The Gallery is currently closed to the public. However, the Gallery Shop is open as usual.

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ART GALLERY

B.168

Bulletin
Christchurch Art Gallery
Te Puna o Waiwhetu

Winter
June—August
2012

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Christchurch City Council

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ART GALLERY

Cover: Alfred Charles Barker **Government Buildings and Durham St. looking east** (detail) 1858 Photograph. Barry Hancox Collection

Inside cover: Zina Swanson **Sensorium** 2012. Mixed-media installation (including *Mimosa pudica*—the sensitive plant). Courtesy of the artist

Contents

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CHRISTCHURCH CITY COUNCIL'S DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN for 2012-13 is currently out for public consultation. Contained within it are proposals for the repair or rebuilding of ten major community facilities, one of which is this Gallery. In preparation for this consultation we, with our project manager, submitted a detailed proposal setting out what we believe to be the best way to repair our building. I am pleased that Council agreed with our recommendations, and my hope now is that they will be adopted.

Our simple and immediate ambition is to reopen to the public, and to do so as soon as practicable. Prior to reopening, however, we must ensure key building repairs are completed to the highest internationally benchmarked standards. Fundamentally, we need to restore our reputation as an important and reliable national and international venue. But to once more become a gallery that punches above its weight and is 'up there' with the best in the world, we must again become a gallery in which lenders and prospective partners have confidence. The quality and performance of our building is crucial to this.

Christchurch Art Gallery exists because good art really matters, and our founding donors and private supporters have reinforced this belief over more than a century. We have always sought to connect people with art, ideas about art and artists. Now, we want to be crucial to the heart of the city once more, to make a difference. We can help people to identify Christchurch as 'open for business', a good place to live and to visit.

We are pleased the Gallery building was able to play a key role in the recovery and future planning of Christchurch and that, during this time, our building became a prominent symbol of renewal. However, now we need to turn to our more specific role as a focus of the city's cultural recovery.

Ours is the only public gallery in this area and there is no way to deliver the specific and unique services we offer without an adequate building. From letters to *The Press* and the many notes of support the Gallery has received, we know it is sorely missed. And we are very aware that one of the few remaining recognisable Christchurch landmarks will founder even further if Christchurch Art Gallery is unable to get over negative perceptions (local, national and international).

Canterbury now finds itself in a new seismic situation that puts it alongside California, Japan, Chile and Greece, to name but a few. We are aware of how risks are mitigated in relation to key public buildings (including galleries and museums) in earthquake-prone areas such as Wellington, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Tokyo; we believe that we must not only restore our building, but ensure it is able to improve its seismic capability.

To this end, we have recommended that additional earthquake stabilisation work be carried out, bringing us in line with an increasing number of major public buildings in areas deemed to be of a higher risk of earthquakes. In addition, Councillors have proposed that the Gallery be repaired to 100 per cent of the new building code, which is considerably tougher in its requirements than the previous code. The repairs that are being advocated for the Gallery are intended to substantially increase our seismic capacity and will massively improve our chances of getting back to where we were in terms of being an active art gallery that functions on both a national and an international stage. To date, we have managed risks through technology, good collection management and installation procedures and timely communications, but now help is needed to manage negative perceptions of the new Christchurch.

The state of our city's cultural institutions was thrown into sharp focus again in April, with the news that Canterbury Museum will be closed until further engineering reports are received and the Museum's Board is satisfied that the building is of a standard to open to the public. We Gallery staff know how hard it is to be closed and we hope that they are able to open again soon. It's certainly difficult in this city with so many of our cultural destinations damaged or destroyed.

With knowledge of the fact that the Gallery will remain closed for some time, we must recognise that there are a range of services we are unable to continue to provide in the shorter term. As a result, we are in the unfortunate position of being obliged to make a number of changes to our organisational structure, and with these changes, a number of redundancies. This is not something we have entered into lightly, In total, these affect seventeen valued members of staff. We are offering all the support we can to the affected staff, and wish them all the very best for the future.

Throughout all of this, however, we are continuing to exhibit art. This month sees the return to New Zealand of Michael Parekowhai's Venice Biennale presentation *On first looking into Chapman's Homer.* I'm thrilled that, despite all the trials that this city has faced since the project was seen at the Venice Biennale and in Paris, Christchurch Art Gallery will be the first in New Zealand to exhibit the work on its return. We will be showing *Chapman's Homer* in and outside the NG space on Madras Street; with a series of regular musical performances planned, it should be well worth repeat visits.

Our **Rolling Maul** and **Outer Spaces** programmes continue apace, with new elements added regularly. And from 23 June you will be able to see the outdoor exhibition **Reconstruction: conversations on a city**, which will be displayed on a series of free-standing display boards down the section of Worcester Boulevard between Durham and Montreal streets. As Christchurch faces enormous challenges connected to rebuilding, this gathering of images and commentaries will provide an opportunity to reflect on the city's past and the different places it has been, and upon how particular dreams and values have been given form in our built environment.

And finally, we were thrilled to take home two awards from the Museums Aotearoa Awards in April—not bad for a gallery that's not even open. My Gallery won in the *Innovation and use of technology* section and in the *Art and design exhibition* category we won with our exhibition **De-Building**. **De-Building** was praised for the way it responded to the September 2010 earthquake, and My Gallery for its playfulness and 'allowing for the unexpected to happen'. We're getting pretty good at that. My thanks to all our staff for their contributions to these projects.

Whatever the result of the consultation process, the coming months will be a busy time for the Gallery. But throughout our repair programme we are committed to providing a cultural outlet for the city whenever, and wherever, possible. In the meantime, keep an eye on our website for updates on our progress.

Jenny Harper
Director
May 2012

Outer Spaces

What do you do when you don't have a gallery to show art in? The answer is, of course, you show art somewhere else. Welcome to the **Outer Spaces.**

Fast moving and short lived or open-ended and generous in scale, the **Outer Spaces** projects are a diverse grouping, and nothing if not fluid. But the project's aim is straightforward—to introduce moments of surprise, humour, colour and wonder to post-quake Christchurch. Here are our recent projects, and some coming highlights, including the **Rolling Maul** project series.

ON NOW

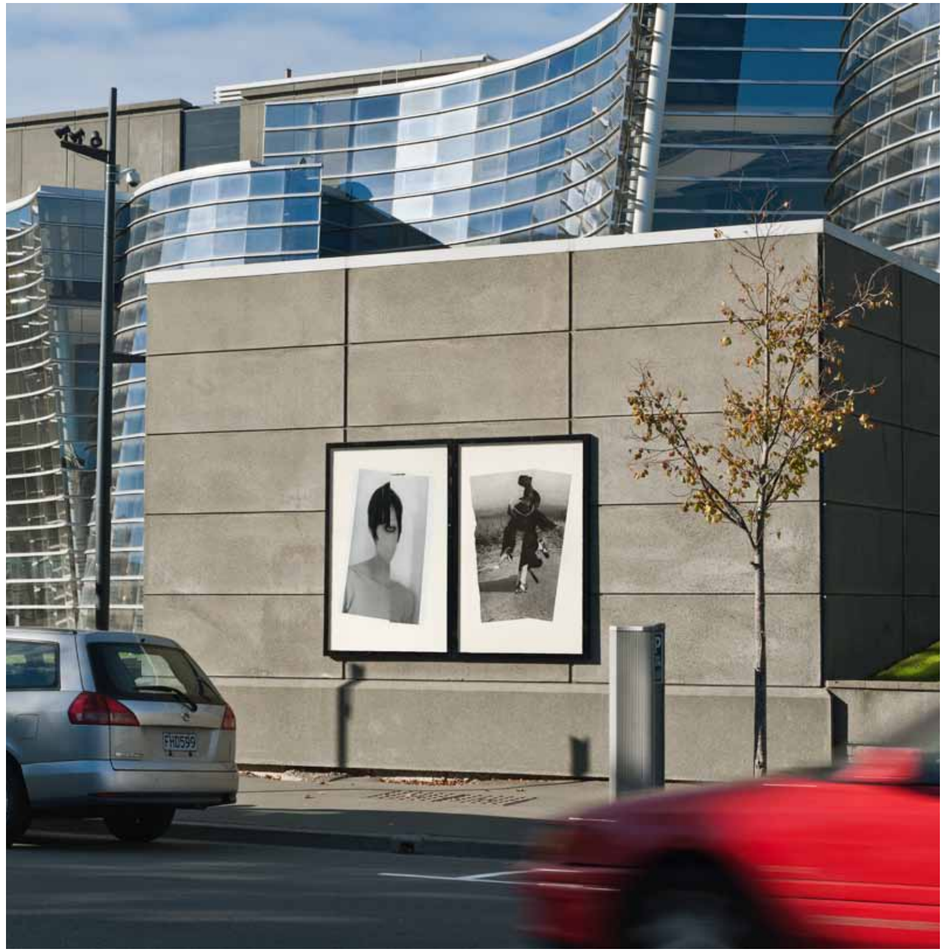
Hannah and Aaron Beehre **Waters Above Waters Below** (detail) 2012. Installation

Hannah and Aaron Beehre
Waters Above Waters Below

26 May – 17 June
In a play on the tradition of the pinhole camera, Hannah and Aaron Beehre interrupt and subvert the view from the first-floor windows of the NG space to create an immersive installation that connects us with the transformative moments beneath the surface of the everyday. Alluding to poetic mythologies, fantasy geology and pseudo-scientific theories about a vast canopy of water vapour that some believe once surrounded Earth, the exhibition stakes a claim for the return of the Sublime.

Felicity Milburn

Generously supported by: creative nz Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa



Stereoscope
Robert hood

6 June – 18 July
Two *Year of the Cyclop*s works by Christchurch artist Rob Hood kick off **Stereoscope**, a new **Outer Spaces** series housed within two black frames positioned on the street-side of the Gallery's Montreal Street bunker. With an absurdist humour, Hood re-purposes photographs culled from art and fashion magazines, creating striking new images that confuse and compel the eye.

Felicity Milburn

Robert Hood, from the **Year of the Cyclops** series, 2011. Scanned prints of folded collages. Courtesy of the artist

RECENT PROJECTS

Elliot Collins
For those who stay behind

25 February – 10 March
When the Gallery's programme came to a shuddering halt on 22 February 2011, the contemporary artists involved in the exhibitions **De-Building** and **Van der Velden: Otira** missed out on the opportunity to show their work at the Gallery. Auckland artist Elliot Collins had contributed four paintings and a video work to the contemporary section of **Van der Velden**, a section of which showcased artists responding to the Dutch master's work and the Otira landscape itself. So it was in some small measure compensation to have the opportunity to include Collins in the Outer Spaces project.

Three of Collins's word paintings appeared on bollards and walls as posters throughout the city during late February 2012 and a number are still making sporadic appearances around the red-zone perimeter fence. *Everything's Evaporating, Sparks that fly upwards* and *Walkabout* were not created directly in response to Canterbury's earthquakes yet the artist's poignant messages can carry universal glimpses of hope or poignancy that can be applied to the devastation that has been experienced in Canterbury since September 2010.

Peter Vangioni

Installation view of Elliot Collins **Sparks that fly upwards** 2010. Poster. Reproduced courtesy of the artist and Tim Melville Gallery

Zina Swanson **Sensorium** 2012. Mixed-media installation (including *Mimosa pudica*—the sensitive plant). Courtesy of the artist

Georgie Hill and Zina Swanson
Breathing space

28 April – 20 May
The vivid surfaces of Georgie Hill's delicate watercolours shimmer with colour, movement and texture. Vibrating with an intensity that belies the stillness of their elegant furnishings, her interiors are private spaces, provisional moments—removed from, but not entirely untouched by, the events that unfold beyond their luminous borders. Hill's 2011 paintings borrow their titles from Nabokov's *Ada* and were influenced by that novel's dream-bright language and examination of notions of time. The female figures that first registered in her work as faint after-images on internal walls now seize centre stage. Set against swirling, kaleidoscopic backgrounds, they radiate an unstable, hallucinatory power.

Within the walls of a domestic glasshouse, Zina Swanson presented a fragile life-support system for a *mimosa pudica*, also known as the 'sensitive plant' or 'touch-me-not', which collapses its leaves dramatically when touched or exposed to heat. Although Swanson's title, *Sensorium*, refers to the mechanisms through which we perceive and decipher the world around us, the encounter she presents is tantalisingly restricted. The *mimosa* is sealed away, protected from our curious hands, and the only experience we have of its unusual qualities comes via the artist, in the form of pseudo-scientific documentation.

Breathing space was the second exhibition in the **Rolling Maul** project series.

Felicity Milburn

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eden
Quality Kiwiana Smoothies

Sam Harrison
Render

31 March – 22 April
Strung up from the rafters and splayed out on plinths, Sam Harrison's sculptures combined powerful presence with disconcerting vulnerability. Their shapes were strange and familiar; the vast, spreading ribcage of the large carcass, the weirdly alien wallabies, the delicate, all too human, forms of the hares.

Drawing on his experiences as a hunter, Harrison's practice is anchored in the physical reality of his subjects—their weight, texture, even smell—rather than in idealised representation. The works for **Render** were sculpted from plaster and chicken wire in response to steadily decaying carcasses and the urgency and directness of this process was reflected in their raw immediacy.

Render was the first instalment of the **Rolling Maul** project series.

Felicity Milburn

Generously supported by:

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Sam Harrison **Carcass** 2011. Plaster and chicken wire. Courtesy of Sam Harrison and Fox Jensen Gallery

COMING SOON

Tjalling de Vries
Tjalling is Innocent

Tjalling is Innocent is an ambitious paste-up project by local artist Tjalling de Vries for the back wall of the CoCA building (viewable from Worcester Boulevard). The 13 metre wide, 9 metre high work will be built up using layers of printed paper, which the artist will tear back into and paint over, creating a collage-like surface that recalls the peeling, weather-beaten images gradually revealing themselves on the walls and bollards of Christchurch's inner-city red zone. **Tjalling is Innocent** is presented in association with CoCA, and will be installed as soon as the HSBC Building that stands next to it has been demolished. Sound familiar?

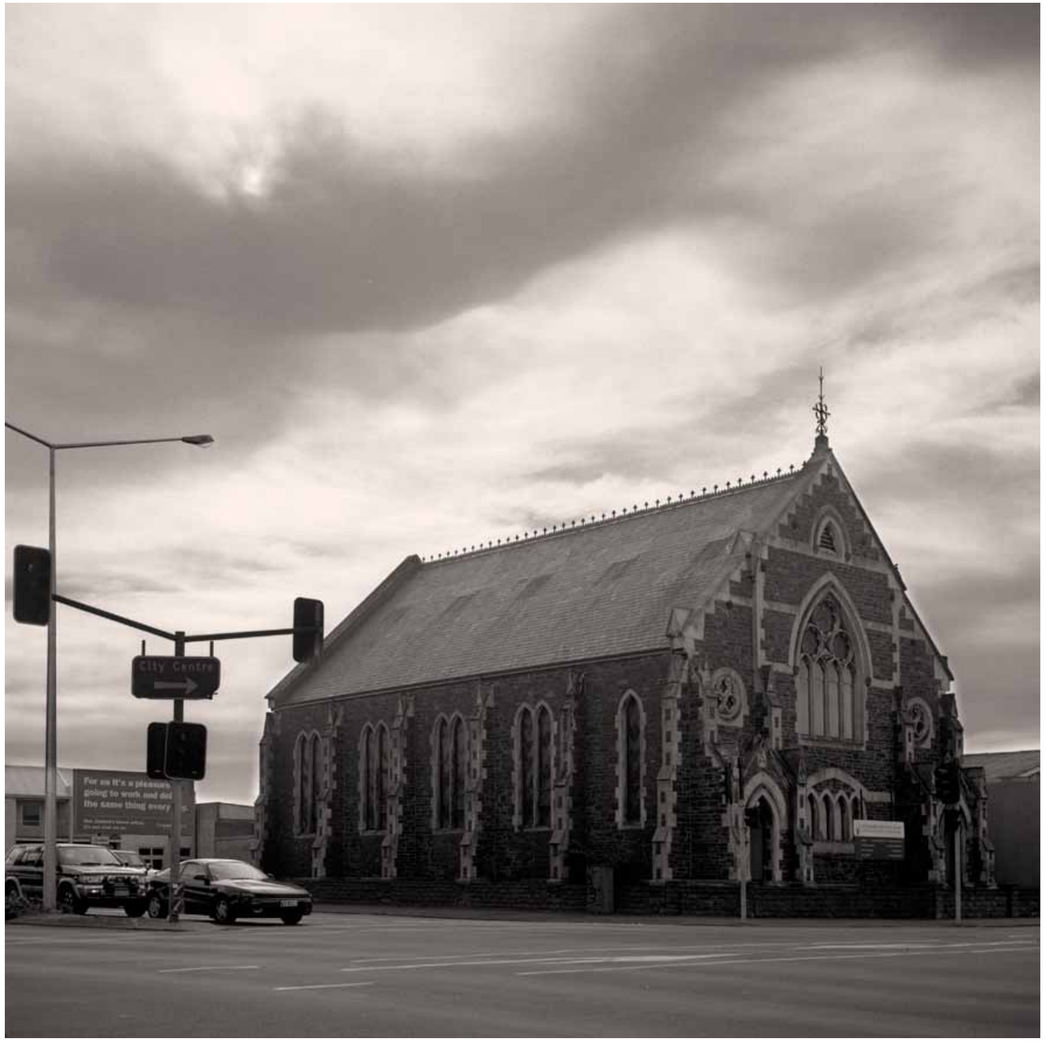
Felicity Milburn

Kay Rosen
Here are the people and there is the steeple

11 June onwards
Kay Rosen's **Here are the people and there is the steeple** is a mural project for the Gallery's east rear wall, inspired by the shape of the wall, by the words 'people' and 'steeple', by the recent and past history of the city, and by the children's finger game. The architecture of the space and the words make it possible to erect a vertical heaven-bound 'steeple' on top of a horizontal earthbound 'people', enabling a verbal metaphor which culminates in a steep three-deep pinnacle made of Es. The work hopes to send a large-scale message about rebuilding a city by, and upon the foundation of, its people.

Justin Paton

Supported by Christchurch City Council's Transitional City



Doc Ross
Phantom City

14 July – 30 September
Doc Ross has been photographing the buildings, streets and urban spaces of Christchurch and Lyttelton for the past fourteen years, framing settings that many of us had probably little thought about in terms of visual pull or beauty. If we have known the city, most of the places he has photographed will have been familiar. His collection of immaculately crafted, richly-toned black and white photographs of shops, commercial buildings, hotels, movie theatres, restaurants, churches, service stations, warehouses and railway sheds is something quite vast, and captures the texture of the place. It is the urban landscape that we knew.

Doc Ross has been a regular exhibitor at CoCA (Centre of Contemporary of Art) and he is represented in the Christchurch Art Gallery collection. He also continues to produce limited-edition artist books. Among the most recent, *Christchurch 1998–2011* gathers together a significant body of images taken before the city's seismic demise. Now completely altered in meaning, they confront our sense of memory and attachment, and have become difficult to view. In the window 464 Colombo Street (the location in fact of Ross's working studio, just down the road from Wayne Youle's Sydenham mural), the photographs will be projected to meet pavement walker or passing car. To be shown on a continuous loop, this ghosted memory of a changed city is one of the latest additions to the Gallery's **Outer Spaces** programme.

Ken Hall

Doc Ross **Sydenham Church, category II heritage number 313, Colombo Street, Sydenham, Christchurch**
2010. Pigment ink print

Stereoscope
Jason Grieg

18 July – 29 August
Keep and eye out for Jason Greig's monoprints, which will be making a larger than life appearance on the **Stereoscope** site on the Gallery's Montreal street bunker. In these recent works sinister figures cast their gaze over passers-by. Inhabiting a cold, darkened world where hues of deep blue, green and red pervade, there is a quiet stillness about Greig's characters—a stark contrast to the movement, speed and bustle of life rushing by on Montreal street.

Peter Vangioni

Other projects

Property is a hot issue in Christchurch at the moment, but not as hot as Tony de Lautour's *Unreal Estate* guides. Pick one up free at stands throughout the city from 13 August.

Chris Pole, Katharina Jaeger and Charlotte Watson feature in the fourth installment of **Rolling Maul** opening on 4 August. And keep an eye on the big window above Peterborough Library—artist Richard Killeen has got big plans for it.

A Warehouse in a Tutu

Chris Pole

APRIL 2011, AND THE GALLERY was occupied by CERA, Civil Defence, the City Council and a host of other city officials tasked with the immense job of tackling the destruction that had crippled our city. We'd been occupied since 22 February, and although our immediate future was uncertain, having been through this already in September 2010 (just before staging the hugely successful **Ron Mueck** exhibition) most staff remained positive that we'd be able to resume normal transmission sooner rather than later. So, despite awaiting internal post-quake repairs to my home, I decided to push on and take a few weeks to sand and paint my house—an old weatherboard bungalow in New Brighton that had taken decades of battering from the predominant north-easterly wind. It was hardly dilapidated, but a spruce-up was overdue.

After four days on the end of an orbital sander, two days on a ladder painting the eaves and bargeboards, a week of double coating the weatherboards and another week of sills, foundations and trims I had run out of time. And I still had to get a couple of coats of enamel on the multi-pane windows—an immense amount of brushwork that was going to keep me busy for a few weekends to come.

When I got back to work, however, nothing much had changed for the better in my absence. In fact, if anything, the picture was a little murkier regarding the Gallery's reopening, and the tall apartment buildings next door were beginning to emerge as something of an elephant in the room we all now shared. Nobody really wanted to address them; they were spoken of only in hushed tones, as if silence would make the increasingly evident problem go away. We continued to make plans for new shows even as the mutterings grew in volume, and the ramifications of a potential demolition next door began to circulate. And then suddenly project managers and insurers were involved and our worst fears began to become reality.

The whole collection would have to be moved.

'Christchurch Art Gallery was described—upon opening to the public in 2003—as 'a warehouse in a tutu'. The glass façade on the front of the building remained an uncrossable barrier, but the internal skeleton had finally lived up to its warehouse capabilities.'

It was a hugely daunting task, but much like painting a house, it was all about the preparation. In that sense, there was a genuinely collaborative effort between the curatorial, exhibitions, conservation and registration teams. But with so many unknowns to deal with (When would we get our building back? When would demolition start? Would the earth stay still?) at first our discussions seemed to begin at no fixed point and have no end; they overlapped, contradicted and circled back upon themselves. However, slowly a plan emerged—at some point you have to put down the sander and pick up the paintbrush.

A swathe of stores throughout the building housing sculpture, textiles, works on paper, contemporary and historic paintings, small objects and a multitude of miscellaneous artworks were to be corralled into one location in our downstairs exhibition galleries. We had a looming deadline—only slightly less ominous than the leaning towers that necessitated the shift in the first place. Both the stores and the site of their proposed relocation were measured, and though we were confident that everything would fit there was no doubt that it was going to be tight. But it was complicated—much like the display of artworks, the safe storage of those items means that they all have their own individual needs. And so it began…

It was decided that a vast number of paintings, drawings and photographs would be housed in temporary plywood bins, the artworks interleaved with sheets of cardboard. Over seventy bins had to be built, each one with a base of 120 x 174cm, two short sides and two tall ends. They had wooden block feet attached and each was able to house a large number of artworks, dependent on weight, size and depth. The great thing about the bins was that they could be wheeled into the stores on dollies, filled with artworks, wheeled out again to their new home and then lowered onto the floor with a pallet jack. Their mobility allowed us to store them in a Tetris-like manner, creating paths through the maze where needed. It also meant no double-handling. Each artwork was removed from its storage rack or shelving unit by technicians, its accession number read out loud to the registrar, who gave it a new bin location on an endless scroll of lists that ensured every artwork had an accurately recorded location at all times. The bins all had an elaborate coding system that was fed into a master floorplan that could be referred to should an artwork need to be found.

While this was happening, the shelving units housing the many large crates of sculpture that the Gallery owns had their contents removed, were entirely dismantled in the stores and reassembled downstairs, with the crates put back in place exactly as they had been. This was heavy, difficult work, but tackled early in the shift to gain some momentum while others were in the workshop building the plywood bins. Indeed, the bin building was a weeks-long exercise that involved a constant stream of timber deliveries; the wood diced up on the table saw in a production-line fashion, assembled in batches of four with a pin gun, screws, and glue and then lined with strips of foam to protect the frames and edges of artworks. The first few were kind of rewarding, but the job became tedious no matter how many philosophical discussions were had, how many bad jokes were told, or how loud Classic Hits was pumped on the workshop stereo.

‘Landscapes sat beside abstracts, portraits hung above reliefs, waterfalls mixed with farmyard animals and distinguished scholars shared wall space with spot-lit eighties pop stars.’

At this stage the **Brought To Light** collection exhibition was still largely on the walls, and this had to be packed down for storage as well. The works on paper store—a series of rolling shelves filled with hundreds of Solander boxes, themselves filled with thousands of matted drawings, prints,

photographs and watercolours—was rolled down on laden trolleys and stacked in a small gallery space previously home to a series of books created by Leo Bensemann at Caxton Press. Like **De-Building** and **Van der Velden: Otira**, the Leo Bensemann show was certainly not forgotten—the wall colours, labels and didactics still adorned the walls and were quickly becoming a backdrop to an insane new 'exhibition' that was taking on a life of its own.

The eccentricities of the new display became especially apparent as larger and more fragile works were hung on the Gallery walls in a mad salon-style hang, unprecedented in scale and scope. Works that had entered the collection decades ago and largely wallowed in the depths of storage ever since were suddenly thrust into the limelight, given centre stage in what was beginning to look more and more like a bizarre experiment—one with no curatorial rationale but dictated instead by that fact that 'this work will fit in that space'. Landscapes sat beside abstracts, portraits hung above reliefs, waterfalls mixed with farmyard animals and distinguished scholars shared wall space with spot-lit eighties pop stars.

'It was hard to imagine this as the scene of a giant Civil Defence rescue operation (as it had recently been), or indeed even as a space for displaying art, despite the fact that there were thousands of artworks everywhere you looked.'

Giant steel units were systematically emptied of their contents; the drawers tipped sideways onto trolleys, angled carefully—and barely!—into our goods lift, and refilled with their precious cargo on the ground floor. Slot racks were assembled out of timber framing in-situ—grids built from four-by-two with little more than a ladder and a nail-gun. These were loaded with seascapes and mountain views, the curly bits on their gilded frames protected by sponges and ether foam, paintings stored back-to-back with the greatest of care. Textile rolls were pushed into corners, recent acquisitions not even accessioned yet were grouped together, and hundreds of orange crates full of archives were brought down from the library by way of the fumigation room.

Weeks of planning melded into weeks of shifting, as nooks and crannies filled with all of the anomalous objects that would fit nowhere else. It became hard to imagine this as the scene of a giant Civil Defence rescue operation (as it had recently been), or indeed even as a space for displaying art, despite the fact that there were thousands of artworks everywhere you looked.

Christchurch Art Gallery was described—upon opening to the public in 2003—as 'a warehouse in a tutu'.[1] The glass façade on the front of the building remained an uncrossable barrier, but the internal skeleton had finally lived up to its warehouse capabilities. With stacks of crates, bins, tables, and shelves lining the touring gallery spaces, the master floorplan was finally adjusted and the details sent to the insurers. And then the lights were turned out and the spaces put into lockdown.

Months have since passed and the demolition of the next-door apartments has now been completed. I've finished painting all of the windows at home, indeed some of the internal repair work has even been carried out, and I've become a father to a beautiful wee girl. We've put aside the prospect of reopening for the moment and instead launched into a variety of exciting off-site projects, from huge murals to haunted houses to temporary exhibitions in places we wouldn't have imagined using this time a year ago. But I can hear some familiar footsteps approaching; there's another elephant on the way, and it is likely to take up residence in our temporary offices in a small corner of our largely inaccessible building. For just as surely as the north-easterly will keep on blowing, and as surely as my house will need to be repainted in the years to come, before we can reinstate a dynamic suite of exhibitions and finally open again to our sorely missed public, we're going to have to move the entire collection *back again*...

Chris Pole
Exhibitions designer

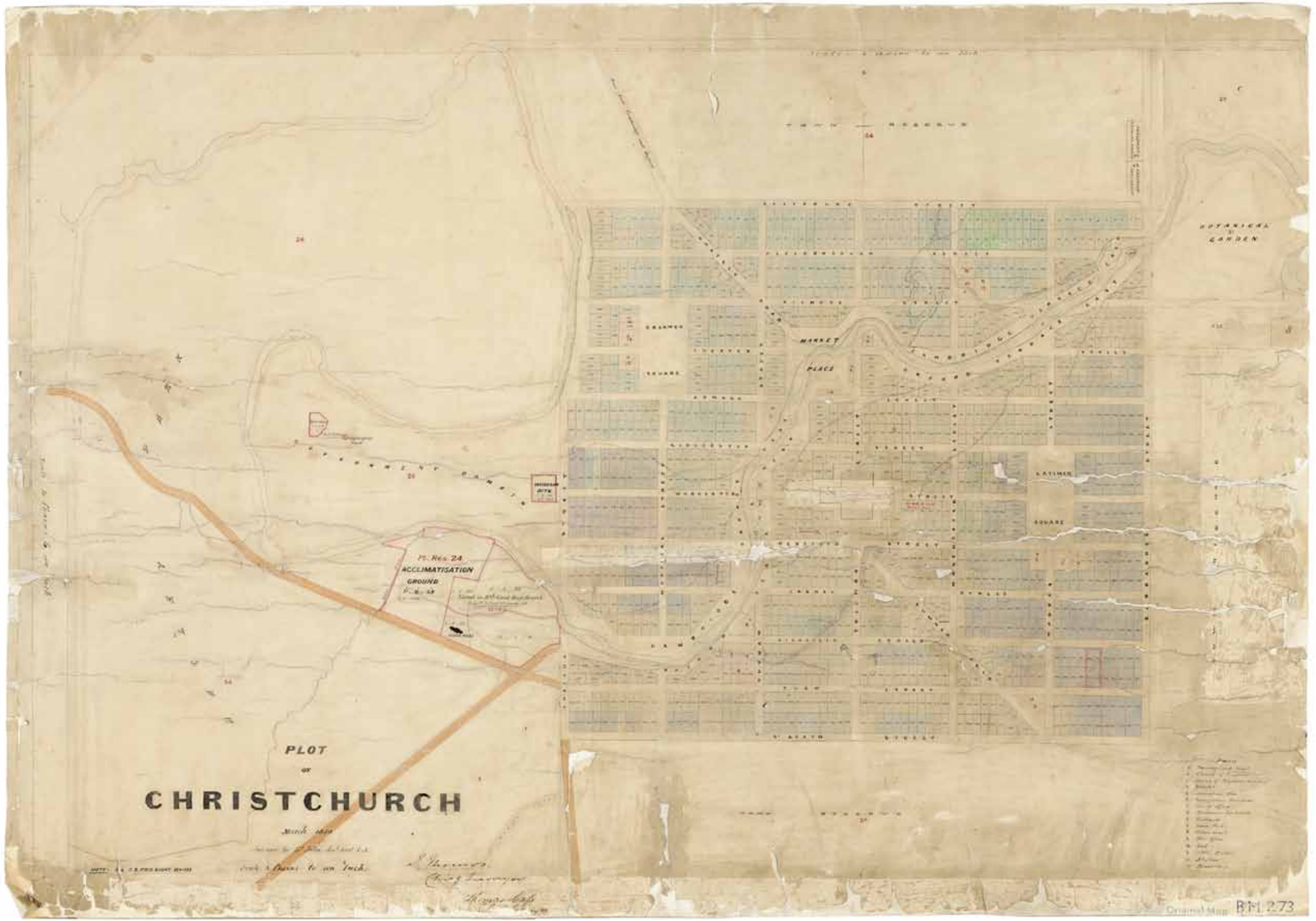
NOTE

1. John Wilson, 'Warehouse in a tutu, *The Press*, 11 December 2002, pp.C1 and C6

Ernest George Gillick **Ex Tenebris Lux** (detail) 1937. Bronze. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwetu, presented by R.E. McDougall. Reproduced courtesy of Norah B. Landells

Laying out Foundations

Looking broadly at the topic of local architectural heritage, **Reconstruction: conversations on a city** *had been scheduled to open at the Gallery but will now instead show on outdoor exhibition panels along Worcester Boulevard from 23 June. Supplementing works from the collection with digital images from other collections, curator Ken Hall brings together an arresting art historical tour of the city and its environs.*



Edward Jollie **Black map 273, Plot of Christchurch, March 1850, sheet 1** 1850. Ink and watercolour. Archives New Zealand Christchurch Office, archives reference: CAYN 23142 CH1031/179 item 273/1

'We may live without her and worship without her, but we cannot remember without her'

John Ruskin on architecture,
The Seven Lamps of Architecture, 1849.

It feels somewhat overwhelming to be bringing this particular visual history into the midst of the heritage disaster that is our present Christchurch. But the images selected for **Reconstruction** seem to matter, and they leave a strong imprint. The diverse gathering of digitised drawings, paintings, plans, photographs and prints offers a telling account of how this place came to be; tracking the story through stills from a historical documentary spanning 164 years provides a clear sense of narrative being played out. It's a movie with transfixing moments and some unpleasant twists—you already know it has a bad ending, but can only hope that when the sequel has been written, the story will not have completely fallen apart. Meanwhile, the eradication of surviving heritage structure in this city continues on an unimaginable scale. At present the exhibition seems more a memorial to the city's rapidly fading architectural past than a vessel that might yet uphold or safeguard heritage values. The images may be all that we have left.

Reconstruction makes no claim to being comprehensive, but aims to provide clarity around the circumstances into which Christchurch was born. Enter a faded pencil drawing—the first known image created within the city's planned boundaries—made thirteen months before the arrival of the first Canterbury Association settler ships.[1] It's a disconcerting start. Walter Mantell's *City of Christchurch Nov 14 1849* shows two wooden surveyor's huts, one with a chimney, on a site that would become known as The Bricks, a landing place for boats on the Avon River by the corner of what is now Salisbury and Barbadoes streets. To their left, a slender flagpole holds an open flag; to the right a dignified Māori figure in a rain cape displays a taiaha, decided strut and (suggested by rapid pencil strokes) generous, outstretched hand. Mantell is no artist and the drawing—like his job title, 'Commissioner for the Extinguishment of Native Titles'—does his reputation no particular favours. But if firsts matter then the sketch is an important record of a moment in time.[2] By March 1850, just four months later, the now well-known 'Black Map of Christchurch' would have the planned city within the Four Avenues neatly laid out.[3]

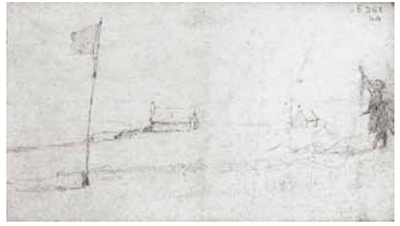
Examples of local Māori architecture are seen in the work of a small number of explorer/surveyor/settler artists, including William Fox, Richard Oliver, Frederick Weld and Charles Haubroe. Providing an invaluable record of Ngāi Tahu settlements beyond the immediate Christchurch vicinity are watercolours painted between 1848 and 1855 by Fox at Te Rakawakaputa (near present-day Kaiapoi), Oliver at Purau, Weld at Rāpaki and Haubroe at Kaiapoi. As depictions of a people and way of life soon to be overwhelmed by the expansionist ways of the British Empire, these paintings may at the same time be interpreted as representing a period of new beginnings for Ngāi Tahu. Following a period of devastating intertribal warfare, peace, faith and reconciliation have come. At this moment the people are rebuilding, in a sense starting again (some of the buildings depicted will have been new); imagining perhaps that the newcomers will be accommodated into their changing world.

Those who wield pencil and brush, however, are part of the strengthening colonial tide, the scale of which is unforeseen. Soon to be made effectively landless, Ngāi Tahu will wait a long time before those in power make honourable amends.

John Robert Godley's Canterbury Settlement—an idealistic new society filled with towering spires, far from his beloved Christ Church College in Oxford, England—could have almost been anywhere, and at one point was being considered for the Wairarapa. From the end of 1850 onwards, as a good number of watercolour sketches show, the Canterbury settlers and their simple structures—tents, makeshift huts and prefabs—begin to spill out of Lyttelton, up and across the land. In the vast scrubland plain, partly swamp, the Christchurch grid will be slowly filled, every single building to begin with raised purely in relation to practical concerns. It will not be long before talent and greater ambitions are ready to perform. The city's founding and transitional stages will be exquisitely chronicled by Dr Alfred Charles Barker (ship's surgeon from the *Charlotte Jane,* the first Canterbury Association ship to reach Lyttelton) in pencil and watercolour, then with his ever-present camera. Barker's shipmate (and photography tutor), the architect Benjamin Woolfield Mountfort, will make the greatest initial impact on the architectural fabric of the new city. His Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings emerging from the swamp in this early period must be admired as a remarkable feat.

Above:
William Fox
Rakawakaputa, P. Cooper Plains. 1848 [Te Rakawakaputa, Kaiapoi Wataputa 20 Decr 1848; Wataputa on Canterbury Plain. Jan 1849, from Fox sketchbook] 1848. Watercolour. Hocken Collections Uare Taoka O Hakena University of Otago

Right:
Walter Baldock Durrant Mantell **City of Christchurch Nov 14 1849** 1849. Pencil. National Library of New Zealand, Alexander Turnbull Library, E-281-q-040



Far right:
Alfred Charles Barker **Untitled [View from Canterbury Provincial Council Buildings, showing Durham and Gloucester streets]** May 1860. Albumen photograph. Barry Hancox Collection

'Beautiful, elaborate productions arose, inspired by London, Oxford, Venice or Rome.'

Far left:
Alfred Charles Barker
Government Buildings, Christchurch N.Z., from N.E. Nov. 29, 1861 1861. Glass negative. Canterbury Museum 1944.78.121

Left:
Alfred Charles Barker
Unveiling the Godley statue, Christchurch N.Z. Aug. 6, 1867 1867. Glass negative. Canterbury Museum 1944.78.52

Owing a debt of inspiration to Charles Barry's new Houses of Parliament at Westminster, Mountfort's scaled-down labyrinth as it grows from the laying of a foundation stone in 1858 is like a breathing thing; distant beams and struts in Barker's photographs expanding like ribcages into glorious life. The showcase within this set of buildings—and Mountfort's acknowledged greatest achievement among many—is his magnificent Stone Council Chamber, completed in 1865.

Certain excerpts from this early period bring it unexpectedly close. This from a Lyttelton Times writer in January 1858:

We have a chance now of making a healthy and pleasant town of Christchurch; and we ought not to commit in a new country the old-world mistake of leaving no lungs for a town which will soon become populous. … We are living in a climate more like that of France than that of England;—the French are wiser than we are in providing glimpses of vegetation in the centre of towns as an antidote against the effects of a hot summer sun upon weary and feverish populations. Let us look a little to the future.[4]

Or perhaps this from Alfred Barker (writing to his brother Matthias in England) on 8 June 1869:

We had a most tremendous & peculiar earthquake here on Saturday last—I was lying in bed, ill, at 8 a.m. when I heard a sudden warning noise—not the deep distant rumbling usually accompanying an earthquake—the house was violently shaken—to the sore destruction of chimneys crockery & chimney ornaments—& in a few seconds all was quiet—the chimneys were wrenched round—& I have since had to take them down. In the town a good deal of mischief was done—but no lives lost—The majority of people agree that the undulatory motion came from N.E. to S.W. or vice versa—it has been succeeded by a vibratory & apparently rotator motion—but the oddest part is it was entirely confined to Christchurch & its vicinity—the shock seemed to come from directly beneath us—but strange to say it did not affect the artesian wells at all. This is the first earthquake which did not give me the sensation of sea sickness.[5]

(And now I am distracted, wondering how many quakes Barker can have experienced during his nineteen years in the region to be surprised—this time—not to be feeling seasick.)

The *West Coast Times* added more details about the impact of Christchurch's quake:

[It] inflicted considerable damage. The Government buildings, the Bank of New South Wales, the Town Hall, and other stone buildings, are greatly cracked and injured. A large number of chimneys are thrown down, and others will have to be taken down. It has been the severest shock ever felt here.[6]

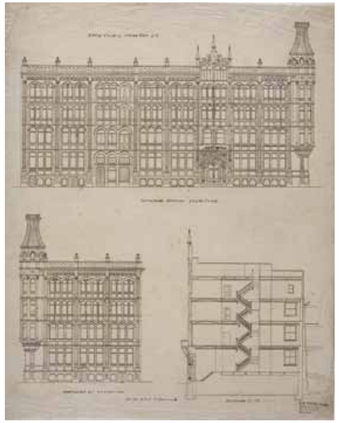
We kept building the city and the quakes we forgot. Beautiful, elaborate productions arose, inspired by London, Oxford, Venice or Rome. Gothic spires appeared everywhere: schools, libraries and university; courthouses and cricket pavilions; museum, railway station and asylum; numerous churches; the tallest, long-awaited, on ChristChurch Cathedral. Sturdy temples dedicated to sacred or secular pursuits embraced the excitement of Gothic revival, Venetian Gothic, neo-classical, Queen Anne or Georgian revival. The proliferation of architecture—serious architecture—meant that Mountfort, provincial architect from 1864, found ready competition from trained and talented others, including Samuel C. Farr, Thomas Cane, W.B. Armson, J.C. Maddison, J.J. Collins, R.D. Harman and Samuel Hurst Seager.[7] Appropriations and adaptations from Roman avenues and villas, the Colosseum or Bath Guildhall showed up in Cathedral Square or on Colombo, Manchester, Worcester, High, Cashel, Hereford and Lichfield streets. Dreams embodying cultural accomplishment, past and present, solidified and defined the city. Stone, brick and concrete reinforced the impression of permanence and stability, while timber retreated into the role of hidden structural support.

When Canterbury's founder J.R. Godley left New Zealand in 1852, the town of Christchurch was still just a few wooden huts scattered across swampy scrubland, yet his farewell speech displayed his pride in what the settlement had already become:

When I first adopted and made my own the idea of this colony, it pictured itself to my mind in the colours of a Utopia. Now that I have been a practical coloniser, and have seen how these things are managed in fact, I often smile when I think of the ideal Canterbury of which our imagination dreamed. Yet I have seen nothing in the dream to regret or to be ashamed of,

Top:
Burton Brothers **Hereford Street, Christchurch** undated. Photograph from black and white gelatin glass negative. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa C.011541

Below:
J.G. Collins (Collins & Harman architects) **The Press Building** c.1906. Ink. Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury B1418/137708



and I am quite sure that without the enthusiasm, the poetry, the unreality (if you will), with which our scheme was overlaid, it would never have been accomplished.[8]

He concluded with the thought that 'The Canterbury Association has done its work and passed away', maintaining that they had done, 'a great and heroic work; they have raised to themselves a noble monument—they have laid the foundations of a great and happy people'.[9] (Even a fraction of his acknowledged idealism could yet serve us well.)

Godley was a principled as well as romantic character, and appears to have been on good terms with local Māori. It is interesting to learn of a presentation made upon his departure from an (as yet) unknown local Ngāi Tahu chief—the highly symbolic gift of a taonga pounamu (greenstone treasure).[10] There is something here yet to be understood in relation to this city's foundations—related perhaps to rightful expectations and relationships. It is thought-provoking. The degree of regard in which he was held by the Canterbury colonists is also plainly manifest in Barker's August 1867 photograph of the unveiling of Godley's memorial statue, by pre-Raphaelite sculptor Thomas Woolner, in Cathedral Square. The idea of foundations laid, a city born out of one person's carefully constructed dream, remains potent even now; particularly when it may be reasonably said that many of us owe at least a part of our existence to this idea.

Did the foundations ever help support 'a great and happy people'? Were these even things we could ever become? We should return more squarely to architecture and urban design. Clearly a city's buildings and spaces are not its people, but it may be recognised that these may contribute much towards our quality of life. The American author Mark Twain saw good and pleasant things at least in the Christchurch he visited in November 1895, describing it as 'an English town, with an English-park annex, and a winding English brook [and] a settled old community, with all the serenities, the graces, the conveniences, and the comforts of the ideal home-life.'[11] Looking at the visual record, it is not difficult for heritage devotees to feel that the city was at its happiest at about fifty years into the story, at around the time of Twain's visit—or perhaps later, around 1923, when Robert P. Moore brought his panoramic camera to Christchurch, Lyttelton and Sumner. Along with its satellite towns, the city has developed architecturally and carries many impressive qualities. The streetscapes are handsome and cohesive; the buildings well-crafted and sufficiently diverse, holding many details and pleasurable elements of surprise.

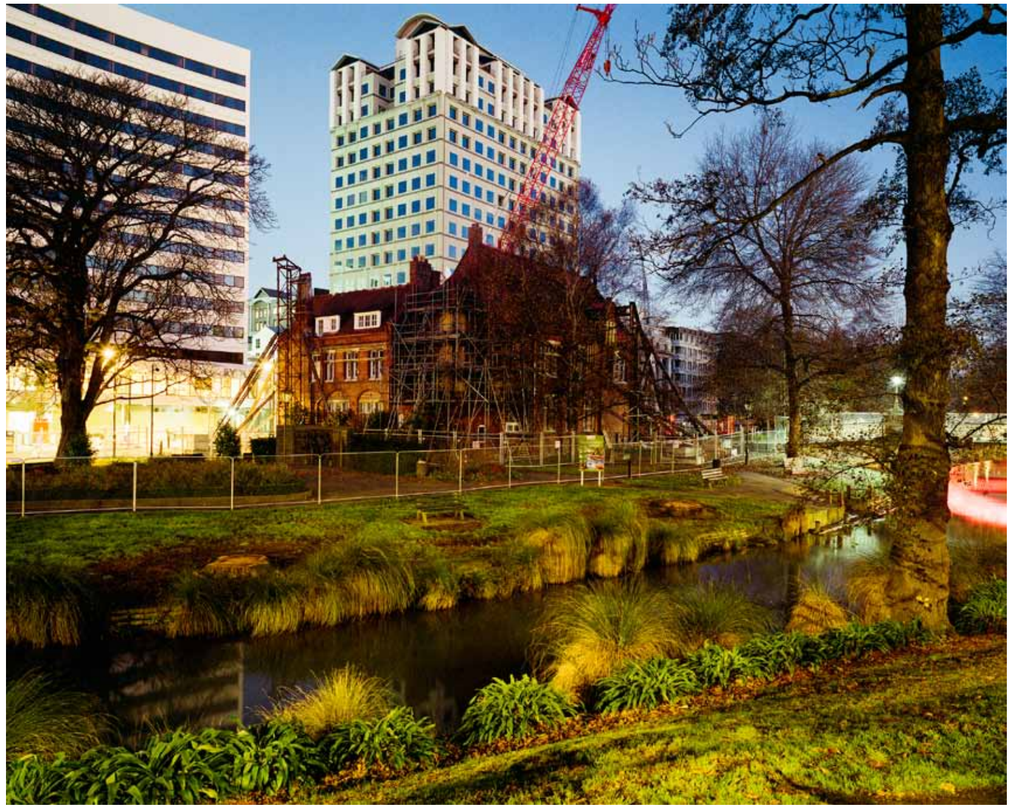
All this is several decades before the period in which the wrecker's ball will be given reign, making space for the profitable, 'new knows best', hulking walls and towers of modernism. (Apologies in advance to those who feel **Reconstruction** casts modernism as the evil baddy.) Many fine buildings will be lost; others will be retained and loved. We can also note in the early record—because we know—that some buildings look dangerous. Hindsight will be something to retain. Keeping anything much at all from our architectural past will be more difficult.

Time has been compressed in the visual record we now own. Many events—and not just recent ones—have turned artist and photographer into historian. Not all would have necessarily sought this fact. However the archival impulse attached to artistic acts of depiction and documentation has regularly been knowing and intentional. As witnesses to change, photographers such as Alfred Barker or Daniel Mundy can be seen as sharing a similar motivation to that of Murray Hedwig, Doc Ross, Tim Veling and John Collie across their unconnected years. In this study of the changing structures and spaces of our city's past, learning becomes as important as remembering. We will all bring our own histories and experience to these images. I am certain they will invite a strong response.

Ken Hall
Curator

***Reconstruction: conversations on a city** can be seen on Worcester Boulevard between Durham and Montreal streets from 23 June to 16 September.*

Tim J. Veling **Support Structure, Former Municipal Chambers, Christchurch** 2011. C-type digital print. Collection of the artist



NOTES

1. Earlier images from within present-day Christchurch were made at the Deans brothers' Riccarton farm in 1848, by Walter Mantell (Alexander Turnbull Library, E-334-014) and William Fox (Hocken Pictorial Collections, A783).
2. The figure is evidently more than symbolic: the reverse of the drawing includes various notes, including carefully-written Māori names in another hand, one being Hoani Paratene followed by a note in Mantell's hand 'by Topi & Taiaroa. Dec. 17 Monday'. Alexander Turnbull Library, E-281-q-040.
3. See 'Black Map of Christchurch, March 1850, Sheet 3', B.M.273, Plot of Christchurch March 1850, Surveyed by Edward Jollie, Assistant Surveyor C.A., Archives New Zealand. http://archives.govt.nz/gallery/v/Online+Regional+Exhibitions/Chregionalofficegallery/sss/Black+Map+of+Christchurch/
4. *Lyttelton Times*, 9 January 1858, p.4.
5. A.C. Barker, Canterbury Museum, letter transcribed by Sylvia Hall, 2002.
6. 'Earthquake at Christchurch', *West Coast Times*, 7 June 1869, p.3.
7. Samuel Charles Farr (1827–1918), Thomas Walter Cane (1830–1905), William Barnett Armson (1832/3–1883), Joseph Clarkson Maddison (1850–1923), John James Collins (1855–1933), Richard Dacre Harman (1859–1927), Samuel Hurst Seager (1855–1933).
8. John Robert Godley, quoted in William Scott, *The Christian Remembrancer*, vol.26, London, 1853, p.320.
9. Ibid., p.322.
10. John Robert Godley Memorial Trust Collection.
11. Mark Twain, *Following the Equator*, 1897, p.134.

CITIES OF REMEMBRANCE

REBECCA SOLNIT

NOTHING WAS MORE FASCINATING than ruins to me when I was growing up in one of the newest parts of the New World—new, anyway, to extensive buildings and their various forms of lingering collapse and remnant. The native people of California had mostly built ephemeral structures that were readily and regularly replaced and left few traces. Anything old, anything that promised to reach into the past, was magical for me; ruins doubly so for the usual aura of romance and loss that, like death, is most alluring to the young who have not seen much of it yet.

Not much is more difficult for me to look at than ruins now that I have travelled extensively in the wreckage of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, the Tohoku region of Japan since the tsunami and in Detroit since the economic earthquakes left it with half its population vanished, the rest impoverished; trees of heaven taking root on the uncleaned crevices of high-rise buildings and whole neighbourhoods turning back into meadows and forests. I have seen what pain can be associated with ruin.

I don't want cities that are nothing but pain. But I don't want anaesthetised, amnesiac cities either. Surely there is a middle ground. Certainly there is a difference between new and old ruins as colossal as that between Port-au-Prince and Pompeii. And a difference between ruined cities and thriving cities that retain some ruin as a site of reflection and respect for those who suffered and died. And even with more recent ruins there are differences that matter. There are structures that fall into decay because of abandonment: roofs fall in, mortar corrodes, animals take over and plants begin to thrive. These are gentle ruins in which natural processes overtake the built environment, so that what is the decay of the constructed is the triumph of the wild.

But this variety of ruin often nowadays arises from the ungentle rearrangements of economies, perhaps most extensively in the abandoned industrial buildings and cities of the global north. These are the ruins of globalisation, in which cars and washing machines and clothes are made in the sweatshops of the south, creating another kind of ruin—abandoned villages, abandoned agrarian societies, abandoned food security and independence from the vagaries of the market. In many cities such as my own, San Francisco, and New York, this industrial abandonment was overtaken by new uses for the buildings—witness the lofts of SoHo, formerly a manufacturing district in lower Manhattan—so that little remains to remind anyone that the economy and employment were once very different.

Yves Marchand and Romain Meffre **Fisher Body 21 Plant, Detroit**. Photograph. Reproduced with permission

Yves Marchand and Romain Meffre **The Palmyra Apartments, Detroit**. Photograph. Reproduced with permission

‘The built environment is only the placeholder, not quite the place that is a city, just as the brain is not the mind.’

And then there are the ungentle ruins, the buildings that collapsed in a day in Baghdad or Kosovo or Kobe or Christchurch. Even in the sudden collapse of a building, a neighbourhood, a city, the distinction between war and nature matters. There is less malice in the latter, and fewer politics. It is also important, however, to recollect that disaster sociologists like to say that there’s no such thing as a natural disaster. When I went to the earthquake-shattered city of L’Aquila in central Italy a few months after the earthquake there, I was told, ‘In California no one would have died.’

It’s not generally earthquakes that kill; it’s the collapse of the built environment that a quake causes. How hard it falls depends on whether you have the unregulated jumble of a poor place like Haiti or the high standards of Japan or California. And in many places the poor live in the vulnerable areas, so mortality is another of the prices for being unable to pay (though one of the peculiarities of my home state is that there the rich choose to live on beaches, on landfill, crumbling cliffs and fire-prone ridges and canyons, where they receive unreasonable amounts of protection and recompense when the inevitable comes again).

Ruins are painful—and yet like bodies, cities have scars, and they are part of the history of the entity. Perhaps removal of all traces of trauma can be thought of as akin to plastic surgery or amnesia, erasing the past, erasing the true age and experience of a place. Which is not to justify or celebrate cities in ruins, but to imagine that perhaps some ruins are worth keeping. When I first went to London in 1976, at age fifteen, there were still traces of the Blitz. In many ways that was London’s finest hour, and perhaps some trace of what a cratered, shattered city the cheerfully defiant Londoners lived in should have been kept alive. In Coventry, the medieval cathedral half-destroyed by German aerial bombardment on 14 November 1940 was left as ruin—as a site of memory. To rebuild it would have been to turn a medieval into a modern structure or a facsimile of itself and perhaps to erase the ordeal. Leaving it and building a new cathedral for worship means that memory remains alive—memory of death and loss—and life goes on.

My city has only one real monument to the 1906 earthquake that, thanks to the terrible response of the authorities, resulted in fires that burned down half the city. It’s the fire hydrant that, when all the rest were dry, miraculously had water: ‘the hydrant that saved the Mission district’. We—locals, city officials, firefighters, the Red Cross—celebrate the earthquake anniversary at 5:06am every year at Lotta’s Fountain downtown, and then at dawn some of the celebrants zip across town to spray-paint the hydrant gold all over again. It’s not much. Those of us who are deeply rooted in the place might remember what happened in 1906 and have lived through what happened in 1989, but a lot of people are young, transient, recently arrived, and nothing tells them that all this is temporary, contingent, just pretending to be stable and secure until ‘the big one’ comes.

The built environment is only the placeholder, not quite the place that is a city, just as the brain is not the mind. After the 1906 earthquake the writer Mary Austin remarked that ‘It comes to this with the bulk of San Franciscans, that they discovered the place and the spirit to be home rather than the walls and the furnishings.’ Her city didn’t burn down so much as it rose up; it was a city of people, not of buildings. Ruins commemorate what became of the structures but something more might be needed to recall the ordinary heroism of people in disaster. We have too many monuments to faraway wars of dubious merit and not nearly enough to the civilians who risk their lives at home. And maybe not enough ruins.

We tear down and replace ruins in thriving cities, because we want those spaces to be useful, inhabitable, productive again. The ruins in other cities—Antigua,

Guatemala, Detroit, Cambodia—are there because nothing has replaced them, because the city is in decline or even dead. And yet to thrive, cities need to be of the past as well as the future. Amnesia is one of the curses of prosperity, which will ruin continuity, tradition, local and fragile parts of the community while keeping the buildings standing, or replacing the old with the new. Too much can be swept away in the name of progress and profit. Although Manhattan's cast iron district mutated into SoHo and its once-ruinous, renegade-inhabited Chelsea Piers are now bland-faced sports arenas, too much has been erased from too much of that city; like San Diego's downtown it is like a theme park of itself.

Maybe there's an inside-out kind of ruin that is the ruin of memory: that's what a city of fully profitable, fully exploited, shiny new spaces can be. It has everything for the wallet and nothing for the imagination, which needs to stretch backward to be able also to stretch forward. It is a city in which the past has been ruined, as both actual place and as space for memory. For ruin also means to spoil something, and in this sense the pumped-up polished cities of maximum commercial potential are deeply ruined, not least because they are so lacking in actual ruin.

The past exists in a city as memorials, monuments and inscriptions, but also as old buildings, as institutions and sites of continuity—a stable, a church continuously hosting mass for one century or for several, a parade threaded down the same boulevard on the same festival day. And as ruins. Ruins remind us that all this is only provisional, that nothing lasts forever, that another day will come and with it another order, or another disaster. Ruins are parts of the city not forced to be productive in the present. They are spaces and structures that, although they have in a sense retired from work (or at least from ordinary productivity), produce the extraordinary and the unquantifiable out of which every great city must be made. The cities that are too ruined are tragic. But the cities without any ruins at all are shallow. How to have a thriving city that is not amnesiac, not all about profit and nothing more, might be about finding the balance between erasing and preserving ruin. Although of course how to have a thriving city is the great problem for the rust-belt cities like Detroit and Toledo and Cleveland.

At the site of a ruin, you pause, you contemplate. Time and space open up a little. You might remember the specifics of why this ruin is there or the sweetness and sadness of all transience. Every ruin is a window into the past, whether the long past of entropic processes or the sudden past of a revolution that smashed up monasteries or bomb that took out neighbourhoods. If a ruin is a place that is not doing the ordinary work of cities, it is because it is doing the extraordinary work, the deep work that matters most, the work of remembering, connecting, caring, and belonging.

Rebecca Solnit

Rebecca Solnit is an activist, cultural historian and best-selling author. Her books include A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities that Arise in Disaster; After the Ruins, 1906 and 2006: Rephotographing the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire *and* Wanderlust: A History of Walking. *She has received many awards for her writing including a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Lannan literary fellowship and in 2010, Utne Reader magazine named Solnit as one of the '25 Visionaries Who Are Changing Your World'.*

The illustrations in this article are taken from Yves Marchand and Romain Meffre's The Ruins of Detriot *(Steidl, Germany, 2010).*

'Every ruin is a window into the past, whether the long past of entropic processes or the sudden past of a revolution that smashed up monasteries or bomb that took out neighbourhoods.'

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Michael Parekowhai **A Peak in Darien** (detail) 2011. Bronze, stainless steel. Courtesy of the artist and Michael Lett, Auckland. © musée du Quai Branly, photo: Cyril Zannettacci

DIRECT TO YOU FROM HENDERSON

via Venice and Paris

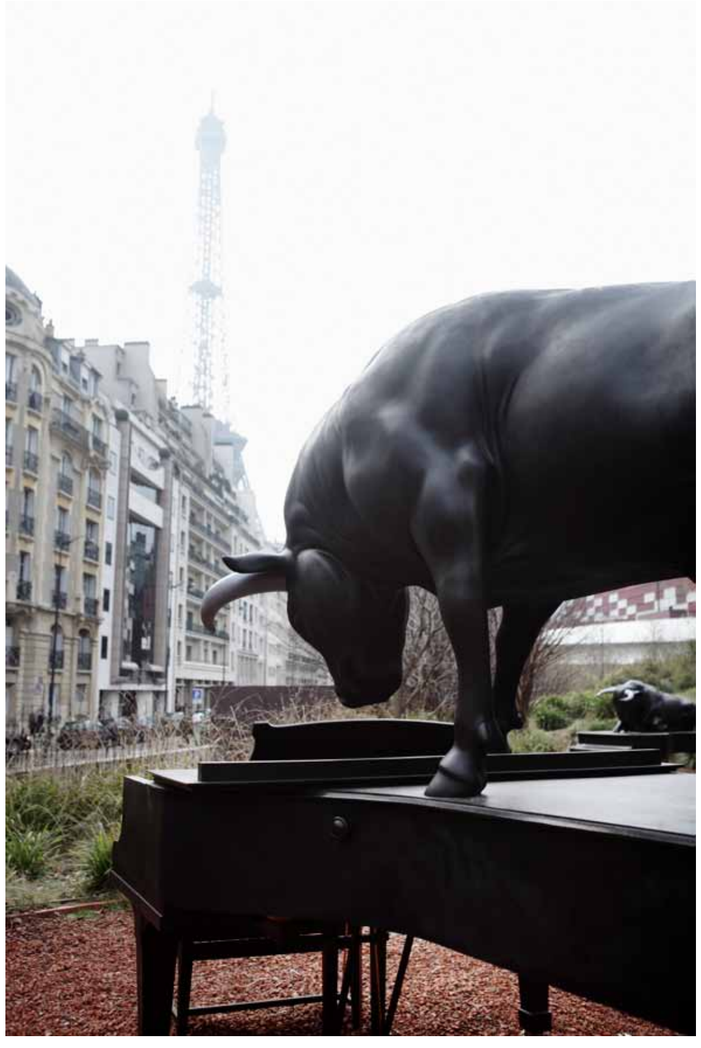
ON 11 FEBRUARY 2011, in a cliff-top house overlooking the Avon/Heathcote Estuary in Christchurch, Michael Parekowhai offered an invitation. It was to the unveiling of his Venice Biennale-bound installation, *On first looking into Chapman's Homer*, to be held in Henderson, near Auckland, on 13 March. But just eleven days later, that house and the city of Christchurch were turned upside down, and the future many of those present had been looking forward to that evening was upset.

To get to Henderson you head north-west out of Auckland. An unremarkable suburb of semi-industrial workshops and vehicle yards, shopping centres and streets of houses, it also holds a few surprises. The largest film studios in the country are there; so too are a thriving farmers' market and, around the corner from his studio, the converted car-paint spray shop where Parekowhai was to first show *Chapman's Homer*.

Parekowhai's project involved a lot of people. By the time you add in families and neighbours, friends and supporters, you are talking about a large community around this work. The acknowledgements in the accompanying publication listed 185 individuals and organisations—the core of the people Parekowhai welcomed and acknowledged in Henderson. Conventionally the work would have been revealed at the Venice Biennale but the artist was adamant: *Chapman's Homer* had to be seen, heard and experienced first at home. And home was Henderson, New Zealand.

Despite broken homes, tenuous job prospects and nerves unhinged by constant shaking, a number of people from Christchurch did still make it to Auckland. Gallery director Jenny Harper was there; so too were gallerist Jonathan Smart and sculptor Neil Dawson as well as a number of patrons and supporters. Christchurch was definitely in Henderson that day.

Now, one year later, *On first looking into Chapman's Homer* returns to New Zealand to be shown in Christchurch. As Commissioner for New Zealand to the Venice Biennale, Jenny Harper always wanted the work to be seen in her home city and following the earthquakes that determination hardened.



Michael Parekowhai **Chapman's Homer** (detail) 2011. Bronze, stainless steel. Courtesy of the artist and Michael Lett, Auckland. © musée du Quai Branly, photo: Cyril Zannettacci

Okay, Christchurch Art Gallery might be closed and venues for art events hard to find, but Christchurch was going to be the place to welcome this major project home again.

The version of *Chapman's Homer* to be shown in Christchurch is different from the Henderson version in one major dimension. Before the work headed for the Venice Biennale, after an intense weekend of tuning and playing, Parekowhai painted the glossy black carved piano, *He Kōrero Pūrākau mo Te Awanui o Te Motu: story of a New Zealand river,* red. That was a bit of a shock. The resonances of nineteenth-century Romanticism were abruptly terminated, the repertoire updated and the piano reclaimed from the musicians as a sculpture. The Venetians, of course, were convinced that the new colour scheme was nothing more than an appropriate nod to the red of their Republic. But Venice was not to be the end of the European adventures of *Chapman's Homer*, as Jenny Harper found another venue in the Quai Branly Museum in Paris.

Back when *Te Maori* was astonishing New Yorkers in 1984, Sydney Moko Mead explained in the accompanying catalogue that over time an object becomes invested with interesting talk. Well, the Quai Branly is a place for that from a Māori perspective. The museum itself is caught somewhere between proposing a post-colonial ethic and still featuring its artefacts spot-lit in darkened galleries. This 1970s theatrical style is strange in the spectacular building;

Michael Parekowhai **He Kōrero Pūrākau mo Te Awanui o Te Motu: story of a New Zealand river** 2011. Wood, brass, automotive paint, mother of pearl, paua, upholstery. Collection of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. © musée du Quai Branly, photo: Cyril Zannettacci

designed by Jean Nouvel and opened in 2006, within its sweeping ramps and surprising views the 'finger of God' displays feel like punctuation rather than narrative. It would certainly no longer fly in New Zealand, where in most museums the lighting is at a more even level. Parekowhai got the picture and sensibly opted for his two bronze works to be installed outside in the daylight.

This time *Chapman's Homer* was presented in distinct parts. The bronze pianos with their bulls were located in the grounds surrounding the building, and it was not until visitors walked into the museum itself that they were greeted by the sound of the carved piano. Of course much of the talk around this piano up to now was invested in the carvings. Back in Henderson we saw Parekowhai's father George gently tracing their twists and turns with his hand to 'read' them as though they were a picture book. Parekowhai has always heroicised the small and the marginalised in his work (sparrows, kids' toys, rabbits, a small painting by Colin McCahon, the overcoated and bowler-hatted figures from René Magritte's 1953 painting *Golconda*). How better to export this signature style than by than smuggling the modest story of his family into an artwork on display in the show-off intellectual centre of Europe?

All that said, Michael Parekowhai's work hasn't always been welcomed with open arms in Christchurch. Of course he didn't necessarily make it easy. Once he proposed that Cathedral Square host a couple of giant cartoon rabbits and later that a copy of the Marcel Duchamp readymade urinal *Fountain* replace the city's own Stewart Fountain. In the Christchurch of 2012 these locations are both unrecognisable but Parekowhai is back again—his distinctive challenges and assertions in full force in the wit and polish of *Chapman's Homer*.

After its long journeys to the Old World, *On first looking into Chapman's Homer* is home again. And that home, for this moment, is the city of Christchurch.

Jim Barr and Mary Barr

Jim Barr and Mary Barr have been collecting contemporary art since the early 1970s. ***Michael Parekowhai: On first looking into Chapman's Homer*** *will be in the NG space from 29 June to 29 July.*

A DARK AND EMPTY INTERIOR

Antony Gormley, interviewed by Jenny Harper

Antony Gormley **Event Horizon** 2007. 27 fibreglass and 4 cast iron figures, each element 189 x 53 x 29cm. Installation view Hayward Gallery, London, 2007. A Hayward Gallery Commission. © the artist. Photo: Richard Bryant

In *B.167* senior curator Justin Paton documented his walk around the perimeter of Christchurch's red zone, and we featured the empty Rolleston plinth outside Canterbury Museum at the end of Worcester Boulevard. In this edition, director Jenny Harper interviews English sculptor Antony Gormley, who successfully animated another vacant central-city plinth—the so-called Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square, London. Gormley filled the plinth with 2,400 people, who occupied it for one hour each, night and day, for 100 days. Here, Jenny asks him about his practice, the value of the figurative tradition and whether he has any advice for Christchurch.

Antony Gormley **Flat Tree** 1978. Larch wood. © the artist

JENNY HARPER: ***I'd love to capture some of your thoughts about Christchurch, but first I thought we'd start by exploring your own work and gaining some insights into your practice. From the 1980s at least, the body is always present—actual or implied—even, it seems, when it's abstracted. And I wondered why this very traditional subject in art history has held such fascination for you over all these years?***

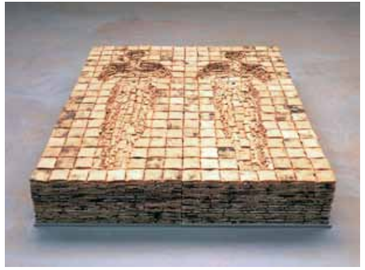
ANTONY GORMLEY: I don't think I had any choice really. My trajectory into working with things was first being a fairly proficient drawer and painter at school and winning art prizes and then going on to travelling. I went to Cambridge because I got in—nobody could believe I would—and I did anthropology and archaeology and then history of art. I knew I didn't want to become an academic, but I wasn't confident that I would be an artist and I wasn't sure that I wanted to be one anyway. So I went to India for three years—well, two years there and a year getting there. I suppose that's a rather long way of saying that my return to art happened quite late and an interest in the body even later. Certainly in Goldsmiths and at the Slade I was working with materials that were not figurative. I wasn't imposing form on them but discovering an inherent form.

Flat Tree is a good example of that: a thirty-year-old pine tree carved into slices and then laid out in a spiral so it made a map, which also became a strange optical thing in which space became curved and disappeared down to the tiny discs in the middle. It was a way of seeing the time in an object. And *Rearranged Tree* was another example: a thirty-year-old pine arranged in thirty piles of little discs from one to thirty. Both of these were exhibited during my time at the Slade, and they were about examining the world around me in material terms and then allowing it to re-present itself. When I made *Bread Line*—a whole loaf of Mother's Pride laid out a bite at a time—here was a daily object somehow re-described in the way that it was physically experienced. I think that work was the beginning of my thinking about the processes of living, and that led me back to the body. I started out looking at rocks and trees and ended up looking at things and materials that were immediately connected to the intimate life of a human body, like clothes and food. I had been using bread as if it was a sheet material and cutting it with a marquetry saw, but it was really much more sensible to use my teeth…

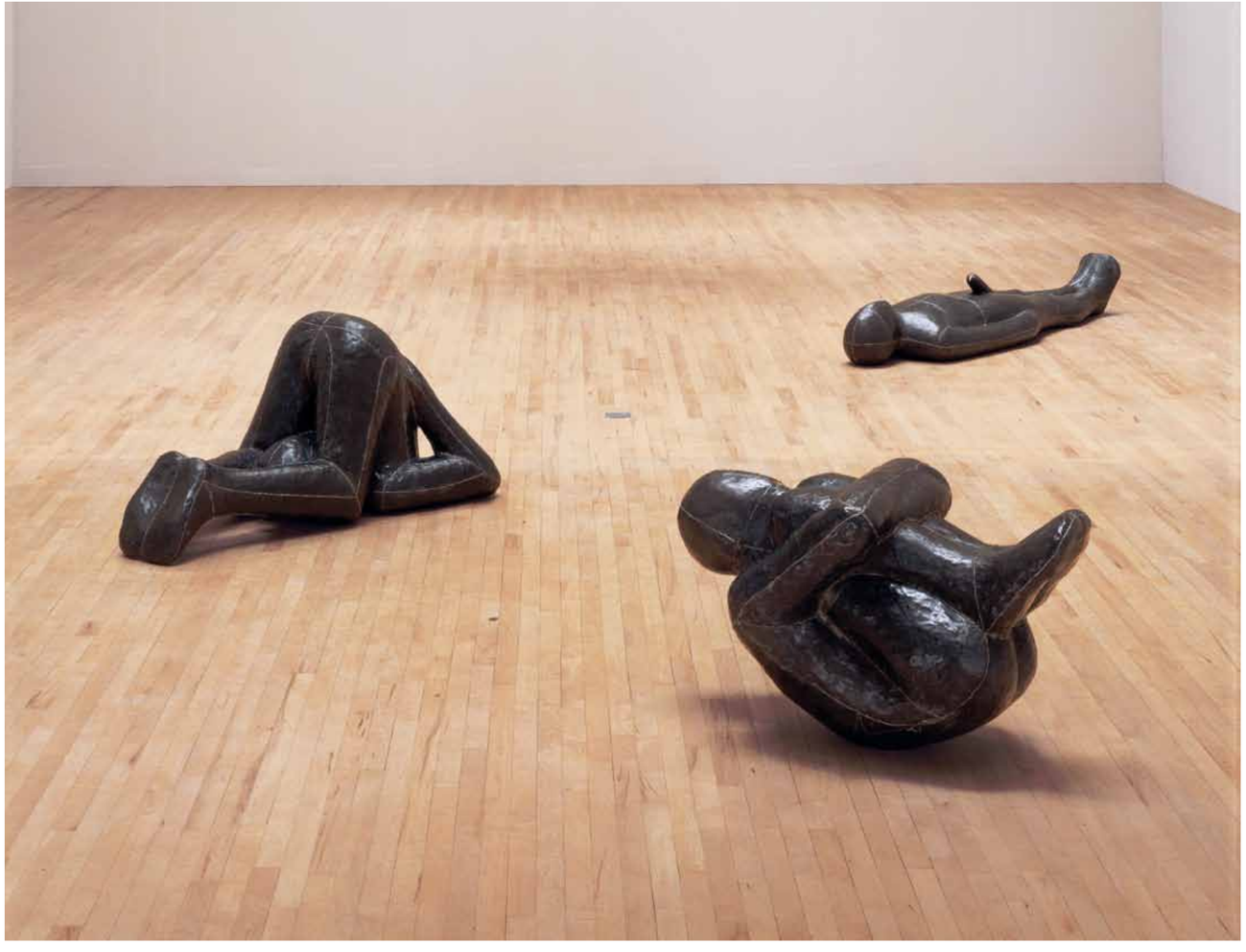
That may seem like an extraordinarily backward-looking way of returning to the body but, having looked at matter within history's intrinsic time and at how time had inscribed itself within matter, I was simply thinking about what the primary relationships with matter were. I was looking at glacial erratic rocks as well and did some analytical work, but I guess I went back to the body because I was trying to deal with real things, with first-hand experience.

I've said this numerous times—I didn't want to start with the body as a given, I wanted to start with the body as a site of experience. I didn't want to start with the body as an image or as a figure. I think it's very important that the work is about the body, not about the figure. I am not putting the figure to work. Having had a protracted training with the historical, philosophical, meditational and then the physical in the syntax of art generally, and realising how much was so concerned with form and conceptual issues that were unique to the artworld, I wanted to deal with life or something much more connected with the real, whatever that means.

So I made *Bed*, which was, I suppose, the first time in my early work that the body was actually figured in some way or acknowledged—that was the 600 loaves of Mother's Pride out of which I ate my own volume



Antony Gormley **Bed** 1980–1. Bread, wax. Tate Collection, London. © the artist



‘I’M TRYING TO DO FOR THE BODY WHAT MONDRIAN DID FOR PAINTING; LIBERATE IT FROM ALL OF THE BURDENS IT HAS HAD TO CARRY.’

Antony Gormley **Three Ways: Mould Hole and Passage** 1981–2. Lead, plaster. Installation view, Tate Gallery, London. Tate Gallery Collection, London. © the artist. Photo: Tate

over about a three-month period. Concomitant with that I made *Room*, which was a set of my own clothes cut into continual strips and expanded to fill a room about twenty-foot square. Between *Room* and *Bed* I had identified the place of the body, so the next question was how to begin to deal with the body in a fresh manner; not as it were, where Rodin left off, but as a system, as a transformative place. In King’s Cross, where we were squatting at the time, I made the first of the body moulds; that was called *Mould* and it was a mould and it still is a mould. It’s a lead mould of my body, with the mouth I used for breathing open as it was open. It connects with *Bread Line* and with *Bed*—here is the orifice, a bridge between body and earth that allows life.

And then I thought about that more and made *Hole*, which is the anus piece, and then *Passage*—the one with the erect penis. I guess this was really just looking at the body as a site of transformation, looking at its entrances and exits and its primary connections with the material world, and that started me on my way. It’s odd—when Vicken, my wife, moulded me for the first time I would never have dreamt that I would still be doing it thirty-one odd years later. I mean, I’ve got to find a better way of leading my life…

JH: ***You mentioned Rodin and whether or not to continue with the tradition he established. What is the value of that tradition?***
AG: Well I don’t know whether I am continuing it. I am very keen to acknowledge that the body has been in art as long as it’s been conscious, but I would like to think that my work is a radical re-examination of what a body is. The value of the figurative tradition is little. I don’t think of myself as making work in a tradition—I am a conceptual artist who has returned to the body because it is the site of being, of human being. I’m not interested in tradition for its own sake.

That doesn’t mean to say that I don’t admire some figurative artists from the past, but I want my work to be compared with the work of Richard Serra, Carl Andre and Walter de Maria rather than with figurative sculptors. It’s very upsetting to me at the moment that my work is on show at Tate Britain next to an Epstein and a golden male figure by Leonard McComb: an acknowledgment of failure in my view. My intent is to give form to the truth that we all live at the other side of appearance. The work at Tate Britain is an untitled work, a standing lead body case made in 1985 with piercings in the position of the stigmata referring to St Francis. But those five stigmata points are transformed into eyes or eye-shaped holes that give access onto a dark and empty interior. And that is my subject. My enquiry is: what is a human space in space at large? The fact that it has a human form is an accident.

You could say the human body is my found object; equally it’s the lost subject of modernity. Mondrian rejected the body, I have a great interest in and respect for Mondrian and the principles that he developed for a pure art of contemplation. I would like to think that my work also uses principles of stillness—the abandonment of unnecessary gesture, of movement, of narrative—in order to engage in the body as a place, not a thing.

JH: ***You mentioned your time spent in India, and it’s interesting to consider how images of the Buddha are valued for their very conventional and recognisable form but are pure in their simplicity—totally without that sense of artistic renewal that we value so much in the West.***
AG: It is interesting isn’t it. I love Gupta art, and Gandharan sculpture is interesting because of its interplay between Greek traditions and those of the subcontinent, but I think that for me the Belgola Jain image of a tirthankara or the Chola and Pala bronzes from South India are the high point of Indian art. It’s to do with the invention of an abstract body. I think that in contrast to, say, the sex and death theme of the Western trajectory—the desire to produce either a narrative or heroic art—the Buddhist trajectory is one of highly conventionalised, proportional rules, a made body that has very little to do with a perfect copy. Yet, through that, notions of timelessness and I suppose *samadhi* or concentration, an embodied void or *sunyata* is conveyed and I have found great empathy with that.

But I’m not making votive images for a religion that doesn’t exist. I’m trying to do for the body what Mondrian did for painting; liberate it from all of the burdens it has had to carry.

JH: ***I think that’s a good moment perhaps to mention Rosalind Krauss’s* Sculpture in the Expanded Field*, and her assertion that sculpture has detached itself from the plinth and become nomadic. I’m***

wondering how your work has engaged with the idea of the figure in the world?

AG: *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, that's a Biblical text. Rosalind may have gone her own way since then, but certainly for me growing up as a sculptor it was a critical text in many, many ways. Her engagement with Merleau-Ponty, phenomenology, the legacy of Husserl and Heidegger, the idea of sculpture as a medium of first-hand experience and indeed the way in which she posits sculpture as the most radical force in art… The reason I came back from India was to make things that changed the world; to do what she suggested that sculpture could by being an object in the world and not being a representation, by being a thing in itself, by being a self-referential displacement of the way things were. To change the way people saw, thought about and related to the facts. In considering the object you are forced to reconsider your own relationship to the world and that's one of the key reasons that I attempted to reconnect with the taboo subject of embodiment, because I thought this was a tool that could be used for awareness. At the same time, from very early on, I wanted to put the work directly into the world rather than having it mediated or framed by institutions or the conventions of an exhibition.

I believed in the expanded field; I grew up in the sixties, took part in happenings. I was involved with dance and performance and got a lot of inspiration from it, whether it was Trisha Brown or Fluxus. And with the spirit of that work comes the idea that an artist doesn't need the validation of institutions. You can work directly in the world, even if your work is as internalised as my performances are. My work comes from performance but it is a very internalised performance.

JH: ***Thinking about the settings and contexts for art and your desire to place works outside the institutions, let's talk about* Event Horizon. *I was very lucky to see this both in London and later in New York, and was so impressed with it—and its different receptions—in both cities. Because people were interpreting its figures very differently—in New York they seemed rather worried about whether or not someone was about to jump. How crucial a part does the given city play in a work like that? How does the work become a source of intrigue or inspiration within a given context?***

AG: Well the figures in *Event Horizon* are literally foreign bodies aren't they? They are nameless and placeless things that you bump into on the street or see on the skyline; the antithesis of the plinth and the titled public statue. For me, putting these bare bodies in the street and in the sky in these key urban sites was a way of asking the question: what is a human space within space at large in a site of dense habitation?

Event Horizon is nomadic. The bodies come one day and are gone the next. I always thought of them as like benign watchers, the ones who could see a horizon that was lost to us walking in the chasms between the cliffs of a built world. But in New York certainly the typical response was that this was freaky and do to with death.

JH: ***So it's revealing about the cultural context into which these things are placed.***

AG: That is important to me. This is to do with what I think of as a changed function for art. To a degree, art has to be adequately empty and silent in order for it to work as a focus for the projections of the public. I don't mean to say that I don't have ideas about why I'm doing it, but I do think that these things are acupuncture—in their disruptive or provocative presence they release latent energies which can be quite dark but this is a necessary and good function for art.

JH: ***It certainly is. So shall we turn to Christchurch, where obviously issues of permanence and impermanence are paramount at the moment. We've had a number of important public works which have literally toppled from their pedestals and a range of significant buildings lost. Just to give you a sense of the scale of the demolition, within a few months, the inner-city block on which our art***

Antony Gormley **Event Horizon** 2007. 27 fibreglass and 4 cast iron figures, each element 189 x 53 x 29cm. A Hayward Gallery Commission. Presented by Madison Square Park Conservancy, New York, 2010. Courtesy Sean Kelly Gallery, New York and White Cube, London. © the artist. Photo: James Ewing

Previous page:
Antony Gormley **Event Horizon** 2007. 27 fibreglass and 4 cast iron figures, each element 189 x 53 x 29cm. Installation view Hayward Gallery, London, 2007. A Hayward Gallery Commission. © the artist. Photo: Richard Bryant

Far right:
Antony Gormley **One & Other** 2009. The Mayor's Fourth Plinth Commission. Fourth Plinth, Trafalgar Square, London, England. © the artist

gallery stands will only have two other buildings on it. The whole of the city is so dramatically changed. It was pretty empty before in many respects and not all was perfect, but obviously we've now got an interesting chance to rethink living and working in the inner city. What role do you think art can play, both in helping the grieving process and also in a post-disaster environment?

AG: Well, it's an old cliché, but in every disaster there's opportunity. I think this issue of how memory can be reconciled with anticipation and the rightful joys of renewal is important because, as is so often the case within urban environments, there's a reluctant acceptance of city plans or the grid or the relationship between public and private. But I'm very sorry about what happened to Christchurch. I was there once and my memory is that it was rather blessed with open spaces and relatively wide streets and no great high-rises, so it was a generous and a fine example of a demographic space where there was, I think, a nice dialogue between commercial interests, civic institutions and dwellings.

But the opportunity is to get artists themselves involved in the re-imagining of what the collective life of the city should be and how to balance that with the necessary acknowledgment of this particular tragedy. Maybe we could then think about how the rather disparate languages of what is left by an unplanned historic remnant could become more focused.

I found myself wondering what will happen to the sculpture of Sir Robert Falcon Scott and whether he can be brought down from his plinth to live with us on the ground as a fellow companion. He suffered his own disaster, didn't he, but he's still a fantastically powerful figure and could become part of life on the street. Maybe it's an opportunity to think about how he could be combined with another idea of possible futures. What motivates explorers is a very powerful idea and human beings need continually to reimagine what's possible. We should be aware of how powerful the reimagining of what's happening in Christchurch can be.

‘I FOUND MYSELF WONDERING WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE SCULPTURE OF SIR ROBERT FALCON SCOTT AND WHETHER HE CAN BE BROUGHT DOWN FROM HIS PLINTH TO LIVE WITH US ON THE GROUND AS A FELLOW COMPANION.’

In London, for example, the twentieth century was utterly hopeless in providing new forms of public space that represented the changes in a liberalising democracy. We're really lucky to have our squares and parks and civic spaces here, but they were all determined in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. If you consider the High Line in New York, however, here is a completely new kind of public space in which engagement with the past and the present happens in equal measure. It informs its views onto the West River and onto buildings that you don't normally see from the outside at that height. And there are all sorts of really lovely opportunities for social engagement, people reading the newspapers on loungers, running, chatting, taking their dogs for walks or walking by.

I think we need to think in a new way about how people like to live together in towns and this is a good opportunity to do so.

JH: ***Is there anything else you'd like to say about city spaces? Of course, I think about the power of the Fourth Plinth project in Trafalgar Square, an extraordinary intervention in London.***

AG: Well, I think all spaces invite a certain kind of inhabitation and we need to continually reinvent them. So this is an exciting time for Christchurch. It can completely reinvent itself in a way that could become an example to the rest of the world. You know, there's no question that human futures are going to be determined by cities. We've passed the point where over fifty per cent of the human race lives in cities. We know environmentally cities are the lightest per person carbon footprint that we can have.

What I love, and I think the Fourth Plinth project was an example of this, is spaces in which citizens become both the viewers and the viewed. In other words, we create spaces that can be used as instruments by which we look at ourselves again. Washington Square in New York is a good example. So many different activities happen at once—you have skateboarders and frisbee players, along with dog lovers and card and domino players and people who just sit on benches and chat. I think the great Mies van der Rohe space on Fifth Avenue is another example of a fantastic idea of what a collective space could be in the city. And how that then relates to all of the basic pleasures that we have: eating, walking, talking, looking—looking out and looking in, looking at each other and looking at the distance. All of these things need to be reconsidered. At the end of the twentieth century we have seen this massive process of the privatisation of collective space, either through the dominance of advertising or through the literal commercialisation of space. Between advertising and shopping, public open space has been lost to commercialisation, which has a profound effect on how we relate to each other as citizens. It suggests that we only have value as consumers, which is a passive and non-celebratory idea of the citizen.

We need to treasure our parks, our runners and our skateboarders and our BMX riders and the people that in some way animate the city by playing with it. Manhattan's High Line is a very good example of how pleasure becomes a spectacle. And we need more of that. The twentieth century failed, well certainly in London, to give a new vision to collective space—and I'm sure we can learn from Christchurch.

DAY TRIPPER: OVER THE HILLS AND ACROSS THE WATER

Peter Vangioni

A DAY TRIP TO TE WAIPAPA/DIAMOND HARBOUR provides a great opportunity to escape the rat-in-a-maze feeling that is modern Christchurch—a feeling generated by the myriad road closures and detours and the miles of hurricane fencing that currently litter the remnants of the city. To get out amongst the harbour waters and Banks Peninsula hills is a true pleasure, even with the recent loss of one of the Peninsula's finest buildings, Godley House in Diamond Harbour.

My first trip across to Diamond Harbour from Lyttelton was made on an old wooden ferry during a southerly storm (I think it may even have been the ill-fated *Ngatiki*, which ended up being pummelled by a Lyttelton Port Company tug). The boat bobbed up and down disconcertingly with the swell as we made our way from the safety of the port into the rougher waters of the Lyttelton Harbour. On the other side, Godley House provided a warm and welcome respite from the cold wind and rain. Contemporary day trippers and commuters have a much quicker and more stable crossing on the modern catamaran *Black Diamond*, but the ferry ride is just one way to Diamond Harbour—the other involves a spectacular drive south, skirting the edges of the harbour basin past Teddington at its head and then back up the other side. Whichever route you choose, it remains a justifiably popular destination for Christchurch residents.

One Canterbury artist for whom the environs of Diamond Harbour were particularly important was the watercolourist Margaret Stoddart (1865–1934). Stoddart, whose *Godley House, Diamond Harbour* is one of the Gallery's most popular paintings, was born in Diamond Harbour in 1865, and the local landscape with its stunning views of the harbour, Godley Head and the steep volcanic hills that surround it, played a big part in the artist's life. Landscape artists often identify with locations—think Petrus van der Velden and Otira, Rita Angus and Cass, Bill Sutton and the Port Hills, Leo Bensemann and Takaka. Margaret Stoddart's landscape, her tūrangawaewae, was most certainly Diamond Harbour.

The Ngāi Tahu name for the area is Te Waipapa and the name Diamond Harbour came from Stoddart's father, Mark Stoddart. He chose it to reflect the way in which the sun sparkles off the harbour's waters on bright sunny days. Mark Stoddart first purchased land in the area as early as 1852 and continued to acquire more as it became available. Margaret was born in the original Stoddart cottage, a pre-fabricated house that was brought out from Australia around the time of Mark's marriage to Anna Schjött in 1862 and which still stands on its original site.

Godley House was built on the point that separates Diamond Harbour from Purau in 1880 by Harvey Hawkins, a successful ironmonger, ship chandler and speculator from Lyttelton who purchased the land from Mark Stoddart. Built of brick and iced with cement to resemble solid stone, the large two-storey building had a feeling of spaciousness upon entering it, enhanced by the high stud of the ceilings. A verandah with highly decorative iron lacework surrounded most of the building and granted spectacular views across the harbour to the Port Hills beyond. Having fallen on hard times by the early 1890s, Hawkins was forced to sell this grand home to the Stoddarts and the family moved there in 1897. This expansive home was a far cry from the family's original small cottage.

Stoddart began painting in the early 1880s, but it was after a prolonged visit to Europe between 1898 and 1907 that she adopted the more impressionistic approach for which she is so well regarded today. Around 1909–13 Stoddart made several studies of Diamond Harbour and the surrounding region. These include paintings of Godley House and the original Stoddart cottage that local art historian Julie King has described as '… some of her most memorable images … a succession of paintings of places that had been familiar since childhood …'.[1] Christchurch Art Gallery is fortunate to

Margaret Stoddart **Diamond Harbour** 1909. Watercolour. Christchurch Art Gallery Trust Collection

have four Diamond Harbour works from this period in the collection.

Around 1913 Stoddart completed three watercolour paintings of the original Stoddart cottage—the version in the Gallery's collection, *Old Homestead, Diamond Harbour*, features the cottage's garden in full bloom with red and white flowers bathed in direct sunlight while the path in the foreground is dappled with light filtering through trees. Diamond Harbour is north facing and is well positioned for exposure to the sun even in the heart of winter. This work highlights Stoddart's deft ability to work *plein-air,* painting outdoors directly from nature.

Two other works in the Gallery's collection, *Diamond Harbour* and *Untitled (View of Lyttelton from Godley House)* illustrate the expansive views of Lyttelton Harbour that are to be experienced from many vantage points around Diamond Harbour, and the promontory on which Godley House was positioned in particular—views that are as popular today as they were when Stoddart was living there a century ago. *Diamond Harbour* highlights Stoddart's skill in combining her work as a landscape painter with that of a flower painter; the almond tree in the foreground being depicted in full blossom, the petals shimmering in the light.

Godley House, Diamond Harbour, however, remains the Gallery's most popular work by Stoddart. In it, the house appears almost consumed by the flower garden as dense herbaceous border plantings dominate the scene with just the corner of the house visible. The fact that the work is in such tremendous condition adds to its popularity with visitors; it remains a strikingly fresh, colourful and vibrant painting with no hint of the fading that is unfortunately so common with older watercolours.

With the recent demolition of Godley House this painting now carries new significance, representing as it does one of Banks Peninsula's lost treasures. As well as being a ferry destination from Lyttelton, for many day trippers Godley House was also a compulsory stopping point for a cold one on the drive home after a day spent at the beaches and bays beyond Diamond Harbour. Those sweltering hot summer days when the strong smell of eucalyptus and pine pervades the area; when the volcanic hills have that parched look and the summer grass is burnt to a beige that contrasts strongly with the refreshing blue-green of the harbour waters. The site remains a wonderful spot to visit and, whether by ferry or by car, still makes for a good escape from the trappings of city living. But I do hope they replace Godley House with a new licensed premises before too long.

Peter Vangioni
Curator

NOTE

1. Julie King, *Flowers in the Landscape: Margaret Stoddart 1865–1934*, Christchurch, 1997, p.85.

Margaret Stoddart **Godley House, Diamond Harbour** c.1913. Watercolour. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased with assistance from the Olive Stirrat Bequest 1990

Margaret Stoddart **Old Homestead, Diamond Harbour** 1913. Watercolour. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 1959

'... THE HOUSE APPEARS ALMOST CONSUMED BY THE FLOWER GARDEN AS DENSE HERBACEOUS BORDER PLANTINGS DOMINATE THE SCENE ...'

STAFF PROFILE

Airi Hashimoto

The Getty Tagging Project

At present there are more than 6,400 works of art in the Gallery's collection, and almost all of these are available to view in some form online. But with so many to choose from, how do you know what you're looking for? It's easy if you know the artist's name or can remember the title of the work. But what if all you know is that it was of a man smoking a pipe? Until recently, you would have had to browse the collection online for hours until you found it (no great punishment perhaps), or contact us and ask for more information. But now, thanks to the Getty Tagging project and Airi Hashimoto's hard work over the past ten months, you can use the 'show tags' function, and quickly narrow down your search. The tags make navigating our collection online much easier—even if you don't know what the work you are searching for is called or who it's by. As long as you can remember something (what the work is about or even its colour) the Getty tags will help you find it. In this case, 'Pipes (smoking equipment)' quickly provides the answer, and a whole host of other interesting juxtapositions and complementary works too. Try it.

Airi joined the Gallery as a Visitor Host in June 2010, and has been undertaking the tagging project since July last year. She's a fine arts graduate from the University of Canterbury, where she studied Painting and Art History. Working in consultation with Gallery librarian Tim Jones and the Gallery curators, Airi is painstakingly going through the entire collection, and applying tags from the Art and Architecture Thesaurus developed by the Getty Research Institute to each artwork. The AAT forms a part of the Getty Vocabulary Program—a growing electronic database of systemised artistic terms used by galleries and museums around the world.

The tags range from the prosaic (trees) to the obscure (marine shell trumpets). And as well as describing objects that appear in paintings, they also describe people, activities, jobs, moods, colours, patterns, animals, styles, seasons, the weather… They can even describe works that depict objects that appear in pairs or things seen from the back.

At present, Airi has tagged over 2,700 works, so there's still a way to go. But she says it's a rewarding project: 'I'm enjoying getting to know each artwork in the collection, or more accurately getting an idea of it, because I can only view them on the computer screen for the time being.' As the project continues to open up the collection in new and sometimes unexpected ways, we hope scholars and browsers alike will find it as rewarding.

PAGEWORK #14

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

JANNA VAN HASSELT AND HARLEY PEDDIE

Printmaker Janna van Hasselt and graphic designer Harley Peddie have joined forces to produce *Bulletin*'s latest pagework, *Escapade*. The work projects a three-dimensional entanglement of hand-drawn and painted objects from the screenprinted surface in a range of high-key colours, recording a recent summer road trip to the southern lakes. *Escapade* is, in effect, a visual diary of what they encountered along the road—impressions of objects, creatures and the landscape itself drawn in quick succession as the artists travelled. Layers of images are pasted and over-pinned—built up to create a fusion of images from the myriad flora and fauna that come in and out of kaleidoscopic focus.

Van Hasselt and Peddie unashamedly embrace the use of bright colours in their work, such as the intense green-yellow and vivid blues seen here. The blues used in *Escapade* conjure up the vibrant hues of high summer; the crystal clear skies and fluorescent blue waters of the high country glacier-fed Lake Tekapo. Texts in the background mark various mountain peaks encountered as they made their way along the Main Divide.

Van Hasselt and Peddie's interest in producing three-dimensional collages was recently developed in their moving parts book *Parade*, an artists' book that combines lithographs, screenprints and letterpress printing recently acquired for the fine books collection at the Gallery's Robert and Barbara Stewart Library and Archives.

Peter Vangioni
Curator

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

Janna van Hasselt and Harley Peddie **Escapade** 2012. Mixed media


CHRISTIANA
LYTTLE

Petrus van der Velden **Mountain stream, Otira Gorge** 1893. Oil on canvas. Christchurch Art Gallery Trust Collection

MY FAVOURITE

Roger Sutton is the Chief Executive of the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA) and took up this position in June 2011. Previously he was the CEO of Orion New Zealand Limited and Chairman of the Energy Efficiency Conservation Authority.

I love this piece. For me, it's always been a powerful image of the wild harshness and beauty of the Arthur's Pass area.

This painting transports my mind to the depths of the Southern Alps—the wet and the cold, the thin, high altitude air, the call of the kea, the unpredictability of the weather—and the sheer pleasure of being in these wonderful and harsh places. Perhaps this changeability is reflected in the fact that van der Velden painted variations of this scene eleven times in three years.

I'm also mindful that getting to the Otira Gorge today is a relatively straightforward journey with few hardships involved. When this piece was painted, more than a hundred years ago, the location was far more remote—just getting there was no small undertaking and would have involved a long, arduous journey, much of it completed on foot. It would have been cold, it would have been wet, and there would have been the unending roar of water.

To me, that makes this piece not just a measure of the painter and his painting, but also the effort made to get there in the first place.

I also know that whether we go to the Otira Gorge tomorrow, or were there all those years ago—as Petrus van der Velden was—the elements reflected in this painting have not changed. It's still remote, it's still wet, it's still cold, the air is still thin, there are still keas, the weather is still unpredictable and there is still, as always, the power of water.

Roger Sutton

BACK MATTER

Gallery Redundancies

With the closure of our building until mid 2013 now a certainty, we have been forced to look hard at the services we are able to offer, and how we continue to operate in a responsible manner. Over the course of the past year, four positions within the Gallery that have become vacant have been left unfilled as a cost-cutting measure, but at the end of April we decided we had to make further reductions in our staffing numbers.

In all, seventeen members of staff have been directly affected by these redundancy measures. In practice, many of these are part time and, because they worked in areas whose operation could be said to be highly building dependent, have not worked for us since 22 February last year. However, some long-serving members of staff have been made redundant.

We have always prided ourselves on the strength of our team and making redundancies was not something that we entered into lightly. However, our staffing structure needs to reflect the realities of our current situation. We are offering all the support we can to the affected staff, and wish them all the very best for the future.

Jenny Harper
Director

Museums Aotearoa Awards

We were thrilled to win in two categories at the Museums Aotearoa Awards, held in Wellington on 19 April. My Gallery won in the *Innovation and use of technology* section (we were quite pleased with ourselves for completing the submission itself online as a My Gallery set), and was described by the judges as, 'an ideal use of resources during forced closure, enabling the gallery to provide continuing audience and community engagement'. And in the *Art and design exhibition* category we won with **De-Building**: 'A creative and beautifully produced exhibition … timely and conceptually strong.'

Congratulations to all staff involved in both these projects. You can try My Gallery yourself at www.mygallery.org.nz, and the **De-Building** catalogue is available from the Gallery Shop.

Public Programmes

Films: Cursed, Controversial, Cruel

A short series of films all receiving their first Christchurch public screening.

The Lost Supper

Sunday 1 July
3pm DL Theatre CPIT

A rare film telling the strange story of the restoration of da Vinci's masterpiece. Marked by a series of mishaps and mistakes, this incredible restoration may have resulted in the loss of a masterpiece.

The Mill and the Cross

Sunday 15 July
3pm DL Theatre CPIT

Director Lech Majewski translates Bruegel's *The Way to Calvary* into cinema, with stunning visual effects, inviting the viewer to live inside the aesthetic universe of the painting as it is being created.

The Mona Lisa Curse

Sunday 22 July
3pm DL Theatre CPIT

This award-winning documentary by art critic Robert Hughes examines how the world's most famous painting came to influence the artworld and its commercialisation.

William McAloon

It was with much sadness that we heard of William McAloon's death in April. Our thoughts go out to his family and friends. Well known for his role as a curator at Te Papa, William began his career in Christchurch, where he was well regarded as a curator and art critic. He was a great colleague and a curator whose exhibitions were always extremely well received. For me, a highlight was the exhibition *Gordon Walters: Print + Design* which he curated for the University of Victoria's Adam Art Gallery in 2004. Insightful and illustrative, it was one of those exhibitions that I lingered in, absorbing every object and written description with delight and learning much about an, until then, obscure aspect of Walters's oeuvre.

The last time I heard from William was regarding the auction of a selection of Leo Bensemann's paintings on offer in Christchurch, from which he was considering a purchase for Te Papa's collection. I always admired the ease with which he could shift between contemporary and historical art; he was one of the few curators with whom I could have in-depth discussions, usually over the telephone, about historic New Zealand artists—from memory, van der Velden, Chevalier, Fomison, Shurrock, Rata Lovell-Smith, Angus and Bensemann to name but a few. His insightful, informed comments and helpful nature were deeply appreciated: answers to questions about artists and art always seemed to be right at the top of his head.

Rita Angus: Life & Vision, which he co-curated with Jill Trevelyan in 2008, remains one of the most popular exhibitions to be staged at Christchurch Art Gallery—our audiences loved it and many made return visits. I am sure it was an exhibition that Rita herself would have been proud of, and for me it stands as a testament to the skill and craft William brought to curatorial practice in New Zealand.

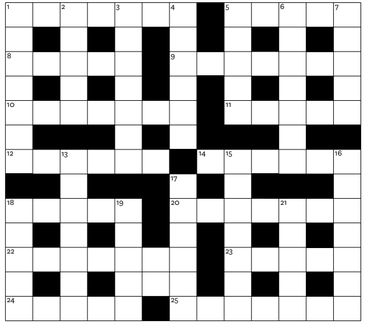
Rest In Peace William.

Peter Vangioni

Crossword

Here's our second crossword—the first person to submit a completed puzzle will receive a $100 voucher from the Gallery Shop. All entries to *Bulletin*, Christchurch Art Gallery, PO Box 2626, Christchurch 8140.

Crossword winner
Congratulations to Kathy Watson of Christchurch, who was the first to return last quarter's crossword. Kathy won a $100 Shop voucher (and we even replaced the *Bulletin* she had to cut up to enter).



T.J.

Across

1 French artist who shocked Christchurch in 1967 (7)
5 The Gallery shop has the best selection in town (5)
8 From the Bridle Path, Sydney Lough Thompson could see 14 of them (5)
9 Rita Angus and Colin McCahon picked it at Pangatotara (7)
10 1993 painting by Euan Macleod (7)
11 Painting by Wilhelm Dittmer (5)
12 Curator Justin Paton so described the Linwood Avenue boat in a recent *Bulletin* article (6)
14 See 4 down
18 Creator of a rowing eight (5)
20 He's just off in Lill Tschudi's linocut (7)
22 A relief—from Don Driver (7)
23 and 13 down, Poet caricatured by Leo Bensemann (5,7)
24 Thousands in the library, but just two (Stuart and Evelyn) in the Gallery (5)
25 Since September 2010 we've had over 10,000!

Down

1 Artist whose drum kits filled the Gallery (7)
2 Christine Hellyar's cabinet is full of it (5)
3 See 6 down
4 and 17, 14. Otira's most famous visitor of 1891 (6,3,3,6)
5 Dutch group of artists who exhibited at the McDougall Gallery in 1983 (5)
6 and 3 down, Victorian animal painter (7,7)
7 Time-honoured subject for painters such as Frank Wright, Doris Lusk, Sybil Andrews, Jeffrey Harris, Margaret Stoddart and countless others (5)
13 See 23 across
15 Opportunities to do so are currently very limited! (7)
16 Would using them leave your fingers weary and worn? (7)
17 See 4 down
18 The containers in Cashel Street did just this (5)
19 They never seem to go down, but they do fund the Gallery (5)
21 Support for Ngaio Marsh (5)

BACK MATTER

Sam Harrison Commission

We were delighted to hear that Sam Harrison, whose **Render** was the first exhibition in our **Rolling Maul** series, has been awarded a major public commission for the Woollahra District Council in Sydney. His life-size figure, *Seated Woman II*, will be cast in bronze and situated in the Sydney suburb of Double Bay.

Curator Felicity Milburn leads a floortalk in Sam Harrison's **Render**.

Wayne Youle Awarded SCAPE Residency

In March Canterbury artist Wayne Youle was awarded the SCAPE Christchurch/ Artspace Sydney artist residency—twelve weeks' accommodation at Australia's leading international residency-based contemporary art centre, Artspace.

Youle's *I seem to have temporarily misplaced my sense of humour* was the first major landmark in our post-quake **Outer Spaces** project, so we're very pleased to see him recognised with this residency and wish him the best of luck in Sydney.

Wayne Youle **My Cranial Palette** 2008. Enamel, paint, plastic skull and timber. Private collection. Image courtesy of the artist and Tim Melville Gallery

From the Blog

Here are some snippets from Bunker Notes over the past few months. If you're looking for the context around these statements, you can find it at www.christchurchartgallery.org.nz/blog.

I wonder if its inhabitants minded being picturesque – or if they'd sought proper planning permission.
3 April, posted by Ken

There's something about the sound of those nibblers …
4 May, posted by Peter

Touché, Mr van der Velden (and hartelijk gefeliciteerd met uw verjaardag).
5 May, posted by Felicity

I've always been a sucker for a good gargoyle …
11 May, posted by Chris