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Te Puna o Waiwhetū
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Trading in Lies, Some Informers Build Cases For Prosecutors
By WILLIAM GLABERSON
MOMENTS
THE NEW YORK TIMES METRO

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Cover: William Wegman *Cut to Reveal* 1997. Colour Polaroid photograph. Courtesy the artist. © William Wegman

Previous spread: William Wegman *Newsworthy* 2004. Colour Polaroid photograph. Courtesy the artist. © William Wegman

Director's Foreword

BLAIR JACKSON
February 2019

Welcome to the autumn 2019 issue of *Bulletin*. It's a busy time at the Gallery, as we prepare for the opening of *William Wegman: Being Human*. Wegman is a very significant American artist and this is his first and only show in New Zealand, so we are thrilled to have such a thorough representation of his work on show here at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū. Wegman, who is famous for working with his Weimaraner dogs, was part of the late 1960s and early 1970s American conceptualist movement, and has produced a huge body of work that examines the human condition through photography and video. Wegman was also one of the earliest artists to see popular culture as a platform for expanding artistic practice and gaining critical attention (he co-produced the hugely influential 1988 re-release music video for New Order's 'Blue Monday'—at the time a record-breaking entry in New Zealand's charts).

We have a history of working alongside international artists—Ron Mueck, Bridget Riley, Martin Creed and Haines and Hinterding to name just a few. We work closely with the artists on all collaborative projects and develop excellent relationships with them all. Working with Wegman continues this legacy. It is also the first ticketed show we've offered since *Ron Mueck* in the summer of 2010–11, which safely landed between the earthquakes that changed our city forever—this exhibition therefore marks an important milestone as we continue to move our gallery and our collective goals forward.

In this issue of the magazine Hamish Win looks at the tricky subject of anthropomorphism—the attribution of human behaviour onto non-humans—within the context of Wegman's work. He finds that the artist's work is less about the depiction of dogs than about how we might expand the ways we think about our connection to non-humans, opening the way for a more open and fluid definition of the human.

Also in this issue, curator Ken Hall looks at the life and work of two supporting characters from his *Hidden Light: Early Canterbury and West Coast Photography* exhibition—Hokitika photographers John and Alexander Tait. In uncovering the story of the Scottish-born brothers and their evocative photographs, he brings more elements of our colonial history into view.

Head curator Lara Strongman talks with artist Julia Morison about the creation of the works for her new exhibition *Headcase*, the way that she deliberately imposes limits on herself, and the ten Sephiroth of the Kabbalah. And we look at the recent generous gift made to the Gallery by former head of the School of

Fine Arts at the University of Canterbury, Professor John Simpson.

We also pay tribute to Julie King, who died in December 2018. Julie was well known by many at this Gallery and throughout the art world. In her thirty years teaching at the University of Canterbury she pioneered the teaching of New Zealand art in Canterbury. She was also key in the establishment of the Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery during the early 1980s, and became a Patron in 2010. Here, she is remembered by many of her former students and colleagues.

Our pagework comes from young local photographer Mitchell Bright, and our Postcard is from our former director Jenny Harper, free-range in Riga. And our My Favourite is from Gallery visitor host supervisor Janet Abbott, who recalls an encounter with the eponymous sitter of Elizabeth Kelly's *Margaret*.

ANTHROPO MORPHISM

Hamish Win

Artist William Wegman has been photographing his Weimaraners in endless humanoid situations for more than four decades. Starting with Man Ray in the 1970s, Fay Ray in the 1980s and her subsequent offspring ever since, Wegman's most popular artistic foil has been his pet dogs. For a number of reasons, this has meant his work has occasionally been thought of as naïve or sentimental—a trivial comic enterprise not too dissimilar to Anne Geddes's notorious baby photos. Primarily, this has to do with the common assumption that anthropomorphism, the attribution of human behaviour onto other non-humans, is a taboo not worth exploring. More importantly though, it is because he works with pets, a class of animal which has, only until quite recently, been openly denigrated as a narcissistic symbol that provides solace for the presumed disenfranchisement of modern life. Take for instance Ken Coupland's damming criticism of Wegman's photographs as "potboilers that strip his dogs of their animal integrity, encouraging a sentimentality whose true impetus is to make animals scapegoats for human weakness".[1] This bears all the hallmarks of a reading of Wegman's practice that focuses solely on the way the dogs are manipulated and made to author a voice not of their own making. Such criticism is guided by the defensive idea that anthropomorphism devalues the human, that it trivialises the exceptionality of human life. It's a stance that is, up to a point, extremely valid. After all, it's a terrible idea to assume that the human is the sole arbitrator of what consciousness might be. Not to mention that we, humans, have a long history of using animals, and particularly their behaviours, as a possible validation for human social rules. Rosalind Coward's hilarious essay "The Sex Life of Stick Insects" calls attention to this failing, noting in particular how nature documentaries so often revolve around the property-owning, patriarchal consciousness of human society.[2] But it's not just this convenient mimicry of human society that anthropomorphism so easily produces. Think how often the comparison to animals, and animal behaviour, has been deployed to devalue and dehumanise other races.

As I said before, it's not just this anthropomorphic bias that so troubles the reception of Wegman's work. It is also that his anthropomorphic representations are of pets, an animal that for too long has been considered not just trivial, but regressive. Take for instance Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's infamous condemnation, that "anyone who likes cats or dogs is a fool", a declaration that turned pets into the

Opposite page: William Wegman *Red Wine* 1998. Colour Polaroid photograph. Courtesy the artist. © William Wegman

deeply symbolic "Oedipal animals" who "draw us into narcissistic contemplation".[3] Such sentiment is similarly seen in John Berger's condemnation of the pet as the acculturated symbol of consumer society's "universal but personal withdrawal into the private small family unit".[4] However in the last few decades, perhaps in response to an exponential increase in pet-ownership practices, critics have begun to look at other means of accounting for the pet in contemporary human society. Key to such studies is their ability to look beyond the symbolic reading of the pet, to acknowledge and account for the actual practicalities of incorporating pets into human families. One way of doing this is to recognise that whilst the relationship isn't necessarily equal it is still an asymmetrical accord that allows pets to adapt and alter the human household and social roles they are inducted into. For example, Adrian Franklin has studied the way houses are physically remoulded to account for specific animal behaviours and routines,[5] whereas Emma Power has looked at the way pets change and adapt the rosters and routines of the household, from feeding time to clearing the dishwasher.[6] In both instances the focus is not on the symbolic role of the pet, but on the way the distinct animality of the pet opens up the family to different experiences and vastly more collaborative ways of living. One way of accounting for such an expanded definition is to say that pets make humans more hybrid, that is, they expose us to a mixed experience of the world. This is something we see over and again in Wegman's photographs, even with their anthropomorphic bent; there is a playfulness and resourcefulness to these situations which suggests a partnership that, whilst not exactly equal, is surely adaptive.

Take Wegman's earliest work with his first Weimaraner, Man Ray, in which he made videos and photographs of the dog balancing upon a ball, dressing up as a frog, partaking in spelling exercises, or posing in high heels. These works call into question the symbolic reading of the pet, exemplified by Berger's condemnation of the pet as a device that aides the individual in their retreat from communal responsibility, particularly as it is guided by the faithful, unconditional love of "man's-best-friend". Indeed, in an early interview, Wegman specifically highlights the constraints of this "falsely sentimental" model of human-pet kinship, something exemplified for him by "dog food ads" and the Hollywood franchises of "Lassie or Trigger".[7] Turning from this stereotype, Wegman chose neither to deliberately script, nor to rehearse any aspect of his photographs or short films, opting instead for an improvisational technique developed through

William Wegman *Madame Butterfly* 1997. Colour Polaroid photograph. Courtesy the artist. © William Wegman

the use of props to create and sustain scenarios that can be actively explored by both human and canine. Such collaboration is evident in the video work *Dog and Ball* (1973), in which Wegman follows Man Ray's various poses as he attempts to engage with a large rubber ball. Keenly depicting the dog's indifference to the apparent routine, as well as his ability to subvert such gestures by hunching over the ball and making it disappear from view, *Dog and Ball* is a good example of the way Wegman allows the animal's point of view to disrupt the disciplinary parameters of stereotypical human-pet relations. This collaborative engagement is also evident in the video work *New and Used Car Salesman* (1973), in which Wegman, holding Man Ray upon his lap, monologues a brief speech about the trustworthiness and familiarity invoked by the appearance of a dog in advertisements, only to have Man Ray squirm about and unsettle such soothing symbolic representation. Picking up on these traits, Susan McHugh usefully suggests that Wegman's practice is characterised more by "negotiation" than "subjugation".[8]

But this disruptive potential of Wegman's work isn't what significantly distinguishes it. Sure, he may be rehashing the velvet-painting stereotypes of cigar-smoking, poker-playing dogs, inverting their representation as a kind of rescued narrative, but there is also another element at play. This is perhaps more obvious as his practice develops from those original works where disruption and comedy were so apparent. Now what we get are increasingly moments of camouflage (of dogs becoming elephants or elegant women) or of a different kind of mimicry, in which the dogs echo classical sculpture or modernist cubes. What emerges is a more playful hybridity that points to an expanded register of possible human-canine collaboration. There is after all a kind of zoomorphic energy to this work, a fluid interchanging of animal registers we are familiar with from the overabundance of such frisson in the work of local painter Bill Hammond. Indeed it is this fluid interchange, this kind of dalliance with the human that is also so plentiful in Wegman's work, granting it a similar sort of frisson—a moment of chance, or slippage in which we begin to glimpse something else.

What I am hinting at here is easier explained in connection to the very slippage of how we define the human, in that as a category it is registered not by *what it is* but by *how it behaves*. When Carl Linnaeus tabled all the animals in his grand classification he left for homo sapiens the peculiar categorising attribute of an animal that is capable of knowing itself.[9] We can register this also in the words sapience and sapidity which define a very practical kind of taste, not only

William Wegman *Wolf* 1994. Colour Polaroid photograph. Courtesy the artist. © William Wegman

of being able to taste but of being able to enjoy and identify taste.[10] It is this kind of cognisance that has always defined the human, which is obvious when we consider our fascination with the apparent wolf-children (children reared with limited contact with human society) that recur throughout history. Indeed, only recently we proclaimed yet another group of humans, this time a family from Turkey who walked on all fours, as a kind of progenitor of and for the human.

The trouble is, of course, when we start to treat the human as sacrosanct, rather than expanded. This expanded connective notion of the human, whereby it is defined by a collaborative agency that connects it to the world, is a much better definition than a kind of reverse engineering in which we are constantly trying to defend the human. It's this that makes Wegman's practice so valuable. His work is less about how we depict dogs than about how we might expand the ways we think about our connection to non-humans. Which is why anthropomorphism is becoming so increasingly popular. Indeed it's not surprising to go to biennials these days and see a wide array of non-humans doing all sorts of different activities. Whether it's Francis Alÿs's peacock strutting through Venice, Pierre Huyghe's golden-legged dog interloping Kassel's *Documenta*, or Hito Steyerl's musings on the expanded possibilities for robots at Munster's *Sculpture Project*, there is an ever-widening preoccupation amongst artists with what it might mean to live in the here and now of a contemporary culture that is willing to think beyond the scope of the purely human. In Wegman's work we are similarly given the chance to glimpse this slippage of the human, so that we might see how the sapience that defines us may indeed be much more open, much more hybrid and much more collaborative than we have ever thought possible.

Hamish Win *is a graduate of the University of Canterbury's human-animal studies programme. He completed his doctorate about lost pet posters in 2013.* William Wegman: Being Human *is on display from 6 April until 28 July and has been produced by the Foundation for the Exhibition of Photography, Minneapolis/New York/Paris/Lausanne, in collaboration with Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū.*

Notes

1 Ken Coupland, 'William Wegman: Only Human', *Graphis* 292, July, August 1994, p.62.

2 Rosalind Coward, 'The Sex Life of Stick Insects', *Female Desire: Women's Sexuality Today*, London: Paladin, 1984.

3 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, London, New York: Continuum, 2004, p.265.

4 John Berger, *About Looking*, London: Writers and Readers, 1980, p.12.

5 Adrian Franklin, '"Be[a]ware of the Dog": A Post-Humanist Approach to Housing', *Housing, Theory and Society*, vol.23, no.3, 2006, pp.137–56.

6 Emma Power, 'Furry Families: Making a Human-Dog Family Through Home', *Social and Cultural Geography*, vol.9, no.5, 2008, p.535–55.

7 Liza Béar, 'Man Ray Do You Want To... An Interview with William Wegman', *Avalanche*, no.7, winter/spring, 1973, p.41.

8 Susan McHugh, 'Video Dog Star: William Wegman, Aesthetic Agency, and the Animal in Experimental Video Art', *Society & Animals*, vol.9, no.3, 2001, p.236.

9 For the full explanation see Giorgio Agamben's *The Open: Man and Animal* (translated by Kevin Attell, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

10 See Michel Serres, *The Five Senses, A Philosophy of Mingled Bodies* (translated by Margaret Sankey and Peter Cowley, London, New York: Continuum, 2008).

William Wegman *Cursive Display* 2013. Pigment print photograph. Courtesy the artist. © William Wegman

William Wegman *White Out* 2014. Pigment print photograph. Courtesy the artist. © William Wegman

Tait Brothers *Kere Tutoko and Gerhard Mueller* 1866. Albumen carte-de-visite.
Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, Isabel Forrest collection (PA2-1764)

Portraits for the Million
Tait Brothers of Te Tai o Poutini

Scottish-born brothers John Tait (1836–1907) and Alexander Tait (1839–1913) established themselves as photographers in gold rush Hokitika in about 1866, the period in which Catton's *The Luminaries* is set. While building up a broader picture of photographers for the *Hidden Light: Early Canterbury and West Coast Photography* book and exhibition, I recalled an interview with the novelist at around the time of her 2013 Man Booker Prize success, and her mention of having restricted her reading for a year before starting the novel to nothing published after 1866, giving the National Library's Papers Past credit as a vital source. The trails and condensed stories of many of the photographers in *Hidden Light* were largely brought together via this same indispensable means.[1]

From this and other sources, research for the project delivered much that was unexpected, including a good many significant firsts. It is too difficult not to mention there now being credible evidence for the earliest photographs in Aotearoa New Zealand having been made on our doorstep in 1840s Akaroa.[2] It was also surprising to learn that the region's first professional photographer was well-known Canterbury provincial architect Benjamin Woolfield Mountfort, who operated a portrait studio for two years from 1857.[3] And there was Derbyshire-born Jane Smith, evidently this country's first professional female photographer from about 1860 and running a portrait studio under her own name in High Street, Christchurch in 1864.[4] Along with such noteworthy firsts, the project naturally delivered personal favourites, including the Tait Brothers, who play a modest walk-on role in *Hidden Light*—it is satisfying to be able to expand a little on them here. Although not the first photographers to reach Te Tai o Poutini the West Coast (three others were there briefly from 1865) like many others they arrived in Hokitika with the gold rushes around 1866, via the earlier Otago and Victoria rushes.[5]

Born in Caithness in Scotland's far north, John and Alexander Tait relocated to Edinburgh before emigrating with their parents to Australia in 1852. In Victoria John trained as a "Chemist and Druggist", and Alexander as a photographer. By January 1862, Alexander was preparing to leave for New Zealand, and by the start of 1864 the brothers were established in Dunedin, running the Caledonian Portrait Rooms; the earliest located account records them with "a camera on the ground" at the Caledonian Society of Otago's second annual gathering, taking "several photographic views, including one of a group of those present who wore the Highland costume."[6] Their Hokitika venture had begun by April 1866, with Alexander probably there first:

> *Mr Tait, of the well-known firm of Tait Bros., of Dunedin, has opened a photographic gallery in Revell street, opposite the Prince of Wales Opera House. The specimens he exhibits display the very perfection of photographic art… Mr Tait has already taken cartes of many of our residents and well known visitors, and the fidelity of the likeness will be at once recognised.*[7]

Tait Brothers branched out to open Greymouth's very first Portrait Rooms on Mawhera Quay in early June, advertising "Portraits For The Million" and advising "an early call, as their stay at the Grey is limited".[8] And brief it was—several weeks later they sold the studio to German-born John Tensfeld, a photographer, painter and successful Australian miner.

One of their early Hokitika customers was another German—civil engineer and surveyor Gerhard Mueller, who had been awaiting the opening of a photographic studio on the West Coast. Mueller visited the Taits' studio in June after seven and a half months exploring Te Tai o Poutini, for most of that time guided by Kere Tutoko, whom he described in a letter to his wife in Invercargill as "the Chief of all the West Coast natives… a strapping fellow—of course what he says is law".[9] Mueller owed both his survival and his success to Tutoko's knowledge and superior canoeing skills as they crossed swollen rivers by dugout and faced hunger and sandflies along the route. His letters include a repeated desire to obtain a photographic portrait with his intrepid companion.

Glimpsed vignettes of John and Alexander's lives appear: in November 1867 they paid fourteen pounds for the hull of the wrecked brigantine *Elizabeth*, its lower masts and rigging still attached. In September 1868 they were part of a group of local "Gentlemen Amateurs" that entertained in a benefit concert at the Duke of Edinburgh Theatre in Revell Street with a display of "Electrical, Magnetical, and Magnesium experiments".[10] Four weeks later, the town was pounded by heavy tides, forcing the Hokitika river towards the centre of Revell street and removing twenty yards of river bank, "now within thirty yards of the back of Messrs Tait Brothers' establishment".[11] By early November they were making news with their art:

> *There is now being exhibited at the establishment of Messrs Tait Bros., the eminent photographers of this city, a magnificent collection of the heads of the people—all being photographed in the studio of the above well known firm. They are arranged in the most artistic fashion, and reflect the highest credit on the artists. We do not hesitate in saying that the entire picture compares most favourably with those produced by the artists in the old country, and certainly equal to anything hitherto produced in the colonies. As a work of art it is really very excellent, and well worth the inspection of the public. Among the photographs in the group are very many familiar faces residing here, and likewise those that are deceased, or left these shores, rendering the picture at once very interesting.*[12]

By early 1869, however, the Tait brothers were preparing to sell up, Alexander on account of his health preparing to return to Scotland. He never made the move, instead relocating seven months later to Greymouth, where he set up a new studio. Joining the local masonic lodge on his arrival, he entered his profession as "artist". In June 1870 he published "a very handsome album, containing views both of town and up-country scenery", also described as "twelve beautiful scenes taken from town and digging life on the West Coast… Each picture … a splendid specimen of high photographic art."[13]

Examples of their work also reached Scotland. In 1871 it was reported that:

> *Under the heading of "Caithness Artists in New Zealand", that old-fashioned, old, country paper, the* John O'Groat Journal says:—"*We have this week been favoured with the inspection of a large number of photographic views of scenes in New Zealand, illustrative of the various operations in gold digging. The views are chiefly taken from the Hokitika district, and give an excellent idea of the difficulties encountered by our countrymen in search of the precious metal. As works of art,*

Tait Brothers *Young woman, Hokitika* c.1867. Albumen carte-de-visite.
Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, Robbie Packer collection (PA1-q-1289-30-3)

these photographs cannot be excelled. They are the work of two brothers, the Messrs Tait, from Watten, in this country; and we are sure they are only to be known, when the gifted artists will receive numerous orders from parties in Caithness who have relatives in New Zealand engaged in the laborious operations of gold digging."[14]

Alexander kept a house on Greymouth's Mawhera Quay and remained semi-itinerant, working in Charleston and Hokitika. In 1872 the two brothers appeared as shareholders in the Westland Quartz Crushing Company, and updated their elaborate portrait montage, now emblazoned "By Special Authority To His Excellency Sir G.F. Bowen", as photographers to the Governor. In 1873 they were lined up to photograph the turning of the first sod of the Greymouth and Brunner Railway. A newspaper advertisement for the event instructed that "those who wish to have their 'shadows' transmitted to posterity will remain motionless for a few moments on the signal being given by the firing of a pistol charge."[15]

Commissions also came from Hokitika ironmonger and importer William G. Johnston, who had the brothers photograph his meticulous arrangements of ferns, mosses and flax; his originals were displayed at the 1873 *Hokitika Exhibition*. In July 1874 Alexander appeared with the Greymouth Amateur Ethiopian Minstrels, in a charity concert to aid Greymouth's Lunatic Asylum at the Volunteer Hall—he was the Dancing Master in "an entirely new burlesque" titled "The Lunatic Asylum; Or; Dancing Mad".[16] Alexander worked in the North Island from 1876, returning in 1880 to open studios in Westport, Inangahua and then Reefton. John exhibited his photographs at the *Melbourne International Exhibition* in 1880–81, and was Hokitika's mayor in 1885–86. He kept a house and shop in Revell Street and stayed active in business until shortly before his death in 1907. Alexander died in Rotorua in 1913.

For all their inventive entrepreneurship, fireworks displays and occasional improprietous entertainment, the Tait Brothers are, like many of their Victorian photographic peers, diverting enough to follow, but the initial and enduring attraction remains their photography. While it is good to be able to lay out a little more of their story, there remains yet more to be uncovered and known. This is especially true for their evocative, sometimes haunting photographs; images which bring a specific past and place into unexpectedly sharp and revealing view.

Ken Hall
Curator

Hidden Light: Early Canterbury and West Coast Photography *is on display until 25 August 2019 and is accompanied by a publication of the same name.*

Notes

1 Thanks are due also to Anthony Rackstraw, author of the website *Early Canterbury Photographers and their Successors* (canterburyphotography.blogspot.co.nz) and Mark Mabin for sharing his unpublished manuscript, *West Coast Photographers 1865–1910*.

2 *Hidden Light: Early Canterbury and West Coast Photography*, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, 2019, pp.24–26.

3 Ibid., pp.26–27.

4 Ibid., p.30.

5 Three photographers arrived in Hokitika in 1865 with the gold rushes: New York-born John West Denslow via the Otago and Victoria goldfields; Danish jeweller J.P. Christenson via Ballarat; and Mayfair gentleman's son Braham La Mert, via Christchurch and Dunedin. Of the three, only Christenson lingered briefly, but he abandoned photography for the lure of gold. See *Hidden Light*, pp.55–56.

6 *Otago Witness*, 9 January 1864, p.8.

7 *West Coast Times*, 16 April 1866, p.2.

8 *Grey River Argus*, 5 June 1866, p.3; p.2.

9 Gerhard Mueller, *My Dear Bannie, Gerhard Mueller's Letters from the West Coast 1865-66*, 1958 and 2012, p.75.

10 *West Coast Times*, 8 September 1868, p.3.

11 *West Coast Times*, 2 October 1868, p.2.

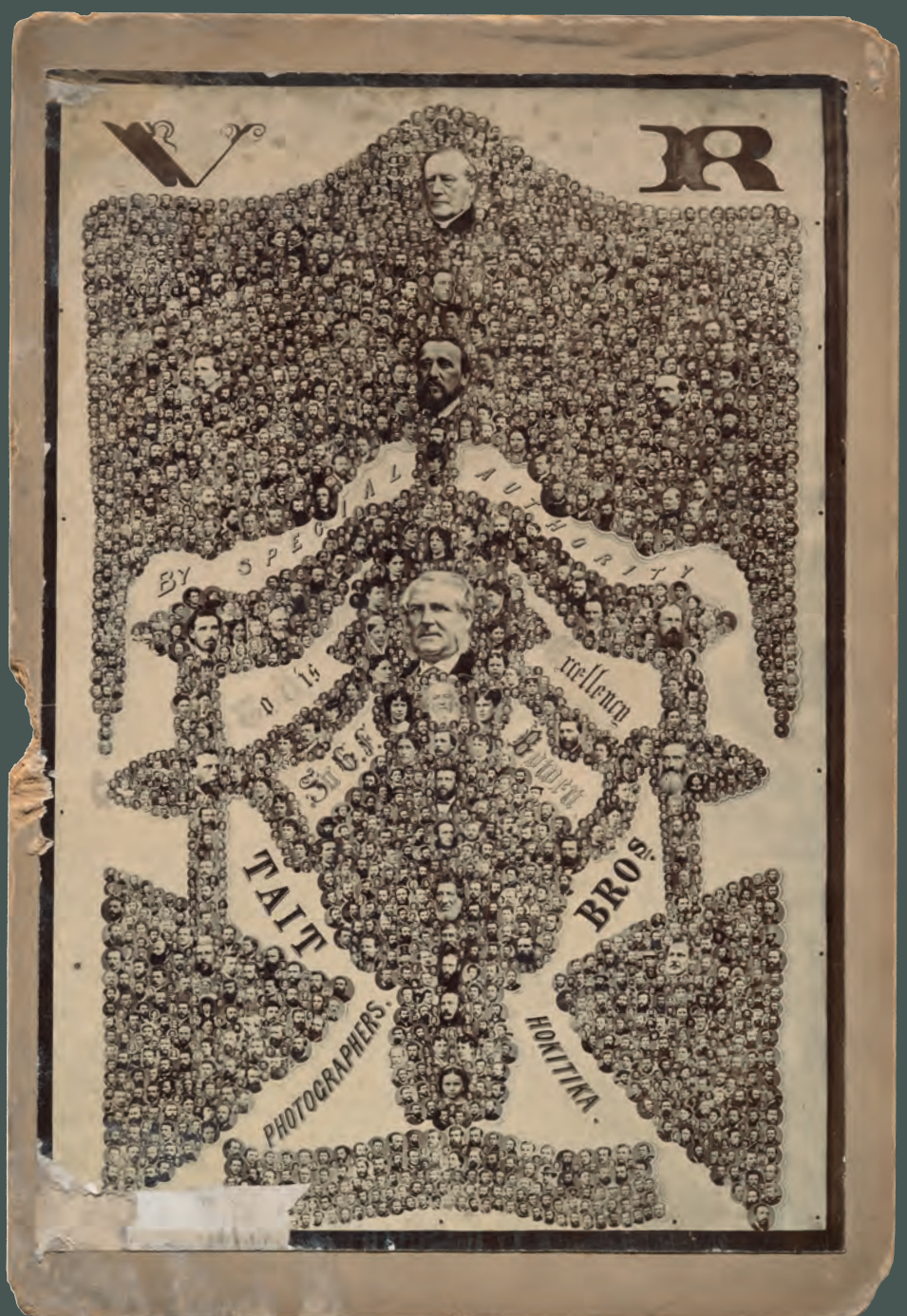
12 *West Coast Times*, 6 November 1868, p.2.

13 *Grey River Argus*, 21 June 1870, p.2; 23 June 1870, p.3.

14 *West Coast Times*, 1 July 1871, p.2.

15 *Grey River Argus*, 11 June 1873, p.2.

16 *Grey River Argus*, 16 July 1874, p.3; *West Coast Times*, 6 August 1874, p.3.



Tait Brothers *Photographers' promotional collage* 1872.
Albumen 'Imperial' cabinet card. Anthony G. Rackstraw collection

Julie King. Photo: Jenny May, 2017

Do You See?

Julie King, 1945–2018

With the death of Julie King late in 2018, art and art history in Aotearoa New Zealand lost one of its great champions and major scholars. Julie was born in Yorkshire and grew up and was educated in Alnwick, Northumberland; she moved to Christchurch in 1975 to take up a role lecturing in the newly formed art history department at the University of Canterbury. She retired three decades later, having pioneered the teaching of New Zealand art in Canterbury.

Julie will be remembered as a dynamic, insightful and inspiring lecturer, whose passion for her subject was engaging and contagious. "Do you *see*?" she would say, her eyes shining, pointing to a detail of a work under discussion. She had originally studied drama at the University of Manchester, switching to a degree in art history and archaeology, and after leaving university had lectured for a while at Goldsmiths, the Guildford School of Art and the Victoria and Albert Museum's study centre. Her MA was on Daumier and the tradition of French portraiture, and for the first few years in Christchurch she taught French and European art, first introducing her Aspects of New Zealand Art course in 1986. A meticulous scholar, she was also interested in the social context of both the production and reception of works of art in their own time. She wrote critically well-received biographies on New Zealand artists with local connections including Sydney Lough Thompson, Margaret Stoddart and Olivia Spencer Bower, and curated several exhibitions that toured nationally.

Christchurch Art Gallery staff will miss Julie immensely. Many of us studied under her; all of us knew her, variously as the first honorary Life Member of the Friends of the Gallery, a regular contributor to our public programmes, and a constant researcher in the Gallery's library. We enjoyed her humour and her kindness, we appreciated her encouragement and her ongoing interest in her former students—and we all benefited from her great generosity with her scholarship into New Zealand art. The number of artists at Julie's funeral in December 2018 also testified to the respect in which practitioners held her. Julie was a modest person, who shone a spotlight on others rather than herself—and her determined scholarship brought into the light many artists, works and connections which would otherwise have languished in darkness.

My most enduring memory of Julie dates back to the early nineties, and her work on Sydney Lough Thompson. Tasked with delivering an exhibition as well as a book about this popular Canterbury artist, Julie quickly won me over with her uniquely gentle yet quietly insistent manner, her refined sense of humour, and her uncanny ability to somehow make me feel that it was *my* idea all along. Julie's depth of knowledge and experience made it possible for concepts and designs to be adapted or edited without loss of meaning or continuity, and just about the only thing she *insisted* on throughout the project was eradication of split infinitives. Many years later she confessed to having been terribly nervous and unsure about the whole thing, but I for one never doubted her abilities and will forever be grateful for her mentorship and support. Rest in peace, Julie.

Hubert Klaassens
Quality assurance and heritage coordinator, Christchurch Town Hall Conservation Project

I first met Julie in 1988 as a colleague at the University of Canterbury and was immediately taken by her warmth and her deep knowledge of New Zealand art. Professionally I knew how well regarded she was by staff and students alike and at a personal level I appreciated her good humour and generous spirit. It impressed me enormously that she transplanted herself to the other side of the world and was able to become an authority on New Zealand art and then to freely share that expertise with the art community as well as students and scholars.

As art lovers and collectors my wife and I would see Julie regularly at galleries, openings and university events and she was invariably friendly and supportive.

A particularly fond memory is a visit she and Jenny made to view our collection and to advise on two Olivia Spencer Bower works. It was a lovely afternoon enhanced by a glass of wine and Julie's gentle humour, delivered with trademark twinkle. We remember that warmth and grace as much as the generous, astute and interesting comments she made on our eclectic collection.

Jeff Field
Registrar, University of Canterbury

Julie was a terrific scholar. She circled her subject with a bird's eye view of the wider terrain, and closed in decisively, a woman with a mission, a detective in hot pursuit of history's crimes of exclusion and oversight. She was a particularly significant scholar of women's art, but her method was impartial. What she did was what all the finest art historians do: she made the invisible visible, and brought the overlooked to wide public attention. Her research was impeccable. You knew that you could always rely on her scholarship. I feel profoundly grateful to have been taught by Julie; she was a model of persistence, grace and personal modesty as an academic. Those were some of the things I appreciated about her; what I loved about her was her self-deprecating humour, that sudden huge laugh that welled up out of nowhere, the moments of fun we shared over the years, doubled up laughing at the absurdity of the world and our place in it. I'll miss Julie enormously. As will many others—she was important not only to me but to several generations of art historians trained at Canterbury. I'm privileged to have learned from her.

Lara Strongman
Head curator, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū

Unfortunately, I never had the pleasure of being one of Julie's students at the University of Canterbury. I was, however, fortunate enough to spend time with her when she was researching Olivia Spencer Bower while I was curator of the art collections there. I learned so much from Julie during those visits; her method of discussing art (and life) was generously Socratic: all possibilities were open, the conversation nipped and darted all over the place, and she really listened and made you feel as if your opinions were worth consideration. In the following years when Julie would visit the Physics Room she would enthusiastically engage with the work, eager to learn more about the artist and their practice. In her joyous reciprocity she was always an educator that empowered; a day where you encountered Julie was always a better kind of day.

Jamie Hanton
Director, The Physics Room

Julie King was a very valued colleague in the art history programme within the School of Fine Arts at the University of Canterbury from the time of her appointment in 1975 until her retirement in 2004. Julie was one of the foundation art history staff at Canterbury but it is little known that she was appointed to teach Renaissance art, having studied with the distinguished British specialist on Italian Renaissance art, Professor John White, at the University of Manchester. Julie had written her MA thesis on Honoré Daumier and, with the introduction of third year courses, she began teaching the paper on nineteenth-century French art for which she will be remembered by many of her students. This was a very popular course but only partly on account of the subject matter; it was Julie's deep knowledge of and enthusiasm for the art of this period that ensured that the course always had high enrolments.

Her interest in New Zealand art developed during the 1980s and grew out of her exploration of the links between French impressionism and New Zealand artists such as Sydney Lough Thompson, on whom she curated a pioneering exhibition in 1990. Julie's research on New Zealand art went hand in hand with the development of new courses at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels. Her teaching was, in the best sense of the term, research-led and students appreciated the fact that they were being presented with fresh knowledge and insights through her lectures. She was also in demand as a supervisor of theses on New Zealand art topics.

The university's art collection benefited from Julie's keen interest in the collections that already existed—she curated a revealing show of the W.S. and Alison MacGibbon collection in 1995—but also from her efforts to add new works to the existing holdings. She played an important role as a member of the university's art purchases committee and promoted the cataloguing and proper care of the university collection.

When Julie retired from her position at the University of Canterbury in 2004 it proved impossible to replace the unique blend of skills she brought to the teaching of Art History with a single appointment and she was greatly missed. She nevertheless remained in touch with the university and was a regular visitor in the art history department and the Macmillan Brown Library.

Her research, however, continued and she was always in demand as a public speaker at Christchurch Art Gallery, the WEA and elsewhere. Her strong interest in Canterbury women artists was reflected in the fascinating lecture she gave on Ngaio Marsh as an artist for the annual Ngaio Marsh lecture series, although sadly this research remains unpublished. Julie's untimely death means that she was unable to bring to fruition this and other projects to which she had devoted so much time and effort. While we must inevitably regret what was not to be we should nevertheless be grateful for the valuable legacy of research and writing that Julie King has left us.

Ian Lochhead
Art historian

Julie's visits to the Gallery library were always a pleasure. In a sector where egos are often very well developed it was always a delight to deal with Julie's complete lack of pretension. Her focus on the job in hand didn't prevent our conversations ranging widely across the state of the world, music and of course above all art. Her book on Olivia Spencer Bower had a long and complicated parentage with archival material coming from a range of sources that included copies, and copies of copies. Someone less devoted to the job might have despaired but Julie created order out of chaos. I can recall her saying that she didn't want the book to become a soap opera on Olivia's life and family. Rather she wanted a serious book about a serious artist with, at the centre of it all, as ever, her art.

Julie combined self-deprecation and intense dedication, plain speaking with a wonderful turn of phrase. She was my best customer and I will very much miss her common sense and good cheer.

Tim Jones
Librarian, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū

I often thought that the achievements of Julie King and our late colleague Jonathan Mane-Wheoki in helping to establish art history as a subject in the University of Canterbury were lamentably under-appreciated. I know 1970s Christchurch presented Julie with quite a few challenges, and the University had a very old-fashioned attitude to its female academic staff at that time. It was Julie's enthusiasm for women artists that brought me to the University's School of Fine Arts in 1989, to take up a lecturing post that had been fashioned by her advocacy to fit my specialism. This was a commitment we continued to share, which resulted not only in certain art history courses being offered but also in numerous research projects at Honours, Masters and even PhD level.

Julie continued to think about the state of art history in this country, nurturing it as a subject within academe and beyond. It was she who prompted us to extend our programme into the study of New Zealand art and curatorial/museum studies, both fields now expected in a degree programme but innovations in their time. She also enthused many lay-people by her activities in the Canterbury community: I would often over the years turn up to address an audience of art-lovers who had been set on their path by Julie, whom they thought of fondly. We also had in common a huge interest in nineteenth-century French painting, which Julie established as one of the most enduringly popular courses on the programme, and I much enjoyed sharing the teaching of it with her and talking over artists, topics and works of mutual fascination.

Pamela Gerrish Nunn
Independent scholar, formerly professor of Art History, University of Canterbury

If nineteenth and early twentieth-century New Zealand painting was a botanical garden, Julie would be the person bringing our attention to the blooms of Canterbury. She was something of a rose herself, in that her soft and gentle nature was juxtaposed with a keen observation and sharp intellect. In conversation she had the unnerving art of posing questions which might challenge your thinking or bring to light the glib and clumsy nature of a comment you were responsible for. Aside from her writings, perhaps the work of Julie's that I admired most was her curation of Fiona Pardington's *Echo* at Riccarton House for SCAPE in 2004 (I think she also helped with Tessa Giblin's curation of Reuben Paterson). I was similarly surprised by and appreciative of her purchase of a work by Andy Leleisi'uao for the University's collection.

I know as a team Julie and Jenny have been a powerhouse of support to artists and people working in the arts both locally and nationally. My contact with her was limited so I recognise her contribution primarily as a teacher, part of a faculty comprised of excellent art historians who were progressive in their programming (I'd say the most progressive in the country at that time) and passionate about New Zealand's art history and narratives. The department also had a proportionately large staff of strong academic women. When I first studied art history in the eighties I think Julie was teaching French painting; when I returned in the nineties she was lecturing on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century New Zealand painting with a section on Canterbury painters. She has to be admired for the depth of primary research undertaken both for her teaching and for the publications she produced.

While we sometimes came at things from different angles, Julie was a kind person, an excellent art historian, feminist and role model. I liked her very much. As happens with shared learning experiences, those who really felt inspired by art history, teachers and fellow students were part of a familial bond which span a great many years. I know her pastoral care for her students had a huge impact personally and encouraged careers within the arts.

Stephanie Oberg
Freelance curator and writer

One of the most distinctive aspects of Julie's teaching was the way that she spoke. Not just the emphasis she put on particular words—Doncaster, Canterbury—but her gentle insistence on looking hard at works of art, rather than just reading what others had to say about them. "Do you see?" she would ask searchingly, at the end of an hour spent listening to me stumbling my way through a sight translation of Jules-Antoine Castagnary's reviews of the Paris Salon to glean meagre comments on Courbet, "as a critic, he draws attention to the paint itself, as well as what is painted."

Missing that voice when I heard that Julie had died, I hoped to find it again in the prose of her meticulously researched books on Canterbury artists. But it wasn't until I read her review of the 1985 McDougall exhibition *Artfull* for the *Press* that I heard it clearly. Zeroing in on the work of nineteenth-century women artists, she laments their works' return to the purdah of collection storage at the end of the summer collection show like Demeter mourning Persephone, describing Henrietta Rae's *Doubts* as being "carried off, screaming" and Henriette Brown's *La Lecture de la Bible* as "descending, sulking". By the end of the article she has succinctly made the case for a new gallery to display these old favourites, and also quietly underscored the neglect of the small grouping of French paintings as "a dead collection" awaiting a change of taste to occasion resuscitation. This was her niche, polishing up the gems she discovered neglected in a Canterbury corner; artists who, like her, were expatriates, with an affection for France, and who were more often than not, women. She taught me the value of mining an archive and carefully structuring an argument from its footnoted details, and I will be forever grateful for her encouragement and example.

Linda Tyler
Convenor, museums and cultural heritage, University of Auckland

When I began my studies in the art history department in the mid 1980s, Julie had already been at the University of Canterbury for ten years and had established herself as an extraordinary educator with a deep interest in exploring the stories, encounters and social settings behind artworks. As proud art history students, we were mesmerised by her knowledge, curiosity and enthusiasm. Julie took her students out of the classroom on multiple visits to the Robert McDougall Art Gallery—this was a different way of teaching. She was incredible at telling captivating stories and looking at the sense of an artist and their life experiences. She opened our eyes to look for the social history, the conditions of the time that might have led people to paint like they had and create what they did. She would say, "Do you see?" and "What do you think?" giving us permission and encouragement to enquire for ourselves. We learned a lot from Julie about research skills, especially the need for primary research —she taught us to look, to think, to interrogate. Those lessons continue to carry us through our professional lives.

Robyn Burgess
Senior heritage assessment advisor, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga

My friendship with Julie was initiated when she was collating information for her book *Olivia Spencer Bower: Making Her Own Discoveries*. On meeting we found that we related to each other very well, and on the strength of that our future meetings developed into conversation about things in which we had a common interest; a mutual understanding and a shared confidence.

Julie was especially interested in knowing about my interest in three New Zealand artists from the turn of the twentieth century, Ethel and Fanny Richardson and Jessie Buckland; acknowledging that they were progressive women of the period. The Richardsons as early conservationists because of their efforts to preserve native species and environments and Buckland as an individualist within the male-dominated field of photography.

As a confidante it was Julie's understanding and insightful knowledge that was so compelling—laughter made our meetings very enjoyable amidst the heady conversation about male/female representation within the world of art and the slow evolution towards some kind of gender balance; and on a bigger scale the diminishing prejudices associated with one's being. I thought Julie was great.

Sadness intrinsic with the life Julie gave.

Paul Johns
Artist

As an art history lecturer, Julie was knowledgeable, impeccably prepared and entertaining, and on a mission to give the women who were under-acknowledged in the male-dominated art narrative the exposure and context they deserved. She put that ideal into action with *Flowers into Landscape*, her outstanding exhibition and publication on Margaret Stoddart's work at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery in 1997.

Julie was private and modest, motivated by enthusiasm for the work rather than glory, and she always put the artist and reader first. Her research was comprehensive and rock-solid, and like many others, I continue to benefit from the hard slog she did, poring through archives and workbooks. What I'll remember most, though, is her warmth and generosity. She was always eager to share what she knew, or offer suggestions for possible leads. When I told her I was working with Jacqueline Fahey on an exhibition, she made time to meet with me to share her own insights about Fahey as an artist and person.

A month or so before she died, Julie came to a lecture I gave about Dora Meeson, the Melbourne-born, Canterbury-trained artist and suffrage campaigner. Julie had investigated Meeson's work many years previously with a view to writing about her but, working in the early days of the internet, had run into lots of dead-ends. We spoke for a long time afterwards, as people drifted out and the auditorium lights were switched off one by one. With her eyes sparkling and one hand gently gripping my elbow, Julie urged me to keep trying to bring Meeson a little further into the light. "It's so *important!*" she said. "Don't you think?"

Felicity Milburn
Curator, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū

When I think of Julie King as an art historian one word comes to mind—'cautious'. This is a measure of Julie's professionalism.

I worked with Julie on exhibitions when she was a guest curator at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery and well recall discussions about works. On one occasion in 1997 when works for the exhibition *Flowers into Landscape: Margaret Stoddart 1865–1934* were being considered the date of one titled *House in a Summer Garden* was uncertain. The conversation went something like this: Julie said to me "Do you know the date?" and I replied "I think it is around 1925." Julie then said "But do you know? How do you know? … we don't know do we." Where a lesser art historian might have easily speculated and decided immediately and left it at that, Julie was more cautious, would not assume, and if the evidence did not stack up would leave the question unanswered. In this case the date of the work was left unknown.

There is no question though that during the forty-three years that Julie lived in New Zealand she made an important contribution to art history. When she arrived in Christchurch in early 1975 and began teaching nineteenth-century French art she had very little awareness of art in this country, but over time, through scrupulous research, grew her knowledge and became highly regarded for the work she did, particularly on women artists such as Ellis Rowan, Margaret Stoddart and Olivia Spencer Bower.

Neil Roberts
Art historian, formerly senior curator and manager of collections, Robert McDougall Art Gallery

I first met Julie when I joined the University of Canterbury as a lecturer in sculpture in February 1991. In those days the art history staff were upstairs in block two along with the administration; downstairs were the reference library, a tiered lecture theatre and a small gallery used by students as an experimental space for trying out ideas and getting feedback from academic staff and fellow students.

It was in the SFA gallery that Julie and I had our first real conversation about art. We circled the gallery in opposite directions, looking at student works and the overall installation. She nodded at me, as she so often did to acknowledge one, carried on looking and at some point we got to talking.

Julie's first words to me on that day were "I don't know" and mine were, "Well, I don't get it." We both laughed, as here we were, supposedly with all this knowledge and both were doubting, looking for the back story, the impulse, the feeling, the resolution.

I can remember at the time being somewhat astounded by the fact that an art historian might be even interested in student work. Julie was. She continued to regularly visit the SFA gallery, often engaging with the studio students in her determined yet supportive way, as a true teacher does. Over the next decade, we conversed about art, the local scene and what was going on across the globe. Every conversation was framed by doubt and questions as Julie incisively and gracefully probed and finally formed an image of what it was that might be there. I'm sure she saw the space in between, the space that contains all the elements in which it is necessary for art to exist.

When Julie King died we all lost a gentle and insightful person who made a valuable contribution to our understanding of the greater ambience of art.

Andrew Drummond
Artist

I knew Julie, who was personally always JK to me, as a lecturer when I was an undergrad taking art history; as a friend; as a teacher using the McDougall collection when I was registrar; and as a curator when she requested loan works from my collection. There will be many who can attest to having enjoyed Julie's lectures. I was one of them. Her lectures were looked forward to with enthusiasm. They were insightful, exciting and extremely learned. Her teaching demonstrated a passion for her subject matter and caring and compassion for her students. She was a mentor and a role model. As a student and also as registrar at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery it was always a highlight for me when JK would request a "mini exhibition" from the collection for her to discuss with her students in a more intimate way these pertinent art works. I would receive the list, retrieve the works from storage and set them up for her. I recall that the students in these groups considered this a unique and special experience. But on a more personal level, I enjoyed JK's delightful sense of humour. She could imitate differing English accents when the occasion arose and this would be evident during the many "Coronation Street" dinners we held. These were not serious dinners but occasions for hilarity and satire over a Lancashire hotpot and other such English fare. It was an endearing side of JK.

Because of Julie King's untimely and unexpected death, the long-overdue recognition of her contribution and commitment to the University of Canterbury and to our knowledge of New Zealand's art history, remains to be resolved. A posthumous Honorary Doctorate from the University of Canterbury would be a fitting tribute to Julie's talents and a recognition of the high regard and respect she holds from the many people who have known her professionally.

Anna Crighton
Art historian, formerly registrar, Robert McDougall Art Gallery

Julie King was without doubt a superb art historian—a meticulous researcher whose writings were totally trustworthy, whose insights were offered with humility, but underpinned by evidence, wherever possible from the source. She was serious, scholarly, even proper, but also loved art passionately and had a definite mischievous—even slightly wicked—streak. One never knew when that gleam would light up her eyes, and out would come an unexpected but very clever observation. My knowing Julie coincided with the blossoming of my love of contemporary art, and with that the need to know more about all art. While at university being grounded in the sciences, art history was not only at the opposite end of campus but very much on the periphery of my interests. Julie helped overcome that. While I was never conscious of being 'taught' by her, I learned such a lot from her. Gently questioning, suggesting, encouraging me to think, and then think more deeply. Not giving the answer but just enough prompts to edge one towards a hypothesis. Those prompts were the key. So subtle that I felt I was being guided rather than taught.

Guiding, but not at all afraid to say "Oh no, I don't think so!"—always followed by the next prompt, "What about…" I'll always be intensely grateful for the insights gained.

Julie King: a warm, delightful, deeply intelligent woman, much loved and admired.

Anthony Wright
Director, Canterbury Museum

It is an immense sadness to have lost Julie King—a great scholar, art historian, educator, supporter and friend of the New Zealand visual art world. I was an art history student of Julie's at the University of Canterbury as part of my fine arts degree in the 1990s. I revelled in her meticulously prepared, visually compelling and beautifully articulated lectures. She introduced me to the artworks of artists in the Group, with an interest being her studies and later book that she wrote on Olivia Spencer Bower. Little did I know at the time of my graduation that Julie would play an ongoing role in the development of my twenty-year career in the visual arts. Julie and her life partner Jenny May have been supporters of SCAPE Public Art from our first exhibition in 2000. Julie enjoyed warmly encouraging her former students and checking in on where their careers took them. In 2004 I had the great pleasure of working with her as curator of ECHO, an exhibition at Riccarton House and Bush Pūtaringamotu in which new artworks were installed within the house and grounds. Julie brought together a carefully selected group of artists who produced new artworks that responded to the specifics of the site and its natural and human histories—Māori and European—to shine a light on the location's present-day significance. The artists included Graham Fagen, Fiona Pardington, Reuben Paterson (this element was co-curated by Tessa Giblin) and Phil Price. Julie also formed the basis of SCAPE's education programme, with two elements in ECHO made by students from Riccarton High School and Rangi Ruru Girls' School. Julie unlocked the power of art to inspire educate, stimulate and create inquiring minds within me and many others. May her spirit and her legacy to New Zealand art history live on for many generations.

Deborah McCormick
Executive director, SCAPE Public Art

Julie was a patron of the Friends of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū but her involvement goes back to the very beginning of the organisation that was the Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. At a reunion of past presidents and committee members we held as a celebration of twenty-one years in 2002, Julie talked about the discussions amongst academics, artists and others about forming a support group for the Gallery to assist with purchases for the collection and inspiring the public to learn more about their art gallery. She was key in enabling this to happen in 1981 and remained a member for the rest of her life, becoming a Patron in 2010.

Julie gave many fascinating lectures and on-site talks to the Friends over the years, and was always enthusiastic about finding yet another subject to present to the members. Her talks were always the best attended as everyone knew how much they would glean from her insight into the artists or artworks. The acquisition by the Friends of a work from the Jacqueline Fahey exhibition last year gave her huge pleasure as her admiration for women artists and the hurdles many faced was part of her examination of art history. She keenly observed the activities of the Friends, and would offer suggestions, then in her charming subtle way would say "and what do you think should happen?"

Julie was so supportive and came to as many of our activities as she could fit in. We will all really miss her warm, encouraging smile, her ongoing concern and support for the Friends and her loving, caring manner towards all who wanted to know more about art.

Marianne Hargreaves
President, Friends of Christchurch Art Gallery

Julie was my art history colleague at the University of Canterbury for over fifteen years and a friend for more than half my life. She was a very fine human being. I was moved to tears at her remarkable farewell, and I'm not far off it as I write this and think of her again.

As well as being a thoroughly good and understanding colleague, Julie was a terrific lecturer, who had this special gift—which I've likened to Barry Manilow in concert—of making you feel what she was saying was meant for you and you alone, even if you were part of a large audience. A rare gift, and one that can never be learnt or acquired. Julie was also an admirable scholar. She was a perfectionist and far too hard on herself, but this went with her essential modesty. She wrote with an authority and a jargon-free clarity that was based on diligent research and a sensitivity towards everybody and everything she studied—from Honoré Daumier to Margaret Stoddart. I was very pleased to be able to (glowingly) review Julie's final book, on Olivia Spencer Bower, for the rather posh *Burlington Magazine* in the UK, and evidently she was not displeased in turn!

I'll finish with a phrase adapted from Colin McCahon, "Here I give thanks to Julie King".

Mark Stocker
Curator historical international art,
Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

Top, left to right:
Julie in Christchurch, 1994 (photo: Jenny May); with Helen Percy, Duchess of Northumberland, prize-giving at Duchess's Grammar School, Alnwick, Northumberland, 1963; in the National Gallery, London, 2015 (photo: Jenny May)

Middle:
School of Fine Arts art history staff 1985. Left to right, standing: Linda Barry, Julie King, Ian Lochhead, Merle Gregor, Ann McGregor, Jillian Cassidy, Professor John Simpson, Jonathan Mane-Wheoki; kneeling: Brya Truscott, Victoria Stafford

Bottom, left to right:
Julie speaking at ECHO exhibition opening as part of SCAPE Public Art Biennial at Riccarton House and Bush Putaringamotu in 2004; outside the Duchess's Grammar School, Alnwick, 2016 (photo: Jenny May); with her beloved dog Lucy at the School of Fine Arts in 1995 (photo: Jenny May)

Julia Morison talks with
Lara Strongman about *Headcase*

Julia Morison *Headcase, 43* 2015. Glazed stoneware. Courtesy of the artist

Lara Strongman: Let's talk about the process of making the works for this exhibition. Can you describe how you produced them?

Julia Morison: I've never actually made ceramics before. I read Edmund de Waal's *The Hare with Amber Eyes*, which is about a netsuke set that is passed through several generations. De Waal is a ceramicist and he talks in this book about objects and porcelain in such a visceral way—basically he seduced me into picking up a ball of clay and playing with it. For a long time I haven't had the use of my hands [because of arthritis], so I thought that playing with clay might actually help strengthen them.

After the earthquakes, I bought a kiln from a neighbour who had been a tile decorator. Tatyanna Meharry borrowed it for her classes and in return gave me a few lessons. I started to enjoy the material, but at that point I wasn't sure what I was going to do with it and was only making pinch pots. I can't remember why I chose to make heads but when I did I decided to make a hundred of them—which was quite a leap. I tried different techniques, slab and coil, and the works I've made use both. I tried pouring too—slip casting—but my moulds weren't good enough … but I think that's more useful for repeating forms, to get each one perfectly the same, which wasn't what I was after at all. From the start, I did want some unity within the heads, so made a mould, based on a wig form. I wanted the heads to be as non-specific as possible and genderless but more or less real scale. Some of them have become characters, and these may or may not end up on the shelves in this exhibition.

LS: Are they characters because they have facial features?

JM: I've concentrated on the holes or passages in the head: the eyes, ears, nose and mouth, and some have no passages at all, referring to skin or touch. These are our sensory apparatus. It's something that's been a bit of a preoccupation in earlier works. Right now I'm looking at you and in the first instance our interaction is through the head. I'm wondering what is going on inside your head as you're maybe wondering what is going on inside mine. And I'm curious if we even see the same thing? I think those differences are fascinating. I'm partially deaf so you're going to hear things that I won't. What we pick up and don't pick up will be different for each of us and what we put out is unique.

LS: We live in the same world but we all experience it in subtly different ways and we know from science and physics that the universe is vastly different from how we see it. These works come from the same mould but are completely different in the way they might interact with the world around them.

JM: Their facial features are, in most cases, like funnels or filters and some have accessories applied to them which could enhance or inhibit sensory data. Reduced to its essence, the head is a case that symbolically separates the self, the inside from context, the outside. I am also asking if we would experience the world differently if our sensory apparatus were other than it is.

Another layer is psychological; we have a lot of imaginative states based on the face and head in nightmares and dreams. Some people who have seen these works have found them disturbing and others have found them funny. Where I've concentrated on one feature, such as the nose for example, it feels more potent and a personality or a character type isn't recognised.

LS: What has been your process for thinking through all the variations?

JM: Sometimes I drew ideas, but these are just for memory jotters. It is difficult to translate from a two-dimensional drawing to a three-dimensional ceramic. Through the drawings I envisioned an outcome, but the result didn't necessarily look how I might have imagined it. Sometimes I would

begin with an idea and carry it through but at other times I would allow things to emerge as I worked. If the clay split or slumped, I would work with that.

LS: So you start with an outcome in mind but you might not actually end up with that outcome?

JM: For the project, I did set out to make a hundred yet there are actually 125, as I wanted some to edit out. Sometimes individual heads were determined from the start but at other times they evolved during the process of making. If an accident happens, I have to make something of that accident—I actually prefer when that happens.

LS: What do you like about the accident?

JM: It surprises me. I have to respond to and work with something that I haven't envisaged. It is more exciting and I'm not fighting the material. It's not that you lose control of it but the material wants to do its own thing. You lose it if you exert your will over it. It's like painting—you have to work with it, not against it. Although you do learn techniques to get the effects you want.

I started with porcelain which was idiotic in hindsight. Porcelain is a very difficult clay to use for what I'm doing as it quickly loses its plasticity. Cheryl Lucas told me about sculpture clay which has paper in it—it's lighter and easier to work with compared with porcelain.

LS: Why did you want to make a hundred heads, and what's the relationship of this work to the other 'hundred' works you've made, like the hundred-panel *Golem*, or *100-headless woman* (1997)?

JM: Even when I was a student I would naturally make works in sets of ten: ten paintings, or ten drawings. Now it's deliberate because it aligns with the structure of the ten Sephiroth of the Kabbalah. In regards to *Material Evidence: 100-headless woman*—well, where are the heads, and is there one or one hundred? In a way an 'oeuvre' is an artist's self-portrait; so maybe they are all my heads and just one head. The "100-headless woman" comes from the Max Ernst work *La femme 100 têtes*, where 'cent' means a hundred but sounds like 'sans'—without. So the hundred are all without a head. Maybe *Headcase* responds to the void?

LS: So there's a range of potential heads but they all come from your own.

JM: I can't blame anyone else!

LS: Let's talk about the Kabbalah, the Sephiroth; can you talk a little about your use of that system of knowledge as a starting point for making work? You've been using it as a background in your practice for a very long time. Can you go right back to the first time you decided to use it, and what you thought it would bring to your work?

JM: I became interested in it while at design school in the early seventies, but it didn't reveal itself in my work back then. Immediately after art school, my work became increasingly abstract. And I had a rupture at a certain point; I lost interest in formal abstraction. Some people think that's when I lost the plot, but producing endless permutations of formal abstract works, I would bore myself silly. That's not to say I don't love this genre of practice—I just didn't have anything to add and lost interest in the modernist idea of making art devoid of meaning. I wanted to imbue my work with meaning and went overboard.

I was trying to understand and devise a visual language that would allow my work to be read without reference to text; to have meaning that I could determine—to some extent. I began with something extremely simple. I played around with writing the words god/dog repeatedly—I covered forty-eight sheets of semi-transparent paper with the

Julia Morison *Working drawings for Headcase* 2014–17. Indian ink and watercolour on paper. Courtesy of the artist

words written forward, backward, in mirror writing and upside down according to a system. If you repeat something often enough it loses its meaning, which also interests me. And I loved the way 'god' and 'dog' merged the banal and the ideal. Then I coupled these two words with matter, dog shit and gold leaf. Expanding on this, I aligned ten different materials positioned within a hierarchy, from lead to transparency, heavy to light, feminine and masculine, in respect of the sefirothic system, alchemy and the writings of Carl Jung. I started making a work called *Golem* (the one in Te Papa) but I was getting into trouble. I was losing my way because I hadn't done the groundwork. I went back and made a fifty-five-page drawing where I associated a shape or symbol to each of the materials. The work *Vademecum* (1986) takes the materials and symbols and combines each one with every other. Like a chart. I think that's my design school training coming up—I used to love designing logos, I refer to the combinations of symbols as logos. I have made quite a few works using those materials, including *Material Evidence: 100-headless woman*.

The Kabbalah is a way of understanding the world through a highly visual language. It's a tool, a filing system, a way of ordering information, and Kabbalists use it in highly personal or idiosyncratic ways. For me, it offers different viewpoints to look at things. Given that the system purports to assume "all and everything", it's not that constraining. I am trying to think when I stopped using it; well, I haven't, but it may be less obvious now. For example, the seven hexagonal rooms in *Headcase* repeat the background geometry of the Sephirothic system. And clay is one of the ten materials I posit with a sefirah.

LS: I'm interested in the way that you deliberately impose limits on yourself. It's similar to the Oulipo group of surrealists who made work by imposing constraints. Like Georges Perec, the writer who wrote the novel without an E in it.

JM: I love Perec! I saw an exhibition of his work at the Louvre, and it was surprisingly visual for a writer. His *Life, A User's Manual* is a nauseating thing to read because it's like an overly rich fruitcake. You get overwhelmed very quickly by the density of details. It's fascinating to see how he worked it all out through charts—assigning a mineral, a period, a style, a personality to generate each room within the fictitious apartment building. His writing is extremely formal. I work in a similar way.

LS: What do limits and restraints bring to your process of making art?

JM: I need to go back to the start to talk about this. The design school I went to was industrial. The course was really there to support industrial design—they didn't give a jot about your personal creative expression. In fact you didn't even get a voice when it came to crit sessions—although everyone else did. What they were interested in was how the work would read. Just because you *feel* it or intend it, that's not necessarily what people see in it.

At design school we worked to strict briefs, simulated client briefs. They were written on pink paper and we were told how many colours were permitted, scale etc. in each project. I loved that way of working because you were challenged to do something exciting within those constraints. I didn't really intend to go to art school; I just did so badly at painting at design school, which was an extra-curricula subject. I never got a mark. I was *zero zero zero* the whole time and it really bothered me. I thought "There's something deeply mysterious about this painting thing that I have to know about." I loved it but I just couldn't do it. In hindsight there was probably a different scenario going on—I wasn't that bad (I can't imagine giving anyone a zero). So I came down to Canterbury to do printmaking and painting. You had to specialise, and as I felt more comfortable

Julia Morison *Headcase, 21* 2015. Glazed stoneware, paint, tacks. Courtesy of the artist

with printmaking I chose painting. So I'm a reluctant painter or a reluctant artist.

LS: It's very funny. Some people would say the difference between art and design is a brief.

JM: I work with a self-imposed brief or set of constraints. When I was at art school, Gopas and Sutton did their studio rounds, puffing on their pipes and giving very little, if any, direction. I was waiting for a brief which never came. "You can do anything you like." It took me a long time to know what I wanted to do. I didn't want to be a painter; I just wanted to know what painting was about, so the brief thing was something that I started to do for myself. I needed to put some kind of perimeter around myself in order to focus on small tasks. But now I think my work belies that. There is a structure there but I could apply it to stamp design, theatre design or public sculpture.

LS: In the past you've said you make things in relation to different kinds of opportunities. Which is perhaps another way of thinking about a brief. What limitation did the earthquakes put on your practice? What opportunity did you see in them?

JM: Well at the time I didn't see any opportunity. It took a while to register what had happened because it was traumatic and not anticipated. But that's part of my experience now, part of my life, all of our lives, our shared experience. Immediately after the quakes, whatever we had been doing beforehand seemed strangely irrelevant. At the time, I was painting. I was preparing for a show for Two Rooms, and physically struggling to do it. I was also procrastinating. The art shops were all closed but I am a bit of a hoarder so I was filling in time doodling with stuff I had here in the studio—but mindlessly. Phil Trusttum visited one day, and I knew the paintings weren't going very well, and he was trying not to look. I pressured him "Phil, what do you think of these paintings?" "Oh Julia," he said, "painting's fucking difficult." *Oh thanks for that—just what I need*. Then he turned around and said, "Well, what's going on here? There's your exhibition." That was the start of the work *Meet me on the other side*. Those works were made with an abandonment that I hadn't had before. I would love to have maintained that degree of ease in making.

LS: Did you ever think of leaving the city at that time?

JM: I really love my studio and its location in the central city. It's a place that I could envisage happily living my time out but when everything shattered I did think I'd be forced to go. Christchurch is my home. Because I don't come from a family with any interest in art, the people around me are my world and Christchurch is where I learned about art, found my voice and feel supported. I spent a decade in Europe in the 1990s, and didn't intend to come back, but I did.

LS: Neither did I but here I am.

JM: That identifies us. It's the lead in our feet or something.

Lara Strongman spoke to Julia Morison in December 2018. Julia Morison: Head[case] *is on display until 14 July 2019. The artist acknowledges the support of Creative New Zealand Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa.*

JOHN SIMPSON

A Generous Gift

Early in 2017, Professor John Simpson, the former head of the School of Fine Arts at the University of Canterbury, approached the Gallery's then director, Jenny Harper, with a proposition: he had been considering the future of the art collection he had accumulated over the past six decades, and wished to know whether the Gallery would be interested in selecting a group of works for a gift. My colleague Ken Hall and I visited John one afternoon in March. It quickly became apparent to us that the collection was significant and that the offer was particularly generous. Interestingly, we discovered that the works variously represented John's own artistic interests and his national and international artworld connections. As such, they told a story of art and art history that usefully expanded the local account.

John Simpson arrived in New Zealand in 1958, appointed as a senior lecturer in design at the University of Canterbury. A notable silversmith (one of only six invited to make work for the Festival of Britain in 1950), he'd been lecturing at the College of Industrial Design in Newcastle upon Tyne, where he had a hand in developing one of the first courses in Britain for industrial design. He'd been trained in traditional silversmithing techniques in order to make prototypes for objects designed for mass production. Interviewed by a selection board at the University of London that included the pre-eminent art critic Herbert Read, he was appointed to the position and sailed to Christchurch first class with his wife Ming, on board the *S.S. Gothic*.

He was more than a little horrified when he arrived at the School of Fine Arts, then housed in the re-purposed Okeover buildings out at the Ilam campus. (Famously, the art school was one of the first departments to move from town to Ilam, and one of the last to get its own building.) In fact, he described the buildings and facilities as "woefully inadequate", and spent the first three months in the job over the summer making tools so that he could actually teach silversmithing the following academic year. The art school itself, he commented, was typical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of a British art school of thirty years earlier, still teaching under the influence of the Victorian South Kensington system. He changed that as soon as he could, instigating group projects to "promote a sense of family" among the students.

When the head of the school, Colin Lovell-Smith, died unexpectedly, Simpson applied for the job. He was in two minds about his application; before leaving Britain, he had been promised a lectureship at the prestigious, progressive Central School of Art in London in three years' time, and had intended to stay in New Zealand only that long. He was also concerned that his wife, who was an identical twin and close to her sister, would be missing family in England. In the end Ming Simpson encouraged him to apply for the role. The chances of him being appointed as the chair of an English art school were low, she said, and this represented a significant opportunity for him. Three candidates were brought out from Europe to be interviewed for the position. "It came as a very big surprise when they appointed me," he said.

As head of school and the first professor of fine arts at Canterbury from 1961 until his retirement in 1990, Simpson did much to modernise the art school and to raise its profile and status among other university departments. He was a fierce advocate for the student body, and employed many high-profile practising artists as lecturers, including Don Peebles and Doris Lusk. He arranged for the teaching staff to have a day off a week to work on their own studio practices, and forged links with other university departments, in particular psychology, which was developing experiments into visual perception.

Privately, he collected works by New Zealand artists he admired and wished to support, including Lusk, Vivian Lynn and his colleague Maurice Askew, who taught film at the art school. He has an ongoing interest in historical British printmaking, acquiring significant works by Hogarth and Rowlandson over the years. When we visited John, he encouraged Ken

and me to make a list of all the works we thought could find a useful home in the city's collection. We followed his instructions, and were astounded—and very moved—to find that John and his family had approved the gift of everything on the list, including John's own early designs in silver and two significant eighteenth-century silver pieces, among them the only known work by Hester Bateman in New Zealand. John was keen that a piece of this calibre remain in Christchurch for later generations to be able to see at first hand. The collection was given to Christchurch Art Gallery by the Simpson family in memory of their late wife and mother Ming Simpson, who passed away in 2012. We'll be using these works often in our future exhibitions.

Lara Strongman
Head Curator

Previous spread:

Hester Bateman
***Silver Coffee Pot*, 1779**

It's a remarkable coffee pot, in such perfect condition. I've got an idea it's been put away in a drawer for donkey's years, and hardly ever used, because the engraving on it is as sharp as if it were done yesterday. I came across it in North Canterbury, when I was doing assessments for insurance. I said I would need to get corroboration that it was genuine, because the mark was slightly effaced. I sent high-resolution photos of the mark to the V&A, to a friend who was then keeper of metals there. He was prepared to write a letter of authentication that it was a genuine mark. I was toying for a while recently with the idea of selling it through Sotheby's in New York. But in the end I thought it would be nice to have something of that quality in a public collection in Christchurch.

Above:

Vivian Lynn, *Clouded Bay*, 1965

This is a lovely landscape, a beautiful painting. A mixture of oil and wax. It's a luscious painting, almost liquid, with a dry-brush skating across the surface. The landscape is Cloudy Bay. It hung in my bedroom for years, and I never got tired of it. Every morning I'd wake up and see something different in it. I purchased it from one of the Hay's Prizes. At that time I was writing for the *Press*, and I featured it in my review, and then backed my opinion by buying it! Vivian was a marvellous person, a stalwart, defending the rights of women.

Above left:

John Simpson, *Teapot*, 1950

I made the teapot for the *Festival of Britain* in 1950. I don't quite know how it happened, but I became known for making teapots. I had a series of commissions, and then I was invited by the Tea Council to advise them on the design of teapots. They had a building in Lower Regent Street in London … their job was to make sure people had reliable information about tea. A lot of myths had grown up about tea in Britain. For example, people had been advised never to stir tea. In the eighteenth century it was believed that a large part of the enjoyment of tea was due to the supernatant oils, which gave it its fragrance. Stirring would have drowned these oils and the fragrance would be lost.

When something new came out, the Tea Council would invite me to review it, from a design perspective. So I became almost by accident a person who could be consulted about teapots.

I was invited to make a teapot for the Festival of Britain on the Southbank. And because it was going to be seen by literally hundreds of thousands of visitors, I engraved my name on top of the teapot. Free advertising!

At that time I did quite a lot of research into pouring. And I eventually hit upon a shape for a spout where it was impossible to get the liquid on to the wrong side of the pot. It was a matter of trial and error, gradually approaching a form that was 100%. After that, I got more orders than I could handle. If you're really good, you can make a pot in about ten days. You can't make one any quicker.

Above right:

John Simpson, *Coffee Pot*, 1951

I made the coffee pot a year later, in 1951. I'd like to think it represents a slight advance—me being another year older, and exposed to more influence and development. It's just a little bit better in its design. It was exhibited at the V&A at one stage, on temporary loan for a year.

The Latin inscription translates roughly as: After a day's exertion, it's sweet to sit in front of the hearth, enjoying the warmth of the fire.

I didn't hallmark the either the coffee pot or the teapot because I never intended to sell them. You can't sell silver in Britain without a hallmark. It's an offence. I knew they were good, and I wanted to keep them in the family.

Thomas Rowlandson, *Bachelor's Fare, or Bread, Cheese, and Kisses,* 1813

The entire drawing is done with brush only using watercolour pigments and it is without question a tour de force of brush technique. It is said he got an engraver to run off a large number of prints. Of course the prints were a right-to-left inversion. The prints sold like hotcakes because people believed it featured the Duke of Kent, who was well known for disappearing from State occasions and ending up in the kitchens, flirting with the kitchen maids. The print was taken up by less than scrupulous engravers, who borrowed the image and sold it under their own names. This led to a large number of such prints in circulation. But the watercolour brush drawing is the genesis of them all.

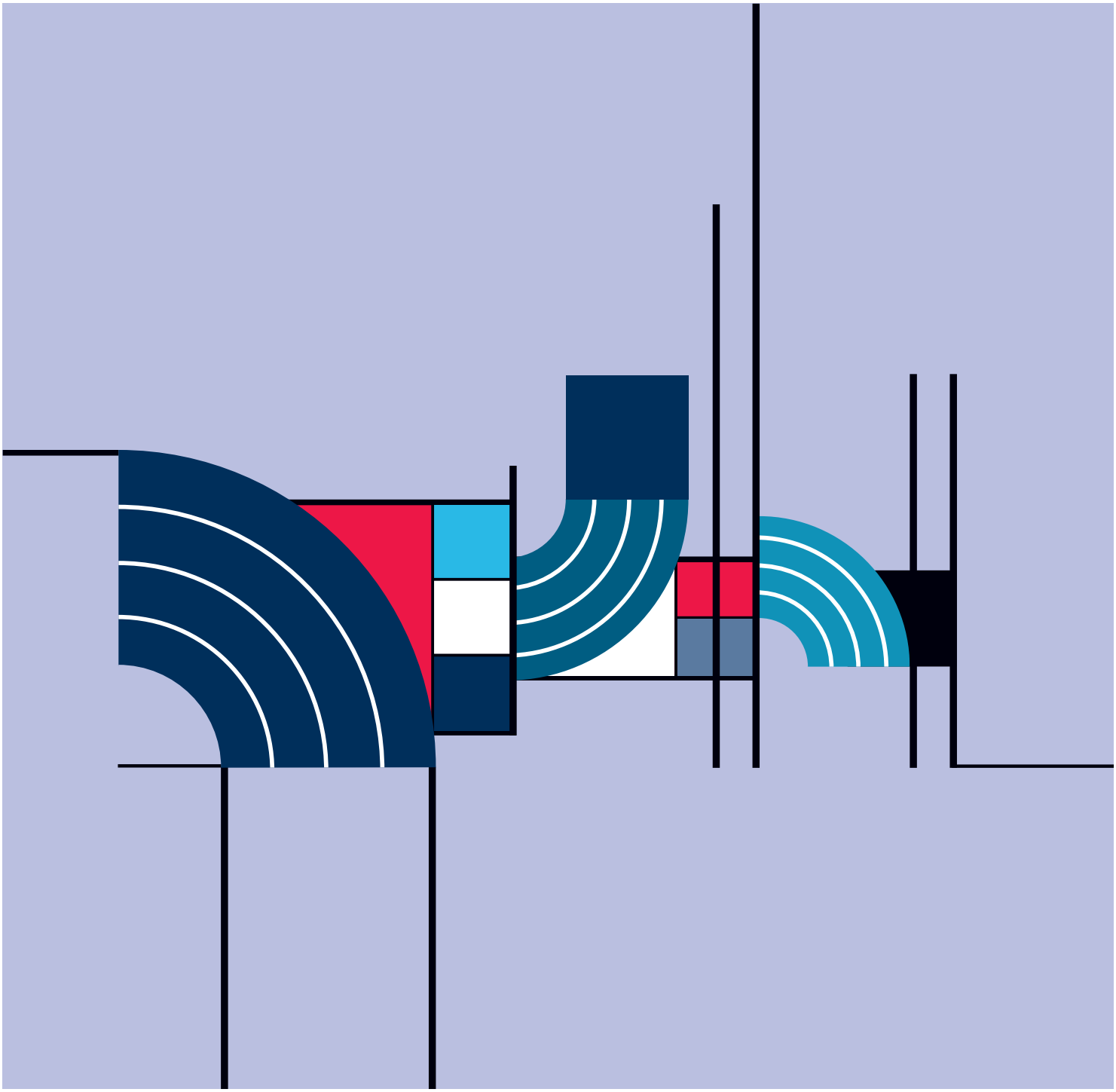
William Hogarth, *The Five Orders of Periwigs*, 1761

I acquired three particularly interesting prints by Hogarth from an antiquarian print and booksellers in Gower Street in London. They came from the estate of Mary Hogarth—Hogarth's wife. *The Five Orders of Periwigs* is a lovely skit on the pageantry of the legal system, the various wigs worn by different grades of judges—all done very tongue-in-cheek, lampooning the hierarchy. It would have been perfect to include in the Gallery's recent *Bad Hair Day* exhibition!

Doris Lusk, *Church Road, Kaitaia,* 1967

Doris was a colleague of mine—and a wonderful person. I often purchased work from her exhibitions. This is a very loose and expressionistic painting. It was auctioned at the CSA—as it was in those days—and contested by Miles Warren and myself, bidding against each other. I stuck it out, and won!

John Simpson's quotes are drawn from his interview with Liz Grant, Port Hills Productions. Commissioned by Christchurch Art Gallery, 5 August 2016.



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Don’t miss these two great new books from Christchurch Art Gallery.

Hidden Light: Early Canterbury and West Coast Photography

In uncovering the remarkable, largely unseen work of early New Zealand photographers, *Hidden Light: Early Canterbury and West Coast Photography* is an exploration of an often overlooked aspect of our artistic past. This publication highlights the sometimes unsettling stories of photographers at work in nineteenth-century Te Waipounamu.

Spectacular landscapes by skilled amateurs and professionals join powerful images of tangata whenua, settlers and mining scenes. The stories and work of several little-known pioneering women photographers are also given new attention.

Ken Hall with Haruhiko Sameshima / 144 pages
Published with the assistance of the Friends of Christchurch Art Gallery

$49.99

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Eileen Mayo: Nature, Art and Poetry

Calling on the natural world around her for inspiration, Eileen Mayo’s extraordinary skill with line, colour and composition made her one of Britain’s foremost print artists in 1930s London. Mayo left it all behind when, in 1953, she abandoned London for Sydney then Christchurch, each move generating a new body of work. This book, and the exhibition it accompanies, brings together for the first time many of her exquisite neo-romantic wood engravings, prints, designs and book illustrations that continue to enthral and delight audiences.

Peter Vangioni with Jillian Cassidy / 88 pages

Now available in our Design Store and online at christchurchartgallery.org.nz/shop


ELIZABETH KELLY

My Favourite

***Janet Abbott** is visitor host supervisor at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū and an art historian and teacher with a particular interest early Canterbury art.*

Many of us have works of art that are favourites, and these are often works that resonate with us or speak to us in some way. *Margaret* is one of those works for me. The portrait spends most of its time safely in storage at the art gallery but, for the summer of 1996–7, it and twenty-two other portraits by Elizabeth Kelly were shown at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery—*Margaret* graced the cover of the catalogue. The show brought a small flurry of excitement around Christchurch and, about sixty years after she had sat for her portrait, Margaret turned up to the show.

This is what draws me to art history—the excitement of finding long-forgotten facts, of joining the dots and piecing together the past. And so it was that, later in 1997, I tracked Margaret Westgarth (née Hatherley) down. We sat in Margaret's lounge at the Fitzroy Apartments, surrounded by paintings, including two portraits of her, and she told me of how Elizabeth and Cecil Kelly discovered her, in the art department at Beath & Co. The couple peered around the door and discussed her for some time; after a while, Cecil came in and asked if she would sit for Elizabeth. Because Elizabeth Kelly was a well-respected painter, Beath & Co. allowed Margaret an afternoon off each week for the task and over time she sat for four portraits, *Blue and Silver* followed by *Margaret,* a pastel and finally a portrait in a tennis outfit.

Margaret recalled how well she got on with the couple. Elizabeth talked to her about Russia and their travels overseas, and when Cecil arrived home from teaching at the Art School he would go out and get cream cakes and make afternoon tea for them. She was never paid for her time, instead Elizabeth gave her a small painting for each portrait completed. One of these paintings was a small oil painting of Margaret's dog that was completed one hot nor'west afternoon with the panting collie tied to the leg of the Kellys' chair.

Blue and Silver and *Margaret* were sent overseas to Elizabeth's agent in London, intended for the Royal Academy and the Salon in Paris, and Margaret said that with the onset of the war, they were not returned for many years in case the ship returning them was bombed. Margaret remembered more—the room where she sat in the Montreal Street apartment with the view out of the south facing window to the river, the tent that Cecil tacked up as a background for this picture, the outfits she wore for the various portraits and the long hours of sitting. I feel lucky to have had the opportunity to record her memories and this is what makes *Margaret* one of my favourites.

Elizabeth Kelly *Margaret* c.1936. Oil on canvas. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū, purchased 1951

Get closer to art with the Friends

Join the Friends for a preview of *William Wegman: Being Human* on Saturday 6 April 9am

William Ewing, the American curator of the exhibition, will present a floortalk at 10.30am.

Friends receive a special discount entry for the exhibition and can go in the draw to win a copy of the exhibition catalogue.

Visit our website for further information christchurchartgallery.org.nz/support/friends

Friends present your membership card at Universo Brasserie & Bar to receive 10% off your order on the morning of the preview.

To join the Friends and access more great events, head to **christchurchartgallery.org.nz/friends**. Check out the event listings on pages 60–63 of this magazine for all our events.

Image: William Wegman *Upside Downward* 2006. Colour Polaroid photograph. Courtesy the artist. © William Wegman

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CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY
TE PUNA O WAIWHETŪ

Pagework no.40

Each quarter the Gallery commissions an artist to create a new work of art especially for Bulletin. *It's about actively supporting the generation of new work.*

When I moved away from Christchurch in my mid-twenties, there were a handful of places that I returned to regularly in memory and on visits home. Te Waihora—Lake Ellesmere—was one of them. It's a shallow brackish lagoon to the south of Christchurch, separated from the ocean by the stony Kaitorete Spit. You see it as you drive to Akaroa and Banks Peninsula, a vast body of water shining silver in the distance, a home for the black swans that were naturalised by nineteenth-century European settlers. It's an important cultural and mahika kai site for Ngāi Tahu, although it's now horribly polluted by agricultural run-off. It's a beautiful place, flat and stark and uncompromising under the big skies of Canterbury; the kind of landscape that gets in your head and never leaves.

Christchurch-based photographer Mitchell Bright grew up in the Selwyn District. His childhood home was about ten minutes' drive from the lake, and it's somewhere he often revisits too, drawn by the expansive landscape. "You can walk for hours and hours," he says, "and feel as if you have gotten nowhere." Bright takes his camera on these walks, and documents traces of human interaction with the landscape—tyre tracks, a burned-out vehicle, a maimai, a mattress and bed base dumped by a track. He uses a medium format rangefinder camera, which allows for sharp focus. A Manichean horizon line bisects each image. The evidence of human activity he records is frequently perfunctory and brutal, yet Bright's views are dominated by the vast emptiness of the landscape. Out there on the flat land at Te Waihora, the land and the sky seem to go on forever.

With *Landscape Studies—Te Waihora*, Bright captures a walk around the margins of the lake in eight photographs. "For me there is never a single image that sums up the experience."

Lara Strongman
Head curator

Mitchell Bright *Landscape Studies—Te Waihora* 2019.
Silver gelatin contact print

Postcard From...

Jenny Harper
Riga, Latvia

I've been conscious of Riga since the 1980s when I organised an exhibition of the work of Australian artist Imants Tillers for the former National Art Gallery in Wellington. Although born in Sydney, Latvian was spoken at Tillers's home and the city's name features from time-to-time in his work, including the large multiple-canvas board painting bought for the NAG collection—*Diaspora* (1992). But my awareness of Latvia's politics and past history was minimal until my visit.

A new retrospective of Tillers's work in Riga was a good reason to go and—like a number of Australians here for a series of Tillers-related events including the launch of a new film about the artist and the world premiere of a musical composition inspired by his paintings—I'm pleased with the recognition he's receiving in the country of his origin as well as that of his birth. It's a good show with an informative and well-illustrated catalogue. It's both strange and familiar to be in Riga seeing Auckland Art Gallery's *Hiatus* (1987), Tillers's unabashed appropriation of both Eugene von Guérard's *Milford Sound* (1877–79) and Colin McCahon's *I AM in Victory over Death 2* (1970), as well as a range of his earlier and later work.

Once here, it's hard not to become aware of the troubled history of a proudly independent and individual Latvia, with successive occupations by the USSR, Germany and, again, the USSR during the twentieth century. Many amazing cathedrals and basilicas have been reconstructed in full or in part. And unsurprisingly there are a number of places of reflection, including the majestic centrally-sited Freedom Monument, with an elongated female figure holding three golden stars aloft, and—near me—the Bloody Sunday Monument made in 1959.

I'm staying in the old town, over the canal from central Riga where the National Museum of Art, the neo-rococo Splendid Palace cinema and various parks and garden areas are located. There's lots of walking to be done, though this is tiring on the largely cobbled stone roads and barely-even-there footpaths. But stumbling on various landmarks and markets in this UNESCO-listed city is a good way to see and learn. And it's the season of festivals, with groups in varying traditional costumes happily performing in streets as well as in more formal venues during the long days of summer.

Riga also boasts perhaps Europe's largest collection of art nouveau architecture and it's all through the old town. So perhaps it's unsurprising to find both the Art Nouveau Museum and an exhibition of art nouveau material in the Art Museum Riga Bourse (reminding me of Christchurch's 2007 exhibition *Morris & Co.*, with similar loans from London's V&A and the Musée d'Orsay, Paris).

Where would a postcard from Riga be without reference to their cuisine? Very near here is a Latvian restaurant with saffron-infused Baltic herrings and pork neck rolls with yellow pea puree on the menu. I'm going again this evening with some new English friends, also here for Imants Tillers, wondering if I might try the beef heart tartare (or not).

Finally, I'm disappointed to have become aware of RIBOCA1 — the first Riga Biennale of Art — a little late in the piece. The pamphlet promises art which is "breathtaking, vibrant, offensive and captivating" but, like many such events, venues are multiple and scattered. A longer stay is needed to enjoy all that Riga has to offer.

Exhibition Programme

Opening this Quarter

William Wegman: Being Human
6 April until 28 July 2019
The first and only New Zealand exhibition of senior American artist William Wegman's photographic work.

Wheriko—Brilliant!
Opens 17 May 2019
Artists play with shadow and light, transforming the familiar into the extraordinary.

Closing this Quarter

Gordon Walters: New Vision
Until 17 March 2019
Modernist abstract painting with a distinctly South Pacific energy.

Simon Denny: The Founder's Paradox
Until 28 April 2019
Simon Denny uses gaming to reflect on competing political visions for New Zealand's future.

Ongoing

Eileen Mayo: Nature, Art and Poetry
Until 9 June 2019
An artist's intense love of nature echoes throughout her work.

Trusttum: Just a Glimpse
Until 16 June 2019
Exuberant and boisterous, these large paintings by Philip Trusttum will lift the spirits.

Julia Morison: Headcase
Until 14 July 2019
An installation of seven small hexagonal rooms and 100 ceramic heads, each distinctly different from the next.

Hidden Light: Early Canterbury and West Coast Photography
Until 25 August 2019
Uncovering the extraordinary and largely unseen work of early New Zealand photographers.

Jess Johnson and Simon Ward: Genetekker Archaic
A collaboration based on an old-school platform video game, commissioned by Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū.

New Dawn Fades
A selection of the Gallery's most-treasured historical European artworks.

Our Collection: 19th and 20th Century New Zealand Art
Our lively historical collection exhibitions explore Māori architecture, colonial portraiture, early landscape painting and mid-century abstraction.

We Do This
As Aotearoa New Zealand marks 125 years of universal suffrage, we've recharged our contemporary collection spaces with a high-voltage hang featuring several must-see recent acquisitions.

Lonnie Hutchinson: Hoa Kōhine (Girlfriend)
An intricately cut-out billboard celebrating supportive friendships between women.

Martin Creed: Everything is Going to be Alright
A completely unequivocal, but also pretty darn ambiguous, work for Christchurch.

Reuben Paterson: The End
A sparkling elevator installation offering an unexpected space for contemplation and connection.

Séraphine Pick: Untitled (Bathers)
Pick's lush watercolour offers a utopian vision in the carpark elevator.

Marie Shannon: The Aachen Faxes
Shannon's sound work contemplates love, loss and longing across distance.

Tomorrow Still Comes: Natalia Saegusa
A fragmented, poetic temporary wall painting by Natalia Saegusa.

Coming Soon

Bill Hammond: Playing the Drums
Paintings, prints and drawings by New Zealand's favourite painter and drummer.

Now, Then, Next
Time and the contemporary in recent works from the collection.

Events

Talks

Richard Killeen on Walters
6 March / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Celebrated for his iconic 'cut outs', artist Richard Killeen—like Gordon Walters—has had a profound impact on visual culture in New Zealand. In this talk Killeen touches on meeting Walters in the early 1970s, and the effect of their long friendship on their respective practices. Not to be missed.

Hidden Light
9 March / 3pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Highlighting largely unseen work by early Canterbury and West Coast photographers, curator Ken Hall explores an often overlooked aspect of our artistic past.

Kā Waituhi Oro: The Work of Dr Margaret Orbell
17 March / 3pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Margaret Orbell was a highly respected writer and scholar of Māori culture and the wife of Gordon Walters. Her colleagues Christine Tremewan, Jennifer Shennan and Wendy Pond discuss her life and work with Julia Waite (Auckland Art Gallery).

Friends Speaker of the Month: Barbara Garrie and Bridgit Anderson
27 March / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / $8, Friends $5, students with ID free
Barbara Garrie, senior lecturer in art history at the University of Canterbury, and photographer Bridgit Anderson of *Place in Time*, the Canterbury Documentary Project discuss the influence of collecting nineteenth-century Victorian memorial photography on a twenty-first-century photographic practice.

A Passionate Affair: Fashion Meets Photography (and they're Still Together)
3 April / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
A unique opportunity to hear noted curator and author William Ewing present Fashion as an older woman (born in the 1680s) and Photography as a younger man (born 1839). They do not meet until 1911, when Edward Steichen makes the first fashion photos and it's love at first sight.

Exploring the Female Gaze
3 April / 7.30pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Award-winning female landscape photographers talk about their lives and work as women exploring the outdoors through a lens, featuring Mount Maunganui-based Kiwi Rach Stewart and American Crystal Brindle (also a DOC ranger, avid tramper and keen trail runner).

William Wegman
6 April / 10.30am / meet at front desk / exhibition entry fee applies
Join celebrated curator William Ewing for a tour through our new exhibition of American artist William Wegman's photographic work and discover more about his life and practice.

Friends Speaker of the Month: Ciaran Begley
17 April / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / $8, Friends $5, students with ID free
Join Ciaran Begley as he discusses the development of his installations of sculptural and functional forms, which invite playful public participation while offering sidelong visions of the forces at play in our world. Begley's work will be on show at the Ilam Campus Gallery from 3 to 31 May.

Such a Good Likeness that she Cannot be Confused with Anyone Else
1 May / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
This talk by VUW lecturer Minette Hillyer focuses on New Zealand's earliest film stars. How did cinema's modern circuits of exchange and display, and the twinned imperative that a 'star' be both unique and recognisable, play out via the local women—Māori and settler—who appeared in our silent movies?

Friends Speaker of the Month: Reuben Paterson
15 May / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / $8, Friends $5, students with ID free
Join visiting artist Reuben Paterson as he discusses the concept and creation process of three of his major public art works, exploring both the positive and polemic outcomes that surfaced—because each work has its own secret.

Haruhiko Sameshima
22 May / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Artist and photographer Haruhiko Sameshima discusses his longstanding exploration of the world(s) presented in historical photographic images of New Zealand, focusing on the works presented in our new exhibition *Hidden Light*.

Wheriko—Brilliant!
29 May / 6pm / meet at front desk / free
Join us as a selection of artists featured in our new exhibition *Wheriko—Brilliant!* speak about their works and practices, and discuss the many roles light can play within the making and experiencing of art.

Special Events

Truth or Consequences
13 March / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Five new works for cinema by artists Andrew de Freitas, Jeremy Leatinu'u, Vea Mafile'o, Janine Randerson and Bridget Reweti. *Truth or Consequences* is curated by UK-based academic Erika Balsom. Presented with CIRCUIT Artist Film and Video Aotearoa Zealand and introduced by CIRCUIT director Mark Williams.

Friends AGM
27 March / 7.30pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium
The AGM follows the Speaker of the Month at 6pm. Supper will be served in the Bayleys Knight Frank Foyer after the AGM. *This is a Friends only event*.

Friends Coffee + Art
29 March / 11.15am / Universo Brasserie & Bar
Join the Friends for a coffee and great conversation in Universo, then enjoy a 30 minute Art Bite talk at 12pm. *See our website for details*.

Friends Nadene Milne Gallery Visit: Sam Harrison
30 March / 10am / Nadene Milne Gallery, 10 Bath Street / $20
Join Nadene Milne in conversation with Christchurch-based sculptor Sam Harrison. Hear them discuss the inspiration behind, and process for, Sam's practice.

Playing Strategically
31 March / 1pm / Bayleys Knight Frank Foyer / free
In case you missed it, board games are cool again, so because Simon Denny's board game-inspired exhibition *The Founder's Paradox* is currently on we are going to spend an afternoon playing some of the best games on offer. Bring your game face. *See our website for details*.

Friends Exhibition Preview: Being Human
6 April / 9am / meet at the front desk / $8
Enjoy a private viewing of *William Wegman: Being Human* before it opens to the public. *This is a Friends only event*.

Workshop: Inspired by Eileen
10 April / 6pm / Education Centre / $10
Join Gallery educator Susie Cox as she leads you in a workshop inspired by artist Eileen Mayo. Participants will make a watercolour and a woodcut print of their own design to take home. Ages 16+

Friends Visit: Exchange Christchurch Creative Hub and Café
13 April / 10.30am / XCHC, 376 WilsonsRoad / $20
XCHC is a post-quake initiative that provides an affordable space for artists to experiment, test and showcase ideas, and work alongside like-minded practitioners. After morning tea in the café we'll enjoy a talk and tour of the artists space with operations manager Preston Hegel.

Workshop: Are You Game to Animate?
27 April / 1pm / Tūrunga Central Library / $35
Video-maker and animator Simon Ward leads a digital animation workshop for teenagers and adults inspired by his work with artist Jess Johnson, *Genetekker Archaic*—a collaboration based on an old-school video game.

Friends Coffee + Art
3 May / 11.15am / Universo Brasserie & Bar
Join the Friends for a coffee and great conversation in Universo, then enjoy a 30 minute Art Bite talk at 12pm. *See our website for details*.

NZ Music Month: Moving Dreams
4 May / 3pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Celebrate New Zealand Music Month with a special screening of a series of animated videos by Jody Lloyd. These videos create beautiful dreamscapes to tracks from some of your favourite Kiwi musicians including Barry Saunders and The Warratahs, Ariana Tikao, Craig Smith, Al Park, Jhan Lindsay, Phil Johns, Trillion, Andy Gibson and Demarnia Lloyd. Accompanied by live music.

After Dark
24 May / 7.30pm / Bayleys Knight Frank Foyer / free
Give SAD the finger by getting down at the Gallery this May and celebrating our new light-themed exhibition *Wheriko—Brilliant!* Be dazzled by contemporary art after dark, experience the hottest bands and DJs, immerse yourself in the Gallery's collection, taste incredible food and beverages at this party of epic proportions. It's gonna to be lit.

Friends Jonathan Smart Gallery Visit: Zina Swanson
25 May / 10am / Jonathan Smart Gallery, 50 Buchan Street / $20
Zina Swanson, inaugural recipient of the Grace Butler Memorial Foundation Award, talks about the works in her latest exhibition. *This is a Friends only event*.

Live Art
28 and 30 May / 7.30pm / Bayleys Knight Frank Foyer / $49.20
Experience a cornucopia of musical riches performed amongst the galleries of the Christchurch Art Gallery. Sit, stand or walk around to view the exhibitions as the CSO is led through a fascinating programme by violinist and director, Mark Menzies. *See our website for details*.

Friends Coffee + Art
31 May / 11.15am / Universo Brasserie & Bar
Join the Friends for a coffee and great conversation in Universo, then enjoy a 30 minute Art Bite talk at 12pm. *See our website for details*.

Family and Kids

Art Safari
5 March, 2 April, 7 May / 10am and 1pm / Education Centre / free
A chance for pre-schoolers to paint, glue, print, stamp and colour without making a mess at home.
Ages 2–4

School Holidays: Where's your Head At?
15–18, 23, 24, 26 April / 11am / Education Centre / $8 per child
Inspired by Julia Morison's exhibition *Headcase*, children will use clay to sculpt their own curious craniums.
Ages 5+

School Holidays: Choose Your Own Adventure
15–18, 23, 24, 26 April / 2pm / Education Centre / $8 per child
Inspired by Simon Denny's exhibition *The Founders Paradox*, children will design their own board game to take home!
Ages 8+

Artists' Toolbox
8 May – 19 June / Wednesdays 3.30–5pm / Education Centre / $90
Do you know a young person who loves to sketch? Artists' Toolbox is a seven-week after-school course. The lessons cover drawing skills that every young artist can use to develop their work. See our website for details. Age 8–13

Films

Short Tails
10 April / 4pm/ Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
A selection of short films for all ages by artist William Wegman starring his iconic Weimaraners. Every frame a delight.
Repeating Wednesdays 4pm and Sundays 11am and 3pm.

Tron Legacy
24 April / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
School holiday family fun! Sam, the son of famous video-game developer Kevin Flynn (Jeff Bridges), is haunted by his father's mysterious disappearance. A strange signal draws Sam to Flynn's Arcade, and he is pulled into the same cyberworld in which his father, its creator, has been trapped for twenty years. Excellent soundtrack by Daft Punk! 125 mins. PG

Indie Game: The Movie
8 May / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
This Sundance award-winning film is the first feature documentary about making video games. It looks specifically at the underdogs of the video game industry, indie game developers, who sacrifice money, health and sanity to realise their lifelong dreams of sharing their visions with the world. 103 mins.

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Christchurch Art Gallery Foundation
The Christchurch Art Gallery Foundation is committed to building an endowment and a collection that reflects a truly significant period on the history of our city. We have the chance to shape the culture of Christchurch by developing a collection which honours the past, reveals the present and helps us imagine the future. We began the TOGETHER programme in 2014 and are continuing to offer opportunities for businesses and individuals to help us realise our mission.

Level One TOGETHER Partners
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Ben and Penny Gough, trustees of the Ben Gough Family Foundation
Grumps
Joanna and Kevin Hickman
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Leaanne O'Sullivan and Andrew Vincent
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Level Three Partners (100) and Hospitality Partners (5)
Please see christchurchartgallery.org.nz/support/foundation for a full list.
Thank you to the generous partners of our five great works:

Michael Parekowhai *Chapman's Homer*
1093 generous donations from Christchurch and beyond, along with proceeds from the first annual gala dinner

Bill Culbert *Bebop*
Purchased with assistance from Gabrielle Tasman and proceeds from the second annual gala dinner

Martin Creed *Work No. 2314 [Everything is going to be alright]*
Purchased with the generous support of Grumps, and installed with proceeds from the third annual gala dinner.

Bridget Riley *Cosmos*
Purchased with the generous help of: Heather Boock; Ros Burdon; Kate Burtt; Dame Jenny Gibbs; Ann de Lambert and daughters, Sarah, Elizabeth, Diana, and Rachel; Barbara, Lady Stewart; Gabrielle Tasman; Jenny Todd; Nicky Wagner; Wellington Women's Group (est. 1984); and installed with proceeds from the fourth annual gala dinner.

Ron Mueck
Purchased with the generous help of: Catherine and David Boyer; Friends of Christchurch Art Gallery; Ben Gough Family Foundation; Charlotte and Marcel Gray; Christchurch Art Gallery's London Club; Jenny and Andrew Smith; Gabrielle Tasman and Ken Lawn; proceeds from the fifth annual gala dinner; and 514 big-hearted individuals and companies.

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http://www.christchurchartgallery.org.nz/support

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CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY TE PUNA O WAIWHETŪ