

BULLETIN OF THE CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY TE PUNA O WAIWHETU autumn march - may 06



Exhibitions Programme

March, April, May

ALLUSION & ILLUSION

Kees Bruin's super-realist paintings explore the boundaries between reality and illusion, creating an enigmatic and intriguing world.

THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT This first survey of Jason Greig's foreboding, otherworldly landscapes, seascapes and figures reveals a sinister side of the

SOUTHERN LIGHTS

A remarkable installation by leading photographer Anne Noble explores how the medium of photography shapes our impressions

JEFFREY HARRIS

A unique journey through the extraordinary career of

CECIL BEATON

The glamorous worlds of fashion, literature and film meet in this major international exhibition of one of the most celebrated British portrait photographers of the twentieth century. Toured by the National Portrait Gallery, London.

From the Gallery Collections

THE COLLECTIONS

Divided into Historical, Twentieth Century and Contemporary

APE TO ZIP

A light-hearted art alphabet adventure bringing together a curious assortment of artworks in an exhibition designed to captivate the young and the young at heart.

GRAPHICA BRITANNICA

Highlights from the Rex Nan Kivell gift of prints by some of the most highly regarded British printmakers of the early to mid **Ravenscar Gallery**

William A. Sutton Gallery

Tait Electronics Antarctica Gallery

Touring Exhibition Galleries & Borg Henry Gallery

William A. Sutton & Ravenscar Galleries publication available
admission charges apply

TE PUNA O WAIWHETU CHRISTCHURCH **ART GALLERY**

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Burdon Family Gallery

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Coming Soon Previewing Cecil Beaton: Portraits

Back cover: Head with Cross (Self-portrait) 1998–2003 Jeffrey Harris. Oil on board. Collection of Dunedin Public Art Gallery

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Director's Foreword P. ANTHONY PRESTON

Guy Boyce is Director of the Christchurch Arts Festival.

"I was seeking a work that expressed the unique aspects of this city and the liveliness of the people who live here."



Beach Figure 1 c. 1963 Russell Clark. Cement. Collection of the Gallery

When I first shifted to Christchurch with my family in crab backs at the edge of the tide, and stomping her heel 2000 to take over running the Christchurch Arts Festival, into the sand to make the biggest impression. I admit not knowing Christchurch well, and my chief A second look reveals a head that might be an owl impression of the city was one formed from flying in - a morepork? - and the towel has become wings. The over the checkerboard of the Canterbury Plains. Now I owl is getting ready to fly in search of prey. The wings naturally have a much more complex view that draws on are furrowed like the sand at the tide's edge and bring me the artists I have met and the cultural life I have enjoyed back to the beach. over the last six years, in addition to the landscape of Throwing Russell Clark into Google, it is nice to discover Christchurch and its environs.

In stalking the permanent collections at the Gallery in search of my favourite, I was seeking a work that expressed the unique aspects of this city and the liveliness of the people who live here. I was captivated by Russell Clark's magnificent sculpture in concrete, Beach Figure 1, that sits in the almost-contemporary section at the Gallery and was made around 1963.

Of course, Andrew Drummond and his wonderful bridge This sculpture was inspired by Clark seeing a young girl was the latest in a long line of artists and public artworks to on the beach at New Brighton with her towel outspread and stir up public debate, and I have no way of knowing whether the wind blowing it against her body in relief. Skinny as a Beach Figure 1 stirred up any controversy in its day. rake, I saw my daughter Matilda taking a rest to warm up, Whatever. This work has invoked my daughter running, before throwing off her towel and flying down the beach sand blowing, and has brought back the salty, seaweedy, to jump over the waves, searching for interesting shells and rust-stained smell of New Brighton in summer.



Dear Friends and Supporters

2006 has ushered in exciting times for the Gallery team as we work to develop a bold new vision for the Gallery, creating a dynamic programme that will deliver a new and enlarged audience.

The Paradigm Shift, as detailed in recent media coverage, moves us towards new frontiers, enabling the Gallery team to build on the remarkable foundations laid since the new facility opened in May 2003.

The team has embraced the Paradigm Shift, and welcomes on board the expertise of Kris Cooper as project manager to steer the Gallery towards a future where it is high on the list of cultural institutions recognised internationally as a must-see place.

Kris and her Gallery team will bring a fresh perspective, helping us set a new direction to enhance our profile, challenge the public's perception of art and build a future that sees the Christchurch Art Gallery evolve as a community facility that offers new, stimulating experiences through its programme.

The Gallery for the second consecutive year was voted 'the best place to be seen in Christchurch' in business magazine Unlimited's 2005 Readers' Poll. Our challenge is to use this position of strength as the platform to achieve a new level of success in 2006 and beyond.

In this autumn issue of Bulletin, we introduce three exciting new exhibitions by three very different artists - Jeffrey Harris, Kees Bruin and Jason Greig. Our thanks to Guy Boyce for sharing his favourite work of art from the permanent collections - Beach Figure 1 by Russell Clark - and Julia Morison for sitting for the Artist Profile in this issue.

Here's to a bright and successful 2006, and we thank you for your continued support.



My Favourite GUY BOYCE





he was born in Christchurch, and came back to the city to tutor at the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts from 1948 until his death in 1966. He made a number of outdoor public sculptures for commission. Responding to the latest ideas of British sculpture, in particular Henry Moore, Clark's work came under considerable public criticism, mocking cartoons and letters to the editor.

SEASON OF PHOTOGRAPHY

The first exhibition in our Season of Photography – Ansel Adams: Photographic Frontiers - proved exceptionally popular, with more than 20,000 visitors! Cecil Beaton: Portraits, the second in the series, starts on 27 May and promises to be just as appealing. One of the most distinguished photographers of the twentieth century, Cecil Beaton is renowned for his portraits of well-known faces from the worlds of fashion, literature and film. This exhibition celebrates this avant-garde, yet quintessential, Englishman whose flamboyant sense of style marks him as one of the most important photographers of recent history.

Right: Queuing for Ansel Adams: Photographic Frontiers

Far right: Baba Beaton: a Symphony in Silver 1925 Cecil Beaton. © Cecil Beaton Archive. Sotheby's London / Collection National Portrait Gallery



For the 2nd year in a row, the **Best 2005 Readers' Poll in business magazine unlimited voted the Gallery the no. 1 best place to be seen in Christchurch!



Eggs on Legs Children's Workshops in April

The famous and fabulous Fabergé decorated eggs made in the nineteenth century for the Tsars of Russia are a great starting point for these special Easter painting and drawing workshops for children. Two separate workshops are offered on 18 and 20 April, starting at 10.30 am until 12 noon, and are suitable for children aged 8-14 years. Places are limited and tickets (\$5 per child) will be available at the Gallery Information Desk. For more information, please telephone (03) 941 7342.

Conserving Passport to the New Millennium

January 2006 sees the start of an important Gallery project to conserve the mural Passport to the New Millennium by Canterbury artist Philip Trusttum. This much-admired work - 84 metres long and consisting of 140 panels - was installed in the reception area of the Christchurch Convention Centre in December 1999 to celebrate the rich culture of Christchurch and New Zealand on the eve of the new Millennium. Over the years, a number of the panels have warped due to environmental conditions such as leaking wall surfaces and changes in humidity and temperature; other panels have been damaged by leaning display boards against them.

The work was declared in need of urgent conservation after a recent inspection by the Gallery's Paintings Conservator, Edward Sakowski. The Gallery is undertaking a comprehensive conservation project, removing all the panels to allow for a new supportive structure to be erected, which will prevent the work from future damage. The panels will then be replaced, after which Edward will remove two panels at a time for treatment.

The project, supported by the Southern Trust, has been welcomed by Neil Roberts, the Gallery's Manager of Collections: 'It will restore the mural to its former glory and protect it for the future enjoyment of generations of Cantabrians and visitors to Christchurch.'

The artwork was originally intended for temporary display before the panels were to be sold individually to a range of public and private buyers. However, the overwhelming response to the work from the general public and the arts community led to a successful funding drive to secure the work for permanent public display at the Convention Centre. The work now officially belongs to the people of Christchurch, and as such is cared for by the Gallery.





Restoration work on the mural Passport to the New Millennium by Philip Trusttum

French Documentary Films

The Gallery's Montana Wednesday Evening programme for May features a fascinating series of cutting edge contemporary French documentary films from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As film critic Emmanuel Burdeau writes. 'Documentaries are enjoying a vitality that hasn't been seen for thirty years [...] More and more performers and artists are featured in documentaries. And lastly, what is perhaps the most unprecedented development, new documentaries are released in cinemas every month.'

The three films at the Gallery are Le Rossignol, based on Stravinsky's first opera The Nightingale; Mur, which looks at Israel's separation barrier with Palestine; and Les Mauvais Garçons, chronicling violence in Parisian ghettoes. The films screen from 6 pm on 10, 17 and 24 May in the Philip Carter Family Auditorium.



Exhibition Previews

The Gallery will be offering a series of exhibition previews over 2006, where an art expert provides an insightful talk on the exhibition before it opens to the public. Join the Friends to take advantage of these previews, and enjoy behind-thescenes information on forthcoming exhibitions such as the eagerly anticipated Cecil Beaton: Portraits and Julia Morison's exciting new show a loop around a loop! For information on how to join the Friends, telephone (03) 941 7356.

School Holiday Programme

The new holiday quiz for the April school holidays is Bells & Whistles, with fun activities for children looking at how sound can be implied within an artwork. The guiz introduces children to the many skills associated with making and looking at art. Bells & Whistles is ideal for family groups and children aged 4-11 years, and is available daily from 15–24 April, 10 am – 4 pm. The quiz is free, and can be picked up at the Information Desk.



Rugby 1933 William Greengrass. Linocut. Collection of the Gallery. © The Artist, licensed by Viscopy, Australia, 2006

The paintings is t e'u b 01 sense (**eind**) Some Born and raised in Akaroa, Jeffrey Harris embarked upon a singular career as an artist while quite young. sychologiçal pheaval...

Jennifer Hay talks to Justin Paton, curator of a major exhibition of the work of Jeffrey Harris

He moved to Dunedin in 1969 after contacting artists Michael Smither and Ralph Hotere who both encouraged him to pursue his practice there. While in Dunedin he continued to teach himself to paint, largely through art history books and art magazines, becoming fascinated with depicting the human figure and face. His admiration for the work of Albrecht Dürer derives from Dürer's ability to imbue his subject matter with a depth of emotional experience. Harris also identified with Colin McCahon, Tony Fomison and Philip Clairmont, and their themes of isolation, pain and the suffering of humanity.



24March–25June

Harris was Frances Hodgkins Fellow in 1977, and during this rich time of production he developed a visual language to convey autobiographical themes centering around the family. Tensions between people, emotional states and complexities of relationships are rendered through a lexicon of pictorial symbols. Religious themes and motifs become a means by which the artist reveals personal conflicts and highly charged events, all taking place amidst a landscape of intense atmosphere.

Harris later moved to Melbourne where he produced gestural abstract paintings recalling Franz Kline and American Abstract Expressionism. Returning to New Zealand in 1999 he embarked on a new body of work that is notable for its stark formality, while still retaining its emotional and visual depth.

Dunedin Public Art Gallery Curator **Justin Paton** has written a book on the artist and curated this exhibition. I asked him a few questions about the work of Jeffrey Harris.

Q1. Jeffrey Harris has had an unusual career trajectory, one that defies easy definition, and you identify this in the beginning of your book on ťhe artíst. Á book is one thing, but an exhibition presents a whole new range of challenges for the curator. The exhibition is at its final destination at Christchurch Art Gallery after touring for a year. In looking back over this period, how do you feel about the exhibition, and do you think it has been successful in 'reintroducing' Harris to a wider public?

A1. Yes, I do. The show has put more than one hundred of Jeffrey's works, spanning a thirty-year career, in front of audiences in five New Zealand cities. It has given those whose affections lie with the early work some new challenges. And for younger artists and audiences, who are almost always drawn to what Jeffrey is doing now, it has given them a primer in what he was up to in his earlier New Zealand period – which is ancient history to art students born in the eighties. Encountering the responses of those younger artists, who have no preconceptions about what Jeffrey's art used to or ought to look like, has been one of the unanticipated but major pleasures of organising the show. Anyway, when Jeffrey returned to Dunedin from Melbourne around 2000, his work since the mid-1980s was pretty firmly lodged in a local blindspot. The aim of the show was to bring the story up-to-date – a goal that seemed all the more urgent from a local point of view because he is an artist very strongly represented in the Dunedin Public Art Gallery collection. It's a knotty, twisty tale, of course, and I like that about it. Retrospectives have a way of becoming predictable if the career under scrutiny doesn't push back at the retrospective format in testing and possibly cantankerous ways.

Untitled (Judith No. 5) 1978/79 Oil on board. Jim Barr and Mary Barr Ioan collection, Dunedin Public Art Gallery

Facing page: **From Dream 2939** 2002/03 Oil on canvas. Collection of the artist

carefu] caught artist, he has built up this immense stockpile ook of confessional urgency. But in fact the work is that tends to cling to Jeffrey, because his work has a and photography. Perhaps partly because he's a self and looking and borrowing from within a body of cradition and a wider world of books and magazin admit, his motifs are the product of wide reading and as Jeffrey is the first to but I would within himself'. That's an idea AZ- That sounds accurate to me, but I woul want to quarrel (gently!) with the idea that his of favoured images and precedents, and he dra numerous very patiently made, and there down from that all the time. variations on a theme, motifs originate A2.



Q2. Over a thirtyyear career, Harris has developed archetypal motifs that are highly personal statements, often having their origins within himself. Is his success due to his ability to convey a combination of forces that render imagery that is both personal and public?





Facing page: Lovers of Today 1981 Oil on board. Collection of Dunedin Public Art Gallery



Above: **The Education of a Dead Child** 1978 Pencil on paper. Collection of the Hocken Library, Uare Taoka o Hakena, University of Otago

Below: **Head with Birds** 1988 Aquatint on paper. Collection of the Hocken Library, Uare Taoka o Hakena, University of Otago

"they're stories told about a life, rather than raw chunks of that life"





Magdalena at French Farm (detail) 1977–97 Oil on board. Private collection

Q3. Harris once stated that 'you have to live your art'. In this he shares an affinity with McCahon and Fomison, two artists with whom he identified. Is this part of what makes Harris's paintings and works on paper unique, the tension he achieves between formal composition and the messiness of emotions?



A3. Definitely. There's almost an equation at work in those extraordinary etchings and pencil drawings from the late 1970s: maximum emotional pressure under maximum graphic control. Ian Wedde has pointed out the way that huge events always seem to have just happened or to be about to happen in Jeffrey's paintings. The paintings give us this sense of being close to some kind of psychological upheaval or flashpoint – hence my essay title, 'The Threshold'. But it's important to emphasise the artfulness of the works – they're stories told about a life, rather than raw chunks of that life. In a culture that's obsessed with celebrity and behind-the-scenes stuff, it can be easy to lose sight of that distinction.

Q4. His recent series of paintings *From Dream* is almost beyond definition. How does this series continue forward with his pre-occupation with the figure and psyche?

A4. There's a work in Jeffrey's studio called *My* Dream of the Mediterranean, a pastel from 1969 - one of his earliest existing works. And at its centre is a form that looks for all the world like one of the ominous white shmoo or skull shapes in the recent works. So the preoccupations have been constant. I don't know whether these new works are 'beyond definition' though – although I felt that way about them myself on first viewing. Perhaps it's just that they at first look unlike other work of his, and that there aren't all that many local artists practicing this kind of grotesque figuration. If you look more widely, though, at US painters like George Condo or Donald Baechler or Carroll Dunham, there are plenty of analogies. And, although you couldn't call it anything as firm as a 'school', there's definitely a fascination among numerous New Zealand artists with grotesque forms, weird physicality, and a creaturely kind of abstraction - look at Seung Yul Oh, Rohan Wealleans, Seraphine Pick, Peter Robinson or Julia Morison in their new work.

Q5. What are the standout paintings in the exhibition for you?

A5. If I could leave the exhibition with one painting under my arm it would probably be *Magdalena at French Farm*, and not just because it's small enough to slip into a briefcase. It's Jeffrey returning in the 1990s to his 'icon' style of the mid-1970s, and the result is one of those artworks that refuses to be reduced down to its component parts. One can explain and explain it without ever feeling that its power has been exhausted. It has it all: beauty tensed against the grotesque, stillness alongside a sense of narrative potential, strangeness existing inside a known and ordinary landscape, melancholy and also something exalting. Perhaps there's a personal connection too, in that it's based on a photo of Jeffrey's daughter, who is about my age – so way back in memory there's a recognition of that kind of pose, posture, landscape.

Jennifer Hay

Jennifer Hay is Curatorial Assistant (Contemporary Art) at the Gallery.

Jeffrey Harris is in the Touring Exhibition and Borg Henry Galleries from 24 March until 25 June. An accompanying publication by Justin Paton is available from the Gallery Shop. This is a touring exhibition organised by the Dunedin Public Art Gallery and is at its final destination at Christchurch Art Gallery.

Related Event

Harris at the Threshold: A Floortalk with Justin Paton 5 April, 6.00 pm The curator of Jeffrey Harris provides a fascinating floortalk on the exhibition. Venue: Touring Exhibition Galleries

This exhibition is toured by





All artworks © Jeffrey Harr

24March-25June

Julia Morison

In the twenty-five years that Julia Morison has been working, she has laid the foundation for a complex symbolic system upon which her work is based. Inspired by sources such as Hermeticism, the Kabbalah, alchemy and memory systems, Morison's work has come to represent an intellectual order made physical. Beautiful, controlled, surprising, suggestive – her works invite us to reflect on the ways structures manipulate how we see things.

Based in Christchurch, Morison is an established artist and has exhibited in group and solo exhibitions in public and private galleries throughout New Zealand and overseas.

a loop around a loop, a major exhibition of Morison's work curated by Felicity Milburn and Justin Paton, opens at the Gallery on 21 July.





Kees Bruin Allusion&Illusion

At first glance, Kees Bruin's paintings seem quite simple and straightforward. Look closer, however, and it becomes apparent that the reverse is in fact true. Each work is made up of carefully organised layers of ideas and symbolic meanings, much of it referencing Bruin's Christian faith. Neil Roberts talks with the artist about the importance of his personal beliefs in understanding his enigmatic and intriguing paintings.

10February – 7May

There is no question that your thinking as a Christian pervades most of your work. How important is your faith to you?

It gives me a reason to work. If I wasn't a Christian, I would be seriously sidetracked by all sorts of ideas and contexts. In a real sense, it concentrates my focus.

Has the influence of Christianity changed your work over time?

Yes, in good and bad ways. I guess the fundamental basics of Christianity have stayed constant in my work, but in recent years especially I have discovered there are many critical issues in Christian teaching and preaching, largely because of the misled and personal agendas of some church leaders, of both liberal mainstream and charismatic evangelical persuasions, who manipulate listeners with the promises of success in all that they want - deliverances, healings, prosperity and church growth. Because of this, many Christians are misled and practise a distorted, unbalanced form of Christianity - including myself in some areas, until a few years ago. I am so thankful and inspired that the truth in all the critical issues can be found and practised, and I continue to discover answers to questions. I believe in this premise: never stop learning what you think you already know. The Bible even teaches this principle, because of the many false teachers in the church.

You use photo-realism or superrealism as a stylistic vehicle for your painting to extend the influence of vour Christian beliefs - vou must have felt this was the most appropriate stylistic means to convey what you wanted to do. Was there any choice? For instance you could have quite easily become an expressionist or minimalist. Do you feel that photo-realist superrealism is better to convey your Christian beliefs than other stylistic approaches?

No! And yet, I guess, for me personally it is. You see, I believe most modern art philosophies are arrogant or naïve to say that for nineteen hundred years artists have followed invalid belief systems in painting. I always remember an essay topic 'A Fresh Impetus in Realism Painting' assigned to us by [lecturer] William Sutton around the time I began to major in painting at [the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts]. I want to continue the thread of western Judeo-Christian painting, which was largely broken about one hundred years ago. This is my heritage and my background education. I feel it is important to pay homage to these traditions - Christianity and realism - and synthesise them with contemporary and new ideas, just as succeeding artists have done in history. So, a sense of integrity, among other reasons, is important to me.

Is Truth part of that? Yes.



Truth to whatever, truth to the identity of reality. I am wondering if there was any significance in your choice of stylistic approach, because truth is fundamental to Christian belief.

I guess I have always been more impressed with reality in the way I see it in painting. In my art history studies I was at first unimpressed by most of the realism painting of the Judeo-Christian heritage. I always thought it looked wooden and inanimate until I saw the first examples of good American photorealism from the 60s and 70s.

Then I was suddenly moved and inspired, and said to myself, hang on, this kind of realism is the closest thing to contemporary realism that I have ever seen in painting, and this is how I want to paint. Secondly - and this came about through the philosophy of art history with [lecturer] Ted Bracey and my own sort of conclusions - I recognised that this is what impressed the greater proportion of the community in painting and what they most easily relate to. I still believe that realism is preferred by the community.

Vanitas 2004 Oil on canvas Private collection





Baptism of Christ (detail) 2005 Oil on canvas. Private collection

It's more accessible?

Yes. That's the integrity part of the question. I was really surprised with Ted Bracey's approach to art, because he is very much an abstract sort of painter and yet he had a very pragmatic philosophy of art. He taught us that being a professional artist should be seen as nothing different to another trade. We should not see ourselves as more special than anyone else. We have a job to perform like a trade. That influenced me quite a lot.

What difference do you think having a faith in religion makes to being an artist?

Well, for me personally, and I suppose that it would be the same for others who are asked the same question, you have a purpose, you know what life is about. You don't have the questions that most artists struggle with to find what they are looking for.

We have discussed the place of being a Christian in your work generally, but what works in particular have emphasised this commitment more than others?

Well, there are some paintings where the meanings are a lot more obvious than others – for example, a recent painting of the baptism of Christ in a New Zealand river scene. Most people, including non-Christians, realise what it is about when they first look at it. The figure of Christ looks like a Christ figure. Then there are other paintings that I feel are equally as good or equally satisfying for their Christian meaning, which is more hidden, and I am equally satisfied.

"Disregarding the Christian aspect of my work, there are two main tenets I believe in about what is art ... one, there should be obvious technical excellence; two, there should be the feeling of magic."

Aotearoa (detail) 1994 Oil on canvas. Private collection



Would you prefer people to be aware of your faith before they view your work?

With regards to my artworks it doesn't matter, but people who know my faith may find another level of meaning.

Artists can paint Christian imagery without having a faith.

There are artists who have painted like that. Colin McCahon, for example. I actually rang him one day and asked him, point blank, 'Are you a Christian?, and he said no. So I asked, 'Would you call yourself a Mystical Christian?' He hesitated and said he supposed so. I was doing a bible course at the time, and one of our projects was to design a tract. The Robert McDougall Art Gallery had just purchased McCahon's painting As there is a constant flow of light we are born into the pure land for \$10,000, and it was causing quite a stir in the local press. As soon as I saw it, I thought, wow! what a great painting; it was so abstract and not normally the kind of painting that strikes me. There was something about it, its composition, the feeling of light coming through that square, and I was really impressed by it. Inspired. I thought about the work and decided to design a tract based on it, and ask McCahon's permission to use an image of his painting. I also wanted to ask him if I could incorporate my interpretation of what I felt he was trying to say. When I rang, I told him this is what I think it says: 'as there is a constant flow of light' alludes to as we find Christ we are born into the pure land, eternal life. And he said yes, that's fair enough, so he gave me permission.

Is there anything more you would like to add concerning your faith. Any post-script?

It is important for me as a painter to try and appeal to as wide a cross-section of the community as possible. That is the first hook, and then I find that if people have an experience with my paintings they are more receptive to things they can't put their finger on. And disregarding the Christian aspect of my work, there are two main tenets I believe in about what is art. Over the years I have summarised it as: one, there should be obvious technical excellence; two, there should be the feeling of magic, something that inspires you.

Something that stirs the soul. In other words, technical excellence and soul motivation.

NEIL ROBERTS

Neil Roberts is Collections Manager and Senior Curator at the Gallery.

Kees Bruin: Allusion & Illusion is in the Ravenscar Gallery until 7 May. An exhibition brochure is available from the Gallery Shop.

Related Event

Meet the Artist: Kees Bruin 15 March, 6.00 pm The artist speaks about his career over the past twenty years and his distinctive superrealist style Venue: Philip Carter Family Auditorium

All artworks © Kees Bruin



Witness Caravaggio 2004 Oil on canvas. Collection of the Gallery





Entity in Flesh 2002 Monoprint. Collection of L. Greig

The dark and shadowy world of Christchurch artist Jason Greig's art is peopled with black-hearted souls occupying menacing landscapes and seascapes. At times tongue-in-cheek, and at others not, he portrays a grim side to the human psyche, where macabre forces of darkness rule in the shadows. One of Aew Zealand's leading printmakers, Greig talks to Peter Vangioni about his first major exhibition of the monoprints (also known as monotypes) for which he is renowned.

You have worked with a wide variety of print mediums since the early 1980s but began working with the monoprint in 1993. As your chosen medium for the past thirteen years, what is it that attracts you to the monoprint?



It always amazes me when I see your monoprints unframed, the way the plate has often torn the paper.

$10/02 \sim 7/05$

I can capture a wide variety of effects and moods. I can go from painterly up to a tighter, engraved look.

It seems to offer a lot more freedom than, say, etching.

Hell yeah, it happens a lot quicker and ideas can develop instead of being stuck in technique.

You've previously mentioned its similarities to drawing.

It really came out of poverty because I couldn't afford zinc plates, acids and stuff [needed for etching], I didn't have enough money to do that. If you made a cock-up it was pretty major, it would affect you for a month or so. Then I started doing charcoal drawings. I'd always been scared that I'd never be able to draw in charcoal. At [the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts] I had always drawn in pencil, but one day I gave it a go and Bob's your uncle – I was away. What I'd do was actually kinda cover up an area of the paper and start working back through it with a rubber, working backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards, and there's a real similarity between that and the monoprint. The way you can apply ink and wipe it back, or you can paint or roll it on in patches or stencils. At art school I hadn't liked monoprints, thought they were a bunch of crap basically, and I thought I'd rather be doing etchings or something more complicated. I was forced to do it because I was teaching in Oamaru and it was part of the curriculum. I just did one and it sort of clicked. I thought, wow, this is pretty cool, it's like a painting, you know, I just whipped it up and saw the possibilities. I just got hooked.

Yeah, that's partly by pushing the pressure thing a hell of a lot. It's a fine line between busting presses and bearings and things, and I probably print up in a manner that would appall most other people.



Top: **Firmament** 2004 Monoprint. Collection of L. Greig

Bottom: **Marsden** 2004 Monoprint. Collection of the Gallery

Facing page: **Seven Years of Labour for the Instruments of Time** 2003 Monoprint. Collection of the artist





But that pressure provides a certain effect? Oh, hell yeah, it makes the paper look like leather or vellum, it just pushes it so much that it looks amazing, it really changes its nature.

Your work often has a dreamlike quality or old world feel, characters from the past sort of lost and found again. What is it that attracts you to the past?

> I answered the same question [in an interview with] my sister and, you know, it sounds like bullshit. She said, 'Past lives, Jason'. I don't want to get all paranormal on you or anything...

But there is an ancestral quality almost, something...

Yeah, I think it was born out of a bit of a hankering for... well, not nostalgia... I just like the idea of that era. It just seems to be a natural thing. I suppose it's a romantic idealisation of wanting to be back there – a simpler time, getting rid of the clutter of our world today. I always talk about old movies and things, but some of those images really did sort of strike me – you know, the old Moby Dick, Miss Haversham in *Great Expectations*. These are things that I just automatically remember.

Often the imagery you produce is very dark, sinister and nightmarish, particularly your character studies. Where do they come from? Are there any strong influences?

> They just come from a sick sense of humour. I'm a reasonably nice guy, I think. I get on with people and stuff, but there's a bit of a dark side and that's the way I get it out. I suppose I get my anger out at the world by sneering and making the characters that I employ sneer back at the world. I'm laughing up my sleeve about it, you know. I'm thinking if I do something like that I'm going, oh cripes, that's gonna give the old biddies a bit of a tease, a kick up the bum. You know, what the hell is this guy on about? I don't know, a bit of a twisted, surreal thing I guess.



Bird of Prayer 2003 Monoprint. Private collection

I'd like to thank my parents, God and Satan

It's always something that has appealed to me, those figurative images. I find I stare right into them and...

Yeah, they're staring back.

Yeah, they are, they're really engaging.

I hardly ever do figures or faces where their eyes or faces are staring away. They are always looking right at you. It's the old Peter Cook / Dudley Moore sketch of the ducks and arses following you around the room when they are in an art gallery. [Jason imitates Peter Cook's voice]'It's marvellous those ducks and arses following you around the room. It doesn't matter where you are they are looking right at you.' It's bloody funny.

On my visits to your studio there always seems to be heavy metal

Yeah. And your space, it's not a huge studio, it's quite confined, it does give quite an intensity to that particular room. Is this an important influence on work?

> Yeah, it just gets the old juices flowing, I suppose. It's an adolescent male thing, it's never gone away, I've never outgrown it, much to my chagrin. I've just always been a metaller. Steve Miller Band was my first album at a fire sale, then I got Fleetwood Mac's Rumours, Everyone's A Winner Baby by Hot Chocolate, then Bachman - the rot really set in - it was Bachman Turner Overdrive, and then it was Black Sabbath and I've never looked up since.

As well as printmaking you also play electric guitar in [Christchurch band] Into The Void. Do you see any connection between your musical output and your artistic output?

> There is a similar aesthetic running through my work and the way I come up with tunes. A lot of our stuff is pretty full on, moody, you know, for want of another word, dark and definitely imposing. I don't want to do happy little ditties and I don't want to do blue grass, you know. It's heavy, dense, foreboding shit.

> > I'd like to thank my parents, God and Satan.



music playing quite loudly.

It's right in your face.

Last words?

Peter Vangioni

Peter Vangioni is Curator (Works on Paper) at the Gallery.

The Devil Made Me Do It is in the William A. Sutton Gallery until 7 May. An exhibition brochure is available from the Gallery Shop.

Related Events

Meet the Artist: Jason Greig 22 March, 6.00 pm The artist conducts a floortalk around the exhibition. Venue: William A. Sutton Gallery

Into the Void 29 March, 6.00 pm On the line contemporary music with Jason Greig, Mark Whyte, James Greig, Dave Imlay, Paul Sutherland and Ronnie Van Hout. Venue: Foyer

Angry Sounds 3 May, 6.00 pm A look at 'bad boys' music with popular national broadcaster Marty Duda. Venue: Philip Carter Family Auditorium

All artworks © Jason Greig

Recent Acquisitions

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

by Leo Bensemann



The Rime of the Ancient Mariner c. 1952 Leo Bensemann. Ink drawing. Collection of the Gallery, purchased 2005

1952

Peter Vangioni Peter Vangioni is Curator (Works on Paper) at the Gallery.

This work is not currently on display. * Excerpt from The Rime of the Ancient Mariner by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1797/98

An important new addition to the New Zealand graphic collection is Leo Bensemann's ink drawing, The Rime of the Ancient Mariner. The drawing was used as the frontispiece for Caxton Press's 1952 edition of that most famous tale of the same name by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Bensemann stands as one of New Zealand's most important typographers of the twentieth century, and was a key figure at Caxton Press in Christchurch between 1937 and 1978. He weaves several passages from Coleridge's tale into this drawing, including that of the central character draped with the recently killed albatross - a bad omen for seafarers. As the rest of the crew starve and eventually die, the mariner is left to face the curse of his deed alone on the high seas.

The many men, so beautiful! And they all dead did lie: And a thousand thousand slimy things Lived on; and so did I.

I looked upon the rotting sea, And drew my eyes away; I looked upon the rotting deck, And there the dead men lay.*

Bensemann was a superb draughtsman, his finely executed drawings appearing in other Caxton Press publications including Fantastica: thirteen drawings (1937). He was deeply interested in literary subjects, which he freely interpreted in his unique and sometimes bizarre manner. The Rime of the Ancient Mariner offers a new aspect of Bensemann's oeuvre that previously was not represented in the Gallery's permanent collections.



This is a letter of thanks.

Thank you to Gallery staff for giving us outstanding exhibitions in 2005, culminating in Ansel Adams: Photographic Frontiers and Alchemy of Daily Life.

Thank you to all the speakers who have entertained and educated us as Speakers of the Month. Regular audiences of 50-150 indicate the popularity of these events.

Special thanks to the artists who have let us into their homes and studios on LocArt visits and trips. We always appreciate their generous hospitality. LocArt visits are extremely popular, and I thank two long-serving committee members, Val Wisely and Rebecca Garside, who have run these for many years. Rebecca not only organised and led the 2005 LocArt visits but also the Spring Trip to Banks Peninsula and the upcoming Summer Trip to north Canterbury, which is fully booked.

Both Val and Rebecca are retiring from the committee this year, and we need someone to take over the responsibility for weekday LocArt. Prerequisites are ideas, time and charm. If you have ideas and the time to help implement them, do consider joining the committee. The Annual General Meeting is on Thursday, 30 March at 7 pm. The notice/ nomination form is enclosed. We will have an exciting speaker, and drinks afterwards.

Finally, thank you to all the Friends for their support - financially with subscriptions and generous donations to the Friends, acquisition and scholarship funds, and by participating in Friends events.

Helen Peate

HELEN PEATE President

Friends

The Gallery invites Friends to preview new exhibitions before they open to the public. Where possible, a curator or other expert will introduce the exhibitions between 4.15 and 4.45 pm. For entry, please present your Friends membership card. Friends are invited to meet at 3.30 pm in the upstairs reception room for a social coffee or tea before the preview.

THURSDAY, 23 MARCH, 4–5 PM Touring Exhibition Galleries

FRIDAY, 26 MAY, 4-5 PM William A. Sutton and Ravenscar Galleries



Marlena Dietrich 1935 Cecil Beaton. © Cecil Beaton Archive, Sotheby's, London / Collection National Portrait Gallery





Friends





Margaret and Max Luisetti

lill Henriod

Murray Hedwig

LocArt visits are for members of the Friends only and cost \$5. Please register by sending your name, address, phone number and the event and date you wish to attend, with your payment, to FOCAG, PO Box 2626, Christchurch,

SATURDAY, 11 MARCH, 10 AM

Visit the studio, home and garden of photographer Murray Hedwig. Murray will give a tour of his garden, which has been described as 'a controlled jungle', blending New Zealand natives with Japanese bamboo and English border influences. The walls in Murray's home display a mix of international artworks alongside a contemporary Canterbury theme, as well as his own art. He will show and discuss his work, which covers a broad sweep of photographic practice from large format to digital and mixed media.

Limited to 40 members. Please meet Joce Gilchrist outside 35 Francis Avenue, St Albans, at 9.50 am.

WEDNESDAY, 29 MARCH, 10.30 AM Born in Paris to Austrian parents. Edith van Haandel studied at the Graphic School of Arts in Vienna and the School of Arts in Edinburgh before moving to New Zealand in 1953. Settling in Christchurch, she worked as an illustrator and lay-out artist for the Christchurch Star and then as a fashion artist for Christchurch department stores. In 1982, Edith became a fulltime artist and since then has held annual exhibitions, both national and international. One of Edith's paintings, a seven-metre-long view of the Port Hills, graces a wall of the Christchurch City Council building. Reproductions of her watercolours in card form are sold at the Gallery Shop. Edith invites Friends to visit her home.

Limited to 20 members, Please meet Rebecca Garside outside 2 Belleview Terrace, Mount Pleasant, at 10.20 am.

THURSDAY, 27 APRIL, 10.30 AM Margaret Luisetti is a Gallery Guide and the Vice President of the Friends Committee. Margaret and her husband, Max, invite fellow Friends to visit their Rangiora home to join them for coffee and to view their collection of mainly Canterbury art.

Limited to 20 members. Please meet Rebecca Garside outside 203 West Belt, Rangiora, at 10.20 am.

THURSDAY, 11 MAY, 10.30 AM Visit Jill Henriod at her studio in the picturesque country garden of her Tai Tapu property 'Cossonay', where she will give a monotype demonstration. Jill began her studies at the University of Canterbury, graduating from American University, Washington DC, with a Master of Fine Arts in printmaking. She spent many years overseas, returning in 1999 with her Peruvian husband to settle in the city of her birth. Jill has exhibited widely, and her vibrant paintings and prints have always attracted collectors. Her subject matter is drawn from real life experience and interpreted using ink, paint or pastel on paper or canvas. Her work is in public, private and corporate collections.

Limited to 20 members. Please meet Rebecca Garside outside 90 Lincoln-Tai Tapu Road, at 10.20 am.



Barry Allom (Recognise this building? Find out at Barry's talk.)

TO BECOME A FRIEND, OR FOR INFORMATION ON BENEFITS AND PROGRAMMES, PLEASE CONTACT: Friends of the Christchurch Art Gallery: PO Box 2626, Christchurch Tel: (+64 3) 941 7356, Fax: (+64 3) 941 7301, Email: friends@ccc.govt.nz



Gerard Smyth

Victoria Edwards

Speaker of the Month

PHILIP CARTER FAMILY AUDITORIUM, 10.30 AM

No booking required. Friends \$2, guests \$5. Coffee and tea will be served in Alchemy Café from 10 am, \$2.

WEDNESDAY, 15 MARCH

Filmmaker Gerard Smyth has been documenting Christchurch people and places for television over the last thirty-five years. He says, 'I have come to understand Warhol's statement that everyone gets fifteen minutes in the lights, because I think I might just have filmed most of them!' Gerard first worked for NZBC, then South Pacific Television, TVNZ. For the last twenty years he has worked as a freelance documentary maker, making over sixty documentaries for television. He has filmed in Africa. India. England and Australia but finds local work the most rewarding.

WEDNESDAY, 19 APRIL What is the best twentieth century building in the world? Or is it all rubbish? What do you think is the best building built in Christchurch between the Second World War and the present day? These are the provocative questions aesthete, historian and Gallery Guide Barry Allom, and one of New Zealand's foremost architects, Sir Miles Warren, will attempt to answer. You will have a chance to make up your

WEDNESDAY, 17 MAY After graduating from the Elam School of Fine Arts in 1972, Victoria Edwards worked at the Auckland City Art Gallery as curator of contemporary prints, and later lectured at Elam for seventeen years. In1996, she established the Fine Arts Faculty at the Design and Arts College in Christchurch, where she acted as Director until 2005. Victoria recently established her own business, V & G Productions, to explore the synergies between art and industry. Victoria will discuss key aspects of her practice over the last ten years in both still and moving images.

Friends

own minds and cast your votes.

Bridget Anderson & Jeremy Roake, Wendy Barker, Jenny Barrer, Marie Bell, Dr Robert Blackmore, Jan Briden, Rose and Steve Cowie, John & Liz Davies, Judy Deans, Sue Egden, Janet Ensor, Dave Evans, Wendy & Patrick Fitzgerald, Mary Forsyth, Susan Francis & Chris Bridgeman, Penny Griffith, Jocelyn Hill, Hank Holt, Danièle Leeming, Jim & Maxine Marron, BJ Maskell, Timothy Nathan, Delia O'Malley & Hugh McEneaney, Eleanor & Jack Patterson, Denise Paulger, Jaimee Peters, Barbara Rowe, Mrs A C Rutherford, George Skellerup, Michael & Rachel Sleigh, Christopher Smart, Geoffery & Caroline Smart, Beverley Smith, Delwyn Stack, Clare & Cliff Strange, Jude Streeter, Carey Treleaven, Esther Venning, Chris & Ron Waghorn, Kit Wallace





Hope in the Door 1 (detail) 1990 Kees Bruin. Oil on canvas. Collection of the Gallery

Events Calendar

Visit our website for updates and details of additional programmes, performances and events.

The **Art Bites** programme is offered every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 12.30 pm, featuring a twenty-minute floortalk on selected works currently on exhibition and delivered by a range of different speakers. For details of artworks and speakers please check the Gallery Programme or visit our website.

The latest search and discovery **Holiday Quiz** for family groups and children is available daily, 10 am to 4 pm, from 15–24 April. See the Noteworthy pages for more information.

March

A Home in the Country

1 6.00 PM LECTURE PHILIP CARTER FAMILY AUDITORIUM Joan Nassauer from the University of Michigan speaks

on the cultural effects of residential sprawl. Presented in collaboration with the NZ Institute of Landscape Architects.

Words with Dame Fiona Kidman

8 6.00 PM LECTURE PHILIP CARTER FAMILY AUDITORIUM

Dame Fiona talks about captivity and secrets: writing historical fiction in a contemporary world.

Thirty-five Years of Filming My City, Christchurch

15 10.30 AM LECTURE PHILIP CARTER FAMILY AUDITORIUM FRIENDS \$2, PUBLIC \$5

Filmmaker Gerard Smyth has worked for the last twenty years as a freelance documentary maker, filming in Africa, India, England, Australia and New Zealand. He finds local work the most rewarding, and discusses thirty-five years of documenting Christchurch people and places. See the Friends pages for more information.

Meet the Artist: Kees Bruin

15 6.00 PM LECTURE

PHILIP CARTER FAMILY AUDITORIUM

The artist speaks about his career over the past twenty years and his distinctive super-realist style.

Meet the Artist: Jason Greig

22 6.00 PM FLOORTALK WILLIAM A. SUTTON GALLERY

The artist conducts a floortalk and discusses his current exhibition **The Devil Made Me Do It**.

Into the Void

29 6.00 PM BAND PERFORMANCE FOYER

On the line contemporary music with Jason Greig, Mark Whyte, James Greig, Dave Imlay, Paul Sutherland and Ronnie Van Hout. www.christchurchartgallery.org.nz

The Gallery's Wednesday evening programme is generously sponsored by Montana Wines. All programmes are subject to change, please check beforehand on (03) 941 7302. Limited places apply to some programmes.

April
Harris at the Threshold: A Floortalk with Justin Paton
5 6.00 PM FLOORTALK TOURING EXHIBITION GALLERIES
The curator of Jeffrey Harris provides a fascinating floortalk on the exhibition.
Anne Noble: Imaging the Ice
12 6.00 PM LECTURE PHILIP CARTER FAMILY AUDITORIUM
The artist introduces new ways of looking at Antarctica, expanding on themes in her current exhibition.
The French Connection in Twentieth Century Christchurch Architecture
19 10.30 AM LECTURE PHILIP CARTER FAMILY AUDITORIUM FRIENDS \$2, PUBLIC \$5
What is the best twentieth century building in the world? What do you think is the best building in Christchurch? These provocative questions are the basis for a discussion with Barry Allom and Sir Miles Warren. See the Friends pages for more information.
Music in the Foyer
19 6.00 PM CONCERT FOYER
Enjoy a programme of easy listening music in the acoustically spectacular foyer.
Brass Bandsmen & Marching Girls
29 1.00 PM PERFORMANCE SCULPTURE GARDEN / FORECOURT
Addington Brass Band and a team of marching girls from Marching Canterbury present a stunning display of old school New Zealand entertainment.



lay

ngry Sounds

6.00 PM MULTI-MEDIA DISCUSSION PHILIP CARTER FAMILY AUDITORIUM

look at 'bad boys' music with popular national broadcaster arty Duda.

e Rossignol: ward-winning French Documentary Film

0 6.00 PM FILM PHILIP CARTER FAMILY AUDITORIUM

n animated adaptation of Stravinsky's *The Nightingale* reates a modern fairy kingdom where ancient China meets rtual reality. (Duration 50 minutes.)

etters from Home

7 10.30 AM LECTURE PHILIP CARTER FAMILY AUDITORIUM FRIENDS \$2, PUBLIC \$5

ictoria Edwards was an art lecturer for seventeen years efore she moved to Christchurch and established the Fine rts Faculty at the Design and Arts College in 1996. Victoria scusses key aspects of her practice over the last ten years both still and moving images. See the Friends pages for ore information.

Iur: Award-winning French Documentary Film

7 6.00 PM FILM

PHILIP CARTER FAMILY AUDITORIUM

his film explores the mental and human horizons created by ne Israeli separation barrier in a region steeped in history. Duration 100 minutes.)

es Mauvais Garçons: Award-winning French ocumentary Film

4 6.00 PM FILM PHILIP CARTER FAMILY AUDITORIUM

gritty film documenting the violence in the Parisian ghettos. Duration 90 minutes.)

ecil Beaton: A Glamorous Life

1 6.00 PM LECTURE PHILIP CARTER FAMILY AUDITORIUM

An insight into the work and life of one of Britain's most celebrated photographers.



Cecil Beaton: Portraits

Cecil Beaton: Portraits is supported by:

Strategy Advertising & Design (Principal Sponsor) The Tasman Charitable Trust (Season of Photography Principal Funder) The Press (Season of Photography Media Partner) Aalto Colour (Season of Photography Paint Sponsor) Ballantynes Untouched World™

SEASON OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Admission charges apply.

Greta Garbo 1946 Cecil Beaton. © Cecil Beaton Archive, Sotheby's, London / Collection National Portrait Gallery

A major international exhibition of portraits by world-renowned photographer Cecil Beaton opens at the Gallery on 27 May.

From London's National Portrait Gallery comes this year's must-see exhibition - a look at the glamorous worlds of fashion, literature and film through the lens of one of the most distinguished photographers of the twentieth century. Cecil Beaton was a major contributor to Vogue in London, Paris and New York, and photographed such luminaries as Marilyn Monroe, Audrey Hepburn, the Rolling Stones, Salvador Dali, Marlon Brando, Pablo Picasso, Elizabeth Taylor, Andy Warhol and many more.

This extensive retrospective celebrates the remarkable life and achievements of Beaton – an avant-garde, yet quintessential, Englishman whose flamboyant sense of style marks him as one of the most important photographers of recent history.





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