

B.176

Bulletin
Christchurch Art Gallery
Te Puna o Waiwhetu

Winter
June—August
2014





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Cover:
Edwards + Johann **Blind Date
With a Happy Ending 1 + 2**
(detail) 2010. Diptych, pigment
print on Hanemuehle Photo Rag.
Held in both public and private
collections

Inside cover:
Transitional Cathedral Square
artist project. Photo: John Collie

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Director's Foreword



Winter approaches, but we're far from settling down at the Gallery. As I write this, registrars and collections staff are busy moving our collections back into newly refurbished storerooms after almost three years of temporary storage in exhibition spaces.

It is marvellous to have this move underway at last—later than we hoped, but underway. It's been a really smooth process so far, with the 'small objects store' nearly completed. Our storage areas have been fully repaired with climate control systems tested; we have installed new racks in the painting stores, creating 25% more space overall. It will make a difference to our peace of mind to have all the collections checked and stored securely and ready for the next phase of building repairs.

There is more news on that front too. Following a successful and trouble-free releveling of our building, the tender process for base isolation is currently closing, and we are looking forward to the start of the next phase in the project. Once a tender has been approved by Council work can begin. Repairs to the high-level parapets may be done at the same time and we will also continue to make progress on the repair or reinstatement of the glass façade.

Like many citizens of Christchurch, our staff need to vacate their usual workspaces to allow for full repairs. So, as well as cleaning up, we're exploring options for relocation for at least a year. We're negotiating a lease on first-floor premises at 82 Peterborough Street and hope also to use an area on the third floor of Canterbury Museum (which they have kindly offered to us). With this space we can continue some work on parts of the works on paper collection (such as updating photography and checking accession details) as well as having sections of the library available for collections research and the upkeep of our artist files.

Meanwhile, our exhibitions programme continues, with **Burster Flipper** proving popular at ArtBox, and the launch of a new series of book-themed exhibitions at the Central Library Peterborough. Currently, we're showing **The Art of the Dust Jacket**, which features illustrative work by artists as diverse as Colin McCahon

and Raymond McIntyre. And we're thrilled finally to be able to bring Shane Cotton's work to Christchurch with **Baseland**—a version of our wonderful **The Hanging Sky** touring exhibition. This two-venue show can be seen at 209 Tuam Street and the University of Canterbury's Ilam Campus Gallery from 7 June, and contains a number of works from **The Hanging Sky** as well as newer work which hasn't been seen in a public gallery before. Make sure you see both elements. In this *Bulletin* we talk to Cotton about the exhibition, and the somewhat circuitous route it has taken to get here.

Also in this issue we've got Warren Feeney, who looks at the recent focus on objects and making in this and other New Zealand public galleries, and Sally Blundell, who talks to local collaborative duo Edwards + Johann about their work and partnership. Edwards + Johann will be presenting their work in our Tuam Street space later this quarter, with the enigmatically titled **Rebels, Knights and Other Tomorrows**. 'Pagework' is supplied by Brisbane-based artist Sandra Selig, and 'My Favourite' comes from one of our current landlords, Sam Crofskey of C1 Coffee.

Jenny Harper

Director

May 2014

Exhibitions June, July, August

Burster Flipper Wobbler Dripper Spinner Stacker Shaker Maker

Until 28 September 2014

ArtBox, corner Madras and St Asaph streets

Powered by the excitement of seeing ordinary things transformed in unexpected ways, this exhibition explores the shape-shifting, experimental and seriously playful work of making art. Artists from near and far test the limits of their materials with morphing pencil sculptures, stretchy paint skins, gravity-defying stacks and videos of exploding paint-balloons. Featuring works by Rebecca Baumann, Mark Braunias and Jill Kennedy, Judy Darragh, Steve Carr, Lionel Bawden, John Hurrell, Tony Bond, Helen Calder, John Nicholson and Miranda Parkes, the exhibition is supported by a lively and engaging programme for both children and adults that includes floor talks, workshops and publications.

The Art of the Dust Jacket

Until 14 July 2014

Central Library Peterborough

Many New Zealand artists have worked on book covers and dust jackets. This exhibition brings together a small selection of covers created by some of New Zealand's most respected artists, whose work also appears in our collection: Colin McCahon, Ralph Hotere, Raymond McIntyre, Don Peebles, Dick Frizzell and many others. From traditional representations that suggest a book's contents, to quirky abstract designs that provide no such clues, all the covers chosen are exercises in design, done to the exacting, miniature requirements of the book cover.

Shane Cotton: Baseland

7 June – 17 August 2014

209 Tuam Street

7 June – 27 July 2014

Ilam Campus Gallery, Block Two, University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts, Ilam

A two-venue exhibition of compelling recent works by one of the biggest names in New Zealand art. Trained at the University of Canterbury's School of Fine Arts, Shane Cotton's works have over the last half-decade have become increasingly provocative, incorporating a host of charged symbols and imagery. Christchurch audiences at last have the opportunity to experience the complexity and ambition of Cotton's latest work. **Baseland** brings home a selection from Christchurch Art Gallery's celebrated Australasian touring exhibition **The Hanging Sky**, combining major recent paintings with works made especially for the show—including a vast new mural-scale painting, a spectacular suite of 'target' prints, and painted baseball bats that suggest both trophies and weapons.

Max Hailstone: Book and Typographic Designer

14 July – 25 August 2014

Central Library Peterborough

Graphic designer Max Hailstone (1942–1977) influenced a generation of New Zealand typographic students as a lecturer at the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts between 1973 and 1997. Having studied and lectured in graphic design in the United Kingdom, Hailstone was drawn to the, then contemporary, International Typographic Style—restrained, pared-back formalist design elements and extensive use of thick, bold rules, contemporary sans serif typefaces such as Helvetica and Univers and photographic imagery. **Max Hailstone: Book and Typographic Designer** includes a selection of typographic designs, including books, posters, prints and ephemera.

Edwards + Johann: Rebels, Knights and Other Tomorrows

23 August – 2 November 2014

209 Tuam Street

Christchurch-based collaborative duo Edwards + Johann present an installation laced with strange tensions and rich possibilities. Vividly imagined photographic sequences featuring elaborately costumed warrior knights and rocks suspended in jewel-like voids combine with sculptural elements to open up theatrical and enigmatic new worlds. Likening their partnership to a 'delicate duelling', the artists have worked together since 2007 in a range of media, including drawing, photography, installation, video and performance. They were recently among ten artists selected for a juried exhibition celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Los Angeles Center for Digital Art.

The Pear Tree Press

26 August – 6 October 2014

Central Library Peterborough

The Pear Tree Press, New Zealand's most renowned private press, was established in Auckland in 1988 by Tara McLeod. It specialises in beautifully crafted, designed and hand-printed books, broadsheets, posters, typographical prints and ephemera, often created in collaboration with notable New Zealand writers and artists. McLeod shuns digital technology in his studio, instead embracing hands-on letterpress equipment, much of it effectively obsolete in the modern printing industry. Pear Tree Press productions feature type that is hand set, inked and printed, and created on ancient presses that include an Albion dating from 1832. McLeod's skill as both printer and typographer is brought to bear on his craft and his printing is among the very best in Australasia.



THIEVES IN

*Sally Blundell talks to
about collaboration*



THE ATTIC

*to Edwards + Johann
n, play and process.*

An unlikely domesticity pervades the small city studio. Drawings and photographed collages are bulldog-clipped and hung against the wall. Odd-shaped articles are crammed into stacks of Dole banana boxes. Large cardboard cartons, colour-coded in capital letters—‘BLACK COSTUMES’; ‘RED’—are piled up near the ceiling. The props, costumes, photographs and books, the disparate resources that feed into the free-ranging eclecticism that defines the playful, performative and exhaustively explorative collaborations of Edwards + Johann, are boxed up and put away.

Today, I am told, is talking day.

In 2007 artists Ina Johann, born and trained in Germany, and New Zealander Victoria Edwards decided to work on a joint project. The result, *Fishing in a Bathtub: Tormenting Luxury* (2007–8), is a four-part video, a highly stylised performance piece set largely in an abandoned military outpost on Godley Head, Banks Peninsula. It is eerie and episodic, a series of tableaux and enactments staged by the newly formed Edwards + Johann within a dreamscape of elaborate costumes, minimal props and percussive sounds. Adrift from the usual anchors of story, place and character, it is a mytho-ritualistic performance; arcane, Delphic in its suggested symbolism.

That project, they say, has never stopped.

While they continued to present work as individual artists, they increasingly pooled their years of experience and traditional art school training into a concentrated, methodical, studio-based process of research, debate (more talking days), dress-up (down come the colour-coded boxes) and role play.

‘Role play is a big part of our collaboration,’ says Edwards. ‘That theatrical nature of our process and our work will always come through.’

Over coffee they construct a discursive commentary—agreeing, disagreeing, extrapolating, interrupting—describing, almost enacting, an art-making practice based on a dynamic process of investigation and re-creation.

‘It’s like a dance,’ says Edwards, ‘of research and the making. You are curious, you go off and explore and that feeds back.’

From every point, agrees Johann, ‘you venture off again, knowing only that you don’t know where it will go.’

These extensive periods of experimentation and uninhibited excavation of the art historical, literary and philosophical canons are honed into a careful

construction of imaginary landscapes, abstract collages and fictional identities. The result, while still indicative of the formalist parameters of their shared background in printmaking (a process that privileges layering and the controlled interplay of light and dark) is a disparate and free-ranging art practice encompassing video, installation, performance, drawing, frottage, large photographs and tiny, portal-like collages. From this multi-disciplinary practice comes a cavalcade of dislocated figures, disguised characters, strange conjunctions and stranger disjunctions.

As Charles Green, senior lecturer in contemporary art at the University of Melbourne, writes in his discussion on collaborative art, such artists operate as ‘thieves in the attic’: ‘They far from innocently try out different, sometimes almost forgotten identities in the chaotically organized attic of history, rummaging in dusty, dark rooms where variations of authorial identity are stored away from view.’²¹

On the wall of Edwards + Johann’s studio hangs a large photographic portrait of a knight, stiff-backed and cavalier, from the *Seven Days and Seven Knights* series (2013). A masculine persona, it is complicated by the pink feathery bloom on the shoulder, the op-shop attire in the tradition of *objets trouvés*, the cut-out hand attached to the body with red string and the pervasive and enigmatic blackness of the background. While alluding to the nineteenth-century tradition of portraiture and the Romantic ideal of the solitary hero, the ambiguous identity of this mock-heroic collation of form and costume—its uncertain gender, its very disconnection from the tradition it emulates—serves as a teasing contradiction to the art historical canon.

On another wall a single large photographed rock—grey, pockmarked and detailed—floats on a dense field of orange. One of the seven-strong *The Accidental Rebels* series (2013), it combines a sense of hurtling force and becalmed expansiveness; a whimsical reading of the strictures of portraiture and a strangely beguiling examination of a common and elemental material.

More usually, however, images of Edwards + Johann, or their fictional identities, are woven into the works. In photographs, drawings, collages and video work they appear as cut outs, flashes of movement, unconventional (and indistinguishable) portraits defined by the hand-fashioned eclecticism of their masquerade. In *Self-Portraits: Ausschnitte... I Only Saw Parts of It*

Previous page:

Edwards + Johann at Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Scotland 2010. Courtesy of the artists

Opposite page:

Edwards + Johann **The Map is Not the Territory—Magenta Meets Green** 2013. Unique C-type photographs, partially hand coloured, line drawing. Courtesy of the artists and Nadene Milne Gallery





(2008) and *Itching to Futterwack* (2009) characters concocted from the Edwards + Johann box of invented personae are defined by the very act of art-making: photographed within or peering over a frame, intruding into or out of cut-out portraits.

Surrealism, wrote André Breton in his *Manifesto of Surrealism* in 1924, operates ‘in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern.’² Edwards + Johann frame this anarchic assault on rationality within a series of disconcerting juxtapositions based on the elaborate artifice of character—often masked, always in costume—that defines oriental theatre, *commedia dell’arte* and the unruly spontaneity of the carnival.

The results are often unnerving, like a hall of mirrors cracked and warped, or characters from a Fellini film let loose in the world beyond the cinematic set. Photographs of animal-masked figures hang within a staged interior of lamps, rugs and hat stands, their functionality skewed by the displacement of bulbs and outlandishly hand-crafted lightshades. In *Skurrile Welten—Strange Worlds* (2008) the whimsy of the German phrase is applied to a series of small drawings/collages—fragments of figuration manipulated and cut into a quixotic world of surreal fairytale, nonsense rhymes, the flashcards of dreams, excavating the line between abstraction and narrative, humour and menace.

The connections and collisions that typify these works

can be likened to the celebration of chance, accident and improvisation that define the Dada movement, with its rebellious use of collage, assemblage and photomontage. But where Dada emerged as a dynamic response to, and disgust for, the assumed rationality and strategies of civilisation that led to—or at least did not prevent—the atrocities of the First World War, Edwards + Johann present a more art-centric practice: extravagant, self-reflexive and playful.

In the photographic series *I’ll Be Your Mirror—One of Us Cannot be Wrong* (2009) the duo, in outlandish headwear and make-up, occupy a wild, apparently uninhabited and largely unidentifiable coastal landscape. The title perplexes—who is the mirror of whom? Or are the implied reflections to be found in the romantic juxtaposition of character and landscape? And to what extent do we rely on the validation of such reflections to ensure we are ‘right’? Such deliberate acts of image-creation, with their surreal, subversive exploration of role and affect, bring to mind the photographic work of Cindy Sherman, in which the camera plays fidelity only to the seamlessly fabricated role play of the artist. Identity is irrelevant; the self deliberately, hermetically, sealed off from the viewer.

At other times such distortions are more subtle. Their video diptych, *Revealed by Detective Work—In Search of the Possible* (2010), the result of Edwards + Johann’s residency at the Perth Museum

and Art Gallery in Scotland, tracks the flight of a lone gull, its wing tip close to touching its reflection on the surface of a lake, to the beautiful, haunting sound of a Scottish ballad. Or is the reflection bowing its wing to the apparent surface of the water? Which way is up? And how does not knowing impact on the viewer’s experience?

This is the realm of ludic play—exploratory, improvisatory, engaging with the social world but operating in a separate, less stable realm of creative misrule; irrational, divorced from concept and theme. In discussing the work of Edwards + Johann, gallerist Robyn Pickens quotes artist Allen Bukoff’s description of the DIY aesthetic of the Fluxus movement: ‘unfettered play in search of uncharted insights’.

‘Play gets to the heart of Edwards + Johann’s practice’, she writes: ‘It is the foundational ground and conceptual space; an enabler, generative. From this act springs a privileging of process and experimentation over any predetermined or “finished” and final product and opens up their practice to include a performative aspect, theatre, drawing, photography, the body, moving image and installation.’³

For Edwards + Johann the one consistent feature of this space, the one enduring medium, is the process of collaboration itself. Consider the studio as a think tank, says Johann, a research laboratory: ‘Someone locks the door and we are in that space together and we come up



Opposite page:
Edwards + Johann **On the Seam
of Things—Sure to Spill**
#1–5 2012. C-type photograph,
drawing on glass, unique work in
five parts. Courtesy of the artists
and Nadene Milne Gallery

This page:
Edwards + Johann **On the Seam
of Things—Days and Knights**
3 and 4 2013. Painting and
drawing on glass over mixed
media work on paper, unique
diptych. Collection of James
Wallace Arts Trust



Edwards + Johann **Looking At—
The View** 2009. Diptych, pigment
print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag,
308gsm. Courtesy of the artists and
Nadene Milne Gallery

with what we come up with and we push and pull and something will come out of that.’

While collaboration has long been understood in terms of film, theatre, music and dance, the idea of the artist, the reclusive and self-sufficient genius finding inspiration from a singular private source, has persisted. It is, of course, a flawed image. There is a long tradition of artists’ workshops and studios in which art was produced, albeit under the name of a single master. There were, too, the intense social environs of the Montmartre cafés (the Impressionists) and Greenwich Village (the Abstract Expressionists). Avant-garde practice in Futurism and Dada drew on models of collaboration from music, theatre and dance, but within the visual arts the expectation of a single origin of innovation persisted. When the notion of collaboration did appear it quickly became associated with the collective activities of participatory art, in line with Nicolas Bourriaud’s definition of relational aesthetics—interactional, socially engaging projects that blur, or make redundant, the very idea of authorship and the individualistic aspirations of so-called ‘gallery art’.

From the early 1970s, however, a number of art collaborations, double acts often involving siblings or partners, began to appear: Pierre et Gilles, Gilbert and George, Eva and Adele, McDermott & McGough, Elmgreen and Dragset, robbinschilds. Most pertinent to Edwards + Johann, perhaps, is the work of Swiss duo David Weiss and the late Peter Fischli (Fischli/Weiss) whose work—a curious, captivating and incongruous practice encompassing film, photography, books, sculptures and multimedia installations—straddles the sublime and the ridiculous, the fantastical and the quotidian.

Such collaborations, writes Green, involve ‘a deliberately chosen alteration of artistic identity from individual to composite subjectivity. One expects new understandings of artistic authorship to appear in artistic collaborations, understandings that may or may not be consistent with the artists’ solo productions before they take up collaborative projects.’⁴

As enacted by collaborative duo Marina Abramović and Ulay (performance artists working together between 1976 and 1988) this combined authorship, writes Green, results in a ‘third hand’, an artist or persona with no real existence outside of these shared endeavours.

Rather than presenting a composite of the work of Victoria Edwards and Ina Johann, the Edwards + Johann

practice involves the construct of such a new hand, an ‘energy field’, says Edwards, existing above and beyond the two artists, an alliance in which the surreal nature of the work and the process of art-making form a new working space, literally and figuratively, where the whole is more than—and separate from—the sum of the parts.

‘Each of us is an individual,’ says Johann. ‘But then there is that new space where we can do things we couldn’t do as individuals. We can push each other and nudge each other into this new space.’

People are puzzled by it, she concedes.

‘It flies in the face of the idea of the one genius artist with one voice and building a reputation based on that. But this isn’t about ownership and authorship, it’s not about us individually, it’s not about controlling, it’s not about the ego. That sort of me-ness gets in the way.’

‘It’s about process,’ says Edwards. ‘We are two individuals but there is this third hybrid space where things form.’

Sally Blundell

Sally Blundell is a Christchurch-based freelance journalist.

NOTES

1. Charles Green, *The Third Hand: Collaboration in Art from Conceptualism to Postmodernism*, University of Minnesota Press, 2001 p.ix.
2. https://www.moma.org/collection/details.php?theme_id=1094.
3. Robyn Pickens, ‘Unfettered play—in search of uncharted insights’, MIC Toi Rerehiko catalogue essay 2009.
4. Green, p.x.

Edwards + Johann: Rebels, Knights and Other Tomorrows
is on display at 209 Tuam Street from 23 August to 2 November.

EVENTS

Artist talk / Edwards + Johann

Hear artists Edwards + Johann talk about their latest collaboration, **Rebels, Knights and Other Tomorrows**.

11am / 23 August / 209 Tuam Street / free

THE PLEASURE OF MAKING



OBJECTS TAKING CENTRE
**STAGE IN THE SPACE OF
THE ART GALLERY**

Was it serendipity that the opening of Christchurch Art Gallery's **Burster Flipper Wobbler Dripper Spinner Stacker Shaker Maker** coincided with that of *Slip Cast*, a group exhibition at the Dowse Art Museum that also focused on the pleasure that artists take in manipulating materials in the process of making art? Where **Burster Flipper** claimed that 'Artists from near and far test the limits of their materials',¹ *Slip Cast* announced that 'ceramics are back ... New generations of artists are using ceramics ... incorporating other materials ... heedless of the traditional art/craft divide.'²

Moreover, a number of the artists included in *Slip Cast* also featured prominently in *Freedom Farmers*, Auckland Art Gallery's recent survey of contemporary New Zealand art—notably Tessa Laird's *The Politics of Ecstasy* (2013), an installation of colourful and curious ceramics, and Isobel Thom's equally arresting installation of teapots, jugs, rocket stoves and bowls. So, is this shared interest in objects (their crafting and materials) in recent exhibitions in three of the country's principal public galleries simply coincidence? There is ample evidence to suggest otherwise. Many of the artists in **Burster Flipper** specifically commented on the act of making and use of materials in interviews for the exhibition. John Hurrell singled out the artwork as 'object' for particular attention in his title—*Things (A Baker's Dozen): Five whatsits, two thingummies, two doodahs and four thingies* (2013)—and also observed a shift in his thinking about making art: 'As I get older I'm enjoying colour and texture more and more.'³ Likewise, in discussing *Spinner* (2011), Miranda Parkes commented that she loved 'the physicality of painting. ... I think there are valuable limitations and therefore possibilities that come through when ideas are tied to, and mediated through, a physical medium like paint.'⁴

So where has this seemingly unanticipated preoccupation with highlighting materials and process come from? There are claims—not without an element of truth—that it represents a reaction against the predominance of an intrusive digital/virtual world through a newfound desire for authentic, handmade objects. Richard Orjis, a participating artist in both *Freedom Farmers* and *Slip Cast*, commented that the attraction of clay resided in its materiality: 'It's a way to celebrate the ... joy of the handmade; it's a reaction to or critique of the fast-paced streamlined art world.'⁵

However, possibly of more import are changing perceptions about potential conflicts of interest between the crafting of the art object and its conceptual framework. Commenting on Erica van Zon's recent exhibition at City Gallery Wellington, *The Light on the Dock*, curator Lily Hacking observed that our understanding of van Zon's ceramics is 'transmutable, shifting, the objects [are] often overtly resistant to traditional systems of categorisation and display.'⁶ Damian Skinner, curator of applied art at the Auckland Museum, has also recently noted that in contemporary craft, 'materials and skills



Opposite page:
Judy Darragh **Gold Box** 1989.
Wood and plastic painted gold.
Collection of Christchurch Art
Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu,
purchased 1989. Reproduced
with permission

Above:
Tessa Laird **The Politics of
Ecstasy** (installation detail)
2013. Hand-built ceramics,
earthenware with ceramic paint,
painted second-hand wooden
furniture, custom-built shelves.
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

are placed in the service of ideas, rather than being celebrated ends in themselves.⁷⁷ This is a view also sanctioned by craft theorist Glenn Adamson, who maintains that ‘skill as a management of risk [in making art] is not just a technical matter. It is fixed firmly within the decision-making process’.⁸

For an artist like Judy Darragh (also participating in **Burster Flipper**) the attention that Adamson and Skinner give to the object as the outcome of an intimate relationship between making and ideas is hardly news. In 2004 she observed:

*Objects aren’t just that; crafted, fabricated or found objects. The object is the focus of the idea. The work becomes something that stands for the process of making, and the collective observation and consideration of making. ... Heart and hand.*⁹

A new generation of artists/jewellers/designers certainly agree with Darragh, with the former life of a found object and the historical narratives that its materials bring to an artwork now accorded a greater degree of respect in contemporary practice. Darragh further observed:

*I’ve had a longstanding love affair with the found object. These objects have had another life, and there can be a continuation when they are drawn into work it’s like the object already has a personality. This challenges the mystique of the original art object. And modern consumerism.*¹⁰

Darragh frequently discusses her work in terms of its ‘other lives.’ Her installation of painted corks in *Swarm II* (2014) has its origins in earlier works and her ongoing collection of corks from wine bottles; Darragh acknowledges that the additional 300 required to fill the space in **Burster Flipper** served as a reminder of the social occasions where her source material had come from—‘everywhere and everyone’.¹¹

As a new generation of artists respond to a desire for a more direct engagement with the handmade, the priority that Darragh has accorded to materials and process for more than twenty-five years is reflected in the work of many emerging and mid-career artists in New Zealand, including Steve Carr, Eve Armstrong and contemporary jewellers like Renee Bevan and Ross Malcolm.

Taking their lead from Darragh, artists such as Malcolm and Bevan also challenge traditional beliefs about what makes an object precious. How can jewellery be ‘precious’ when it is made of discarded items or found objects? Recently participating in *Handshake* (a mentoring project for arts graduates set up by teacher and jeweller Peter Deckers),¹² Darragh mentored Kristin D’Agostino, who made rings and brooches from fishing line and plastic takeaway containers—where else could the value of such work reside but in its idea and making? (Possibly with some degree of contrariness, Hurrell’s and John Nicholson’s contributions to **Burster Flipper** also makes use of plastic—that most humble of industrial materials.)



Top:
Isobel Thom **Untitled**
(installation detail) 2013.
Ceramic prototypes: teapots,
cups, jugs, planters, rocket
stoves, bowls and flat plates.
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o
Tāmaki

Bottom:
Renee Bevan **Bubblegum**
brooch 2013. Bubblegum, pin,
paper. Collection of the artist.
Courtesy of the artist and
The National



Judy Darragh **Swarm II** (detail)
 2014. Corks, paint, wire.
 Courtesy of the artist and Two
 Rooms Gallery

Discussing the qualities and characteristics of contemporary jewellery, Damian Skinner observes:

At its most productive, the critique of preciousness encourages contemporary jewelers to continually question the field itself, to renew the arguments about value that sit close to the heart of jewelry's legacy, and to draw on the techniques of art and craft to explore how the jewelry object can propose new conclusions about the body and society.¹³

Skinner and Adamson have both considered the conception and making of objects outside familiar definitions of art and craft that have been predominant for the past thirty years, and in doing so they draw attention to the long-serving and questionable nature of such distinctions. Published in 2010, British ceramic artist Edmund de Waal's *The Hare with the Amber Eyes* also addressed these concerns, highlighting the way in which objects in wider social spheres represent other values and perceptions of preciousness.¹⁴ De Waal traced the history of his family's collection of seventeenth-century Japanese ceramics from the 1870s to the present day, documenting changes in ownership and the location of the works, giving prominence to their history as central to their substance and worth.

De Waal has also raised questions about prevailing distinctions between craft and art by focusing on the intimate and longstanding relationship between craft and the avant-garde throughout the twentieth century. He maintains that 'it is precisely because clay can be seen as practically worthless that so many artists have been able to use it as a material in exploratory and digressive ways'.¹⁵ This has encompassed Picasso's ceramics and Jeff Koons's love of porcelain. He observes that Koons shamelessly admits it: 'Everyone grew up surrounded by this material. I use it to penetrate mass consciousness—to communicate to the people.'¹⁶

Similarly, Adamson observes the vital role that craft, and its emphasis upon the qualities of materials, occupied in the development of Process Art in the United States in the 1960s. Rejecting the notion that works of art encompassed an experience of spiritual or emotional values, Process Art sought to reveal only materials and methods:

[There] was never a time at which craft was fully sidelined from the discourse of modern sculpture. In 1962 ... Robert Morris was already beginning to work with plywood. His recollections about this moment make it clear that ... craft had a profoundly liberating quality. 'At thirty I had my alienation, my Skilsaw, and my plywood ... When I sliced into the plywood with my Skilsaw, I could hear, beneath the ear-damaging whine, a stark and refreshing "no" reverberate off the four walls: no to transcendence and spiritual values, heroic scale, anguished decisions, historicizing narrative, valuable artefact, intelligent structure, interesting visual experience.' It was from this attitude



John Hurrell **Things (a Baker's Dozen): Five whatsits, two thingummies, two doodahs and four thingies** (detail) 2013. Plastic peg baskets, nylon cable ties, label ties, plant ties, washers, rawl plugs, shower curtain rings. Courtesy of the artist

that Process Art, the most craft-like of the twentieth-century avant-gardes was born.¹⁷

Discussing *Swoop* (2013)—his installation of ceramic objects and wooden shelves (fixed deceptively loosely to the gallery walls in **Burster Flipper**)—Tony Bond talks specifically about the importance of making to realise the idea. He notes:

*[With] these ceramic works the intimate involvement with the media and the initial open approach means judgement calls are continually being made throughout the making processes. ... The work builds on an idea, the outcome isn't predetermined.*¹⁸

Like the majority of participating artists in **Burster Flipper**, or *Slip Cast* and *Freedom Farmers*, Bond recognises the constraints of working with particular materials. He articulates an attitude that encapsulates fundamental challenges for any artist, recognising that some measure of solution to questions about the success or otherwise of a work is found in the process of making—a proposition possibly best summarised by Isobel Thom, who comments on her recent engagement with clay as part of her practice: 'limitations are your best friend.'¹⁹

Warren Feeney

Warren Feeney curated and managed Kete 2014, a contemporary craft symposium and art fair for the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts and International Festival of the Arts in Wellington (27 February – 2 March 2014).

NOTES

1. <http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/exhibitions/burster-flipper-wobbler-dripper-spinner-stacker-sh>.
2. <http://dowse.org.nz/exhibitions/detail/slip-cast>.
3. Quoted in Felicity Milburn and Justin Paton, 'Burster Flipper Wobbler Dripper Spinner Stacker Shaker Maker', *B.175*, Christchurch: Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, 2014, p.9.
4. *Ibid.*, p.14.
5. Sue Gardiner, 'Ceramics are the new black,' *Art News*, Autumn 2014, p.86.
6. Lily Hacking, 'The (Curious) Nature of Things', in Warren Feeney (ed.), *Kete 2014*, Wellington: New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts, 2014, p.8.
7. Damian Skinner (ed.), *Contemporary Jewelry in Perspective*, United States: Lark Books, 2013, p.7.
8. Glenn Adamson, *Thinking Through Craft*, Great Britain: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2007, p.76.
9. 'Gwynneth Porter interviews Judy Darragh', in Natasha Conland, *Judy Darragh: So... You Made It?*, Wellington: Te Papa Tongarewa, 2004, p.74.
10. *Ibid.*, p.76.
11. Quoted in Milburn and Paton, p.16.
12. <http://handshakejewellery.com/curator/>.
13. Skinner, p.63.
14. Edmund de Waal, *The Hare with the Amber Eyes*, Great Britain: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010.
15. Edmund de Waal, 'High Unseriousness: Artists and Clay', in Christoph Grunenberg (ed.), *The Secret History of Clay*, Liverpool: Tate Gallery, 2004, p.38.
16. De Waal, 'High Unseriousness: Artists and Clay', p.23.
17. Adamson, p.42.
18. Quoted in Milburn and Paton, p.26.
19. Gardiner, p.88.

Burster Flipper Wobbler Dripper Spinner Stacker Shaker Maker is on display at ArtBox until 28 September 2014.

EVENTS

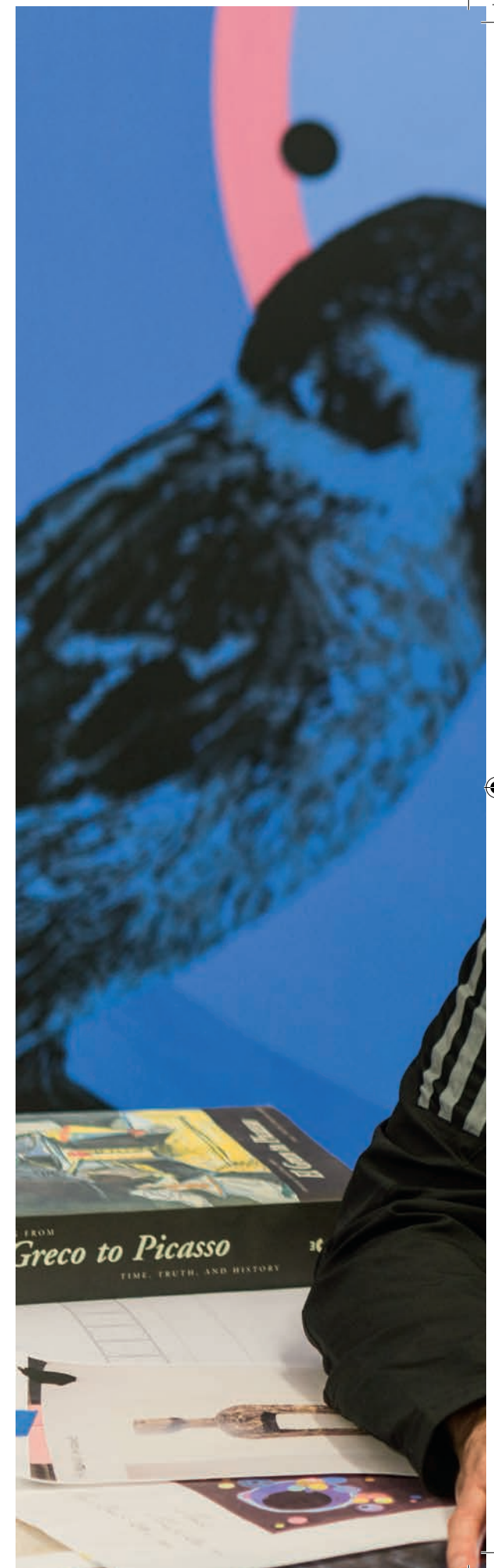
Artist Talk / Helen Calder

Join Helen Calder as she explores the relationship between colour, form and space, which is integral to her work in **Burster Flipper**.

11am / 5 July / ArtBox, corner of St Asaph and Madras streets / free

Hanging Around

Curated by Justin Paton, and in development since 2009, **Shane Cotton: The Hanging Sky** was scheduled to open at Christchurch Art Gallery in late 2011. However, earthquakes and the subsequent closure of the Gallery intervened, and the show was reconfigured as a very successful touring exhibition, visiting venues in Brisbane, Sydney and Wellington. So, it will be a pleasure to finally open a version of the exhibition in Christchurch with **Baseland** in June this year. *Bulletin* caught up with Shane to ask a few questions about what has been a rather unusual journey.





Bulletin: We're excited to finally be introducing the exhibition to a Christchurch audience, albeit in a much condensed version. The *Hanging Sky* was launched at what was originally intended to be the second venue in its tour—the IMA in Brisbane. It was very well received, but was there a sense of disappointment for you that we were unable to begin the show here in Christchurch?

Shane Cotton: Yes, of course. At one point it had looked like the show might not happen at all, especially after the second quake, but the Gallery persevered and established a number of alternative venues. But I was certainly very disappointed when it became clear that the show could not take place in Christchurch.

B: In September 2011 you travelled to Christchurch to talk to curator Justin Paton about the show. The talk, our first major post-quake event, was held in the new, temporary Events Village established in Hagley Park, and was a great success. How did it feel to talk to an audience clearly so hungry for culture and relief from the drudgery of earthquakes?

SC: I was blown away by the response to the event. Justin had asked if we could do a curator/artist conversation and most times you'd be lucky to have an audience of fifty people. But by the time we sat down to do the talk the entire event centre was full. I'm not sure, maybe 300 to 400 people. At that point I realised that Cantabrians were resilient, yearning to get their cultural fix, to establish some sense of normality through participation and support of 'their' gallery. It was a memorable night for me.

B: At that time you were presumably still anticipating that the show would be launched here at Christchurch Art Gallery. Was the show finished at this point, or were you still producing works? When the show finally opened in Brisbane more than a year later, had the extra time changed the content of the show, or the nature of the paintings you were working on?

SC: No, in September I was still thinking about possibilities for work and making work. In some ways the delays and rescheduling was a positive, in that it allowed me to tease out several directions of interest, which in the end proved beneficial. There were variations on the content. I had planned to make several new works, which included litho prints, the bats and several paintings.

B: The book *The Hanging Sky* is spectacular. Was there a sense of putting the show into the book, knowing that we couldn't do the full exhibition here at Christchurch Art Gallery?

SC: The book was seen as a stand-alone project. It went through many variations and was really driven by Justin, Sarah [Pepperle, the book's editor] and Luanne [Bond, Cotton's wife and manager]. I think we all agreed that the book should go beyond the show—that it should have significance as a document primarily focused on the works and interpretations outside of the exhibition itself.

B: The show that audiences will see in Christchurch, *Baseland*, is split between two venues—our exhibition space at 209 Tuam Street and the Ilam Campus Gallery at the University of Canterbury's School of Fine Arts. You spent your formative years as a painting student at Ilam during the 1980s, and counted among a number of exceptional graduates during that period. Any idea what made it such a productive time for the school?

SC: I'm not sure exactly what it came down to—many factors no doubt? Obviously the people: Peter Robinson, Séraphine Pick, Tony de Lautour, Mark Braunias, Richard Fahey, Gina Ferguson, Blair Jackson, Anton Parsons, Richard Reddaway, Eugene Hanson, Saskia Leek, Phil Price... and there were many others that you don't hear so much of. But they were all incredibly talented artists, so the environment was very competitive and always stimulating. It was just a brilliant time to be at art school.

B: In a way you became established as an artist during your time here in Christchurch. Did that have any impact on how you responded to this project, the energy you put into it? Perhaps a feeling of coming home in some sense?

SC: I just wanted to make a great show and present works that revealed the expansive nature of my project to a Christchurch audience. My formative years making work were very different to this period of work and I was excited about showing it to Christchurch.



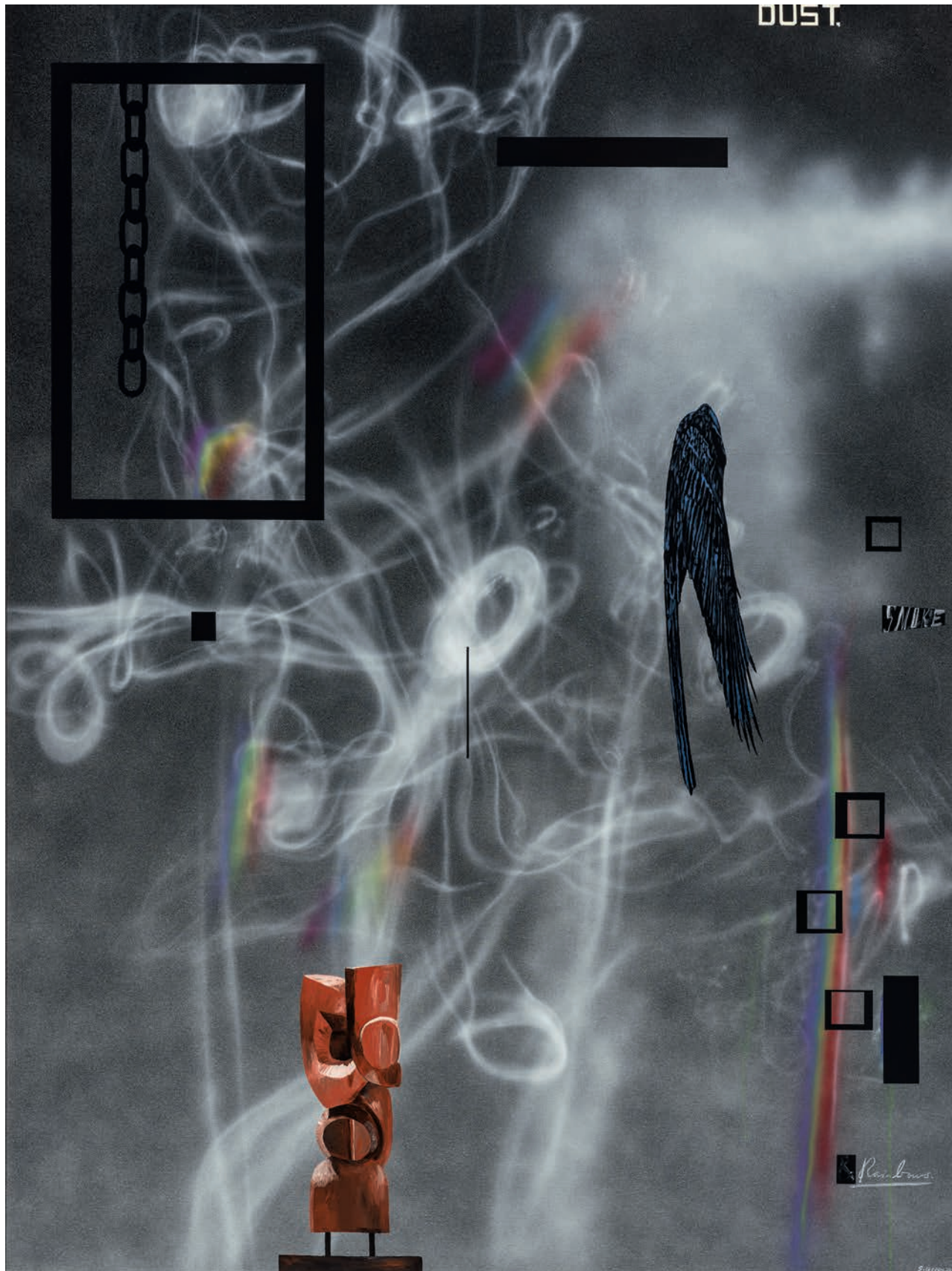






Previous spread:
University of Canterbury School
of Fine Arts, class of 1986.
Image courtesy Tony de Lautour

Above:
Shane Cotton **The Haymaker
Series I—V** (comprising:
**Haymaker V2.0, Diamond and
Circles, SEE.R, Coloured Dirt
Dreaming, Staging Post**) 2012.
Acrylic on linen. Collection of
the artist. Courtesy Michael Lett
and Hamish MacKay Gallery



Shane Cotton **Dust, smoke and rainbows** 2013. Acrylic on linen. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, gift of the artist 2013. Courtesy of the artist

B: Working with a major institution can be daunting for an artist at the best of times. Despite the massive setback of our gallery building closing, the idea that this show might not actually happen doesn't really seem to have been considered, and the output from your partnership with the Gallery has been exceptional. What do you put that down to?

SC: It's always about the people, and this is a credit to the staff of the Gallery. Every person I had dealings with that was involved with the show always went the extra mile to make things happen. From the artist's point of view, your primary concern is in the production of new work, so you need to trust and feel confident that everything else will be addressed as you'd expect, and in this instance it was—every time.

B: You recently made an extremely generous gift of a large painting, *Dust, smoke and rainbows* (2013), to the Gallery—what prompted you to make that gesture, and was there a reason you chose this work in particular?

SC: Because of my time spent in Christchurch (1985–93) as a student and artist: I wanted to make a contribution in acknowledgement of this connection. After the earthquake I was in some ways more determined to offer a work for consideration as a possible gift to the Gallery. I was already experimenting with different types of imagery including cloud/smoke/dust grounds, as historic veil-type references. It was out of these works that I made *Dust, smoke and rainbows*, which I thought was an appropriate set of themes given the climate and times. For me the painting is awash with an air of uncertainty, but is also playful and hopeful.

B: Did you spend any time visiting the Robert McDougall Art Gallery as an art student? If so did you have a favourite work?

SC: Yes I did. Many favourite works, but two artists whom I really admired as a student were Doris Lusk (*Canterbury Plains from Cashmere Hills*, 1952) and William Sutton (*Landscape Synthesis VIII*, 1980). Both artists had connections to Ilam and both had a very particular take on the 'regional'. I like Lusk's sometimes exaggerated and extreme views, and Sutton's heavily structured plains upon plains. In both cases, I was always reminded of the 'painting' in the paintings and the relationship of content/process and their thematic concern with place and places.

B: You recently collaborated with Dunedin musician/song-writer Martin Phillips of the Chills to produce a limited-edition box set containing a set of vinyl records by the Chills and two limited-edition prints by yourself. What drew you to work with Martin? Did you see the Chills as an art student in Christchurch back in 1980s?

SC: The project was initiated by a mutual friend who introduced us to the idea. I didn't have any real knowledge of the Chills. Yes, I knew the band and Martin, but wasn't at all familiar with the music, so I did a crash course on their back catalogue—wow, pretty amazing lyrics! I also watched a couple of videos from the eighties, which were brilliant; pushing that fake rock around a winter land and walking through the forest singing about pink frost—inspirational. I made two paintings in response: *Blue Moon* and *untitled*, which featured a blue rock hanging by strings in a bookcase setting. The final piece of the project involved Martin selecting lines and words from the lyrics, which were then printed on to the image, so that each work is a unique print. I now listen to the Chills on occasion, but 'Pink Frost' is my favourite.

Shane Cotton: *Baseland* is on display at 209 Tuam Street from 7 June until 17 August and Ilam Campus Gallery, University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts from 7 June until 27 July. Shane Cotton talked to Bulletin in April 2014.

EVENTS

Artist Talk / Shane Cotton

Join Shane Cotton for a floor talk on his exhibition *Baseland*.

11am / 7 June / 209 Tuam Street / free

Come early as space is limited

GREAT DAYS IN NEW ZEALAND PAINTING

John Newton

Sir Toss Woollaston **Sunset, Grey River** (detail) 1955. Oil on cardboard.
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 1956.
Reproduced courtesy of the Toss Woollaston Trust







1

They did it hard on those gravel highways—
Six Days in Nelson and Canterbury—
 Christchurch to Mapua through the Lewis

on a dungery old bicycle.
 The gentler route was down the Wairau;
 McCahon tells Brasch that at Renwicktown

the winter mountains ‘are so blue’
 (listen) ‘you know them to be
 whiter than other white snow mountains’.

Woollaston, author of ‘The Death of Shelley’,
 learner by heart of ‘The Wreck of the Deutschland’—
 chanted over the uddery slop of the separator

in a Taranaki cowshed—rides five days to Dunedin
 to sit with Bob Field. At his back
 the *magic circle* of flower and snow and the red

pine needles, hop vines taller than the eaves of
 St Barnabas: all that *thrilling, silent*
life. What’s a bit of gravel rash, sleeping out

under a hedge in South Canterbury?
 The night sky, he tells us, is ‘powdered with stars’.
 With all that behind you, why wouldn’t it be?

Colin McCahon *Nelson landscape with tobacco kilns* c.1940.
 Oil on board. Private collection. Reproduced courtesy of the Colin
 McCahon Research and Publication Trust



2

***Blitzed in the back of the Newmans bus
with a beat-up Penguin American Verse.
Rita Angus polarised plexiglass
picture windows. The People, Yes!***

**Same route, give or take sixty years, over
the Dashwood, the dry sierras. And a nifty
conceit that you fiddled about with for decades
but couldn't make into a poem.**

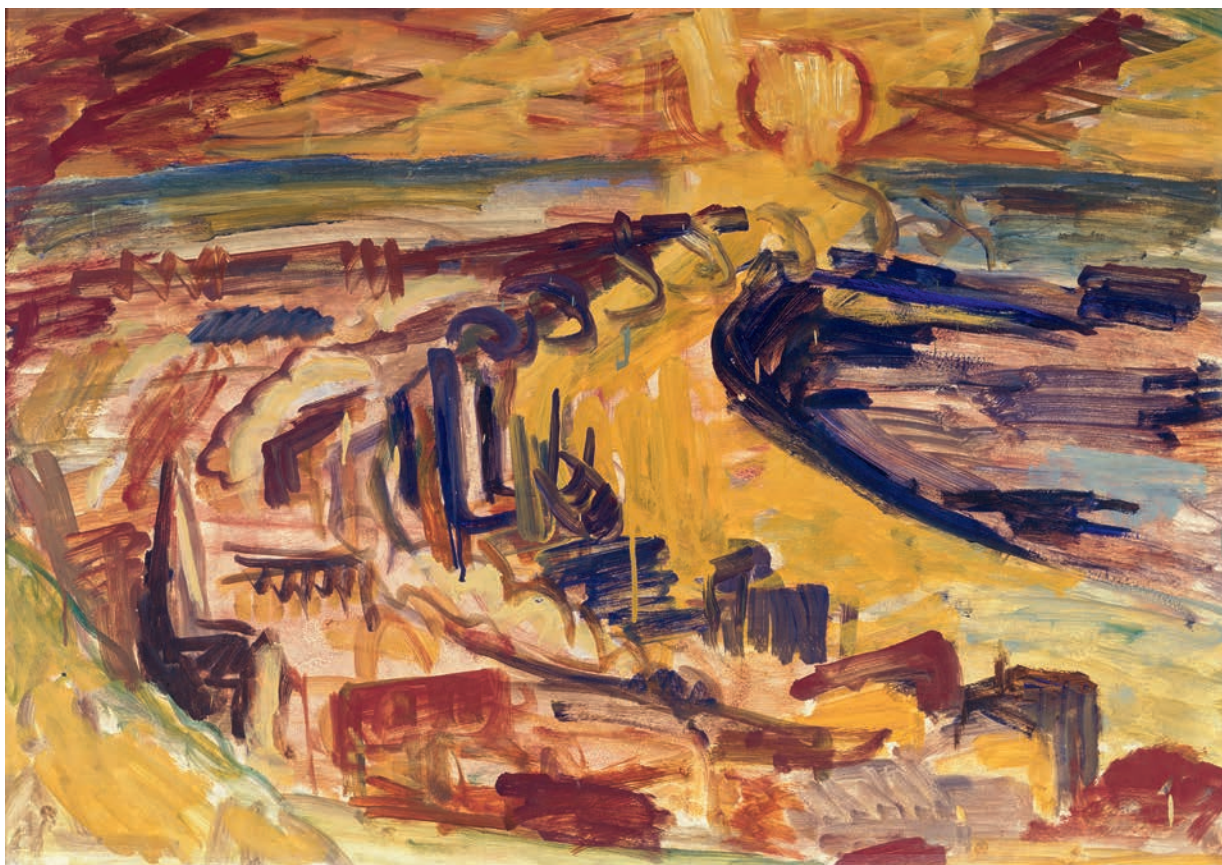
**When you lifted your eyes it was all there:
the chiaroscuro of worked paddocks, wind-sculpted
shelterbelts, volumes of firewood, railway sleepers
scumbled with diesel—but somehow**

**it only made sense from the road.
There were spaces *between people*, that's
what confused you, a silence, unfolding
like a river of shining highway.**

**Then 4:4 country measures
fell short. You came to, deep in the forest,
in the sudden dark of an October southerly,
scurf of snowdrops, cider apples**

**iced with blossom. And as if you were now deaf
even to the distant sound of the vehicle pulling away
you ran here and there like a lost dog,
scared and unreachable.**

Ivy Fife **Railway Crossing, Canterbury** c.1945. Oil on canvas on board. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 1994. Reproduced with permission



3

The trip down to Greymouth was a fearful thing. The sun went down Nembatal yellow

in the black Tasman surge. Murchison was a small plain, a dark apex, a beard

of trees. The Grey was the Hutt but with lonelier, shabbier settlements.

One day, with luck, with 'great violence', in tones out of Goya, it might be painted,

but those big ugly man-killing waterways, how could you ever trust them? Nelson

('The Italy of N.Z.', he called it) had this trick of ruining other climates.

The river named for Matthew Arnold soaked like stewed tea into the gruel of the Grey.

Sir Toss Woollaston **Sunset, Grey River** 1955. Oil on cardboard. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 1956. Reproduced courtesy of the Toss Woollaston Trust



4

Meanwhile, back in the scenic zone
(Boyd Webb's bathtub, von Guérard's altarpiece)
Sigrid and Günther, saddle-sore Romantics,

tipple on a lukewarm Lucozade, easing
their hamstrings. All day into a moderate
headwind, grinding up into the throat of Southland,

but the lake edge here is a wave-lapped mosaic,
reds and ochres, olives and blues.
Now, as at only the most perfect places,

the lovers build their ephemeral shrine:
cradle of fallen, rain-softened branches;
platform of moss and old man's beard;

then snail shells, pebbles, paradise duck feathers,
beech leaves (amber and scarlet) that find their
own way.

And look, now:
here comes a worshipper!
In ten-gallon hat and psychedelic lederhosen,

whistling a tune of his own composition,
it's JR—angler extraordinaire—
descending to the water to commit to

sky-burial the four pound slab his exquisite
skills lately conjured from the
water hazard at the Glenorchy golf course.

A sensitive soul could have nightmares here:
these strutting black-backs, their reptile
gaze, the flush on that muscular bill

like a congenital bloodstain. But our
fröhliche campers, pumping the primus,
dispose their tender thoughts elsewhere,

while the lake water dimples
and the athletic taste-maker packs his
evacuated trophy with a flourish of wild mint.

John MacIntosh Madden **The Mailboat In A Norwester, Wakatipu**
1913. Oil on canvas. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o
Waiwhetu, bequest of Mrs E.H. Fernandez 1980



5

**Woolsheds were meant to be woolshed-red.
Now everywhere they're galvanised iron.**

**What if the colour were to vanish from
a landscape? That oxidised crimson**

**like dried blood, the pond with its sugary
crust of duckweed, Jonathans ripening in April**

**streaked with honey. Could it be simpler?
I need this colour, as much as I need**

**that towering summer in the riverbed
somewhere below Ikamatua:**

**salmony blush on the granite boulders,
water the colour of yellow Chartreuse;**

**a sandy hollow, your mahogany
tan; a happy, clumsy scribble of self.**

Rita Angus **Mountains Cass** 1936. Watercolour. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, presented by Robert Erwin in 1985 in memory of Lawrence Baigent. Reproduced courtesy of the Rita Angus estate



6

Let's imagine it's 1950, in Dobson,
maybe, or Stillwater Junction, a railway
house overlooking the river. The rain could be

easing, the smoke-thickened clag on the bush terraces
pulling back slightly. Drying out in front of the range,
warming his hands on cup of tea,

is the Rawleighs man—the painter
chappie, the shy one, Mr W.
Nothing odd about that, you say. You see

him through here every so often with his
weird little dog-cart contraption hitched up
to his bicycle. But here's the thing: today

he doesn't bother with the pleasantries.
He doesn't produce his sample case and lay out
his rubs and tonics, his minty expectorants.

He simply unfastens a flat
tin box, with a gesture that speaks for itself.
Take it or leave it.

You stare at the labels.
Cadmium orange! And pure vermilion
and cobalt blue! Red hills with violet

mountains! *Emerald + geranium*
lake. The colours mix before your eyes
and images begin to appear: something

like memory, but kinder, more expansively
lit. Here are the foxgloves you noticed just
yesterday, candy-coloured in the railway cutting;

the dredge tailings with their scarlet
lichen; the lotus that blossoms in the cow paddock
blue as a gas flame.

Now, then, you have a decision to make.
Do you buy up the shop? *Of course you do!*
You walk him out to his bicycle, and

look, the sun has broken through, the river
has its lights back on, and the great Grey
Valley is heaving with colour and work.

James Cousins *Seven days* 2000. Oil on canvas. Collection of
Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 2000.
Reproduced with permission

John Newton is a poet, literary historian and occasional musician.
He is the 2014 writer in residence at the University of Waikato.
This text was first published in Newton's *Family Songbook* (Victoria
University Press, 2013). Reproduced with kind permission.

TRANS FORMERS

Curator Ken Hall writes about his experience of working with artists Chris Heaphy and Sara Hughes, as part of a small team with other city council staff and Ngāi Tahu arts advisors, on the Transitional Cathedral Square artist project.

For twenty-eight months following the 22 February 2011 earthquake, Christchurch's Cathedral Square was part of a vast, army-controlled no-go zone. Procuring permission to enter was a task, and once inside it felt shockingly post-apocalyptic—abandoned, grey and dead. Heavy machinery and hard-hats came and went—contractors, visiting celebrities and politicians, the occasional TV crew—but its reopening was attached to bureaucratic wrangling and uncertainty. Meanwhile, behind the fences, the familiar historical heart of the city was largely reduced to landfill; in the name of recovery, mountains of rubble were trucked away.

Recognition of the cultural significance of this public space needs no particular explanation. From the highest levels in the city council, it was obvious that if people were to regain access to the Square,

it had to be welcoming and influence beyond stolid pragmatism must be allowed to exist. Of course, its eventual reopening on 6 July 2013 was only possible once public safety issues had been properly addressed, with the installation of barriers and fencing to limit risk during ongoing deconstruction and repairs. But early plans for reopening also included seating, planting and attractive hoardings; it was soon recognised that these could be more than decoration. At this point, a small team consisting of relevant council staff and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu arts advisors was formed, and two artists were invited to become involved.

Auckland-based Chris Heaphy and Sara Hughes—both artists of calibre and outward-looking character—agreed to enter the project, to which they brought complete commitment and consummate results.



Chris Heaphy **Planted Whare**
2013-14. Mixed media

For Heaphy, his ancestral Ngāi Tahu links were valuable in relation to the reviving and ongoing reinterpretation of this space. As a painter Heaphy characteristically reworks emblematic forms to achieve a dazzling, multi-layered storytelling; a rich exploration of shared histories and the sometimes problematic push-pull of cultural identity. That his exploration is open-ended rather than neatly stitched up or exclusive also fitted well with what was clearly a critical moment in the life of this significant public space.

Sara Hughes is also an artist who regularly connects with the history of the spaces in which she works. Her personal history with this city includes *United We Fall* (2008), a temporary installation at the Gallery that clearly attested to her ability with large-scale projects. In first surveying the abandoned Square in November 2012, both artists responded with a desire to bring something opposite to what they were experiencing; they saw a need for vivid colour as well as a sense of order, energy and life.

Chris Heaphy was keenly attuned to the near invisibility of Ngāi Tahu (or any Māori presence) in the Square, apart from a small engraved memorial by the edge of the more generous ‘First Four Ships’ plot. He was likewise drawn to the cathedral in its present state as something central and inescapable—a fact that needed comprehending. Heaphy’s *Planted Whare* is a cleverly participatory architectural form that allows viewing of the cathedral through an open wire-fencing end—a reasonable break in the (mostly continuous) wall. Constructed of robust steel scaffolding and covered with plastic bread baskets filled with a profusion of plants, the house also matches one of his earliest intentions—to see a colour field of flowers before the broken cathedral. While speaking of the beauty and fragility of life, these also held for him an understated memorial role; as an affirmation of life and existence, the planted house is a hopeful presence alongside acknowledgement of loss. Facing the cathedral, positioned absolutely centrally within the Square, it makes gentle conversation with the historical British architectural form, honours Māori presence within a broad symbolic timeline and also represents a meeting place—an inclusive, encompassing welcome to all.

Extending far beyond the sides of the whare, Heaphy’s

elaborate, intensely coloured hoarding panels are digitally designed and printed. Existing as a vast and lively backdrop to a wide variety of human activity within the Square, the boldest forms within the schema immediately invite the eye to move around, dancing between them and various architectural elements on the cathedral. From a distance, the predominantly circular shapes explode like cactus flowers or fireworks, unfolding brilliantly across an expanse of black. Some are reminiscent of stained glass windows. The effect is intricate as well as powerfully bold, with reward to be gained by zooming in to comprehend the generous unfolding of symbols and elements distinctive to Heaphy’s painting practice. These include axes, pipes, top hats, weapons and walking sticks; legs, boots, torsos, tongues and hands; profile heads and grimacing tiki; playing-card hearts, clubs and diamonds; tuning forks and triangles; and recent additions—geometric Gothic-inspired architectural motifs. Objects are formed into astonishing kaleidoscopic configurations, sometimes into vast butterflies. Heaphy’s visual lexicon also includes hilarious stick figure angels; colonial gents; and Māori men with topknots, after Louis Auguste de Sainson—a French artist who visited this region with Dumont d’Urville in 1827. Numerous birds may also be found, including kōtare (kingfisher), kāhu (harrier hawk), ruru (morepork) and koreke (the extinct New Zealand quail). This last makes reference to a 1903 *Lyttelton Times* account of an old timer recalling having shot some 120 koreke on a single day within the boundaries of the early Cathedral Square.

Heaphy and Hughes both responded to the physical, symbolic and historic aspects of the space, working out the territorial nature of the project with cordiality. Hughes’s contribution has been installed in two stages, each making use of existing structural elements—either temporary or fixed—in the Square. The first of these was (the now ever-present) safety fencing. Both artists designed dynamic visual schemes to be printed on durable cloth to wrap hurricane fencing on building and demolition sites. Maintaining a bold palette, Hughes transformed two further groups of fences with elaborate patterned designs. Adapting a commercially available product—plastic ‘put-in cups’ made in the USA for emblazoning team logos on hurricane fencing in sports

arenas—she took these in a very different direction. Individual cups are carefully pushed into place, overlapping and interlocking at the edges, creating an effect like pixels on a digital screen or individual cells on an embroidery pattern. Indeed, one of the sources used by Hughes was a collection of historical stitching designs from the James Johnstone Collection in the University of Canterbury’s Macmillan Brown Library. Johnstone was for many years a teacher at the Canterbury College School of Art; embroidery designs by students who were there from the 1930s to 1950s are part of the collection that Hughes surveyed.

Creating a vivid welcome at the south entrance to Cathedral Square, a set of fence designs based on simplified flower patterns are particularly reminiscent of embroidery. They also return to miniature scale when viewed from a distance, elegantly asserting the persistent value of creative labour, as well as of colour, pattern and order. Further groups of Hughes’s patterned fences, with openings solidly filled to create a more tartan-like appearance, are positioned in other locations in the central Square and create an unexpected sense of psychological anchoring through their bold colour.

Hughes’s *Flag Wall* has been just recently completed, and as a temporary installation will stay in place for at least six months—longer if the flags can last. Working with four empty flagpoles in front of the old central Post Office building on the south-west corner, Hughes has created a vivid wall of movement that provides a dynamic, uplifting presence to this space. For Hughes, it was important to ‘bring colour and energy into the Square as a way to welcome people back’. Her ongoing investigation into the emotional and psychological effects of colour joined here to her recognition that a giant wall of flags could convey ‘a spectrum of meaning, encompassing the political and the celebratory’. The 648 flags laid out in carefully ordered rows are abandoned to movement in the prevailing wind, seldom hanging still, so the overall scheme of the *Flag Wall* is not necessarily picked up at once by the eye. When the fluttering is frozen through photography, however, the installation immediately reveals its layered diamond pattern, one that is also strongly linked to those on the solid-fill hurricane fencing. A similar pattern appears elsewhere in the Square in slate

tiles, eastwards on the cathedral roof, and in artwork that is no longer seen: tukutuku panels by Ngāi Tahu weavers in the cathedral interior.

When walking around the Square now, it is interesting to try and imagine the space without the work that these artists have created—take it away and it remains a thoroughly difficult space. This temporary work is far more than sticking plaster or wallpaper, however, and argues centrally for many extremely valuable qualities that this city sorely needs. This includes recognition of the value of the stories of this place, many of which are preserved in elements of historical architecture that (possibly barely) remain. It also places a high public, civic and cultural value on the realm of the imagination—the place where art is allowed within a culture to speak and breathe. Planners, architects and developers in this city would do well to engage artists of proven calibre at a real and genuine level, opening up different kinds of conversations, initiating innovative partnerships and finding new ways of generating exciting and well-considered, high quality ideas.

Ken Hall

Curator



Sara Hughes **Flag Wall**
2014. Mixed media

Commissioned by Christchurch City Council, the Transitional Cathedral Square artist project was developed in collaboration with Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and opened on 6 July 2013.

MAKE A DONATION, MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Following the Canterbury earthquakes, Christchurch Art Gallery needs your support more than ever. By becoming a supporter of Christchurch Art Gallery Trust you can help this Gallery continue to grow as a cultural centre of national and international note, providing stimulating and accessible experiences to all who visit.

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.

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 core collection development budget by matching dollar-for-dollar donations raised by the Trust up to a set amount per annum.

Donate to any level if you would like an association with the Gallery's growing collection. Ask us if you would like your name associated with a particular purchase and we'll look out for a work and discuss it with you.

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. Talk with your legal advisor and, if you would like, the Gallery's director, Jenny Harper (+64 3 941 7375).

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.

RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS AND GIFTS

Gabrielle Tasman
Chartwell Trust
Andrew and Jenny Smith
NZ Federation of Graduate Women (Inc),
Canterbury Branch
Pat Unger
Worcester Trust
W.A. Sutton Trust
Dame Jenny Gibbs
Anonymous (various)

Major Bequests

N. Barrett

Artist Patron

Max Gimblett

Christchurch Art Gallery Trust Trustees

Mike Stenhouse—Chair
Chris Brocket, Garth Gallaway, Jenny Harper,
Bruce Irvine, Stephen Montgomery, Guy Liu-Pask,
Monica Ryan, Alexandra Stewart, Gabrielle Tasman

**CHRISTCHURCH
ART GALLERY
TRUST**

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

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Email: cagtrust@ccc.govt.nz

PAGework

#22

The following double-page spread is given over to the twenty-second 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.

SANDRA SELIG

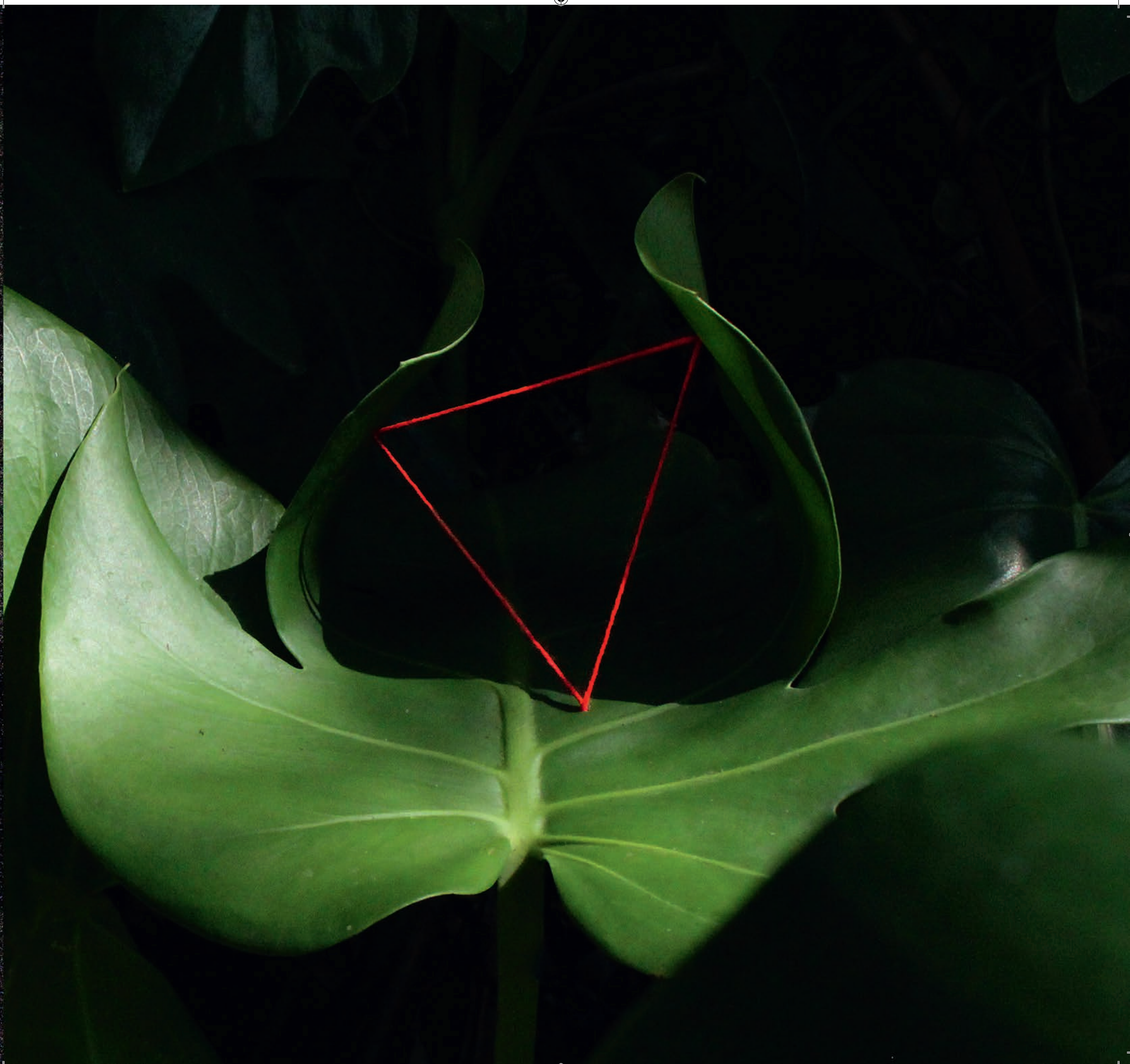
Brisbane-based artist Sandra Selig is perhaps best known for extraordinary, delicate installations in which she strings polyester sewing thread between corners and across rooms in intricate patterns that appear to shift and intensify in colour as the viewer moves towards them. Articulating what we might typically think of as 'empty' space, they also activate it, rendering it not only visible, but surprisingly resonant. Lines of another, related kind run through *double arc of dreams*, the work Selig has created for this issue of *Bulletin*. A jagged streak of light that races across a grainy darkness like an electrical pulse, a taut red thread that marks out a tiny universe between the twin arabesques of a curling leaf; they are insubstantial yet insistent points of connection to a largely unseen world.

Felicity Milburn
Curator

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

Sandra Selig **double arc of dreams** 2014. Digital image. Courtesy the artist, Milani Gallery Brisbane, and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney







Many months after the major February earthquake, we were told by the authorities that we were allowed to salvage whatever we could from our business—provided it fitted into a single wheelie bin. We grabbed what little we could. And this included our coin-operated pony, which had somehow made it out of the old C1 Espresso building in one piece.

We already knew Wayne had his eye on our horse for an idea involving a mechanical kids' ride, a great white hope and the steps of parliament. But we just couldn't bear to let go of the pony, as it was one of the few tangible pieces of our past. So we set about finding him an even better substitute. Eventually, we came across a vintage American ride-on pony, which was lovingly made into his work *The Saviour*.

There have been many saviours ride into this town on their big white horses since the Canterbury earthquakes. All of them preaching hope and praising the locals for their resilience. They sit safely on their high horses as they pat our heads and ride by.

Wayne's 'saviour' is yet to be exhibited. Sadly a major retrospective of his work was cancelled due to earthquake damage at the Gallery but I look forward to seeing this piece when the repairs are completed.

I just hope that there are no 'do not touch' signs around.

Sam Crowskey

Wayne Youle **The Saviour** 2012.
Fibreglass, mahogany, leather,
ply and electrical components.
Collection of Christchurch Art
Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu,
purchased 2012

MY FAVOURITE

BACK MATTER

Gallery Repairs Update

Despite the fact that we're closed, over the past few months one area of the building has enjoyed visitor numbers that would make a lot of exhibition spaces slightly jealous.

Down in our basement, teams of workers from Uretex Ground Engineering (NZ) Ltd and a consortium of international experts from New Zealand, Australia, Japan and the United States have been working hard to relevel the building.

So we're now very happy to report that all their work has paid off and the building is now officially level— apparently we've been raised by as much as 150mm in some places. Of course that's not the end of our repairs, and at the time this magazine goes to press the tender for the contract to base isolate the building is currently closing. This will be followed by repairs to the distinctive glass façade, parapets on the roof line and the reinstatement of miles of lighting tracks and wiring. However, it's undoubtedly a pretty significant milestone, and we'll endeavour to keep you up to date with the repairs as they progress.

Bulletin Reader Survey

The *Bulletin* you're reading now is number 176 in a long-running quarterly series. We like it. But we thought it was time to see if you do too. To that end, we're running a short survey online—it'd be great if you could take a couple of minutes to let us know what you think.

www.surveymonkey.com/s/MPS26CJ

Art Bites are Back

With our collection safely locked away while the Gallery building is closed, we're bringing **Art Bites** to our off-site exhibition spaces, because like us, we know you will be missing those gems from the collection.

Presented by our friendly and informative volunteer guides, these thirty-minute lunchtime presentations are a wonderful way to reunite with old favourites, learn more about the work, how it came to be in our collection, and the life of the artist. There is a catch and we're up front about it; we need to use digital reproductions because we can't access the actual works.

Art Bites take place every fortnight on a Friday and are repeated the following Sunday. Check out our events calendar for more information.

Nor'western Sky

On 13 March descendents of Christchurch identity John Bradley presented a charcoal drawing by Petrus van der Velden to Christchurch Art Gallery. This wonderful, dense charcoal drawing, titled *Nor'western Sky*, relates directly to a painting of the same scene already in the collection, gifted to the Gallery back in 1938 by the van Asch family.

John Bradley was a part-time photographer and accompanied van der Velden on his second trip to the Otira Gorge in winter 1893. This drawing has been in the Bradley family since it John acquired it from van der Velden in the early 1890s, so it was with much appreciation that we accepted this extremely generous gift from his descendents.

Peter Vangioni at Otakou Press

Congratulations to curator Peter Vangioni, who has been named Otakou Press Printer in Residence at the University of Otago. He will be hand-printing a book titled *XXXXX Words*, which features lyrics by Dunedin guitarist, noise maker and artist Michael Morley and will be illustrated with a series of geometric abstract images printed from Morley's original lino-blocks. The four week residency takes place in August 2014, and Peter will be printing on a Columbian Printing Press from the 1860s.

We were sorry to hear of the recent death of two artists represented in our collection, Christchurch potter David Brokenshire, and New Zealand-born, UK-based Alexis Hunter.

David Brokenshire 1925 – 2014

Born in Thames, Brokenshire went straight from secondary school into the RNZAF, where he flew for two and a half years. While stationed in the Pacific, he pursued an interest in botany in his spare time, studying and sketching local plants. After leaving the Air Force in 1946, he trained as an architect in Auckland and began his career in Christchurch. He began working with pottery in 1951, from a studio in the house he built in Sumner with his wife, artist Noeline Brokenshire, and became a full-time artist in 1979. Brokenshire's work has been exhibited within New Zealand and internationally and one of his pieces represents New Zealand in the International Museum of Ceramics at Faenza in Italy. His porcelain work is known for its subtle responses to the colours, forms and movement of nature; the force of the wind and ocean, the petals of an open flower, the first traces of colour in a morning sky. The Gallery holds eleven pieces by Brokenshire in its collection.

Alexis Hunter 1948 – 2014

Alexis Hunter, who died in Camden, London on 24 February, was a fearless and well-respected artist who became an active member of the Radical Feminism movement in Britain. Her works were included in the first female-curated Hayward Annual Exhibition in 1978 and she was selected to represent Britain at the 1982 Sydney Biennale. A resurgence of interest in the work of that time has seen her included in several significant exhibitions in recent years, including *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, which later toured to New York and Vancouver. She maintained strong links with New Zealand and returned regularly to lecture and exhibit here. The Gallery holds four works by Hunter—*We Do This* (1988), a painting of confiscated leopard and tiger skins piled up for burning, and three lithographs from a series celebrating local kai moana that was printed by Christchurch printmaker Marian Maguire in 1990.

The Physics Room Artist in Residence Program

Our congratulations go to the Physics Room who are establishing a residency programme at their space in Tuam Street. As part of their fundraising efforts for the residency the Physics Room has produced three limited artist editions, by Kirstin Carlin, John Ward Knox and Ella Sutherland. They are available for purchase at \$300 each; contact the gallery on (03) 379 5583 or at fiona@physicsroom.org.nz. For more info: www.physicsroom.org.nz

The Dead C and The Terminals

On Friday 23 May the Gallery presented a classic double bill featuring two of the South Island's legendary underground bands—the Dead C and the Terminals.

Formed in the second half the of 1980s, both bands forged reputations in New Zealand and overseas for their no compromises approach. In New Zealand they have released material through the Flying Nun and Xpressway labels, as well as numerous international labels including Siltbreeze and BaDaBing Records in the US.

Seeing either of these bands live is a rare opportunity at the best of times. But catching both at the same gig was almost unprecedented. Quite simply, it was awesome.

Bulletin Highly Commended at MAPDA

The Museums Australia Publication and Design Awards were announced at the Museums Australia 2014 conference in Tasmania on 17 May, and director Jenny Harper, who was speaking at the event, was on hand to collect our certificates.

Not only did we pick up highly commended for another year of *Bulletin* (B.171, 172, 173 and 174), but we won best invitation for our invite to the Shane Cotton book launch. We'd like to say a big thank you to everyone involved in both projects, in particular all at Strategy Design & Advertising and Aaron Beehre.

Public Programme

Film: Vermeer and Music—The Art of Love and Leisure

Filmed in London's National Gallery, New York's Met and other galleries, this stunning film delves into a breathtaking collection of Vermeer's finest pieces and delivers a detailed biography of the artist, his life and times.

6pm / 4 June / Alice Cinematheque / free
100 mins

Artist Talk: Shane Cotton

Join Shane Cotton for a floortalk on his exhibition **Baseland**.

11am / 7 June / 209 Tuam Street / free
Come early as space is limited

Film: Bill Cunningham New York

After fifty years of cycling the streets of the Big Apple with his camera, snapping the great, the good and the stylish, this portrait of a remarkable man and a chronicler of a city puts Bill Cunningham in front of the lens.

6pm / 11 June / Alice Cinematheque / free
90 mins

Artist Talk: Helen Calder

Join Helen Calder as she explores the relationship between colour, form and space, which is integral to her work in **Burster Flipper**.

11am / 5 July / ArtBox, corner of St Asaph and Madras streets / free

School Holidays: Sweet As Sculpture

All you need to make an incredible sculpture are toothpicks and marshmallows. The sky's the limit! Suitable for ages 4+.

Caution: Some marshmallows may be consumed in the process.

1.30pm / 7–18 July, weekdays only / ArtBox, corner of St Asaph and Madras streets / \$8; bookings essential—see the website or call (03) 941 7382

School Holidays: Imagination Playground!

Unleash your child's imagination. Two hours of creative indoor fun guaranteed, with our big blue blocks in a huge range of unique shapes and sizes. Suitable for ages 2 to 9.

10am–12pm; 1–3pm / 7–18 July, weekdays only / WEA, 59 Gloucester Street / \$5; bookings essential—see the website or call (03) 941 7382

Film: The Universe of Keith Haring

This documentary examines the life and career of a hugely influential figure in contemporary pop art, and features interviews with his friends, family, and colleagues.

6pm / 9 July / Alice Cinematheque / free
90 mins

Film: Guest of Cindy Sherman

Filmmaker Paul H-O confronts his own ego and identity after analysing his relationship with reclusive artist Cindy Sherman in this illuminating and witty documentary that offers a unique perspective on the New York City art scene.

6pm / 30 July / Alice Cinematheque / free
88 mins

Film: David Hockney—Secret Knowledge

This BBC documentary follows Hockney as he visits art galleries around the world and looks at how artists mastered the art of using projected images.

6pm / 6 August / Alice Cinematheque / free
70 mins

Film: Linotype: The Film

Called the 'Eighth Wonder of the World' by Thomas Edison, the linotype typesetting machine revolutionised printing and society. The film tells the surprisingly emotional story of the people connected to the linotype and how it impacted the world.

6pm / 13 August / Alice Cinematheque / free
77 mins

Artist Talk: Edwards + Johann

Hear artists Edwards + Johann talk about their latest collaboration, **Rebels, Knights and Other Tomorrows**.

11am / 23 August / 209 Tuam Street / free



The Gallery is currently closed to the public.
Our off-site exhibition spaces are upstairs at
209 Tuam Street and at ArtBox CPIT, corner of
Madras and St Asaph streets.

**CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY
TE PUNA O WAIWHETU**

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