

# B.

## 183

**Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetu  
Bulletin Issue no.183**

### **Hidden in Plain Sight**

Felicity Milburn on illusion, misdirection, and the high-stakes games that artists play when they send their works deep undercover.

### **City of Shadows and Stories**

Tom Goulter considers communal foolishness in the history of Christchurch and explores the tension between our desire to create a city and nature's indifference.

### **Trove**

Ken Hall explores the hidden acts of generosity behind Christchurch's public art collection and underlines the value of art philanthropy.

### **Pacific Art in Christchurch**

Stephanie Oberg looks at the sense of cultural vitality, belonging and place within Otautahi's Pasifika arts community.

### **(In)decent Exposure**

Erin Harrington writes on sex, censorship and what is, and is not, acceptable when naked bodies are displayed in art.

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Rita Angus *A Goddess of Mercy* (detail) 1945-7. Oil on canvas.  
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu,  
purchased 1956. Reproduced courtesy of the Estate of Rita Angus

# B.

## 183

### 4 Director's Foreword

A few words from director Jenny Harper.

### 8 Hidden in Plain Sight

Felicity Milburn on illusion, misdirection, and the high-stakes games that artists play when they send their works deep undercover.

### 14 City of Shadows and Stories

Tom Goulter considers communal foolishness in the history of Christchurch and explores the tension between our desire to create a city and nature's indifference.

### 22 Trove

Ken Hall explores the hidden acts of generosity behind Christchurch's public art collection and underlines the value of art philanthropy.

### 30 A Perspective on Pacific Art in Christchurch

Stephanie Oberg looks at the sense of cultural vitality, belonging and place within Ōtautahi's Pasifika arts community.

### 36 (In)decent Exposure

Erin Harrington writes on sex, censorship and our understanding about what is, and is not, acceptable when naked bodies are displayed in art.

### 42 Exquisite Treasure Revealed

Anthony Wright and Julie King shed light on a collection of drawings and photographs compiled by artist Margaret Stoddart.

### 48 Silent Patterns

Lara Strongman talks to artist Tony de Lautour about scale, camouflage and the escape of abstraction.

### 51 Pamework no.29

Neil Pardington responds typographically to Hinemoana Baker's poem *If I had to sing*.

### 54 Unsung

Peter Vangioni talks noise with Malcolm Riddoch, founder of the Auricle Sonic Arts Gallery and artist Bruce Russell.

### 60 My Favourite

Tim J. Veling makes his choice.

### 62 Postcard From...

Martyn Reynolds in Vienna, Austria.

### 65 Exhibition Programme and Events

What's on at the Gallery this quarter.

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Cover: Tony de Lautour *Silent Patterns* (detail) 2015-16. Acrylic on board. Commissioned by Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu  
Previous spread: Installation view of Simon Morris *Yellow Ochre Room* 2015.  
Photo: John Collie

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Photo: John Collie

# Director's Foreword

JENNY HARPER / DIRECTOR

FEBRUARY 2016

When I wrote my foreword for *B.182*, we were edging closer and closer to reopening; still anticipating this major milestone after almost five years.

Having made the vaguely reckless decision to open our doors, come what may, at 10am on 19 December 2015—a mere week after project completion—we stuck to that deadline. I'm so glad we did. It was one of the best moments of my time here in Christchurch when, following a happy group photograph of staff and their families in the foyer, we gathered to welcome our first visitors on the dot of 10am. We clapped them and they clapped us back!

During our first weekend just over 10,000 joyful citizens returned to their art gallery; during our first month, we have had a total of 65,800 visitors.<sup>1</sup> No one seems to mind that they can't yet enter through some doors, nor that our shop is a 'pop-up', nor that the car park and café are not yet operational. This is Christchurch; we're used to making do and enjoying what we can.

There have been smiles and even tears as people enter the Gallery, and as they recognise favourite works of art (even if *The Dutch Funeral* has been unframed for this outing). There has been surprise and pleasure—and perhaps also some puzzlement—as new friends are greeted. (Is that Glen Hayward work made from paint tins or carved wood?)<sup>2</sup>

This last couple of months has been a source of heady delight for us and for this community as this key cultural facility has been returned to its primary use.

Several celebratory events marked our reopening, with the final one on 5 February 2016, when we opened the last of our exhibition spaces.

I would like to thank the amazing team of Gallery staff, long-standing and new, as well as our committed project support group and contractors, who've worked long and hard to open as much as we could when we did. At times it has seemed chaotic and impossible, but we humans have an amazing ability to look forward with positivity. Our teams have learned to focus on what we could do, not what we couldn't. As an Alice in Wonderland postcard I was given over the break categorically states: 'Everybody has won and all must have prizes'.<sup>3</sup>

So here we are, the first edition of *Bulletin* in a new world, or so it seems; it's in a new format—a handy size which will be easier to shelve, but best of all, there are more pages for art. Many thanks to all who have created this: editors Lizzie Davidson and David Simpson, art director Aaron Beehre and his team of designers at the Ilam School of Fine Arts, PMP Print for their generous sponsorship, and all our contributors, staff, commissioned writers and our wonderful photographer, John Collie. (It also comes with a few apologies for those who've worked out how to stack the large floppy-covered *Bulletin* we introduced at the end of 2008. *Plus ça change!*)

Our newly redesigned website is also worth many visits. It's full of content connected to our exhibitions and this publication. I'm proud of it and thank the team

at Sons & Co. who've helped create this rich resource.

Our pocket-sized handbook documenting the reopening exhibitions has already sold out. We've reordered, but while we wait for the boxes to arrive, I recommend our new publication *101 Works of Art*, a sumptuous presentation of treasures from our collection, full of personal takes on works from the collection and interviews with artists and curators.

An important component of our reopening exhibition is titled *Unseen*. It's downstairs and brings to public light for the first time in Christchurch a range of new acquisitions for the city's art collection; gifts and bequests we've received with gratitude or newly purchased items we've sought and negotiated. We're thrilled to at last be able to show this selection, including portions of two major gifts from artists: among my favourites are a massive and brightly coloured Philip Trusttum and a beautiful gold quatrefoil painting by Max Gimblett, which Peter Vangioni and I last saw on a brick wall in his New York studio when we visited in 2010. Two new paintings by Colin McCahon, both made when he lived in Phillipstown, Christchurch, have been bought: one from the estate of Jacquie Sturm, the widow of James K. Baxter, had been a gift to their daughter, Hilary; the other is a Canterbury landscape and is shown as part of *In The Vast Emptiness*. While we were closed, we certainly weren't idle; and there are many more new works to see in *Unseen* as well as elsewhere in the galleries.

The notion of the unseen has also provided a general theme for this *Bulletin*, with features like 'Trove', 'Hidden in Plain Sight', and 'Exquisite Treasure Revealed'. Guest writer Tom Goulter considers Christchurch as a city of shadow and stories; his creative contribution evokes a sense of unease beneath the ground and is illustrated with images from the collection. Erin Harrington explores notions of (in)decent exposure, reminding us of how much is

revealed and how much is not at a given time in our culture, as she recalls the consternation that greeted Christine Webster's image of queer Māori cabaret artist Mika when this Gallery opened in 2003 and explores other similar incidents elsewhere. And Stephanie Oberg reminds us of the presence of a new generation of Pasifika artists, writers and musicians in Christchurch. Before our closure in 2011, we featured regularly changing sound art within the car park Bunker; and in this edition Malcolm Riddoch, Bruce Russell and Peter Vangioni discuss sonic art in Christchurch, New Zealand and Australia. We also celebrate the dazzling new camouflage of the Bunker with a work by local artist Tony de Lautour.

This magazine is as varied and rich as our reopening exhibitions. And just as new and different art sometimes takes time and positive energy to convey its meanings, some offerings may take more than one reading. But to paraphrase Alice, 'Everybody wins ...' We hope you enjoy the first *Bulletin* of 2016 and that you make a practice of returning often to the now fully open spaces of Te Puna o Waiwhetu Christchurch Art Gallery to see what we're up to during the year.

#### Notes

1. Gallery visitor numbers at 3pm on 18 January 2016, since reopening on 19 December 2015.
2. Glen Hayward *Yertle* 2011. Wood (kauri, pine, pūriri, rimu, tōtara), acrylic paint, wire. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 2011.
3. "'But who is to give the prizes?" quite a chorus of voices asked.' My preliminary answer: 'You and you and you, by visiting and returning as often!'



## R E M E M B E R I N G

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*With this note, we recall the lives of four influential figures from the New Zealand art world.*

Art dealer **Peter McLeavey** ONZM (21 September 1936 – 12 November 2015) was a lifelong champion of New Zealand art and culture and established one of this country's leading dealer galleries in Wellington in the late 1960s, showing work from New Zealand's best known artists including Colin McCahon, Gordon Walters, Len Lye, Robin White, Bill Hammond and Peter Robinson. Most recently we bought from him a work of Colin McCahon's made in Phillipstown, Christchurch.

**Melvin 'Pat' Day** CNZM (30 June 1923 – 17 January 2016) was a prolific painter of abstract works and modernist landscapes. He studied at the Courtauld Institute in London, becoming director of our former National Art Gallery from 1968 until 1978, where he broke with tradition and purchased works by modern New Zealand artists including Colin McCahon and Gordon Walters.

The death of ceramic artist **Barry Brickell** OBE (26 October 1935 – 23 January 2016) was announced earlier this year. He is represented in our collection and we have placed *Locomotive* (c.1977) on our balcony in his honour.

And last but certainly not least, we recognise the wonderful contribution of **Pip Culbert** (15 December 1938 – 12 February 2016) to our world. We're so glad that her *Pup Tent* (1999) is in our reopening show.

Felicity Milburn

# Hidden in Plain Sight



Joe Sheehan *Mother* 2008. Greywacke stone. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 2008. Reproduced courtesy of the artist and Tim Melville Gallery

In 1997, I went to see an exhibition called *White Out*, curated by William McAloon for Auckland Art Gallery's contemporary space. The show's subtitle unambiguously promised 'Recent Works by Seven Artists', but as I completed my circuit I realised I'd come up one maker short. I went through again, looking more closely. Still no luck. By the time I found *Now and Then*, Simon Morris's shimmering sequence of crosses painted in clear varnish across a white wall, I was applying a heightened level of concentration that felt quite different to my usual gallery-going demeanour. Having to hunt out the work had somehow primed me for the experience of seeing it, and rather than generating the frustration or annoyance I might have anticipated, my brain was crackling with thoughts about whiteness and lightness, surface and reflection; how the quality of light can alter perspective; how things can be both present and absent, subtle and intense. Morris's sleight-of-hand had operated as a delaying tactic that conditioned me for a more meaningful viewing encounter, and I was intrigued to find that this intensified consciousness carried over, for a while at least, into my experience of the other works I came across as I left the *White Out* space.

Illusion and misdirection have long been part of art; ancient Roman murals in Pompeii fooled the eye with false windows and lifelike insects, and the Greek painter Zeuxis reportedly painted grapes so realistic the birds flew down to peck them. Since the arrival

of Marcel Duchamp's revolutionary readymades in the early twentieth century, everyday objects—modified, juxtaposed, or merely transformed by their relocation into galleries—have been added to the contemporary artist's arsenal. As a result, many visitors arrive with increasingly suspicious eyes, a wariness perhaps vindicated by recent events at the Dallas Art Museum. In April 2015, two high-school students created an impromptu, tongue-in-cheek art installation, arranging a watch and pair of sunglasses on the floor of an abstract art exhibition. They photographed the reactions of visitors and later posted them on the social networking/news site Reddit.<sup>1</sup> As one prankster, Jack Durham, told the *Dallas Morning News*, 'A lot of people were like, "There's no way this is real." But some people were thinking "Wow, I wonder what this means?"'<sup>2</sup> Predictably, reactions to the stunt were mixed. Many commentators saw it as a timely puncturing of the pretensions of modern art—a contemporary version of the 'Emperor's New Clothes'—and it was gleefully reported from that angle across the web. Others, however, interpreted it as a natural extension of Duchampian process: Reddit user WGHHUA wrote 'You think you made fun of art, but you created art. Joke's on you.'<sup>3</sup> The museum's director, Maxwell Anderson, took a benevolent view, calling it 'a modest, cheeky guerrilla action in keeping with a venerable tradition'.<sup>4</sup>

The tensions and uncertainties surrounding an



Glen Hayward *Shrink Wrap* 2004.  
Wood and acrylic paint. Collection  
of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna  
o Waiwhetu, the Jim Barr and Mary  
Barr Gift 2011

audience's expectations about what art can be, and how they should respond to it, provide fertile ground for contemporary artists who choose to send their works deep undercover. In Christchurch Art Gallery's collection, works by Joe Sheehan, Glen Hayward and Susan Collis reveal how subterfuges, double-takes and slow reveals can act as catalysts for more lingering and attentive art experiences.

Mention 'carved stone' and people's thoughts might turn to marble, shaped into cool classical curves, or perhaps a pounamu heitiki, glinting with the green light of deep water. Few would think of greywacke, the common argillaceous rock found throughout the eastern South Island, which originally accumulated as sediment at the edges of the Gondwana super-continent. And how many would connect that stone with a plastic milk bottle, crushed and compacted almost beyond recognition? New Zealand sculptor Joe Sheehan brings these unlikely companions together, under an even less expected title: *Mother*. If the distorted form of the

bottle is unmistakably contemporary, the stone carries us back many millions of years. But both were formed as the result of irresistible external forces. Holding this in your mind as your eye traces the undulating and deceptively fluid lines of the stone makes for a captivating encounter. Radiating out with conflicting histories and associations, it's the kind of juxtaposition that is typical of Sheehan's practice, which gains much of its impact from the convincing way he replicates the perfection of industrially-produced surfaces. In his hands, solid stone has masqueraded as a wide range of contemporary objects, from light bulbs, sunglasses and ballpoint pens to a pounamu cassette tape.

Material deception is also at the heart of Glen Hayward's sculptures, four of which currently lurk, like unexploded ordnances, in the *Unseen* exhibition. The first of these, *Shrink Wrap*, is a beaten-up recycling bin in the faded blue livery of the Auckland City Council. Tilted over on one side, it's just begging to be set to rights and tidied away;



Glen Hayward *Yertle* 2011. Wood (kauri, pine, pūriri, rimu, tōtara), acrylic paint, wire. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 2011

from the expressions on some visitors' faces, it's obvious that's just what they'd like to do. Motivated by as much irritation as curiosity, they stalk around it—but they're in for a surprise. The bin that seemed empty is actually full, stuffed not with last week's newspapers or the weekend's empties, but wood. Or more accurately, like all of Hayward's works in *Unseen*—and like *Yertle*, his teetering paint-pot tower upstairs—it's been carved from wood and then painted with Machiavellian attention to detail. Like Sheehan (and unlike Duchamp) the artist didn't go out into the world to gather everyday objects; he went back to his studio and made them by hand. It's interesting to witness the recalibration in visitors' attitudes as they process this difference: suddenly what seemed like a trashy plastic intrusion represents hours of meticulous labour and considerable skill. And by lavishing such time and attention on something that's all about what's thrown away, Hayward invests his works and process not only with humour, but with an unexpected

gravitas. Unlike *Shrink Wrap*, the three other Hayward works aren't noticeably out of place—they're all objects that might conceivably be found in a gallery space and it's only when you get closer (or read the wall label) that you realise something's not quite right. That venerable fire extinguisher, faded and weathered through years of vigilant readiness, was carved from native tōtara. A grimy light switch nearby has undergone a switch of its own. It's also made from wood, but its surface was whitened with correction fluid rather than paint and fittingly—given its inability to perform the one task we might expect of it—it carries the moniker of *Typo*. The watchful visitors who discover these secret identities may pause to query an apparent duplication of surveillance equipment on an adjacent wall. Halfway down, that extra security camera seems curiously outdated, and a check of the wall label offers another clue; in a sly nod to the tight conceptual loop that contains the artist and the viewer, now caught in his hoax camera's sights, Hayward calls

this one *Closed Circuit*.

Many clandestine works draw the viewer's notice to the context of the gallery space—those deliberately calibrated walls, rooms and openings we often overlook, but which unquestionably influence our viewing experience. For British artist Susan Collis, the pristine sanctity of 'white cube' spaces is an invitation for mischief-making: she clutters them up with things we'd expect to be hidden away: dust-cloths, overalls, stepladders, sawhorses. Careful inspection reveals these untidy cast-offs as meticulously realised deceptions, exquisitely rendered in a range of precious materials. That rickety stepladder is speckled not with drips of paint, but with inlaid diamonds, opals and pearls, while the stains on a series of crumpled up dust-cloths are painstakingly rendered in delicate embroidery. When Collis's *As good as it gets* was installed for the earthquake-curtailed exhibition *De-Building*, visitors were confronted with three raw screw holes on an otherwise blank wall. Two were occupied by rawlplugs; the third also held a solitary screw. Many must have wondered if a work had been stolen or left mistakenly in storage, but in the kind of payoff usually reserved for those who do good deeds in fairytales, attentive viewing was rewarded with glittering treasure. The unsightly plastic rawlplugs were in fact delicate turquoise inlays, and the 'forgotten' screw had been cast in 18-carat white gold and set with a sparkling white

sapphire. The work may have been subtle, but the message was clear: the longer (and harder) you look (and think), the more you'll see. Modern life places ever-increasing demands on our attention: behind every browser tab, there's another waiting to be opened; articles splinter into a gorgon's head of tantalising hyperlinks. Prioritising speed and scope over immersion, we are in danger of processing images as though we were inferior computers, rather than engaging with our human capacity for thought, emotion, memory and analysis. For that, we need moments of stillness; accumulations of time. Elusive works, like those made by Sheehan, Hayward and Collis play a high-stakes game; risking being overlooked altogether, they gamble that those who do spend the time to find them will leave far richer for their efforts.

### Felicity Milburn

Curator

#### Notes

1. [reddit.com/r/funny/comments/31jp81/my\\_friend\\_and\\_i\\_set\\_his\\_watch\\_and\\_sunglasses\\_down](https://www.reddit.com/r/funny/comments/31jp81/my_friend_and_i_set_his_watch_and_sunglasses_down).
2. Jack Durham, quoted in Sarah Baskovich, "Potentially brilliant teens leave sunglasses at Dallas Art Museum, call them "abstract exhibit", *The Dallas Morning News*, [guidelive.com/viral/2015/04/07](https://www.guidelive.com/viral/2015/04/07).
3. WGHUA, 5 April 2015, [reddit.com/r/funny/comments/31jp81/my\\_friend\\_and\\_i\\_set\\_his\\_watch\\_and\\_sunglasses\\_down/cq2eamp](https://www.reddit.com/r/funny/comments/31jp81/my_friend_and_i_set_his_watch_and_sunglasses_down/cq2eamp).
4. Maxwell Anderson, quoted in Baskovich, op. cit.



Susan Collis *As good as it gets* 2008-10. 18-carat white gold (hallmarked), white sapphire, turquoise. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 2011

Tom Goulter considers communal foolishness in the history of Christchurch.

# City of Shadows and Stories

If cities are the ground into which we plant stories, the soil of Ōtautahi—later Christchurch—is undergoing a protracted tilling season. Five years is a long unsettlement in human terms; on a geological (or indeed narratological) scale, time moves more gradually. Christchurch exists today as a rich aggregation of narratives, propping up physical edifices of crumbling stone and cardboard.

Few cities were as rigidly planned and executed as the Christchurch of old. Four avenues—Bealey, Fitzgerald, Moorhouse and Deans—framed the central city, pinned in its centre by a cathedral spire. The latter's shadow fell on a square whose soil once embraced dead from Puari Pā, whose cobbles would one day be trod by wizards.

Ōtākaro, the Avon River, ran through the city from northeast to southwest, a complementary winding line was formed by the grid's diagonal overlays, Victoria and High streets, and the two grassed squares, Cranmer and Latimer. The box was then bisected horizontally by Worcester and vertically by Colombo, the creaking spine of the whole edifice.

Worcester. Gloucester. Avon. Beckenham. New Brighton. All pointers toward a desire to make an England more English than England herself. An ideal England, where long shadows still fall on John Major's 'cricket grounds [... and] invincible green suburbs'.<sup>1</sup>

The result was some theme-park version of Englishness: a place where the Jesters could be seen at the Court Theatre and the Bard hosted drinks by the Avon; where students told Canterbury tales and Manchester was the place for entertainment of negotiable virtue.

But equally, it's long been a place that divides into harsh absolutes, splitting its culture into deep binaries. Freaks and normals, gang patches and skinhead leather, saturnine old boys and jovial youth.



The Christchurch sewerage system is one of the world's flattest, meaning that pushing shit from A to B is an uncommonly difficult task. Perhaps it was this difficulty that led, in the years leading up to the quakes, to the trouble with the oxidation ponds in the city's estuary—where the treated sewage is left after we're done with it.

Leave treated sewage in a shallow wetland, and if the wetland goes dry in a hot summer—well, what can you do? You can't fight the sun. And if a northerly scrapes like sandpaper over those crud-caked pond-beds and whips clouds of sun-dried night-soil into a drifting cloud of airborne excreta, what are you going to do? Rich complexity of the ecosystem. You're breathing shit. And then when the shit falls on the seawater and flows back to the shore, it washes up on the beach at Sumner by Cave Rock—known to Māori as Tuawera, which means 'cut down as if by fire'. It settles on the tideline like the great black whale that gave the rock its name. Tūrakipō, a local chief, had put a death curse on a woman he couldn't have, so the girl's father climbed the hill above Tūrakipō's beach and sang karakia that rolled down the hill and out to sea. The hymns of nemesis brought forth a whale, which beached on the shore. Tūrakipō's men feasted on the whale, and caught a sleeping sickness from which they never awoke—cut down as if by fire.<sup>2</sup>

Christchurch's residents may prefer a thing to be simply accessible, directly before them, but let it not be said that they are without a yearning for meaning. So it was that Arthur Worthington—Counsellor Worthington MD, until questions were asked—could drift into town from Parts Unknown, USA, and speak with an exotic accent about 'substance' and 'matter' and 'forms' and 'ideals' and become recognised, not as a kook, but as a prophet of ultimate truth.

A sermon transcribed for the ages began with Worthington taking the stage beside a table bearing a burning lamp. 'Brethren,' he told his congregants, 'you think you see a lamp before me on the table. You think that lamp is an actual, concrete, permanent lamp. You are wrong. The only actual, real, and eternal thing is the concept of that lamp in your minds and mine.'<sup>3</sup>

Worthington elaborated on this theme, holding forth on Platonic idealism and Berkeleyan immaterialism, before knocking the flame onto the ground—crying triumphantly that the lamp was merely symbolic of the concept of a lamp and had no actual existence of its own. The crowd, thrilled by the realisation that they had not been burned to death, applauded and spread the word of Worthington's transcendently sensible philosophy.

It wasn't long before Worthington had gathered enough capital from followers to erect, at Latimer Square's northern end, a Temple of Truth from which to preach. Worthington's flock constructed for him a lavish townhouse alongside the Temple, where later sat one of Christchurch's longest-running hostels—now a car park.<sup>4</sup>

By the time Christchurch's preachers, their congregations dwindling, looked into allegations of impropriety between the Prophet of Truth and his female-only



Tim J. Veling *Latimer Square, Christchurch, 2012*, from *Adaptation, 2011–2012*. Digital C-type print. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, gift of the artist 2012

Society of the Blue Veil, the lamp had been smashed and the flame extinguished. And once anyone inspected the construction of the Temple, whose Solomonic pillars and biblical-classical architecture masked a cheap wooden frontage painted to look like stone with sprayed-on sand, Worthington had left town as mysteriously as he appeared. He left behind him an out-of-pocket parish blinking in the sunlight of a world that now seemed but a figment—the signpost to an unreachable higher reality, populated by fickle confidence tricksters.

Arthur Worthington's lusty depredations may have been bad magic or just good honest confidence trickery, but through ringing word and hidden deed, he taught his parishioners that the line between the two is thinner than we think. This, in itself, is not so dark a spell to cast.

The same can't be said of the gatherings over the river from the Temple of Truth at the Barbadoes Street Cemetery. Here were held moonlit black masses—red wine and clove cigarettes—at the grave of Margaret Burke. The grave was said to display bloody handprints, and the city's amateur necromancers would gather in the hope of contacting the hosts of the underworld. Their calls were answered by crystals of iron pyrites, slowly oxidising blood-red within the stone, but in 1929 *The Press* ruled that for graveside visitors from as far off as the USA, the macabre marker's story was 'too good to spoil by rationalising explanations'.<sup>5</sup>

Margaret Burke had come from Ireland to become a kitchen-hand in the Cambridge Terrace house of wool-man William 'Ready Money' Robinson. In 1867 Robinson had travelled to Latin America and brought back from Panama a manservant named Simon Cedeno, whom literature identifies for us as slight, handsome, around twenty-eight years of age, 'of negro extraction' and 'in all respects a superior member of his race'.<sup>6</sup> Otherness marked his time in Christchurch. Cedeno would later testify to the racial harassment which Ready Money apparently considered a condition of employment.

In January 1871, officers were called to the Robinson house, where Margaret Burke and another servant had been stabbed by Cedeno. The first man on the scene had to pry Cedeno's hands from around Burke's neck. 'You'll kill her, you brute!' the officer said he told Cedeno; to which Cedeno reportedly answered, 'Yes, I kill.'

The money-line of the case comes when Cedeno is being cuffed and being removed from the premises. 'You kill cows and Māoris', he is quoted as telling arresting officers. 'For my part, I kill English girls. People call me wildman, madman, but I am not.'

Writing up the case in the 1930s for *New Zealand Railways Magazine*, Charles Treadwell strongly suggested that Cedeno's colour and accent biased the jury from the start, adding that an insanity plea would have saved him in a modern court. Treadwell and crime writer Dudley Dyne take pains to put Cedeno's more salacious lines in the mouths of unreliable witnesses.

Simon Cedeno's body hung from the Lyttelton gallows before joining Margaret Burke's at Barbadoes Street, where the two immigrants lie beneath the ash and broken glass.

‘As a nation’, wrote Robin Hyde in response to the Worthington affair, ‘we seem to be too repressed, and consequently seize on almost any pretext for making communal fools of ourselves.’<sup>7</sup> We leave our shit in shallow pools. We curse the sun for shining and the wind for blowing, and we are ourselves cursed for eating the wrong meat. We spray a wall with sand and call it stone and wait for bloody handprints to appear, and we don’t know whether this is magic or a stubborn insistence on things being the way they aren’t. We don’t know objects from the ideas they represent, or the other way around. It’s only because we know so very much about the way of things that we are so surprised when they turn out not to be that way at all.

When much of Christchurch fell in February 2011, a visibly disturbed Prime Minister Key summoned a gift often overlooked by his detractors: the natural hierophant’s ability to craft instructive stories out of subjective feelings. To speak—often disarmingly frankly—less of *what just happened* than *how to feel* about it. He spoke of the city’s ‘aching hearts’ and ‘great spirit’ in battle with raw nature in her ‘violent and ruthless’ aspect.<sup>8</sup>

His words *felt* true; this is Key’s talent. Brethren, look to the lamp. Key will often begin by observing just what New Zealanders are seeing (‘yeah, well, I think if you look...’), following causatively to suggest how we might then feel about it. And if we recognise the feelings described, it follows that we’ll accept our place within the narrative in which Key situates those feelings. For a people as famously reticent as New Zealanders—or at least the New Zealanders of Key’s stalwart base—his confessions of feeling are powerful tokens.

But to personify a location like this is as tempting as it is impossible. Regardless of how we look at it, Christchurch only exists because we say it does. The place itself, tight shingle and steadfast rock, doesn’t think of itself as *Christchurch* or as *Ōtautahi* or as anyone’s home. The earth didn’t shake because of anything we did upon its surface—it moved because that’s just what the earth *does*. Not to spite us, but in spite of us.

Druidic architects once stirred human blood into their foundational cement. More recent builders laid Bibles or effigies of human significance into the cornerstones of their constructions. Reminders of a universal principle of building, that when we lay down foundations—whether for a shack, highrise or city itself—we extend our own human meaning down into the earth, idea and narrative mixing awkwardly with clay and loam.

It had been easy enough to incorporate September 2010’s pre-dawn shiverings into the Christchurch narrative. Seismic trembles rocketed up through the strata even as primal sparks rang out through sleeping brains, touching off reptilian fight-or-flight synapse patterns. We rushed to make sense of the event, to fit it into a narrative. Tight faux-English grid and village-green suburbs tested by Antipodean ring-of-fire wildness. Earth’s fury. Why didn’t ‘They’ warn us? City and story alike were cracked but repairable. Look back or move forward? Either seemed feasible.



James Fitzgerald *The Lighted Pillar* 1925. Etching and aquatint. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 2001



David Cook *Cathedral Square* 1983. Photograph. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 1987



W.A. Sutton *Private lodgings* 1954. Oil on canvas on board. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 1959

But after February the following year, it was clear the graft had never taken. Blood and Bible alike sit dead in the soil, neither swallowed nor spat back. The land doesn't want to reject or revise our story. It simply doesn't care. No longer can we feel we've sunken our awareness of place and community into the earth. The only place Christchurch truly exists, it's become clear, is in its people. We might all agree upon what Christchurch is or isn't. If nothing else, we all agree that it's *there*. But there's one party that reserves judgement on even that most basic fact, and that's the location itself.

The earth doesn't move out of malice or ruthlessness. The earth simply moves. Any attempts to ascribe human meaning would be like trying to read a buried Bible. Like Tūraki pō and the whale, Worthington and the lamp. We're left with a place made out of narratives and experiences, streets forever trod by those who'll never tell their stories.

**Tom Goulter** was born in the Canterbury town of Lincoln and raised in the Port Hills of Christchurch. He wrote an early draft of this article in an office that was crushed by falling boulders in February 2011. He holds a master's degree in creative writing from Victoria University's International Institute of Modern Letters and writes about literature and local culture for Wellington's FishHead magazine.

#### Notes

1. John Major, speech to the Conservative Group for Europe, 22 April 1993.
2. The account of the legend of Tuawera is taken from J.F. Menzies, *Sumner*, ([christchurchcitylibraries.com/digitalcollection/publications/1940s/1941sumner/pdf/69264-022.pdf](http://christchurchcitylibraries.com/digitalcollection/publications/1940s/1941sumner/pdf/69264-022.pdf)) and A.W. Reed, *Reed Book of Māori Mythology*, Raupo Publishing, New Zealand, 2004.
3. O.T.J. Alpers, *Cheerful Yesterdays*, Whitcombe and Tombs, Auckland, 1930, p.130.
4. Built in 1861, the former Collins' Family Hotel and Boarding House at 208 Hereford Street overlooked Latimer Square. The hotel became known as Perry's Occidental Hotel or the Occidental in 1889. The hotel closed in 2006 and was demolished in 2011 following the Christchurch earthquakes.
5. *The Press*, 2 May 1929.
6. See Charles A.L. Treadwell, 'Famous New Zealand trials: The trial of Simon Cedeno', *The New Zealand Railways Magazine*, vol.8, issue 9, 1 January 1934, p.34.
7. Robin Hyde, 'Journalese', *The Parliamentary Reports of Robin Hyde*, New Zealand Texts Collection, The National Printing Company, Auckland, 1934, p.130.
8. Speech by John Key at a press conference on 23 February 2011. The full text of John Key's speech is published online at [stuff.co.nz/national/christchurch-earthquake/4694016/John-Keys-full-speech](http://stuff.co.nz/national/christchurch-earthquake/4694016/John-Keys-full-speech).

# TROVE

Recounting the untold stories behind some of the works in the exhibition

*Treasury: A Generous Legacy*, curator Ken Hall also underlines the value of art philanthropy.

Investigating the stories behind the many gifts and bequests in *Treasury* has been satisfying in many ways. For a start, the research process nicely feeds the detective instinct; for this project it has been a collaborative activity, with dues rightly paid to colleagues Tim Jones and Deborah Hyde. Piecing together elements from sources including artist and object files, books, wills, archives and historical newspapers online (from France, Britain, Australia and New Zealand) also helps us see how our collection has come together. The understandings gained can tell us much about our shared past and the multiple facets shaping Christchurch culture. With this, our research has highlighted the inspired efforts and

generosity that have supplied strength to our historical collection, uncovering many fascinating, often hidden, histories connected to works of art. The stories told here contain links to some of art history's most famous names; extraordinary wealth connected to colonial roots; banished occupants of a royal palace; a young woman's likeness with an excess of admirers; and a significant Tainui leader and his European contacts. Some of these paintings had been enjoyed by the privileged few before entering this collection; others briefly shared with a larger crowd. All are loved works within this collection, including two relatively new arrivals, and all have benefited from this intensified recent research.



## The Physician 1653

Gerrit Dou



Oil on copper. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, Heathcote Helmore Bequest 1965

Gerrit Dou (1613–1675), a leading figure in Dutch painting's Golden Age, became Rembrandt's first pupil aged just fourteen, studying under him for three years from 1628; before long he had eclipsed his master's reputation and his extraordinarily detailed paintings were being prized by wealthy collectors. Bearing Dou's signature and the year 1653, *The Physician* is one of four near-identical versions—a copy at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam is the only one not signed. The one believed to be the original, in Vienna, is painted on oak; the others are on copper. It was not exceptional for artists such as Dou to make copies of their own works in response to demand.

This painting's earliest documented owner is the Somerset-born Henry Francis Gray (1837–1905), who reached Port Lyttelton in 1856, aged eighteen, to farm in Canterbury. His brothers Ernest and Albert also took this path. He and his seven siblings were already well-off in 1870 when their father, the Reverend Frederick William Gray of Castle Cary, died and left a fortune of £210,000 (having the buying power of £17,000,000 today) as well as an (undocumented) art collection.

In 1881, Henry Gray was commended in local newspapers for lending *The Physician* for the Canterbury Society of Arts' first exhibition. He left New Zealand for South Africa and the Argentine in 1899, and the painting passed through family lines to his great-nephew Heathcote Helmore (1894–1965), a prominent Christchurch architect, who bequeathed this treasure to the Gallery in 1965.

## Les Puritaines/La Lecture de la Bible 1857

Henriette Browne



Oil on canvas. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, presented by R.E. McDougall 1930

Henriette Browne (1829–1901) was a well-known French painter of religious and Orientalist themes; this painting has many interesting names attached to it.<sup>1</sup> Evidently depicting young sixteenth-century Huguenots contemplating scripture, it was first exhibited at the 1857 Paris Salon as *Les Puritaines*.<sup>2</sup> The author Jules Verne recorded Browne exhibiting ‘four excellent canvases’ in his review of the Salon, but sympathised less with the subjects of this work than the painter had: ‘Les Puritaines are painted with a conscientious truth; everything in their features, in the asceticism of their faces, in the cut of their grey garments, in their stiff and serious attitude, denotes very well the daughters of Protestantism’s most intolerant sect.’<sup>3</sup>

Painted during the early years of the Second French Empire (1852–70), at which time thousands of opponents of Emperor Napoléon III were being imprisoned or

fleeing into exile, *Les Puritaines*—in picturing persecuted citizens of the past—may have permitted a gently political reading.<sup>4</sup> Any such interpretation, however, did not hinder its purchase at the Salon by the Empress Eugénie. It was displayed until 1870 at the (soon to be destroyed) Tuileries Palace, when she and her husband went into permanent exile in England following his crushing defeat to Prussia. Napoléon died three years later; this and other paintings were restored to Eugénie in 1881.<sup>5</sup> Following her death in 1920, it was sold in 1922 at Christie’s in London (renamed *La Lecture de la Bible*) to the Sydney art dealer William J. Wadham, who sold it to Christchurch art dealer John Walker Gibb. After being shown in Dunedin at the 1925–6 *New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition*, it was purchased by the Christchurch biscuit manufacturer Robert E. McDougall, donor of Christchurch’s first public gallery, and became a part of his extraordinary civic gift.

## Teresina <sup>1874</sup>

### Frederic Leighton



Oil on canvas board. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, presented by the Canterbury Society of Arts 1932

The name *Teresina* appears in a notebook list of models sketched by Frederic Leighton (1830–1896) in 1874 while in Rome, where he typically relocated from London each autumn. The completed painting, like other of his portrait studies from the late 1850s onwards, shows the influence of Renaissance portraiture, presenting his (often Italian) sitters in a restrained, simplified style. This was in contrast with his vast history paintings packed with human figures, including *Daphnephoria*, a five-and-a-quarter metre long work shown at the Royal Academy in London in 1876 alongside *Teresina*. Picturing an ancient Greek festival honouring Apollo, it captured all of the attention. But this little picture also sold.

*Teresina* had several owners, all serious art collectors, in the thirty years before coming to Christchurch. The first, Charles Peter Matthews, was a wealthy brewer with homes in Mayfair and Essex, who died in 1891. It was then purchased at auction by Aylesbury picture-dealer Robert Gibbs, who sold it to the Reigate-based John Rudolph Lorent, a former Rothschilds' banker who spent all that he could on art. His need to raise a dowry for his daughter in 1894 coincides with his parting with *Teresina*. The next owner was Thomas Craig-Brown, a Scottish woollen manufacturer and antiquarian who was praised for lending it to the Scottish Royal Academy Exhibition in 1896. Inexplicably, he also allowed it to be sent to Christchurch for the 1906–7 *New Zealand International Exhibition* and purchased for £100 by the Canterbury Society of Arts. *Teresina* was presented to the city's new Robert McDougall Art Gallery in 1932.

## Panier de Raisins <sup>1893</sup>

Henri Fantin-Latour



Oil on canvas. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, Frank White Bequest 2001

Every June from 1878 onwards, once the clamour of the Paris Salon had subsided, the painters Henri Fantin-Latour (1836–1904) and his wife Victoria (née Dubourg, 1840–1926) closed their Paris apartment and headed to the country, a small house with a garden in Lower Normandy, working there until the summer had ended. From Paris, Fantin-Latour shipped his most successful new fruit and flower paintings to his London friends, the art dealers Edwin and Ruth Edwards. Edwin Edwards had supported Fantin-Latour when Paris was in turmoil in 1871 at the close of the Franco-Prussian war by clearing his studio of drawings and still-life paintings to sell in England. Subsequent demand for his work from English collectors created a regular income for Fantin-Latour, whose still-life works were for a long while unknown to his countrymen. As the painter Jacques-Émile Blanche complained in 1919, ‘For too long, they were not found in France; Fantin was revealed to us only through rare portraits and fantasies.’<sup>6</sup>

*Panier de Raisins* (basket of grapes) was purchased through Ruth Edwards in London. Its buyer is unrecorded, but it was almost certainly purchased by the parents of its donor, Frank White (1910–2001), a Hororata sheep and cattle farmer and arborist who brought his mother’s belongings to New Zealand following her death in Somerset in 1935. White came to New Zealand in 1927 to study farming at Canterbury Agricultural College (now Lincoln University). Graduating in 1929, he served with the New Zealand armed forces in North Africa and the Mediterranean during the Second World War, and never married.<sup>7</sup> Following his death in 2001, the Gallery was offered first choice of his paintings by bequest. Twelve were selected, among which this work is the most exceptional.

## A Hot Day: Wiremu Pātara Te Tuhi, Ngāti Mahuta 1901

Charles Frederick Goldie



Oil on canvas. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, presented by the Canterbury Society of Arts 1932

Wiremu Pātara Te Tuhi (1823?–1910) of Ngāti Mahuta was a well-known resident of Mangere, Auckland when his portrait was first painted by the thirty-year-old Charles Frederick Goldie (1870–1947) in 1901. Goldie had spent six years studying abroad from the age of twenty-two, mostly in Paris, returning in 1898 as ‘a young and promising artist’ with an impressive European art training behind him.<sup>8</sup> By 1900, he was showing a mix of portraits of European and Māori sitters at the Auckland Society of Arts. He exhibited two portraits in the following year with the Canterbury Society of Arts.

Goldie and Pātara were introduced to each other in 1901 by the writer and historian James Cowan, who observed the first of their many collaborations and had also interviewed Pātara in depth. On 18 February 1902, his detailed biography of Pātara filled almost a page of the *Christchurch Star*. This may have been by design, as seven weeks later Goldie’s first two portraits of him, including this one, were shown at the Canterbury Society of Arts. Christchurch readers had opportunity, therefore, to become apprised of major aspects of the Tainui leader’s life, receiving at the same time a potted history of New Zealand, with the sorry truths of colonisation thoroughly embedded. Pātara was most animated when describing his involvement in the Māori King Movement, including as a newspaper publisher and as secretary to his cousin King Tāwhiao; their long exile in the Waikato ‘King Country’; and their visit to England in 1884 in the hope of proper recognition from Queen Victoria of the Treaty signed in 1840 on her behalf.<sup>9</sup> *A Hot Day* was purchased in April 1902 by the Canterbury Society of Arts shortly after the exhibition opened, and presented to the city’s new gallery in 1932.<sup>10</sup>

## In the Wizard's Garden c. 1904

George Dunlop Leslie



Oil on canvas. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, presented to the Canterbury Society of Arts by W. Harris, 1907; given to the Gallery in 1932

George Dunlop Leslie (1835–1921) was a prolific, successful artist who exhibited annually at the Royal Academy in London from 1859—usually theatrical, symbolism-laden paintings of young women from a previous age. He exhibited *In the Wizard's Garden* at the Academy in 1904. Both the artist and the painting's donor, Wolf Harris (1833–1926), were present at the opening.<sup>11</sup> Harris, a Kraków-born, London-based Jewish businessman with New Zealand connections, had already purchased a work by Leslie for himself, and was regarded as 'a great friend of many of the artists [...] accustomed every year just after the opening of the Academy to entertain at dinner the president and other academicians', probably including Leslie.<sup>12</sup>

Harris (born Wolf Hersch Schlagit) moved to Australia from Poland in 1849, to Wellington in 1851, and then to Dunedin in 1857 during the Otago gold rushes, and there founded Bing, Harris & Co., a highly successful clothing importing and manufacturing company. Establishing branches throughout New Zealand, he opened another in London after moving there permanently in 1864.<sup>13</sup> Harris maintained his New Zealand links and made business trips, the last in 1898. When George Leslie lent *In the Wizard's Garden* for the 1906–7 *Christchurch International Exhibition*, it was Harris who purchased it for the Canterbury Society of Arts, who in turn gave it to the city in 1932.

## Notes

1. Sophie Louise Henriette de Bouteiller became Mme Henri Jules de Saux through marriage in 1855. As the painter Jules Lecomte explained in 1857, as 'a woman of high society through birth and marriage [...] modesty still more than certain aspects of her position lead her to half-hide behind a pseudonym'. *Le Monde illustre*, 1857, p.370, translation by Tim Jones.
2. The women's costumes, particularly their caps, appear a mid-nineteenth-century pastiche of sixteenth-century French Huguenot attire. With thanks to Bronwyn Labrum, Associate Professor, Ngā Pae Māhutonga, Massey University School of Design.
3. Jules Verne, *Salon de 1857*, edited by William Butcher, Acadien, 2008, translation by Tim Jones.
4. The theme also had contemporary currency for Salon visitors through sources such as *Les Huguenots*, a popular grand opera by Giacomo Meyerbeer set in this period, which premiered in Paris in 1836 and was still being staged in the 1850s.
5. The painting is seen in a photograph of Empress Eugénie's library at Farnborough Hill. Alison McQueen, *Empress Eugénie and the Arts*, p.306. Further information from Dr Alison McQueen, email to Tim Jones, 27 November 2015.
6. *Propos de Peintre, de David à Degas*, Paris, 1919, p.48, translation by Tim Jones.
7. Reginald Francis White, *An Ordinary Man: Frank's Story*, Dryden Press, 1999. Frank White also left his farm, Silverwood, to Lincoln University for training purposes.
8. 'Auckland Exhibition', *New Zealand Herald*, 7 December 1898, p.6.
9. James Cowan, 'Patara, the scribe', *The Star*, 18 February 1902, p.4.
10. The portrait was published in 1904 as a chromolithograph in a supplement of 'New Zealand Illustrated', the Christmas number of the *Weekly Press*; two copies were placed on Pātara's casket at his tangi in 1910. Much later, James Cowan recalled the painting's origins: 'One day in midsummer the ancient nodded and fell asleep, overcome by the heat, and Goldie, delighted with the natural pose, produced his first really great portrait.' Quoted by Roger Blackley, *Goldie*, 1997, p.190, from James Cowan, *New Zealand Magazine*, March – April 1941, pp.8–12.
11. 'The Royal Academy Banquet', *The Times* (London), 2 May 1904, p.4.
12. Harris purchased *The Wishing Well* in 1901. 'Notes on pictures [with prices] painted by G D Leslie by himself', vellum-bound volume, Tate Archive, ref: TGA9613/5/2/1; 'Personal notes from London', *Auckland Star*, 28 April 1926, p.10.
13. Alexander Trapeznik, *Dunedin's Warehouse Precinct*, Dunedin, 2014, p.19.

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# A Perspective on Pacific Art in Christchurch

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Stephanie Oberg

Pacific art is one of the more internationally successful and innovative sectors of New Zealand's art industry, but Pacific artists in Ōtautahi have struggled to be a visible part of the city's cultural landscape. Due to our small population and distance from the Pacific art capital that is Auckland, our artists have often developed in relative isolation, relying on our Pasifika arts community to maintain a sense of cultural vitality, belonging and place within the city.

Intimately tied to identity and place, Pacific art flexes in and out of everyday life. For some artists, the notion of being categorised as Pacific still carries the stigma of difference and limiting expectations around what that implies. For others, it's a difference that is integral to their experience and is deeply encoded in everything they do. All Pacific artists seek meaningful context and engagement with their work, but they often

look for validation in the context of cultural institutions that predominantly serve the mainstream.

In Canterbury, this context was determined by the existence of our Pacific Arts Festival, the University of Canterbury's Macmillan Brown Pacific Artist in Residence programme, tertiary courses on Pacific art, events like the Pacific Arts Association's International Symposium (held in Christchurch in 2003), and exhibitions by Pacific curators. It was encouraged by galleries like the Salamander, which focused on developing a market for Pacific artwork, and by supporting galleries CoCA, Our City Ōtautahi, the Physics Room, Jonathan Smart Gallery and PaperGraphica and represented in collections at the University of Canterbury, the Canterbury Museum and Christchurch Art Gallery. These things all contributed to the visibility of Pacific art in Ōtautahi. But it is the people that activate these spaces and events who determine their success.



### A Pacific story

As the earthquakes shattered our buildings and performance venues, they also shook the foundations of our small arts community. One loss felt keenly has been Pacific Underground, which began as a creative vehicle for the likes of Oscar Kightley, Anton Carter, Dave Fane, Malo Luafutu (Scribe), Pos Mavaega, Dallas Tamaira, Joy Vaele and Shimpal Lelisi. As an independent theatre and music production company, Pacific Underground's role extended to events management. Managers Tanya Muagututi'a and Pos Mavaega ran a central city office in the Christchurch Arts Centre and established the city's annual Pacific Arts Festival. Forging strong relationships throughout the performing arts sector and within the Christchurch City Council, Pacific Underground became something of an institution, as did the festival. Providing a platform to develop and showcase local talent alongside more established artists, the festival's focus was on Pacific entertainment. What began as a family day with a market, local cultural groups, dance crews, singers and musicians, grew to encompass an extended program of contemporary and heritage arts, workshops, exhibitions and evening performances.

Hosted in the Arts Centre, the festival delivered inspired collaborations and magical performances. It turned Christchurch into a tour destination for Pacific musicians and became a televised feature on Tagata Pasifika. Facilitating an inter-island flow of creativity, the festival encouraged the innovative spirit and professionalism of our arts community, but more importantly provided a relevant context in which to see ourselves as part of a colourful cultural landscape.

Eventually, managing the festival impacted on Pacific Underground's other commitments and the festival celebrated its tenth and final year in February 2010. After 2011, the breakdown of the city's infrastructure, especially in the east, forced Pacific Underground to move to Auckland. In their absence, the voice of Ōtautahi's Pacific arts community was lost amidst the clamour to salvage what was left of the city's creative industry. Not long after, the University of Canterbury decided to restructure the Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies and the Pacific Artist in Residence programme was discontinued.

### Home grown

The often conservative nature of Ōtautahi's cultural and institutional landscape easily undermines the talent and cultural contribution of the Pasifika artists who regard Christchurch as home. Most reluctantly move north, but some flourish regardless. More than a decade ago Christchurch rapper Scribe's musical debut, *The Crusader*, hailed his regional pride across the nation's airwaves and we all learned to chant 'not many, if any'. Similarly, for many years poet Tusiata Avia actively maintained her profile on the international poetry circuit from the eastside depths of Aranui.

Recently, the play *Black Faggot*, written by award-winning Christchurch-born Samoan playwright Victor Rodger, was performed in his home town. A multi-faceted coming out story, *Black Faggot* makes no concessions for polite society but was proudly presented as part of the 2015 Christchurch Arts Festival. While Rodger's work plays to mainstream audiences in Auckland, Melbourne, Hawaii and Edinburgh, this was the first time in twenty years it had been commissioned in Christchurch.

Another South Pacific highlight in the 2015 Christchurch arts festival 2015 was the premier of *The White Guitar*. Produced and directed by Nina Nawalowalo and Jim Moriarty, *The White Guitar* was a family biography written by Malo Luafutu, his brother Matthias and father Fa'amoana, who performed on stage as themselves. As theatre born from the Christchurch earthquakes *The White Guitar* unveils the darker side of the Luafutus' lives, the pains of migration, the effects of family violence and the unbounded legacy and redemptive power of creative expression.

*The White Guitar* was not just a story but an emotional homecoming for both the performers and those who lived alongside the Luafutu clan. Within Pacific circles, the musical prowess of Fa'amoana (John) Luafutu and the artistic talent of the Luafutu family is legendary. Malo Luafutu, Caroline Tamati (Ladi6), Mahalia Simpson (Australian X Factor), Matthias Luafutu (actor), Tyra Hammond (Opensouls) and artist Lonnie Hutchinson are all cousins. *The White Guitar* is a Christchurch story, a Pacific story revealing the strength of family and connections which underpin the collective nature of our individual expression.

Writing has been one of the more popular creative vehicles for the Pacific community. First Draft Ōtautahi Pacific Writers group was established in 2007. A year

# ‘With the resonant awakening of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, the city’s cultural enthusiasm has been revived.’

later they published their first illustrated anthology, *Fika*, and went into intermittent hibernation until 2011 when they regrouped as Fika Writers. Providing a forum for all genres of writing, from performance poetry to blogging, Fika have become the unofficial face of Pacific writing in Canterbury. The group facilitates support for younger writers and development through workshops with established writers, such as David Fane, Albert Wendt and Tusiata Avia.

Fika’s Danielle O’Halloran and poet Alice Andersen mentor a regional workshop series for Rising Voices, an Auckland-based youth poetry movement and national slam competition, inspired by poets Grace Taylor and Jai MacDonald. A global phenomenon, slam poetry has a strong youth following, and has become a powerful medium for the voice of Pacific youth. Last year, for the first time, a Christchurch poet, Sophie Rea, won the Rising Voices Grand Slam, and young Rising Voices Moana Thompson and Damien Taylor took the top two places in the Christchurch qualifier for the NZ Poetry Slam, going on to form the Faultline Poetry Collective with Sophie Rea and Courtney Petelo-Luamanuvae.

Two young Samoan producers are making their presence felt: Sela Faletolu of No Limits Theatre, supported by her partner, Silivelio Fasi, and Daisy Lavea-Timo, of Judah Arts Productions. Both women are leading the creative management of young performers in their school and church communities. Motivated by the need she saw for young people to have a voice and creative outlet following the earthquakes, Sela created No Limits. *Speak Your Truth* premiered at the Court Theatre in 2013, the first of many productions highlighting Pasifika youth issues. Collaborating with The National Academy of Singing and Dramatic Art, the majority of No Limits actors, singers and dancers are untrained but they perform sell out shows

and evoke strong emotional responses from the audience.

In contrast, Judah Arts Productions are a collective of experienced artists and musicians, who also work with youth. A recent performance was *Brave—A Daisy Poetry Promenade* at Aranui High School, a collaborative showcase of photography, music, spoken word and performance, woven into an experience of ceremonial Samoan art forms, including gift exchange and tattoo.

Historically Christchurch galleries have been graced with work by some of the best Pacific artists the country has to offer. Audiences have long been wowed by the likes of Lonnie Hutchinson, Michel and Sheyne Tuffery, Fatu Feu’u and Andy Leleisi’uao, but currently only a handful of Pacific artists actually live and practice here and most work or exhibit in relative isolation.

Residing in Aranui, Samoan carver Raphael Stowers’s tall pou carving *Unification* commands the entrance to Wainoni Park. Aside from his studio practice, he is also a carving tutor at Crossroads Trust. Working on the periphery of the art establishment, Raphael’s creations are stylistically eclectic. Inspired by a number of different carving traditions, his works bear a life and personality of their own.

Clockwise from top left:

Daisy Lavea-Timo in promotional image for *Brave—A Daisy Poetry Promenade*

Jon Jeet *Me Myself and I*, a *Commodified Mokomokai* 2013. University of Canterbury Art Collection. Reproduced with permission

Josh Bashford *Selection 3* 2015. Woodcut on paper. Reproduced with permission, image courtesy of the artist

Fatu Feu’u *Taputapu* 1990. Lithograph. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 1991

Lonnie Hutchinson *Sista7* 2003. Black building paper. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 2003



On the other side of town, Tongan artist Kulimoe'anga Maka uses a traditional method of producing Ngatu 'uli (an elite form of tapa making). Kuli has won numerous awards and was the 2009 Macmillan Brown Artist in Residence. He is also one of thirteen artists in Pataka's 2014 exhibition *Tonga 'i Onopooni: Tonga Contemporary*, curated by Nina Tonga, now touring galleries nationwide.

Painter Teina Ellia, of Cook Island heritage, lives in Rāpaki and experiments with mixed media to explore 'the autobiographical potential and possibilities of painting'.<sup>1</sup> A Dunedin graduate, Teina participated in Dunedin School of Art Gallery's 2012 *Pasifika Cool*, curated by Graham Fletcher and Victoria Bell, and in a follow up 2013 exhibition, *Art in Law IX—Pasifika Cool Remix*, curated by Peter Stupples.

Samoan printmaker Josh Bashford lives in Little River and produces woodcuts that relate his experience of faith, family and nature. Taking guidance from artist Fatu Feu'u, he has developed a deeper relationship with his Samoan heritage. Josh exhibits locally at the Little River Gallery and also in Auckland and Samoa.

Jon Jeet, of Fijian, Māori and Indian heritage, has two aspects to his practice: one loosely based around portraiture, the other comprising interactive art-making through workshops, public drawing and pounamu carving. Jon describes his portraiture as being 'ethnocentric without bathing in sentimentality, or preaching the cultural revival movement'.<sup>2</sup> He exhibits at the Eastside Gallery and was part of *Minotaur*, a 2014 group exhibition curated by Warren Robertson.

Multimedia artist Nina Oberg Humphries, of Rarotongan heritage, participated in *Drowned World*, curated by Daniel Satele, an online exhibition launched in December 2014, accompanied by performance at the Physics Room. Her work explores 'cultural tradition and popular culture to create a visual language which represents me and hopefully others as a second generation New Zealand born Pacific Islander'.<sup>3</sup>

### Looking to the future

With the resonant awakening of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, the city's cultural enthusiasm has been revived. Although historically Pacific artists have been poorly represented by the Gallery, the reopening exhibition featuring Lonnie Hutchinson's spectacular cut-out *Sista7*, and the reappearance of Pacific works from the collection, coupled with the Gallery's new mantra 'Art makes me', indicates new energy from curators and

staff for a more open engagement with Pacific art.

There are other positive signs. The reinstatement of the Macmillan Brown Pacific Artist in Residence programme and possible teaching opportunities for Pacific art historian Dr Karen Stevenson, also bodes well for Pacific art in Ōtautahi. Fika writers plan to perform new work and publish a second anthology, *Faultline Poetry Collective*, and the reopening of CoCA, means our visual artists and curators may have another opportunity to exhibit within the four avenues.

Within the Pacific arts community itself there is a greater sense of urgency around the creation of a more cohesive vision for the future of Pacific art in Ōtautahi. This was borne out by the Christchurch Pasifika Creatives Fono in 2015. While acknowledging the need for better networking and community support across the sector, the immediate result of the Fono was a call for new Fika members and creation of a Christchurch Pasifika Creatives Facebook page to keep our fragmented arts community informed.<sup>4</sup> Every like is an affirmation.

So will 2016 be a year of 'more' for our Pacific Community? More art, poetry, music, theatre and exhibitions; more Pasifika creatives creating, engaging with social media and building relationships with mainstream institutions? Will there be more than a handful of Pasifika visual artists living in Christchurch and more people wanting to engage with Pacific art and cultural events? The future of Pacific art in Christchurch lies with our youth, and how they choose to acknowledge the voice of their ancestors. Will they feel the ongoing pull of the collective and understand the continued relevance of their Pasifika heritage? And will they find representation within our local arts framework?

**Stephanie Oberg** is an independent curator and writer of Cook Island heritage, based in Christchurch.

### Notes

1. Personal correspondence between Teina Ellia and the author, 26 November 2015.
2. Personal correspondence between Jon Jeet and the author, January 2016.
3. Tautai, 'Fresh talent, Nina Oberg Humphries', [tautai.org/freshtalent/nina-oberg-humphries](http://tautai.org/freshtalent/nina-oberg-humphries).
4. Chch Pasifika Creatives Forum, [facebook.com/chchpasifikacreativesforum](https://facebook.com/chchpasifikacreativesforum).

Opposite: Taofia Pelesasa in *Black Faggot* by Victor Rodger. Reproduced with permission. Photo: Oliver Rosser





# (IN)DECENT EXPOSURE

**Erin Harrington**

When naked bodies are displayed in art and popular culture, the question is often: to see or not to see? Film scholar Linda Williams, in her landmark work on sex in cinema, frames the tension between the erotic/sensual and the pornographic/explicit as a reciprocal relationship between concealment and revelation.<sup>1</sup> This interrelation is a rich, conceptual and liminal space in which what is taken for granted as appropriate and in good taste is exposed as something unstable and hotly contested. When it comes to works dealing with bodies and genitals in particular, the act of suppression or concealment serves to highlight our own attitudes, perhaps more than the meaning, intended or received, of the artefact itself. This interplay is evident in a work that was the target of some vocal public consternation when it appeared in one of the opening exhibitions at the new Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu in 2003: a dark, and lushly glossy Cibachrome print of queer Māori cabaret artist Mika, which first appeared as a part of artist Christine Webster's *Black Carnival* exhibition in 1995.<sup>2</sup> Mika is naked except for loosely laced boots and a tasselled brassiere, which is augmented with kitschy fake breasts. His pubic region is shaved and his long

dark hair falls across his right shoulder in a manner that could ordinarily be coded as demure, but he looks deliberately into the lens—and thus, at the viewer—in a manner that reads as powerful and defiant. The background is a rich black, and Mika is lit from the front with a strong, warm light, as if for the stage. The impact of the image is made greater by its size; at nearly two and a half metres tall, it demands attention.

Webster frames the large, playful and theatrical portraits of *Black Carnival* as expressions of the 'carnival of the 90s',<sup>3</sup> but their emphasis on the fluidity of identity and gender can also be contextualised more broadly within the emergence of a visible, defiant and celebratory queer culture. More generally, the notion of the carnivalesque also refers to modern critical appraisals of the medieval carnival: a jubilant, anarchic festival in which the usual rules and regulations are suspended. Within the bounded space of the carnival, hierarchies are turned on their heads, and laughter, excess, grotesquerie and vulgarity displace the po-faced seriousness of officialdom.

In each of these senses, the portrait of Mika disrupts normative standards of representation and expression through the relationship between what



is revealed and concealed. Normative, in this sense, is not normal or even something expressed by a majority, but rather the small, culturally sanctioned wedge of a much larger system of expression and power that favours, in Western culture, heterosexual, white, able-bodied male subjects whose genitals match their gender identity. This same system marks women's bodies, but generally not men's, as passive objects of erotic fascination. Webster's image, then, is confrontational but also flirtatiously ambiguous, as expected codes of gender, sexuality, representation and proper decorum are undermined. There is a great deal here that is exposed beyond the content of the image itself, most notably the way that the viewer must negotiate expectations of sex and gender through the dissonant juxtaposition of the normatively masculine (Mika's boots, his penis, his physical build) and the performatively feminine (the gaudy fake breasts, his long hair). It is undoubtedly a sensuous and erotic image, but one that does not align with culturally sanctioned expressions of (hetero)sexuality. Such overt representation reveals parts of the body that are usually hidden from view, but also the taken-for-granted attitudes that inform such acts of concealment and that structure culturally sanctioned modes of desire.

The interplay between the made-visible and the culturally obscured has other power, too, especially in works that reveal the sexed and reproductive female form in ways that challenge powerfully embedded assumptions about the place of women, women's work and women's bodies in a patriarchal society. While the form of the nude has a long and rich artistic tradition that helps to contextualise Webster's near-naked image of Mika, the image of the vulva is generally considered to be taboo and pornographic.

A key example is the work of Australian artist Greg Taylor, whose 2009 Adelaide exhibition *Cunts... and other conversations* featured 141 'porcelain portraits': casts of the genitals of women ranging in age from eighteen to seventy-eight. The exhibition came under heavy criticism for its allegedly pornographic content, and postcards advertising it were considered so vulgar that Australia Post banned them, warning Taylor that he was in breach of Commonwealth law. The lifelike images were even argued to be degrading to women themselves: the conservative Australian Family Association's spokeswoman Gabrielle Walsh condemned the exhibition, saying that there was no excuse for the 'c-word' to be used in public and that Taylor 'shouldn't be allowed to force these images





Opposite page:  
Sam Taylor-Johnson *Wrecked* 1996. C-type print. Reproduced with permission, image courtesy of the artist

This page:  
Tania Kovats *Virgin in a Condom* 1994. Painted and varnished resin and latex condom. Reproduced with permission, image courtesy of the artist

Christine Webster *Mika: Kai Tahu* 1994. Cibachrome photograph. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu purchased 1995. Reproduced with permission

and words upon us in public for all to view, including children. [...] It's an abuse of public space and women, in particular, would find them deeply offensive.<sup>4</sup> These negative responses stand in direct contrast to the attitudes of Taylor's models; as Taylor notes, 'all of them want one thing; for young women to be free of growing up with fear, ignorance and loathing of their bodies and sexuality'.<sup>5</sup>

This act of deliberate showing finds a cousin in English artist Jamie McCartney's similarly themed and presented work *The Great Wall of Vagina*, first exhibited in full in 2011, a nine-metre-long polyptych made up of hundreds of plaster casts of vulvas, each as individual as the face of their owner. Like Taylor, McCartney is interested in de-stigmatising women's bodies, and providing an intimate counter-narrative to the glossy, manufactured images of the designer vagina of hard-core pornography.<sup>6</sup> Each work is a statement: that the explicit visibility of these genital images—which are both representation and re-creation, given the tactility of their manufacture—are themselves an act of imposition upon public and private spaces. Whether this imposition is hostile or benevolent, or warranted or obscene, depends as much on the viewers themselves as the artistic context

of their display, although the smooth, impersonal whiteness of both porcelain and plaster undoubtedly serves to render even these large works less potentially confrontational than they could have been.

These issues are certainly not new, for controversy surrounding Taylor's work echoes the criticism levelled at American artist Judy Chicago's iconic and monumental 1979 installation *The Dinner Party*, which featured thirty-nine beautifully presented ceramic vulval sculptures placed at ornate settings around a large triangular table. The thirty-nine 'guests', accompanied by 999 tiles representing 'women of achievement', are dedicated to historical and mythical female figures, ranging from Celtic warrior queen Boadicea, to American poet Emily Dickinson, to the remarkable German abbess St Hildegarde of Bingen, who worked across fields as diverse as music, medicine and theology.<sup>7</sup> The work utilises forms of arts and crafts traditionally associated with women and domesticity, and that are thus considered less worthy than other forms of artistic expression due to their quotidian, feminine and often quite practical nature. It aims to counter the often invisible place of women in historical accounts by giving them a seat at the table and undermining phallogocentric, patriarchal narratives

of power and influence. Here, a distinct connection is drawn between the profoundly troubling elision of women and their work within records of history and culture, and the ways that women's bodies and sexualities have been likewise disavowed and hidden from view.

The response to this work, too, was vitriolic. Despite the undeniable earnestness of the exhibition, the *New York Times* review described it as offensive and exploitative, having 'an insistence and vulgarity more appropriate, perhaps, to an advertising campaign than to a work of art'.<sup>8</sup> When the piece was initially gifted to the University of the District of Columbia in 1990, it was described as 'ceramic 3-D pornography' by Californian Republican representative, evangelist Pat Robertson, who accused Chicago of blasphemy.<sup>9</sup> Republican congressmen threatened to cut funding to the National Endowment for the Arts, which had initially funded the work's creation, using the indignation over the work as fuel for a broader attack on federal arts funding.

Of course, these debates surrounding the obligations, tacit or otherwise, that accompany public funding are familiar in our own country, such as in the notorious response to one of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa's opening exhibitions in 1998. The touring exhibition of contemporary British art *Pictura Britannica* is best remembered for Tania Kovat's diminutive sculpture *Virgin in a Condom* (1994) and Sam Taylor-Johnson's *Wrecked* (1996), which presents a photographic re-working of Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper* as a boozy party hosted by a female stripper. Each piece plays with the relationship between what is exposed and what is obscured while dancing between the sacred and the profane, and both provoked sustained outcry and protests (and counter-protests) from both individuals and lobby groups. These issues and conflicting ideological positions raised lingering questions about what the role of Te Papa should be, while also highlighting how murky the multiple possible interpretations of their slogan—'our place'—could be.

Despite the celebration of women's bodies and subjective experiences in both Taylor and McCartney's works, and in Chicago's piece the deliberate exposure of women's obscured achievements, it is telling that the inclusion of images of female genitalia, be they lifelike or expressionistic, led and continues to lead many of the works' detractors to label them as innately exploitative, glib or pornographic. Here, the designation of work as pornography means far more than that which is explicit; instead, the implication is that women's bodies are being simultaneously victimised and displayed in a manner that inherently invites or provokes sexual arousal. (The question of who is being aroused, why, and whether or not they wanted to be turned on in the first place, is rarely touched upon.) Of course, freedom of expression does not come with freedom from the consequences of that expression, yet the barely veiled implication here is that while women may be shown and celebrated—and in the case of Chicago's work, that's a pretty strong may—it is only if there is a consequent disavowal of the intimacies of female sexuality and biology. It is deeply troubling that such an overt display of women's bodies and positive sexual and cultural embodiment is deemed not only inappropriate, but actually bad for women themselves, even in the face of the participants' protestations to the contrary.<sup>10</sup>

In the case of each of these works, the general accusation that something exposed or explicit leaves little to the imagination, while technically accurate, is really quite misleading. Consider the reaction to the Classification Office's interim restriction order in 2015 that briefly removed Ted Dawe's award-winning young adult novel *Into the River* from book stores and libraries because of concerns over depictions of teen sex and drug use. When the (small) offending portions of the book were stripped of their narrative and thematic context, excerpted online to be scrutinised word by word by outraged bloggers, and picked apart with breathless glee by radio hosts, we learned less about the work itself and more about the work of the imagination of publics and individuals

alike. In particular, we are reminded of the tendency of one's own set of values, beliefs, desires and fears, whatever they may be, to expand, gas-like, into the offered vacuum.

It is within the imagination and in that thrumming, dissonant space between artefact or practice and the individual (and the community and the civic or social institution) that our understandings about what is and is not acceptable are truly teased out. This is a demarcation that is porous, fragile and hotly contested. The records of arguments around obscenity, display and censorship from years past are remarkable cultural documents, and our own debates and sites of cultural struggle over content and moral authority will form rich material for the curious in the future. In our efforts to obscure or reveal the art and culture around us, we are also exposing ourselves.

**Erin Harrington** has a PhD in cultural studies and works as a lecturer in English at the University of Canterbury, where she teaches cultural and critical theory. She is completing a book for Ashgate Publishing (UK) about women in horror narratives, and her research and teaching covers popular, visual and digital cultures.

#### Notes

1. Linda Williams, *Screening Sex*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2008.
2. Interestingly, no such complaints seem to have been received regarding the sometimes larger-than-life nudity in the Gallery's enormously popular 2010–11 exhibition of sculptures by Ron Mueck. This suggests that it is not just the representation of the naked human form that is of concern, but rather the intersecting issues of ethnicity, sexuality and performativity that Webster's work engages with, let alone the differences in medium.
3. Jenny Harper, 'Art is not above the law', *Junctures: The Journal for Thematic Dialogue*, no.14, 2011 ([junctures.org/junctures/index.php/junctures/article/view/211/281](http://junctures.org/junctures/index.php/junctures/article/view/211/281)).
4. David Nankervis, 'Genital posters "degrade women"', *Sunday Mail* (Southern Australia), 28 February 2009 ([adelaidenow.com.au/news/fringe-display-uproar/story-e6freo8c-111118996889](http://adelaidenow.com.au/news/fringe-display-uproar/story-e6freo8c-111118996889)).
5. 'New Greg Taylor exhibition: Cunts and Other Conversations', *Cunts the Movie*, 12 February 2009 ([cuntsthemovie.com/2009/02/new-greg-taylor-exhibition-cunts-and-other-conversations](http://cuntsthemovie.com/2009/02/new-greg-taylor-exhibition-cunts-and-other-conversations)).
6. Beyond presenting information about the work itself, the exhibition's website offers an account of some of the castings from a medical consultant in sexual health, who discusses the castings of pregnant women, transgender folk, women who have had labiaplasties, identical twin sisters and women whose vulvas have been affected by diseases such as cancer. See [greatwallofvagina.co.uk/education](http://greatwallofvagina.co.uk/education).
7. A number of alternative spellings are used for Boadicea; in the main text we use the spelling adopted by Chicago in *The Dinner Party*.
8. Hilton Kramer, 'Art: Judy Chicago's Dinner Party comes to Brooklyn Museum: Review', *New York Times*, 17 October 1980, C1.
9. Gail Levin, 'Art meets politics: How Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party* came to Brooklyn.' *Dissent* 54, no.2, 2007, p.91.
10. In comparison, in 2015 the breakfast hosts of commercial radio station *The Edge*, during exit interviews for the reality television show *The Bachelor*, made a point of asking the obviously reluctant female ex-contestants for their 'cucumber number', that is, the number of inches of a cucumber they could deep throat in an act mimicking fellatio. After a complaint, the Broadcasting Standards Authority ruled that the pieces counted as light-hearted banter, and that this sort of content was what audiences expected of the hosts.

## Exquisite Treasure Revealed

Canterbury Museum holds two albums compiled by Diamond Harbour artist Margaret Stoddart. The older of the two, containing images featured in this *Bulletin*, and itself currently exhibited in the Gallery, covers the period 1886–96. The album is handsomely bound in maroon, and stamped M.O.S. in gold. It contains a sort of travelogue by way of black and white photographs set amongst decorative painting, mostly of native flora, with some locality and date information. It records her visits to the Chatham Islands, various places around Canterbury and the Southern Alps, and abroad in Tasmania and Victoria, Australia. I wish we could tell you more about how and when the album came to the Museum; the report recommending its formal accessioning in preparation for the loan to the Gallery simply notes that it has ‘unknown provenance’.

As a botanist by training (and at heart), I find the plant portraits are both pleasing in composition and botanically accurate enough to allow identification. *Crossing the Hooker* is embellished with two heads of the large mountain daisy *Celmisia semicordata*. Over the page, a photograph of a large clump of Mount Cook lilies (actually a buttercup—*Ranunculus lyallii*) lies over an exquisitely painted scape of its flowers which seems to leap from the page.

Museums and galleries care for a myriad of hidden treasures behind those on public display. It’s great that the reopening of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu can also shed light on some of Canterbury Museum’s unseen taonga.

**Anthony Wright**

*Director, Canterbury Museum*

*Credits written by Julie King,  
art historian and author of Flowers  
into Landscape: Margaret Stoddart*



### Camping at Akaroa 1893

Walking parties were popular in Margaret's social circle, and the Port Hills and Banks Peninsula were favourite destinations. One clipping in her sister Mary's album describes an excursion to Akaroa and back, which was completed in four days. Taking the launch to Diamond Harbour, the party walked to Purau, along the Port Levy road and on to Little River, with an overnight stay at the Hill Top, before making their descent into the harbour. Margaret can be identified in the photograph, wearing a white blouse, and seated at the centre of the group. Her lively sketches illustrate the excursion.

The prisoners' huts on Orea flat, overlooking Waitangi Bay, Chatham Islands, 1886 (above) with the Lament of Te Kooti, translated by H. Parata at Ōtaki, January 1893

On 19 April 1886, Margaret travelled to the Chatham Islands, where she stayed for over a year painting the landscape and indigenous flora. This drawing in her album depicts the huts on Orea flat overlooking Waitangi Bay, where the Māori leader and prophet Te Kooti had suffered unjust imprisonment and exile. In 1893, Margaret added a sheet inscribed with verses from the *Lament of Te Kooti* translated by H. Parata. These were framed within a painted border in the hammerhead shark design that could be seen on the kowhaiwhai panels of Rangiatea, the great Māori church built at Ōtaki.





Mt. Torlesse..August. 1892.



### Mt Torlesse 1892

In August 1892, Margaret joined a climbing expedition to Mount Torlesse. These photographs, which were taken with a hand-held quarter-plate camera, record the arduous ascent. The party spent seven hours travelling across snow and the frozen and slippery shingle to the steepest slopes, where they were roped together, and reached the summit by cutting steps into the ice. On 1 September, the *Canterbury Times* commented that 'Christchurch ladies are now adding the invigorating pastime of mountaineering to their other athletic pursuits ... and, are specially to be commended for the plucky way in which they took to it.'

### Mount Cook Lilies

On this page, Margaret placed a photograph of Mount Cook lilies, which is combined in a highly original way with her painting of the plant, and a background of snow-capped mountains. The flowers are captured in the clear light, and the delicate white petals shine from the page. When Margaret was a young woman, she completed numerous paintings of New Zealand's native flora. Her personal album, which was made for the perusal of her family and friends at home, provides a fascinating glimpse of the artist's adventurous travels, and an insight into her youthful aspirations.







### Crossing the Hooker

These photographs come from the attempted ascent of Mount Cook, made in November 1893 by celebrated mountaineers Marmaduke Dixon, George Mannering and Tom Fyfe. This was the first expedition to use skis as a means of combatting the snow-covered crevasses. The skis had been ingeniously constructed from the blades of a harvester by Dixon, the brother of Rosa Dixon (later Spencer Bower), and a close companion of Margaret around this time. He is standing in the foreground of the photograph in the centre, which is crowned with a painting of the mountain daisy, a plant that flowers in spring and early summer.

*Nature's Artist, an exhibition of the watercolours of Margaret Stoddart, runs until 8 May 2016 at Christchurch Art Gallery. Margaret Stoddart's album is on display as part of this exhibition.*



# Silent Patterns

When we asked Tony de Lautour to produce a new work for the Bunker—the name Gallery staff give to the small, square elevator building at the front of the forecourt on Montreal Street—he proposed a paint scheme inspired by Dazzle camouflage. Associated with the geometric near-abstract of the vorticist movement, Dazzle was developed by British and American artists during the First World War to disguise shipping. It was a monumental form of camouflage that aimed not to hide the ship but to break up its mass visually and confuse enemies about its speed and direction. In a time before radar and sonar were developed, Dazzle was designed to disorientate German U-boat commanders looking through their periscopes, and protect the merchant fleets. Senior curator Lara Strongman spoke with Tony de Lautour in late January 2016.

**Lara Strongman:** We call the building the Bunker. Did you conceive the project in relation to the name?

**Tony de Lautour:** As soon as I knew it was a project for the Bunker, I started thinking about something camo or military. I've made works with camouflage in them before, and I've looked at Dazzle at different times, mainly through Edward Wadsworth's vorticist prints. With this project, the idea is to disguise or break up the surface shape of the building. With Dazzle camouflage, the object's still there, but you're confused about where it is in relation to you, and in relation to horizon lines. The point wasn't to hide the object, but to break it up into facets. Imagine looking through a submarine periscope—you're not quite sure what it is that you're seeing, what you need to zero in on, to target.

**LS:** What you've effectively done is make the Bunker building look like the conning tower of a massive underground submarine, or the bridge of a battleship.

**TdL:** Something that's just resurfaced, but is locked in the land.

**LS:** How does this idea relate to other recent works of yours?

**TdL:** I'm using abstract shapes or forms based on the environment around the Bunker. There are curves that echo the curves in the Gallery walls, and I've used some of the surrounding colours of buildings; it's similar to what I've been doing in paintings recently. It's abstract, but maybe based on architecture or plans or zoning maps. There's a foot

in abstraction, and a foot in a representational base.

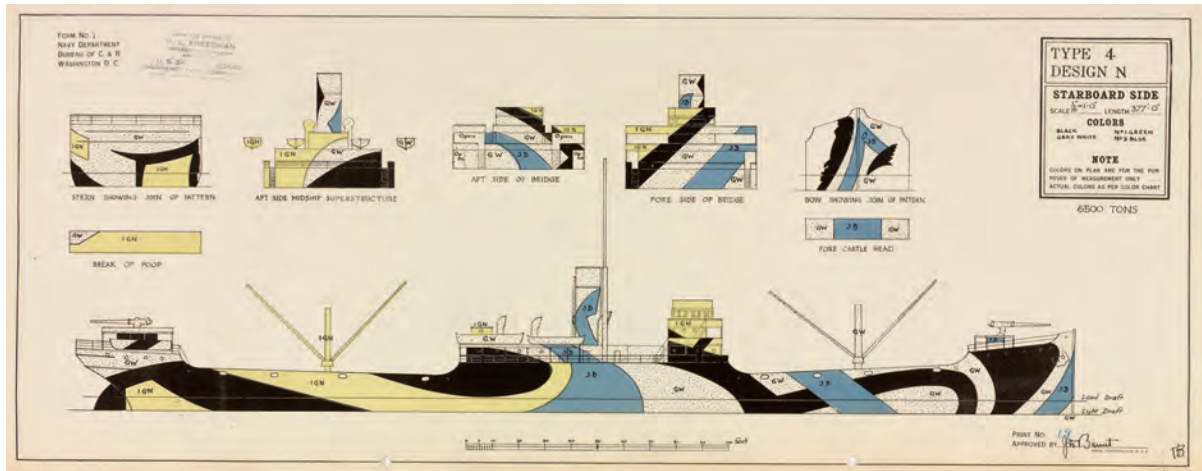
**LS:** There's always been abstraction in your work, but it was quieter than the figuration: hiding there in plain sight. The abstract elements have made themselves more evident over the past few years. A couple of years ago you described abstraction as an escape. What did you mean by that?

**TdL:** After the earthquakes I found that figurative work seemed a little... facile. I just wanted to deal with shapes. Shapes seemed more real, more like objects. Also, it was a way of dealing with things obliquely. I didn't want to illustrate the earthquakes; I was making work in that context. I made the *Tower* paintings—which funnily enough I started before the earthquakes, but continued afterwards—wobbly tower block things. They reference structures and precariousness.

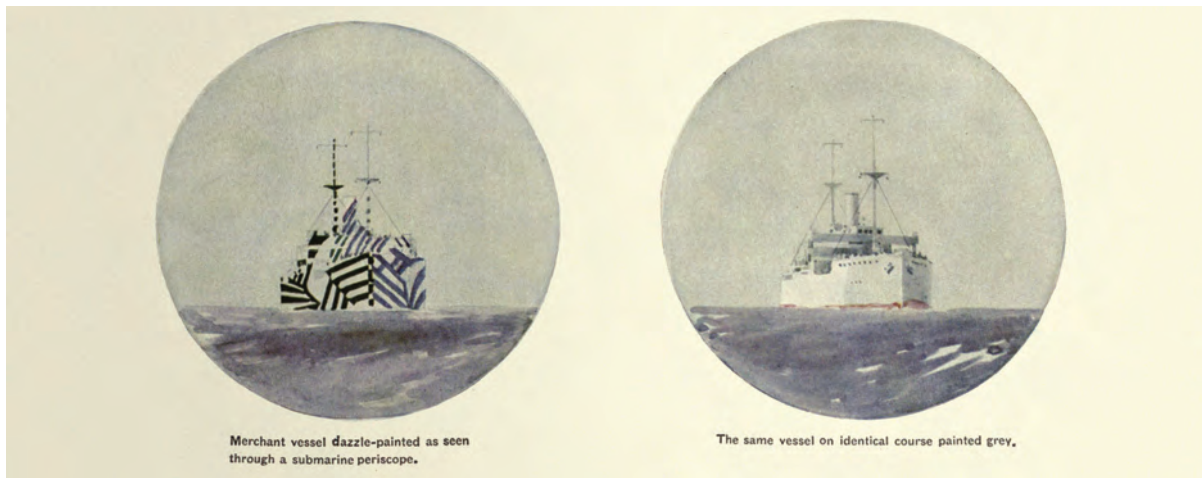
**LS:** You look at Dazzle camo, and with its curves and straight lines, there's a way to see it like a detail from a monumental text, an unreadable fragment of gigantic words...

**TdL:** Like a close up of some sort of typography. They look like they're sections of something that's much larger, and maybe that's the idea: they're a little section in a larger environment which makes up the bigger picture. They connect to the elements in the same way that a piece of camouflage in earth colours integrates fully with the land. Something painted with Dazzle integrates with its environment, but the object is still there.

**LS:** Is this the biggest painting you've ever made?



Maurice L. Freedman Dazzle camouflage, Type 4 Design N. Collection of the Fleet Library at RISD. Reproduced with permission



Norman Wilkinson EB1922 Camouflage. *Encyclopædia Britannica*, v.30, 1922, pp.540-1. Licensed under Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons

**TdL:** Yeah, it will be. The second biggest would be the bus at Smash Palace, or the long canvas that the Gallery owns. This is an interesting project though. I've drawn it up on a small scale; it'll be interesting to see how it works larger.

**LS:** What are the considerations for making a big painting, as opposed to a small one?

**TdL:** It's about viewing distances. If it's a small painting you're seeing the whole thing at once. With this project, you can't ever see it in its entirety. There's three walls but you're only going to be able to see two at once, or one wall straight

on; but you will be able to see it from quite a distance. When you get closer to it your sense of the scale will change. But as we've been working on this project, the Bunker itself seems to have been getting smaller and smaller. I had an idea of the pattern being more intricate, but in the end I made it bolder. Whether or not it works is the thing. We'll know when it's up.

You can read an extended version of this interview at [christchurchartgallery.org.nz/bulletin/183/silent-patterns](http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/bulletin/183/silent-patterns).

# Pagework no.29

For each issue of the *Bulletin*, we commission an artist to produce a pagework. This quarter's offering is the result of two individual commissions, the words contributed by a Ngāi Tahu writer and the design by a Ngāi Tahu artist. In July of last year—when the Gallery was still closed for repairs following the earthquakes of 2010 and 2011—we asked Hinemoana Baker to write a poem which could be read when the Gallery reopened. We showed her around the building site, a brutal environment full of concrete dust and machine noise and hi-vis vests; she visited the basement where the 140 gigantic base isolators on which the Gallery would sit when it was cut loose from its moorings were being positioned, and she climbed up to the roof to look out over the broken city. We asked her to consider the history of the land on which the Gallery stood. *If I had to sing* was the result.

The Gallery's Māori name—Te Puna o Waiwhetu—was given to it by Dr Te Maire Tau of Ngāi Tahu in 2003 when the building opened for the first time. It translates as 'the spring of star-reflecting waters', and refers in part to the artesian spring that rises under the building and flows into the Ōtākaro/Avon river nearby, at the Worcester Street bridge. Baker mentions the connection between the Gallery and the river in her poem, and so it's fitting that Neil Pardington, commissioned to respond typographically to *If I had to sing*, used the bespoke typeface that he's developed for texts set in stone along the Ōtākaro/Avon Literary Trail. You can see a pepeha designed by Pardington in a path at the newly opened Margaret Mahy Family Playground, by the river at Manchester Street.

When Pardington was developing the typeface, he drew on a variety of sources, both contemporary and historic. He looked at the use of written language within Ngāi Tahu culture, including maps, whakapapa, legal documents, Treaty signatures, rock art, the naming of whare (houses), and text within carving and weaving traditions. He also looked at

the traditions of whakairo (carving), raranga (weaving) and tukutuku (lattice-work panels), and made a decision to use an approach to typography that sat closer to the geometric forms of weaving than a curvilinear, kowhaiwhai-inspired design. As he moved around the city, he noticed the Arts and Crafts and neoclassical lettering carved in stone on our surviving historical buildings such as Canterbury Museum and the Edmond's Telephone Cabinet (surely one of the grandest phone boxes ever constructed!). Pardington's hand-drawn typeface for the river texts touches all these histories, yet is resolutely contemporary—lettering designed for this time, and of this place.

Christchurch, like many cities around the world, is built on a swamp. The devastation in the city has been brought about by the underground water that forced its way to the surface during the earthquakes, causing the ground to settle at different rates in different places. As Christchurch people settle back into post-earthquake life, the rebuild gives us a chance to reimagine the future of the city. But it also gives us an opportunity to renew the traditions of our past—to bring them back into view, and remake them in a new light. Hinemoana Baker's poem asks us to consider the relationship between the new flame and the old, between the spring and the river.

**Lara Strongman**

*Senior curator*

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

Hinemoana Baker *If I had to sing* 2015. Designed and typeset in Raranga Slab by Neil Pardington

# IF I HAD

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT TO CALL THIS REBIRTH  
AND YET I'M HERE TO NAME IT  
TO FEED THE NEW FLAME

WITH WOOD FROM THE OLD.  
LANGUAGE IS A FLUTE, A LILY  
A CHAIR OVERBALANCING;

A CHURCH WE TEETER  
ON THE THRESHOLD OF.  
THERE ARE PLACES WHERE

THEY HARVEST WATER FROM THE AIR -  
DRINK FOG FROM A GLASS THEN OVERNIGHT  
HANG THE RAG BACK ON THE BAYONET.

DOES A THING WHICH IS REBORN  
NEED TO HAVE DIED?  
ALL THOSE CITIES STILL LIVE

# TO SING

IN MY MIRRORS, THEY RISE  
AND FALL AGAIN WITH THE SUN'S  
ROUNDS, THE WAY THE PLANET

CARVES ITS OWN SEISMIC  
TRENCH IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM.  
THE SPRING CHARGES

AND RECHARGES ITS RIVER SYSTEM  
WHILE ON THE COLUMNS OF OUR LIVES  
PRESS UNIMAGINABLE STRESSES.

HOLD ME UP NOW, AS I DO YOU.  
SING, AND STEADY ME UNDER  
YOUR STRONG, SURE FEET.

HINEMOANA BAKER

Commissioned by Christchurch Art Gallery to mark their re-opening in December 2015



Bruce Russell making noise.  
Photo: Marine Aubert



# Unsung

Curator Peter Vangioni talks with Malcolm Riddoch, founder of the Auricle Sonic Arts Gallery in New Regent Street, and artist Bruce Russell.

**Peter Vangioni:** Sound artist or sonic artist? Is there a distinction? Do you get precious about the term ‘sound art’?

**Malcolm Riddoch:** When we were setting up the Cantabrian Society of Sonic Artists and doing the scoping study for the Auricle, we chose the term ‘sonic art’ because it has a much wider breadth and includes performance and installation. Sound art we reserve for contemporary sound art practice, art gallery installations and that kind of thing. But sonic art includes free jazz people, the noise artists, the installation artists and everyone else in between.

**Bruce Russell:** I personally favour calling myself an artist who works with sound, because people often think of sound artists as people who make sonic sculptures. They might think I work solely with recordings, as in electric acoustic composition or whatever, so I just say I’m an artist—if I have to qualify it I say I work in sound, I don’t do pictures.

**MR:** And that’s the definition we came up with: a sonic artist is someone who works creatively with sound, open-ended and inclusive. I think our exclusivity is that we provide a venue for people who don’t have other venues for working creatively with sound; so no contemporary music bands and that kind of thing, or jazz.

**PV:** Do you feel there’s support for sound art or sonic art from traditional art galleries, or do they tend to just deal with the visual?

**BR:** I think they’re gradually getting up to the mark, but we’re still waiting for a landmark. Christchurch Art Gallery had the thing in the car park stairwell for a while, whatever that was called.

**PV:** It’s been so long... *Subsonic*.<sup>1</sup>

**BR:** That represented progress, and it followed on from the fact that you managed to include me in the *Coming Home in the Dark* show in 2005. I believe, at the time, you said it was the first time purely sonic works had been exhibited in the Gallery. Around that time I was working with the Physics Room and they had a show curated by Matthew Leonard, who was working for Radio New Zealand at the time, and that was the first exclusively audio installation of sound works that I was aware of.<sup>2</sup>

**PV:** I quite liked the location of *Subsonic*, but it was interesting that it was outside the actual Gallery itself...

**BR:** At a safe distance.

**PV:** Does that reflect sonic art’s status as an outsider type of art, in relation to traditional art galleries?

**MR:** Internationally, the genre has matured in the last ten years. Sonic art is something people understand and accept like the visual arts. There are lots of

contemporary art galleries around the country that run sound art installations. When we started the Auricle we were talking to Melanie Oliver [director of the Physics Room] because they do contemporary sound art installations even though they have a visual arts focus. We deliberately differentiated ourselves because we didn't want to step on the Physics Room's toes. We did this monthly Canterbury Art sound art installation with an emphasis on the sonic aspects, making sound within the actual gallery space with a conceptual focus. It's not just a jukebox or music. It's much more of a contemporary art aesthetic but sonically focused, to distinguish between what we do and the Physics Room, because there is a lot of overlap.

**PV:** And the audiences that go to the Physics Room and the Auricle would be much more accepting of that type of art. When we played your piece in *Coming Home in the Dark*, Bruce, it horrified some people. I remember one comment in particular: 'Marginal at best.'

**BR:** Excellent. I think that's an accurate description. I'm delighted to report that our curatorial process here at the Auricle includes discriminating against works that rely too heavily on a visual component, so take that!

**PV:** Malcolm, you're from Perth and you've performed with the likes of Jeremy Hicks there.<sup>3</sup> What's the sonic art scene like over in Australia?

**MR:** There's Western Australia and then there's the rest. You've got Liquid Architecture in the east, which is a wonderful festival and very much more sound art orientated. Sydney Biennale a couple of years ago had a sonic art component. Australia's a much bigger market, especially on the east coast. The west coast is a lot more isolated; basically you've just got Perth, which is two million people, so it's like half the New Zealand population. A lot of sonic art in Western Australia came out of what we were doing at the Western Australia Academy of Performing Arts, pushing our students

into community collaborations. The community itself was generating its own artworks. Perth's known for producing artists that make do with very little and do a lot because they are so isolated physically.

**PV:** Would that resonate in Christchurch?

**MR:** No, here I find that you've got the four cities and the two islands and they all interlink—we're part of a network which is really amazing, really quite vibrant.

**PV:** Why was the Auricle formed?

**BR:** Seemed like a good idea at the time!

**MR:** Actually it came out of Borderline Ballroom [the managing committee of the Cantabrian Society of Sonic Artists] who've been working since 2007 on providing venues for experimental audio performances, and with Christchurch City Council, Creative New Zealand earthquake recovery funding and the post-earthquake impetus it just came together.

**BR:** There was an opportunity as well as a need, and because there was an established loose alliance of people collaborating on organising events it just grew out of that community. When funding was identified it was a chance to do something, and because by its very nature sound work is non-corporeal it's quite appropriate for a city like Christchurch—which is not that corporeal lately.

**MR:** But the venue gives you a real concrete space within which sonic art exists.

**PV:** Kind of grounds it somehow?

**MR:** Absolutely.

**BR:** I think the Audacious Festival of Sonic Arts [Christchurch, 23–6 October 2015] would never have happened without the Auricle as a base and a network to build on.

**MR:** It's a centre for that community of practice, and people have fed off it, which is cool.

**PV:** So how did you both come to be artists that use sound?

**BR:** Can't draw.



Top: Justyna Burzynska (UK) opening the group exhibition she curated, *London: A Sonic Fragment*, in February 2015. Photo: Marine Aubert  
Bottom: The Auricle Wine & Sound Bar. Photo: Marine Aubert

**PV:** Did you start playing in a rock band in Dunedin, Bruce, and go, ‘Aw, actually fuck it, I can’t’?

**BR:** I knew before I started playing in a rock band in Dunedin that I couldn’t play, but I didn’t let that stop me because I felt that what’s important in any cultural practice is good ideas, and how you realise those ideas is secondary in a way. I distinctly remember, before I’d even picked up a guitar for the first time, that was very much my position. I was interested in experimental literature; I was really interested in rock music; I had some interest in contemporary art. This was in Dunedin in the early 80s, so there wasn’t a lot of it happening, and I didn’t know very much about it. I guess I had a clever and enquiring mind, but the key was the environment I was in: there was a vibrant scene of underground post-punk garage music happening, and I worked my way through that and came out the other side.

**PV:** And finding two musicians that would put up with you...<sup>4</sup>

**BR:** That obviously gave me a platform and an opportunity to develop what I was doing in a way that I would never have on my own, so, yeah, that was important for me.

**PV:** A lot of traditional musicians would have found your harsh unrelenting feedback sound quite hard to take.

**BR:** A lot of them did.

**PV:** How about you, Malcolm?

**MR:** I think you’re a wonderful musician, actually, Bruce. You’ve got a wonderful touch and a great aesthetic sensibility and wonderful improvisational approach.

**BR:** I might admit to being an instrumentalist, but perhaps not a musician.

**PV:** Got to draw a line in the sand somewhere.

**BR:** It’s not an honourable occupation, musician.

**MR:** My main music experience as a child was listening

to my Dad’s shortwave radio, just going through all the frequencies, all the different sorts of noise. Fascinating. I hated the bloody recorder, and I’ve got no visual genes in my body, no visual sensibility—don’t really want one, I just loved noise. There was one seminal point where a bogan mate of mine was trying to show me and my brother how to play ‘All Along the Watchtower’ Hendrix-style. I got a guitar and my brother got drums and there’s this point where we went ‘What’s the point?’, and started playing chromatic—not thinking about it—noise. Improv is always the only thing that makes sense. I hate notation—you gotta think ahead and you’re always behind—whereas with improv you just fall into it. It’s exciting and spontaneous.

**PV:** When you say recorder you mean the little...?

**MR:** We played them at primary school.

**BR:** ‘Greensleeves’.

**MR:** The Mr Whippy tune.

**BR:** Aka the Mr Whippy tune. I had piano lessons as a child, so I knew what notation was, and having to practice playing pieces—I knew that wasn’t something that agreed with me.

**PV:** So were you hammering out traditional songs?

**BR:** I think ‘The Sound of Silence’ by Simon and Garfunkel was a piece that I mastered at one point. I might have played a little bit of Beatles—don’t really remember.

**PV:** Anything that you want to add to wind it up?

**BR:** All joking aside, it’s great being able to work alongside publicly funded institutions like Christchurch Art Gallery. But I think as a group we also needed to have some way to organise ourselves, and the Auricle and the Cantabrian Society of Sonic Artists has helped with that. It’s drawn people in; there are people involved who wouldn’t have been if this wasn’t happening, and this is a unique product of unique circumstances in Christchurch.

**PV:** It’s interesting how the dynamics have changed,

and I'd like to see the Gallery connecting with the Auricle and their programme.

**BR:** My first involvement with the Gallery was back at the old Robert McDougall [the city's first public art gallery] when I was organising events there that were tolerated as part of the public programme because they put bums on seats, but I couldn't get any real support for doing sound art. I was lucky I was allowed to do it. I talked to the then public programmes manager about getting some sort of funding to enable us to do more, but there was never any question of that, they were never interested.

**PV:** What period was this?

**BR:** This was about 1997–8.

**PV:** Matt De Gennaro and Alastair Galbraith's *Wire Music*?<sup>5</sup>

**BR:** Around that time, but I organised a number of things. Robert Leonard put Otomo Yoshihide in there around the same time.<sup>6</sup>

**PV:** Which was amazing.

**BR:** It was amazing it didn't bring down the skylight in the McDougall's centre court!

**PV:** Rattling.

**BR:** There was a snowfall of paint.

**PV:** And dust.

**BR:** So that was the start, but after that I decamped to the Physics Room. Sonically, the McDougall was great for shows, it was fantastic, but at that stage the gallery team weren't really willing to consider what I was doing that seriously, whereas the Physics Room people were a lot more welcoming, so my focus shifted there for a number of years.

**PV:** Well, I'm looking forward to working alongside the Auricle in the future to get some sonic art in our exhibition programme.

#### Notes

1. *Subsonic: Sound art in the bunker* (11 June 2010 – 22 February 2011) was a programme of sound art at Christchurch Art Gallery curated by Peter Vangioni and featuring work by Adam Willetts, Nathan Thompson, Bekah Carran, Arran Poole, Rob Hood, Richard Neave, Campbell Kneale, Brian Crook, Paul Sutherland, Bruce Russell and Greg Malcolm, Alastair Galbraith and Matt De Gennaro, Clint Watkins, Simon Kong, Rosy Parlane, Julian Dashper, John Nixon and Matt Hinkley, Michael Morley, Marco Fusinato, Torlesse Supergroup and Peter Stapleton.
2. *Audible: New Frontiers* (19 August – 13 September 2003) featured audio artists Philharmonic, Richard Francis, John McCallum, Rachel Shearer, Radioqualia and Wendyhouse. Curated by Sally McIntyre and developed by the Physics Room and Radio New Zealand's *Revolutions Per Minute*, hosted by Matthew Leonard.
3. Sonic artist Jeremy Hicks is a freelance producer, sound designer and composer working in Western Australia.
4. Bruce Russell is a member of The Dead C with Michael Morley and Robbie Yeats, and A Handful of Dust with Alastair Galbraith and Peter Stapleton.
5. Matt De Gennaro and Alastair Galbraith's *Wire Music* tour (6–31 July 1999) included seven wire performances in New Zealand gallery and museum spaces. 'The sound of the wires is the sound of the building. [...] We found that each of the art galleries in New Zealand sounded different. [...] We were playing with huge beautiful architectural musical instruments. Two of the galleries were domed church-like square courts with rooms through arches on all four sides—the Robert McDougall Art Gallery in Christchurch and the Sarjeant Gallery in Wanganui. [...] There is some quite magical feeling of communion turning the lights off and making the building sing.' Alastair Galbraith, quote from an interview conducted by Bill Meyer, 'Wired for sound: The music of Matt De Gennaro and Alastair Galbraith', April 2000, *Perfect Sound Forever* online music magazine ([furious.com/perfect/galbraith](http://furious.com/perfect/galbraith)).
6. Otomo Yoshihide played a live set in the centre court of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery on 9 March 2000. 'An unexpected highlight was when, quite early on, white paint flakes began to fall from the ceiling like dandruff onto the shoulders of the audience sitting in chairs below. This sublime poetry of destruction was quite mesmerising, adding to the atmosphere of transcendental beyondness, while at the same time grounding it completely in the particularities of place. And also caused those of us who were sitting directly under glass skylights to peer up anxiously for a few seconds, until we relaxed back into the tensions the sounds were stretching around us.' Sally McIntyre, 'A conversation with Otomo Yoshihide', *LOG Illustrated*, March 2000, the Physics Room ([physicsroom.org.nz/archive/log/archive/10/otomo/](http://physicsroom.org.nz/archive/log/archive/10/otomo/)).



Peter Black Selwyn Toogood, *Levin* 1981, from the series *50 Photographs*. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu 1988

# My Favourite

*Tim J. Veling is a photographer. He is currently engaged in projects relating to the aftermath of Christchurch's devastating earthquakes. He has exhibited nationally and internationally, lectures in photography at the Ilam School of Fine Arts, and is a key contributor to Place in Time: The Christchurch Documentary Project.*

I spent much of my adolescence in hospital, confined to bed due to a chronic illness. With a 14" TV beside me, I'd travel to imaginary places via the controller of my Nintendo games console. At the time, I couldn't imagine walking to the letterbox, let alone experiencing the more exotic places of the world.

It's little wonder that when finishing high school my ambition was to study to become an animator. I wanted to reside in my imagination and create fantastic and surreal worlds to get lost in. When I entered the Ilam School of Fine Arts I was completely naïve as to what life had in store for me. As the saying goes, I learnt pretty quickly—without cajoling by lecturer Glenn Busch—that reality is sometimes much stranger than fiction. It was then that I first became aware of Peter Black's work and declared I wanted to be a photographer.

Glenn talked of driving Peter around while he photographed out of his car window. He said that he couldn't walk down the road with him and have a conversation because Peter would always be side-tracked and on the hunt for images. Glenn reckoned Peter was an obsessive breed of photographer that could transform everyday, banal things into extraordinary moments with his camera. I quickly learnt that this was no mean feat. To recognise the potential of a good photograph, to see something happening before you, and to frame and photograph it is one thing, but to articulate and sustain a personal voice within a series of photographs is quite another. Sitting in the studio at Ilam, I'd study my own proof sheets and compare them to Peter's. We were photographing similar things; why were his so much better? Then came a revelation. It was what his photographs implied, not what they depicted that carried weight. I realised the ambiguous mental space that fell just outside of view was just as important as the space rendered

between the edges of each frame—that magic mixture of content, perspective, light, timing and composition. This changed my way at looking at art forever.

The first time I saw Peter's *Selwyn Toogood, Levin*, I remember stopping in the City Gallery exhibition space and staring at Selwyn's teeth, rendered bright white and Bugs Bunny like between awkwardly pursed lips. I imagined him being caught mid-sentence asking: 'What'll it be, New Zealand? The money or the bag?' When I was a kid I'd shout 'The bag!' back at him, believing good fortune comes to those who take risks. Put in the contestants' shoes now as an adult, pragmatism would dictate I'd choose the money—no matter how meagre the figure—to pay my astronomical power bill. From Selwyn's teeth and lips, my eyes wandered the surface of the print and, after failing to adjust to the harsh light emanating through the window blinds, were drawn to the pot plants lining the top of the frame, the Formica table in the bottom right corner, the garish wallpaper. I then noticed the cash register and painted sign on the window of the door. This is a typically small town, Kiwi, dining establishment. A fish and chip shop, maybe? The angle of view is skewed just enough to imbue the image with a sense of unease.

Considering the context surrounding this photograph, I began to think about the social-political climate of New Zealand in 1981. After the Springbok rugby tour and with the country heading into steady economic decline, Muldoon's National Party would soon be narrowly elected for a third term in government. Their time in power would be cut short with Muldoon calling a snap election. Many who care to remember cite this moment as the end of the 'good old days' and the birth of hardline, neo-liberal politics in New Zealand. In hindsight, perhaps what Selwyn was really uttering was a warning of things to come—the money or the bag?

# Postcard From...

## MARTYN REYNOLDS

Vienna, Austria

I live in Vienna; what's it good for? The general humour of the place starts with Schmääh (pronounced schmee), a happily nihilistic response to problems. For a long time, people here have been thinking about meaninglessness and the indifference of reality. An American professor who taught linguistics at the University wrote a paper on the topic. One nice thought related to Marie Antoinette, who the French think of as naïve and decadent—'let them eat cake'. However, she was raised in Vienna and by most accounts was much more politically aware than her peers in Paris. When the pitchforks came the statement was not a naïve one, but a knowing resignation to the guillotine; perhaps the first historically recorded incidence of Schmääh.

Michael Haneke's film *Funny Games* is another good example. Haneke used to live up the street from me and I saw him once, dressed in black, running through the street, clutching a folded umbrella, silver hair flowing.

Not long ago I was invited to give a lecture in Hito Steyerl's class at the Art Academy in Berlin. I spoke about aggregation, how it's the process that forms planets including our earth, and Julian Dashper's stack of *Artforums* from Wystan Curnow's house.<sup>1</sup> A compression of material necessary when there's too much world. This phrase struck Hito and she used it as the title of her book published in 2014.<sup>2</sup>

In the spring I made some videos for Josef Strau. It had been a particularly bleak winter in Manhattan and he had hard-drives full of ice pics and snow vids from his iPhone. We made rhythmical montages set to soundtracks from Native American early contact movies.<sup>3</sup> As a European in NY, he said he felt like a colonial explorer. As a New Zealander, I told him, Germanic Europeans still see a Gauguin fantasy that's not available anymore to the major colonial cultures. He thought that was pretty far out.

**Martyn Reynolds** is a New Zealand artist living in Vienna. Recent projects were shown at *La Salle de Bains, Lyon; Shanaynay, Paris; Spreez, Munich; and 9800, Los Angeles*. In 2016 he will show work at *Sydney and Rogaland Kunstsenter, Stavanger*.

### Notes

1. Julian Dashper *What I Am Reading at the Moment* 1993. Chair, *Artforum* magazines. National Library Gallery of New Zealand Te Puna Matauranga o Aotearoa.
2. Nick Aikens (ed.), *Too Much World: The Films of Hito Steyerl*, Sternberg Press, 2014.
3. Josef Strau *A Turtle Dreaming (... Echoes from an Encapsulated Space Exiled Sounds of Letters Requiring Symphonic Treatment)* 24 April – 21 June 2015, Secession, Vienna.





Martyn Reynolds *Untitled, Appendix Project* 2015 at Georgi Stranski City Hospital, Pleven, Bulgaria. Photo: Martyn Reynolds



Martyn Reynolds in collaboration with Halvor Rønning, *Les Nouvelles Nouvelles Libertés, Accesorios Especiales* 2014 La Salle de Bains, Lyon, France. Photo: La Salle de Bains



The staff of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu and their families, 18 December 2015.

# Exhibition Programme

*Te Rua o Te Moko*  
Until 3 April 2016

*The Golden Age:  
20th-century Wood Engravings*  
Until 1 May 2016

*A Room of One's Own*  
Until 8 May 2016

*Nature's Artist:  
Margaret Stoddart*  
Until 8 May 2016

*Hotere*  
Until 29 May 2016

*In the Vast Emptiness*  
Until 4 June 2016

*Ata Wairere*  
Until 4 June 2016

*Pip + Pop:  
The Newest New World*  
Until 19 June 2016

*Op + Pop*  
Until 19 June 2016

*Unseen:  
The Changing Collection*  
Until 20 June 2016

*Kā Honoka*  
Until 24 July 2016

*John Gibb*  
Until 31 July 2016

*In Modern Times*  
Until 7 August 2016

*Yellow Ochre Room*  
Until 21 August 2016

*Beasts*  
Until 30 October 2016

*Treasury:  
A Generous Legacy*  
Until 27 November 2016

*Above Ground*  
Until 1 January 2017

*Silent Patterns*  
Until 30 June 2017

*Max Hailstone:  
Treaty Signatures*  
9 April to 28 August 2016

# Events

## Special Events

### Anis Mojgani Returns

19 March / 7pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / \$20; under 18s \$15 / Buy tickets at [wordchristchurch.co.nz](http://wordchristchurch.co.nz)

Anis Mojgani enthralled audiences at the 2014 WORD Christchurch Writers & Readers Festival. Now you've another chance to catch him. A two-time National Poetry Slam Champion, winner of the International World Cup Poetry Slam and TEDx speaker, Anis takes seemingly commonplace subject matter and creates 'fiercely hopeful word arias'. Presented by WORD Christchurch in partnership with the 2016 New Zealand Festival Writers Week and Golden Dawn Auckland.



Anis Mojgani on stage

### Tag!

20 March / 11am / NZI Foyer and Education Centre

A day celebrating street art, contemporary New Zealand hip hop and its New York roots. Fresh from winning silver at the 2015 Hip Hop Unite World Champs, local hip hop maestros Zion Studios will be performing and running workshops for all ages and abilities. Create your own street art inspired stencil or make LED light art. Watch the 1983 hip hop film *Wild Style*, and then take a closer look at street art and graffiti in Christchurch and New Zealand today. See [christchurchartgallery.org.nz/events](http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/events) for more details.



Zion Studios perform at Festival200 in 2014

### Launch of New Zealand Music Month

1 May / 6pm / NZI Foyer

Celebrate the success of home-grown musical talent as we launch New Zealand Music Month with live music from local musicians. See [christchurchartgallery.org.nz/events](http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/events) for more details.

### Youth Week 2016

21–29 May

Youth Week celebrates youth culture and the talents and achievements of young people. We'll be holding special events, tours, films and workshops by and for the young people of Christchurch to celebrate the vital part they play in our arts community. See [christchurchartgallery.org.nz/events](http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/events) for more details.

## Talks

### My Grandmother, Louise Henderson

2 March / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium

Born in Paris, Dame Louise Henderson's father worked with Rodin and her grandfather was a minister of arts. She came to New Zealand in 1925, attended the Canterbury School of Art and studied with French cubist artist Jean Metzinger. By the 1950s she was recognised by her peers as a leading modern painter. Join Simone McKegg, granddaughter of Henderson, for personal memories of her grandmother.



Louise Henderson *Addington Workshops* 1930. Oil on board. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, Dame Louise Henderson Collection, presented by the McKegg Family 1999

**There is Only One Direction:  
James K. Baxter and Colin McCahon**  
6 March / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium

A panel discussion on the tumultuous friendship between two of New Zealand's cultural titans. Learn how the friendship of James K. Baxter and Colin McCahon influenced their work. Speakers include poet, author and painter Gregory O'Brien, Professor Paul Millar of the University of Canterbury and 2012 Creative New Zealand Michael King Writer's Fellowship awardee Peter Simpson, who curated the 1996 exhibition *Candles in a Dark Room: James K. Baxter and Colin McCahon* for Auckland Art Gallery.

## Performance

**Court Youth Company**  
6 April / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium

The Court Youth Company is a training and performance company for young Christchurch actors. In this special performance the Company will perform original pieces they have devised in response to works in the Gallery's collection.

**Everything is Surrounded By Water**  
22 April, 8.30pm / 23 April, 2.30 and 8.30pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium

The story of how Uther sold his soul when he was seven and how he got it back, from award-winning Wellington theatre company My Accomplice. *Everything is Surrounded by Water* won Best Solo at the Wellington Fringe Festival in 2014.



Uther Dean

## Films

### The Art of Antony Gormley

8 March / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / 70 minutes

In 2009, artist Antony Gormley created the public art project *One & Other*. For 100 days, 2,400 volunteers spent an hour doing whatever they wished on the empty plinth in London's Trafalgar Square. This documentary reveals the background to this living monument and explores its origins in the sculptor's beautiful and mysterious art. Works created across more than two decades were filmed in HD for this visually sumptuous and thought-provoking documentary.

### National Gallery

13 March / 2pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / 180 minutes

Frederick Wiseman's *National Gallery* takes you on a journey to the heart of a museum inhabited by masterpieces of Western art from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century. *National Gallery* is a fascinating portrait of a place.

### Jesus Christ Superstar

26 March / 2pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / 106 minutes

Adapted from Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice's Broadway rock opera, *Jesus Christ Superstar* recounts the last days of Jesus Christ from the perspective of his betrayer Judas Iscariot.

### The Art of Exploration: William Hodges

18 May / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / 50 minutes

William Hodges accompanied Captain Cook on his second voyage to the Pacific. His vivid paintings of Tahiti, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands were the first such images widely seen in Europe. Later he travelled extensively in northern India, and once again his paintings of landscapes and monuments were a revelation for audiences at home. This film reviews his complex, beautiful art.



William Hodges *A View taken in the bay of Oaite Peha [Vaitepiha] Otaheite [Tahiti] (Tahiti Revisited) 1776*. Oil on canvas. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, Ministry of Defence Art Collection



## Families

### Cosmo

19 March / 11am / Education Centre

Hop into Christchurch Art Gallery this Easter to spend some time with Michael Parekowhai's *Cosmo McMurtry* and make your own miniature rabbit plant-holder out of upcycled materials.

### Where the Wild Things Are: School Holiday Takeover

16–30 April

Let the wild rumpus begin! These April school holidays we're taking inspiration from our *Beasts* exhibition and letting the wild things take over the Gallery. Two weeks of artful adventures with spellbinding theatre, fun workshops, terrific trails and fantastical films. See [christchurchartgallery.org.nz/events](http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/events) for more details.

### The Bookbinder

20–2 April, 7pm / 23–4 April, 1 and 7pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / Ages 8+ / \$10 / Buy tickets at [christchurchartgallery.org.nz/events](http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/events)

'They say you can get lost in a good book. But it's worse to get lost in a bad one.'

From Trick of the Light Theatre comes a story of mystery, magic and mayhem. *The Bookbinder* weaves shadowplay, paper art, puppetry and music into an original dark fairy tale in the vein of *Coraline* and *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell*. After a sell-out season at the 2015 Edinburgh Fringe, don't miss this inventive one-man performance, winner of Best Theatre and Best of the Fringe at the NZ Fringe Festival 2014 and the BDO Children's Theatre Award at Fringe World, Perth 2015.

'Spell-binding storytelling at its purest and best.' *Theatreview*, Dunedin

'A must-see gem.' (4.5 stars) *The West Australian*, Perth

'Storytelling of the highest quality, Trick of the Light have created something truly beautiful here.' (5 stars) *Three Weeks*, Edinburgh



The Bookbinder



The redesign of *Bulletin* has been generated as part of an internship project with Ilam Press at the Ilam School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury. Ten Graphic Design students researched and developed the new format under the supervision of senior lecturer Aaron Beehre. This partnership project between Christchurch Art Gallery and

the Ilam School of Fine Arts has been running since 2014 and gives students the opportunity to be involved in real-world publishing outcomes. Students in the Graphic Design programme can apply to be a part of the internship, which runs throughout the academic year and involves the design and production of four issues of *Bulletin*.

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Please see [christchurchartgallery.org.nz/support/foundation](http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/support/foundation) for a full list.

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**CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY  
TE PUNA O WAIWHETU**

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