island of St Helena, from its history by the Portuguese to the year 1823*, London, 1824, p.404.
10. Major Moor, FRS, ‘Brigadier-General Alexander Walker of the Bombay Army’, *The Annual Biography and Obituary: 1832*, vol.16, 1832, p.49.
11. They were dated 1819 in an 1898 Canterbury Society of Arts exhibition; it is, however, possible that they were painted earlier to celebrate their marriage.
12. ‘Biographical Account of Sir James Montgomery, Bart’, *The Scots Magazine; or, General Repository of Literature, History, and Politics*, vol.65, 1803, p.596.
13. J. Hardy, ‘Report of Meetings for 1887’, *History of the Berwickshire Naturalists’ Club, instituted September 22, 1831*, Berwickshire Naturalists’ Club, Scotland, 1890, vol.12, p.59.
14. Lieut.-Col. Alexander Walker, ‘Considerations on the Affairs of India. Written in the Year 1811’, Appendix to Report from Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company, *House of Commons papers*, HMSO, vol.14, 1832, pp.310-16.
15. *Ibid.*, p.310.
16. Correspondence between B.S. Jones, Esq., and Lt.-Col. Walker, Appendix to Report from Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company, *House of Commons papers*, HMSO, vol.14, 1832, pp.295-324. Quote from 1818, p.304.
17. Letter to Lt.-Col. Walker to B.S. Jones, Esq., Jan.31, 1818, Appendix to Report from Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company, *House of Commons papers*, HMSO, vol.14, 1832, p.302.
18. ‘Brigadier General Alexander Walker’, *The Asiatic Journal*, p.207.
19. Alexander and Barbara Walker’s sons became Sir William Stuart Walker, KCB and James Scott Walker, captain in the 88th Regiment. The former’s sons, William Campbell Walker and A.J. Walker, emigrated to New Zealand in 1862.

**A MISCELLANY
OF OBSERVABLE
ILLUSIONS**

Robin Neate

Tony de Lautour *Untitled*
2012. Acrylic on board in found
frame. Reproduced courtesy
of the artist and Brooke Gifford
Gallery



‘AT FIRST THESE SIMPLE SHAPES MIMICKED LETTER FORMS, THE WORDS THEY CREATED HIDDEN IN THE ABSTRACTION’

Romantic notions of gothic leanings, the legacy of Tony Fomison, devotion to rock sub-genres and an eye to the past are familiar and sound reasons to group Tony de Lautour, Jason Greig and Bill Hammond together in one exhibition, but **De Lautour / Greig / Hammond** is to feature new and recent work. Could all this change? What nuances will be developed or abandoned? Will rich veins be further mined? We can only speculate and accept that even the artists concerned can't answer these questions. For the artist, every work is a new endeavour, a new beginning. What may appear to the public, the critic or the art historian as a smooth, seamless flow of images is for them an unpredictable process where the only boundaries are those that they choose to invent.

In recent years a strong shift has been readily observable in the work of Tony de Lautour. Left to history, or at least temporarily sidelined, are the cobwebs, the smoking heads, the punk kiwis and other Ed Roth *Rat Fink* analogies. Figurative elements have all but disappeared from his paintings, to be replaced by modernist blocks of solid colour in pastel pinks and blues. At first these simple shapes mimicked letter forms, the words they created hidden in the abstraction. More recently, similar shapes have served as elements to construct reductive

forms reminiscent of the early twentieth-century abstract paintings of the Suprematists and Vorticists. Seeking to extend cubism, the Vorticists took up the modernist dictum of poet Ezra Pound to 'Make it new!' While De Lautour also strives to make it new he chooses to do so by making it old.

De Lautour has always shown a penchant for the aged. Whether it's the surface incidence of impasto and faux wood-grain or using old paintings, found pieces of wood, vintage saws or the pages of real estate publications to paint on, he often attempts, in some manner, to disrupt and interfere with the reception of the applied image. The flat painted geometric shapes that currently hold and accentuate the surface in his work are no exception, and the ground of the paintings as well as the modernist enterprise continue to be corrupted by his grunge aesthetic. Painted shapes are superimposed on spray-can backgrounds or, imitating both the aging of old master paintings and the art of the forger, a faux craquelure. Accented by cool blacks, the colour palette consists of kitchen-cupboard pastels sourced from leftover tins of stodgy paint gleaned from garage sales. Amid these interventions and self-conscious dribbles of paint the machined utopian imaginings of the early modernist mentality segue into a more immediate contemporary urgency.

Below: Bill Hammond *Proto 4* 2012. Lithograph. Reproduced courtesy of the artist and Papergraphica

Opposite: Jason Greig Farewell *Italica... say goodnight Gracie* 2012. Monoprint. Reproduced courtesy of the artist and Hamish McKay Gallery



‘LONG GONE, IT WOULD SEEM, ARE THE ANGST-RIDDEN BLOCKHEADS AND ZIGZAG-LIMBED ANTAGONISTS OF THE EARLY YEARS.’

If the past in Bill Hammond’s paintings is anything to go by, the characters who inhabit it rarely stray far from their natural habitat. They are never hurried. They may occasionally visit a local pool hall, play a musical instrument or pose for a portrait, but as often as not they seem content to wait for something to turn up—even at times to the extent of taking on the appearance of wallpaper with intricate all-over decorative patterning. They rarely attempt full flight and are happy to hover or float about in an apparently weightless atmosphere. It’s the quiet illusion of an extended moment where the only sound is a ticking clock; change is slow and subtle.

Long gone, it would seem, are the angst-ridden blockheads and zigzag-limbed antagonists of the early years. The sleek-bodied bird people that overtook them were long content to contemplate from treetops and shorelines a paradise lost, whereas more recently Hammond’s paintings have begun to suggest a paradise regained. The inhabitants of his willow-pattern-land have discreetly grown more defined wings and become reminiscent of the angels in a Gustav Doré biblical engraving. The monochromatic green mist has been known to lift, revealing scenes tinged with a golden glow or the full colour of daylight, complete with cloud-dappled blue skies. The only lingering sombre note in Hammond’s recent soundless song of summer has been the emergence of cinerary urns, and even these funereal echoes have been suitably decorated as if to distract from their contents. Along with dissolving plumes of smoke and images of a wishbone, the urns imply mortality and the hope that the breaking bone is favourable and the wish to savour each passing moment is granted. For who knows what tomorrow may bring.



Jason Greig’s working method lends itself readily to the capture or cornering of shifting moods and odd thoughts. Coupled with the monoprint process, the stencil-like forms he uses to create his images act as templates that can be reworked and recycled into subtle variations on drifting themes. Like an Antipodean Edvard Munch, he visits his subjects over and over again. Greig’s gallery of images can be rearranged at a whim and cast in a different light, like Giorgio Morandi’s bottles, bowls and vases, or James Ensor’s carnival masks and skeletons. With a simple straightening of a tie, the tilt of a hat, a touch of make-up here or there and a pat on the back, Greig ushers his players back into his carnival of souls to await their fate. Drawn from a repertoire similar to that of the silent screen actor Lon Chaney—the Man of a Thousand Faces, famous for his portrayals of such grotesques as the Hunchback of Notre Dame and the Phantom of the Opera—the faces that stare back

at us from Greig’s macabre melodramas are equally afflicted.

Yet of late some of Greig’s images have begun to leave their claustrophobic chiaroscuro. He seems to have managed to drag himself away from Miss Havisham’s wedding table, brush away the cobwebs, dust himself down and head for the door. Forms and figures have become more fully formed, perhaps even defiant, taking on a more direct poster-like appearance, with strongly defined edges, crushed blacks and saturated colour: rich reds, radiant violets and velvet greens. The shadowy figures that lurked in Greig’s *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* visions appear to have been sedated and deposited in a sealed crypt. It would be unwise, however, to assign his characters to the literary past from which they may have emerged for, with Greig, we must always be prepared for the unexpected hand on the shoulder or the gruesome result of a premature burial.

On some level an artist’s work is always a surrogate or subliminal self-portrait and when the artist’s thoughts change or mood shifts usually the work follows. The colour fades or heightens, the tones darken or lighten, the focus blurs or becomes more acute—for it is seldom the subject an artist depicts that forms the image and imparts its resonance but how it is made.

Robin Neate

Robin Neate is an artist and writer and is currently a lecturer in painting at the University of Canterbury’s School of Fine Arts. De Lautour / Greig / Hammond will be on display in the NG space on Madras Street from 2 February until 10 March.



Ash Keating Concrete
Propositions 2012. Acrylic
house paint on concrete. © the
artist. Courtesy the artist and
Fehily Contemporary, Melbourne
Australia. Photo: John Collie

STAFF PROFILE



John Collie

Gallery Photographer

I photograph all new acquisitions and continue the process of digitising existing works in the collection. I also photograph all the Gallery's exhibitions, including touring shows as well as general day-to-day work such as shop products, website, education and public programmes.

In addition to these core activities there are special publication projects such as the Van der Velden catalogue, the Andrew Drummond book and, currently, the large publication for Shane Cotton. And of course

there's the publication you're reading right now which provides me with an opportunity to be a bit more creative.

I'm also collecting quite a few earthquake shots from around the city, and documenting how the quakes have affected the Gallery—everything from the Civil Defence takeover and the demolition of the Gallery Apartments next door, through to Prince William's visit and the prime minister's press conferences.

I've been here for just over three years now, and I've come to view my role as the mediator of much of the visual material experienced by the public and Gallery staff.

This is especially true now, as the originals are rarely seen; everyone must rely on the accuracy of information in my reproductions.

It's been an odd road to Christchurch. I was born in Dunedin but moved to Auckland at the age of twenty-three to attend Elam School of Art in 1988. The band I was in (Straitjacket Fits) moved too. I did my foundation year at Elam then spent the next six years touring and recording with the band before finally returning to Elam and graduating with a BFA specialising in photography in 1998. I subsequently got a job as a photo technician at the Manukau School of Visual Arts

working with Anne Shelton and Darren Glass. It was at this time I began photographing the exhibitions at Te Tuhi/The Mark gallery in Auckland. After a few years there I returned to Elam and did my MFA, producing large format landscape photographs and limited edition books.

And the best part of the job? It's a bit nerdy, but I really enjoy the challenge of photographing a good old oil painting. It's really satisfying capturing the texture and detail—it can be very technically challenging which appeals to the geek in me. Oh, and *Bulletin* of course.

PAGework

#16

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

SHANNON WILLIAMSON

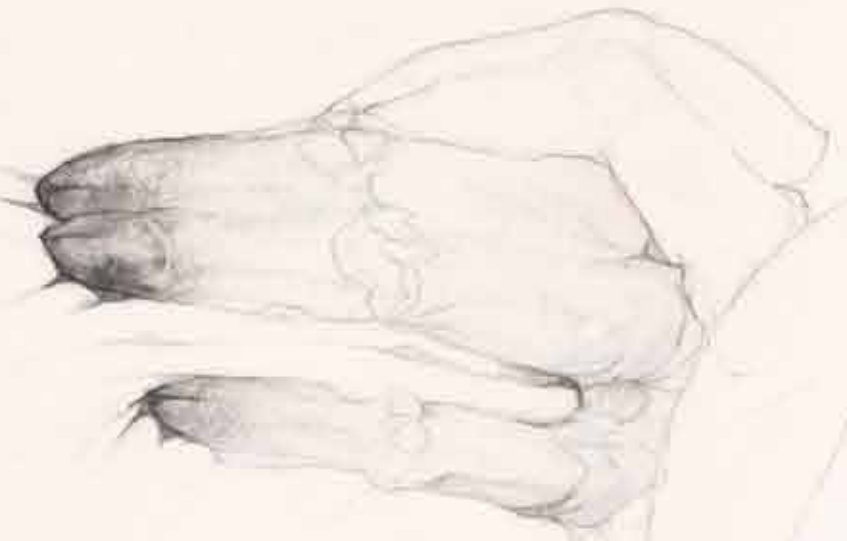
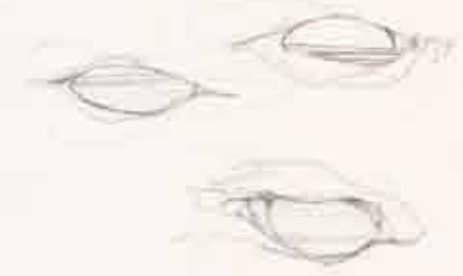
Erasing and redrawing, making and unmaking, Shannon Williamson delicately bruises body parts onto paper, building and applying dislocated bodily amalgamations; straining muscle and flesh that warns of psychological peril, stirring in some viewers at least a kind of protective, semi-parental concern. But if it's her still youthful story being put on such disquietingly forensic, vivid display that troubles, then we can also recognise that this story is ours. Delicately wrought, her drawings respond to the complexities of inhabiting flesh, of our visceral nature; bodies, actions and components that are vital as well as vulnerable, everything at the mercy of biological fine tuning, internal frameworks, circumstances, entropy and time. *Ode to the sleep that I've lost, since I left* opens up a story that is not impossible to understand.

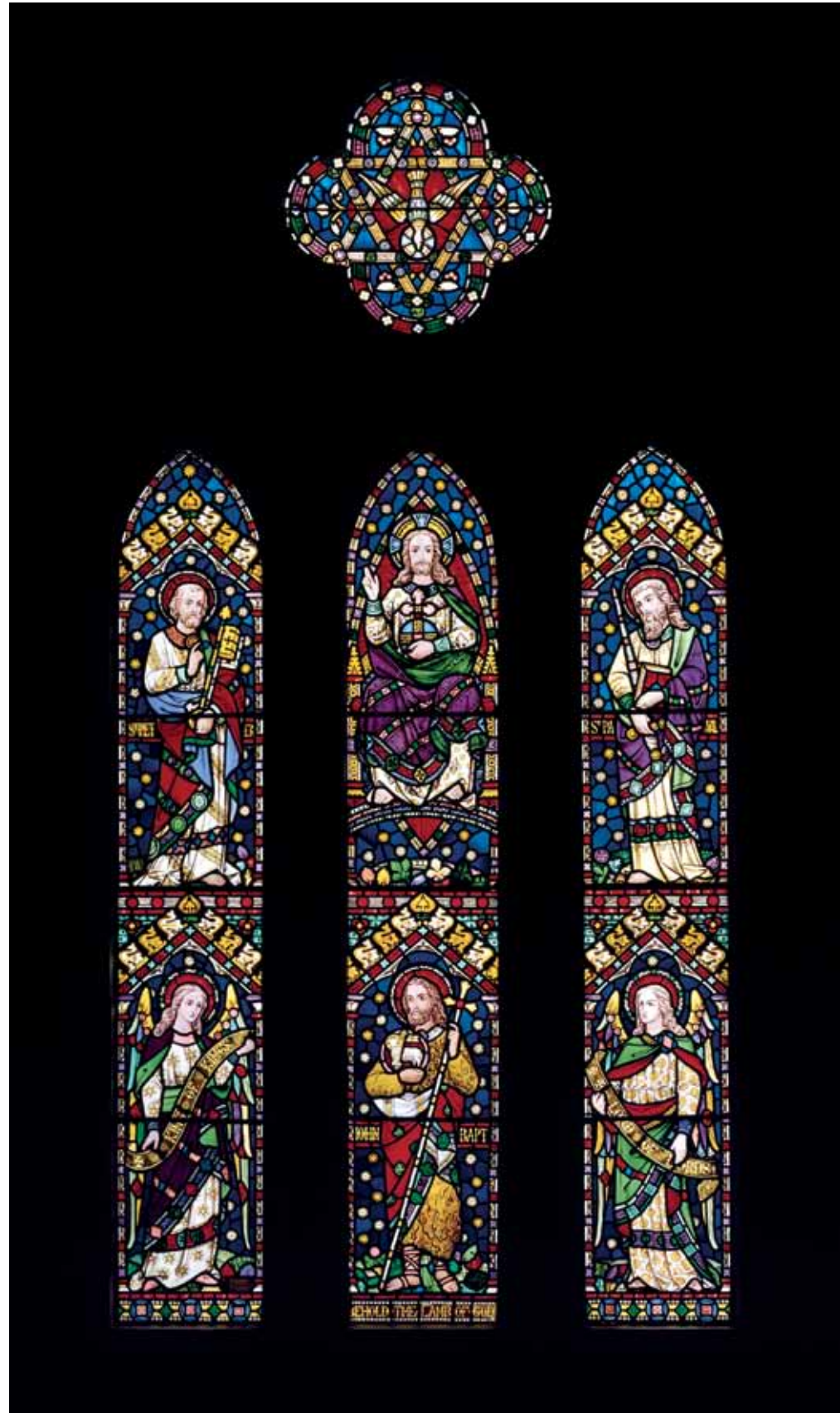
Shannon Williamson was born in Virginia, USA to New Zealand parents, and received her Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours) in Painting from the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts in 2009. An exhibitor in group and solo shows in Christchurch and Dunedin since 2008, she is currently based in Perth, Western Australia, artist-in-residence at SymbioticA Centre of Excellence in Biological Art until December 2012, then at the Fremantle Arts Centre. We wish her well.

Ken Hall
Curator

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

Shannon Williamson *Ode to the sleep that I've lost, since I left* 2012. Pencil and watercolour





The earthquakes have tossed us out of house and home and gallery. They have forced us to look at and value things anew. We, in Canterbury, according to recent published research, are now more tense, irritable and given to acts of temper.

Therefore it is with great pleasure that I was able to combine my life in Lyttelton with the **Reconstruction: Conversations on a City** exhibition on Worcester Boulevard. The Boulevard is (or was until 14 October) the place to go to experience a feeling of calm. In particular, Stephen Estall's photos of stained glass windows—'the glow of controlled fire'—reached me.

Stephen also lives in Lyttelton, and I have always enjoyed his company. He has (among many other things) conducted professional orchestras throughout New Zealand, including the NZSO. And fortunately for us, he has also spent years perfecting his ability to photograph stained glass windows. 'The bigger the image,' he says, 'the more detail.' Using a large-format monorail camera and transparency film, and given that every shot costs about six dollars, this kind of photography is not only a labour of love, but a financial sacrifice.

Stephen began by photographing church windows from the exterior and then saw the need to take the photos from inside: 'To see the light from within.' He has a record of the windows of the lamented and much argued-about Christ Church Cathedral. One of the **Reconstruction** exhibits: *Christ Blessing a Child*, in memory of Harry S. Beard who died aged 11 months on 13 May 1863, is still in place at St Peters, Upper Riccarton. And the beautiful east window of the Holy Trinity in Lyttelton is in storage.

Which in itself, says a lot about the current state of many lives.

Which takes me back to my initial comments about the sense of calm.

There is no need to be religious (Stephen is not) to appreciate the beauty of these images. There is something in human beings which makes us want to believe in, if not a bigger religious picture, then an image of goodness or a symbol of love and peace. In the aftermath of the quakes, it was affecting to find them on Worcester Boulevard.

Gary McCormick

The Risen Christ seated in majesty with St Peter and St Paul the Apostles and St John the Baptist c.1865. Stained glass window. William Butterfield; Alexander Gibbs & Co., active London 1858–1915. Photo: Stephen Estall



Gary McCormick (or 'Lord Ted' as he prefers to be known on local radio) has spent 37 years filming, writing and talking to New Zealand audiences.

MY FAVOURITE

BACK MATTER

Reconstruction Recognised

Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu was very pleased to win a Civic Trust Award on 12 October for the outdoor exhibition **Reconstruction: Conversations on a City**. The award was given ‘in recognition of the initiative and enterprise in raising the community’s awareness and appreciation of Christchurch built heritage through a distinctive public event’.

Other Christchurch Civic Trust award winners were the Valley Inn, Heathcote; the Court Theatre; and Inveresk House. Commendations were awarded for The Youth Hub, Barbadoes Street, and Kilburn House, St Margaret’s College.

It’s good to see that Christchurch heritage is still worth something.

The **Reconstruction** publication is now available online, in the Gallery Shop and at outlets throughout the city.



Front cover of *Reconstruction: Conversations on a City*



Chris Pole *Devilskin Pass*. Oil on canvas. Courtesy of Warwick Henderson Gallery

Chris Pole awarded Malaysian Residency

Gallery exhibition designer Chris Pole was recently awarded the Shalini Ganendra Fine Art Vision Culture Residency in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. This two-month residency has been awarded via the Asia New Zealand Foundation, and includes airfares, accommodation, studio, material costs, living and travel expenses. Chris says he’s looking forward to using this fantastic opportunity produce a body of work that will be exhibited both in Kuala Lumpur and back here in New Zealand. Congratulations Chris.

Physics Room Appointment

Congratulations to Melanie Oliver on her recent appointment as director of the Physics Room. We are very much looking forward to The Physics Room’s imminent Tuam Street relaunch and wish it well.

Museums Australia Publication and Design Awards

On 27 September the annual Museums Australia Publication and Design Awards were announced in Adelaide. And we were thrilled to be winners—not once, not twice, but four times.

The Gallery picked up awards for best magazine or newsletter (*Bulletin*) and website (My Gallery), as well as a commendation in the exhibition catalogue category and the judges special award—the ‘Be Inspired’ category—for the *De-Building* publication.

We were up against some pretty stiff competition so were extremely pleased to be acknowledged with so many awards. We’d like to thank everyone involved in all these projects, including the many members of our staff who contributed in a multitude of ways, our friends at Strategy Design & Advertising and Sons & Co, and Spectrum Print.



Florence Akins *The Metalworker* 1932. Linocut. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, presented by the artist 1997

Florence Akins 1906–2012

Florence Akins, an artist with a very long association with Canterbury art, died peacefully on 18 October, aged 106.

Born in Christchurch in 1906, Florence graduated with a Diploma in Fine Arts from the Canterbury College School of Art in 1931 and continued her association with the school as a teacher until her retirement in 1969. She was highly regarded for her metalwork and we were lucky enough to be able to include her exquisite coffee pot (c.1933) in the exhibition **Simplicity and Splendour: The Canterbury Arts and Crafts Movement from 1882** in 2004. Florence was a living link to a previous generation of New Zealand artists—among her contemporaries were Rita Angus and Leo Bensemann. She was very close to Francis Shurrock but her greatest connection was with her fellow artist and lifelong friend, Chrystabel Aitken.

In 1997 Florence presented the Gallery with nine linocuts and etchings from the 1930s and 1940s by herself, Shurrock, Bill Sutton and Alexander McLintock. They were a very welcome addition to our New Zealand print collection.

Florence lived a very long and very productive life and, as her obituary noted, the time had come for her to lay down her paint brush and palette.

Zina Swanson Awarded Hodgkins Fellowship

Congratulations to Zina Swanson, who was awarded the Frances Hodgkins Fellowship in September. **Rolling Maul** followers will remember Zina’s remarkable contribution to that series, in her **Breathing Space** exhibition with Georgie Hill.

As the University of Otago’s media release makes clear, the Fellowship year will allow Zina to work full-time as an artist, with a dedicated studio space. After losing her Christchurch studio in the February earthquake and having to make the move (temporarily, we hope) to Auckland, that’s sure to be a welcome relief; we have no doubt she will produce some terrific work as a result.



Machen Sie sich doch selbst ein Bild!

Senior curator Justin Paton’s *How to Look at a Painting* has now been translated into German. Produced by Benteli and Niggli, a Swiss/German publisher of architecture, design and art books, the book was launched at the recent Frankfurt Book Fair, where New Zealand was guest of honour.

Justin says that the translator had a special query about how to translate the phrase ‘Kissed as a piwi’. You’ll have to buy the book to find out how that one was resolved, if your German is up to it. You can find it at www.benteli.ch.

Bulletin goes Digital

As this magazine goes to press we’re busy finalising the details of our first fully electronic magazine. So it’s exciting to announce that (all going well) from early December *Bulletin* will be available to iPad users—of whom we see a steadily increasing number—in a fully browsable form.

We’re working with our design partners, Strategy Design & Advertising, to translate the magazine into this new format, which we initially plan to offer as a free download. While we still firmly believe that print is the best place to reproduce artworks, and *Bulletin* will continue to be produced in the format you’re reading now, the iPad provides some exciting new opportunities for richer content that we’re keen to explore. Watch our website for full details on how to get your copy.

Outer Spaces Public Programme

Mad Tracey from Margate

An intimate and thought provoking portrait of Tracey Emin, the self-styled ‘bad girl’ of contemporary British art.

Wednesday 5 December / 6pm / free

The World’s Greatest Cities

Actor and comedian Griff Rhys Jones gets under the skin of the world’s greatest cities in this series of three films. He avoids the usual tourist traps as he searches out the quirky and unusual secrets capturing the essence of each city’s unique personality.

Rome

Wednesday 9 January / 6pm / free

Paris

Wednesday 16 January / 6pm / free

London

Wednesday 23 January / 6pm / free

Brutal Beauty: The Architecture of Sir Miles Warren

This film explores an extraordinary career focusing on a number of key modernist buildings in New Zealand, and particularly in Christchurch.

Wednesday 30 January / 6pm / free

All films are shown at Alice Cinematheque, Tuam Street. Space is extremely limited, so bookings are essential. More information and reservations online or tel: (03) 941 7382

School Holiday Programme

Mosaic Magic

Creative fun with paper for children from four years old.

15, 17, 18, 22, 24 and 25 January / 10–11.30am / \$5

WEA, opposite the Gallery at 59 Gloucester Street. More information and reservations online or tel: (03) 941 7382.

COMING SOON

Brenda Nightingale: Christchurch Hills 2010-12

Distributed throughout the city
Dates tbc

This new **Outer Spaces** project is a beautifully produced, hand-stitched publication featuring a selection of local artist Brenda Nightingale's recent watercolours based on Christchurch's Port Hills. In Nightingale's series the spectacular Port Hills are depicted in freely applied washes of watercolour that verge on abstraction. Everyday features like a walking-track sign, a concrete lamp-post or a survey marker provide subtle contrasts to the spectacular vistas and landforms of one of Christchurch's defining features.

Brenda Nightingale Untitled 2012. Watercolour. Reproduced courtesy of the artist and Jonathan Smart Gallery



Steve Carr: Majo

56 Worcester Boulevard
(opposite the Gallery)
2 March - 30 June

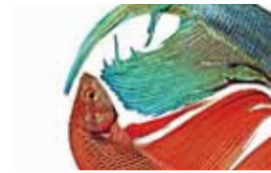
Steve Carr's strangely mesmerising video shows the artist working a toy plastic bubble, which he inflates then slowly deflates to the beat of a 1970s Italian horror movie soundtrack. Metallic wind is joined by reverberating percussive strike and wailing electronic choir, investing seemingly playful footage with an urgent sense of danger or fright. Starting as if in slow-motion, the bubble changes gradually from amorphous, twirling egg to collapsing jellyfish. Tension also subsides, before the moment begins again. Steve Carr's **Majo** is part of the Gallery's **Outer Spaces** programme, and is viewable on Worcester Boulevard at the old house opposite the Gallery.

Steve Carr Majo 2010. SD transferred to DVD, duration 3 min 40 secs. Courtesy of the artist and Michael Lett, Auckland

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