



Bulletin

THE ROBERT McDOUGALL ART GALLERY

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Litany Desk, 1945, Frederick George Gurnsey, St. Mary's, Timaru.

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Christchurch City Council



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Angels and Roses
Frederick George Gurnsey
20 August - 19 October

For almost fifty years, following his emigration from Britain to New Zealand in 1904, Frederick George Gurnsey was a leading figure in local wood and stone carving. He taught at the Canterbury College School of Art until 1923 and later worked as a freelance carver on prestigious commissions throughout New Zealand. Among his best known works are the reredos and the Chapel of St. Michael and

St. George in the Christchurch Anglican Cathedral and the stone carvings on the Bridge of Remembrance.

Angels and Roses presents Gurnsey's work to the Christchurch community and celebrates his very significant contribution to the artistic impact of many local buildings. The fifty works gathered for the exhibition are choice examples of his work. Included are dressers, chairs, altars, pulpits and a fine 1929 reredos. Through these works from his large oeuvre we will be able to

witness Gurnsey's skill and versatility in a wide range of carvings both charming and witty. Above all though is the technical excellence of his ornamental carving which, despite the ambiguous status on the boundary of art and craft, lifts this artist's work into a special category.

The title for this exhibition arises from the angel forms featured on many of the ecclesiastical pieces and the carved Tudor rose which Gurnsey used as an affectionate tribute to his wife Rose Ellen. Gurnsey was too modest to sign his works so instead is often identified by his angel and rose monogram. Yet no two of his

hundreds of angels, cherubim and putti are ever the same, and his thousands of roses vary from naturalistic flowers to emblematic Tudor blooms.

Angels and Roses will help break down the often negative and elitist barriers between art and craft and between sculpture and carving which have tended to obscure Gurnsey's remarkable achievement. His versatility also provides a fascinating insight into artistic styles: from the Art Nouveau of the country church font cover to the 17th century "Wrenaissance" style of the Bishops court font and chair; from the Elizabethan revivalism of his flagons to

the distinctively New Zealand imagery on the North Otago pews.

Angels and Roses is a collaboration between Mark Stocker, Senior Lecturer in Art History at the University of Canterbury, and Anna Crighton, Registrar at the McDougall Art Gallery, who did the preliminary research on Gurnsey as a post graduate student at the University of Canterbury several years ago. Works have been generously lent from private owners and institutions throughout New Zealand. On Sunday 14 September, at 11.00 am, Mark Stocker will give a Floortalk on **Angels and Roses**

Ellis Rowan - A Flower-Hunter in Queensland
4 September - 2 November

This touring exhibition from the Queensland Museum presents 50 paintings by Ellis Rowan, one of Australia's most celebrated flower painters. Displaying the beauty of Queensland's native wildflowers these works also reflect the rich diversity of the native flora from the Border Ranges in the south to the northern Torres Strait Islands.

But it is not only the paintings which are remarkable. Ellis Rowan, born in 1848, was an adventurous, emancipated woman who turned the genteel Victorian pastime of flower painting into an internationally acclaimed and highly profitable career. First visiting Queensland in 1887, she trekked from her home base in Melbourne to the most remote and inhospitable parts of Australia and New Guinea in her pursuit of subjects to paint. A tiny, wasp-waisted woman of indomitable will she climbed mountains, braved crocodiles and undertook perilous river journeys - always dressed in the height of fashion.

In a career spanning 50 years she produced more than 3000 paintings before her death in 1922. Ellis Rowan also spent several years in New Zealand after her marriage in 1873 to Captain Frederic Charles Rowan of the New Zealand Armed Constabulary. Following the untimely death of her husband, she visited New Zealand in 1893-94 on a sentimental journey, which brought her to Christchurch. Here she was delighted to discover the work of Margaret Stoddart and wrote in her book, published in 1898, "*Even here everyone was shivering, but I forgot the weather amongst Miss Stoddart's beautiful flower-paintings in the Art Gallery. I had the pleasure of meeting her, and next morning went to see her whole collection. It was a new revelation to me to see such work hidden away, and I think she stands without*



Wheel of Fire, 1891/2, Ellis Rowan

rival the first and foremost of our flower-painters in Australia. Her grouping, colouring, form and harmony were perfect".

The scheduling of this exhibition, just prior to the Gallery's big summer show featuring the works of Margaret Stoddart,

makes **Ellis Rowan - A Flower-Hunter in Queensland** a very interesting comparison. The show will be accompanied by a book 'Ellis Rowan - A Flower-Hunter in Queensland' published by the curator Judith McKay. She will also give a public lecture at the Gallery on Thursday 4 September, 5.30 pm.

Our Silver Heritage
14 August - 25 September

Reflecting the history of New Zealand gold and silversmithing, the touring exhibition **Our Silver Heritage** has been curated from the collections of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

Featured in this small but interesting show will be ewers and goblet sets in sterling silver and greenstone (New Zealand jade), tea services and trays with engraved and hammered decorations from a variety of artistic styles, cutlery sets and elaborate ornamental centrepieces which

encapsulate the taste and opulence of the late nineteenth century. There are also pieces with intriguing histories like the ink stand made from a silver mounted horse's hoof from the famous racehorse Danebury and a ceremonial sterling silver railway spike which was presented to the Prime Minister Sir Joseph Ward on the completion of the Main Trunk Line in November 1908.

For those who love the lustre of fine silver and the intricate skills of the silversmith, this show featuring 16 exquisite historical pieces is being toured by Exhibitour and should not be missed.

The Developing World Ruth Watson 15 August - 14 September

Ruth Watson, whose work has been described as taking the viewer on "an intellectual adventure", presents **The Developing World**, the latest in a series of her map-related works.

Watson, one of New Zealand's leading contemporary artists, was born in Christchurch but is now based in Sydney. She graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Canterbury and, in 1992, was the recipient of the Olivia Spencer Bower Award. Mapping, both literal and figurative, has always been an important element in Watson's work, and her installation for the Annex continues to explore themes touched on in previous exhibitions such as *Souvenirs du Monde*, *Planetarium* and *Vantage*. In her *Wonderlands* piece, exhibited to a very favourable public response at the Jonathan Smart Gallery last year, she presented a wall studded with photographic fragments cut in the shape of various countries, their silhouettes made out of images gathered from a diverse range of sources.

For **The Developing World**, Watson has taken the images of these countries and, with the aid of computer technology, has morphed the countries into one another. The resultant images will then be projected from the four corners of the Annex ceiling (an allusion to the four directional points of a compass) onto the floor of the darkened gallery, creating a constantly moving and changing montage of colour and form.

Watson uses maps to highlight the instability and ambiguity of cartography: "(Maps) are typical of the things we take for granted: things which are often more complex than they seem". Her work recognises the human need to divide the world into smaller, chartable territories in order to create something we feel we can recognise and understand, but it also acknowledges that such divisions are idealised, rather than actual, and reflect the beliefs and projections of the hand that charted them. Watson's previous use of old maps made reference to their political use as documents for colonisation, a process underwritten by the assumption that once something has been mapped, it is also somehow 'owned'.

Humanity's firmly held faith in the fidelity of photography also comes under examination in Watson's work, and she links that medium's ability to present and enforce a particular vantage point with the God-like hand of the mapmaker: "Drawing a map is a way of controlling the world image or controlling your part in it". Her photographs are recognisable as countries, but by morphing them into one another she questions our unconscious associations and assumptions. When presented with a map of Africa for example, we make certain mental connections, but we can never hope to ex-

press all that the continent is. Similarly, the atlas version of the Pacific Ocean as a vast expanse of blue dotted with tiny islands, whilst recognised as 'geographical fact', imparts nothing of the multitudinous traditions, languages and histories that dominate that region and contribute to its unique essence. Watson examines the importance of location to identity, and the part that maps have played and continue to play in the demarcation and manipulation of cultural territory: "The main thing about my work is understanding. Understanding yourself and where you are in the world."



Detail from a video sequence in 'The Developing World', 1997, Ruth Watson

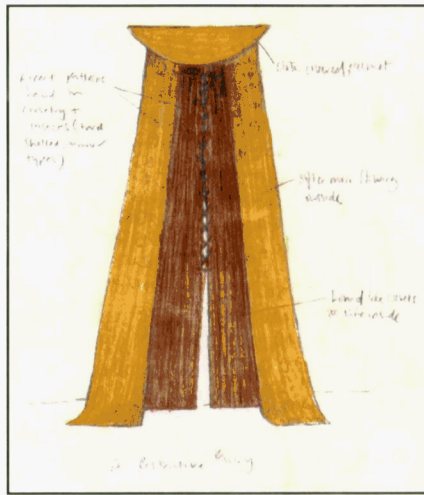
Part of the Furniture 19 September - 26 October

Contemporary design comes under the spotlight at the McDougall Art Annex with the opening of **Part of the Furniture**, an exhibition project initiated by the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, which features the work of fourteen local artists - Graham Bennett, Bing Dawe, Donna Demente, Stephen Gleeson, Lorelei Jenner, Mark McEntyre, Rachel Malloch, Jennifer Matheson (the Guest Curator for this exhibition), Callum Pankhurst, Michael Reed, Sophie Sherriff, Sandra Thomson, Randall Watson and Loretta Young.

This exhibition, which includes wall and floor works in a diverse variety of media, will provide the artists with the opportunity to investigate the relationship between two areas of art practice, fine art and design, in either a functional or a conceptual manner. The pieces of furniture or installations will be very different to those made for commercial operations, with the demands of commercial production taking a back seat to artistic intent and expression. The works in this exhibition seek to challenge the way we think about the design that surrounds us in our everyday lives. Readily recognisable objects such as a bed, a chair and a television are all included, but don't expect to be able to

sit down and relax, the artists have incorporated unexpected and often unsettling elements. Randall Watson's entry, *TABLE/unSTABLE*, is a kinetic work that will distort and collapse at the approach of a visitor, then slowly right itself again.

The artists in **Part of the Furniture** are all students, ex-students, tutors or lecturers from the city's principal tertiary institutions for art and design instruction, the University of Canterbury and the Christchurch Polytechnic. The inclusion of established artists such as Graham Bennett, Sandra Thomson and Bing Dawe, with mainly Fine Arts training, is intended to suggest that they may have wider applications for their work. It is hoped that artists new to textile design will bring fresh approaches and diverse stimuli to the media. Within this group, each artist will



Preliminary concept sketch, 1997. Sandra Thomson

investigate the same issues they have explored within their usual media (film-making, painting, sculpture, printmaking, etc.), but with new materials which will

challenge and broaden their art forms. Thomson's exhibit, *Curtain: A Restrictive Entry* alludes to the underwear and fashion present in her print works, but takes the form of a corseted fabric curtain, hanging from the wall and trailing along the ground.

The other group of artists, with mainly Craft Design training, are already working within these parameters. **Part of the Furniture** targets the Canterbury region, highlighting the exceptional standard of work already being achieved in the area of design.

With the intention of exploring and evaluating the position design currently holds within the high/low fine arts/craft tradition of debate, **Part of the Furniture** will also include a public forum in October featuring speakers who work professionally in the field of art and design.

Recent Survey

Thank you to all those who gave us feedback with the questionnaires on the present and future art gallery. For those who haven't yet returned them, we would still like to hear from you and I will still be receiving completed questionnaires until the end of September. It was very heartening to receive such a large response and we will be collating the information over the next few months. Thank you again.

Amanda Gregan
Publicity & Marketing
Officer.



Young Gallery visitors Robert, Louise and Zoe Coleman tackle the holiday Quiz.

Enthusiasms 97

Following our very successful series of winter lectures last year, we are offering you a new programme for 1997. Again we will be focusing on different aspects of the arts and applied arts and guarantee to widen your art background while we entertain and amuse you. A new element this year is to add to our gallery-based programme some sessions which will involve a move to interesting off-site venues.

Tickets will be available from the Gallery at \$6 for Friends for sessions 1 - 8, and \$25 for session 9 which will include fine food and wine. Public prices will be a little higher at \$8 per session and \$30 for session 9. Sessions commence at 6 pm (except on Saturday 1 November which will be at 10 am.)

The programme this year is expected to be as follows:

1. 15 September Wine & Silver
2. 22 September Maori Studies Block, Christchurch Polytechnic
3. 29 September Advertising Art
4. 6 October Jewellery
5. 13 October Handbuilt (pots & chocolates)
6. 20 October Landscape Design
7. 1 November Digital Photography
8. 3 November Fabrics & Couture
9. 10 November Fine Food & Wine

To purchase tickets please contact the Gallery. For further information call 372 2973.

New Members

Lyn Boddington
Dawn Boddington
Barbara Driver
D Francis
Ritchie Rutherford
M & Mrs Hugh Rutherford
M J & H M Stockwell

Tour to Rembrandt - A Genius and His Impact

The Gallery is organising a tour to Melbourne 13-16 November to see this exciting international exhibition which is showing only in Melbourne and Canberra. Please ring 372 2973 if you would like to register your interest and we will keep you in touch with the tour plans as they develop.

SPEAKER OF THE MONTH

These functions take place on the third Wednesday of each month, commencing at 10.30 am with tea and coffee. The charge is \$1.50 for members. \$2.50 for non-members.

On **20 August** Anthony Wright, Director of the Canterbury Museum, will give an illustrated talk on the future of the Canterbury Museum. The venue for this session is the Hurst Seager Room, Christchurch Arts Centre.

On **17 September** Mitsuyu Matsumoto, jewellery designer, will give an illustrated presentation on her recent work. The venue will be the Hurst Seager Room, Christchurch Arts Centre.

RECENT SPEAKERS OF THE MONTH

Josie Martin - Artist and Sculptor

At present living in Akaroa, Josie Martin has worked for most of her life as an artist, painting, sculpting, tutoring and promoting the arts. She opened her talk by saying she loves surprises and those present who didn't know the artist were in for a surprise themselves. With her brightly coloured hair and clothes she looked as wonderfully unconventional and stylish as the colourful large sculpture 'La Paloma' that she brought in to show us.

A quotation by a former tutor "Paint with your heart, control it with your mind and let yourself become part of it" and years of travel and gathering information and experiences on art, have influenced her

work to the point where today she is able to express herself and her vision with conviction.

A scholarship at the Vermont Studio Centre U.S.A., workshops at the International School of Art, Todi, and at Assisi, and recently a scholarship at the prestigious MacDowell Art Colony in New Hampshire, U.S.A., have helped Josie to consolidate her work in the transition from two dimensions to three. Her love of colour combines with the organic forms to breathe energy and life into sculpture. Originally worked as papier-maché maquettes, they are formed in welded steel and painted in bright enamels to withstand all weathers. Josie Martin believes that being answerable to herself alone and following her own intuition - not being led by the taste of others - creates work of integrity.

Colin McLachlan - Ngaio Marsh House

As the chairman of the Ngaio Marsh Trust, Colin McLachlan is an entertaining speaker, and who better to tell us about Ngaio Marsh House than the person largely responsible for the purchase of the home and the running of it as a charitable trust? It was also appropriate to be meeting in the Hurst Seager Room as Ngaio Marsh House was designed by Seager when Ngaio was just ten, and she lived there until her death at 87.

After ten years of occupation by tenants, the house was luckily largely unspoiled when purchased. Photographs of the house, commissioned by the late Helen Holmes when Dame Ngaio Marsh was living there, proved very useful in setting up the



President—Dr Mark Stocker 365 3895
Vice-President—Robyn Ussher 332 0385
Treasurer—Chris Brocket 355 7133
Secretary—Ann Watt 379 4055

furnishings and possessions. Now the home appears just as she left it; as if she has simply stepped out momentarily and will soon return to take up her Waterman pen with its distinctive green ink.

There were many problems involved with the purchase and setting up of the house as one of only three literary houses in this country open to the public. However, with a dedicated group of supporters, the problems were overcome and the house is now open for viewing by appointment, with daily guided tours (except Monday). A video presentation of the house filmed by C.T.V. was shown at the conclusion of the talk.

As Barbara Mitchell said in her vote of thanks, our appetites were certainly whetted for a visit to Ngaio Marsh House.

COMING LOCART VISIT

On **Wednesday 13 August** Friends are invited to visit Avonside Girls' High School to view their collection. Please meet Noeline Brokenshire outside the Assembly Hall at the back of the school at 2.50 pm. (Please use the right hand driveway where parking will be available.) Tea and biscuits will be served after the visit. To book or cancel please ring the answerphone on 379 4055.

LOCART VISIT IN MAY

On 15 May thirteen Friends visited the studio of Christchurch painter Helen Rockel. She discussed her painting through different phases of her life and her travels through Moslem countries before her marriage and the birth of her children. The painter's life and the life

of others is the subject matter she uses focusing on the different phases experienced by women. Her work has a strong mythological content, shows a strength without aggression and a wide versatility of medium. We were privileged indeed.

LOCART VISIT IN JUNE

Eleven Friends visited the Photographic Studio, Media Arts, Christchurch Polytechnic where Murray Hedwig outlined his photographic progress since the 1960s. With a CSA scholarship he travelled to Australia. Spending some time in Canberra he appreciated the architecture and the multitude of shapes linking the patterns of the Parliamentary House to the adjacent Lake Burley Griffin. Hedwig's early work was also influenced by the minimalist abstractionist Rothko.

The group was shown a selection of photographic slides from the late 1960s until the present showing Hedwig's interest in symbols and marks as they appear in road signs, roadworks and general constructions. Sadly many of the constructions he photographed in the Christchurch landscape have now been demolished but a strong photographic record has been established.

In his 'Water Features' series techniques were explored to polarise colour and capture the forms below the surface of the water. Hedwig's New Zealand sites have extended from Karamea to the Volcanic Plateau. His enthusiasm for the mystic qualities of water and its many forms was discussed briefly, including the association of water with rocks, ferns and many native plants and the use of water as a feature in the residential landscape. In all it was a fascinating visit.

COMING EVENTS

AUGUST

Exhibitions

- 1 **Treasures in Trust** - until 3 August
Youth Make Their Mark - until 24 August
Magnet - Simon Biggs - at the Annex - until 10 August
Works from the Collection the 1997 selection - until 31 December
- 14 **Our Silver Heritage** - until 25 September
- 15 **The Developing World - Ruth Watson** - at the Annex - until 14 September
- 20 **Angels and Roses - Frederick Gurnsey** - until 19 October

Events

- 1 **Friday Club** 10.30am. Art appreciation club meeting
- 2 **Saturday 1 Club** 10.30 am. Art appreciation club meeting
- 3 **Lecture - Enid Ellis** Canterbury Public Library will speak on "Twelve Treasures on a Desert Island." A discussion on 12 very special and rare books. 11 am in the Christ's College, Conference Room.
- 3 **Floortalk - Treasures in Trust** - Ann Betts, Senior Education Officer, - 2.00 pm
- 5 **Eye Spy 1997** - Art Appreciation Tuesday programme begins today. 10.30 am. Enrolments essential 372 2973
- 6 **Wednesday 1 Club** 10.30am. Art appreciation club meeting
Wednesday 2 Club 1.30pm. Art appreciation club meeting
- 7 **Mac Club** 10.30am. Art appreciation club for the disabled or differently abled. New members welcome.
- 8 **Eye Spy 1997** - Art Appreciation Friday programme begins today. 10.30 am. Enrolments essential 372 2973
- 9 **Saturday 2 Club** 10.30am. Art appreciation club meeting
Eye Spy 1997 - Art Appreciation Saturday programme begins today. 10.30 am. Enrolments essential 372 2973
- 13 **LocArt Visit to Avonside Girls' High School**, 180 Avonside Drive at 2.50 pm. To book or cancel phone 379 4055.
- 14 **Our Silver Heritage** exhibition begins today - until 25 September
- 15 **The Developing World - Ruth Watson** . At the Annex - until 14 September
- 20 **Speaker of the Month - Anthony**

Wright, Director of the Canterbury Museum. 10.30 am in the Hurst Seager Room, Christchurch Arts Centre

- 20 **Angels and Roses - Frederick Gurnsey** exhibition opens today - until 19 October
- 24 **Lecture - Peter Peryer** - Photographer, will give an illustrated lecture on his work, 11.00 am, in the Hurst Seager Room, Christchurch Arts Centre.
- 24 **Concert** - St Andrew's College Stage Band. 2.00pm

SEPTEMBER

Exhibitions

- 1 **Angels and Roses - Frederick Gurnsey** - until 19 October
Our Silver Heritage - until 25 September
The Developing World - Ruth Watson- at the Annex -until 14 September
Works from the Collection The 1997 selection - until 31 December
- 4 **Ellis Rowan. A Flower-Hunter in Queensland.** - until 2 November
- 19 **Part of the Furniture** - at the Annex - until 26 October

Events

- 3 **Wednesday 1 Club** 10.30am. Art appreciation club meeting
Wednesday 2 Club 1.30pm. Art appreciation club meeting
- 4 **Ellis Rowan. A Flower- Hunter in Queensland** exhibition opens today - until 2 November
- 4 **Mac Club** 10.30am. Art appreciation club for the disabled or differently abled. New members welcome
- 4 **Lecture - Judith McKay**, Curator from the Queensland Museum will speak on "Ellis Rowan a Flower-

hunter in Queensland and New Zealand", 5.30 pm. (Please use the Night Entrance)

- 5 **Friday Club** - 10.30am. Art appreciation club meeting
- 6 **Saturday 1 Club** 10.30 am. Art appreciation club meeting
- 13 **Saturday 2 Club** 10.30 am. Art appreciation club meeting
- 14 **Floortalk. Mark Stocker** will speak on **Angels and Roses** 11.00 am
- 15 **Enthusiasms 97 - Wine & Silver.** 6.00pm. Please use the Night Entrance from Rolleston Ave. Tickets: Friends \$6. Public \$8.
- 17 **Speaker of the Month - Mitsuyo Matsumoto**, jewellery designer, 10.30 am in the Hurst Seager Room, Christchurch Arts Centre
- 19 **Part of the Furniture** exhibition opens today. At the Annex - until 26 October
- 22 **Enthusiasms 97 - Maori Studies Block**, Christchurch Polytechnic. **Bill Royal** will give us a special guided tour. 6.00pm. Tickets: Friends \$6. Public \$8
- 28 **Lecture - Julie King** will speak on "Flower Painters in the Colonial Landscape". 11.00 am at the Hurst Seager Room, Christchurch Arts Centre
- 29 **Enthusiasms 97 - Advertising Art Ian Harvey.** 6.00 pm. Please use the Night Entrance from Rolleston Ave. Tickets: Friends \$6. Public \$8.

SPRING TRIP

A trip to view special art resources in the Rangiora and North Canterbury region has been scheduled for mid September. Please see the flyer enclosed with this issue and mark your diary for this interesting tour.



A group of children working on the July Kidsfest programme with Katherina Jaeger.