

# B.155

Bulletin  
Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetu

Summer  
December 2008 —  
February 2009







Two cyclists use the custom-designed bikes that form Anne Veronica Janssens's *Les Australoïdes* installation in the Gallery foyer.

Front and back cover images:  
Fiona Hall *Medicine bundle for the non-born child* (detail) 1994. Aluminium, rubber, plastic layette comprising matinee jacket. Collection of Queensland Art Gallery, purchased 2000. Queensland Art Gallery Foundation Grant. Courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley Gallery, Sydney







Home by Mark Richards and Associates



Artwork by Martin Fitzgerald, furniture by Cassman Inc.



Artwork by Pat Hodge, lamp by Andrew Davidson

# INSIDE NZ'S BEST HOMES



Artwork by Mark Richards, used by Peter Hall



Artwork by Andrew McLeod, used by Linda Williams, used by Rhian James



**HOLIDAY ISSUE**  
Sunny patios welcome for a bright new year  
Porches that come with a view  
The best outdoor chairs

TE PUNA O WAIWHETU  
CHRISTCHURCH  
ART GALLERY

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# B.155

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Welcome to a new look for the Christchurch Art Gallery *Bulletin*. This is the first edition to be published in our new format, and it is an exciting development for us. Fast approaching its thirtieth birthday, *Bulletin* has certainly come a long way since it was first published in 1979. Our creative partners Strategy Design and Advertising first became involved in 1998 and, with them at the helm, the magazine has received numerous awards and accolades. This new look represents the next stage in the evolution of our *Bulletin*, and we hope that you are as thrilled by it as we are.

Where our spring season of exhibitions explored the ways in which artists deal with time, this summer a theme of collecting can be detected through many of our exhibitions, and many of the articles in this magazine. Indeed, we hope that this revamped edition of *Bulletin* is, in itself, something of a 'cabinet of curiosities'.

Taking up the collecting theme, we are excited this quarter to host a major exhibition by Fiona Hall, one of Australia's most prominent and well-respected artists. Organised by Sydney's Museum of Contemporary Art and City Gallery Wellington, **Fiona Hall: Force Field** comes to us fresh from a highly successful run in both its previous venues. It is a compelling survey of the artist's work over the last four decades, from her early photography to video work resulting from her recent botanical expeditions. The exhibition provides fascinating insights into the artist's intense and imaginative investigation of our relationships with the natural world and the pressures placed upon it by politics, trade and consumption.

**Wunderbox** is a home-grown exhibition, taking its title from seventeenth-century cabinets of curiosity or *wunderkammer*. These attempts by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European collectors to document the world as it opened up before them were filled with exotica, becoming almost portraits of the world in miniature. The works within this particular 'cabinet' are predominantly from the Gallery's permanent collection, and it's fantastic to have this opportunity to display recent acquisitions like Francis Upritchard's idiosyncratic *Husband* and *Wife* which, along with other items in the exhibition, demonstrate what an exciting and unpredictable act collecting in a gallery context is today. We are thrilled that Francis, a graduate of the University of

Canterbury's School of Fine Arts in 1997, was recently selected to be one of two artists representing New Zealand in the prestigious Venice Biennale in 2009.

Replacing our long-running and highly successful **I See Red** exhibition is **White on White**, an examination of the artistic possibilities of white — a 'realm of unlimited artistic potential' according to early twentieth-century Russian abstract painter, Wassily Kandinsky. This exhibition has been created with children in mind and seeks to ask pertinent questions about the nature of white through a number of interactive components that we hope will be a hit with our younger audiences — as well as all visitors who are young at heart.

Also in the Gallery this summer are two exhibitions focusing on the work of New Zealand artists, past and present. **Te Huringa / Turning Points** comes to us from the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua. Looking at Pākehā colonisation and Māori empowerment, this exhibition makes use of the twin viewpoints of the show's curators, one Pākehā and one Māori, to stimulate debate. The third exhibition in the Gallery's young contemporaries series, **let it be now** focuses on the work of emerging New Zealand artists. Featuring a number of artists whose works lead an ephemeral or temporary life, the exhibition also raises some telling questions about the way public galleries contain and collect contemporary works of art.

Finally, we are delighted to include in this edition a new work of art created especially for *Bulletin* by the holder of the Olivia Spencer Bower Award for 2008, Eddie Clemens. Previous recipients of this award include Séraphine Pick, Jim Speers and Robert Hood, all of whom are now represented in the Gallery's collection — indeed, Pick will be the subject of a major survey at the Gallery in 2009. We are delighted to have the opportunity to display a unique new work such as this in *Bulletin*, and we hope that this will develop into a regular feature. Watch this space in future issues for more new work and fresh ideas.

**Jenny Harper**  
Director  
November 2008

DECEMBER, JANUARY, FEBRUARY  
2008 — 2009

FIONA HALL: FORCE FIELD  
Until 15 February 2009

Renowned Australian artist Fiona Hall explores the intersection of nature and culture with a deft touch and a vivid, unpredictable imagination. This spectacular survey, which includes works from the 1970s through to the present day, shows how she transforms ordinary objects into complex and evocative works of art.

*Exhibition organised and toured by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia and City Gallery Wellington, New Zealand.*

*Touring Exhibition A, B and Borg Henry Galleries*

Catalogue and iPod Audio Tour available

WUNDERBOX  
Until 15 February 2009

**Wunderbox** brings together secretive spaces, model worlds and eccentric collections from some of New Zealand's best-known contemporary artists, including Judy Darragh, Andrew Drummond, Bill Hammond, Neil Pardington, Francis Upritchard, Terry Urbahn and Ronnie van Hout.

*Touring Exhibition Gallery C*

iPod Audio Tour available

LET IT BE NOW  
12 December 2008—8 March 2009

This year Christchurch Art Gallery presents six contemporary artists who analyse the psychology of materials and the possibilities of space. Each artist employs a unique approach, yet the end goal is the same — that of setting up a dialogue, an encounter that sparks an enquiry into the nature of making and exhibiting art.

*Monica Richards and Tait Electronics Galleries*

TE HURINGA / TURNING POINTS  
Pākehā Colonisation and Māori Empowerment

19 December 2008—15 February 2009

A gathering of paintings from some of New Zealand's best-known modern and historical artists, this exhibition travels a pathway from early European contact, settlement and colonisation through to contemporary perspectives by twentieth- and twenty-first-century artists. Bicultural viewpoints are provided by curators Peter Shaw and Dr Jo Diamond.

*William A. Sutton and Ravenscar Galleries*

WHITE ON WHITE  
Until October 2009

New for children and families, **White on White** is the thought-provoking replacement to **I See Red**. Includes new works by contemporary artists Steve Carr and Sean Kerr, and works by Ando Hiroshige, Eileen Mayo, Jude Rae and Peter Robinson from the permanent collections.

*Burdon Family Gallery*

Family worksheet available

THE COLLECTIONS

From Petrus van der Velden's thundering *Mountain Stream*, *Otira Gorge* of 1893 to Robert Hood's *Samuel Butler (My Rifle, My Pony and Me)*, filmed in the South Island landscape 110 years later, the first-floor collection galleries hold a rotating selection of treasures from the Historical, Twentieth Century and Contemporary Collections.

*Collection Galleries*

Collections catalogue available

A CONSTANT FLOW OF LIGHT

Fifty years since Colin McCahon began his renowned work *Tomorrow will be the same but not as this is*, this focus exhibition from the collections brings together remarkable works spanning the life of this great modern painter, and points to the 'afterlives' of his art in the works of two contemporary artists.

*Collection Galleries*

OUTER SPACES

A programme of artworks in spaces beyond the traditional exhibition galleries. Featuring *United We Fall* by Sara Hughes in the foyer and *The Gathering* by Richard Killeen on Worcester Boulevard.

TWINSET

A rapid-fire programme of new video art on the twin screens in the foyer. This season featuring videos by Terry Urbahn (December), Seung Yul Oh (January) and Jae Hoon Lee (February).

SUBSONIC

The summer Subsonic programme features a variety of sounds from Alastair Galbraith and Matt De Gennaro, Bekah Carran and Paul Sutherland.

Jim Speers *Didn't Get to Sleep Last Night* (detail) 2004. Acrylic, vinyl and fluorescent light source. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu. Commissioned by the Christchurch Art Gallery with the assistance of the Friends of the Gallery, 2004



# FIONA HALL: FORCE FIELD

Leura, New South  
Wales 1974. Gelatin  
silver photograph.  
Collection of the artist

ALL FIONA HALL IMAGES  
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST  
AND ROSLYN OXLEY'S  
GALLERY, SYDNEY,  
AUSTRALIA. © THE ARTIST

TOURING A, B AND  
BORG HENRY GALLERIES  
— UNTIL 15 FEBRUARY



**FIONA HALL: FORCE FIELD** IS A SURVEY OF THE WORK OF AN ARTIST AT THE HEIGHT OF HER POWERS, CONSTANTLY EXPLORING NEW AVENUES AS WELL AS RECONFIGURING EARLIER CONCERNS. IN MANY WAYS, FIONA HALL'S PRACTICE RESEMBLES THE NEST-BUILDING HABITS OF A MIGRATORY BIRD. HER WORKS, LIKE NESTS, ARE PLACES WHERE THE DETRITUS OF THE WORLD IS SHAPED BY MIND AND HEART. SINCE THE 1970S FIONA HAS BEEN A CURIOUS AND ENERGETIC TRAVELLER; HER RECENT TRAVELS HAVE INCLUDED SRI LANKA, GUYANA AND NEW ZEALAND. **FIONA HALL: FORCE FIELD** SPEAKS ELOQUENTLY OF THESE PLACES, AS IT DOES OF AUSTRALIA AND THE WORLD GENERALLY. →



Puwak (Sinhala), kamuhu (Tamil)/ betel-nut palm/ Areca catechu (from the series *Paradisus Terrestris Sri Lanka*) 1999. Aluminium, tin

Top: *Collaroy Beach* (Eko, Jan and Max Pam) 1975. Gelatin silver photograph. Collection of the artist

Bottom: *Bondi Beach* 1975. Gelatin silver photograph. Collection of the artist



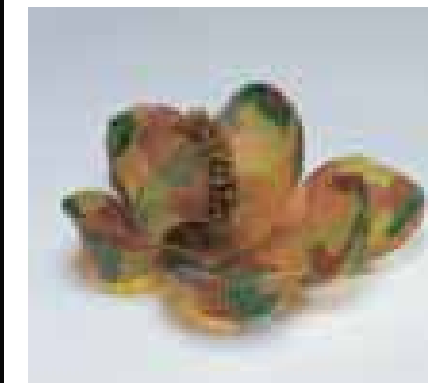


Medicine bundle for the non-born child 1994. Aluminium, rubber, plastic layette comprising matinee jacket. Collection of Queensland Art Gallery, purchased 2000. Queensland Art Gallery Foundation Grant

Creation of Adam (from the series Paradise) 1984. Gelatin silver photograph, toned. Collection of National Gallery of Australia, Canberra



Below: Understorey (detail) 1999-2004. Glass beads, silver wire, rubber, boar's teeth. Private collection, Sydney



Top left: *Abelmoschus esculentis/okra* (from the series *When my boat comes in*) 2002-. Gouache on banknotes. Collection of the artist

Above: *S.O.S.* (from the series *The price is right*) 1994. Polaroid photographs, one image from triptych. Collection of the artist

→ As well as including a number of new works that have never before been exhibited, this exhibition and its accompanying publication are very strong in their representation of Fiona's photographs from the 1970s and 1980s. These images are especially illuminating in the context of her later sculptural works, with their intense focus on the human body and the forms of nature; as you can see, their metaphors become richer all the time.

Fiona's work reflects a constant movement onwards, led by a questing spirit and an unflinching capacity to engage with the tough issues of our times. It is impossible to ignore the political dimensions of her art. There are works which address gender politics, legacies of empire, industrialism and militarism, the ethics of consumption and the plundering and exploitation of natural and human resources. Works like *Scar Tissue* and *Dead in the Water* eloquently deal with war, violence and environmental ruin.

At the same time Fiona's work is deeply personal, very much one woman's account of making sense of and finding her own place in a complicated and often inhospitable world. There is a homeliness about her work — a 'domesticity' in her management and arrangement of seemingly incompatible materials. We find ourselves sifting through the artist's kitchen cupboards and bedroom drawers. Out of such unpromising materials as sardine tins and videotape, the artist reveals exquisite details of the human body and plant-life.

This exhibition and publication are very much statements of faith in Fiona and her work. The inclusion of a number of works still unfinished or in a conceptual stage at the time of selection says something about the degree of trust the three curators involved in the project had in the artist. I'm not saying we didn't have a level of anxiety that the work would not be finished in time — particularly when Fiona left to embark upon on a botanical expedition down a Guyanan tributary of the Amazon. In fact, this voyage resulted in new video work that is also included in the exhibition.

I'm pleased to say Fiona never faltered. The catalogue captures something of this work-in-progress feeling as it includes reproductions of new artworks such as *Amnesiacs Cartography* and *Mourning Chorus* as they were evolving towards their final form. Importantly, I think, Fiona's art is, by its very nature, a work in progress. Gregory O'Brien in his catalogue essay sees it in the tradition of the Japanese poet Bashō's *Narrow Road to the Far North*. Like a migratory bird, Hall regularly returns to her point of origin — to a core of ideas and beliefs — while at the same time continuing to press onwards.

This has been one of the most inspiring projects I have been involved in. While the exhibition and catalogue publication present a survey, or a look backwards, for the show's curators Fiona Hall: *Force Field* has always held the excitement of an exhibition of new work.

Paula Savage  
Director, City Gallery Wellington, and co-curator,  
with Gregory O'Brien and Vivienne Webb, of  
**Fiona Hall: Force Field**



Occupied territory 1995.  
Glass beads, wire, nails,  
tooth, vitrine.

Gift of Art Gallery of South  
Australia Foundation  
1999, Art Gallery of South  
Australia







Cell Culture 2001-2.  
Videotape, silver wire,  
Tupperware, Vitrine.

South Australian  
Government Grant  
2002, Art Gallery of  
South Australia



Far left: *Tender* 2003-5.  
US dollars, wire, vitrines.  
Collection of Queensland  
Art Gallery, purchased  
2006. The Queensland  
Government's Gallery of  
Modern Art Acquisitions  
Fund

Left: *Gneering*  
(Gunditjmarra) / *drooping*  
*she-oak* / *Allocasuarina*  
*verticillata* (from the  
series *Paradisus Terrestris*  
Entitled) 1998-9.  
Aluminium, tin

## Looking into Force Field: two personal responses

In *Tender*, Fiona Hall entwines two powerful and often opposing forces: the American dollar bill (and by extension, human trade and commerce) and the instinctive desire of parents to protect and nurture their young. In accordance with the status of the 'mighty greenback' as the preferred currency for much international business, Hall has used shredded US banknotes (destroying, in the process, items of legal tender) and used them to replicate the delicate and distinctive nests of a variety of birds. Though they are literally 'made of money', these exquisitely crafted structures elevate the humble, personal and fragile, inviting us to celebrate not the influence of global financial systems, but the tender industry of the birds who build such nests to house their families. In destroying the money's face value, Hall offers it worth as a means of shelter for new life, but the emptiness of the nests underlines the price paid by the natural environment in the face of greed and capitalism.

For me, Hall's nests symbolise the physical, economic and social defences we all build around our lives and families — the small but necessary protections we make against external forces and opposing agendas. Suspended and enclosed in their glass cases, the objects in *Tender* are preserved like rare museum specimens, haunting remnants of the displaced and the extinct. The serial number for each otherwise identical banknote has been etched into the glass of one of these cases, and the other bears the Latin names of each bird species whose nest Hall has painstakingly recreated. Placed deliberately and directly in our line of sight, these details question how far we have strayed from our most cherished value, and the price we are prepared to pay for progress.

Felicity Milburn  
Curator, Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetu

Like Hieronymus Bosch in his *Garden of Earthly Delights*, Fiona Hall, in *Paradisus Terrestris*, offers a wildly personal vision of the Garden of Eden, encompassing the erotic, the dysfunctional, the strange, the grotesque and the unspeakably lovely. She certainly has much in common with the fifteenth-century Netherlandish painter. I am reminded of Rita Angus's famous statement back in 1937 that she thought New Zealand was essentially 'medieval'. By medieval she was suggesting, as James K. Baxter would write a few years later, that we consider the world around us as 'an environment ... an annex of Purgatory, which the medieval writers described simultaneously as a place of torment and a garden of flowers'. Bearing that definition in mind, Hall's art can be seen as medieval in its bipolar tendencies, its darkness and its light, its Bosch-like extremes of pleasure and suffering — a body of work strangely at home here in New Zealand, Rita Angus might well have thought.

Delacroix considered the essence of genius 'the art of coordinating relationships', and *Paradisus* is a playing out of that, with its visual rhymes and juxtapositions. It sets up a rapport between human and non-human elements. The very pleasure-obsessed artist Henri Matisse once wrote that 'rapport is the affinity between things, the common language; rapport is love'. *Paradisus Terrestris* is Hall's great account of rapport, of blissful love, of oneness — humanity and nature, flesh and spirit, above and below. Even if the male and female elements are most often confined a safe distance from one another on the gallery wall, these are particularly euphoric works — especially if you go back to the Greek root of the word, *euphoros*, which means 'a state of well being'. They celebrate the fecundity and vitality of the human body and what A.R.D. Fairburn called 'the brief eternity of the flesh'.

Gregory O'Brien  
Curator, City Gallery Wellington  
and co-curator of **Fiona Hall: Force Field**

## EVENTS

**Wednesday 3 December**  
**Fiona Hall** Artist interview on DVD  
6pm / Philip Carter Family  
Auditorium / 45 mins / free

**Saturday 13 December**  
**ART BITE Understorey** by Fiona Hall  
Kim Morton unravels this iconic  
artwork — an exquisite assembly  
of objects.  
1pm / meet at the front desk / free

**Wednesday 14 January**  
**ART BITE Amazonical** by Fiona Hall  
Diane Swain examines this video  
work and Fiona Hall's ongoing  
research into the natural world.  
5:15pm / meet at the front desk / free

**Wednesday 28 January**  
**ART BITE Tender** by Fiona Hall  
Nicci Best charts the overlapping  
territories of power, politics and the  
environment in Hall's work.  
5:15pm / meet at the front desk / free

**On the Money** Professor Lydia  
Wevers examines how Fiona Hall's  
artworks use money to create new  
and often provocative narratives.  
6pm / Philip Carter Family  
Auditorium / free

**Wednesday 4 February**  
**ART BITE Paradisus Terrestris** by  
**Fiona Hall** Rod McKay examines  
Hall's most acclaimed series.  
5:15pm / meet at the front desk / free

**Wild Scenes: Artists in the  
Preservation of the Indigenous**  
Ecologist and author Geoff Park  
explores artistic responses to the  
land, where survival, economics and  
spirituality intermingle in the work of  
Fiona Hall and other artists.  
6pm / Philip Carter Family  
Auditorium / free

**Wednesday 11 February**  
**ART BITE Mourning Chorus** by Fiona  
Hall Allison Fox discusses Hall's  
research into the politics of bird  
extinction.  
5:15pm / meet at the front desk / free

**SCHOOL HOLIDAYS / HOLIDAY QUIZ**  
Mon 5 Jan—Sun 1 Feb,  
10am—4pm, free  
Explore the **Fiona Hall: Force Field**  
exhibition with this fun activity sheet.  
Collect from front desk.

EXHIBITION ORGANISED AND TOURED BY  
THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART,  
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA AND CITY GALLERY  
WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND



## Showcase

Recent gifts to the Gallery's collection

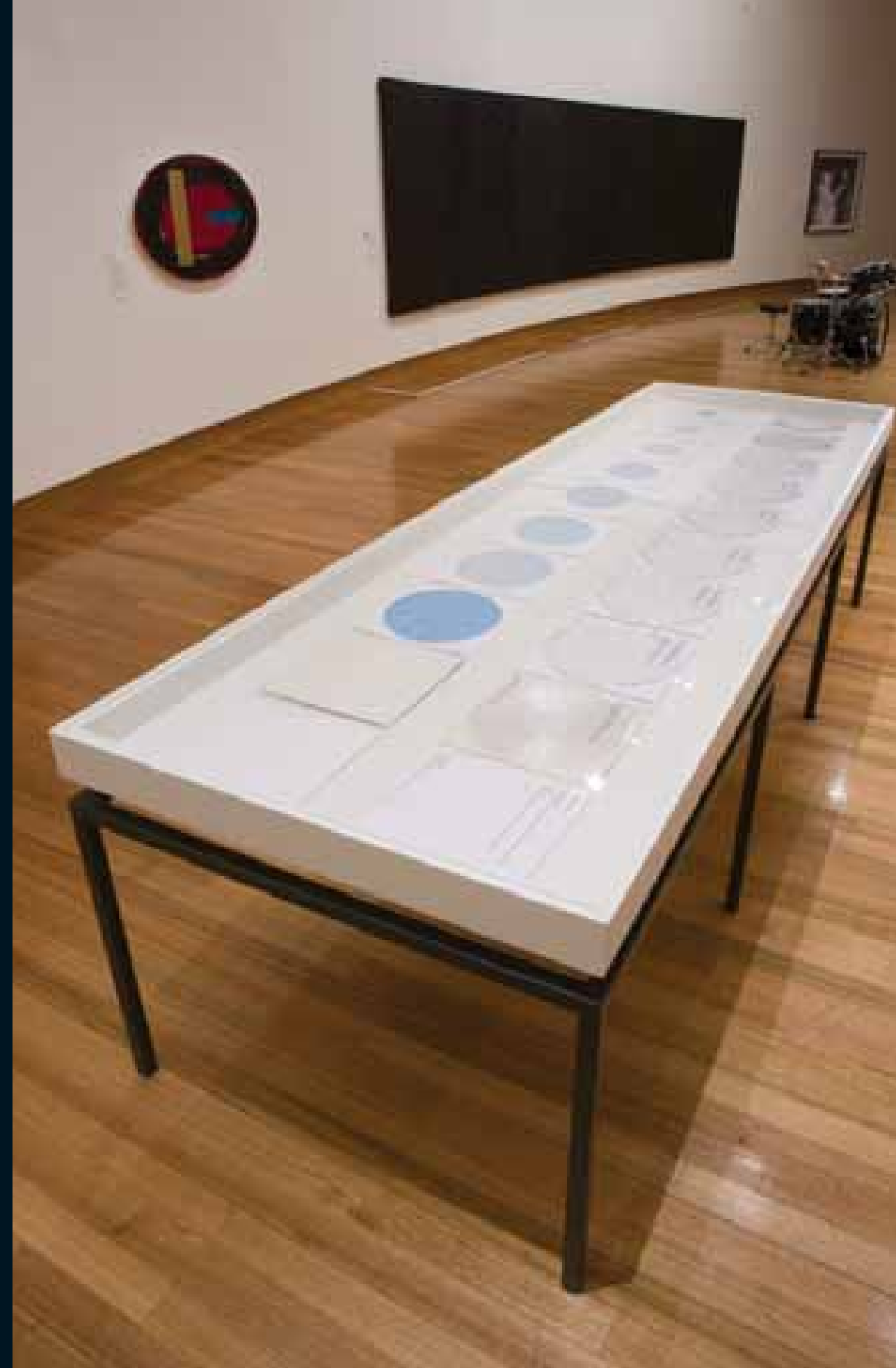
Throughout the last few issues of *Bulletin*, 'Showcase' has provided a view of artworks newly arrived in the Christchurch Art Gallery collection. This issue, we home in on a special group amongst those new arrivals — the gifts. From the Heathcote Helmore bequest of Gerrit Dou's 1653 painting *The Physician* through to the gift by anonymous donors of Colin McCahon's *Tomorrow will be the same but not as this is*, the Gallery's collection has been immeasurably enriched over the years by the generosity of patrons, collectors and artists. Gifts have been especially important to the collection since the turn of the last century — a period when an energetic art market often made it difficult for public collections to compete with private collectors. Such acts of generosity are likely to play an even more important role in the near future, as current economic woes place pressure on all points of the art economy. In the meantime, we celebrate the extraordinary variety of 'gifted' images and objects to arrive in our storerooms over the last three months, from Julia Morison's flourishing *Tootoo*, to Petrus van der Velden's atmospheric *Windmill by Moonlight*, through to Julian Dashper's field recordings made in the presence of Jackson Pollock's painting *Blue Poles*. These works reach from Holland to Britain to New Zealand, encompass materials as various as ink, sound, laser-cut vinyl and thin air, and span more than a century of art-making. Less apparent on these pages, but no less important, are the many connections to the Gallery that underpin these acts of generosity. Julia Morison and Ben Cauchi, for instance, are both artists who have exhibited recently with the Gallery and acknowledged that collaboration with a gift. William Nicholson's elegant woodcut of Queen Victoria is the latest gift to us from Gordon Brown, a renowned New Zealand scholar who is well aware of the special strengths of Christchurch's international works on paper collection. And Simon Denny's slow-motion sculpture *Of course it was*, which quietly deflates during the course of its display, is the bold first gift to be made by a newly formed group of Auckland-based patrons, the Art Five O Trust. Many of these artworks will be seen in the Gallery soon. We present this advance view of them with the only words appropriate: Thank you.

**Justin Paton**  
Senior curator

Above: Ben Cauchi *Winter Sun #4* 2007. Lightjet print. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu. Gifted to the Gallery by the artist, 2008



Below: Simon Denny *Of course it was* 2006. Softboard, balloons, rubber, plastic sheet, spray paint. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu. Gifted to the Gallery by Art Five O Trust, 2008



Above: Petrus van der Velden *Windmill by Moonlight*. Charcoal on paper. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu. Gifted 2008

Left: Julian Dashper *Blue Circles #1-#8* (installation view) 2002-3. Eight polycarbonate records and cardboard covers. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu. Gifted 2008



W U N W U N W U N  
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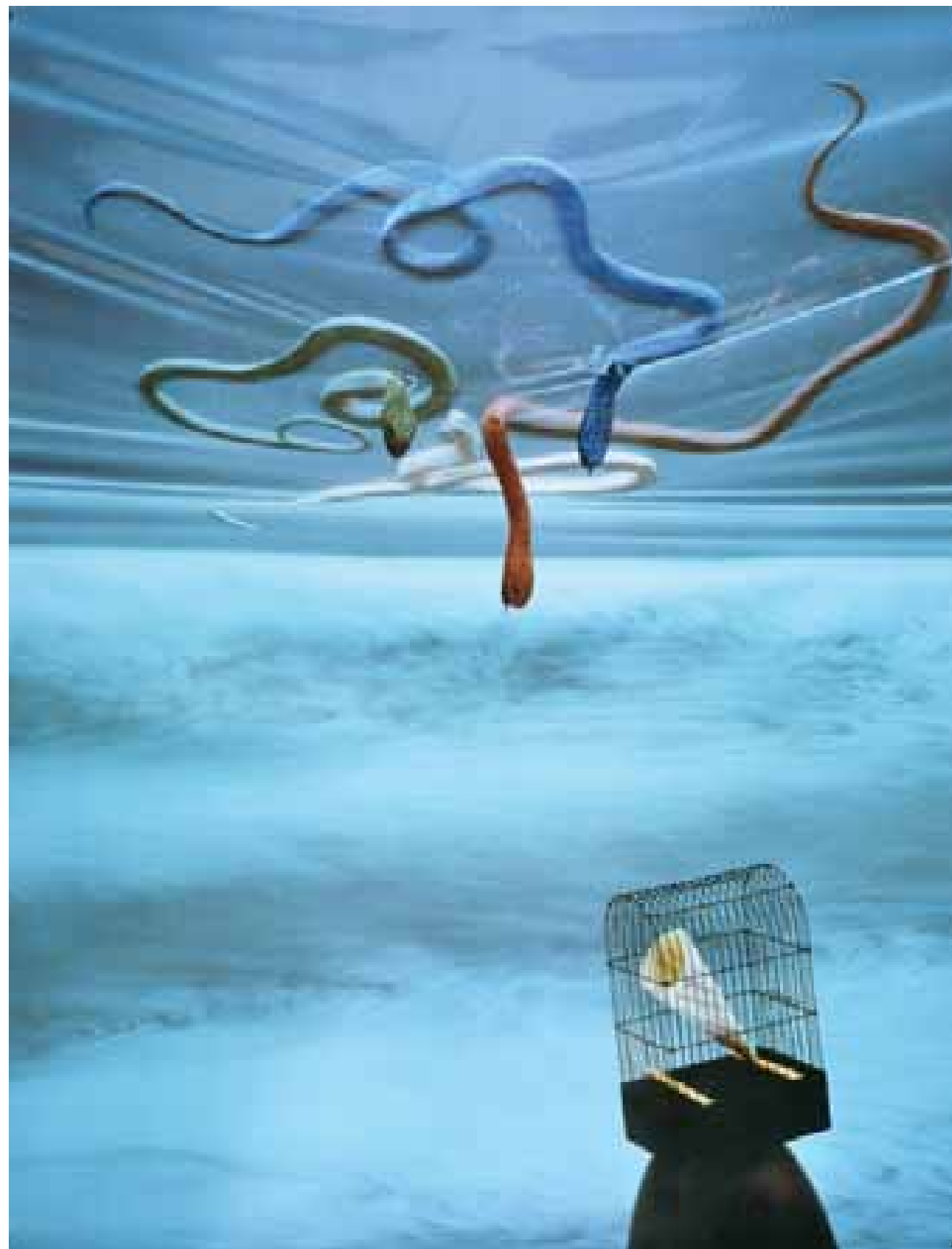
## A COLLECTION OF COLLECTIONS FROM THE COLLECTION

TOURING EXHIBITION GALLERY C — UNTIL 15 FEBRUARY



Francis Upritchard *Wife* 2006, and *Husband* 2006. Rabbit fur, tanned goat skin, modelling materials.

Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 2008. Courtesy of the artist and Kate MacGarry



Boyd Webb **Untitled**  
1988. Photograph.  
Collection of  
Christchurch Art Gallery  
Te Puna o Waiwhetu,  
purchased 1988.  
Courtesy of the artist

#### EVENTS

**Wednesday 21 January**  
**The Business of Collection:**  
**Man-Made and Natural Curiosities**  
Renowned collector, John Perry, from the Regent Theatre in Helensville, opens his suitcase of wonders and talks about his lifelong experience of collecting.  
6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free

**Tuesday 27 January**  
**Curious Collections**  
Tying in with **Wunderbox**, curator Sarah Whitehead takes us behind the scenes to reveal Canterbury Museum's previously unseen weird, wonderful and curious collections.  
6pm / Bird Hall / Canterbury Museum / free

**Sunday 22 February**  
**Meet The Artist**  
Zina Swanson, a collector of the beautiful and unusual, discusses her exquisitely delicate sculpture, *Some people's plant's never flower ...*  
1pm / meet at the front desk / free

**SCHOOL HOLIDAYS**  
**Wonderful Wunderbox**  
Held in the Education Centre, be inspired by the exhibition **Wunderbox** and collage your own wonder cabinet.  
Mon 5 Jan–Fri 23 Jan, weekdays only / 10am–12 noon or 1–3pm / \$5  
Bookings essential,  
Tel: (03) 941 7367

## WUNDERBOX: Being an exhibition of bell jars, boxes, cabinets, dolls, display cases, tabletop universes, several bees, two monkeys, hundreds of hooks and one miniature coffin.

A piece of coral. A unicorn's horn. A clockwork robot. A globe of the known world. Open the doors of a seventeenth-century wonder cabinet and you'll find shelves full of objects like these. Various known as wonder rooms, cabinets of curiosity and *wunderkammer*, wonder cabinets emerged in the late sixteenth century and had their golden age in the seventeenth. For patrons and collectors newly fascinated by the world beyond Europe, wonder cabinets offered a kind of portrait of the world in miniature — a finite space filled with a sampling of the world's infinite strangeness.

The most famous wonder cabinets are centuries old, but they raise issues very much alive in art today. Drawn largely from the contemporary collection of Christchurch Art Gallery, **Wunderbox** is an exhibition of secretive spaces, model worlds, fictitious collections and idiosyncratic dioramas by contemporary New Zealand artists. Ranging from one of the largest works in the collection to one of the smallest, it's an exhibition about our attempts to collect and categorise the world. It's also, more importantly, about the moments of doubt, wonder and pleasurable confusion that arise when the world slips through those categories. Like a walk-in wonder cabinet, the exhibition will unfold through a series of small rooms within the Touring

Galleries. In one room, you'll find a tin butterfly in a jar, a wooden box that opens on to a world of symbolism, and a table populated by small glass vessels holding filament-fine dioramas. Further on, there's a bird in a bell jar, a cupboard full of bones, a museum storeroom bristling with trophies and antlers, and, on the largest wall of the exhibition, one of the most remarkable fake collections ever concocted by a New Zealand artist — Richard Killeen's 253-part painting the *Book of the Hook*.

Most of these artworks date from a period of fervent and sometimes fractious local debate about how best to display and understand objects drawn from other times and other cultures. During a decade when museums were abandoning their old moth-eaten dioramas and politically incorrect display cases in favour of touch-screen interactives and other high-tech options, many of the artists here chose instead to salvage the old display techniques and crank up their strangeness and ambiguity. Thus Terry Urbahn inscribes old National Museum educational display cases with a barrage of mixed messages, while Laurence Aberhart and Neil Pardington discover something haunting and decidedly surreal in museum spaces where order and reason are meant to prevail. Both Urbahn's and Pardington's works dwell on changes



Terry Urbahn **Japanese Toys**  
1997. Mixed media.  
Collection of Christchurch  
Art Gallery Te Puna o  
Waiwhetu, purchased 1998.  
Courtesy of the artist and  
Anna Bibby Gallery, Auckland





within New Zealand's largest 'cabinet of curiosity', the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. Urbahn's display cases were used for educational purposes during Te Papa's former life as the National Museum, but abandoned in the 1990s as embarrassing relics. Pardington's photograph takes us behind the scenes of the current organisation and focuses on the animal trophies that museums once collected in morbidly vast numbers.

From Damien Hirst's preserved creatures to Thomas Grünfeld's topsy-turvy taxidermy, many contemporary artists have been drawn to the stock-still wildlife in natural history museum dioramas. In the alternative museums created by these artists, the usual emphasis on education and explanation gives way to dream-like juxtapositions, prankster's laughter and lateral chains of association. In two works newly acquired for the Gallery's collection, Francis Upritchard sews a couple of ape-like ancestors from second-hand shop materials, using the skin of one animal to reconstitute another. In the same room within Wunderbox, Judy Darragh gleefully tampers with the usual order of things in a pseudo-serious evolutionary tableaux. Her part-fish, part-human creature recalls a famous hoax creature — the monkey-headed, fish-bodied being known as the Feejee Mermaid. A fossil of the Mermaid was created for American showman P.T. Barnum and sprung on a stunt-hungry public in 1842 in New York, where it was exhibited alongside a creature that, to American eyes, looked equally strange — a platypus. By demonstrating the infinite human appetite for oddity and surprise, inventions like the Mermaid remind us that some of the strangest creatures in museums are not the ones inside the display cases, but those looking into them.

Wunderbox is a collection of works that are themselves about the act of collecting. As the Gallery moves towards a major rehang of its permanent

collection in 2009, Wunderbox is also an opportunity to reflect on the ways public galleries accumulate and preserve artworks. The artists in this show leave no doubt about the kind of accumulation they favour: here collecting is a charged and imaginative act with wildly unpredictable outcomes, not a dry and dutiful accumulation of objects. Whether it is Bill Hammond evoking the overzealous efforts of bird-collector Walter Lowry Buller, Zina Swanson sealing insect specimens under glass in her exquisite sculpture *Some people's plants never flower ...*, or Ronnie van Hout interring a doll-sized version of himself in a

tiny wooden coffin, all the artists in the exhibition reflect on what it means to take pieces of the lived world and store them away. Are those things stilled and stifled by this action, or preserved against the ravages of time? Should museums labour to explain and demystify the objects they show, or heighten their wonder and strangeness?

For answers-in-progress, open the box ...

**Justin Paton**  
Senior curator

Neil Pardington Land and Marine Mammals Store, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa 2006-7. LED/C-Prints on Dibond edition of 15. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 2007

**WUNDERBOX is in Touring Exhibition Gallery C until 15 February, and includes work by Laurence Aberhart, Steve Carr, Ben Cauchi, Judy Darragh, Bing Dawe, Andrew Drummond, Christine Hellyar, Katharina Jaeger, Richard Killeen, Peter Madden, Julia Morison, Neil Pardington, Zina Swanson, Francis Upritchard, Terry Urbahn, Ronnie van Hout and Boyd Webb.**





# The art of collecting

The act of collecting, the reasons for forming a collection, the practicalities of storing and caring for a collection — these are issues and questions that all public galleries must have answers for. But collecting can also be a very personal act. Some of the most interesting and idiosyncratic collections are in private hands, and will never be seen by the public. *Bulletin* talks to four New Zealand artists about their own very different personal collections and collecting habits.

## Roger Boyce

What is this collection? Third-world movie posters hand-painted on the back of cotton flour-sacks. Lurid, chromatically lush and psychologically intense interpretations of exploitation films (native productions and American horror and action films) for distribution in rural areas where film was previously unavailable and patrons were relatively unsophisticated consumers of movies. Groups of entrepreneurs travelled from village to village with gas generators, videotape players and television sets and charged to view the movies. A diverse genre developed around the percolating little market for these advertising posters, and the artists who painted them gained money and status because of their skills. An informal apprenticeship network developed, with known artists tutoring unknown in the tricks of the trade. As the technology for viewing these films became more readily available and cheaper the film business dried up, and the artists worked for less and less money as mass-produced imaging began to replace the hand-rendered posters. →



**Do you see the object and you just have to have it, or is there a plan?** I saw one at a well-heeled New York City artist's summer house and fell in love with the character of this genre of 'folk art'. Set out to and succeeded in finding my own affordable source of the posters.

**Do you collect for a specific purpose or project, or is there another reason?** Pure object lust and acquisition. Nothing by design or to any fixed end. I think some of the aesthetic has bled over into my own work ... but that's debatable considering I used similar sensibility motifs and exaggerations in my own early and late figurative work.

**Do you think all artists have a 'hoarding instinct'?** Artists can never safely be generalised about.

**If you had unlimited resources (and storage space) what would you collect?** I'd buy every one of these posters that was still available, as they have, to all intents and purposes, gone out of production. Apart from the knock-offs, which are now being produced for an established market. The knock-offs lack the strange earnestness of the earlier work ... a trained eye can sort one from the other.

**If you could save one item from your collection, what would it be?** *Camp Blood*. The machete-wielding clown. I know, I know, everyone thinks clowns are creepy but I think this particular clown (who seems to be taking a machete to a guy that looks to be Paul Bunyan) takes the cake in terms of clown-creepiness.

## Sue Upritchard

**What is this collection?** Much of my collection is domestically related. There are knitting needles and row counters — which I love the look of but never use — thimbles, crochet hooks, children's toys, that sort of stuff. But I also collect a lot of natural things. I collect cicada skins, seaweed, holdfasts and basket fungi, which are hard to dry retaining their shape — I'm always delighted when I find one of those. I love making works from cast-offs, making something for nothing.

**Do you see the object and you just have to have it, or is there a plan?** A plan ... I don't think so. It's more of an instinct, like a weka — even after they've stolen my camping spoons, I have a certain sympathy with them.

Some collections certainly do have a plan behind them ... but this develops from a prior interest. For example, I collected thousands of cicada skins to pin directly onto a gallery wall — that was planned. For two summers I made

works from cicadas, but I had been collecting them in a smaller way for years. Their detail astonishes me.

Normally I look for things on the ground, and the 'op shops' that I collect from are not expensive. If I change my mind later, I can just return things.

**Do you collect for a specific purpose or project, or is there another reason?** Sometimes I collect for a particular project but often it's just because I think if I have enough of a certain object it will become the basis for a work. There are lots of things that I collect only for pleasure, like horse chestnuts, which feel and look amazing when they are fresh. I'll collect those every year and then throw them out when they are no longer shiny.

**Do you think all artists have a 'hoarding instinct'?** The ones I know do. Even if they are not storing physical things the way I do, they must be storing memories, representations and images. I guess I'm a really literal person. Sifting through my collections is my way of wandering through my museum of influences.



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# Sifting through my collections is my way of wandering through my museum of influences.

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**If you had unlimited resources (and storage space) what would you collect?** New Zealand pottery. I love it. I spent a long time living in New Plymouth and while I was there I knew several potters who had a massive influence on me. I love contemporary New Zealand pottery, and adore the earlier work that I see in museums.

**If you could save one item from your collection, what would it be?** Probably something that Alan, my husband, had made — his handcraft is amazing and his early work is really quite different to what he makes now. Other things are replaceable. It's really the process of collecting that I enjoy: if I lost it all I could start all over again.

## Jamie Richardson

**What is this collection?** This particular collection — I have quite a few — comprises a number of BMX bikes, frames and wheels that I have acquired over the years in varying states of disrepair.

**Do you see the object and you just have to have it, or is there a plan?** In collecting there is never really a plan; I can't say I was planning on finding as many BMXs as humanly possible. Collecting always starts with just one; by the time you have three or more you've got yourself a collection.

**Do you collect for a specific purpose or project, or is there another reason?** In terms of the bikes, it's often to save them from landfill or scrap, with the misconceived notion that I will in the future have the time and the space to return them all to their former glory and ride around on them with my friends as BMX bandits.

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# Collecting always starts with just one; by the time you have three or more you've got yourself a collection.

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**Do you think all artists have a 'hoarding instinct'?** Not all, perhaps a few. I know personally of a good number of artists with fairly minimalist lifestyles. I am, however, not one of these.

**If you had unlimited resources (and storage space) what would you collect?** That is just too frightening to fathom. Planes, trains and automobiles?

**If you could save one item from your collection, what would it be?** Probably my Red Line — the only BMX to ride in the eighties! It took me quite a long time to put that bike together, from the customary red anodised rims and hubs and seat stem to the full pad set and rainbow coloured chain. Much too hard to replace! And also at least one good set of SkyWay Tuffs, an iconic piece of BMXing history, as seen on the well-known New Zealand classic, the HMX 600.



## John Parker

**What is this collection?** Male dolls and acupuncture figures.

**Do you see the object and you just have to have it, or is there a plan?** You start with one, then two etc.

**Do you collect for a specific purpose or project, or is there another reason?** They all look the same but they are all very different in terms of the moulding and finishing. The different plastic used for different body parts gets bleached by the sun in different ways so they become 3D collages.

**Do you think all artists have a 'hoarding instinct'?** All those I know do. The things they hoard are visual resources.

**If you had unlimited resources (and storage space) what would you collect?** Life-sized mannequins.

**If you could save one item from your collection, what would it be?** The oldest one, A Stephen Doll I think he was called. Quite battered and well played with and loved.





Justin Kerr *Maze 7a*  
(detail) 2007.  
Vector illustration.  
Courtesy of the artist

‘ART IS A GAME  
BETWEEN ALL  
PEOPLE OF ALL  
PERIODS’

Marcel Duchamp

# let it be now

12 December 2008 —  
8 March 2009

**Let it be now** is the third exhibition in an ongoing series presenting emerging artists at Christchurch Art Gallery. A synthesis of installation, painting, new media and assemblage, it focuses on six recently graduated artists who investigate the potential for art to generate encounters and to surprise in unique ways.

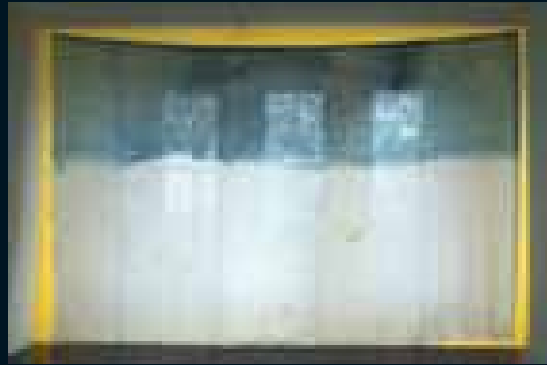
Elements of performance art are evident in the work of Auckland-based Beth O’Brien and Kate Newby. Newby explores how colour and pattern combined with language can alter the mood of particular spaces within a building, while O’Brien seeks to stretch the limits of use between object, individual and action.

Christchurch artist Stacey Turner balances formal qualities with spontaneity in his paintings. His carefully delineated pen-marks upon richly textured surfaces set up a dynamic flow between drawing and painting. The scatter installations of another Christchurch artist, Justin Kerr, activate spaces in unexpected ways. He constructs a wry lyricism by using materials such as toys, defunct technology and perishable objects in kitchen science-like experiments.

Kentaro Yamada, currently studying in Chicago, creates software programmes that combine with everyday imagery to convey poetic relationships between life and objects. His interactive digital work *Tampopo* (2005), a projected image of a dandelion, allowed viewers to blow into a microphone, causing the spores to float away. His new work for Christchurch Art Gallery continues his research into how creative code can re-imagine the natural world.

*Endgame* by Eddie Clemens (Olivia Spencer Bower Fellow for 2008) is a riff on the temporal. With a digital clock embedded in the back of an office chair, it emphasises every single minute in every day and is a reminder that, like Duchamp with his obsession with chess strategies, you have to formulate a game plan now in order to succeed.

**Jennifer Hay**  
*Assistant curator*



1  
**Kate Newby** b.1979

Kate Newby graduated with an MFA from Auckland University in 2007 with the project *My Poetry, for example*. Recent projects include *Thinking with your body*, Gambia Castle, Auckland (2008), *Academy*, TCB, Melbourne (2008) and *Many directions, as much as possible, all over the country*, 1301 PE, Los Angeles (2008). Recent solo publications include *Holding onto it only makes you sick* (2008) and *Architecture for Specific People* (2007). Kate has exhibited throughout New Zealand, Australia and the USA, has initiated several print-based publications, and is a founding member of the gallery Gambia Castle, Auckland.



4  
**Eddie Clemens** b.1977

Eddie Clemens completed a BFA in Sculpture at the University of Canterbury before graduating with an MFA from Auckland University in 2004. He recently made a work for the Auckland City Public Library Light Commission (2006). Eddie was the Olivia Spencer Bower Fellow for 2008 and has been announced as the Frances Hodgkins Fellow for 2009. He had exhibited widely in group and solo exhibitions including *The phenomenon of tissue boxes placed on the rear shelves of automobiles*, Special Gallery, Auckland (2005) and *British Racing Green*, 64zero3, Christchurch (2006).

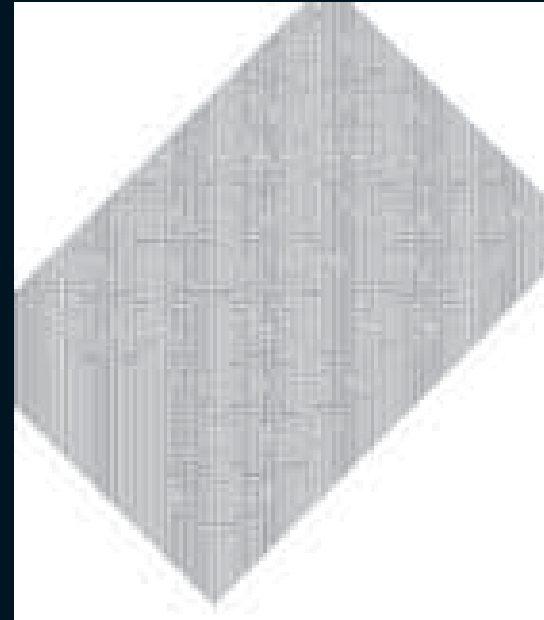


2  
**Stacey Turner** b.1984

Stacey Turner (Ngapuhi) graduated from the University of Canterbury in 2007 with a BFA in Painting and a BA in Te Reo Māori and Art History. He has just completed an Honours year in painting. Turner has exhibited in group and solo exhibitions including *Drawing is all you Need*, 64zero3, Christchurch (2008) and *Spring Chickens*, Quintin Frost Gallery, Christchurch (2007). He was the recipient of the Bickerton-Widdowson Trust Memorial and Grant Lingard Scholarships (2007) and the Susan Ethel-Jones Travelling Award (2008).



5



3  
**Justin Kerr** b.1982

Justin Kerr studied sculpture at the University of Canterbury, and is currently working towards a professional library qualification. His recent exhibitions include *Plan B*, High Street Project (2008) and the group exhibitions *Forestaurant*, High Street Project (2007) and *Common Denial*, Jonathan Smart Gallery, Christchurch (2007).

**Kentaro Yamada** b.1978

Kentaro Yamada graduated with a BSc from the University of Auckland in 2000, a Diploma of Multimedia from the National College of Art and Design in 2001 and a BFA from the University of Auckland in 2006. He is currently an MFA candidate at the School of The Art Institute of Chicago. In 2007 he initiated the artist-run gallery Happy, and has contributed to the book *Asian Aucklanders and Arts: Attitude, Attendance, and Participation* (2007). Kentaro has exhibited in group and solo exhibitions in New Zealand and overseas, including the International Symposium on Electronic Art (ISEA), Singapore (2008) and *I KISS NZ*, Cannes, France (2007).

**Beth O'Brien** b.1983

Beth O'Brien graduated with a BFA in Sculpture from the University of Canterbury and has just completed an MFA at the University of Auckland. She was a highly commended runner-up in The British Council's 'By the throat' scholarship in 2008. Beth has recently exhibited work in the group exhibitions *Try 'em again for the first time*, High Street Project, Christchurch (2007), and *MSYSMS*, Enjoy Gallery, Wellington (2007) and was invited to participate in Enjoy Performance week, Wellington (2006).

1 Kate Newby *Thinking with your body* 2008. Acrylic, enamel, fabric, wire. Courtesy Gambia Castle

2 Stacey Turner *Green Cruz* 2008. Acrylic and pen on linen. Courtesy of the artist

3 Justin Kerr *Maze 7a* 2007. Vector illustration. Courtesy of the artist

4 Eddie Clemens *Endgame (Impression)* 2008. Avant Fulton leather chair and Daka Pinlock. Courtesy of the artist

5 Kentaro Yamada *Eye Drops from Upstairs* 2008. Mixed media. Courtesy of the artist

6 Beth O'Brien *White Flags* 2008. Photograph. Courtesy of the artist

#### EVENTS

**Saturday 13 December**  
*Let it be croissants!*  
Friends event

**let it be now** curator Jennifer Hay leads a breakfast discussion about this new exhibition.  
8.30am / Alchemy / Friends \$20, public \$30

**let it be now** Curator Jennifer Hay presents a floortalk of this new exhibition and Kentaro Yamada describes his interactive video work.  
1pm / meet at the front desk / free

LET IT BE NOW IS IN THE MONICA RICHARDS AND TAIT ELECTRONICS GALLERIES FROM 12 DECEMBER 2008 UNTIL 8 MARCH 2009

**let it be now** is generously supported by Coffey Projects





# WHITE ON WHITE

'WHITE ... IS NOT A MERE ABSENCE OF COLOUR;  
IT IS A SHINING AND AFFIRMATIVE THING, AS  
FIERCE AS RED, AS DEFINITE AS BLACK.'

G.K. CHESTERTON

BURDON FAMILY GALLERY  
UNTIL OCTOBER 2009



Steve Carr Cook  
2005. Photograph.  
Collection of  
Christchurch Art  
Gallery Te Puna o  
Waiwhetu,  
purchased 2008.  
Courtesy of Michael  
Lett, Auckland,  
New Zealand

Steve Carr *Zebra*  
2005. Photograph.  
Collection of  
Christchurch Art  
Gallery Te Puna o  
Waiwhetu,  
purchased 2008.  
Courtesy of Michael  
Lett, Auckland,  
New Zealand



Peter Robinson  
*Cascade* 2007.  
Polystyrene. Collection of Christchurch  
Art Gallery Te Puna o  
Waiwhetu, purchased 2007



Ando Hiroshige  
*Lingering snow  
at Asukayama*  
c.1837-8. Woodcut  
on paper. Collection  
of Christchurch Art  
Gallery Te Puna o  
Waiwhetu. Gift of  
William E. Smith,  
2003

In 1918 the pioneering abstract artist Kasimir Malevich painted an angled white square against a white background and titled the work *White on White*. Making a radical statement for this time, the Russian artist intended *White on White* to suggest a higher, transcendent realm, to touch the idea of infinity. The colour white was also seen as a realm of unlimited imaginative potential by Wassily Kandinsky, who in his 1911 publication *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* described it as a charged silence: 'like many pauses in music that break temporarily the melody. It is not a dead silence, but one pregnant with possibilities. White has the appeal of the nothingness that is before birth, of the world in the ice age.'

Typically associated with austerity or absence, white is often pictured as a temporary starting point: the empty page, the blank canvas, the white cube of a gallery space. From a scientific viewpoint, however, white represents the opposite of absence: white light refracts through a prism to reveal a spectrum of colour, and the human eye can perceive white when the three types of colour-sensitive cone cells in the retina are stimulated to a near-equal degree. We recognise therefore that white is not empty, but full of hidden elements. At the same time it is clear that its fullness most obviously resides within a potential and imaginative realm.

In a gathering of artworks in which white is dominant, Peter Robinson's sculpted polystyrene *Cascade* (2007) seems a good place to begin to test these ideas. Evading easy definition, this snow-like, crumbling form is encircled by delicate appended weights and chains. It seems an object from a thought world, an abstraction whose links to reality and representation are slender, or an object about to levitate.

Levity and kinetic potential are also present in Sean Kerr's *Bob and Sam* (2008), in which the standing white sheet Bob (in perspex box) and bug-eyed Sam (aka twin LCD monitors) have been teamed to maintain their vigilant awareness of the viewer, to whose movement they have been inexplicably programmed to respond. If Kerr's dancing Bob suggests a juvenile ghost, Jude Rae's oil on canvas *Clérambault's Dream* (1994) may be a wardrobe full of ghosts — an elegant formalist abstraction of classical folds, white on white, the marble drapery of Artemis or Venus. In contrast,





Gregor Kregar *I Wish  
I Were What I Was,  
When I Wished I Were  
What I Am* 2004.  
Glazed stoneware.  
Collection of the artist

the contemplation of white classical sculptural form receives an invitation to parody in Scott Eady's *Child Prodigy #1 (Grandad)* (2008), a large blobby presence in shining fibreglass. Modelled after a much smaller plasticine original by one of Eady's sons, the work in its title captures a lovely teasing combination of self-deprecation and indulgence.

A different type of contemplation is offered through Michael Parekowhai's *Passchendaele* (2001), a photographic arrangement of white silk flowers in a white vase, which through its title becomes an unexpectedly potent memorial. One of twelve works from the series *The Consolation of Philosophy: piko nei te matenga* (a traditional lament for a fallen chief), it honours the New Zealand soldiers — Māori and Pākehā — who lost their lives in 1917 at Passchendaele. This was a prolonged battle fought under impossible conditions, including heavy rain and deep swamps of liquid mud. Parekowhai's work seems to honour both the collective and the individual. Its specificity of colour also makes it an exquisite lamentation: it is



Steve Carr **Giraffe**  
2005. Photograph.  
Collection of  
Christchurch Art  
Gallery Te Puna o  
Waiwhetu,  
purchased 2008.  
Courtesy of Michael  
Lett, Auckland,  
New Zealand



Eileen Mayo  
**White Heron**  
1976. Gouache and  
coloured pencil.  
Collection of  
Christchurch Art  
Gallery Te Puna  
o Waiwhetu,  
purchased 2005.  
Reproduced courtesy  
of Dr Jillian Cassidy



Michael Parekowhai  
**Passchendaele** 2001.  
Photograph. Collection  
of Auckland University

perhaps the wedding bouquet remembered or never to be seen.

Gregor Kregar's multiplying self-portrait in glazed stoneware *I Wish I Were What I Was, When I Wished I Were What I Am 1* (2004) is another memorial of sorts. Reminiscent of classical sculpture in white, Kregar's nine forms are lined up and diminishing in scale, each commemorating its predecessor, having been formed from its mold. Depending on the viewer's position, perspective will be obliterated or enhanced. The artist in his working everyman's garb appears to have a task before him, moving beyond self-obsession to the more anonymous role of questioning what it means to be shaped from human clay. Human form is also a participant in Steve Carr's playful photographic *Zebra, Cock, Giraffe*, and *Elephant* (2005). Through sleight of hand and minimal means, Carr invites an apparently stupid suspension of disbelief: the blank white space becomes a waiting stage; innocent imagination taking us beyond rationality to a place where — echoing Kandinsky almost one hundred years earlier — white is pregnant with possibilities.

For the added enjoyment of younger viewers, **White on White** will include a number of interactive components, including a scientific machine that investigates the nature of white light; an artwork in fake fur by Simon Shephard; Sean Kerr's *Bob and Sam*; and a miniature photo booth inspired by the work of Steve Carr, which will allow visitors to make and email their own hand-animal creations.

**White on White** includes new or recent works by artists including Sean Kerr, Steve Carr, Scott Eady, Simon Shephard, Niki Hastings-McFall, Michael Parekowhai and Gregor Kregar, with highlights from the collection by Eileen Mayo, Peter Robinson, Jude Rae and Ando Hiroshige.

**Ken Hall**

Assistant curator

**EVENTS**

**Saturday 24 January**  
**White on White** Friends event  
Breakfast discussion about new  
exhibition **White on White** with  
curator Ken Hall.  
8.30am / Alchemy / Friends \$20 /  
public \$30 / children \$10 / under-  
fives free



**White on White** is in the Burdon Family  
Gallery until October 2009 and is  
generously supported by Chartwell Trust.



## Springboard

This illuminated billboard is Christchurch Art Gallery's newest exhibition space. Currently featuring a digital painting by renowned New Zealand artist Richard Killeen, **Springboard** will host newly commissioned artworks each year. The **Springboard** series is part of **Outer Spaces**, a programme of artworks in spaces beyond the traditional exhibition galleries.







# LONG WIRES IN DARK MUSEUMS — AN INTERVIEW WITH ALASTAIR GALBRAITH

**Peter Vangioni: When did your interest in sounds begin?**

**Alastair Galbraith:** My parents tell me that before I was one year old I'd wriggle out of my mother's arms whenever we were in the car, and rest my head on top of the gear-lever! By four I'd ask to hear the washing machine. Mostly I remember a deep fascination with the tone control on our old valve radiogram. I remember feeling that sound was a very private world; something that happened within your own head.

**PV: You began your career in the early 1980s as a guitarist/songwriter for Dunedin garage band The Rip. Was there a defining moment when you branched out into improvised sound or can the two streams, rock and experimental sounds, coexist?**

**AG:** Initially, I was focused primarily on songwriting, but even in The Rip we played around with a couple of free-form instrumentals, where we improvised upon a theme. In 1984 Bob Scott and I sat up all night and improvised the whole *On Golden Pond* album to tape!

Later, getting to play with Robert Cardy of the Axemen once or twice freed me considerably, but it was with Plagal Grind that the idea of mixing rock songs and improvisation really took off. Personally, I discovered that the songs demanded emotional presence and if that was rehearsed the whole thing became an act, and I felt like a liar.

I found I had to create blank areas in the map of the song, but leave some landmarks so we were all on the same page. Often it was a frustrating exercise in compromise and diplomacy, but occasionally it meant that the song took a hold of the performers rather than the other way around. Then with the Handful of Dust album, *Concord*, Bruce and I let go of even the landmarks, and I found I was in another coexisting world.

**PV: Sound art is in itself a loaded term that leaves one wondering why it cannot simply be referred to as art. How would you describe your sound output?**

**AG:** Is there a difference between music and art? Was some music once considered so non-musical that it got called *sound*? Have the boundaries of music expanded meanwhile to include it? Was Len Lye a great sound artist? I guess I think that music = art, and that all musicians deserve to be recognised as sound artists.



Glass Harmonium built by Alastair Galbraith

**PV: It seems to me that there are extremes in your output, from such tracks as the beautifully tuneful, acoustic *Entropic Carol* on The Rip's *Stormed Port EP* (1987) and the piano wire / violin tracks on *Long Wires in Dark Museums Vols 1 & 2* with Matt De Gennaro (2002 and 2006) to the intense shrill and rumble of amplified feedback found on A Handful of Dust's *Concord LP* (1993) to name a few. Is it difficult to shift between these two extremes of sound?**

**AG:** Far from being difficult it's a relief to shift between them. I'd soon become bored by one or the other. And there are different things to say, different subjects in different genres. Think of the range of sounds the human voice can make; the many spectra of emotion we fall prey to; the incomprehensible range of possible experience. It seems false to represent this without acknowledging the vast periphery.

**PV: It was great to see your name among the list of recipients of New Zealand Laureate Awards back in 2006; well deserved recognition for your work over the years. Are New Zealand galleries and the arts sector in general supportive of artists who produce sound in New Zealand?**

**AG:** I just have no idea how the New Zealand public gallery system normally works with artists. I imagine there must be some kind of research into local art practice at some level; however, excepting yourself, nobody from any of the galleries has approached me to do anything in more than twenty years. The Rip were asked to play at Eastern Southland Gallery by Jim Geddes in the mid-80s. Normally we approach *them*, and generally they have been accommodating, as in the *Long Wires in Dark Museums* tour of 1999 with Matt De Gennaro. Sometimes I simply don't have the guts to press another unsolicited proposal on them.

There are two organisations dedicated to presenting sound art that spring to mind: the Audio Foundation and the Borderline Ballroom, both of whom seem to be very supportive and proactive with local artists.

The Arts Foundation has been so good to me, not just the award itself, but also flying me around the country to demonstrate my half-finished glass harmonium to receptive audiences that I would otherwise reach only in my wilder dreams. I had a front-row seat at a private concert where the tenor Simon O'Neill sang Schumann and accompanied himself with wreathes of cloud-shifting sorrow on the piano. I could never have afforded that ticket! Transformative experiences like hearing Bill Manhire read through a beautiful PA and dissolving the auditorium into the Antarctic past.

**PV: You have lived at Taieri, south of Dunedin, for a number of years now. How important is that landscape on your sounds?**

**AG:** In terms of being able to find the time to work (especially now that I'm a parent) the most important thing is being out of the city, away from the all-consuming distractions. And Taieri Mouth is beautiful and relatively unspoiled: it has no shop, but lots of native bush beside the river; no petrol station, but an island just a few hundred metres out to sea at the river mouth. Its past stretches back through a whaling station on the island to Tu Wiri Roa allowing Tukiuaau to seek refuge upriver after he had killed Manawa, and from there into the mists of Waitaha villages on the river banks.

**PV: Have you any projects on the go at the moment or recent activities that you would like to share with us?**

**AG:** Currently I'm working on a collaborative album with French composer Amiel Balester. I recently gave a workshop for the Audio Foundation on working with the long wire instrument at the Gus Fisher Gallery in Auckland, and later that night performed with Peter Wright at the Whammy Bar.

I've been teaching music as a volunteer at the local primary school; we've tried to smash wineglasses with our voices, hooked long wires across the playground, and played 78s with drawing-pins and cardboard! Right now the kids are making their own CD!

I'm preparing my last album *Orb* for re-release on vinyl by the New York label Old English Spelling Bee, have just released Maxine Funke's album *Lace* on my Nextbestway label, and am beginning work on A.J. Sharma's album *The Road Back*.

*Alastair Galbraith is a leading New Zealand sound artist and musician with an international following. He was interviewed by Gallery curator Peter Vangioni.*

*Long Wires in Dark Museums Vol. 1 (2002) by Alastair Galbraith and Matt De Gennaro will be playing as part of the Subsonic programme from 1 – 31 December 2008.*



# ARE YOU TALKING TO ME?

Where to start?

*'The Gonzaga family's dominance as the world's art collector collapsed due to misdirected religious beliefs, and an unhealthy love of dwarves and parrots.'*

From the BBC documentary *The Queen's Art Collection*

The Italian Gonzaga dynasty was the first we know of to have a picture gallery and show off what was probably also the first art collection. The collection started in the mid-fifteenth century, and over five or six generations the family gathered together the greatest art of the age to display in their palace in Mantua.

People collect things because they want to have them close at hand; to have the opportunity for a long-term relationship with selected objects, whether that relationship is meditative or comparative, competitive or collaborative. This is as true for collectors of stamps as it is for those who collect cars, books and art. Some collections go beyond these more conventional needs and develop what Walter Benjamin called a 'passion [that] borders on the chaos of memories'. Which is possibly just another way of bringing up parrots and dwarves.

Looking back over the works we first bought in the 1970s, it wasn't so much possession or memory that drove us, as opportunity. It was the chance to be part of something that seemed lively and exciting as well as challenging. It also gave us a chance to have close connections, and often friendships, with artists. At that time the art market in New Zealand was very small, so you didn't even have to be very gregarious to get to know most of the people involved.

We've often talked about the difference between 'buying stuff' (or, let's face it, shopping) and 'assembling a collection'. The collection label often feels overly serious for what we do, given its roots in history, scholarship, connoisseurship and the rest. But then the simple idea of buying things avoids the elephant in the room: the accumulation of work that builds up over decades and seems to develop a mind of its own. Given that it can be read and analysed independently of either of us, however, a collection it is.

Most articles you read about starting to collect art insist you need to swot up on the subject: don't buy things you don't personally like and, always high on the list, don't buy

on the assumption that you'll make a good return when you sell. While there is nothing fundamentally wrong with that kind of advice, the reality is that the reverse of each of those pearls could build a fascinating collection — except maybe the learning part. The injunction about not expecting to make money has always struck us as disingenuous. Since art was first put out on the market the best examples of work by good artists (well, painters) have done well enough to count as being a reasonable way to invest — and most people should be able to figure it out from there.

In the end everyone who collects will do it for different reasons, which is probably why many of the best collections are so idiosyncratic. Private collectors don't have to 'fill gaps' as public collectors do, so we are spared the contortions required to validate all our past purchases by future purchases. We can decide (as often and as capriciously as we like) to simply take another route and move on. This is probably why it is often only in hindsight that personal collections are recognised for any coherent sense of purpose. That recognition has made private collections the basis of many of the world's greatest public collections — which does make you wonder why private collectors are still often regarded with such suspicion (and occasionally hostility) by public collectors. They might be better off joining forces, starting a conversation and even, pushing this boat out as far as it will go, taking advice.

The problem for both private and public collectors is that the whole business of collecting is fraught with paradox. The über-collector Charles Saatchi once said, 'I primarily buy art to show it off.' And that's true with us too, but there is also an intense privacy that surrounds the purchase and ownership of each work. The moment of committing to buy a work of art, and particularly the sort of work we seem to be attracted to, comes with its own questions of faith. Normally we brush these aside with enthusiasm and determination, but they can still linger. With contemporary art in particular, choices are often against

the grain of what most people find reasonable — the parrots and dwarves thing again. So, while it is almost unimaginable to have someone come into your house and tell you that your sofa is enough to make them sick, the phrase 'How can you live with that sort of stuff?' is a conversation starter familiar to most contemporary art collectors. So faith, yes.

Having faith in the work becomes easier for us when we are most familiar with the artists. Contemporary art collections largely ride on the courage of others. Collectors don't have to enter the empty studio and create the stuff, they just have to recognise it for what it is.

So what is it that you are recognising? For us it has always been a way to upset the familiar, to open up a new way of thinking, to puzzle and intrigue. Art has that effect. In our experience the fascinating work draws you through layers of understanding, each one being shaped by the time you're living in and the experience you bring.

That's why collecting art is so alluring: it gives you a privileged opportunity to see and respond to work over long periods of time and, just as importantly, in comfort. Anyone who visits art galleries and museums knows how much the time you spend is limited by sore feet. Having work at home gives you the opportunity to relax and simply to play. To rearrange objects physically. To make unlikely connections. To be unrestrained by professional caution or historical classifications. Juxtapositions and connections don't need to add up to anything more than simple pleasure. They're often driven by curiosity or art's best question, 'What if...?' We are definitely talking about one of the best games in town.

Not many people can claim to be constantly delighted by what they see every day. This is what art gives us as one of its greatest and most mysterious powers.

*Jim and Mary Barr have been collecting contemporary art since the early 1970s.*

# PAGEWORK #1

## EDDIE CLEMENS

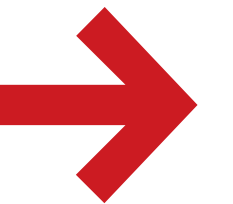
The following two pages of this magazine have been given over to a new feature. The premise is simple — commission an artist to create a new and unique artwork especially for *Bulletin*. By this means the Gallery enlarges its role as a patron of the arts, creating another channel through which we can actively support the generation of new work by contemporary artists.

Eddie Clemens's work is often built upon the re-purposing of mass-produced consumer objects. Here, the title *Basin-net* carries the suggestion of a product brand-name; however, through its word play and the image presented, Clemens suggests a cradle made from a spider's web. The web (created from appropriated suction-cup plugs and connecting chains) clings for dear life to a basin in the Gallery's public toilet. The chain links allude to dewdrops on a spider's web, and the weight of the chain follows the form of the basin inwards towards the drain. The stylised web is completed by the reflection in the washroom mirror.

Clemens, who is also featured in **let it be now** (see page 32), was the Olivia Spencer Bower Artist in Residence for 2008. This prestigious award, established in 1987, is administered by the trustees of the Olivia Spencer Bower Foundation, and, through collaboration with the Arts Centre of Christchurch, provides financial support, accommodation

and studio space for an emerging artist. The aim is to allow the artist to develop 'freed from the necessity to seek outside employment'. While there are no stipulations about the type or quantity of work to be produced, it is expected that the artist will donate one work from the period of the fellowship or the following year to the Foundation, to be held by the Gallery on behalf of the Foundation.

Previous holders of the award include Jim Speers, whose *Didn't Get to Sleep Last Night* illuminates Worcester Boulevard from the Gallery's Oriel window; Robert Hood, whose *Samuel Butler (My Rifle, My Pony and Me)* can be seen in the contemporary gallery; and Séraphine Pick, who will be the subject of a major survey exhibition at the Gallery in 2009. Clemens was recently announced as the winner of the University of Otago 2009 Frances Hodgkins Fellowship. Clare Noonan, a Christchurch-born artist who featured in the Gallery's **Out of Erewhon** exhibition in 2006, has just been announced as Olivia Spencer Bower Artist in Residence for 2009.



Over page:  
Eddie Clemens  
*Basin-net*  
2008. Courtesy  
of the artist







# Te Huringa / Turning Points

*Pākehā colonisation and Māori empowerment*

*Featuring paintings from many of New Zealand's best-known artists, **Te Huringa / Turning Points** charts a journey from early European contact, settlement and colonisation through to artworks by modern and present-day artists, reflecting contemporary concerns. Acknowledging a diversity of viewpoints, the exhibition is curated by Dr Jo Diamond (Ngapuhi), lecturer in art history at the University of Canterbury and Peter Shaw, curator of the Fletcher Trust Collection. Ken Hall talks to the curators.*

19 DECEMBER 2008 —  
15 FEBRUARY 2009

AN EXHIBITION OF  
PAINTINGS FROM THE  
COLLECTIONS OF THE  
FLETCHER TRUST AND  
SARJEANT GALLERY  
TE WHARE O REHUA  
WHANGANUI



Major-General Sir  
Horatio Gordon Robley  
Tomika Te Mutu 1866.  
Watercolour. Courtesy  
of the Fletcher Trust  
Collection



Captain Richard Oliver  
Te Rangihaeata, Chief  
of Ngati Toa c.1850.  
Watercolour. Courtesy  
of the Fletcher Trust  
Collection

Joseph Jenner Merrett  
Hone Heke and his  
wife, Harriet, with four  
attendants c.1845.  
Watercolour. Courtesy  
of the Fletcher Trust  
Collection



Thomas Allom  
Mt Egmont from the  
North Shore of Cook  
Straight, New Zealand,  
natives burning off  
wood for potato  
grounds 1841.  
Watercolour. Courtesy  
of the Fletcher Trust  
Collection



**Ken Hall:** What was your kaupapa, the overriding idea for bringing together this exhibition?

**Jo Diamond:** Peter approached me with an innovative, unprecedented, curatorial idea, that promised opportunities, for Māori people especially but not only, to express their viewpoints on art and related social issues. Of course, the artists and artworks make comments in their own right and we may see in them how perspectives of Māori by non-Māori and of Māori by Māori have undergone ‘turning points’ throughout the various histories of our country. The kaupapa was, from the outset, about me making comments from my own Māori perspective on the artworks, but also and most importantly, it was about Peter and I, as curators, providing space for other interpretations and expressions that had not existed before in art galleries.

**Peter Shaw:** The intention was firstly to make these paintings, many of which had never before been seen in public, available to as many people as possible, especially Māori for whom so many of the images are of vital significance. The other intention was to provide a dual perspective — Māori and Pākehā — for each work and to uncover sometimes obscured layers of meaning.

**KH:** It is interesting to consider how much your voices may reflect your different cultural perspectives in responding to the paintings. I am thinking, for example, Jo, of your very personal responses to John Tole’s *Māori Village, Rotorua* (c.1950) and Russell Clark’s *Hokianga Crossroads* (1954), which contrasts in an interesting way to Peter’s (also enlightening) focus on artist biography.

**JD:** My personal recollections and associations will hopefully encourage other people (Māori and non-Māori) to express their own personal recollections and associations; mine are simply examples of how Māori people may or may not interpret the works. My interpretations are based on my experiences as a Māori woman who engages with art on a daily basis, yet the comments are not meant to be fully authoritative, comprehensive or representative of all Māori people. In my comments you may detect questions, which I hope will encourage other questions and comments, as opposed to authoritative statements that close down other people’s engagements with the works.

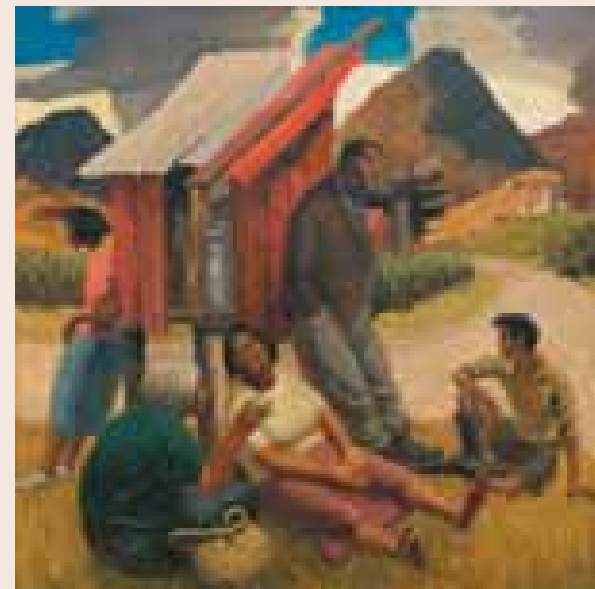
**KH:** For me the difference in your responses has been at times both surprising and telling; I have tended to agree with Peter’s response to some of the earliest depictions of Māori seeming to be overly picturesque or sentimentalised (noting his quoting of Leonard Bell’s description of Joseph Jenner Merrett’s portraiture as ‘doll-like, with stereotyped, sweet and harmless expressions ... little more than decorative knick-knacks — naively charming, but unrelated to the social and psychological realities of Māori life’). You have proposed a different perspective here, Jo, in that these should rightly be treasured and regarded as taonga.

**JD:** For me, taonga is a very big concept that needs robust and educated engagement within the realm of artworks as well as in most other social contexts. I adhere to the concept of taonga tuku iho not only in the sense that we inherit taonga from our ancestors but also in the sense that regardless of their representation — including that provided by artists who arguably had naïve, over-sentimentalised and possibly faulty ideas about taonga of many kinds — the importance of taonga for Māori people nonetheless persisted as much throughout early Pākehā colonisation as it continues to do today. My comments have the strength of that understanding of taonga. So whilst our criticisms of earlier non-Māori representations of taonga may be justified, let us not forget their value in reminding us of the power of the actual taonga they attempt to represent.





Shane Cotton  
**The Plant** 1995.  
 Oil on canvas.  
 Courtesy of the  
 artist and the  
 Fletcher Trust  
 Collection



Russell Clark  
**Hokianga Crossroads**  
 1954. Oil on canvas.

Courtesy of the Fletcher  
 Trust Collection

**KH:** Jo, when discussing Horatio Gordon Robley's portrait of the Ngaiterangi rangatira Tomika Te Mutu, you touched upon the idea of many stories 'yet to reach the printed page' — stories known by descendants of those depicted in such paintings. For good reason it would be expected that the holders of stories are not necessarily desperate to give these away. How much do you think this matters, particularly in relation to this portrait?

**JD:** I think that one of the words that sometimes goes missing in gathering and disseminating knowledge is 'respect'. Approach Tomika Te Mutu and his descendants with respect, and you can't go wrong in my opinion. I do not think that people should be forced into telling their stories. If it was decided that such stories were not to be told publicly for whatever reason, I would respect that. Also, I do hope that any stories that work against repeated oppression and ignorance can and will be told so that beneficial change comes about. Is it not intriguing and sometimes distasteful, though, that particular interpretations of many artworks have been and continue to be emphasised over others? Perhaps if more stories did reach the published page, including those of Māori people, we might gain a more balanced view of these artworks, if not life in general, past and present.

Right: John Tole  
**Māori Village,  
 Rotorua** c.1950.  
 Oil on board.  
 Courtesy of the  
 Fletcher Trust  
 Collection

Far right:  
 Francis Dillon Bell  
**New Zealand Bush**  
 c.1845.  
 Watercolour.  
 Courtesy of the  
 Fletcher Trust  
 Collection



**KH:** Reflecting the consequences of colonisation, it is readily observable that a Māori presence or voice has until comparatively recent decades been missing from the centres of New Zealand art and art history. One of the central themes in **Te Huringa / Turning Points** is the rising prominence gained by Māori artists, starting with names such as Selwyn Muru, Sandy Adsett, Ralph Hotere, Darcy Nicholas, Cliff Whiting and Robyn Kahukiwa. How best can we understand the significance of their emergence to centre stage?

**PS:** Their prominence now demands that we keep on looking at and exhibiting the works of established Māori artists, while paying close attention to the work of emerging Māori artists.

**JD:** I totally agree with Peter and would add that engagement with 'third spaces' — that is mixtures and meldings of Māori, Pākehā as well as other identities, as they occur in art and art history — is also very important for us to consider.

**KH:** It would be hoped that public art institutions in New Zealand, including ours, are improving in terms of the interpretation and display of artworks relating to our (often dishonourable) bicultural history, although there will always be room for doing things better. What does this exhibition say in terms of this, and what can you both offer us as a critique and encouragement in terms of finding a way ahead?

**PS:** **Te Huringa** itself represents our attempt at finding a way to confront these issues. It is for others to critique our work. That's what we are inviting everyone who views the exhibition to do. We aren't interested in final words or anything like that. We want to encourage thinking, discussion, dialogue, controversy. That's how a way ahead can be ensured.

**JD:** We should acknowledge a dualism that defines a (yes, equally 'often dishonourable') biculturalism in this country by enabling the public to stare it in the face and therefore deeply consider its characteristics and truths, no matter how uncomfortable they may be. I hope that my participation in this exhibition encourages a critique and discussion of my commentary and the artworks that extends beyond the usual canon of curatorship. This is a controversial yet necessary goal in itself because the canon usually reflects Pākehā colonialism alone, although more recently it has attempted to improve itself biculturally. We could encourage an informed move amongst the public by encouraging more articulations from

Māori people to balance the accepted Pākehā view. We could also be in the business of complicating matters further still with focused attention on third spaces that are expressed in artworks in this country. Such a move can complicate the whole idea of Māori and Pākehā, empowering so many groups of people who consider themselves, for example, as 'in-between' or 'something else besides ...' and whose voices remain yet to be heard within a biculturalist framework.

*The curators' full interpretive text for artworks in **Te Huringa / Turning Points** is available online at: [www.fletchercollection.co.nz](http://www.fletchercollection.co.nz)*

#### EVENTS

**Saturday 14 February**  
*A Turning Point*  
**Friends event**

Breakfast discussion about new exhibition **Te Huringa / Turning Points** with co-curator Dr Jo Diamond.  
 8.30am / Alchemy / Friends \$20 / public \$30

**Te Huringa / Turning Points** is in the William A. Sutton and Ravenscar Galleries from 19 December 2008 until 15 February 2009.

As the last issue of *Bulletin* went to press, the artists participating in Scape 2008 were arriving at the Gallery and beginning to realise their artworks. Here we look back at some of the Christchurch Art Gallery projects.

**JEN BEREAN AND PAT FOSTER**  
**OLD THOUGHTS AND NEW IDEAS;**  
**PROPOSITIONS FOR PUBLIC SCULPTURE**  
 RAVENSCAR GALLERY, CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY

The artworks of Pat Foster and Jen Berean draw attention to overlooked aspects of public spaces. In the past they have altered the architecture of rooms to reveal what is hidden, or brought things from ‘behind the scenes’ forward into gallery spaces. On their site visit, the artists became interested in Christchurch’s monumental statues and the controversies that have often surrounded them. They also became interested in the many smaller sculptures, often figurative statues and portrait busts, which rest in Christchurch Art Gallery’s storerooms. In their work for SCAPE 2008, Foster and Berean grouped a range of these sculptures on plinths that

were ordinary in all but one respect: rather than sitting at the normal viewing height for small, intimate sculptures, they were elevated to heights usually associated with grand public statements in civic squares. Described as ‘hypothetical’ proposals for public sculptures, the results highlighted issues of access and representation. Who deserves to be commemorated? And how ‘publicly accessible’ is a public gallery collection? Foster and Berean’s installation put these objects tantalisingly close and yet also ‘out of reach’.



**MURAT AND FUAT ŞAHINLER**  
**BREATHER / TENEFÜS**  
 FORECOURT, CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY

Collaborators Murat Şahinler and Fuat Şahinler work in the space between art and architecture. Their practice encompasses complex architectural structures, witty statues, and light-footed interventions in grand public spaces. All of their works seek to create more generous and useable public spaces. For SCAPE 2008, they transformed an underused grassed area in the Gallery forecourt. the Şahinlers’ amphitheatre has enlarged the space for small-scale human activities, whether having lunch or pausing to talk. Murat and Fuat have been careful not to strictly define the purpose of any of their structures, remarking that ‘our attitude is a symbolic one, pointing out certain possibilities, not creating an ultimate solution’.

Christchurch is known as a city of neat and flat suburban lawns, but the Şahinlers merged grass with an ancient classical structure for shaping public space — the amphitheatre. In contrast to the grand and somewhat forbidding façade of the Gallery,



**KARIN SANDER**  
**A WALK ALONG THE CITY’S PERIMETER**  
 FOYER, CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY

As one of Germany’s most prominent artists, Karin Sander is renowned for her site-responsive installations and subtle transformation of spaces. For SCAPE 2008, Sander provided an opportunity for Christchurch Art Gallery visitors to vicariously wander the boundaries of the city. She employed a walker from Germany to trace the circumference of Christchurch during the course of the Biennial, while inside the Gallery a map showing the path the walker had taken was updated daily. Playing on the relationship between the centre and the periphery, the work encouraged visitors to visualise the rich terrain beyond the limits of the ‘Cultural Precinct’.

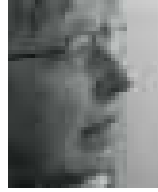


**GUILLAUME BIJL**  
**MISS CHRISTCHURCH**  
 WILLIAM A. SUTTON GALLERY,  
 CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY

Guillaume Bijl explores the boundaries separating the social world and the art world by reconstructing everyday environments. These he calls ‘Transformation-Installations’. The first Transformation-Installation was *Driving School Z* (1979), in which an entire driving school was installed in a gallery in Antwerp. It was accompanied by a fictitious manifesto, decrying all art centres as superfluous and calling for their replacement with ‘useful’ social institutions. When seen in neutral spaces such as galleries and parks, Bijl’s sculptures are at once intriguing and perplexing. In the artist’s words, Transformation-Installations like *Miss Christchurch* are ‘a reality in a non-reality’, merging fact with fiction. *Miss Christchurch* examines the changing politics of beauty pageants — an especially loaded inquiry to conduct inside art galleries, which are traditionally storehouses for beautiful objects.







Gaylene Preston is a writer, director and producer, making both documentary and drama for the large and small screen. In 2001 she was honoured by the Arts Foundation, becoming New Zealand's first film-maker Laureate and was appointed an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2002 for her services to film-making.

The name of the artist tells it all. NOT ONE OF US. A person from 'the other', not indigenous. Foreign.

He came here after the Second World War with his German wife and young family. Not a particularly good moment to be German in 1950s mono-cultural New Zealand. That's an understatement. When I met him, he was 'Lithuanian'. Bill Sutton said he was a communist, Tom Taylor said he was a Nazi; it turned out that both and neither were true.

I didn't meet Rudi Gopas until 1966 when I galloped into the Ilam School of Fine Arts fresh from the Napier suburbs, with my John Berger under my arm, a pile of Beatles records (vinyl) and most treasured possession — a subscription to *Nova* magazine. 'Bright eyed and bushy tailed' I think is the expression. We knew nothing about New Zealand art, and not much more about anything that wasn't to do with the explosion of Pop Art that had washed over us out of Britain and America during that dynamic decade.

The art school was creaking its way from being a place where students sat in studios drawing plaster casts of body parts from famous sculptures, to an extreme embrace of abstraction in all things. Rudi wandered around the school wearing a grey garage coat that made him look like the janitor, his sharp chin at a challenging angle, spitting out guttural comments (generally critical) interspersed with

loud sucking of his perennial pipe. Most days, I got the impression, he hated everything about the place — New Zealand I mean, not just the art school — and suffered us fools with difficulty.

By that stage he was painting large abstract paintings with pockmarked surfaces — mysterious moonscapes with no reference to any landscape on this planet. Those paintings were all about painting and space. Internationalist. At nineteen years old, I was too interested in people and place and story to be keen on the intellectual coolness of abstraction. I argued. The argument conducted over two years in Rudi's painting class taught me everything I still understand about art, and painting in particular. I wanted to put figures in my work. I failed. We were all little Rudi clones painting big, subdued, abstract expressionist, mid-European paintings with (certainly in my case) not enough real understanding of what the hell we were doing.

Having had this early traumatic love/hate relationship with the artist, imagine my surprise when I found this painting. There is so much about *The Old Wharf, Kaikoura* that makes it a quintessential New Zealand work. The black outline around boldly articulated hill formations, the colour range of earth tones offset by that very particular southern light on the horizon. There's a haphazard clatter of

forms made by the juxtaposition of the old wooden wharf, the boulder rocks in the foreground and the bobbing boats. The painting has a lot of life.

'Make sure to capture the spontaneous energy of your first composition sketches on the surface of your finished painting,' Gopas would tell us. And in *The Old Wharf, Kaikoura*, you can see why.

This painting has got a real feeling of movement and rest. The boats have been flung up onto the rocky shore. There's light on the horizon offset by the bright coldness of a southern sea. I love the music in the colours. Bright red strong against deep blue.

By the time it was painted, in 1958, Rudi would have had a chance to get a little bit used to the challenging lack of people in New Zealand, but in this land of perpetual newness, he's found a corner of the old. The wharf is mouldering, the boats have found shelter from the storm.

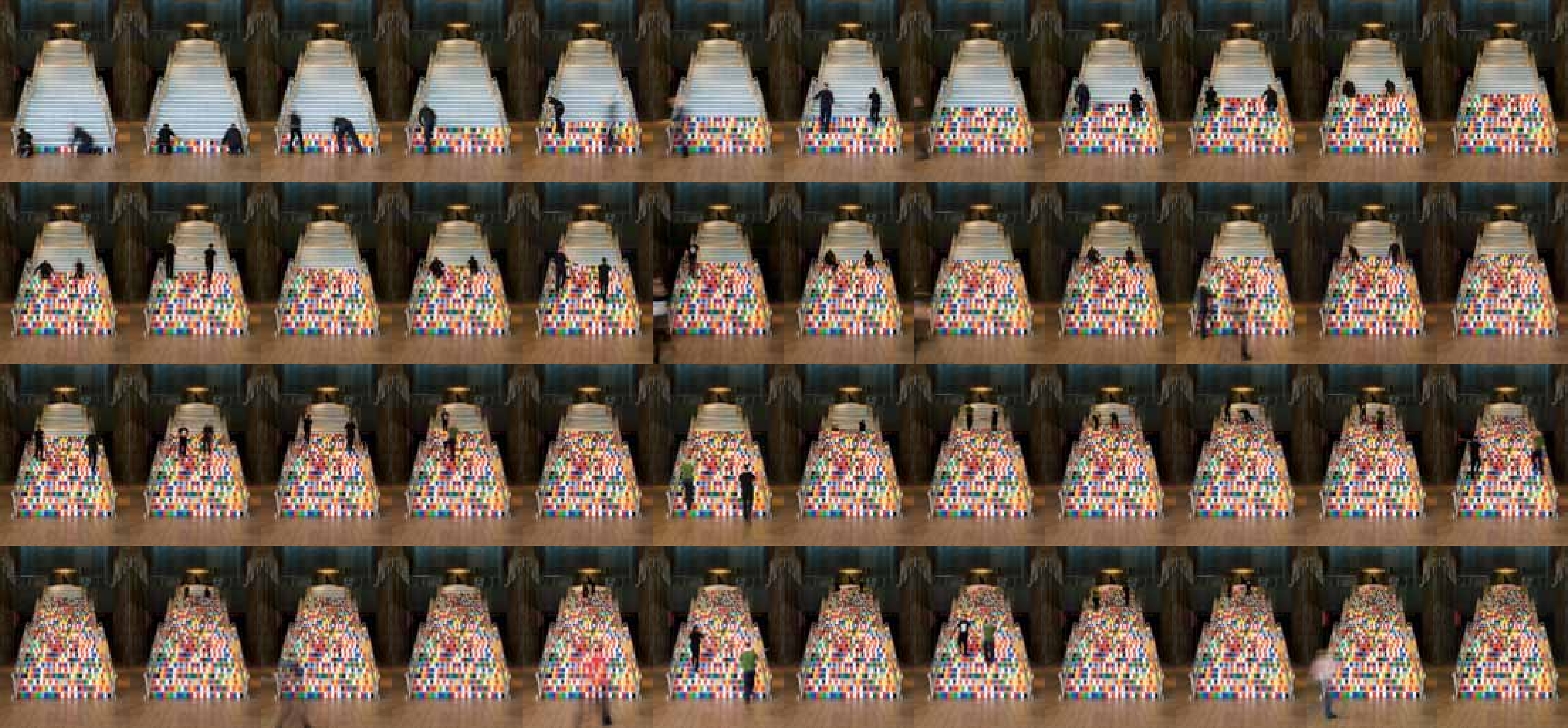
Maybe at this point in his life, Rudolph Gopas had too.



*The Old Wharf, Kaikoura* by Rudolph Gopas is on display in the Dame Louise Henderson Gallery.

Rudolph Gopas **The Old Wharf, Kaikoura** 1958. Oil on board.

Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 1985





Doris Tutill  
Māori whare and  
tiki design 1932.  
Watercolour.  
Collection of  
Christchurch Art  
Gallery Te Puna o  
Waiwhetu. Gifted  
to the Gallery by  
Doris Hartley Tutill,  
2008



### From ART SCHOOL 125 in Christchurch to ART DECO in Melbourne

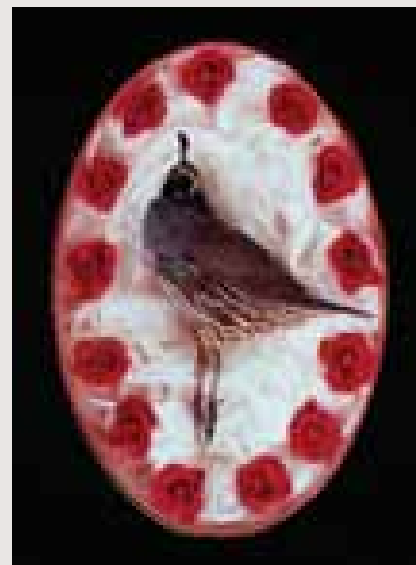
In 2007, Christchurch Art Gallery was contacted by a curator from the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, in relation to preparations for an expanded version of *Art Deco 1910–1939*, an exhibition originally shown at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London. Recognising the international character of the art deco style, the NGV were including Australasian examples in the show and hoped to locate Christchurch-based Doris Tutill's *Māori whare and tiki design*. Christchurch Art Gallery was at that time preparing to open **Art School 125**, celebrating 125 years of the University of Canterbury's School of Fine Arts, where Doris had studied from 1929 to 1934. Tutill's design was to be included, and was later generously gifted to the collection by the artist. In the sumptuous Melbourne show, although one of only three exhibits with an obvious New Zealand connection, Doris Tutill's design made an impressive impact. Doris recently celebrated her 92nd birthday.

### Out and about

Several of our staff have been out and about recently. In November, director, Jenny Harper spent time in Rome, Venice and London, meeting with ambassadors and high commissioners in her role as commissioner for New Zealand's contribution to the 2009 Venice Biennale. Jenny also visited potential sites for the New Zealand exhibition in Venice. Two Gallery curators travelled to the Volume Contemporary Art/Craft Symposium at Hawke's Bay Museum and Art Gallery in October. Senior curator Justin Paton gave a keynote presentation called 'Poor Things' on the place of the object artist today, and assistant curator Jennifer Hay gave a presentation on the Gallery's forthcoming **Talisman** exhibition. In November, Justin also took part in a Goethe Institute tour of the contemporary art scene in Berlin, visiting Art Forum Berlin, the city's major art fair, as well as some of the city's vast number of museums, collections, alternative art spaces and private galleries.

Previous page:  
Time-lapse sequence showing the installation of Sara Hughes's *United We Fall* in the Gallery foyer

Sara Hughes **United We Fall** 2008. Courtesy of the artist and Gow Langsford Gallery



Michaela Cox  
*Angelus for a California Quail* 2007. C-type photograph

### Decoupage Diorama with Artist Michaela Cox

**Adult Art Classes, Sun 22 Feb, 10am–3.30pm, Education Centre, \$30**

Working with the artist, create your own Victorian diorama through the use of decoupage, photomontage and museological presentation.

This unique workshop explores the artistic possibilities of a three-dimensional collage process. Materials and photographic equipment provided.

Bookings essential, Tel: (03) 941 7342

### Trambience

Sat 28 Feb and Sun 1 March

Trambience uses one of Christchurch's restored wooden trams as a venue for experimental music. Local and international sound artists and musicians respond to the space of the carriage and the sounds of the tram, as they and the audience trundle together around Christchurch's Cultural Precinct. Trambience will end at the Christchurch Art Gallery tram stop, leading into sound performances planned for the foyer area.

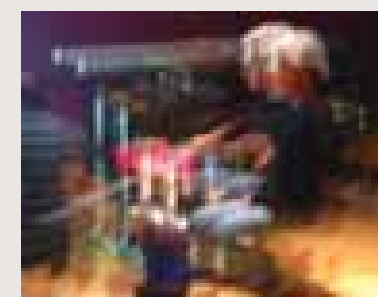
Check the Gallery website for your Trambience timetable: [www.christchurchartgallery.org.nz](http://www.christchurchartgallery.org.nz)

### Canterbury artists win prizes

We congratulate two Canterbury-trained artists, Shane Cotton and Peter Robinson, who have recently been recognised for their contributions to contemporary New Zealand art. Cotton is a 2008 Arts Foundation of New Zealand Laureate and Robinson won the prestigious biennial Walters Prize for his sculptural installation *ACK*. New works by both artists were acquired by the Gallery in 2007.

### The Donkey's Tail play live

On 18 September, Melbourne artists John Nixon and Marco Fusinato flew into town to perform improvised noise sets with legendary local sound artists Greg Malcolm and Bruce Russell. Playing in the Gallery's auditorium, this was the first time Nixon's band, The Donkey's Tail, had performed outside Melbourne, and was an excellent opportunity for Christchurch audiences to see and hear leading Australian and local noise merchants perform live. Electric guitars dominated the evening (ten in all being counted on stage) and they were played in a variety of unconventional manners. The Donkey's Tail played with local guests The Purple Mountain Eagle.



John Nixon performing with The Donkey's Tail at the Gallery's auditorium, 18 September, 2008. Photograph by Mick Elborado

### Gallery gains Qualmark endorsement

Christchurch Art Gallery has been recognised as one of New Zealand's leading tourism businesses and is now licensed to carry the Qualmark — New Zealand tourism's official mark of quality.

The Gallery earned this accolade as part of the Qualmark quality endorsement programme, which is designed to identify professional and trustworthy operators and enable international and domestic visitors to book and buy tourism products and services with confidence.



### More awards for Gallery publication

The accolades just keep rolling in for the Gallery's spectacular book *Bill Hammond: Jingle Jangle Morning*. Fresh from successes in both the BPANZ Book Design Awards and the Montana New Zealand Book Awards the book, designed by Aaron Beehre, picked up a silver award in the Editorial and Books category at the BeST Design Awards 2008. Also recognised were the Gallery's creative partners, Strategy Design and Advertising, who received silver and bronze awards in the Environmental Graphics and Visual Communication categories respectively for their work on the Gallery's **Morris & Co.** exhibition.

Get your copy of *Jingle Jangle Morning* from the Gallery shop.

**BeST** Design Awards 08  
*Designers Institute of New Zealand*

### PERFORMANCE — CHRISTMAS BALLET

Wed 17 Dec, 6pm, foyer, free

A very special Christmas ballet by the young dancers of the Sharon Howells School of Ballet.

### CINEMA CLASSICS — MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET (1947)

Wed 24 Dec, 6pm, Philip Carter Family Auditorium, free

In this film, one of Hollywood's most delightful fantasies, the spirit of Christmas is rekindled in a young girl (Natalie Wood) by a department store Santa. Edmund Gwenn is perfect as the endearing employee who claims to be the real Mr Claus.

### HOLIDAY PROGRAMME — WONDERFUL WUNDERBOX

Mon 5 Jan–Fri 23 Jan, weekdays only, 10am–12 noon or 1–3pm, \$5

Be inspired by the exhibition *Wonderbox*. Become a crazy collector and collage your own cabinet of wonders in the Education Centre.

Bookings essential, Tel: (03) 941 7367

### HOLIDAY QUIZ — FIONA HALL: FORCE FIELD ACTIVITY SHEET

Mon 5 Jan–Sun 1 Feb, daily 10am–4pm, free

Fiona Hall is an Australian artist who uses common household materials and objects to make her art, changing them so that we look at materials in a new way. Come and explore **Fiona Hall: Force Field** with this fun activity sheet. Collect from the front desk.



Fiona Hall  
*Cell Culture (detail)*  
2001–2. Glass beads,  
silver wire, Tupperware.  
South Australia  
Government Grant 2002,  
Art Gallery of South  
Australia. Image courtesy  
of the artist and Roslyn  
Oxley Gallery, Sydney

## Staff profile



### Martin Young — workshop technician

When you next look at the works on display at Christchurch Art Gallery, take a moment to think about how they got here. And what happens to them when they are not on display.

Works of art can be any size, shape, weight, and of course, value. But all need to be able to be moved, lent to other institutions, and stored safely. That's where workshop technician Martin Young comes in. Working in a custom-designed workshop on the ground floor of the Gallery, Martin has the task of creating the bespoke crates and boxes that will protect and store these valuable works of art, whatever their journey.

These crates are much more than just simple wooden boxes or 'apple crates'. They have to be strong enough to support and protect very valuable artefacts, yet light enough to be transported internationally. Each crate is lined with archival foam to ensure a snug fit for its contents, and lined with an insulation foil to protect it against changes in atmospheric conditions. Finally the crates are sanded and varnished, often to a very high level of finish, because, as Martin says, 'the better they look, the better they get handled.'

## Coming soon

### Miles: a life in architecture

Opening in March 2009, this major survey exhibition will celebrate the life, work and achievements of Sir Miles Warren, and mark his 80th birthday. It will reveal his life as New Zealand's leading architect, as a patron of the arts and accomplished watercolourist, and as a passionate gardener who has developed one of New Zealand's finest post-war formal gardens, Ohinetahi at Governors Bay, Christchurch.

The exhibition, curated by Dr T.L. Rodney Wilson with the full support of Sir Miles, will contain nearly 200 photographs, more than 100 drawings, two architectural models, interactive computer-based catalogues of work not included in the show and a CAD 'walkthrough' of one of Sir Miles's most important buildings.



Sir Miles Warren *New Zealand Chancery, Washington, USA 1975.*

Watercolour. Architects Warren and Mahoney

### Rita Angus: Life & Vision

The spectacular exhibition **Rita Angus: Life & Vision** is coming to Christchurch Art Gallery on 6 March 2009.

One of New Zealand's most significant artists, Angus spent many years in Christchurch, having studied at the Canterbury College School of Art. A pioneer of modern painting in this country, she created some of our most memorable and best-loved images. To honour the centenary of her birth, this exhibition brings together 141 of her works. These include sketchbooks, studies and unfinished works, some of which have never been seen in public before.



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Rita Angus  
**Self-portrait**  
1936-37. Oil on  
canvas. Collection  
of Dunedin Public  
Art Gallery,  
purchased 1980.  
Reproduced  
courtesy of the Rita  
Angus Estate

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**Open 10am — 5pm daily**  
Late night every Wednesday  
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