



S O A

JASON GREIG attended the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts from 1982, studying printmaking under Barry Cleavin. He graduated in 1985 with Honours in Engraving, returning in 1991 as a visiting lecturer in printmaking. Greig tutored at the Otago Polytechnic in Oamaru from 1993 to 1998, where he began working with

monoprints. He currently tutors in printmaking at the Aoraki Polytechnic in Timaru, dividing his time between there and his home in Lyttelton. Greig has exhibited widely throughout New Zealand over the past fifteen years, producing monoprints, etchings, lithographs, drawings and, more recently, paintings.

LIST OF WORKS

All measurements are sighted within the frame and are height by width.

Seven Years of Labour for the Instruments of Time 2003

Monoprint, 317 x 236 mm
Collection of the artist

Complete and Unabridged 1993

Charcoal, 390 x 496 mm
Collection of L. Greig

Viking U-Boat 1993

Monoprint, 343 x 570 mm
Collection of L. Greig

My Dying Bride c.1994

Monoprint, 340 x 275 mm
Collection of L. Greig

Landfall c.1995

Monoprint, 280 x 340 mm
Collection of L. Greig

Firmament 2004

Monoprint, 342 x 200 mm
Collection of L. Greig

Stampede of Ghosts 2004

Monoprint, 210 x 350 mm
Private Collection

Pandemonium 1997

Monoprint, 392 x 492 mm
Collection of L. Greig

Vulcan Paradise 1998

Monoprint, 450 x 520 mm
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery
Te Puna o Waiwhetu

Abel – Cain do 1999

Monoprint, 150 x 190 mm
Collection of Mark Whyte and Jane
Purdue

Apocalypse Then 2005

Monoprint, 290 x 390 mm
Collection of the artist

The Surveyor's Son 2004

Monoprint, 335 x 370 mm
Collection of the artist

Incessant Meteoric Rain 2005

Monoprint, 228 x 352 mm
Private Collection, Lyttelton

Fat Abe and the Rat Patrol 1995

Charcoal, 328 x 234 mm
Collection of the artist

The King and Eye 1993

Charcoal, 318 x 300 mm
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery
Te Puna o Waiwhetu

The King and Eye 1993

Monoprint, 345 x 280 mm
Collection of L. Greig

Beatles Reunion 1993

Monoprint, 377 x 307 mm
Collection of L. Greig

Vlad the Impaler 1993

Monoprint, 170 x 125 mm
Collection of Mark Whyte and Jane
Purdue

Southern Man 1994

Monoprint, 345 x 250 mm
Private Collection

Daniel Boone 1995

Monoprint, 335 x 273 mm
Collection of Mark Whyte and Jane
Purdue

Helium 1994

Monoprint, 342 x 278 mm
Collection of L. Greig

The Latter Day Saint 1994

Monoprint, 340 x 260 mm
Collection of Mr and Mrs A. G. E.
Greig

Vamprayer 1999

Monoprint, 473 x 357 mm
Courtesy of Marshall Seifert Gallery,
Dunedin

Long Chain 2005

Monoprint, 150 x 110 mm
Collection of the artist

Marsden 2004

Monoprint, 140 x 102 mm
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery
Te Puna o Waiwhetu

Long Chain Junior 2005

Monoprint, 145 x 110 mm
Collection of the artist

Inkjet 2002

Monoprint, 220 mm diameter
Collection of L. Greig

Bird of Prayer 2003

Monoprint, 320 x 265 mm
Private Collection

Sister 2003

Monoprint, 327 x 251 mm
Collection of L. Greig

Entity in Flesh 2002

Monoprint, 188 x 143 mm
Collection of L. Greig

The Thief of Baghdad 2003

Monoprint, 360 x 225 mm
Collection of the artist

Blood is Thicker 2005

Monoprint, 370 x 290 mm
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery
Te Puna o Waiwhetu

Ivy 1997

Monoprint, 97 mm diameter
Collection of L. Greig

Edison's Wet Dream 1997

Monoprint, 127 x 173 mm
Collection of L. Greig

Chinese Whispers 2003

Monoprint, 320 x 243 mm
Collection of L. Greig

Boy oh Boy a Goya Toy 2001

Monoprint, 245 x 196 mm
Collection of L. Greig

Depth Charge 2005

Monoprint, 290 x 390 mm
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery
Te Puna o Waiwhetu

Top: Depth Charge

Cover and back: Seven Years of
Labour for the Instruments of Time



Christchurch Art Gallery would like to acknowledge the generous support of the lenders to this exhibition.

Essay: Peter Vangioni, Copy editing: Anna Rogers,
Photography: Brendan Lee, Design: Emma Vial

Copyright © 2006 Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu
All images copyright of the artist. No part of this publication may be
reproduced without permission in writing from the publisher.

Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu
Worcester Boulevard, PO Box 2626, Christchurch, New Zealand
Tel (+64 3) 941 7300 Fax (+64 3) 941 7301
www.christchurchartgallery.org.nz

Open seven days. Admission free



The Devil made me do it

JASON GREIG



There's not a lot of sunshine in the art of Jason Greig, especially in his dark and sinister monoprints. These have been his primary interest over the past thirteen years, surveyed for the first time in *The Devil made me do it*. Greig has always admired the draughtsmanship of his father, an engineer and surveyor by profession, and is a technical virtuoso himself when it comes to drawing. Monoprints, also known as monotypes because they are a unique one-off print, involve drawing and painting with tactile ink and are very tonal, allowing Greig to fully develop his grim and highly imaginative works.



Greig has always had an interest in dark subject matter and draws on a wide variety of sources from popular culture and more traditional influences. He has a deep respect for the work of several master printmakers, particularly Giovanni Battista Piranesi, Francisco de Goya, Charles Meryon and Alphonse Legros. His most important influence, however, is the dream-inspired work of French Symbolist artist Odilon Redon. The work of these artists provides inspiration not only through their subject matter, but also for their technical abilities and printmaking prowess.

Greig also draws inspiration from horror movies, especially the Hammer Film productions of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, and such classics as *Eraserhead* and the original *Phantom of the Opera*, with Lon Chaney portraying the hideous phantom. Literature, especially of the Gothic kind, has also had a discernible influence, and such authors as Oscar Wilde, Edgar Allan Poe, Mary Shelley and Howard Phillips Lovecraft have all offered Greig food for thought.

Like the French Symbolists he admires, Greig is also strongly influenced by music, in his case the evocative, discordant electric guitar sounds found in doom metal bands. He often turns up the volume on

Black Sabbath, Judas Priest, Suicide, Chrome, Hawkwind and Devon Townsend of Strapping Young Lad while he works on his monoprints. 'The thing that got me going was Black Sabbath,' he says. 'It was fuel – stuff to chew on – the imagery and the weight of it. It made me want to draw stuff. I do heavy, laden drawings, dense. When I hear really loud guitars it gives me the same sort of feeling. It makes me feel good. It's as simple as that.'¹ Greig himself plays menacing electric guitar in one of Christchurch's most notorious noise bands, Into the Void, whose members include fellow artists Ronnie van Hout, Mark Whyte and sound artists Paul Sutherland, Dave Imlay and James Greig.

A sense of age and decay comes through strongly in Greig's work, particularly in his figure studies, a feeling, he says, of 'things falling down on top of each other'. Greig likes the layers of grime that accumulate over time, creating a patina of the past: 'It's not dirt – it's memories'.² There is also a violent edge to his work, particularly in images of male subjects such as *Marsden*. Samuel Marsden, known as the 'Flogging Parson' due to his violent treatment of convicts in Australia, was the first man to preach the Christian Gospel in New Zealand in 1814. Here he is depicted as if he has fought with Satan himself and come off a little worse for wear. Looking depraved yet composed, he looms out of the half-light like a Victorian parlour portrait, staring defiantly at the viewer with clerical collar stoically in place.



The same sinister quality is seen in the disdainful casual glance of *Southern Man*, skin flayed from his head, leaning on a Ministry of Works issue shovel. Greig loves ugliness: he removes the surface and exposes hidden beauty beneath. 'I really like flayed men! It's pretty fascinating, the idea of that kind of structure and beauty being there underneath my ugly physog.'³

Greig frequently uses imagery from the Victorian era, drawing on the romantic, Gothic sensibilities associated with the period. *The Latter Day Saint* can be read as a sort of self-portrait – the artist is romanticised, dressed in a greatcoat, wandering in a dreary landscape. 'I'd like to be the man on the moor with the big cloak,' he says. 'I'm putting on a guise, dressing up.'⁴ As in many of Greig's works, a deliberate lack of visual clarity, where objects and landscapes are suggested rather than rendered in an obvious way, gives this monoprint a sense of ambiguity and the feeling of a dreamscape.

Greig's work also includes numerous studies of women – equally as frightening and dangerous as their male counterparts, but their violence is quieter, a little more subdued. The siren portrayed in *Depth Charge* invites the viewer to join her for a swim. She languidly treads water, but with a look that suggests she would gently drag any companion down to the murky black depths of the dead sea she occupies. Gently menacing temptresses, such as the one portrayed in *Entity in Flesh*, suggest both pleasure and death, a sense of fatal attraction.

Greig's landscapes and seascapes are often ambiguous and dreamlike. Many of the scenes are like fantastic movie sets, invoking a feeling of trespassing in an otherworld. In *Vulcan Paradise*, a figure stands defiantly atop a promontory surveying his own smouldering domain. There is humour, too, in the awkward-looking figure in the foreground, seemingly oblivious to the menace that surrounds him as he wanders through the landscape. He is the academic anthropologist explorer, complete with a neat backpack, alone, lost and trespassing in some vast cavern resplendent with a lava river.



Greig's love of the past is most obviously seen in his images of old world sailing ships, epitomising a romantic era of exploration and discovery. In *Firmament*, a demasted ship with an eerie light glow emanating from the deck drifts on the high seas; two figures can just be made out on the deck. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* comes to mind:

*Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.*

Viking U-Boat, one of Greig's earliest monoprints, highlights his immediate affinity with the medium. The work is a variation on his charcoal drawing *Complete and Unabridged*, and both works have beautifully rendered tonal variations between light and dark. When viewed together, these works highlight the natural progression Greig has made from his drawing ability to the monoprint.

The ghoulish figures extending from the prows of the vessels instil an ominous sense of mystery that is at once romantic and menacing.

This impression of mystery and the macabre is one that Greig has pursued relentlessly since he

began working as an artist in the mid-1980s, but it is his work with the monoprint since 1993 that has enabled him to fully explore the dark depths of his imagination.

1. 'Haunted: Louise Greig talks with Jason Greig' in *Hangover*, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery and Waikato Museum of Art and History, 1995, p. 28.
2. Ibid., p. 27.
3. Ibid., p. 28.
4. Ibid.

Top from left: *Vulcan Paradise* (detail), *Entity in Flesh*, *Southern Man*, *Viking U-Boat* (detail)
Below from left: *The Latter Day Saint*, *Marsden*, *Complete and Unabridged*