B.160

Bulletin
Christchurch Art Gallery
Te Puna o Waiwhetu

Autumn
March—May
2010

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INSIDE NEW ZEALAND'S BEST HOMES

TE PUNA O WAIWHETU
CHRISTCHURCH
ART GALLERY

Front cover image:
William Sutton **Rooftops, Perugia, from the Brufani Palace Hotel, 14 August '74** (detail) 1974. Watercolour. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, presented by the artist 1989

Inside front cover image:
Bill Culbert **Pacific flotsam** 2007. Fluorescent light, electric wire, plastic bottles. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 2008. Reproduced courtesy of the artist

Contents

B.160

WELCOME TO THE AUTUMN edition of *Bulletin*. The **Brought to Light** collection exhibition has now been open for several months and, while it has ignited some debate, has been received very positively. We thank you for all your feedback. When we began this project it was with the intention of creating a space that would allow the collection to become more dynamic, and the first rotations of works on display have already happened. The Mana Whenua room has been substantially changed, with the rotation of the delicate and highly light-sensitive works on paper and a new series of loan items from the Akaroa and Okains Bay museums. Watch out for a major works on paper rotation throughout **Brought to Light** at the end of May

But there's a lot more to what's happening at the Gallery this quarter. From March, if you look up when you enter the Gallery's grand foyer space, you will see a stunning new work by Christchurch-based sculptor Andrew Drummond. *Viewing Device, Counter-Rotating* is an interactive kinetic sculpture, installed as part of the Gallery's large survey exhibition on the artist, and powered by an innovative air muscle motor designed by the artist himself. Casting a silent display of ever-changing light patterns across the foyer, this piece is a perfect example of Drummond's fascination with the connections between art and technology.

Opening at the Gallery in late May, **Andrew Drummond: Observation / Action / Reflection** is the first comprehensive survey exhibition of this acclaimed New Zealand artist, and continues our serious explorations of artists with well-established reputations. Encompassing two decades of sculpture, installation, drawing, photography and performance, it is a long overdue survey of one of the country's foremost practitioners. The exhibition will be accompanied by a beautiful 200-page catalogue.

Also downstairs in the Gallery this autumn is **Provocations: The work of Christine Webster**, a spectacular exhibition that deals with power relations, sexual identity and representations of the body. Webster, a New Zealand/UK photographic artist of considerable renown, is no stranger to controversy, and this exhibition features works from her best-known series, including *Black Carnival* and *Circus of Angels*, as well as a specially developed new film work. Complex and challenging, this exhibition and its accompanying publication may surprise and unsettle viewers.

Canterbury artist William Sutton was a generous patron of the Gallery—one of our galleries bears his name—as well as an exceptionally talented painter. In 1973 Sutton, then a lecturer at the University of Canterbury, undertook an eight-month sabbatical tour of Italy. He travelled the country extensively, immersing himself in its architecture and culture, and he made the decision that his trip would be recorded, not on film, but on paper alone. At every location he produced exquisitely detailed studies of the architecture—the ruins and the vistas—that surrounded him. **W.A. Sutton: Watercolours of Italy** is a fascinating record of the artist's Italian sojourn, and the dazzling watercolours he produced on location.

New Zealand photographer Joyce Campbell has two bodies of work on display at the Gallery—both utilising antiquated photographic techniques largely consigned to the history books to create mesmerising images. The ambrotype is a negative image, created on glass, which appears positive when viewed against a black background. In **LA Botanical** Campbell produces a series of delicate ambrotypes of medicinal flowers and herbs taken from backyards and parking lots throughout Los Angeles. The daguerreotype was the precursor to the ambrotype, and Campbell's, taken during a 2006 trip to Antarctica, imbue the landscape with an eerie and at times menacing quality.

You can still enjoy **The Naked and the Nude**—our exposé of the unclothed human body as seen through the Gallery's collection—until 18 April. And the very popular **Blue Planet**, which has been designed to appeal to families and young children, will be on until November.

Contributing to this issue of *Bulletin* are John Finlay, who interviews Andrew Drummond; Anne Kirker, who writes on Christine Webster and the nude; Tessa Laird, who investigates Joyce Campbell's *LA Botanical*; Matthew O'Reilly, who offers his take on the reframing of one of the Gallery's iconic works; and Pat Unger, who looks at William Sutton's Italian diaries. And in a slight departure from previous issues, 'Pagework' is provided by a more established artist, Ricky Swallow, whose recent **Watercolours** exhibition was very well received in the Gallery. I'm sure you'll agree that the evocative work he has produced is a fine addition to the series.

Jenny Harper
Director
February 2010

MARCH, APRIL, MAY 2010

THE VAULT: NEIL PARDINGTON
Until 14 March 2010
Working behind the scenes in museums and galleries throughout New Zealand with his large-format camera, Neil Pardington brings to light the hidden collection storage spaces that are normally closed to the public.
William A. Sutton and Ravenscar Galleries
Exhibition publication and iPod video tour available

THE NAKED AND THE NUDE
Until 18 April 2010
The unclothed human figure is one of art's oldest subjects, yet it still ignites debate. Bringing together dozens of bodies from the collection, this exhibition charts the tension between the nude and the naked—between works of art that idealise the body and those that try to tell it like it is.
Touring Galleries A and B
iPod video tour available

BLUE PLANET
Until 7 November 2010
Blue is a feeling, a place to dream and the colour of our amazing planet as seen from space. Looking at the ways artists have used the colour blue, **Blue Planet** celebrates imaginative art making and thinking, as well as different cultural and global perspectives. Shaped with younger audiences in mind.
Burdon Family Gallery

JOYCE CAMPBELL:
LA BOTANICAL / LAST LIGHT
Until 9 May 2010
New Zealand artist Joyce Campbell exhibits **LA Botanical** and **Last Light**—two bodies of work that employ the historical photographic technologies of the ambrotype and daguerreotype. **LA Botanical** contains delicate photographs of medicinal flowers and herbs, while the daguerreotypes in **Last Light** record the eerie and menacing Antarctic landscape.
Monica Richards and Tait Electronics Galleries

W.A. SUTTON: WATERCOLOURS OF ITALY
Until 25 April 2010
Canterbury artist William Sutton undertook an extensive eight-month tour of Italy in 1973–4. **W.A. Sutton: Watercolours of Italy** provides a selection of works from Sutton's Italian sojourn, including views of Rome, Florence and Venice, and highlights the artist's exquisite skill as a draughtsman and watercolourist.
Touring Gallery C

PROVOCATIONS:
THE WORK OF CHRISTINE WEBSTER
26 March – 7 June 2010
Complex, theatrical and fearless, Christine Webster's photography has long entranced and challenged audiences. Curated by Dr Anne Kirker, this spectacular survey presents many of her best-known works alongside an exciting new film project and highlights key aspects of Webster's practice, such as power relations, sexual identity and representations of the body.
William A. Sutton and Ravenscar Galleries
Exhibition publication available

ANDREW DRUMMOND:
OBSERVATION / ACTION / REFLECTION
14 May – 5 September 2010
Andrew Drummond: Observation / Action / Reflection is the first comprehensive survey exhibition of this acclaimed New Zealand sculptor. Focusing on the period between 1980 and 2010, this spectacular exhibition features sculpture, photography, installation and a new kinetic sculpture, installed in the Gallery's foyer.
Gallery foyer, Touring and Borg Henry Galleries
Exhibition publication and iPod audio tour available

AN IDYLLIC COUNTRY: PASTORAL LANDSCAPES FROM THE COLLECTION
15 May – 8 August
An exhibition of works in the pastoral tradition—an artistic genre representing the idealised portrayal of country life.
Monica Richards Gallery

GONCHAROVA AND LARIONOV: L'ART DÉCORATIF THÉÂTRAL MODERNE
15 May – 8 August
An exhibition of stage and costume designs by the Russian avant garde artists Natal'ya Goncharova (1881–1962) and Mikhail Larionov (1881–1964).
Tait Electronics Gallery

THE COLLECTIONS
Almost seven years since Christchurch Art Gallery opened, the collection display has undergone a complete refreshment. Spectacularly reconfigured exhibition spaces feature a dynamic mix of new and seldom-seen works, as well as new conversations among old favourites. For any art institution charged with conserving the past, registering the present and offering suggestions for the future, the challenge to 'bring to light' is at once daunting and inspiring. **Brought to Light: A New View of the Collection** is our response to that challenge.
Collections catalogue and iPod video tour available

OUTER SPACES
A programme featuring works of art in spaces beyond the traditional exhibition galleries. Featuring *The prow of the Charlotte Jane* by Fiona Pardington on Worcester Boulevard, *A wall, and other thoughts* by Fiona Jack on the carpark bunker, and Andre Hemer's work in the water feature on Worcester Boulevard.

TWINSET
A rapid-fire programme of new video art on the twin screens in the foyer. This season featuring video by Judy Darragh, Gray Nicol and Reuben Patterson.

SUBSONIC
The summer **Subsonic** programme features a variety of sounds from Clinton Watkins.

An Italian Sojourn

*You may have the universe if I may have Italy**

*Giuseppe Verdi, 1813–1901

IN 1973 THE UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY granted W.A. Sutton, 'Bill', sabbatical leave—three-hundred days of freedom he called it—and he chose to spend all but thirty of those days in Italy.

From about the fifteenth to seventeenth century, Italy experienced a Renaissance—a rebirth of classicism and aesthetics that revitalised the country's literature, science and art, and made it a magnet for all manner of future devotees and dreamers.

Giovanni Canaletto (1697–1768) painted wondrously topographic views of Venice, which became so popular with English visitors on their Grand Tour that he temporarily shifted to London to be closer to his collectors' market. The romantic poets embraced Italy's allure, albeit with romantically tragic outcomes: two years in Italy were a great creative writing period for poet and revolutionary Lord Byron (1788–1824) before he died furthering the cause of Greek independence; Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822) travelled around Italy, indulging his prolific literary and tempestuous personal life, before his untimely death in a boating accident near Livorno; and John Keats (1795–1821), who hoped Italy would revitalise his writing and improve if not cure his consumption, died in Rome, aged twenty-five.

In 1895 the first Venice Biennale was held to promote new artistic trends, followed later by festivals for film, contemporary music and theatre. These events continue to keep Italy at the cutting-edge of the world's creativity today.

In 1973, Bill—scholar, innovative artist and admirer of the Renaissance principles of harmony and proportion—saw Italy not only as an encapsulation of his art learning, but also as a step to new insights. This was later well realised in *Te Tihi O Kahukura (Citadel of the Rainbow God) and Sky* (1976–7), a series of ten large paintings of Canterbury's skyline touched with Renaissance grandeur.

William Sutton **Detail of the dome, Florence Cathedral, 9 April '74** 1974. Watercolour. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, presented by the artist 1989

William Sutton **Colosseum from the south, Rome, 5 January 1974** 1974. Watercolour. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, presented by the artist 1989

During his sabbatical, Bill visited Rome, Florence, Venice, Ferrara, Ravenna, Arezzo, Urbino, and Perugia. He revelled in their art, history and architecture and his diaries, letters and notes glow with enthusiasm. He totally rejected photography: this voyage was to be recorded in watercolour and sketch alone. Entries in Bill's diary show that he packed 'a large wad of light-weight Sanders paper which takes colour nicely without stretching first and [hoped] to bring back a bundle of elegantly nostalgic w/cs'. He certainly achieved his aim: over one hundred works recording his travels are now in the Gallery's collection.

Arriving in Rome on 18 December 1973, Bill rushed all over the city, visiting art galleries, monuments, historic buildings and cathedrals. His first painting was the *Palatine from the Circus Maximus 23 December 1973* and his diary of that day reads 'Feet much improved'—a reference to all his intensive sight-seeing. He visited New Zealanders staying in Rome, yarned with the locals and made friends easily. Bill's diaries note many 'bright but cold' days, and when it 'rained like hell'. Painting *St. Peter's and Castel di S. Angelo, Rome, 29 December 1973*, he 'bloody well froze'.

After studying Velázquez, Raphael, Caravaggio, Bernini, Rubens and Botticelli among others, a diary entry on 17 January 1974, reads, 'Feel the need of a day's sketching again, to unwind after all the masterpieces.'

Answering the historic call to 'See Naples and die', Bill travelled to the city by bus on 26 January: 'Naples brilliant… Pompeii for 1½ hours then on to Sorrento. Superb town… down to Capri, steep and spectacular, up impossible heights… 2 beers for morning tea and then back to Sorrento…'

William Sutton **Wild flowers, Boboli Gardens, Florence 2 April 1974** 1974. Watercolour. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, presented by the artist 1989

Back in Rome two days later, not a site was missed by our peripatetic art-tourist: his diaries record virtually every famous feature of the 'eternal city'—ceilings, walls, forums, ruins, mosaics, internal spaces and external spaces, 'up all those damn stairs' here and 'up half a million steps' there. The Vatican Museum thrilled him. He drew from their sculptures and friezes, and his birthday treat (1 March) was a long viewing of 'Michelangelo's ceiling and wall'.

On Sunday, 3 March, his diary reads: 'walked down to St. Pietro and heard Mass—superb. Then outside to see Pope bless, at 12 noon. Most impressive all told.' A declared agnostic, Bill nevertheless enjoyed many a religious occasion. Even an attack of 'Florence Belly' saw him 'going quietly to the Church of the Trinity [to sit] for an hour with Ghirlandaio's altarpiece…'

On 20 March Bill caught the express train to Florence. His comment? '[Their] art is superb.' More Titians, Poussins, Lippis, and Goyas; more cathedrals, museums, monasteries and palaces; more frescoes, murals, and rural views. While in Florence Bill records a 'wonderful day—off to Boboli Gardens and lay in the grass and drew until 3pm. Wild flowers just like the meadows of Angelico and Botticelli… Late lunch, 2 bottles of beer and roll.'

Arriving in Venice by train on 24 April, this city of crumbling grandeur awash in sea and light captivated him. He saw it as an ideal site for watercolour and, significantly, nearly a quarter of his painted sketches are of Venice.

The Dogana and entrance to the Grand Canal, Venice, 17 May '74 shows the old Custom's House, the Dogana at the entrance to the Grand Canal, and behind it, the domed basilica of Santa Maria della Salute, described as the masterpiece of Venetian Baroque. Today, as if defying the Adriatic Sea's encroachment, the Dogana is a superbly renovated gallery exhibiting French billionaire François Pinault's weird and wonderful art collection.

Bill's painting of the *Courtyard of the Doge's Palace with St. Marks 16 May, '74* is a marvel of architectural detail in space. After finishing it he wrote, 'Had lunch, very little for a very great price… walked across to the Church of the Jesuits , under repair… rock'n'roll floor and amazingly rich walls and columns of inlaid marble, green and white to resemble brocade—acres of it, must have cost a bloody fortune.' Today's avid art trekker may well compare Bill's St Marks with the square now—lined with stacks of wooden platforms while sirens sound high tide alerts at fairly frequent intervals.

Venice is now a destination for creative flood-control engineers and global warming diviners as much as for artists

studying Renaissance inventiveness and the Biennale's conceptual advances. They may yet save this unique city. Perhaps Bill's watercolours will become valued as historic, as well as nostalgic, records of Venice's past glory.

Along with making notes about the area's dramatic weather events and optimum conditions for success with watercolour washes, Bill described his travels to Padua, Verona, Mantua and stays in Ferrara and Ravenna. He visited the basilica of Sant'Apollinare in Ravenna and pronounced it, '…splendid, almost alone in a lovely countryside and the mosaics in the apse are like a green bowl full of fresh leaves and fruits… ventured inside and the shock of the sheer beauty and simplicity was breathtaking.'

Arezzo he found 'Altogether the most beautiful smaller city I've seen yet.' His most enduring memory of Italy was of the artist Piero della Francesca (1416?–1492), whose work can be constantly seen in and around Arezzo. Day trips through central Italy and the Adriatic Coast, with a brief stay in Urbino and Perugia, saw Bill's last painting, the *Church and Via S. Ercolano, Perugia, 16 August 1974*. Returning to Rome on Saturday 17 August, he stayed at the same hotel he had visited eight months earlier: 'Alberto and Anna Granni and others made me very welcome.' And on Sunday 18, they all, 'set off to [Alberto's or Anna's] mum's place, sisters-in law etc., lunch in a restaurant and on to brother Charlie's, in a small village outside Rome. Much fun and boozing and rowing on the Tiber.'

Bill left Italy, from Rome, by train for Amsterdam on Friday 23 August. It certainly had been a sabbatical leave of significance. As English writer Fanny Burney (1752–1840) is often quoted as saying, 'Travel is the ruin of all happiness. There's no looking at buildings after seeing Italy.' Bill may well have agreed. He declared that he so 'fell in love with Italy' that he could never go back again lest he never return to New Zealand.

Pat Unger

Pat Unger is an artist, critic and author. Her biography of Bill Sutton, Bill's Story: A Portrait of W.A. Sutton, *was published in 2008.*

***W.A. Sutton: Watercolours of Italy** is in the Touring Gallery C from 27 February to 25 April.*

William Sutton **Rooftops, Perugia, from the Brufani Palace Hotel, 14 August '74** 1974. Watercolour. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, presented by the artist 1989

EVENTS

WEDNESDAY 24 MARCH
Floortalk: W.A. Sutton: Watercolours of Italy
Exhibition curator Peter Vangioni explores this exhibition, which showcases work from Sutton's 1970s Italian sojourn, highlighting his exquisite skill as a draughtsman and watercolourist.
6pm / meet in the foyer / free

SATURDAY 27 MARCH
Art in the Morning: Sutton's Watercolours
Author Pat Unger discusses the watercolours from Sutton's 1970s trip to Italy, peppering the talk with quotations from his graphic and entertaining diaries.
8.30am / Alchemy / Friends $20
Public $30 / book by 26 March

Joyce Campbell **Tuna and nopales from prickly pear cactus** 2006–7. Ambrotype. Collection of the artist

Joyce Campbell's LA Botanical *is a series of portraits. It is a poisoner's handbook, a herbalist's cure-all, a shaman's bundle, a gardener's guide, a botanist's field manual*[1] *and an artist's scrapbook.*

A Garden of Peculiarities

***LA BOTANICAL* IS, SPECIFICALLY, A SERIES** of ambrotypes, an early form of photography, invented in 1850, the same year that the City of Los Angeles was incorporated as a municipality. At that time, the population comprised a mere 1,610 hardy souls. The population explosion of the following 150 years into the Los Angeles we know today might, from an imaginary aerial vantage point, resemble an algal bloom or bacterial inflorescence—the visible record of a natural imbalance.[2]

Ambrotypes are negative images on glass plates which, when shown against a black backdrop, appear to be positive. The name comes from the Greek *ambrotos*, meaning 'immortal'—a rather poetic way of evoking the power of photography to fix forever the fragile moment. Plants, particularly flowers, have long been the favourite metaphor of poets, painters, and now photographers for the passage of time—they are our most consistent reminder of mortality, and yet our most frequent solace at times of bereavement.

Though the ambrotype predates early moving pictures, Campbell's use of antique photography can't help but remind viewers of its sister medium, film, and the attendant connection with LA as a national and global 'dream factory' (or, indeed, the role that these technologies played their part in swelling the population of the fledgling city). Campbell's humble backyard blooms become, in *LA Botanical*, stars. The silver nitrate of the photographic process is linked, chemically and etymologically, to the silver screens onto which early films were projected. Campbell's botanical immortals have been bequeathed eternal 'limelight' (another chemical process which, due to its use in theatrical lighting, is forever associated with fame).

Campbell's ambrotypes are also ghostly (Haunted Hollywood?), a reminder of the early spiritualist nature of photography, in which an occult-hungry public happily believed in photographic truth twisting. This willingness to be duped and desire for belief relates to the state of mind of the rootless masses, living in newly industrialised centres; the urban expansion of a metropolis like LA meant a concurrent loss of lifeways, be they social and religious structures or practical knowledge of folk medicine and subsistence agriculture.

Campbell's insistent use of antiquated technology leads us to recall not only the birth of LA—now infamous for its global status as a dysfunctional city—but also the burgeoning of philosophies critiquing the very social systems that made such dysfunction inevitable. In the 1840s, the young Karl Marx was developing his theory of alienation as a result of capitalism. The abstraction of commodities into fetishes

Joyce Campbell **Ephedrine from ephedra californica** 2006–7. Ambrotype. Collection of the artist

"Campbell's herbarium is a call to take up gardening tools. If an armed revolution is likely to perpetuate the cycle of violence, then perhaps we need a green revolution instead."

and the reification of labour undermined traditional social relations, not to mention human relationships with the landscape. The Industrial Revolution ruptured forever humanity's holistic, cyclic relationships with the natural world. But while Marx's theories seeded revolutions in Europe and Asia, LA, with its history of union-busting and McCarthyist witch-hunts, has grown ever more unwieldy. Alienation is a literal status for many of the illegal residents of this city—they remain an invisible labour force without which LA would grind to a halt.

People came to this city from all regions of the globe, and the plants they brought with them reflect this multicultural diversity. Campbell's florilegium combines the indigenous with the exotic, tracing the migratory routes of various communities. The botanical diversity expressed by Campbell's photographs is a testimony to the stubbornness of human desire in the face of natural deterrents. LA is a semi-arid desert, which has been made superficially lush by the massive, artificial influx of water and labour, both of which have involved a considerable degree of corruption (the politics behind the diversion of water from Owens Valley was immortalised in Polanski's classic film *Chinatown*).

Unlike the rainy, temperate country Campbell grew up in, rich in alluvial soil, LA gardens do not flourish untended; any sustained attempt at gardening in LA requires a significant investment in topsoil and sprinkler systems. The awareness that life in this grandiose city hangs in a rather precarious balance, and that under the tendrils of convolvulus and nasturtium lie vast tracts of dry, restless sands, brings to mind Baudrillard's 'desert of the real'.[3] It also causes one to think of the mythical Hanging Gardens of Babylon, which were supposedly constructed by Nebuchadnezzar II in what is today contemporary Iraq. The introduction of a lush garden into a desert environment was for the benefit of the king's exotic courtesan, homesick for greener climes. LA's constructed gardens are built for similar reasons, as virtually everyone in the city is a migrant to some degree.[4]

But LA has also been a centre for agriculture, and one of its neighbouring cities bears the name of agricultural wizard Luther Burbank, who bred a startling array of fruits and vegetables—including a plum with the arresting name 'Climax', which supposedly tastes like a pineapple. Burbank worked intuitively, breeding the potato that takes his name from the seed head rather than the tuber. The resulting large, creamy-white potato has dominated the US market ever since, and made the rapid spread of fast-food chains possible, being the perfect shape for cutting into French fries.[5] Though Burbank himself saw plants as individuals, understanding the 'peculiarity' in each, his skills with the plant world were coopted by the drive for standardisation and monoculture that so threatens biodiversity in the US, and globally, today.

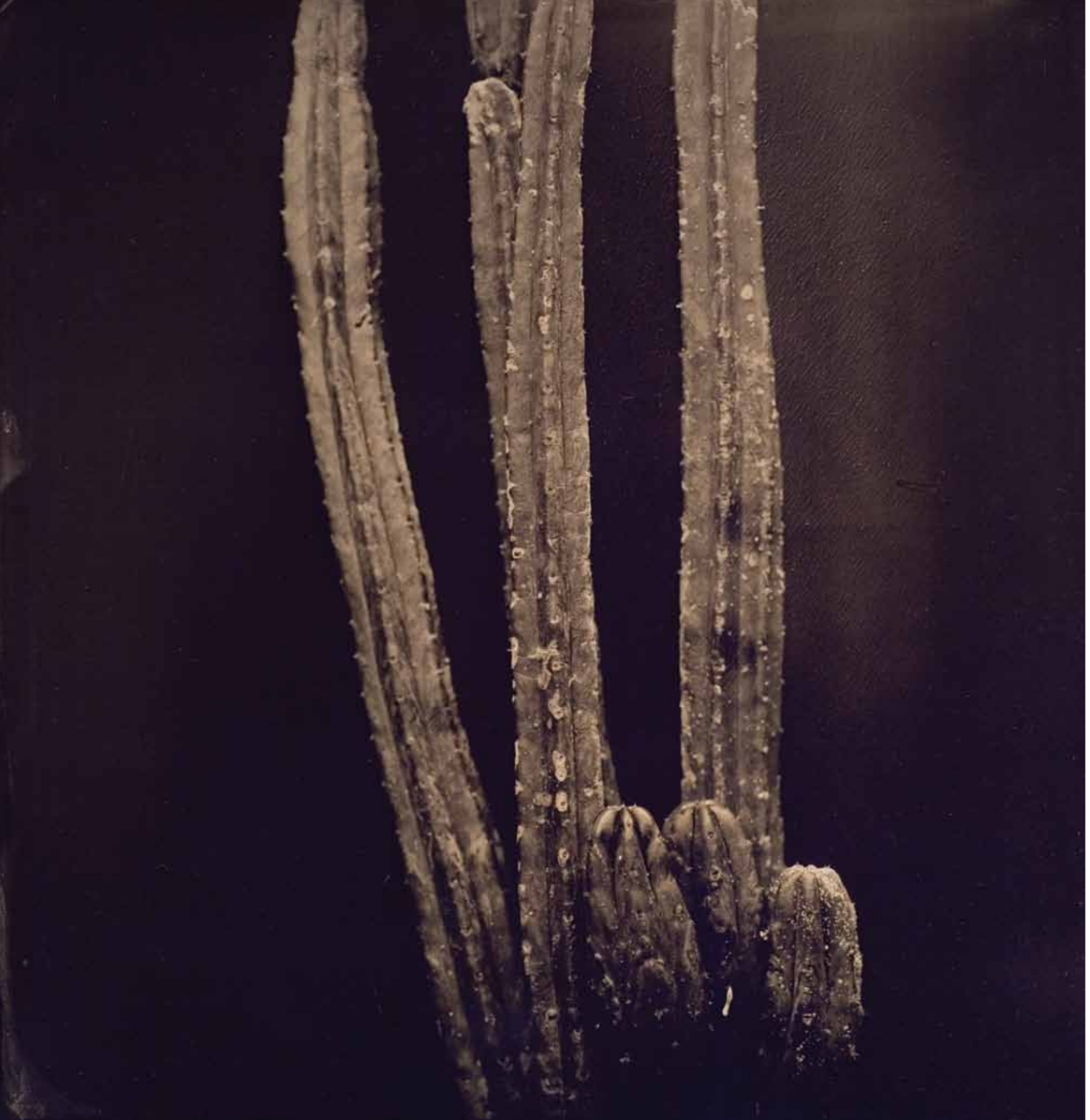
Jesús Sepúlveda puts it succinctly in *The Garden of Peculiarities*, his manifesto for greener living: *In the fifteenth century, Europeans knew only seventeen varieties of edible vegetables, while in the fourth century, the Hohokam—inhabitants of the region now encompassed by New Mexico, cultivated around two hundred varieties of vegetables. In South America, the Incas designed a system of terrace cultivation that extended the length of the Andes and took advantage of local microclimates and varying humus qualities, harvesting something like six hundred different varieties of potatoes. This proves that horticulture has nothing to do with the standardising drive of civilisation.*[6]

Sepúlveda's title is a metaphor—a garden can be a planet or a neighbourhood. Peculiarity is his term for individuality or uniqueness, a quality that must be preserved at all costs in the face of the alienation and standardisation that have become the mainstays of industrial living.

A brilliant communal riposte to the concrete jungle of LA was the South Central Farm, perhaps the largest urban farm in the US until its bulldozing by developers in 2006. This cooperative farm, which fed hundreds of local families, was seeded with the same idea as Campbell's *LA Botanical*—that an understanding of, and cooperation with, plants within our urban spaces is essential for survival. The South Central Farm and Campbell's photographs both exist in opposition to what Sepúlveda calls the 'bourgeois garden' whose objective is luxury. Campbell illustrates that not only is the plant kingdom a comestible cornucopia, it is also a pharmacopoeia that can sustain or kill us. But while pharmaceutical companies make a killing from the chemical compounds that grow in our yards and empty lots, the ancestral knowledge that held the key to the free extraction of these medicines is all but lost.

Campbell's herbarium is a call to take up gardening tools. If an armed revolution is likely to perpetuate the cycle of violence, then perhaps we need a green revolution instead. Not a Green Revolution, as in the controversial agricultural boom that has seen developing world farmers become dependent on agrichemicals and biotech monopolies, but an ecological awakening that transcends boundaries of creed, culture and class. Sepúlveda again: *The garden of peculiarities*

Joyce Campbell **Scopolamine from brugmansia** 2006–7. Ambrotype. Collection of the artist



deterritorializes and topples hierarchies. That is its nature. It allows the garden to grow, organically, under the concept of mutual recognition between the gardener and garden. It doesn't try to control the landscape by making it uniform. On the contrary, the point is learning to live with nature and in the midst of nature, orienting the human effect more toward aesthetic practice than standardisation. Such a lesson starts by recognising the otherness of nature as our own otherness. Only in this way is it possible to dissipate the ego among the ever-growing foliage in search of shelter rather than conquest.[7]

Over the last few years artists and writers have realised that technological interconnectivity needs to be accompanied by an awareness of the pre-existing interconnectivity of the plant world. Artist and writer Frances Stark extolled the virtues of *The Secret Life of Plants* (a cult book of the 1970s which postulated that plants think, feel and communicate) in *Artext* magazine. New York's *Cabinet* magazine showcasing contemporary art devoted an entire issue to horticulture (subsequent issues featured pharmacopoeia and fruits). *Artlink Australia* published an ecology issue, while artists everywhere are making work that either utilises directly, or references the world of plants—such as the sprawling *gardenLAB experiment*, produced by Fritz Haeg and Françios Perrin in LA. Michael Pollan's *The Botany of Desire: A plant's eye view of the world* (2002) suggests that humans are actually controlled by the plant world, or rather, by our desires, which the plant world cleverly caters to. LA-based author Mark von Schlegell wrote a science fiction novel *Venusia* (2005) in which society is placated with a daily dose of hallucinogenic flowers—and it turns out the whole novel is actually penned by a pot plant. The list of green protagonists is as endless as the variety, or peculiarity, found in nature itself, perhaps heralding the emergence of what psychedelics guru Terrence McKenna called the 'vegetable mind'.

But Campbell does not intend *LA Botanical* to be a feel-good selection of pretty flowers. These photographs constitute a reminder of the sublime power of plants to sustain or kill, and an exhortation to understand that which will enable our continued existence on this planet. As McKenna put it in his manifesto for survival into the twenty-first century and beyond, *Plan/Plant/Planet*: 'Our choice as a planetary culture is a simple one: go Green or die.'[8]

Tessa Laird

Tessa Laird is an artist and writer. She lectures in contextual studies at Manukau School of Visual Arts while undertaking doctoral study at the Elam School of Fine Arts.

***Joyce Campbell: LA Botanical / Last Light** is in the Tait Electronics and Monca Richards Galleries until 9 May.*

Above: Joyce Campbell **Atropine from sacred datura, devil's weed** 2006–7. Ambrotype. Collection of the artist

Left: Joyce Campbell **Mescaline from San Pedro cactus** 2006–7. Ambrotype. Collection of the artist

NOTES

1. *City Terrace Field Manual* is the title of a book of poems by east LA poet Sesshu Foster (Kaya Press, New York, 1996). It captures the violent bleakness of urban living, occasionally relieved by a burst of green. Large avocado trees are an important signifier for the length of time this area has been populated by Mexican migrants—trees become a trace of human trajectories.
2. Campbell's earlier projects have included the mapping of LA via its bacterial traces—taking swabs from plant surfaces and soil samples in each of LA's districts, then allowing the microbes to flourish in Petri dishes. The final product is an array of contact-printed photograms of abstract clusters of dots, whorls and blooms—the microscopic life of a megalopolis.
3. From *Simulacra and Simulation*, University of Michigan Press, 1994; via *The Matrix* film trilogy, and Slavoj Žižek's *Welcome to the Desert of the Real: Five Essays on September 11 and Related Dates*, Verso, London, 2002.
4. The original inhabitants of Southern California, their plants and their lifeways, leave barely a trace on the surface of LA. The classic text of indigenous genocide in the US, *Bury my Heart at Wounded Knee*, makes this poignant observation about the natives of Southern California: 'No one remembers the Chilulas, Chimarikos, Urebures, Nipewais, Alonas, or a hundred other bands whose bones have been sealed under a million miles of freeways, parking lots, and slabs of tract housing' (Dee Alexander Brown, *Bury my Heart at Wounded Knee: an Indian history of the American West*, Barrie & Jenkins, London, 1971, p.220).
5. For more on the political ramifications of potatoes, see Michael Pollan's *The Botany of Desire: A plant's eye view of the world*, Random House, 2002. He gives corn the same treatment in *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A natural history of four meals*, Penguin Press, 2006.
6. Jesús Sepúlveda, *The Garden of Peculiarities*, Feral House, Los Angeles, 2005, pp.136–7.
7. Ibid., pp.118–19.
8. McKenna, *The Archaic Revival*, Harper Collins, San Fransisco, 1991, p.225. This essay was originally printed in the Fall 1989 edition of *The Whole Earth Review*, an issue dedicated to 'the alien intelligence of plants'.

EVENTS

WEDNESDAY 10 MARCH
A Garden of Peculiarities
Writer, critic and reviewer Tessa Laird discusses Joyce Campbell's book *LA Botanical*—a series of portraits, a poisoner's handbook, a gardener's guide and an artist's scrapbook.
6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Sponsored by The Press

SATURDAY 17 April
Art in the Morning: Twin Lens
Photographer Cathryn Shine looks at the photographic techniques used in **Provocations: The work of Christine Webster** and **Joyce Campbell: LA Botanical** and **Last Light**.
8.30am / Alchemy / Friends $20 / public $30 / book by 14 April

ANDREW DRUMMOND: OBSERVATION / *ACTION* / REFLECTION

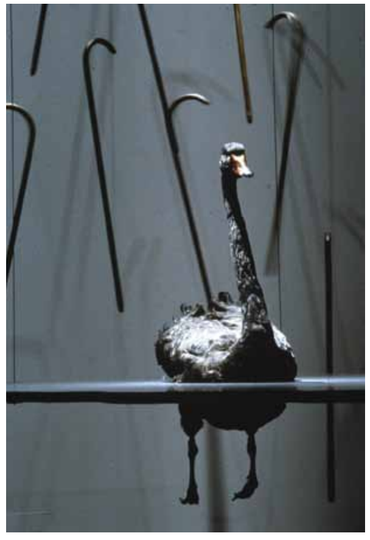
Andrew Drummond **Earth Vein (The Insertion, Action for 9 Stoppages, Filter Action for 2 Entries)** 1980. Digital prints on rag paper.
Photos: Andrew Drummond and Gregory Wilson

I. **FOR OVER TWENTY-FIVE YEARS,** Andrew Drummond has consistently and inventively addressed both formal and lyrical qualities within his practice. Drummond's work is rich with associative, interactive possibilities that mediate understandings of space and material, land and body and place and time. **Andrew Drummond: Observation / Action / Reflection** is his first major exhibition—held in the city in which he lives and works.

A long-overdue survey of an important and formidably-talented New Zealand artist, **Observation / Action / Reflection** features sculpture, drawing, installation and photography, dating from 1980 to the present day. It also presents a major new work, *Viewing Device, Counter-Rotating* (2009–10), which, along with the highly charged *Counter-Rotating and Earthing Device* (2000), is installed in the Gallery foyer.

Drummond's uncompromising practice has seen him prevail through many highs and lows to explore myriad genres. This exhibition highlights recurring facets in his work—the environment, the body, technology, space and the importance of the social. An exhibition that gives and receives energies, it leads viewers through key periods in the artist's career.

As a performance artist during the 1970s, Drummond investigated dislocated histories and environments at risk of exploitation—situations that rendered the artist as worker, a vehicle for change. The interactive installation *City Vein*



(1983) deals with notions of observation and learning, and references *Earth Vein* (1980), a significant performance in which lengths of copper piping were inserted along a water race near Lake Mahingarangi in Otago. Accompanying *City Vein* are *King and Queen in Union* (1980) and *Warrior* (1980)—individual sculptures of mysterious primitivist appearance. The fragility of the land and the body are emphasised in installations such as *Sentinel* (1984) *Fragile Vessels* (1985) and drawings from the *Braided Rivers* series.

The intense sculptural language demarcating Drummond's mid-career period resonates with figurative and symbolic imagery. The artist explores themes as diverse as dreams, transportation and collecting in works like *Five Sights* (1987), a floor sculpture of wax-filled containers with copper objects and willow that reflects his collecting and discarding activities along the banks of the Maerewhenua and Whanganui rivers. Much of Drummond's work from the 1990s suggests ways of reading and experiencing the environment—not only what is visible but what one can sense within the ever-changing landscape. His pivotal kinetic installation *For beating and breathing* (1995), commissioned by the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, is installed in its entirety for the first time since its inauguration. The extravagant and poetic *from the duplicitous nature of the swan: COB and PEN (1993–4)*, which employs two stuffed swans and alludes to Canterbury's Lake Ellesmere, is also exhibited for the first time in Christchurch.

A selection of mythological devices encapsulated within glass cases or bell jars, such as *Hanging Device with Shelter* (1994), guide the viewer toward a central hub of kinetic activity. Evocative of Victorian mantle objects and technologies of the past, they also resound with mysterious scientific readings and act as portals or instruments for augmenting the senses. The West Coast, an area enveloped by its history, has informed Drummond's work both conceptually and visually for many years. A selection of pivotal early sculptures, such as the ground and polished coal specimens of *Coal Samples* (1998); *For Digestion* (1996), a suspended glass capsule of mulching and grinding sphagnum moss; and *Livery for Extractions* (1997), a cabinet of glass tubes, wax and moss, elucidate Drummond's fascination with materials extracted from the land and devices that echo the workings of the human body.

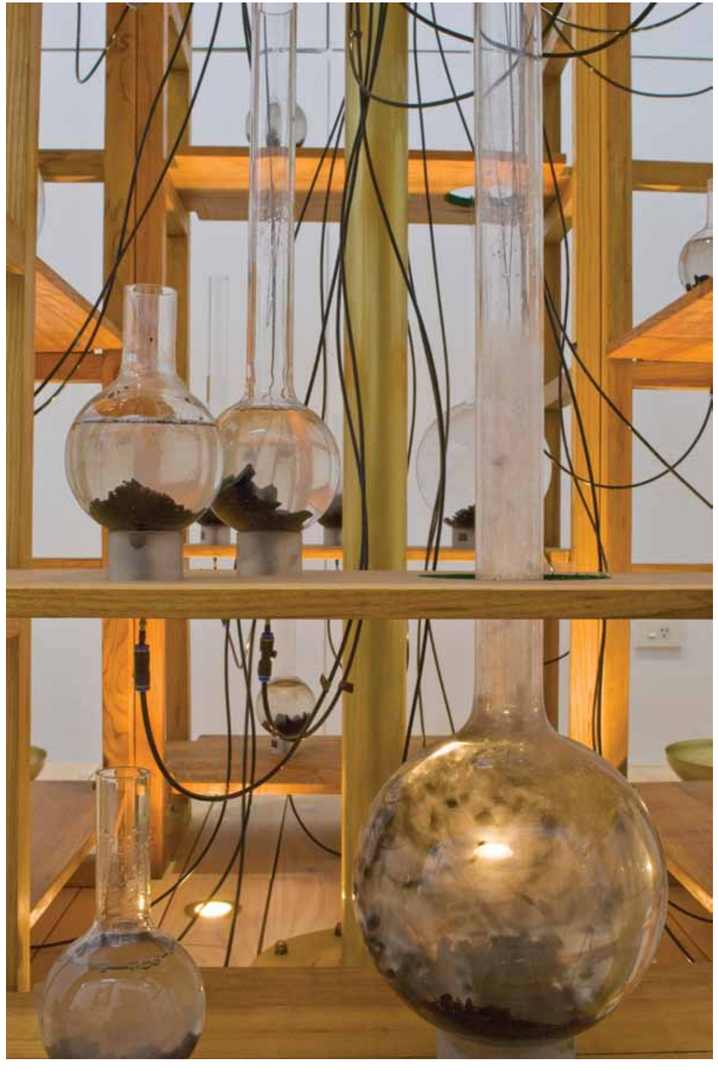
Continuous mining, technological experimentation and the latent potential of coal itself are all connective features in Drummond's recent sculpture and photographic projects. Various coal mines—Garvey Creek, Island Block, Cascade and Stockton—have provided inspiration for kinetic machines like the mighty *Walking Device* (2001), *room for Observation* (2003) and a whole suite of 'drawing machines' that etch patterns into their coal-laden plinths. A new work installed under the stairs in the foyer, *Place of incomplete extractions* (2009–10), suggests a dialogue about our place on the earth. Bronze casts of the artist's hand grasp 'slide hammers' attached to coal-filled glass 'samples' seemingly extracted from the earth. They lie discarded, part of an ongoing experiment that aims to provide a greater understanding of why the sculptor still toils in his studio.

Jennifer Hay
Assistant curator

"DRUMMOND'S WORK IS RICH WITH ASSOCIATIVE, INTERACTIVE POSSIBILITIES THAT MEDIATE UNDERSTANDINGS OF SPACE AND MATERIAL, LAND AND BODY AND PLACE AND TIME."

Left: Andrew Drummond
from the duplicitous nature of the swan; COB and PEN
(detail) 1993-4. Mixed media.
Collection of the artist

Right: Andrew Drummond
room for Observation
(detail) 2003. Mixed media.
Collection of the artist.
Photo: Brendan Lee



THE TRANSFORMATIVE MOMENT

II.

John Finlay: Despite your recent sculpture being very different in conception and materials, it is intimately bound up with the themes of your performance pieces from the early 1970s. I am talking specifically about the aesthetic idea behind your wind-driven piece *Kowhai, Counter-Rotating* (2008) in which motion and cyclical patterns are intended not just to interact with the environment, but also to filter it, leaving traces. Would you say that all of your work is transformative?

Andrew Drummond: The notion of transformation has been central to my practice since the beginning. The idea of drawing comparisons between a kidney and the land as a filtration system for the earth was a key concept in my performance art. As my work progressed through the late 1970s and early 1980s, I continued to develop the idea of transformation. In my kinetic pieces from the early 1990s, I would often burn a material like coal by means of electricity so that it would give off a gas and change completely. Later, I became interested in the idea of making a machine that would do the work of the body. Our bodies are designed to do the same things, but each individual body does things quite differently.

The idea of rotation has gone on from time immemorial—since the invention of the wheel—so it is pretty central to my practice. These machines are intended to work in a quirky kind of way, so their mechanisms—like human beings—are individualistic, and this is highlighted by the materials. For instance, I used glass and brass in order to make almost scientific-looking sculptures. My more recent sculptures respond to cyclical principles by using the fickleness of the wind to demonstrate how quirky machines are in comparison to the human sensory system. My machines

do not just do what they do, they also inform us about the environment and play on age-old ideas of the transformative moment.

JF: Many of your new works result from sketches, drawings, or detailed designs that create an initial brief. What role does drawing play in the production of these works, and do the drawings necessarily describe your ultimate intentions?
AD: Certainly drawing is central to my practice and to the process of thinking about making a machine. Drawings explore and describe my initial ideas, but they do not necessarily inform the turn of events. I allow things to develop slowly and don't try to predetermine the outcome. An idea that I started with might become very different. For example, a work that I designed to operate both above and below ground started out as an experiment with the idea of wind force, but evolved into something else completely. The underground portion of the sculpture spins around inside a massive hollow structure causing light evacuation, so that, in the middle of the day, the open section at the top reveals a view of the stars. This was a casual occurrence and totally unintended, but it's not unlike the reversal process used in printing and drawing. The underground chamber also had to be vented to allow pressure to be released. The sun shining down through the vents created moon shapes and ultimately ended up visualising all types of universal ideas.

JF: Residue as a trace element or document seems to be fundamental to the vocabulary of your work. For example, *Filter Action* (1980) employed a language in which the body symbolised time, space, location, land practice, and the relationship between humankind and the environment. Is this true?
AD: Yes. In my earlier performance pieces, residue was always part of the work. I was fascinated by the idea that marks could make themselves and leave traces. At art school, I experimented with electrical wires and how the explosion and melting of the metal made trace marks across paper. This appeared very profound to me at the time. Years later, the idea surfaced again when I started leaving marks on the land to achieve a cause-and-effect relationship. I must make it clear, however, that I did not set out to make marks in that way. They just happened to make themselves, and through observation and thinking in retrospect about my earlier work, they seemed to make sense in terms of recording the process of action. Reactions happen as a result of me doing something unintentional whether on paper or on the landscape. In the mid 1990s when I created *Beating and Breathing*, two kinetic machines (one beating, one breathing), I liked the idea that a machine would leave marks. I also started making drawings using schlag metal on paper, and I would drop hot liver of sulphur and trap or fix the reaction. I was really interested in the concept that despite each moment being different, it is also as perfect as it could possibly be. Similarly, as sentient beings, we don't ever do things in exactly the same way.

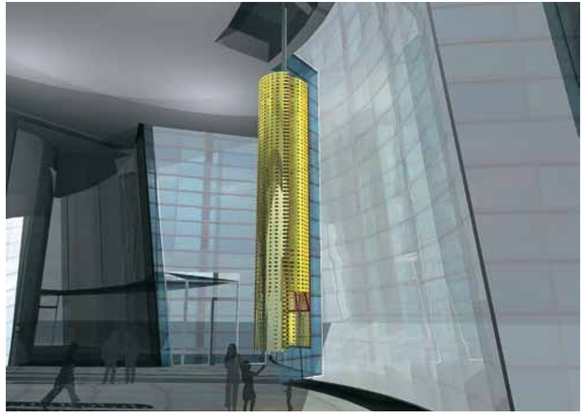
"I BECAME INTERESTED IN THE IDEA OF MAKING A MACHINE THAT WOULD DO THE WORK OF THE BODY. OUR BODIES ARE DESIGNED TO DO THE SAME THINGS, BUT EACH INDIVIDUAL BODY DOES THINGS QUITE DIFFERENTLY."

Andrew Drummond was interviewed by John Finlay, an independent art historian and critic.

This interview is an extract from a piece first published in Sculpture *magazine, November 2009. An extended version of the full interview will be published in the catalogue to accompany the exhibition,* ***Andrew Drummond: Observation / Action / Reflection.***

Andrew Drummond **Filter Action** from the performance, Aramoana, 1980. Photo: Nick Spill

VIEWING DEVICE, COUNTER-ROTATING



III.

VIEWING DEVICE, Counter-Rotating is a suspended kinetic sculpture by Andrew Drummond, installed in the foyer of Christchurch Art Gallery in March 2010. This counter-rotating sculpture is the first of its kind to utilise Drummond's specially designed and engineered 'air muscle' motor. Drummond's practice is located firmly in the arena of technological innovation and precision engineering, and he combines aesthetics and technology to create machines that reference both nineteenth-century and cutting-edge inventions. This new motor design was developed by Drummond along with his mechanical engineer, to explore a simple proposition—the ability for counter-rotation to come from one motive source.

For the last five years one element of Drummond's work has been a concern with the movement of counter-rotation and the optical effects that result. In 2007 Drummond made the small sculpture, *Device for rotation and reflection* (in the collection of Christchurch Art Gallery), which explores ideas of movement and light. This work has two electric motors, and while it creates a fascinating play of light and shadow, it does not allow viewers access into the internal workings of the machine—something that Drummond felt could be expanded upon. In 2008 he developed his air muscle motor, which could provide counter-rotation from one discrete mechanism. This unique motor works by using air muscles and sprag clutches, and allows viewers to enter the internal structure of the work—thereby observing the myriad light patterns, shadows and projections within.

Viewing Device, Counter-Rotating is really a tall optical device that hangs from a central shaft and terminates with the air muscle motor. When standing beneath the motor, silver discs can be seen to counter-rotate. Attached to these discs are drive arms, which connect to the punched sheets of electroplated aluminium that form the outer and inner shrouds. As the structure opens and closes with slow and silent regularity, the grid-like pattern of punched holes will cast ever-changing light patterns across the foyer.

Viewing Device, Counter-Rotating is an interactive sculpture, designed to elicit wonder. Descending from the height of the building like a glowing, pulsating beam of light, the public are able to enter the work and experience both the shifting moiré patterns it creates, and the unique nature of the air muscle motor. This experience will provide a fascinating insight into the way in which technology transformed into sculpture can be a surprising and beautiful tool. The sculpture, while large, is also intimate and reflects very real human qualities. As it conceals and reveals the person inside, they themselves will catch fragments of the world, moving and refracting.

Jennifer Hay
Assistant curator

***Andrew Drummond: Observation / Action / Reflection** is in the Gallery foyer, Touring and Borg Henry Galleries from 14 May to 5 September.*

Andrew Drummond **Viewing Device, Counter-Rotating** 2008-10. Steel, aluminium, air system, paint. Partially funded by Creative New Zealand

EVENTS

SATURDAY 15 MAY
Art in the Morning: Andrew Drummond Reflects
Acclaimed New Zealand sculptor Andrew Drummond leads us through his survey exhibition **Observation / Action / Reflection.**
8.30am / Alchemy / Friends $20 / public $30 / book by 12 May

WEDNESDAY 19 MAY
Meet the Artist: Andrew Drummond
Andrew Drummond gives an illustrated lecture discussing development processes, materials and the integration of new technologies.
6pm / free
Sponsored by The Press

Portrait **Andrew Drummond**

Photograph: Guy Pask

RON MUECK

ngv National Gallery of Victoria
NGV Touring Exhibition

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NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA
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A National Gallery of Victoria touring exhibition

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

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We invite you to become a supporter of the Christchurch Art Gallery Trust. Your support will help to ensure our continued growth as an internationally recognised centre of excellence, providing a stimulating and culturally enriching experience for all who visit now and in the future.

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Our three-tiered programme for making annual donations allows you to choose the level that best suits your circumstances. Each level of giving confers a number of exclusive benefits, including private dinners and cocktail functions, personal invitations and viewings and back-of-house access to collections.

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The Challenge Grant and Challenge Grant Response Fund
The Challenge Grant is a ten-year commitment by Christchurch City Council to supplement the collection development budget by matching dollar for dollar any amount raised by the Trust up to $190,000 per annum.

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Making a special donation means you can stipulate what you would like your contribution to be used for.

Bequests
This is your opportunity to leave an inspirational legacy for the future by including the Gallery in your will.

Christchurch Art Gallery formally acknowledges the major donors who contributed to the building of the Gallery.
Margaret Austin, Kiri Borg and Brian Henry, Hon Philip and Mrs Ros Burdon, Philip Carter, Sir Neil and Lady Isaac, Neil and Diane McKegg, Monica Richards, Robert and Barbara Stewart, Sir Robertson and Lady Stewart, Stout Trust, William A. Sutton Trust, Sir Angus and Lady Tait, Adriaan and Gabrielle Tasman, Jim and Susan Wakefield.

Many continue to support the Gallery and we thank them.

RECENT CONTRIBUTIONS AND GIFTS

Challenge Grant Response Fund—progress to date:

Art Gallery Trust total $46,000

City Council contribution $46,000

Total remaining to raise $144,000

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Tax Status—The Christchurch Art Gallery Trust is a charitable trust registered with the Charities Commission. The Trust has tax charity status as defined under the Income Tax Act 2007.

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

Matthew O'Reilly

FRAMING THE CRUCIFIXION

IN JUNE AND JULY OF 2009, when visiting Christchurch Art Gallery and the exhibition concerning some of the collecting activities of my father Ron O'Reilly, I found myself staring somewhat negatively at the frame surrounding the early McCahon work *Crucifixion according to St Mark* (1947).

I had lived with this frame for a while in my later school years, but really hadn't noticed it. But then who *would* normally think of the frame around such a painting—or even see it? For those who care actively about art, their focus may be used to filtering out all else, but for most others, whose comfort zone is disturbed by the process of looking at art, I suggest that the frame may be either a hindrance or a help, but seldom neutral.

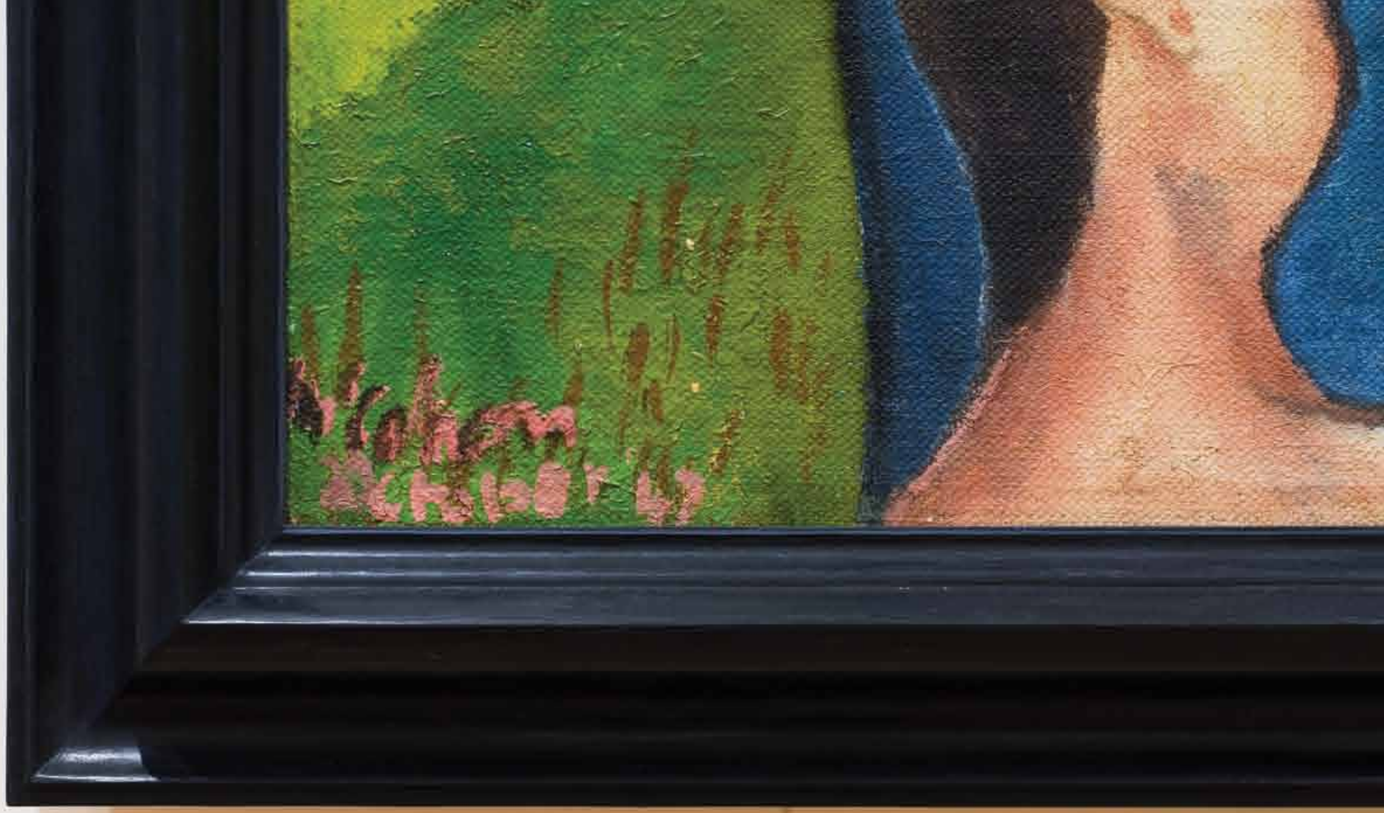
The *St Mark* was always one of my most favourite paintings. Always a difficult painting to walk past glancingly, its drama and theatricality could remove everything outside the scene from my consciousness. With the passage of time the magic of the painting has not really dimmed, but rather my own awareness of context has come up to meet the painting: an awareness that the artist was, in that renaissance way, a witness to the story of the painting; that a sense of detachment was as important to the comprehension of the narrative as the immersion in it. McCahon and the local—landscape and actors—framed the story. Indeed one might say that the artist constitutes a part of the frame for Christ's Passion, representing the dilemma of detachment and profound engagement implicit in 'witnessing'—McCahon represents us looking into the scene, and we are made complicit. Besides the artist looking in from the right, three other depicted participants in the scene are directly connected to the place of the frame. Most tellingly, the mocking words 'This is Jesus the King of the Jews' are in a speech bubble implicitly sourced from it by the land, which forms an eerie, almost claustrophobic, backdrop with the near opacity of the 'gilded' sky. A very uneasy painting indeed, and this is reflected in its complex linear and chromatic scheme.

So, by and by, I became a framer of paintings. As a framer one learns to think critically about the matters of visual context that impinge upon the experience of the viewer in engaging with a work of art. The personal negotiation with a work can frequently be a struggle, even where pleasure is attached. I have always felt that my first duty is, where possible, to remove potential distractions from the experience of art through my presentation of it; to remove all other works for enough time for the penny to drop, then, when the moment has come, to re-expose the broader context through the mediation of the frame as a pleasure, an anticipation of the impact that the new experience will have on the surrounding world. The frame as mediator of consciousness.

This particular graceless mediator of consciousness consisted of knotty and kinked old pine shaped into a steep bevel. Its odd modernism seemed to run counter to the medieval sensibility of the painting. The very steepness of its bevel presented a quality of forced perspective that seemed to preclude any sense of relationship, and tunnel vision would often grip this viewer. The verticality and set-like depth of field expressed in the composition were gratuitously emphasised by the narrowness and steepness of the frame, whose style was current in the early sixties: it was not contemporary with the painting's creation but with a restoration that took place in about 1960.

I needed to see a frame which had the grace to appreciate its object and acknowledge its surroundings, able to contain the painting whilst letting its content spread; which could riff discreetly on the formal play of the composition, and be sensitive to the complex axial layout of the painting. I wanted it to entice the viewer trolling along the wall with a pleasurably evolving view, presaging the formal, dramatic and emotional content, in which the viewer once in front, could feel the freedom to move, but not necessarily want to. But of course, this is all too much to expect of a frame! It is however what I hoped for in the design and execution of it.

***Matthew O'Reilly**, son of the late Ron O'Reilly, is framer of paintings at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. He has an extensive knowledge of frame history and techniques.*



Colin McCahon **Crucifixion according to St Mark** (detail) 1947. Oil on canvas on board. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, presented by Ron O'Reilly to the Gallery in accordance with the wishes of the artist 1982. Reproduced courtesy of the Colin McCahon Research and Publication Trust

“… the nude in western art had principally been about woman as object and man as viewer and vehicle of action. Berger summarised the situation when he stated, ‘Men act and women appear.’”

REVISITING THE ART OF THE NUDE AND CHRISTINE WEBSTER

Christine Webster from the series *Black Carnival:* **Black Carnival #56** 1995. Cibachrome print. Collection of Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

WHEN SIR KENNETH CLARK PUBLISHED *The Nude* in 1956, his classic book on this venerable subject, it was acclaimed for its comprehensiveness and scholarly accounts. From the Greeks to modern times, Clark traced his 'study of ideal art' through passive depictions of Venus and energetic battles between nude men. He was confident in his judgment on shifts in history and style, demonstrating that the nude was extensively used for allegorical purposes, and unapologetically shared his enthusiasms for particular artists and their work. For instance, 'Botticelli's Venus does not deny the empire of the senses. On the contrary, the flow of her body is like some hieroglyphic of delight'; 'Around the Venuses or Dianas of the Fontainbleau School hangs a smell of stylish eroticism... strong as ambergris or musk'; and of a nude by Boucher, 'Freshness of desire has seldom been more delicately expressed than by Miss O'Murphy's round young limbs, as they sprawl with undisguised satisfaction on the cushions of her sofa.' Even the eye of the champion of realism, Gustave Courbet, 'embraced the female body with the same enthusiasm that it stroked a deer, grasped an apple or slapped the side of an enormous trout'.

These opinions are as witty and insightful today as they were fifty years ago, yet with one major qualification: it did not occur to Clark to mention that all the artists he wrote of were male and that their depictions of the female might be construed as degrading. Furthermore, it was not helpful to be reminded that (Spartan women aside), the Greeks 'discovered in the [male] nude two embodiments of energy... they are the athlete and the hero'—a pattern that continued well into the twentieth century. It would take the fury of the early feminists in the sixties and John Berger's deconstructing project *Ways of Seeing* (1972) to realise that the nude in western art had principally been about woman as object and man as viewer and vehicle of action. Berger summarised the situation when he stated, 'Men act and women appear.'

Since those heady days, many other writers (including Lucy Lippard) have thrown light on how art can reflect all manner of power relations. Terms such as multiculturalism and queer art are commonplace, and we have witnessed how under them, the reversal of the usual stereotypes in depicting the nude are addressed. Often teasing and provocative, they demonstrate that parody and humour go a long way when revealing uncomfortable truths. For instance, as Jeanette Winterson points out in her book, *Art Objects* (1996), 'Some of the early feminist arguments surrounding the wrongfulness of men painting provocative female nudes seem to me to have overlooked the possibility or the fact of another female as viewer.'

Whatever their sexual persuasion, race or cultural background, it is fair to say that women have made significant inroads into mainstream art in the past forty years. Some still mine The Body as a way to explore their own sexuality as much as commenting on society at large, for as Linda Nochlin wrote in *Woman as Sex Object* (1972), 'The growing power of woman in the politics of both sex and art is bound to revolutionize the realm of erotic representation.' However, some female artists distance themselves from feminism altogether and engage with their practice as creative individuals, unfettered by polemics, and especially by antiquated expectations of their gender.

Male artists too have grown tired of living up to the expectations of hero and warrior; many now freely expose their vulnerabilities or, at the other extreme, parody the pin-up femme fatale as an alter-ego. After all, men too have benefited from sexual emancipation and the demise of high art ideals. Sexual symbolism had always been a principal element of Picasso's imagery but even he had the wit and courage in old age to create etchings of erotic abandonment, depicting himself on the sidelines looking impotently on. George Alexander, writing on Julie Rrap's nudes after Degas for the group exhibition *Pleasure of the Gaze* at the Art Gallery of Western Australia in 1985, also acknowledged the importance of spectatorship: 'In art, the pleasure of the gaze is essential. Without it the painter would have no impulse to keep painting.' Unless there is what he calls 'an erotics of reception' the spectator would not complete a picture.

"... some female artists distance themselves from feminism altogether and engage with their practice as creative individuals, unfettered by antiquated expectations of their gender."

Christine Webster from the series *Le Dossier:* **Le Dossier 10 (ii)** 2006. C-type photograph. Collection of the artist

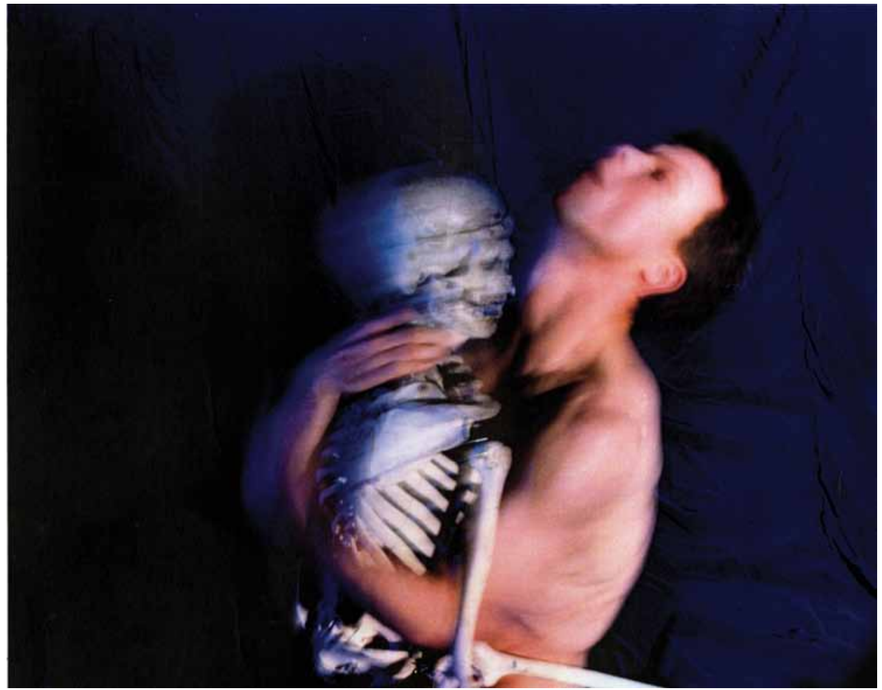
Christine Webster from the series *Le Dossier:* **Le Dossier 3 (i)** 2006. C-type photograph. Collection of the artist

Christine Webster from the series *Le Dossier:* **Le Dossier 10 (iii)** 2006. C-type photograph. Collection of the artist

Christine Webster from the series *Le Dossier:* **Le Dossier 3 (iv)** 2006. C-type photograph. Collection of the artist

Left: Christine Webster **Craigwell House** 1984. Cibachrome print. Collection of Douglas Wright

Below: Christine Webster from the series *Circus of Angels*: **The skeleton** 1997. Cibachrome print. Collection of Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua, Whanganui



“While Webster does not usually use the nude without symbolic trappings, it remains (whether female, male or trans-gender) as the site of all her work.”

Which brings me to Christine Webster. Since the 1980s this New Zealand-born artist has been addressing the erotics of the gaze through large-scale Cibachromes. Her adoption of photography rather than painting accords with the feminist move from high art distinctions associated most readily with painting and sculpture. In fact, right up to the present, at least half the main players in photographic tableaux (as opposed to documentary photography) dealing with the politics of identity and representation of the body, are women. For starters, one only has to think of Cindy Sherman. While Webster does not usually use the nude without symbolic trappings, it remains (whether female, male or trans-gender) as the site of all her work. *Craigwell House* (1984), depicts the bare torso of a male in an old institution’s tiled bath—his head of hennaed hair and face with rouged cheeks flung back as though in state of ecstasy. In the *New Myths* series that followed in 1987, the nude male is the model for *Moon Envy* while the female serves *Water into Wine* and *Post Crucifixion*.

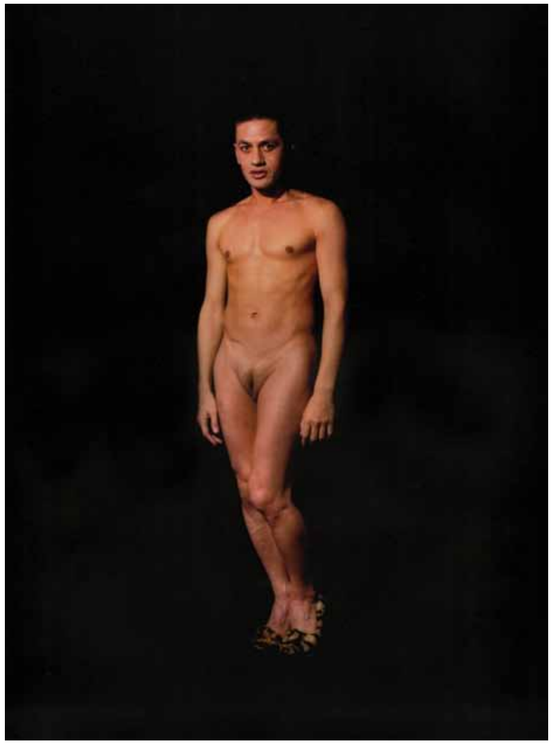
Like all her work, Webster throws caution to the wind. She alludes to the tight moral compass that orthodox Christianity imposes on believers—a compass that is so restricted at times that it causes the very perverse and brutal acts that it proposes to outlaw. Instead, through her series of Cibachrome images from the 1980s right up to *Le Dossier* in 2006, Webster proposes that sexuality is a complex and necessary attribute of humankind and that its link with representations of the body is inevitable. In her famous *Black Carnival* series (1993–7), life-sized figures masquerade as characters that the models themselves propose, in tandem with Webster

Left: Christine Webster from the series *A Serious Doll House*: **Doll 9** 2000. C-type photograph. Collection of Alex and Kitty Mackay

Opposite page: Christine Webster from the series *Circus of Angels*: **The hanged man** 1997. Cibachrome print. Collection of the artist

as director/photographer. There are the two ‘Can Can Boys’, there is Mika in two versions of drag and a ringmaster character (although this time it is a ‘she’ not a ‘he’). Reversals of the expected often characterise the imagery of this artist, as does liberation from stereotypes so that the full personality can be given expression.

With *Circus of Angels* the chief protagonist is well-known dancer and choreographer Douglas Wright. When first shown at the Sarjeant Gallery in Whanganui in 1997, this nude figure with props conveyed a range of extreme conditions experienced by the human psyche. Whether balancing on a tightrope, clutching a skeleton to his chest or hanging blindfolded up-side-down, these images simultaneously haunted and thrilled us with their conceptual and actual performances. Webster herself plays protagonist at times—evident in the series *A Serious Doll House*—for as she says, ‘I feel the need to become a participant as much as being behind the camera. I can’t only be the voyeur…’ In the 2000s, she continued to periodically include herself with other models, nude or part-nude, in series such as *Le Dossier*. The resonance of ‘place’ and how it provides its own character to these images again becomes important, as it had been in her work of the early 1980s. Intentionally erotic, her women are set in squalid interiors for *Le Dossier*, repulsive and beguiling at the same time. The photographs of this series are not large, yet they mock the photo-documentary tradition through their artifice and psychosexuality. They led to the film project *Blindfield*, first shown as a multi-screen film installation at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery in 2007 and subsequently made into a single-screen



version. It investigates madness, power-relations and the hypocrisy (and perversity) of antiquated institutional systems.

Complex, theatrical and fearless, the unsettling photography and film-work of Christine Webster challenges audiences. This survey, the first on the artist, demonstrates the consistency of her investigations into societal myths and belief systems that mask an often cruel and bizarre symbolic order. For over twenty years, Webster has addressed questions of power, sexual identity and representations of the body. She has upturned issues of propriety and taste through her use of eroticism and subversive play. Through **Provocations** we have the chance to free ourselves from imposed roles and recognise human desire in all its complexity. Imagined scenarios (and the artist's personal history) take us into often troubling zones of awareness that can also be liberating for the viewer.

Anne Kirker

Dr Anne Kirker is an independent art consultant, curator and writer now living in Brisbane. Throughout her career she has had a special interest in art practice by women and is the author of the influential book New Zealand Women Artists: A Survey of 150 Years (1993).

***Provocations: The work of Christine Webster** is in the Sutton and Ravenscar Galleries from 26 March to 7 June 2010. A fully illustrated catalogue accompanies the exhibition.*

Above: Christine Webster from the series *Black Carnival*: **Black Carnival #47** 1995. Cibachrome print. Collection of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

Opposite: Christine Webster from the series *Black Carnival*: **Black Carnival #18** 1993. Cibachrome print. Collection of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa

EVENTS

WEDNESDAY 31 MARCH
Christine Webster's Provocations
Exhibition curator, writer and independent art consultant Dr Anne Kirker gives an insight into the exhibition **Provocations: The work of Christine Webster.**
6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Sponsored by The Press

WEDNESDAY 7 APRIL
Nakedness, Nudity and the Public Gaze
Referring to works in **The Naked and the Nude** and **Provocations: The work of Christine Webster**, Gallery director Jenny Harper explores debates that surround nudity and the sexually explicit in New Zealand public art.
6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Sponsored by The Press

SATURDAY 17 APRIL
Art in the Morning: Twin Lens
Photographer Cathryn Shine looks at the photographic techniques used in **Provocations: The work of Christine Webster** and **Joyce Campbell: LA Botanical** and **Last Light.**
8.30am / Alchemy / Friends $20 / public $30 / book by 14 April

WEDNESDAY 21 APRIL
Film: *Profiles Christine Webster*
This documentary-style film gives an insight into Christine Webster's photography and includes her high-profile and most controversial series *Black Carnival.*
6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Sponsored by The Press

ON THE TABLE

The following is an extract from a conversation between artist John Reynolds and Gallery director Jenny Harper, which formed part of the opening weekend events around **Brought to Light: A New View of the Collection.**

Jenny Harper: We've walked past several works that are made up of multiple parts, such as Richard Killeen's *Book of the hook* (1996) and Bill Culbert's *Pacific flotsam* (2009). And here we are at a major new work of yours, John. Tell us, how might we approach this work for the first time?
John Reynolds: The clue to this is its title. It's called *Table of dynasties*, and when it was first shown it was intended for an art fair in Hong Kong. The strategy was to somehow go back into the east, back to China, and to set up a Shanghai street trader's table and sell their wares back to them. In other words, these little canvases were all made in China, they've come to New Zealand, and we wish to take them back—loved up, value added, exported if you will—towards the great mothership of the global economy at the moment. Happily, very happily for me, Justin and the team have opened up another kind of play with the work. It's now got a cinemascopic, 3D blockbuster feel, which is very successful. It's no longer a little street stall in Shanghai, over-rich and tumbling. It's something expansive and lurching and pixellated and glorious—I'm very happy with it. It's almost like a pier going out into the ocean—this marvellous sense of departure and arrival. It seems to have a beginning and an end, but maybe it doesn't. It's glorious to see the work like this because for me it's like meeting it again for the first time. It has its own wild energy which I had nothing to do with and that's a thrill.

JH: And we've been thrilled with the response too. Some visitors seem to have noticed the curved wall it's on for the first time. It's been here since the Gallery opened, but it seems to have suddenly become 'visible', with the presentation of your work accentuating the curve in some unusual way.
JR: Well Jenny, I thought you made a good point earlier about how this new space has offered opportunities to gear up and get leverage for certain works, like the Bill Culbert installation nearby. *Table of dynasties* has also been extended with this opportunity, with this wall, with this staging. I think that's a very real illustration of the way that museums work—the play of them, the way they stage, the way they frame, the way they can tease out meanings and readings for an audience. That's just as good as it gets.

JH: Very rewarding. Well we've talked about one aspect of its origin, but you've also looked at a dictionary here—a dictionary of art historical terms; a taxomomy of art if you like.
JR: Yes. One of the things that seems to be emerging in my work (and I say seems because I'm trying to resist it) is a certain violence to books. There's an unpicking process, where I take a dictionary and I refuse to accept its structure. Obviously the words you can see are terms, over 1,600 of them, from a dictionary—but they're not definitions. Part of my motivation here is a fantastic statement I took from Borges, who said we as an audience, we as readers, must misread the text. We must misunderstand the book. I've taken that as a green light to take things like the *Orsman Dictionary of New*

John Reynolds **Table of dynasties** (detail) 2009. Oil paint stick on acrylic on canvas. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 2009. Reproduced courtesy of the artist

John Reynolds **Table of dynasties** (detail) 2009. Oil paint stick on acrylic on canvas. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 2009. Reproduced courtesy of the artist

Zealand English, or in this case, Lucie Smith's Thames & Hudson *Dictionary of Art Terms*, and boldly step away; to rip the thing apart and disperse it through the mechanics of two-dimensional visual art.

Of course, at the same time as I'm unpicking the dictionary, I'm unpicking some of the ways we might be attentive. When we walk through a museum we have a certain kind of radar up with regard to readings and meanings and experiences. We're looking for significance, and this work denies that process by using the vocabulary of meaning and reading in kind of a dumb way. It's bright and it's stupid simultaneously. And somewhere between those cracks and those parameters there's this very gentle caressing of the processes where meaning might be.

As an artist I quite like working on these small canvases because they allow me a way of producing work that's closest to reading. I'm sitting down—I'm not standing at a wall or an easel—there's a little lamp, there's a book, there's a pen, there's a canvas. And I'm writing. So I'm as close as I possibly can be to rehearsing that gentle kind of conversation between reader and book. At the same time I'm creating this Sisyphean task, which seemingly has no end, or no structure. There's an obsessive and somewhat thoughtless quality to it. It's a very odd thing to do, and the whisper it's making to the audience is 'where does this collating go?' 'What's this collecting about?' 'What's being collected?' 'Where is the meaning?' Hopefully that's a very valid loop in making sense of a larger collection.

"We're looking for significance, and this work denies that process by using the vocabulary of meaning and reading in kind of a dumb way. It's bright and it's stupid simultaneously."

JH: So we have the option of reading here as well as looking?
JR: These damn words. Words, words, words. Mention text in contemporary painting and practice and there's a gnashing of teeth in the background. As an audience we go 'Oh God, another New Zealand work of art with text.' And I'd like to tease this out a little bit. As an artist you have a number of balls in the air. There's a range of possibilities vying for one's attention. This work came up, with regard to Hong Kong, and seemed to say 'Pick me, pick me.' And initially you try to resist the work coming to fruition, because in that resistance you discern the work's true shape, or the seductive appeal of pursuing it. So as an artist you have two roles to play—trying to generate activity and, simultaneously, trying to corral it. The potential works are all sheep, and you don't have a dog, and they are aberrant and truculent and you're trying to get them through some sort of portal you don't know the shape of… It's a curious form of blindness in a way. Roland Barthes used to describe that when he said 'You proceed blindly'.

JH: So, a really prosaic question—how does it work? You get a dictionary, do you choose a word or phrase every second page, or do you put it into a computer? Because some of these are legible as terms—'Still Life' obviously, but what is '_f.f., f.f._'?
JR: It's a term printmakers use—it's folio, but I see it as swearing… The question is quite good though. I bashed into this when I was taking on the 15,000 terms in the *Orsman Dictinary*—what kind of editorial strategy does one use? There's this kind of bipolar process of being drawn to the poetry of the terms you like, but at the same time trying to stand back and be true to the book. One luxury I had was to mispresent. All dictionaries present order—they start at A and they end at Z. They categorise and they particularise. What I'm doing here is conforming but refusing to conform. I fall in the gap between that collision of a desire for order and an insistence on disorder. So I trip myself up trying to be true to the book while at the same time riffing on the wild poetry of the terms that are in there. And again misunderstanding or misreading the texts. Deliberately, vacuously and vivaciously. And you do learn.

JH: Have you observed people with the work, walking past and reading?
JR: One of the things that we found in Hong Kong was that people would walk up to it, stunned; the hand would reach out and they'd wish to pick something up. They're kind of pretty little things, and they've got that quality that you could just take one home. But somehow, there are so many of them sporing that people stand back at the same time.

JH: I must say, we were a little bit worried when we bought it about the logistics of display—there are 1,652 canvases and they *are* easy to pick up.
JR: I think it's one of the greatest compliments as an artist to have your work stolen. That seems to say that someone can't live without this work

JH: Don't spread that message…
JR: I remember as a young art student—I can confess this because we're in public and safety—I was at the Auckland Art Gallery late in the day and I was all of eighteen or twenty I suppose, and there was a particularly beautiful McCahon work, a long paper scroll. There was no one around, and those were the days before CCTV I'm sure. And I stood there looking and I thought, 'I'm this close, I can get closer'. And I did. I could sniff it, and I thought 'this is extraordinary—I could just roll this up'. And the tease of the transgression, the desire to shoplift, at the same time as this immense sense that I'd get caught because I'd be glowing—I felt like an altar boy caught sipping the Communion wine in some way. It was passion—one that could be forgiven because I was an art student. Of course I stepped back, thankfully, and here I am today. But I'm happy to claim that the allure of working in this way is that these little canvases are grabable.

One of the anxieties all museums have, and all artists have, is what I call the museum distance. One of the things we as artists want to tease out is that proximity—to get the viewer curious and to get them closer. Frames do that. Small scale in a large space does that. The moment you get past a critical distance with regard to works you can sniff them. I got caught sniffing a Mondrian in the Museum of Modern Art in New York once, and some guards moved towards me with a certain purpose… This was the first time I'd bumped into a Mondrian—there was a little cluster of them—and I couldn't believe how ugly they were. Growing up in New Zealand I had only seen them in beautiful offset printed books and they were glorious and smooth.

JH: They look perfect and modern in prints, but you know in front of real Mondrians that they are made objects.
JR: I couldn't believe it. But that was a key moment because works of art are not inert and they are not dead—they are alive and they wish the viewers to engage, and one of the problems for all of us, even those in the profession, is that you can walk round somewhere like the Prado and one of the things that you are fighting is this kind of haze that comes down: 'Oh yes, the Velázquez—got him. Goya… right, got him too.' And you can end up accommodating the works rather than engaging with them. So museums and artists are looking for strategies to blow away this haze. How critical display is. And also of course contemporary artists play games with regard to the floor, the wall, new media, the desire to reach out to an audience and insist that they locate this work somehow in a personal experience.

John Reynolds **Table of dynasties** (detail) 2009. Oil paint stick on acrylic on canvas. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 2009. Reproduced courtesy of the artist

JH: I was wondering finally about the different colours you've used, and the blends of colours in some canvases. Are they totally random or is there some form of rhyme or rhythm operating there?
JR: There is a sort of a dumb rhythm—I'm a great fan of metallics and their slightly elusive tones, so I've used these as a kind of visual glue. The metallics, the silvers, the bronzes, are a kind of baseline in the work. And the highs, the top notes, the geegaw kind of fluoro oranges are intended to be punchier. But what I'm trying to assert is that any book which attempts to sum up or collate the vocabulary of art terms also requires the full horror in terms of colour spectrum. As I say, I wanted to step out of my own familiar spectrum as an artist and use the whole paintbox, which is a luxury that as a painter I'm allowed. I surprised myself by going a bit too far with some of the multi-tonal ones, where the term that's written on them collapses a little under the weight of colour pushing through behind it. I'm trying to present an architecture of the world here in some strange way—a mini Manhattan of experience and language, played out with as many colours as I could use. And some of them, I'll tell you, are awful, which was a great pleasure.

This conversation was recorded at Christchurch Art Gallery on 28 November 2009. An iPod audio tour of this event is available to download from the Gallery's website. www.christchurchartgallery.org.nz

Joanna Langford **Up from the plainlands** (detail) 2009. Recycled plastic bags, bamboo skewers, sushi grass, 12 volt LED lights, fans and electrical wiring. Commissioned for **Brought to Light: A New View of the Collection** 2009. Reproduced courtesy the artist and Jonathan Smart Gallery

Staff Profile
Christchurch City Council's Community Arts Team

From left:
Marlene Le Cren
and **Paula Rigby**

Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu houses the city's visual arts collection, comprising around 6,000 objects in a bewildering array of media and forms. But this is just one facet of the city's involvement in the arts. Christchurch City Council's arts policy also takes into account performing, literary and multidisciplinary arts across the broad range of communities and ethnicities that make up the city today.

Charged with implementing council policy across this wide playing field are Marlene Le Cren, arts advisor, and Paula Rigby, Māori arts advisor. Although both are based in the Gallery, their work crosses many Council units, from Festivals and Events to Transport and Greenspace. At the time of the 2005 *Paradigm Shift* it was felt that the Gallery would be the ideal environment from which they should operate.

Before working for the Council, Marlene, whose background and training is in the performing arts, primarily theatre and dance, spent twenty-three years as junior dean and head of performing arts at Linwood College. She describes her current role as 'advocate, supporter, promoter, enabler, planner, funder, facilitator and passionate devotee of all art forms'. She is responsible for the allocation of arts funding from the Council's annual Strengthening Communities funding scheme and Creative New Zealand's Creative Communities scheme, and liaises with CNZ on local government arts involvement.

Paula (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairoa, Ngāi Tuhoe) has been actively involved in the arts as a weaver and performer of kapahaka at national and international levels. At the Council her focus is on promoting and encouraging the growth of artists and arts opportunities in Māori and Pacific Island communities, and increasing public participation in the arts as both passive and active participants. She also helps out at the Gallery with all things Māori and organises workshops as part of the **immerse** programme where appropriate.

Art, and especially contemporary art, can easily feel exclusive. Together Marlene and Paula help to ensure that the arts in Christchurch are inclusive and accessible to all.

PAGEWORK #6

RICKY SWALLOW

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

Ricky Swallow is one of Australia's most renowned artists. As a sculptor he represented Australia at the 2005 Venice Biennale, and many of his carved wooden works were recently the subject of a survey exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne. However, works on paper have always been a part of Swallow's practice, as demonstrated by his recent exhibition at Christchurch Art Gallery. **Ricky Swallow: Watercolours** brought together around eighty of these 'atmospheric presentations', a selection reaching all the way back to the underwater views, evolutionary studies and sci-fi scenarios Swallow painted as a student and emerging artist in Melbourne.

Swallow's recent watercolours look back into the recent past rather than forward into a science-fictional future—a past populated by almost-forgotten musicians, folk heroes such as Ned Kelly, and anonymous Americans of the late-nineteenth century. Fresh from Swallow's studio, the 'falconer' represented on these pages also looks to have been rescued from some little-known historical record. Like the 'old guitarists' who appeared in several paintings in Swallow's exhibition, the falconer is a practitioner of a time-honoured discipline requiring delicacy, accuracy, discipline and nerve. It is not hard to guess at his appeal for Swallow, because these are qualities required of any watercolourist too.

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

Over page:
Ricky Swallow **Falconer 1 & 2** 2009. Watercolor on paper. Reproduced courtesy of the artist

Ron Mueck Coming to Christchurch Art Gallery

Gallery director Jenny Harper and senior curator Justin Paton attended the opening of *Ron Mueck* at the National Gallery of Victoria on 21 January. This major exhibition presents the most comprehensive selection of works by this Australian-born, London-based artist to be shown in the Southern Hemisphere, and Christchurch Art Gallery is very pleased to be the only New Zealand venue for the show when it tours later this year. Justin says, *We've been peering for months at photographic reproductions of Mueck's sculptures. They look good on the page. But these are works that really come alive when people are around them. It was fantastic to stand in the show in Melbourne and watch crowds of people coming face to face and eye to eye with the sculptures—and scarcely believing what they were seeing.*

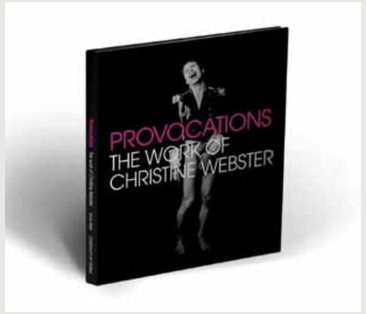
Ron Mueck, born Australia 1958 **Two women** (detail) 2005. Polyester resin, fibreglass, silicone, aluminium wire, steel, wool, cotton, nylon, synthetic hair, plastic, metal, ed. 1/1. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, purchased Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists 2007. © Ron Mueck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

ngv National Gallery of Victoria
NGV Touring Exhibition

Hot off the Press!

Christine Webster is one of New Zealand's most innovative and provocative photographers. Confronting, uncompromising and often controversial, her works show us what we don't expect to see and have the power to unsettle and disturb the viewer, exploring the outer limits of what we might consider acceptable. **Provocations: The work of Christine Webster** is a spectacular survey exhibition, featuring many of the artist's best-known series, and new work created especially for the show. The exhibition is accompanied by a full colour 96-page catalogue, written by the exhibition's curator Dr Anne Kirker and designed by award-winning designer Aaron Beehre. The catalogue is available from the Gallery shop.

Orders: Gallery Shop, tel. (03) 941 7370 or email galleryshop@ccc.govt.nz



Staffing Changes at the Gallery

The Gallery was sad to say goodbye to facilities manager Mike Heineman, who left in January to take up the post of operations manager at Christchurch City Council. We wish him luck in the future and, as the Gallery is still within his remit at the Council, we look forward to seeing him again. We would also like to welcome new staff Andrew Shepherd and Julie Owens to the visitor experience team.

A Major Bequest to the Gallery

Norman Barrett (1922–2010), who died on 6 January, has generously left Christchurch Art Gallery a bequest of approximately $1.8 million to be spent on acquiring work by significant Canterbury artists working between 1940 and 1980 for a Barrett Bequest Collection. Norman was an enthusiastic supporter of the arts in Christchurch and regularly attended art gallery openings throughout the city. He made many friends in Christchurch's art circles including crime writer Ngaio Marsh and artist William Sutton. Norman Barrett's bequest is an extremely generous act to the citizens of Christchurch and will enable many important additions to be made to the City's art collection.

William Sutton **Portrait of Norman Barrett** 1992. Oil on canvas. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, presented by Norman Barrett 2001

Conservation and Restoration: A Curious Case of Traction Cracks

Sarah Hillary, principal conservator at the Auckland Art Gallery is at the forensic frontier of art history. She discusses the specialised conservation carried out on the work of Colin McCahon at the Auckland Art Gallery, in collaboration with the Getty Conservation Institute.

Wednesday 5 May / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free

Sumi Ink Workshop with Max Gimblett

Renowned artist and practising Rinzai Zen Buddhist Max Gimblett leads a sumi ink workshop on ink drawings and Asian aesthetics.

Saturday 6 March / 10am / Education centre / charges apply, to register your interest tel. 941 7342

Max Gimblett: A Contemplative View of My Practice 1963–2010

Artist Max Gimblett presents an illustrated talk on his practice. One of New Zealand's most internationally prominent artists, he is known for his paintings, sculpture, ink drawings, works on paper and artists' books.

Saturday 6 March / 2pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free

Handstand Productions Present: Double Portrait – Finding Frances Hodgkins

This feature production to celebrate Frances Hodgkins's birthday is written by Jan Bolwell and directed by Ralph McAllister. A stash of Frances Hodgkins paintings has been discovered in France. Part of a deceased estate, they land on the doorstep of a Parisian gallery owner who has never heard of Hodgkins. When he contacts Auckland Art Gallery, there is a flurry of activity as a female curator tries to prise them out of his hands and return them to New Zealand. Based upon a real life incident, Jan Bolwell's new play is not to be missed.

Wednesday 28 April / 7pm / 75 mins / $25 /
bookings tel: (03) 941 7342

Sponsored by The Press

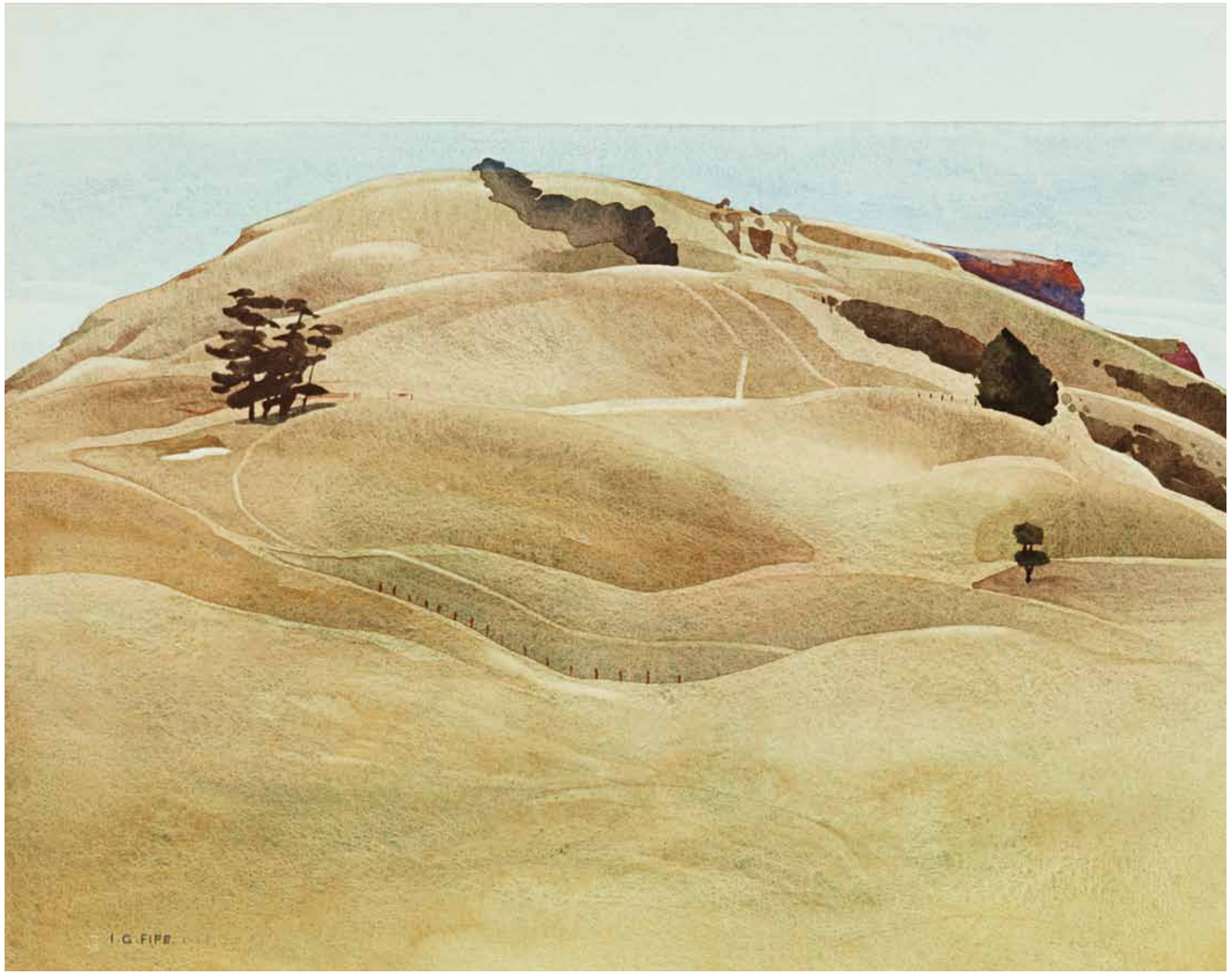
School Holidays

FAMILY FILM: THE NEVERENDING STORY

A young boy escapes the neighbourhood bullies by retreating into a mysterious book that takes him to another world.
Tuesday 6 – Friday 16 April / 1pm; programme runs 90 minutes / Phillip Carter Family Auditorium / G / weekdays only, bookings (03) 941 7382/ Gold coin entry, parents and caregivers free

EXPLORE AND DRAW

Explore the Gallery with this fun activity sheet.
Friday 2 – Sunday 18 April / 10 am – 4pm / collect from the front desk, free



Ivy Fife **The Long Lookout** 1950. Watercolour. Donated from the Canterbury Public Library Collection 2001

My Favourite

Quentin MacFarlane

Quentin MacFarlane is a marine and modernist artist, and has been working since the late 1950s. He has exhibited widely and still paints and sails.

My appreciation for art began with trips to the local library, where my mother—who was a trained artist—would borrow prints by famous artists. One week it would be Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* and the next an Augustus John portrait. In the 1950s we moved to Lower Hutt, where I had the great fortune to be taught at high school by innovative art educator Jim Coe, alongside fellow student Bill Culbert. Our goal was to attend art school, so we made frequent visits to the National Art Gallery where we became familiar with the painting collection.

As students at University of Canterbury's Ilam School of Fine Art, we found the Robert McDougall Art Gallery a gloomy place. The one great saviour was Christchurch City Libraries and head librarian Ron O'Reilly, who had amassed a collection of original works—including Colin McCahon's Kauri paintings—that the public could rent on a monthly basis.

One of my favourite tutors at art school was Ivy Fife. She took us for a variety of subjects, but most significant were the 'Head-life', or portrait painting, classes. A great teacher, she had an impish sense of humour. Being a male in her class had some advantages as she saved the best places for 'her boys'. Although familiar with her portraits, I was surprised to see *The Long Lookout*, a lovely watercolour depicting Banks Peninsula, in the Library's collection. I knew from experience that this was a superb watercolour and I've never forgotten it. It frequently reminds me of what Banks Peninsula means to me and its influence in my own practice.

I settled with my young family in Sumner and my interest in sailing was to become an important aspect of my own painting. I began exploring Banks Peninsula with architect Peter Beaven in his 30ft sloop *Serica*, and later with Albion Wright and Dennis Donovan in the historic gaff-rigged cutter *Pastime*. We spent many happy days rolling around the coast, taking in the dramatic scenery and fighting the southerly and huge swells. Albion owned Pegasus Press and published Dennis Glover's *Towards Banks Peninsula*, a collection of poems and verse about the area. These amiable old rogues taught me a great deal about our culture, the importance of landscape and life. On the sailing trips we would thrash out from the Heads, work our way past Port Levy and head for Long Lookout, with its defining line of macracapas along the ridge. Fife captures this landmark with a clear line and beautiful washes. Many years later, I explored the landmark on foot with Christchurch-born artist Euan MacLeod, whose work also evokes that sense of sea and peninsula.

So now you can understand why Fife's exquisite watercolour is one of my favourite paintings. It reminds me of days gone by; the haunting lonely presence of Banks Peninsula with its unspoiled grandeur and sea stretching out to a limitless horizon. My former tutor was a master of watercolours. She painted this work around the time I attended art school but strangely she never mentioned her long love affair with the Peninsula.

Coming soon

John Alfred Arnesby Brown
On the uplands c.1910. Oil on canvas. Purchased by the Canterbury Society of Arts 1912 with the J.T. Peacock Bequest, presented to the City of Christchurch 1932

An Idyllic Country: Pastoral Landscapes from the Collection

The pastoral tradition in art is the idealised portrayal of country life, often idyllic views of a tamed countryside inhabited by shepherds and livestock. **An Idyllic Country: Pastoral Landscapes from the Collection** brings together a collection of paintings, watercolours and prints spanning several centuries.

15 May – 8 August

Goncharova and Larionov: L'Art Décoratif Théâtral Moderne

An exhibition of stage and costume designs by Russian avant garde artists Natal'ya Goncharova (1881–1962) and Mikhail Larionov (1881–1964). Featuring pochoir (stencil) prints and lithographs, the abstracted, angular forms illustrate the artists' involvement with rayism, cubism and futurism in Paris during the 1910s.

15 May – 8 August

Taryn Simon: An American Index of the Hidden and Unfamiliar

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

19 June – 5 September

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Late night every Wednesday
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