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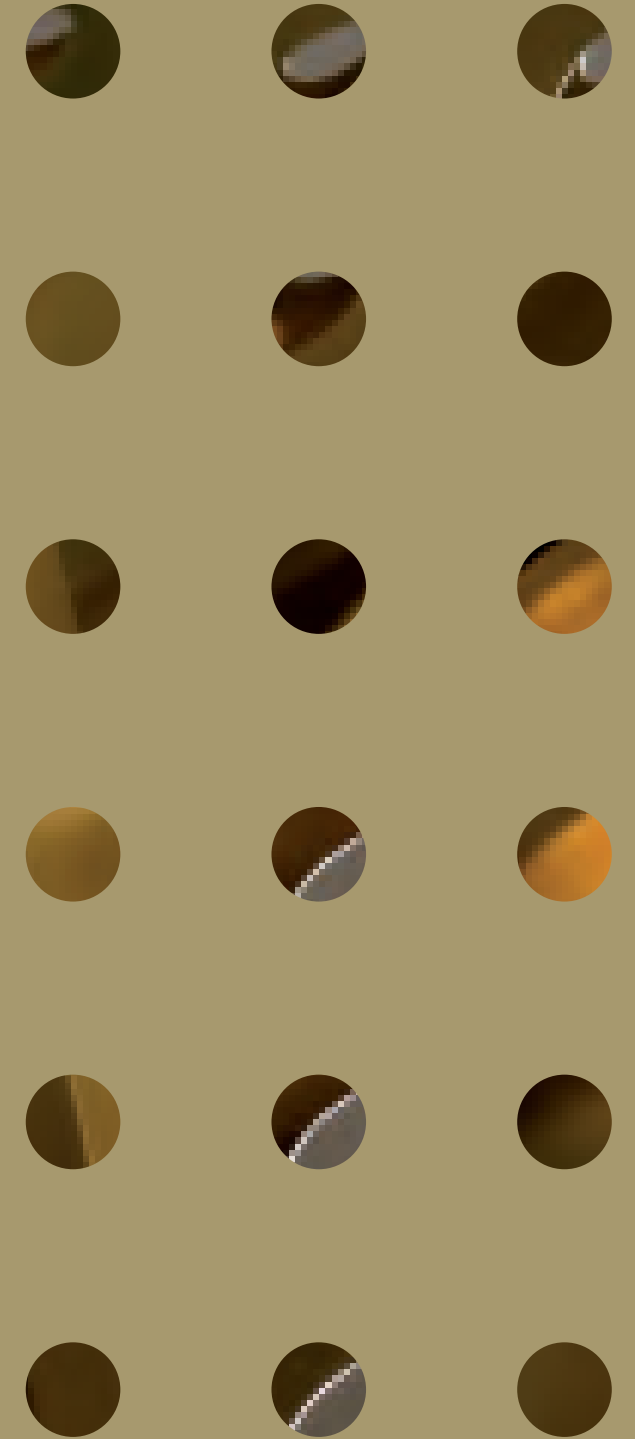
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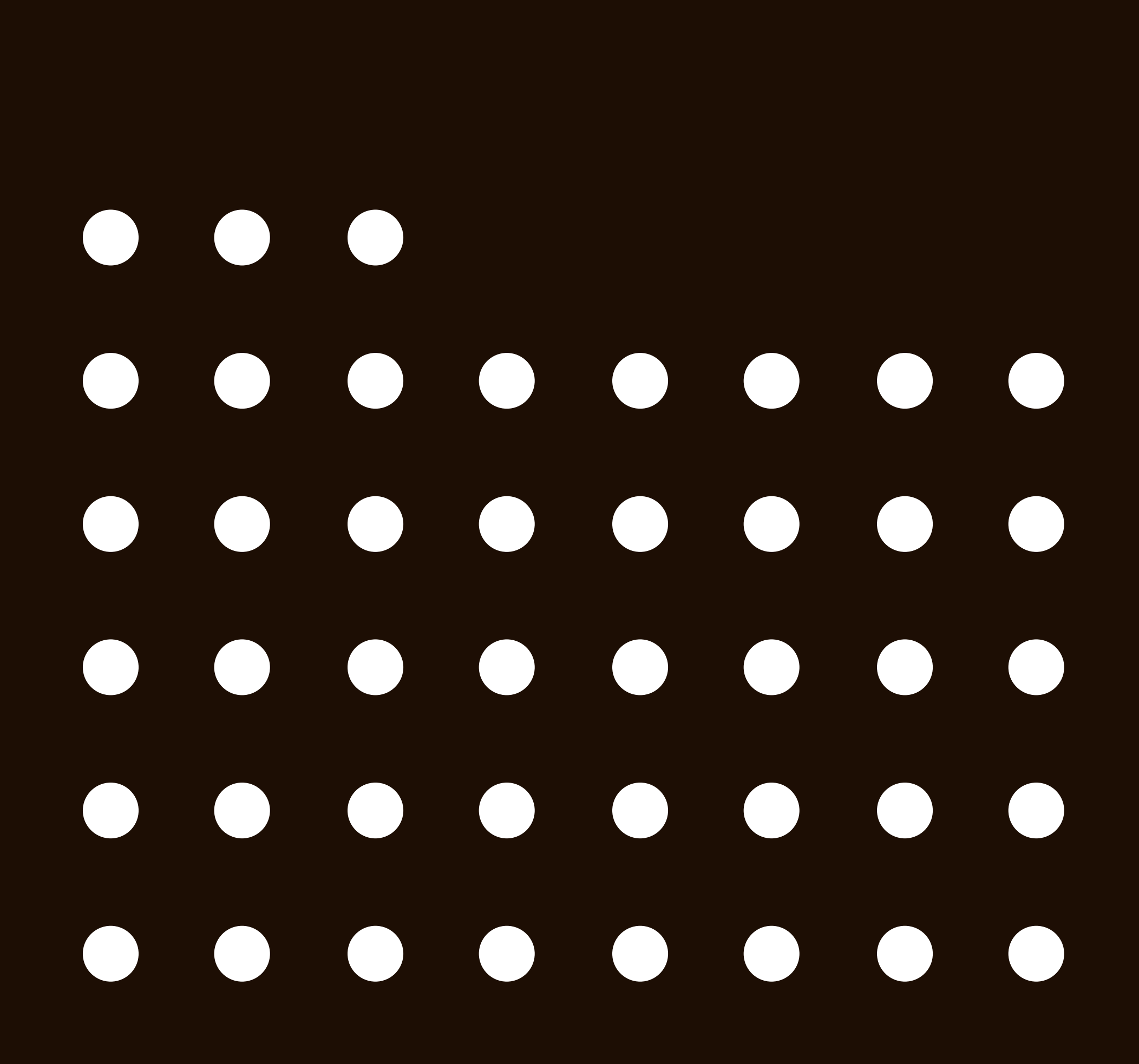
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B.161

Bulletin
Christchurch Art Gallery
Te Puna o Waiwhetu

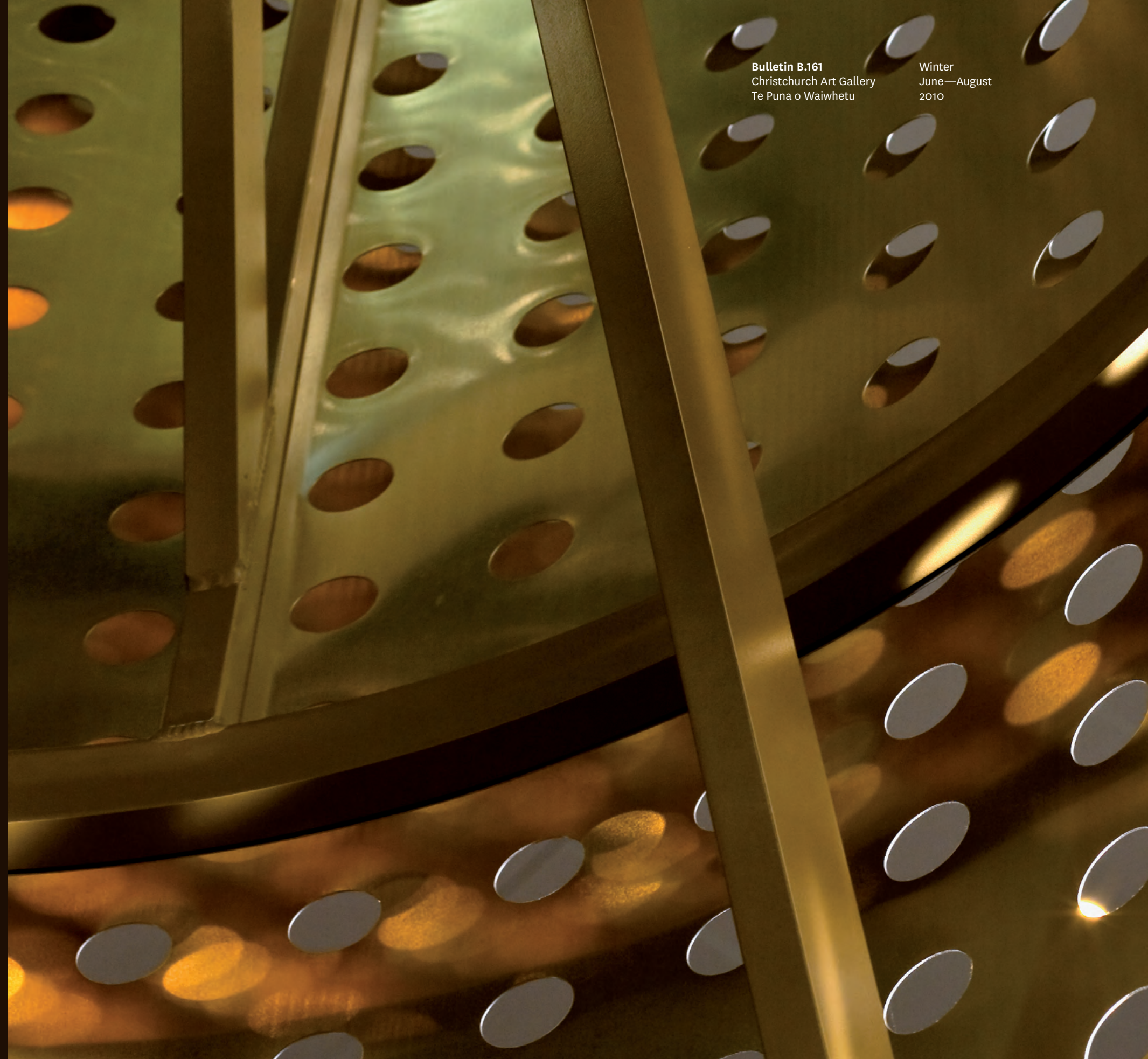
Winter
June—August
2010





Bulletin B.161
Christchurch Art Gallery
Te Puna o Waiwhetu

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TE PUNA O WAIWHETU
CHRISTCHURCH
ART GALLERY

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nine archival gelatin silver hand prints, the set as an edition of two with one edition being held in the permanent collection of the Musee du Quay Branly in Paris after being gifted by the New Zealand Government; each print individually in an edition of five 2430 x 2025mm: installation size
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Inside front cover image:
Andrew Drummond *Viewing Device, Counter Rotating* (detail) 2008-10. Steel, air control systems, coatings, electroplated aluminium. Partially funded by Creative New Zealand. Collection of the artist. Reproduced courtesy of the artist

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OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS, the Gallery foyer has become an integral part of our exhibition programme. The **Outer Spaces** programme revolutionised the way we think about this imposing and somewhat austere space, and it's since been the site of a number of major works by artists such as Sara Hughes, Sean Kerr and Michael Parekowhai. As an exhibition space in its own right it is unrivalled for sheer scale, but it can dwarf works that would be imposing in any other location. Producing work that can hold its own here is a challenge.

Rising to that challenge at present is Andrew Drummond, a Christchurch-based artist who has long been at the forefront of sculpture in New Zealand. Throughout his career his work has developed from ritualistic performance to kinetic sculptures using cutting-edge technology. We've had two major kinetic pieces by Drummond on display in the foyer since March, but in mid May they were joined in the Gallery by a selection of pieces created by the artist between 1980 and 2010. **Andrew Drummond: Observation / Action / Reflection** is the first comprehensive survey exhibition of this artist's work and is accompanied by a beautiful catalogue produced by the Gallery.

It's your last chance to see **Provocations: The work of Christine Webster**. Highly respected as one of New Zealand's most confrontational photographers, this retrospective survey provides viewers with a uniquely memorable encounter. Perhaps one of the more controversial exhibitions we've mounted in recent years, it has divided opinion. If you haven't seen it yet, come in and make up your own mind before 7 June.

On the surface, **An Idyllic Country: Pastoral Landscapes from the Collection** is a much gentler examination of an idealised country life. Selected from the Gallery's collection, it brings together works of art spanning several centuries to focus on a picturesque view of rural living. Featuring a selection of mainly historical works intended to illustrate the antithesis of industrialised urban life, this exhibition also contrasts these with recent prints that take the realities of modern farming as their subject and raise questions about the contemporary relationship between nature and science.

Goncharova And Larionov: L'art Décoratif Théâtral Moderne features the prints and lithographs of Russian avant-garde artists Natal'ya Goncharova and Mikhail Larionov. Produced in Paris during the 1910s, these prints and lithographs were created as set designs and costumes for theatre productions, including work for the legendary Ballets Russes. Today Goncharova and Larionov are widely regarded as the foremost Russian artists of the twentieth century, laying the foundations for abstraction in Russia.

Taryn Simon's photographs in **An American Index of the**

Hidden and Unfamiliar home in on our fascination with the idea of national secrets—of conspiracies and intricate bureaucracy. Her carefully-composed photographs are a fascinating record of areas in the contemporary USA that are seen by only a very few, and certainly not open to public scrutiny. Fresh from the IMA in Brisbane and Dunedin Public Art Gallery, it will be a real pleasure to have the exhibition on display in Christchurch.

Roger Boyce is a Christchurch-based painter and lecturer who has taken on the formidable task of documenting the history of painting. But Boyce's take on that history is best described as a re-imagining, taking satirical aim at a wide range of artistic targets, and **The Illustrated History of Painting** is a comical body of work with serious intent.

In the Burdon Family Gallery **Blue Planet** continues to enchant children and adults alike, while in the collection galleries, **Brought to Light** develops further with work rotations and new additions to the display. We were absolutely delighted when **Brought to Light** was awarded the top honour for an exhibition in the Museums Aotearoa annual awards in April this year, and I'd like to thank all our staff for going that extra mile at the time of its preparation and installation. We know our visitors are enjoying the exhibition, but it is especially pleasing to have the new approach in this display so emphatically endorsed by our professional colleagues.

The boundaries of the Gallery are set to be pushed still further in July with the launch of our redesigned website, which continues our efforts to bring our collection and activities to the fore, wherever you choose to access them from. With improved collection interfaces, more dynamic content and a wonderful new online shop, the site will be a destination in its own right.

In addition to our own staff, contributing to *Bulletin* this quarter are Tyler Cann, Robert Leonard and artist Andre Hemer. Cann writes on kinetic art with regard to Andrew Drummond's practice, while Leonard deals with Taryn Simon's photography. And Hemer, whose *Things to do with paint that won't dry* is currently installed in the Worcester Boulevard water feature, creates a new work specifically for our regular 'Pagework' feature.

Jenny Harper

Director

May 2010

JUNE, JULY, AUGUST 2010

PROVOCATIONS: THE WORK OF CHRISTINE WEBSTER

Until 7 June

Complex, theatrical and fearless, Christine Webster's photography has long entranced and challenged audiences. Curated by Dr Anne Kirker, this spectacular survey presents many of her best-known works alongside an exciting new film project and highlights key aspects of Webster's practice, such as power relations, sexual identity and representations of the body.

William A. Sutton and Ravenscar Galleries

Exhibition publication available

AN IDYLIC COUNTRY: PASTORAL LANDSCAPES FROM THE COLLECTION

Until 8 August

The pastoral tradition in art is the idealised portrayal of country life, often idyllic views of a tamed countryside inhabited by shepherds and livestock. This exhibition brings together a collection of paintings, watercolours and prints spanning several centuries.

Monica Richards Gallery

GONCHAROVA AND LARIONOV: L'ART DÉCORATIF THÉÂTRAL MODERNE

Until 8 August

An exhibition of stage and costume designs by Russian avant-garde artists Natal'ya Goncharova and Mikhail Larionov. Featuring pochoir (stencil) prints and lithographs, the abstracted, angular forms illustrate the artists' involvement with rayonism, cubism and futurism in Paris during the 1910s.

Tait Electronics Gallery

ANDREW DRUMMOND: OBSERVATION / ACTION / REFLECTION

Until 5 September

Andrew Drummond: Observation / Action / Reflection is the first comprehensive survey exhibition of this acclaimed New Zealand sculptor. Focusing on the period between 1980 and 2010, this spectacular exhibition features sculpture, photography, installation and a new kinetic sculpture, installed in the Gallery foyer.

Gallery foyer, Touring A, B, C and Borg Henry Galleries

Exhibition publication and iPod audio tour available

BLUE PLANET

Until 20 February

Blue is a feeling, a place to dream and the colour of our amazing planet as seen from space. Looking at the ways artists have used the colour blue, **Blue Planet** celebrates imaginative art making and thinking, as well as different cultural and global perspectives. Shaped with younger audiences in mind.

Burdon Family Gallery

TARYN SIMON: AN AMERICAN INDEX OF THE HIDDEN AND UNFAMILIAR

19 June – 5 September

Inspired by rumours of weapons of mass destruction and secret sites in Iraq, Taryn Simon decided to address secret sites in her own country. From an underwater nuclear-waste storage facility to a Scientology screening room, these images provide an extraordinary record of a never-before-seen side of the contemporary USA.

William A. Sutton and Ravenscar Galleries

ROGER BOYCE: THE ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF PAINTING

13 August – 14 November

In this new series of paintings, Christchurch painter and lecturer Roger Boyce reimagines the history of his chosen medium as a succession of outrageous stunts, tragicomic mishaps and wild endeavours. While poking fun at the hopes and ambitions of painters, Boyce's series—100 paintings in total—is itself a work of serious comic ambition.

Monica Richards Gallery

THE COLLECTIONS

From Ngāi Tahu portraits to European landscapes; ceramics to video art, **Brought to Light: A New View of the Collection** is your chance to get up close and personal with hundreds of extraordinary works of art. For any art institution charged with conserving the past, registering the present and offering suggestions for the future, the challenge to 'bring to light' is at once daunting and inspiring. This exhibition is our response to that challenge.

Collections catalogue and iPod video tour available

OUTER SPACES

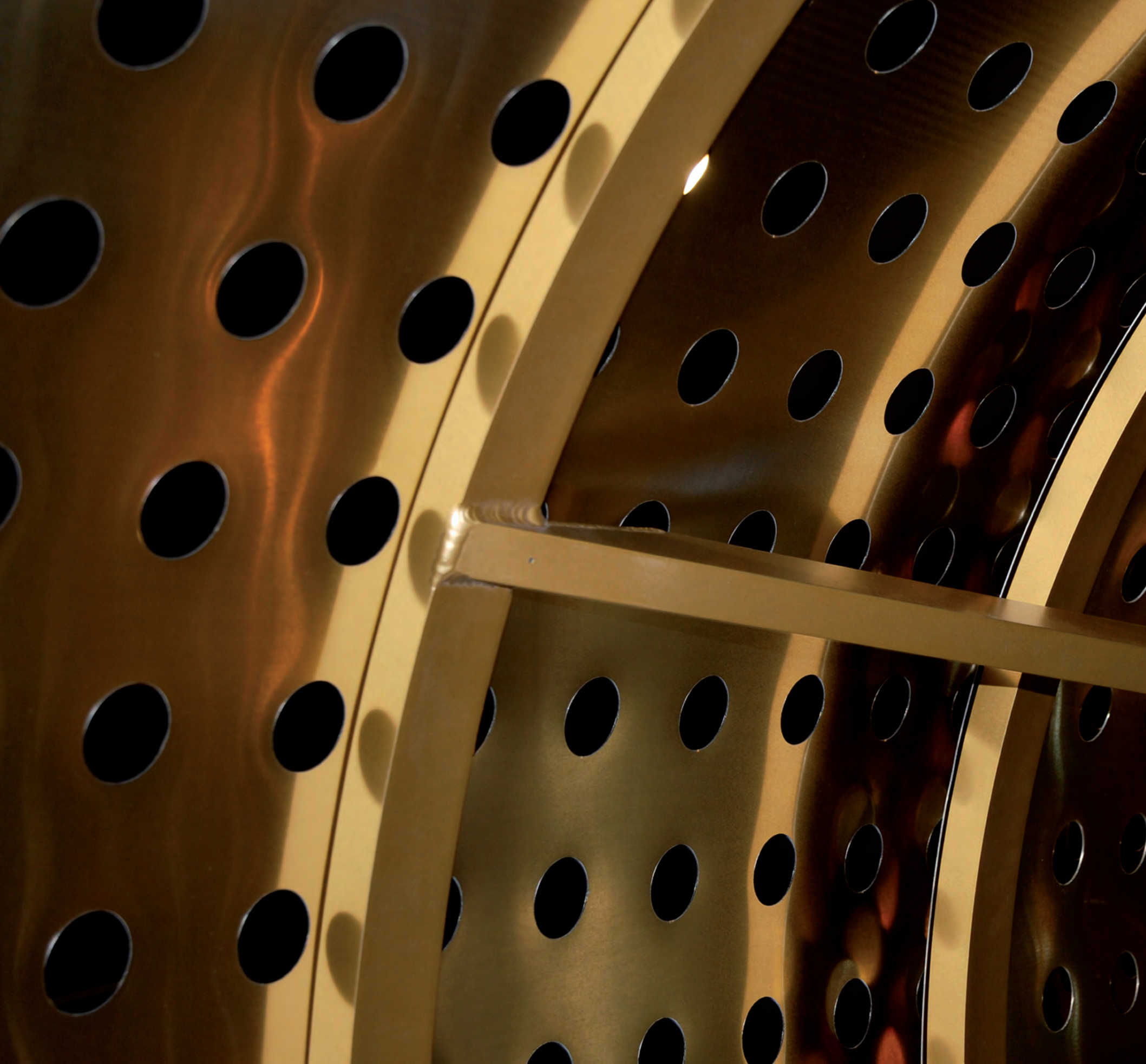
A programme featuring works of art in spaces beyond the traditional exhibition galleries. Featuring *The prow of the Charlotte Jane* by Fiona Pardington on Worcester Boulevard, *A wall, and other thoughts* by Fiona Jack on the carpark bunker, and *Things to do with paint that won't dry* by Andre Hemer in the water feature on Worcester Boulevard.

TWINSET

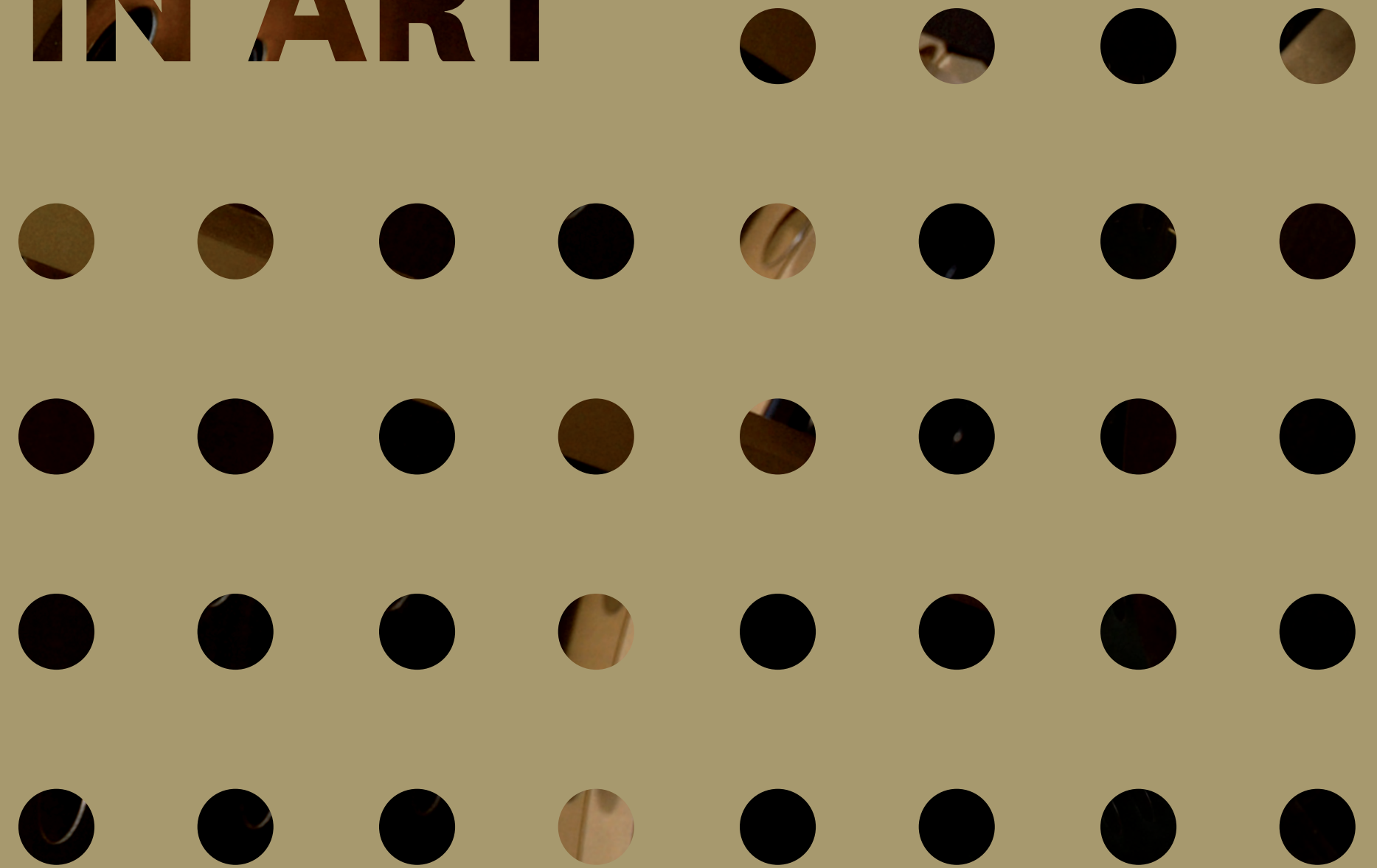
A rapid-fire programme of new video art on the twin screens in the foyer. This season featuring video by Andrew Drummond.

SUBSONIC

The winter **Subsonic** programme features a variety of sounds from artists including Adam Willetts.



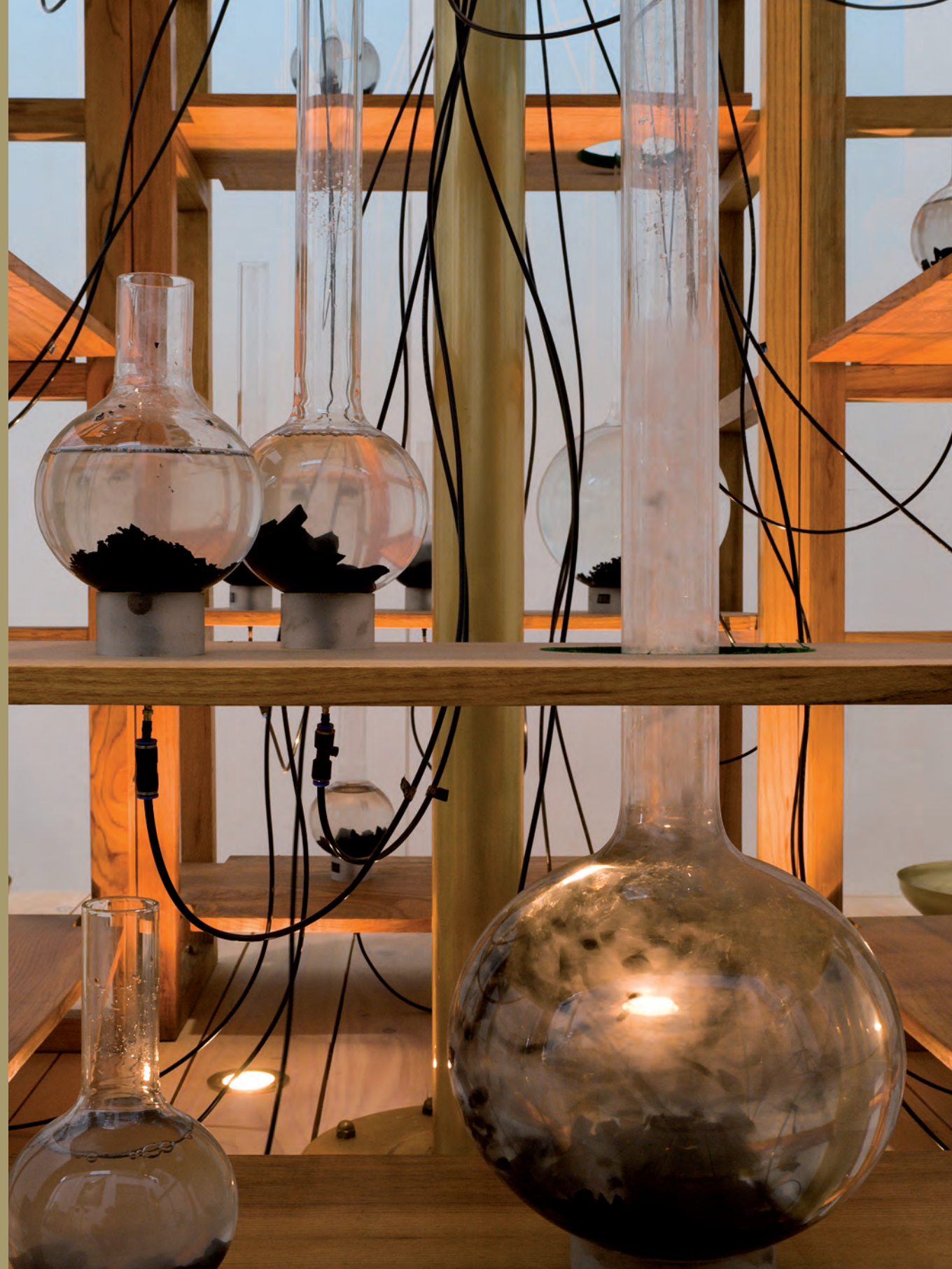
SOME NOTES ON MOVEMENT IN ART



ANDREW DRUMMOND: OBSERVATION / ACTION / REFLECTION IS THE GALLERY'S MAJOR SURVEY EXHIBITION OF THE WORK OF NEW ZEALAND SCULPTOR ANDREW DRUMMOND. ENCOMPASSING PERFORMANCE, SCULPTURE, INSTALLATION, DRAWING, PHOTOGRAPHY AND TECHNOLOGY, DRUMMOND'S PRACTICE IS VARIED AND DIVERSE. HOWEVER, A RECURRENT THEME THROUGHOUT HIS ART, HIGHLIGHTED BY THE WORKS CURRENTLY ON DISPLAY IN THE GALLERY FOYER, IS A FASCINATION WITH MOVEMENT. HERE, TYLER CANN LOOKS AT THE HISTORY OF KINETIC ART, AND WHY IT CONTINUES TO FASCINATE US.

Andrew Drummond
Viewing Device, Counter
Rotating 2008-10. Steel,
air control systems,
coatings, electroplated
aluminium. Partially
funded by Creative New
Zealand. Collection of
the artist. Reproduced
courtesy of the artist





Andrew Drummond
room for Observation
(detail) 2002-7. Wood,
glass, resin, air system.
Collection of the artist.
Reproduced courtesy
of the artist

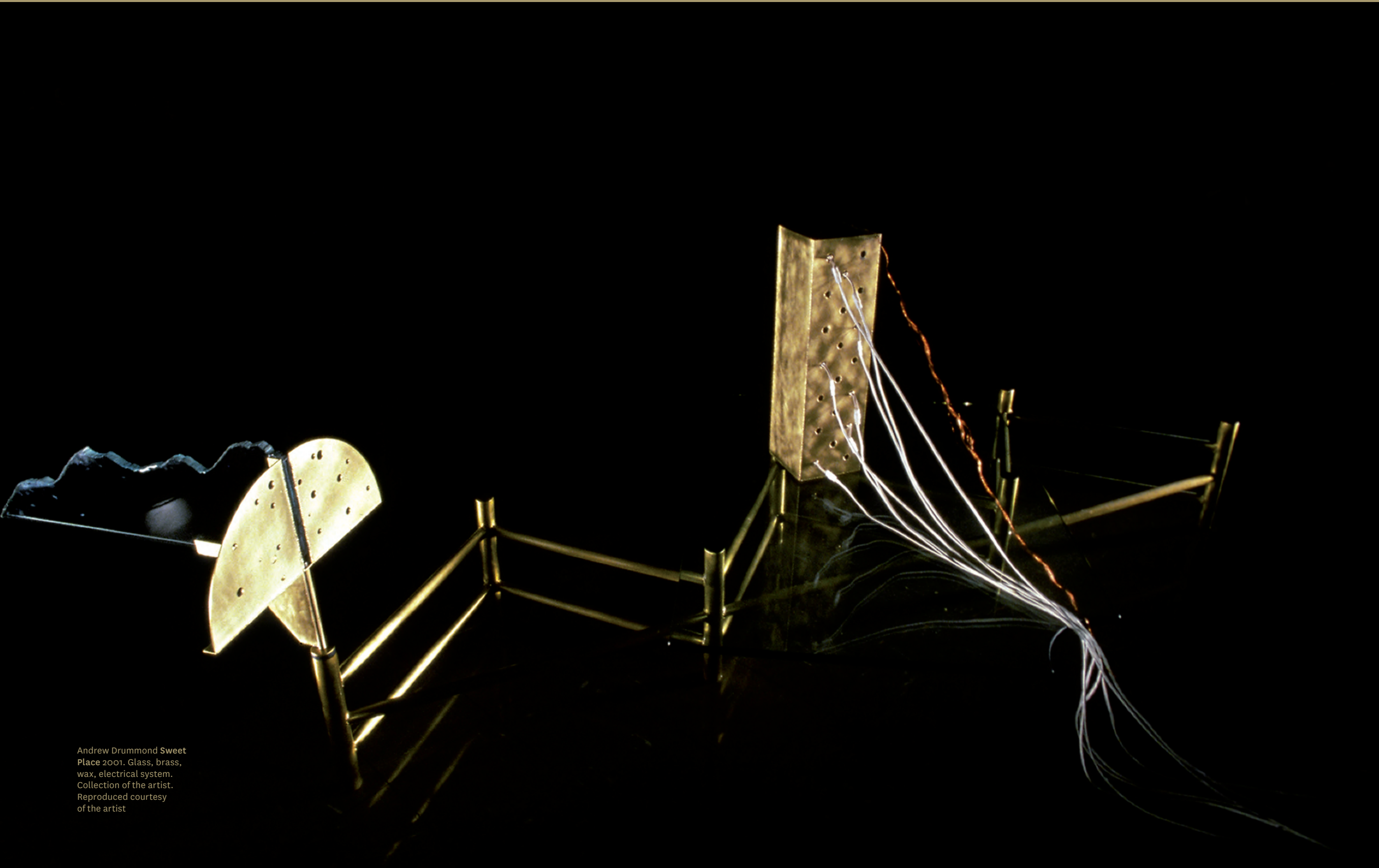
**ANDREW DRUMMOND:
OBSERVATION / ACTION /
REFLECTION IS IN THE
GALLERY FOYER, TOURING
A, B, C AND AND BORG
HENRY GALLERIES UNTIL
5 SEPTEMBER.**

HANGING FROM THE CEILING in my infant son's room is a mobile. At rest, he seems to scarcely notice its suspended figures, but a quick breath brings them to life and, drawn to their gentle twirling, his face brightens and body tenses with a laugh. His pre-verbal fascination provides only the most simple anecdotal evidence for our peculiar vulnerability to objects in motion, but the susceptibility of our attention to movement is deeply ingrained. A healthy capacity to track motion no doubt conferred some evolutionary advantage to a species both hunter and prey. And indeed, the neural pathways by which visual movement is cognitively processed are considerably older than those governing other aspects of visual perception, such as colour or pattern recognition. The sense of movement is fundamental to the way our brain constructs a coherent world from disparate physical sensations. So perhaps Len Lye and Laura Riding were correct to characterise it as 'the earliest language', and one that 'expresses nothing but the initial living connotations of life.'¹ From infancy forward, motion compels attention like nothing else in the visual field, and is intimately connected to our physical being.

Perhaps this goes some way toward explaining the historical prevalence of a strong cultural desire to make things move. A recitation of this history of wonder—which might include the development of fireworks, mechanical automata and even cinema—is far beyond the scope of these brief notes. But we can at least

glance toward the mid twentieth century, when artists began to incorporate movement into their practices, to shed light on some of the issues at stake. Following some famous, and largely isolated, experiments by Marcel Duchamp and Naum Gabo in the 1910s and 1920s, as well as Alexander Calder's invention of the mobile in 1931 (Duchamp coined the name), an explosion of moving, or kinetic, works of art occurred in the 1950s. Some of this work was created in reaction to the largely moribund lyrical abstraction choking Europe at the time. Seeing that the expression of subjective emotion in paint had become a spent force, bands of artists like Group Zero, Gruppo T, and GRAV (Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel) turned to movement as a way to give their art a life independent of the artist as controlling author. Prominent, if now largely forgotten, artists like Nicholas Schöffer looked to the new science of cybernetics for systems of programming feedback and response into sculptures attuned to a new technological society. Others, like Jean Tinguely, parodied that society with junkyard contraptions that scrawled abstract pictures, or even destroyed themselves. Belgian artist Pol Bury investigated the destabilising effects of slowness, while in New York, the New Zealander Len Lye was spinning and shaking metal bands with frightening speed. Their works, like those of Brazilian Lygia Clark, explored motion in relation to our awareness of the physical body. For many artists, the experience of movement itself was a by-product of other

1. Len Lye and Laura Riding, "Film-Making" in *Epilogue 1*, Deya, Seizin Press, 1935, reprinted in *Figures of Motion: Len Lye Selected Writings*, Wylan Curnow and Roger Horrocks (eds.), Auckland University Press and Oxford University Press, 1984, p.39



Andrew Drummond Sweet Place 2001. Glass, brass, wax, electrical system. Collection of the artist. Reproduced courtesy of the artist



Andrew Drummond Walking Device 2001. Brass, glass, air systems, coal dust, steel. Collection of the artist. Reproduced courtesy of the artist



Left:
Andrew Drummond
Rotating Devices
1999–2001. Coal, brass,
steel, felt, electric
motors. Collection of
the artist. Reproduced
courtesy of the artist

Right:
Andrew Drummond
**Device for Shadows and
Reflection** 2005. Electric
motors, brass and steel.
Collection of Christchurch
Art Gallery Te Puna o
Waiwhetu, purchased
2006. Reproduced
courtesy of the artist

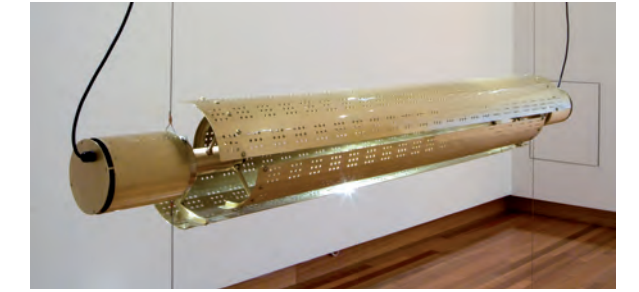
concerns, but for Lye, the choreographed figure of motion and its impact on the body of the viewer was central, more important than the object itself. For fellow New Zealander Andrew Drummond, a 1976 visit to Lye, made while the younger artist was studying in Canada, was a formative encounter, and one that greatly reassured Lye that art in his native country had come far from where he had left it a half-century earlier.

Exposed to the accelerating boom and bust cycle of artistic fashion, kinetic art as an international ‘style’ had collapsed before the end of the 1960s, and its association with airports and corporate lobbies proved difficult to shake.

As a coherent movement, kinetic art had always been a construction of the galleries and museums promoting it. But issues regarding movement, the body, time, authorship and technology persisted as concerns within installation, video and performance practices. And they still persist today. As the mechanical means of making and programming movement in art have developed over recent years, kinetic practices have found place within the work of contemporary artists. Externalising the processes and movements of the body in sculpture has, in very different ways, become a concern of artists like Tim Hawkinson, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Wim Delvoye, and, in New Zealand, Andrew Drummond. For these artists, movement is less an end in itself than a medium to work with, and one that explores our congenital fascination with things that move in relation to what it means now to have a body.

Tyler Cann

Tyler Cann is curator, Len Lye at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery. His recent projects include a retrospective of Lye’s work at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image, and co-editing a major new publication on the artist.



EVENTS

Wednesday 16 June

Floortalk / Andrew Drummond
Exhibition curator Jennifer Hay leads this floortalk on Christchurch artist Andrew Drummond—renowned for producing engaging and dynamic large-scale mixed-media works.
6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Sponsored by The Press

Wednesday 23 June

Films / Flip and Two Twisters and Transformers
Flip and Two Twisters explores the career and ideas of internationally renowned New Zealand film-maker and kinetic sculptor Len Lye. We then screen a documentary following artists at work as they continuously transform their art and challenge its boundaries. Films presented by the Canterbury Film Society.
6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / 80mins total / koha
Sponsored by The Press

Wednesday 7 July

Under Observation: Andrew Drummond and the Body of Art
Art theorist, philosopher and critic Dr Peter Leech interweaves philosophical and psychological ideas of bodily-consciousness around selected works from Andrew Drummond: *Observation / Action / Reflection*.
6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Sponsored by The Press

Wednesday 7 July

ArtBite / Andrew Drummond
Jonathan Smart discusses Andrew Drummond’s impressive foyer installations *Viewing Device*, *Counter Rotating*, and *Counter Rotating Earthing Device*. Designed to elicit wonder, these stunning pieces meld science with art.
5.15pm / foyer / free

Wednesday 28 July

Human Sound
This presentation by Jen Hay from the New Zealand Institute of Language, Brain and Behaviour explores the science and beauty of human speech. In association with Andrew Drummond: *Observation / Action / Reflection* and the University of Canterbury.
7.30pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free

Wednesday 18 August

The Power of Movement
The power of movement breathes life into our macroscopic world but also looms large in the molecular world of our cells. Led by Emily Parker and Richard Hartshorn of the Biomolecular Interaction Centre, in association with Andrew Drummond: *Observation / Action / Reflection* and the University of Canterbury.
6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Sponsored by The Press

Wednesday 25 August

ArtBite / Andrew Drummond
Exhibition curator Jennifer Hay reveals the transformation of energy in Andrew Drummond’s work *City Vein*.
5.15pm / meet at the front desk / free

Wednesday 25 August

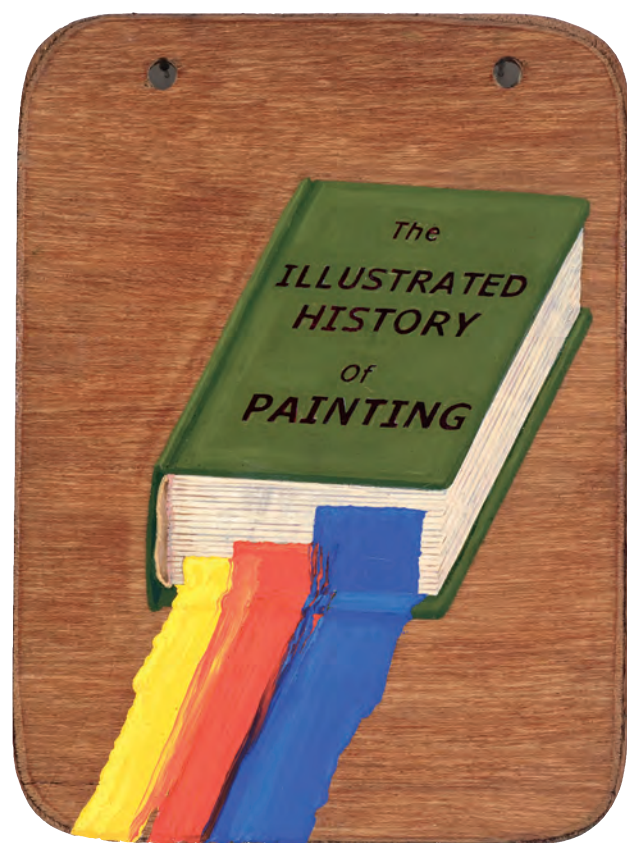
Seeing Small
This MacDiarmid Institute presentation with Richard Blaikie shows how the unseen worlds of micro- and nano-engineered systems are revealed through powerful microscopes. In association with Andrew Drummond: *Observation / Action / Reflection* and the University of Canterbury.
6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Sponsored by The Press

Trouble Ahead

Roger Boyce &
*The Illustrated History
of Painting*

BY JUSTIN PATON

If you want to get some perspective on the art of today, a good but grim way of doing so is to imagine it from the future's point of view. When the archaeologists of the year 2195 pick their way across the ruins of the city of Christchurch, what traces of art and culture will they find amongst the rubble? And more to the point, what fragments would we want them to find—if we had the choice?



“
*Across a hundred
 lusciously painted
 and mischievously
 detailed panels,
 Boyce reimagines the
 history of his medium
 as a succession of
 creative mishaps,
 ludicrous stunts,
 and preposterous
 endeavours.*
 ”

IN THE UPBEAT VERSION of this future fantasy, the archaeologists strike it lucky. Clambering across the remains of the city’s one-time centre of learning, the University of Canterbury Library, they discover a dusty recess half-hidden beneath a slab of brutalist concrete. Inside, miraculously preserved from flood and fire, there’s a stash of precious art books. Ernst Gombrich’s *The Story of Art*, H.H. Arnasson’s *History of Modern Art*, perhaps even Michael Dunn’s *New Zealand Painting: A Concise History*. Histories of the art we judged great and good, packed with pictures we thought mattered.

If the future’s approval is what we’re after, then no doubt this discovery is the one to wish for. But I can’t help imagining a slightly different discovery—one with funnier and more confusing results. In this alternative scenario, the archaeologists unwittingly begin digging for samples in what was once the University’s School of Fine Arts. And there, sealed in a box amidst the wreckage of a lecturer’s office, they discover a much stranger account of art-making in our time—namely Christchurch painter Roger Boyce’s *The Illustrated History of Painting*.

I don’t mean to dismiss the noble Gombrich and Arnasson, or to make light of the scary fate that many commentators predict for our cities; it’s simply fun

to imagine the trouble Boyce’s *Illustrated History* might cause for any would-be reconstructor of our historical moment. Most histories of painting play out as a sequence of movements and styles, with one ‘ism’ giving way to the next in a soothing and logical rhythm. But Boyce’s version is about as soothing as a lawnmower on a suburban Sunday morning. Across a hundred lusciously painted and mischievously detailed panels, Boyce reimagines the history of his medium as a succession of creative mishaps, ludicrous stunts, and preposterous endeavours. Instead of heroically ‘breaking through’ and ‘leading the way’ as painters are supposed to do, Boyce’s painters slam into their own limitations like pratfalling comedians in a knockabout farce.

The cartoon look and low humour of Boyce’s *Illustrated History* may seem out of keeping with his serious-sounding role as senior lecturer in painting at the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts, but it’s significant that Boyce is a teacher. His *Illustrated History* reminds me of a distinctive teaching aid Boyce brought with him when he came to Christchurch from the States six years ago—nine slide carousels brimming with reproductions of paintings, from prehistoric through to postmodern. With this battery of images,

Boyce wasn’t out to tell his students a traditional history. Instead the aim was to soak them in the sheer range of possibilities for painting today, and thus raise an unsettling question: in an artworld where anything is possible, where all history is up for grabs and reachable at the click of a mouse, how does one choose what kind of painter to be? How to wade through the length and breadth of painting’s past and emerge without feeling terminally exhausted or bewildered?

I like to think of the *Illustrated History* as Boyce’s wayward answer to his own question—a gonzo variation on the ‘allegories of painting’ created by high-minded academicians in centuries past. From the opening title page right through to the final panel with its blunt conclusion (*Ends*), the panels offer funny and ever more frenetic propositions about what a painter is. The painter as a high-diver leaping into the whiteness of the canvas below (*Yves*). Or as a boxer sucker-punched by his own painting (*KO*). Or as a saint bleeding paint from his wounds (*Stigmata*). Strivers, doofuses, flame-outs and fools, Boyce’s little artist stand-ins struggle to make their mark on art’s history, to prove their mastery of the medium. But time after time they find themselves undone by their own ambitions—weighed down by the tools of the trade (*Burden of Dreams*, washed up by

waves of art history (*Washed Up*), or stuck in traps of their own creation (*White Man’s Burden*).

Taken individually, the paintings exude a fierce, almost fatalistic humour, with Boyce running a satirist’s skewer through every creative myth and painterly cliché he can see. But the more I see of the series (there are eighteen paintings still to go at the time of writing), the less it feels like a straight-out satire at painting’s expense. For a start, you can’t miss the care Boyce has lavished on each panel, rendering his scenarios with a devotional intensity that recalls medieval illuminations as much as it does *Mad* magazine. But even more compelling is the sense of momentum—of sheer freewheeling enjoyment—that accumulates throughout the series, an enjoyment that competes with and increasingly overrides the satirical point of individual paintings. Like the best satirists, Boyce is clearly in love with the very things that vex him, and he goes at the problems of painting with the headlong gusto of a stand-up comic who has at last found a topic large and annoying enough to take all the spleen he can spray at it.

Boyce didn’t set out to paint a hundred paintings. The series began in a what-the-hell spirit with the painting of some bright but bleak little scenes on scraps of plywood that had been lying around the studio.

Portraying a series of artist suicides—painters ‘offing themselves’ (Boyce’s phrase) by means of rope, gun, fire and more—these early paintings are intensely, you might even say passionately, negative. Painting is finished, these works seem to say, and the painter is at the end of his rope. But having begun in this bleak and final spirit, it’s as if Boyce found himself intrigued and, with each new work, increasingly carried away by the very medium whose death he was preparing to announce. In other words, he found himself in the same position as the little painters he portrays—toiling away inside painting’s history with a mixture of hope, desperation, energy and glee.

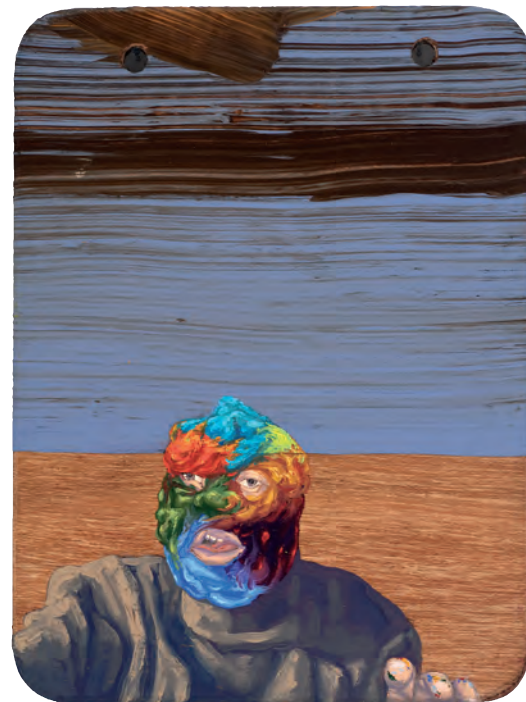
Even as it lets the air out art’s highest hopes and ambitions, *The Illustrated History of Painting* is a work of serious comic ambition. Let’s hope the archaeologists of 2195 see the funny side.

Justin Paton
 Senior curator

Roger Boyce: *The Illustrated History of Painting*
 is in the Monica Richards Gallery from 13 August to 14 November 2010.

Previous page, from left to right: *The Illustrated History of Painting*, *The Critic*, *Simon’s Periscope*, *Ur Matter*, *Stigmata*, *Breakthrough*, all from the series *The Illustrated History of Painting* 2008–10. Oil and water-based mediums on hardwood ply. Reproduced courtesy of the artist, Brooke Gifford Gallery, Christchurch and Suite, Wellington

This page, from left to right: *El Lutes*, *Solitaire*, *Rainbow Coalition*, *Great White*, *My Ship Coming In*, *Agua Libre*, all from the series *The Illustrated History of Painting* 2008–10. Oil and water-based mediums on hardwood ply. Reproduced courtesy of the artist, Brooke Gifford Gallery, Christchurch and Suite, Wellington





John Gibb *From the foot of the hills* 1886. Oil on canvas. Christchurch Art Gallery Trust Collection

A PASTORAL VIEW

The portrayal of life in the country has long been a popular subject in western art. This pastoral theme is explored in **An Idyllic Country: Pastoral Landscapes from the Collection**, which includes European and New Zealand prints, watercolours and oil paintings spanning several centuries.

As a genre, pastoralism can be traced back to the third century BC Greek poet Theocritus, whose work, *Idylls*, focused on the idyllic existence of shepherds in an arcadian countryside. While the pastoral theme appeared in Greek and Roman frescos it was during the Italian Renaissance that the genre really became popular with artists and patrons alike. Today, it can be argued that the pastoral tradition continues to exert a strong influence in contemporary New Zealand life, as seen through the huge demand over the past ten to twenty years for lifestyle blocks offering an escape for 'greener pastures'.

AN IDYLIC COUNTRY: PASTORAL LANDSCAPES FROM THE COLLECTION IS IN THE MONICA RICHARDS GALLERY UNTIL 8 AUGUST.



John Arnesby Brown **On the uplands** c.1910. Oil on canvas. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, presented by the Canterbury Society of Arts 1932

Richard Earlom **Landscape with figures from the original drawing in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire** 1776. Mezzotint / engraving. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, Sir Joseph Kinsey collection, bequeathed by May Moore 1954

The French painter Claude Lorrain (1604–1682) is perhaps one of the best known of the pastoral artists. Lorrain’s highly idealised views of country life, where all living things appear contented within the landscape, have resonated for many centuries. One of the works included in **An Idyllic Country** is a copy after a Lorrain drawing. *Landscape with figures from the original drawing in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire* by Richard Earlom (1743–1822) is taken from *Liber Veritas*, a book of original drawings recording the compositions of Lorrain’s paintings, purchased by the Duke of Devonshire in 1720. Between 1774 and 1777 Earlom engraved these drawings, making them widely available to many British artists. These engravings after Lorrain became a standard resource for many art students from the late eighteenth century.

Closer to home, the Victorian artist John Gibb (1831–1909) was one of the first truly professional artists to establish a successful career in Canterbury and pastoral views such as *From the foot of the hills* helped to secure his success. To the modern eye Gibb’s 1886 subject presents a somewhat poignant rural view of the Canterbury Plains from the Port Hills. This view has long since been transformed into Christchurch’s sprawling suburbs of Somerfield, Beckenham, Cashmere, St Martins and Opawa; the seemingly vast paddocks subdivided and built out. Livestock accessing waterways, as depicted in *From the foot of the hills*, is today a major problem in the wider Canterbury region and contributes to the deteriorating quality of many Canterbury streams and rivers.

John Arnesby Brown (1866–1955) sought refuge from city life, spending his career based in the English countryside. Arnesby Brown established an annual routine of summers and autumns based in Norfolk and winters and springs spent in Cornwall. He specialised in painting cattle, and with dramatic skies playing an important role in his compositions

the rolling hills and open skies of Norfolk provided much of his material. *On the uplands* depicts a rural arcadia far removed from the modern urban centres of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Winifred McKenzie (1905–2001) provides a more modern view of an idyllic landscape. Her coloured woodcut takes advantage of a high viewpoint to give a sweeping view of a farmhouse set within a Devonshire valley. Similar viewpoints, looking down onto pastoral landscapes, are also seen in paintings by New Zealanders Evelyn Page (1899–1988) and John Weeks (1886–1965) included in the exhibition. Although based in Scotland for much of her career McKenzie lived in the bustling city of London throughout the 1930s, and she and her sister Alison (also a printmaker of note) would often travel throughout the English countryside seeking suitable pastoral subjects.

Pastoral carelessness by local contemporary artist Barry Cleavin (b.1939) comments on scientific intervention in the countryside, where modern farming practices including biological engineering are being used to increase productivity and profits. Works by Cleavin and Bing Dawe (b.1952) highlight the inevitable fate of farmed livestock—the fateful trip in a cattle-truck to the freezing works that provides a striking juxtaposition to the more sedate depictions of livestock in **An Idyllic Country**.

Peter Vangioni
Curator



Barry Cleavin **Pastoral carelessness** 2004. Etching and aquatint. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 2004. Reproduced courtesy of the artist

EVENTS

Wednesday 14 July

ArtBite / An Idyllic Country? Join exhibition curator Peter Vangioni as he attempts to reconcile an idealised portrayal of country life with contemporary commentary on the inevitable fate of livestock.

5.15pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / meet at the front desk / free

Wednesday 14 July

Paradise and the Slaughter House: Settlement and Forgetting Patrick Evans, professor of English at the University of Canterbury, discusses his contentious account of the role of colonial capitalism in the formation of New Zealand literature.

6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Sponsored by The Press

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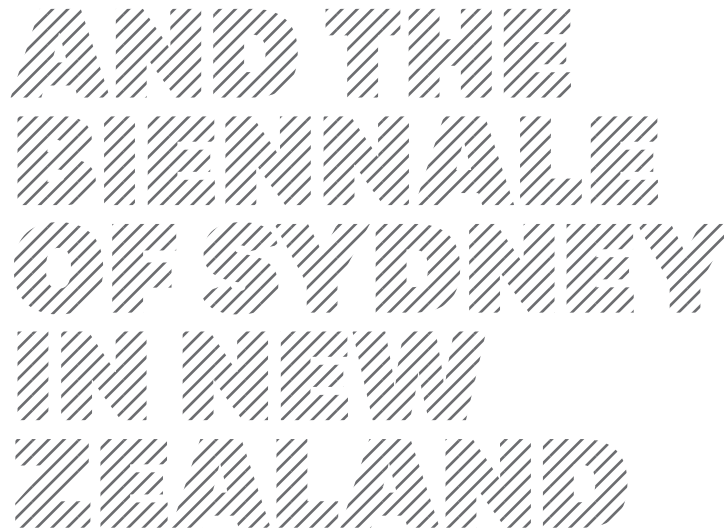
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FOR MORE INFORMATION
Please contact the Gallery's development manager.
Tel: (+64) 3 941 7348; email: cagtrust@ccc.govt.nz

NEW ZEALAND IN THE BIENNALE OF SYDNEY



CALL IT A MOMENT OF UNCANNY CURATORIAL SYNCHRONICITY. Call it an alignment of the trans-Tasman curatorial stars. Or—calming down a bit—call it a minor but welcome coincidence. In Sydney from 12 May till 1 August, nine New Zealand artists go on show in the Biennale of Sydney—one of the largest contingents of Kiwis ever to take part in the nearest thing the South Pacific has to European megashows like documenta and the Venice Biennale. And across roughly the same timeframe, six of those artists are on show at Christchurch Art Gallery—Jason Greig, Julia Morison, Fiona Pardington, Reuben Paterson, Rohan Wealleans, and (in the Russell Crowe position, with a foot in both Australia and New Zealand) Daniel Crooks. (The other Kiwis taking part are Yvonne Todd, Brett Graham and Shane Cotton.)

Called *The Beauty of Distance: Songs of Survival in a Precarious Age: The 17th Biennale of Sydney*, artistic director David Elliott's edition of the show sure won't be winning any prizes for economy in exhibition titling. But it's impossible not to feel hopeful for a curator who takes as his touchstone Harry Smith's great 1952 collection of field-recordings, the *Anthology of American Folk Music*, and who says, with a welcome directness and absence of bet-hedging, that he wants to 'explore the affirmative power of art in the face of unprecedented threats'.

International group-shows often bring out the worst in New Zealand commentators, who feel compelled for the zillionth time to wonder what exactly makes the New Zealand work distinctively 'ours' (*Hello, you want to respond, it's from New Zealand*). We're doing our best here to avoid that kind of naffness. But it has to be said that Elliott's stated interests in tricksters, cabinets of curiosity, and 'gods and ghosts' sit very comfortably indeed with the New Zealanders in his selection—particularly those who do their digging down at the dark end of the local cultural garden, like Cotton, Greig, Pardington and Wealleans. Of course, to see how the nine New Zealand artists harmonise or otherwise with Elliott's 'songs of survival' theme, you need to get to Sydney and get amongst it. But if you can't, or even if you can, six of the nine are playing right now at the Gallery.

Justin Paton
Senior curator

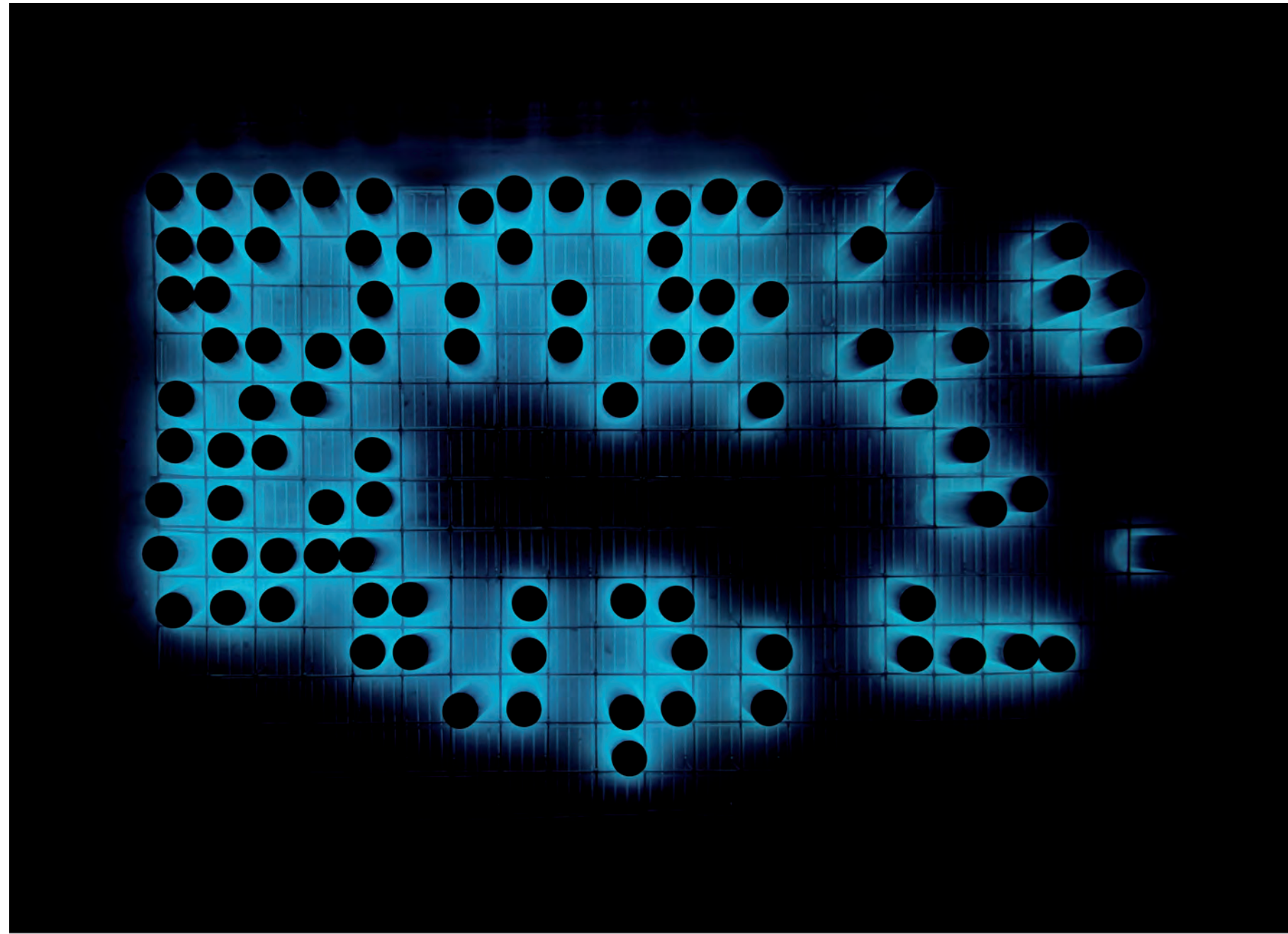
Reuben Paterson and Rohan Wealleans are currently on show in *Blue Planet*. Jason Greig, Julia Morison and Fiona Pardington currently feature in *Brought to Light: A New View of the Collection*, with Pardington also appearing on *Springboard on Worcester Boulevard*. Daniel Crooks's video installation from the collection, *Pan No.2* (one step forwards, one frame backwards), will play from 14 August.

Jason Greig *Blood is Thicker* 2005. Monoprint. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 2005. Reproduced with permission

Reuben Paterson *A shadow born from three dreams* 2008–9. Glitter and acrylic on canvas. Private collection, Christchurch. Reproduced courtesy of the artist



Julia Morison
Tootoo 2006. Mixed media on aluminium laminate. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, presented 2008



Submerged in a pool of water at Hanford Site are 1,936 stainless-steel nuclear-waste capsules containing cesium and strontium. Combined, they contain over 120 million curies of radioactivity. It is estimated to be the most curies under one roof in the United States. The blue glow is created by the Cherenkov Effect which describes the electromagnetic radiation emitted when a charged particle,

giving off energy, moves faster than light through a transparent medium. The temperatures of the capsules are as high as 330 degrees Fahrenheit. The pool of water serves as a shield against radiation; a human standing one foot from an unshielded capsule would receive a lethal dose of radiation in less than 10 seconds. Hanford is among the most contaminated sites in the United States.

Taryn Simon Nuclear Waste Encapsulation and Storage Facility, Cherenkov Radiation, Hanford Site, U.S. Department of Energy, Southeastern Washington State 2005–7. Chromogenic colour print. © 2007 Taryn Simon. Courtesy Gagosian Gallery/Steidl

Taryn
Simon's

KNOWN UNKNOWN

The work is meant to be disorienting. It was produced during a disorienting time in my history as an American. There is an element of exploration—of discovering a new American landscape—politically, ethically, and religiously.¹

In 2003, the American photographer Taryn Simon embarked upon a four-year heart-of-darkness journey. In response to paranoid rumours of WMDs and secret sites in Iraq, she turned her gaze to places and things hidden within her own country. The resulting exhibition—*An American Index of the Hidden and Unfamiliar*—is an idiosyncratic guide to the American mindset, whose subjects traverse the realms of science, government, medicine, entertainment, nature, security, and religion. Among other things, the show takes in glowing capsules in an underwater nuclear-waste storage facility, a Braille edition of *Playboy*, a retarded inbred tiger, a teenage corpse rotting in a forensic research facility, the Death Star and a Scientology screening room. Shot with a large-format view camera, Simon's images range from ethereal to foreboding, from deadpan to luscious. Each is accompanied by a text that provides often chilling background information on what is shown.

Walking through the show, one is surprised—but never so surprised. We know rape victims get DNA tested, so it's not implausible that somewhere there is a backlog of kits awaiting analysis. National borders are protected by customs agents and patrols—it would only be scandalous if they weren't. And this

won't be the first time we've heard of the KKK, cryonics, serpent handlers, government bunkers, and black ops. But while we know all these things, we don't expect to be confronted with them en masse. Simon's subjects are mostly the half-secrets that people exile to the backs of their minds to maintain their collective sense of security as they live their lives and go about their business. As one commentator put it, 'What's most strongly conveyed by these photographs is how conscientious we can be about what we don't want to be conscious of.'² Slavoj Žižek said something similar when he observed that Americans saw 9/11 as unimaginable when Hollywood had been imagining it for years.

It's hard to look at the *Index* without speculating on the research and negotiation that would have attended the creation of each image. What did Simon have to say in order to get access? How much resistance did she face? How secretive was she about her intentions? If this is what she can show, what is it that she can't show? One imagines that many of the bureaucrats and technocrats who permitted her access were understandably proud of their well-oiled facilities, like that executioner in Franz Kafka's story *In the Penal Colony* who finally demonstrated his machine on himself. However, Simon

TARYN SIMON: AN AMERICAN INDEX OF THE HIDDEN AND UNFAMILIAR
 is in the William A. Sutton and Ravenscar Galleries from 19 June until 5 September.

EVENTS

Saturday 19 June
 Floortalk / Robert Leonard on Taryn Simon
 Captivated by Taryn Simon's hauntingly beautiful exhibition, Robert Leonard, director of the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, became the driving force behind its tour of Australasia.
 12noon / meet at the front desk / free

Wednesday 11 August
 Trillion: Using Rap Music to Uncover Crimes Against Humanity
 Trillion is Jody Lloyd, one of New Zealand's only true natural-accent rappers. His aim is to raise awareness and expose corporate and government corruption.
 5:15pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / music video screenings / free

Wednesday 11 August
 The Visible and the Secret in Global Media Culture
 The University of Canterbury's Kevin Glynn explores America's fascination with conspiracy theories and tabloid culture and looks at the cultural repercussions of 'infotainment'.
 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
 Sponsored by The Press

“As much as Simon reflects on America, she also reflects on photography. For someone who cut her teeth as a photojournalist, she is surprisingly skeptical of photography's claims to truth and attentive to its limitations.”

acknowledges resistance in one work. This text-only piece excerpts a 'no letter' from Disney which argues that 'the magical spell cast on guests who visit our theme parks is particularly important to protect and helps to provide them with an important fantasy they can escape to.' It is odd to think that one can photograph nuclear-submarine work stations, the mint, the CIA, government marijuana crops, and death-row exercise cages, but backstage at Disneyland is off-limits. Simon suggests that the entertainment industry may be more fastidious than the military in maintaining appearances.

For me, one image offers a telling key to Simon's inquiry into secrecy. *Hymenoplasty, Cosmetic Surgery, P.A., Fort Lauderdale, Florida* shows an operating theatre in which a young woman, spread-eagled in stirrups, awaits an operation to restore her hymen 'to adhere to cultural and familial expectations regarding her virginity and marriage'. The image is conflicted. On the one hand, the woman is obscenely displayed; on the other, her face is hidden and her sex modestly veiled. Perversely, the image exposes the existence of a dishonest procedure but protects the woman's identity, making us complicit with her subterfuge. In specifying that the woman is 'of Palestinian descent', Simon's text introduces a twist. Through its support of Israel, America may be implicated in the deceitful oppression of Palestinians, but here, in the 'free world', this young Palestinian-American woman's own lie can be enabled. Is restoring her 'innocence' resisting misogynist cultural expectations or buying into them? It's complex. America is complex.

As much as Simon reflects on America, she also reflects on photography. For someone who cut her teeth as a photojournalist, she is surprisingly skeptical of photography's claims to truth and attentive to its limitations. Her previous series, *The Innocents* (2003), presented portraits of persons who had been wrongfully convicted, often on the basis of photographic evidence. The *Index* also emphasises

misrecognition. Simon compares her approach to that of exploration-period artists who made seductive images of locations and specimens only to supplement them with the driest of descriptions. Simon's texts emphasise what her spectacular images don't or can't say. Viewers experience a double take, only recognising the implications of what they have seen *after* they have read her text. Simon says, 'the image is meant to float away into abstraction and multiple truths and fantasy, then the text functions as this cruel anchor that nails it to the ground.'³

At first glance, it is easy to see the *Index* simply as a documentary project, but it is more than merely evidential. Simon's images are highly crafted, contrived, themselves duplicitous: she famously rearranged seized contraband to recall a classic Dutch still-life and chose a particular group of glowing nuclear-waste capsules because their disposition suggested a map of America. Rhetorical installation is also crucial to her plan. Simon insists on laboratory-white gallery walls and even, regular spacing of her images. And she runs her texts small, as if they were literally 'the fine print'. While the show appears sedate and systematic, the works—the registers they operate in and their implications—are so heterodox that they generate a burgeoning sense of disorder and dislocation. For all its encyclopaedic breadth, the paradox-fuelled *Index* refuses to join the dots. While it furnishes building blocks for a conspiracy theory, it pulls back from an overarching explanation. In doing so, it exemplifies, engages, critiques, and inverts Bush-period paranoia. The prospect of an American axis of evil constantly appears and evaporates under our gaze.

Robert Leonard

Robert Leonard is director of the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane.



NOTES

1. Taryn Simon, quoted in *Interview* (December 2008), p.170.
2. 'Behind Closed Doors', *New York Times Magazine* (17 December 2006), p.64. Abridged.
3. 'Taryn Simon Photographs Secret Sites' (2009), http://www.ted.com/talks/taryn_simon_photographs_secret_sites.html

The patient in this photograph is 21 years old. She is of Palestinian descent and living in the United States. In order to adhere to cultural and familial expectations regarding her virginity and marriage, she underwent hymenoplasty. Without it she feared she would be rejected by her future husband and bring shame upon her family. She flew in secret to Florida where the operation was performed by Dr Bernard Stern, a plastic

surgeon she contacted on the internet. The purpose of hymenoplasty is to reconstruct a ruptured hymen, the membrane which partially covers the opening of the vagina. It is an outpatient procedure which takes approximately 30 minutes and can be done under local or intravenous anaesthesia. Dr Stern charges \$3,500 for hymenoplasty. He also performs labiaplasty and vaginal rejuvenation.

Taryn Simon *Hymenoplasty, Cosmetic Surgery, P.A., Fort Lauderdale, Florida 2005–7*. Chromogenic colour print. © 2007 Taryn Simon. Courtesy Gagosian Gallery/Steidl



Above:
Mikhail Larionov 'Un Paon',
Costume mécanique ('A
peacock', mechanical costume)
1919. Pochoir. Collection of
Christchurch Art Gallery Te
Puna o Waiwhetu, presented
by Anita Muling 1979. © Michel
Larionov /ADAGP. Licensed by
Viscopy, 2010

Right:
Natal'ya Goncharova Costume
Espagnol (Spanish costume)
1919. Screenprint. Collection
of Christchurch Art Gallery Te
Puna o Waiwhetu, presented
by Anita Muling 1979. © Natal'ya
Goncharova /ADAGP. Licensed
by Viscopy, 2010



“With Goncharova’s 1914 *Golden Cockerel*
and Larionov’s 1915 *Tales of Russia*,
cubism made its appearance in the theatre.
A new decorative art began.”*

STAGING THE AVANT-GARDE

THE FOLIO *L'ART DÉCORATIF THÉÂTRAL MODERNE* (Modern Theatrical Decorative Art) was published in Paris in 1919 by leading European avant-garde artists Natal'ya Goncharova (1881–1962) and Mikhail Larionov (1881–1964) to coincide with an exhibition of theatre designs at Galerie Barbazanges. Included are examples of the artists’ work in lithography and pochoir (stencil) printing which collectively highlight their interest in stage and costume design and their desire to combine the forms of cubism with the representation of movement. In 1912 Larionov initiated rayonism, an artistic genre in which he investigated the effect of light rays fracturing and reflecting off the surface of objects. The prints included in *L'Art Décoratif Théâtral Moderne*, with their rich decorative patterns, vibrant colours and abstract forms, highlight these concerns.

Goncharova and Larionov first met in 1898 at the Moscow School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture and remained lifelong companions. Both artists were founding members of leading Russian avant-garde movements, including the Jack of Diamonds (1910) and the Donkey’s Tail (1912), and worked with the renowned founder of Ballets Russes, Serge Diaghilev (1872–1929), from 1914. In 1919 they settled permanently in Paris, where they became prominent figures in the city’s artistic, dance and literary circles. Today both artists are widely regarded as the foremost Russian artists of the twentieth century.

L'Art Décoratif Théâtral Moderne highlights a number of collaborative relationships undertaken by Goncharova and Larionov throughout the 1910s. These include stage and costume designs for Diaghilev and Larionov’s responses to the music of Maurice Ravel (1875–1937) and Lord Berners (1883–1950). The folio includes pochoir prints, a forerunner to screenprinting that was extremely popular with avant-garde artists in France during the early twentieth century.

L'Art Décoratif Théâtral Moderne was presented to the Gallery by Anita Muling in 1979.

Peter Vangioni
Curator

***Goncharova and Larionov: L'Art Décoratif Théâtral Moderne* is in the Tait Electronics Gallery until 8 August.**

*Valentin Parnakh
Natal'ya Goncharova and Mikhail Larionov *L'art Décoratif
Théâtral Moderne*, La Cible, Paris, 1919.

EVENTS

Wednesday 9 June
Immerse Feature Night / Goncharova,
Larionov and Chekov
Immerse yourself in the art and
performance of Russia’s finest. Exhibition
curator Peter Vangioni presents a short
talk on **Goncharova and Larionov: L'Art
Décoratif Théâtral Moderne**. The talk
is followed by a performance of Anton
Chekov’s *The Seagull* at the Court Theatre,
and a post-show forum led by Elric Hooper
on the costume and stage design for this
engrossing production.
6pm talk / 7.30pm performance / \$45
includes complimentary champagne /
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Wednesday 21 July
Film / Ballets Russes
An intimate portrait of the pioneering
Russian artists credited with the birth
of modern ballet.
6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium
/ G / 118mins / free
Sponsored by The Press

Wednesday 4 August
Larionov, Goncharova and the Russian
'isms'
An overview of Russian performing and
visual arts by Russian art expert Peter
Stupples, who looks at how the country’s
turbulent history fuelled a whirlwind of
artistic styles and 'isms'.
6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Sponsored by The Press



dining table

Robin White '88

fresh light



Robin White clock, from the series *Saying goodbye to Florence* 1988. Relief print on paper. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 1989. Reproduced courtesy of the artist



Robin White medicine cabinet, from the series *Saying goodbye to Florence* 1988. Relief print on paper. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 1989. Reproduced courtesy of the artist



Robin White dining table, from the series *Saying goodbye to Florence* 1988. Relief print on paper. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 1989. Reproduced courtesy of the artist



Robin White tallboy, from the series *Saying goodbye to Florence* 1988. Relief print on paper. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 1989. Reproduced courtesy of the artist

In *Bulletin* last year, we described some of the thinking behind **Brought to Light**, our new permanent collection exhibition. And one of our main thoughts, from the beginning, was that this exhibition should not feel *too* permanent—that there should be room for change and fresh light within it. Six months since the show opened, a host of new additions have just been rolled out: a vast canvas by Tony de Lautour, five works by Frances Hodgkins and dazzling new acquisitions by Kentaro Yamada and Reuben Paterson. Here, Robin White talks about another group of collection works recently put on display—the series of twelve prints she made in 1988 after the death of her mother Florence. These prints are displayed in the twentieth-century gallery, in front of White's much-loved portrait painting of her mother from 1974.

Justin Paton
Senior curator

The overall title for the two sets of six prints is *Saying goodbye to Florence*. There is no particular order for the first set, *Time to go*, but the image with the dining table (like a McCahon *Necessary protection* painting) is the only image with a window—a way out?—and it was here that my mother died suddenly of a heart attack in 1979. She was sitting on the seat you can see to the right of the image and having a cup of tea with my brother-in-law who had popped by for a visit.

Because my mother had died suddenly, everything in her house was in its usual place, as if she had just gone out to do the shopping. As soon as news of her death reached us, my husband Mike and I drove up to Te Puke from Dunedin and stayed in my mother's spare room. Her funeral was held on December 24. On Christmas morning I woke very early and went about the house making drawings of things that spoke to me about my mother. Ignoring the fact that it was Christmas Day (got to get your priorities right!) I then went and woke my nephew who lived nearby and got him to come with his camera to my mother's place. Through the lens I lined up the shots based on the drawings I had made and, with the camera lashed to a surveyor's tripod and a bit of guesswork in the absence of a light meter, my nephew pressed the shutter. When all was done my nephew

went home and developed the negatives, and the rest is history. I have no recollection at all of what else happened that Christmas Day.

All these images are full of traces of my mother, of her character and her beliefs. Take for example the tallboy, with my father's portrait on the top and my mother's shoes tucked tidily below. All just exactly as they were. It says a lot about my parents and about their marriage. I was thinking also of Jan van Eyck's portrait of Arnolfini and his bride with the shoes in left foreground. Standing on sacred ground.

Robin White
2010

Opposite page:
Robin White dining table, from the series *Saying goodbye to Florence* 1988. Relief print on paper. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 1989. Reproduced courtesy of the artist

RON MUECK

2 OCTOBER 2010 —
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Ron Mueck, born Australia 1958.
Mask II 2002. Polyester resin,
fibreglass, steel, plywood,
synthetic hair, second edition,
artist's proof. Private collection.
© Ron Mueck courtesy Anthony
d'Offay, London. Photo: Chris
Markel, NGV Photo Services



‘...connected to all we see and do in life...’

DON PEEBLES 1922–2010

AS A CURATOR AT CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY, there are many different reasons to visit the storerooms where the painting collection is held. Most often you go alone to look at a work you’re considering for an exhibition. Sometimes you take visiting researchers to see works they’re interested in. And now and then you take a visitor backstage for personal reasons—because they’re related to the person who made the painting, or because they themselves are in it.

But the most memorable trip I’ve taken behind the scenes took place recently in the company of Christchurch painter Don Peebles, his wife Prue, their son Colin, and Gallery director Jenny Harper. Like many people in the Christchurch art community, I’d been sad to hear last year that Don was unwell. In mid March Prue rang to say he was seriously ailing; would it be possible for Don to come and look at some of his paintings? And of course it was.

About two weeks after visiting the Gallery Don died at his home in Ilam, and his loss is felt strongly by all who knew him as a person and a pioneering abstract painter. Thinking about Don, the things I remember are his wit, his seriousness and his height. To meet him was to be immediately impressed by his straight-backed, tennis-player’s bearing. So when he visited in March, it took a moment to get used to Don moving through the building in a wheelchair. But only a moment, because once in front of his paintings he was recognisably his painter self, appraising his own work with the look of wary curiosity that anyone who visited him in his studio will remember.

I got to know that look in 1995 as a first-time curator, researching a survey of Don’s paintings for the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. When Don looked at a painting he seemed to have two things on his mind. First, all the small and immediate questions about the look of the painting—its format, colour, and composition. Then, all the large and daunting questions about the broader purpose of Painting

with a capital ‘P’. Should it aim for tension or balance? Should it soothe or irritate? Should it adhere to tradition or break from it?

It’s strange and sobering to consider that each of us, at some point, will take a last look at things. And here was Don paying one last visit to things he’d spent a very long time looking at. His early *Relief construction no.3*, with its fine weightings of solid and shadow. The *Untitled* painting from 1972, a pristine grid interrupted by a few swirls of grey. The *Untitled* relief from 1981, with paper fins as dense and delicate as the gills underneath a mushroom. And the big unframed canvas *Untitled A4*, as lush and gleaming as West Coast foliage. In front of that majestic work, Don took the opportunity to rearrange its canvas ‘leaves’, and remind us that it should always be hung loose on the wall, not stretched taut, so that it reaches energetically into the viewer’s space. He liked to tell how the French painter Pierre Bonnard would return to galleries where his paintings hung and surreptitiously retouch them. And as Don looked at his paintings in the storerooms, I had the feeling he was performing a few of those adjustments in his mind. Painting, for him, was something perpetually in progress.

Late style is a fascinating subject. In their maturity some artists become heavy and dark, like Goya or Rembrandt. With others, like Matisse and De Kooning, the work becomes wonderfully light and transparent. Don’s recent paintings are of this kind. Often they begin with a shallow wooden tray like those he used back in the 1960s, and almost always this tray is painted white. But the white is not pure or otherworldly. It’s enlivened by little visual events—a fine pencil line, a bit of bare wood, and the floating red and yellow squares that are Don’s homage to one of his own touchstone artists, the abstract pioneer Piet Mondrian. For Mondrian, of course, abstract painting offered a diagram of another reality, a window onto a spiritual realm beyond this one. Don’s aims

Don Peebles at work in his studio in 2007. Photos by Ken Baker, courtesy of the Arts Foundation of New Zealand



weren’t as lofty; he never had any truck with the idea of art as a substitute religion. But in their unpretentious way his late paintings do lift the spirits. Within the small world of each wooden tray, there’s a lesson in lightness.

Don Peebles was one of New Zealand’s foremost abstract painters. That’s what it says in the wall label accompanying his paintings, and it’s true. But how inadequate that word ‘abstract’ is and always has been to describe what he was up to. In my dictionary one of the definitions of abstract is ‘separate from concrete reality’. Yet Don was a painter intensely engaged by the concrete realities of life, by its textures, colours, rhythms. As an artist he wasn’t just making things to look at in isolation. He was also making suggestions about how to look at things beyond the gallery—how to look with curiosity, alertness and openness. I was very glad my tape recorder was running when, in Don’s studio in 1995, I asked him how his abstract paintings connected with the world beyond:

I see that all these things are so interconnected, connected to all we see and do in life. I think there’s something very special about art. I have to. But I also know that it’s very ordinary, that these things I’m dealing with in my painting are the very stuff of which all human activity is moulded and built, and they are going on around me all the time. This is what my work’s about, I suppose. It’s about that sort of human situation, that duality, that sort of sociability, of life in different situations and the surprisingly different and unexpected things we have to cope with all the time.

Justin Paton
Senior curator

Don Peebles died on 27 March 2010 at his home in Ilam. His funeral was held on 31 March at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu.



Louise Etienne Sidonie Henderson **Addington workshops** 1930. Oil on board. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, Dame Louise Henderson Collection, presented by the McKegg Family 1999. Reproduced with permission



Robert Consedine is a writer/author and a political activist for social justice. He has been delivering Treaty of Waitangi workshops for twenty-one years.

For me, Louise Henderson's painting immediately evoked smell and sound; a sense of excitement and anticipation. I loved the stately grandeur of the locomotives, puffing steam and smoke as they commanded the carriages and railway trucks to move in rhythm, each executing their pre-ordained task. They had a sense of place and an unchallengeable role in the orderly and predictable movement of people and freight.

Addington workshops was a place of rest and restoration for these colossuses, as they visibly relaxed and waited for the specialised skills of the tradesmen. Diagnosis and repair ensued, all in good time.

Despite the low pay and poor conditions, there was a pride as workmen ministered to these extraordinary machines. Pride in the noise of a metal lathe refining the materials, the banging of hammer on metal, the smell of French polish being applied to carriage interiors, the hum of wood being cut with precision and the murmur of men, sometimes discussing work but, one suspects, more often the 'trots' around the corner at the local Addington racetrack.

In this often freezing, dirty and oppressive environment their solidarity with one another and the heat from a pot belly stove kept them alive. In winter they stood warming their hands in a circle and discussed their kids—for whom they all wanted something better. Religion and politics were treated circumspectly as relationships were maintained. Each had a turn at reading *The Press* in the time out locations of the toilet

or the locker room, and toys were made for home in 'spare' time. Loyalty was paramount. The workmen looked out and covered for each other.

The working lives of these 1,300 men, who included my father, were governed by a piercing whistle straight out of the Industrial Revolution. It could be heard all over Christchurch. The men came in the Clarence Road or Lowe Street gates on their bikes by 8am and were out at 4.30pm. Many, with permission, took off-cuts from railway sleepers home for firewood.

The annual workshops open day was a high point of the year for the families. One of the more exciting events for children was a ride, high under the roof of the wood-wagon, in the bucket attached to the crane. They climbed into the bucket and were whisked away—no OSH legislation there!

Each railway family got an annual free pass for a holiday. Our family often used ours to travel to Auckland. Awaiting departure, the excitement would be at a peak. Train to Lyttelton, overnight ferry to Wellington and the 3pm 'limited' train to Auckland. The rhythmic clackety-clack, the rocking of the carriages, the bells at the rail crossings, the whistle and the smoke, the diverse railway stations and the legendary pies and cups of tea were always part of the journey, as immortalised and celebrated in popular songs by Rod Derrett and Peter Cape.

For me, this painting is iconic. The memory of those visions, smells and sounds remains very powerful.

Staff Profile

ToTal Property Services Canterbury Ltd



From left to right:
Linda Wakefield, Helen Chang, Sam Hoeta, Nicole Anthony, Jono Hermosa, Trish Tiananga, and Helen Lundy

In our series of staff profiles so far we've featured the public face of the Gallery, and we've looked at many of what might be considered the more glamorous roles undertaken. But there is much more to the operation of a Gallery working in full flight—for one thing it generates a serious amount of mess. Keeping that under control is an integral part of the day to day operation of the building.

At Christchurch Art Gallery, the cleaning is undertaken by ToTal Property Services Canterbury Ltd. The team is led by Linda Wakefield, who started at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery and has built up thirteen years of service with the Gallery as team leader. Working with her are weekly cleaners Trish Tiananga, Nicole Anthony and Sam Hoeta (who have eleven, seven and two years experience at the Gallery respectively). Also working are Paddy Gallagher and Helen Chang, Helen Lundy and Jono Hermosa.

The day starts at 6am, 364 days a year, and getting the Gallery ready for staff and visitors alike is no mean feat. One only has to think of the volume of dust and dirt that flowed out of the **Brought to Light** construction site on the boots of the armies of contractors that tramped through the corridors, or the unwieldy lengths of timber that tore gouges through the plasterwork as they were manoeuvred around tight corners. At times it must have seemed something of a Sisyphean task. To this, Linda simply quotes the company motto: 'ToTal service, total commitment'.

As well as cleaning up after functions, events and weddings in the Gallery, sometimes they are called upon by Gallery departments to undertake special cleans. This might mean blitzing a recently redecorated gallery space in anticipation of the arrival of the works of art, or the deep cleaning of collection storage spaces.

ToTal Property Service's work at the Gallery has been recognised at the Golden Service Awards—the national industry awards for the delivery of quality service—with gold in the Community and Culture category in 2003 and 2005. The team was also very close runner up in 2004, 2006 and 2007. They are very proud of their commitment and performance at the Gallery. So the next time you walk into the Gallery in the morning, spare a thought for the Gallery's cleaning staff—they've been hard at it since well before the sun rose.

PAGEWORK #7

ANDRE HEMER

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

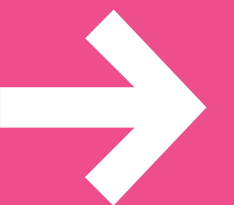
Andre Hemer's practice encompasses a wide range of conceptual and painterly techniques. In his layered and effusive work he tests the relationship between the material nature of painting and the process itself. By subverting and contradicting conventional painting materials through his use of flat graphics, Hemer heightens the visceral nature of painting, and the resulting images resonate with texture and movement. Through his play on ideas of contradiction, confusion and excess in visual culture, his works reference the contemporary moment, where technology and digital means of making and consumption create visual artefacts that are immediately engaging.

The imagery of **Love is what we do on week-days** (in partial 3-D) is drawn from a previous installation and its preparatory works. A blurry installation shot forms the

landscape for the image, upon which Hemer pieces together related elements from various digital photographs of paintings, digital projections and digital drawings. The resulting work is a composite of many different generations of physical outcome, derived from a singular starting point, and highlights the inherently circular nature of digital media. He says, 'I guess visually the work is kind of like a scene from a sci-fi flick—a whole set of competing elements and fragments exploding against an ambiguous landscape.'

Andre Hemer (b.1981) is a New Zealand painter who has exhibited in Australia, New Zealand, Korea, Taiwan, Germany, China and the UK. He is the founder of the international painting collective Paintlust, and currently runs the Paintlust Project Space based in New Zealand. He has undertaken residencies at the Royal College of Art in London in 2006, and the National Art Studio in Seoul, Korea in 2008. He is currently based between New Zealand, Seoul, and Germany.

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



Over page:
Andre Hemer *Love is what we do on week-days* (in partial 3-D) 2010.
Reproduced courtesy of the artist





Christchurch Art Gallery Wins Top Honours at the 2010 New Zealand Museums Awards

On 15 April, the Gallery was delighted to be awarded first place in the Exhibition Excellence category at the 2010 New Zealand Museums Awards. Museums Aotearoa granted the Selecon Award for Exhibition Excellence to the Gallery for **Brought to Light: A New View of the Collection**, which the judges praised as ‘an ambitious project that presents a considered coherent redevelopment for the display of the Gallery’s permanent collection.’

Brought to Light is the largest single exhibition project we have undertaken since opening seven years ago. The project was carefully planned and—because it was such a comprehensive redevelopment and rehang of the Gallery’s collection—the upstairs exhibition galleries were closed for four months. Every member of staff was involved in a team effort that was totally unprecedented. So it was both exciting and gratifying to have the hard work of all our staff recognised so emphatically. **Brought to Light** was commended for its coherent and engaging visitor experience, local and

Visitors enjoy Bill Culbert’s *Pacific flatsam*, part of **Brought to Light**.

international appeal and for providing ‘a model of high standards and good practice as well as a rewarding experience for both first time and regular visitors.’

Now in their third year, the New Zealand Museums Awards celebrate excellence and achievement and recognise the best of exhibitions and programmes throughout museums and art galleries in New Zealand. They also acknowledge the contribution that individuals make in their institutions and across the wider sector. In the exhibition category, **Brought to Light** emerged successful from a field of nine: other finalists were Museum of Wellington City and Sea for *10 Years in Wonderland* and the Air Force Museum of New Zealand for *History Gallery Redevelopment Project; Horizon to Horizon*.

The efforts of Gallery staff were applauded by Christchurch City Council at their meeting on 22 April and the Gallery was delighted to hear the House of Representatives offered their congratulations for the award, also on 22 April.

New Website Launch

In early July the new Gallery website will be launched. Completely redesigned by Christchurch firm Sons & Co, the new site will be a revelation for visitors familiar with our existing web presence. Like the collection galleries before them, the website has not had a significant overhaul since the Gallery opened in 2003; seven years is a long time in computing, and it was clear that our site was no longer working as hard for the Gallery as it should.

The redesigned site will be dynamic, content rich, and exciting. We’re bringing the collection to the fore with much improved access to the Collection Online. And our new events calendar, online booking system and shopping facilities will make it much easier to interact with the Gallery. But don’t take our word for it—get online in July and tell us what you think.

Art and the City Centre

The inner city was recently announced as both the site and subject of the 2010 *SCAPE Christchurch Biennial of Art in Public Space*. As Christchurch, like many cities all over the world, looks to new urban planning and development models to create a more livable, populated and environmentally sustainable inner city, *SCAPE 2010* will present a set of artist projects which probe, refocus and enhance both existing experiences and future projections of the inner city as a collective, civic space.

The Biennial, which runs from 24 September to 7 November, will create a platform for artists to make physical interventions in the ‘scape’ of the inner city, and to undertake actions that traverse its streets, paths, lanes and vacant spaces. Projects will be located at strategic sites within the inner city and linked by the *SCAPE 2010 Public Art Walkway*, with the *SCAPE 2010* hub in Cathedral Square. Visitors will encounter sculptural structures and architectural modifications; utopian renditions of a future city and propositional excavations of its history; artists working live within the city environment and artworks subject to climatic transformation through the six weeks of *SCAPE 2010*; projects that invite movement through the city and projects that invite their public to pause, sit and look. Find out more at www.scapebiennial.org.nz.



Conservators’ Conference Booked for October 2010

The New Zealand Conservators of Cultural Materials Group (NZCCM) are to hold their annual national conference at Christchurch Art Gallery on 22 and 23 October 2010. Entitled ‘Making Miracles Happen—the art of the conservator’, the conference will focus on treatment-based lectures. There will also be a workshop on gilding with gold leaf taken by gilding conservator Lin Klenner, and a trip to visit artists and conservators in North Canterbury. The conference is open to all who may be interested.

Join our Volunteer Guide Team

The Gallery is recruiting volunteers to guide daily tours and assist with school and holiday programmes. The next intake closes 25 July with training commencing 1 September. We are looking for people who have a passion for fine arts and wish to share their knowledge with our visitors of all ages. Being a volunteer guide at Christchurch Art Gallery is a fun and rewarding way to meet new people, extend your arts knowledge and offer your time and skills to the wider community. Our volunteer guides are a valued and vital part of the Gallery team.

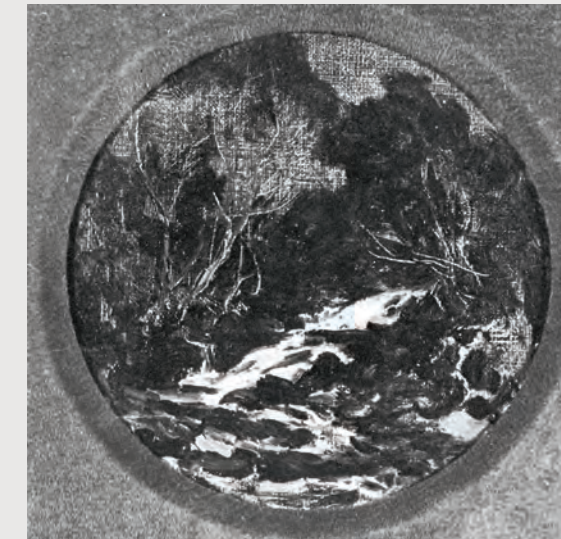
For further information and an expression of interest form, please contact Rebecca Ogle, visitor services and guides supervisor, tel: (03) 941 7347; email rebecca.ogle@ccc.govt.nz.

Sign Language Tours

The Gallery now offers quarterly Sign Language tours for the Deaf community. The first event was held on 5 May and was deemed a great success by staff and visitors alike. Tours are given by a Gallery guide, and interpreted for visitors by a New Zealand Sign Language interpreter. Our thanks go to the Gallery staff who made the initiative possible and such a success, and of course to the NZSL interpreter and all participants.

Andrew Drummond: Observation / Action / Reflection

Pre-order your copy of this superb catalogue at the Gallery Shop before 30 June to receive a 15% discount. FULL RETAIL PRICE: \$89.99



Looking for Petrus

Petrus van der Velden’s paintings of the Otira Gorge are well regarded for their impressive scale and monumental depictions of one of New Zealand’s most majestic regions. One example, *Mount Rolleston, Otira Gorge* (c.1893) in the collection of Te Papa, is an astounding three metres in length. However, there is one painting in the series that defies the scale of the larger works—a tiny oil on canvas tondo measuring just 148mm in diameter. This work was documented in Rodney Wilson’s 1979 catalogue raisonné of Van der Velden’s work, where it was listed as being in a private collection in Christchurch. Curator Peter Vangioni is currently preparing an exhibition of Van der Velden’s Otira series for the Gallery in February 2011 and would like to hear from anyone who may know of this painting’s current location. Please contact peter.vangioni@ccc.govt.nz if you have any information.

Film / The Light Fantastick

Director Rupert Glover introduces this detailed retrospective of animation created by the National Film Board of Canada. Includes the work of Norman McLaren, a contemporary of New Zealand film-maker and sculptor Len Lye. Presented by the Canterbury Film Society.

Wednesday 9 June / 7.30pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / 58mins / koha

Sponsored by The Press

Matariki / Doll-making Workshop

During this two-day workshop, acclaimed doll-maker Claire Inwood helps you create a doll from a range of treasures including buttons, braids, natural fibres and recycled wonders.

Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 June / 10am–4pm / education centre / \$65 / bookings tel: (03) 941 7382

Māori Language Week

Celebrate Māori Language Week with Katerina Te Heikoko Mataira, who is at the forefront of Māori language revival and teaching.

Wednesday 28 July / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free

Sponsored by The Press

School Holidays

TV2 Kids Fest LANTERN MAKING WORKSHOPS AND PARADE

Make your own lantern, which you can then use in a parade from the Gallery to the Cathedral.

Saturday 3 July / Workshops: 5–7yrs, 10am–12noon (caregiver required); 8–12yrs, 1–3pm / education centre / free / bookings tel: (03) 941 7382 / Parade: 5pm / forecourt / free

COOLSTUFF PAINTING

CoolStuff is the TV2KidsFest mascot. In this class, children aged 4–7 paint and decorate their own CoolStuff poster to take home.

5–9 July / 11am–12noon / education centre / \$5 / bookings tel: (03) 941 7382

YOUR COMIC, SEEN BY THE WORLD!

Children aged seven to twelve are invited to create their own comic book story and characters with cartoonist Marc Barnes, and enter the draw to have their cartoon published on the Gallery website.

12–16 July / 10.30am–12.30pm / education centre / \$5 / bookings tel: (03) 941 7382

EXPLORE AND DRAW

Explore the Gallery with this fun activity sheet.

3–18 July / collect from front desk / free



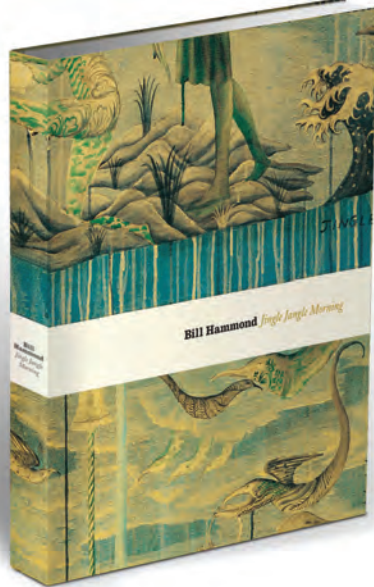
Ron Mueck

Christchurch is the only New Zealand venue for this must-see exhibition. Astounding in their realism and emotional power, Ron Mueck's works have made him one of the most renowned sculptors of our time. Ranging from the startlingly huge *Wild man* to the miniscule *Two women*, this comprehensive exhibition of work by the Australian-born, London-based artist is the largest to have been presented in the southern hemisphere—and an opportunity not to be missed. It includes four striking new works alongside many of the artist's iconic sculptures, including the poignantly tiny *Dead dad* and the larger-than-life *Pregnant woman*.


2 October 2010—23 January 2011

Left: Ron Mueck, born Australia 1958 *Two women (detail)* 2005. Polyester resin, fibreglass, silicone, aluminium wire, steel, wool, cotton, nylon, synthetic hair, plastic, metal, ed. 1/1. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2007. © Ron Mueck courtesy Anthony d'Offay, London

Above: Ron Mueck, born Australia 1958 *Woman with sticks (detail)* 2008. Silicone, polyurethane, steel, wood, synthetic hair, ed. 1/1. Private collection. © Ron Mueck courtesy Anthony d'Offay, London. Photo: Mike Bruce

Bill Hammond:
Jingle Jangle Morning
Winner: Illustrative Section,
Montana Book Awards
BPANZ Book Design award winner



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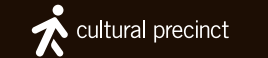
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