







Michael Parekowhai **Chapman's Homer** 2011. Bronze, stainless steel. Courtesy of the artist and Michael Lett, Auckland. Photo: John Collie Westpac New Zealand Limited.

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Cover: Peter Trevelyan survey #4 2013. O.5mm mechanical pencil leads. Courtesy of the artist

TE PUNA O WAIWHETU
CHRISTCHURCH
ART GALLERY

Inside cover: Tadayoshi Sugawara monitors air and cement milk flow to the Jetcrete columns in the Gallery car park as part of the relevelling work, October 2013. Photo: John Collie

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Director's Foreword



John Brophy (Westpac's South Island manger, retail) Pat Unger (the first person to write to The Press to suggest we buy the bull) and director Jenny Harper. Inside the crate, *Chapman's Homer*, who is staying in Christchurch.

AT 2PM ON 30 SEPTEMBER our Back the Bull campaign on PledgeMe closed, with a staggering \$206,050 raised. Through the generosity and drive of the Christchurch public, international and national donors and our sponsors and partners, Michael Parekowhai's striking Chapman's Homer will now call Christchurch home. I'd like to extend our huge thanks to all involved, to our primary corporate funder, Westpac, and to the Art Gallery Trust who spearheaded this truly twenty-first century funding campaign to help mark the tenth anniversary of the new Christchurch Art Gallery. The numbers are testament to the impact that Chapman's Homer clearly made on Christchurch: 1,054 private individuals and families donated, fourteen companies and trusts gave \$10,000 or more, and 1,791 people liked or shared our Facebook page and helped to spread the word. The total raised was by far the largest successfully attempted on PledgeMe.

The artist particularly loves the idea that his work has been instrumental in bringing communities together, from school fundraising events to our own and others' sausage sizzles in support of the purchase. When the sculpture was returned to Christchurch on loan throughout this year's Arts Festival, it became the focus of attention once more and it was rare to see *Chapman's Homer* without someone posing on the piano stool for a photo. So I'm looking forward to seeing it installed finally on our redesigned forecourt when we reopen in 2015. In the meantime, we're exploring a number of leads to ensure this popular work remains available to all who have supported it and taken it to their hearts; expect to see it in more than one location around town over the next two years.

While we're on the subject of the Gallery forecourt, if you've passed the building recently you will have noticed that our repair works have finally started. In October plywood hoardings went up around the building, Uretek installed a site office on the forecourt, and drilling started in the basement and out on the forecourt. Coupled with the construction work and the infrastructure repairs on Gloucester Street, it has certainly been pretty busy around here, and our offices now vibrate gently to the sound of heavy machinery.

Most Gallery staff are still working in this building, at least until the re-levelling process ends and retrofitting of our base isolation begins in earnest. The largest impact on our workload to date has been the need to move the collection from its temporary storage location in the downstairs exhibition galleries and back into its permanent location on the first and second floors. This project began in November, and we expect to take until March 2014 to complete it. In his B.168 'A Warehouse in A Tutu' article, exhibition designer Chris Pole described the process of moving it the first time. Then (mid to late 2011), our building was in the so-called 'drop zone' of the next door Gallery Apartments, which were red-stickered and scheduled for demolition; to minimise the potential for damage (primarily we worried that excessive vibration from the nearby demolition would cause problems) everything was moved. It was a mammoth task, but an undertaking we made knowing that it would have to be reversed. Although our collection suffered very little damage and we maintained our fine arts insurance throughout the earthquakes of 2010-11, we're taking no chances with

its future. We're adding new fixtures where necessary as we move it back, and we'll have better and stronger storage arrangements in place should any further seismic events occur.

One member of the Gallery's staff who won't be here to see the collection move finished, however, is our senior curator, Justin Paton, who has accepted a new position as head curator, international art at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. It's an exciting and challenging next step for Justin and I am confident that he will make an energetic and strongly intellectual contribution to this major art gallery, itself preparing for major transformation. We know him to be a gifted communicator and an inventive curator and we are profoundly glad for him. But our warm congratulations stand alongside a sense of sadness at the resignation of such a creative and collegial member of staff who has contributed so much to how Christchurch Art Gallery re-invented itself pre-22 February 2011 and how collectively we are facing the current extended period of closure. Justin will finish here in early December and is starting at AGNSW in January 2014. Above all I am proud that one of us has been chosen by a major Australian gallery to continue his career there and to work with an exciting collection and development. It's excellent to have good friends in senior places in other galleries, colleagues who understand our DNA and what makes this place tick. We look forward to future collaborations.

Jenny Harper
Director
November 2013

Street Urchins BIUE MOONS

RARBVISIONS

Restoring the dome of the Isaac Theatre Royal

EVEN IN A CITY WHERE SURREAL SCENES have become somewhat routine, the sight of the Isaac Theatre Royal's eight-tonne dome, suspended like a great alien craft, had the power to turn heads and drop jaws. Preserved inside a strange white shroud while the theatre was slowly deconstructed around it was a jewel of Christchurch's decorative arts heritage—a 105 year-old Italianate plaster ceiling featuring a circular painted reverie on the theme of William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The dome, along with the rest of the theatre, is currently being restored as part of an ambitious rebuild that is expected to be completed in 2015 at a cost of over \$30 million.

The Theatre Royal is no stranger to reincarnation, with two earlier wooden buildings (1863 and 1876 respectively) previously carrying that name in Christchurch. The current brick theatre, with its classically-inspired façade, was a grander presence, designed by Australian brothers Sydney and A.E. Luttrell to include a horseshoe-shaped dress circle and gallery. When it opened to a packed house in February 1908, with a performance of the Edwardian musical comedy *The Blue Moon*, the theatre was regarded as one of the best of its type in the southern hemisphere and garnered special praise for its acoustics.

Support for the restoration of the theatre following the 2010/11 earthquakes has been vigorous, just as it was when the building last faced the possibility of destruction. In the mid 1970s, its then-owner, J.C. Williamson Theatres, began selling off its holdings, including the Wellington Opera House. When no viable buyer for the Theatre Royal could be found, the company decided to demolish it and sell off the land. A forceful public campaign was launched to save it, and in 1979 a small group of Christchurch citizens formed the Theatre Royal Foundation, which eventually raised sufficient capital to purchase the building just days before it was scheduled to come down.

Since then, the theatre has experienced two significant upgrades. An extensive programme of earthquake strengthening and fire protection work was undertaken in 1998/9, and was almost certainly the reason it withstood

the February 2011 earthquake and subsequent aftershocks without collapse. Major renovations were also completed in 2004/5 with the support of Diana, Lady Isaac, whose name the theatre now bears. Although the building remained standing after the recent earthquakes, its interior structure was severely compromised, and the rebuilding project has required it to be almost entirely deconstructed so that a new concrete and steel structure can be provided to house the original façade, marble staircase and painted dome.

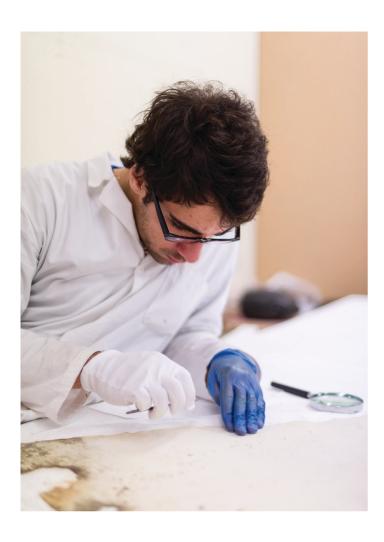
Little is known about the artist who painted the dome ceiling, but he has been identified by the theatre's advisors as G.C. Post of the Carrara Ceiling Company in Wellington, which created the ornate plaster ceiling. Carrara, which was established in 1903 and still operates today, drew on the talents of artists, modellers and craftsmen from Australia and England and was responsible for the decorative plaster work in many of New Zealand's public buildings.

Made up of eight separate canvases, four large and four small and installed in an overlapping configuration, the painting presents a selection of images from what is arguably Shakespeare's most whimsical comedy. Given its emphasis on dreams ('rare visions') and transformation, combined with a complicated 'play-within-a-play' narrative, A Midsummer Night's Dream provides a fitting subject with which to decorate a theatre. Its intricate tangle of coincidences, mistaken identities and misunderstandings seems designed to test the audience's ability to suspend its disbelief, with the playwright, via the 'merry wanderer' Puck, finally suggesting that they can, if they prefer, pretend the whole performance was merely a sleep-induced fantasy:

If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumbered here
While these visions did appear.
A Midsummer Night's Dream, act 5, scene 1

'Given its emphasis on dreams ("rare visions") and transformation, combined with a complicated "playwithin-a-play" narrative, A Midsummer Night's Dream provides a fitting subject with which to decorate a theatre.'

A Midsummer Night's Dream (detail). Isaac Theatre Royal dome painting during restoration. Photo: John Collie



Notwithstanding the pale moon that hovers overhead, the Theatre Royal painting is presented as a daylight, rather than nocturnal, vision. A blue sky, wispy clouds, feathery vegetation and diaphanous fabrics provide a delicate and dream-like setting for Titania, Queen of the Fairies, who, under the influence of a magic potion, has fallen in love with the weaver, Bottom (whose head has been changed into that of an ass). Around the circular composition float a host of other characters, including fairies, lovers and the Indian changeling at the centre of the fateful dispute between Titania and her husband Oberon.

After a long period of inaccessibility inside the red-zone cordon following the February 2011 earthquake, the dome was removed from the theatre's ceiling in 2012. This was achieved using a customised cradle designed by Naylor Love, the principal contractor for the Theatre's restoration, in consultation with project manager RCP, structural engineers Holmes Consulting and Smith Crane and Construction. The dome was then wrapped in Tyvek

to protect it from further damage from the elements and re-suspended inside the theatre, this time above the stage, to allow the first stages of the rebuild to get underway. In mid 2013, it was lowered onto the rebuilt stage to allow its conservation to be undertaken while the auditorium was remediated around it.

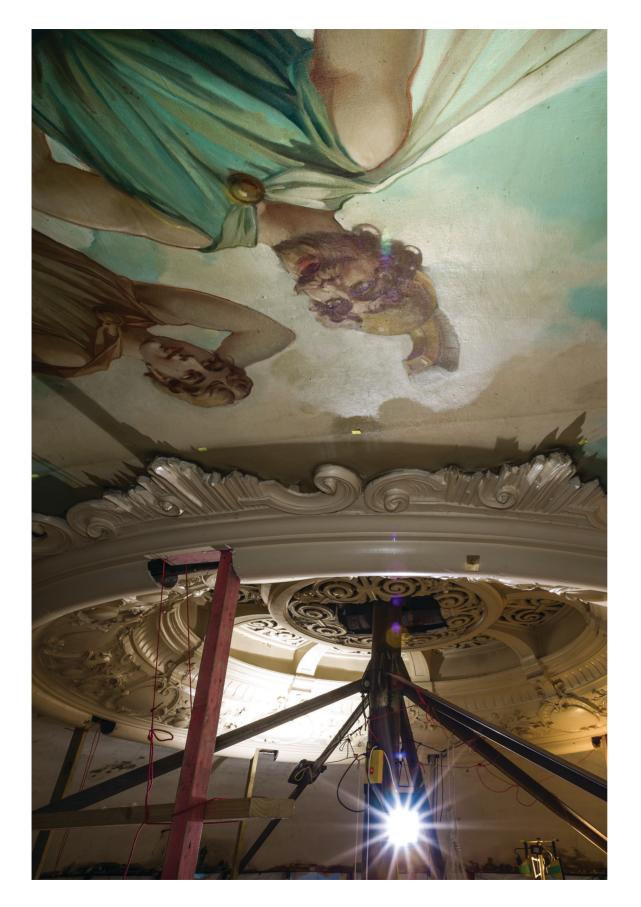
Alongside the stage, a space formerly occupied by the theatre's Green Room became the 'operating theatre' for the restoration of the dome painting. The project has been spearheaded by Carolina Izzo, an internationally renowned, Wellington-based conservator who trained in Florence, Italy, with more than sixteen years' experience working on earthquake-damaged objects (many of which belonged to the Italian state or to international institutions). Izzo moved to New Zealand in 2001 and worked for six years as a painting conservator at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa before setting up her own private conservation business. Having previously worked on the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples (which opened in 1767 and is the oldest continuously active venue for public opera in Europe) Izzo was delighted to be invited down to Christchurch by the Theatre's chief executive Neil Cox to prepare an estimate for the restoration of the dome. That first visit, in June 2013, gave her some indication of the challenges posed by the project. She arrived to find the site closed due to freezing temperatures and falling snow, and remembers being surprised that the object to be assessed was suspended many metres overhead. What she didn't yet know was the extent of the damage present after the dome had been suspended in that condition for a year; as she would later discover, although the protective synthetic wrapper had prevented new moisture from getting in, existing dampness inside had allowed mould to grow actively on both the front and back of the painting's canvases.

When Izzo was advised that she had been selected to lead the conservation project, she set about assembling her team. First, she looked for a conservator with an established career and experience with damaged heritage objects who could lead the team whenever she needed to

'Having previously worked with assistants drawn from the local community on a project restoring a monastery in Italy, Izzo put out a call via email and Facebook, inviting local people to join the project.'

Left: Restoration work in progress. Photo: John Collie

Right: A Midsummer Night's Dream (detail). Isaac Theatre Royal dome painting during restoration. Photo: John Collie



return to Wellington. Ideally, she was looking for someone adaptable, who was used to working on site, away from the conservation laboratory. She found these qualities in Emanuele Vitulli, a fellow Italian with considerable experience in conserving earthquake-damaged objects and buildings.

Given the extensive and meticulous cleaning required, it was clear to Izzo that she and Vitulli would need help to complete the work within the required timeframe. Having previously worked with assistants drawn from the local community on a project restoring a monastery in Italy, Izzo put out a call via email and Facebook, inviting local people to join the project. The subsequent team, though drawn from Christchurch, has a distinctly international flavour (the presence of two Italians and a Brazilian may explain the excellent coffee always available on site). It also includes Julia Holden, a contemporary artist who recently moved to the city from Melbourne and who couldn't resist the opportunity of being involved with the restoration of this unusual piece of Christchurch's artistic heritage:

I thought, 'Oh I've got to do that!' I've absolutely fallen in love with the paintings, they are so beautiful, so lightly painted, so deft and confident and incredibly loose, up-close. I've been surprised by some of the colours that have been used—it's obviously been painted by someone who knows about painting things to be seen from a distance.

The task the team faced was far from simple. Though the painted canvases were designed to be bonded firmly to their plaster backing, it soon became evident to Izzo that there was a greater separation between the canvas and the ceiling than was usual. She began to be concerned that large sections had delaminated. During her first week inspecting the painting, she took samples of the adhesive on the back of the canvas and discovered that it was not animal glue as had been previously thought, but gum arabic, a natural adhesive made of hardened acacia tree sap. Primarily now used as a thickening agent in the food industry, it has many other uses, including binding watercolour paint and acting as edible glue on the backs of 'lickable' postage stamps. It is easily soluble in water and,

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in the case of the Theatre Royal ceiling, this had caused the canvases to partially detach. As part of the conservation treatment, the eight canvas sections were carefully removed from their plaster supports and the residual glue washed off with warm water. Areas of mould were laboriously cleaned from the front and back of the paintings and surface damage, including cracks, tears and marks caused by singeing from light bulbs installed around the edge of the dome, was repaired. Because of the size and fragility of the paintings, some of this work had to be undertaken while lying suspended over the canvas, using a platform designed by Vitulli (drawing upon the knot-making skills he developed as a sailor).

Along the way, the team uncovered a few surprises, including an unexpected original layer of real gold on the central plaster rosette decoration that had been subsequently covered with layers of white enamel. Unfortunately, the gold was so thinly applied—'they were thinking of economy', says Izzo—that it was impossible to remove the

paint on top without pulling it off too, but she is proposing that it be recreated in the final restoration.

The next stage of the project will involve the construction of a new backing support to replace the original one, which was applied by hand, creating a uneven surface. Over the many years since it was installed, the canvas stretched to accommodate these imperfections, so any new stabilising surface will need to mirror these irregularities exactly. As part of the conservation project, the canvases will be relined to protect them against any further damage; each will be able to be removed individually, in any order. The final completion date for the dome project is currently unknown, as it depends on the progress of the overall rebuild of the theatre. For now, Izzo's team must wait until the dome structure can be returned to the auditorium. They will then reattach the canvases to it before it is lifted into place, ready for any final retouching that may be needed.

'Along the way, the team uncovered a few surprises, including an unexpected original layer of real gold on the central plaster rosette decoration...'

Early on in the project, the conservation workers were dubbed 'Team Scugnizzi'—a name that came from Izzo's and Vitulli's experience of the social impact of conservation when working in Italy. Izzo recalls an early project in the streets of Naples:

I was often dealing with tough areas where conservation or restoration wasn't something that was known to the local people. There was a door from a royal palace that for some reason was moved to a normal building which is now in a difficult area. We were just approaching the cleaning



of this beautiful door and the first day on the scaffolding I put my bag down... gone! My workers were running behind these guys who had stolen the bags. [It turned out that] they used the door as a goalpost for playing soccer. So that's how we started. But then they watched us working every day, just scratching at the door, doing our work all the time. And they began to appreciate what they had. If people were working so hard on it, then maybe they had something of value there. The best result for me was when we were leaving the scugnizzi (street kids), these young fellows, they were saying 'don't worry, we are going to look after the door!'

For Izzo, the reaction she has experienced in Christchurch when people hear what she is working on has reconfirmed her belief in the power of conservation to connect people, especially, perhaps, those who have shared traumatic experiences: 'Sometimes we become too pragmatic, we just look at one side without looking all the other parts of it. It's better when you can have an impact on people's everyday life and they have an opportunity to participate.' Vitulli, who, back in Italy, works with at-risk children to restore old boats and put them back on the ocean, agrees: 'Restoration, it's clear, is not just about buildings.'

Felicity Milburn

Curator

Felicity spoke to Caroline Izzo, Emanuele Vitulli and Julia Holden in September 2013.

Left: Underside of the painting during restoration. Photo: John Collie

Above: Team Scugnizzi at work. Photo: John Collie

FURTHER READING:

The Theatre Royal, Christchurch: an illustrated history, Clerestory Press, Christchurch, 2008.

The Fault is Ours Joseph Becker on Lebbeus Woods

There was a packed auditorium at CPIT in Christchurch this August when visiting San Francisco
Museum of Modern Art curator
Joseph Becker delivered a lecture on architect Lebbeus Woods.
And it wasn't hard to guess why. In addition to many other achievements, Woods is renowned for his highly speculative project, Inhabiting the Quake. Senior curator Justin Paton spoke to Becker about Lebbeus Woods, and what Christchurch might learn from him.

Lebbeus Woods
Sketchbook (30 July
1995, NYC - 23 May
1998, NYC) 1995. Ink
on paper. Collection
SFMOMA, Accessions
Committee Fund
purchase. © Estate of
Lebbeus Woods

JUSTIN PATON: You came to Christchurch to talk about the architect Lebbeus Woods, who is not an architect in the sense most people are used to. Could you say a little about Woods and the context he emerged from? JOSEPH BECKER: Absolutely. To put Woods in proper context it's important to paint a little bit of the picture of his upbringing. He was born in 1940 and grew up as the son of an army engineer in the thick of the Second World War and during the development and evolution of the atomic bomb. His father, Colonel Lebbeus Woods, was responsible for a lot of the infrastructural developments related to the Manhattan Project, so Woods junior, Lebbeus, was around all of these large engineering projects—aeronautics, wind tunnels and fighter jets—and I think that established a design and engineering sensibility in him at a very young age. His father ultimately died of radiation poisoning from the Bikini Atoll atomic tests, and Lebbeus Woods was also affected by a very raw understanding that, through engineering, there could be both the creation of something and destruction and chaos. This probably also led him towards a certain fundamental distrust of governments and institutions—the idea of some heavy hand that was not his. Perhaps with this in mind he studied engineering at Purdue and architecture at Urbana-Champaign where he was exposed to the idea of cybernetics and the science of thinking. He then entered into architectural practice, working for Eero Saarinen and Associates after Saarinen's untimely death and the firm's transfer to Kevin Roche and John Dinkeloo, and was involved in key projects focusing on architecture's capacity to craft an experiential space for its inhabitants. And all the while

he's developing his own voice, his own architectural language, working as a freelance illustrator and architectural renderer, honing his skills and his technical capabilities in clearly rendering an architectural idea.

JP: At that point, though, he was perhaps not so different from many other young practicing architects. What was it that started to set Woods apart from architects as we normally encounter them?

JB: The major difference is that Woods was seemingly never fully interested in actually building his buildings. He was more interested in the idea of architecture for its own sake, and by that I mean architecture that was not for clients, or money, or even for glory, but more focused on underlying philosophical concerns about what architecture is and what it has the potential to become. By separating himself from some of the practical requirements of professional architecture, such as building permits, or the potential design derision of corporate clients, or even from dealing with forces like gravity, he was able to focus on the question of what it means to exist in a world that we can create. What does it mean to exist in an architecture that we can be responsible for? What can we do with that responsibility? This was also at a time, in the late 1970s and the 1980s, when the idea of practicing a more conceptual architecture, and not 'selling out' to the capitalist system of building, became a badge of honour. There was a very interesting conversation flowing through academic circuits and publications, with people pushing against the common understanding of what architecture is. And Woods was at the centre of that.



'What if, instead of being victimised by the earthquake, we used architecture to embrace it, allowing variations within our architectural programmes that are generated by seismic activity?'

Lebbeus Woods
Photon Kite from the
series Centricity 1988.
Graphite on paper.
Collection SFMOMA,
purchase through a gift
of the Members of the
Architecture + Design
Forum, SFMOMA

JP: What triggered this push towards conceptual architecture? Was it disenchantment with commercial models?

JB: It was a common feeling at that time that corporate interests were taking over. To have clarity of architectural vision in that social context was difficult, especially if you were trying to execute your ideas through actual buildings. A built version of the architectural idea would not necessarily provide the conceptual rigour that Woods wanted and which he could execute more successfully through a drawing, a model or his writing. His aim was to describe the potential of architecture, rather than creating something three-dimensional and inhabitable that we would commonly consider architecture.

JP: Ceasing to make buildings might strike some observers as a withdrawal or a retreat. With that potential criticism in mind, how did Woods make his ideas known? How did he disseminate them?

JB: It's a good question because, if you consider the idea of architecture as a career, then you know your cachet lies in realising your projects. But Woods was very adept at keeping himself relevant. He taught for many years at Cooper Union's School of Architecture, along with others, and also founded what is called the Research Institute for Experimental Architecture in the 1980s, which he saw as a new model for teaching architecture through conceptual practice. He also lectured internationally, and published his drawings and writings. He undoubtedly practiced architecture even though he never built buildings.

JP: And can you talk a little about the things he did make?

JB: He was extremely talented with the pen and the pencil, and he had such an ability to describe architectural ideas clearly that the drawings and models were capable of standing as artworks in their own right. They have this quality of labour and attention to detail that is seldom found these days in architectural practice.

JP: Is that due to the widespread use of computer-aided design?

JB: Absolutely. The pen and the pencil are very much still tools of the trade, but for sketching. The computer is such an important and functional device that it has essentially trumped the need for somebody to describe a space by hand, or illustrate the essence of a space by hand. So Woods was among the last, and perhaps the best, of a generation of

architects who did this, who rendered the potential of a space by hand. There are some who have the technical skills, but the conceptual rigour of Woods's work sets him apart. He wasn't just a renderer, he was the creator and author of these ideas.

JP: When I look at the works, I think of the tradition of fantastic architecture, from Piranesi's Carceri etchings all the way through to the structures seen in science-fiction movies. Was there a fantastic dimension to what Woods was doing? Did sci-fi influence him or the other way around?

JB: This idea of fictional architecture, or even science-fictional architecture, is tricky for me. I wrestle with it in relation to Woods because a common perception of science fiction is that it's there more for amusement or escape than for deep contemplation about how the world works—that it's involved with imagining a world that is impossible. And with Woods, I'm less interested in thinking about the impossibilities than I am in thinking about the possibility of his projects. What if some of these things were realised? What effect would that have on our social perceptions? Our engagement? Even our communications?

JP: Woods had a strong connection with the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, where you're assistant curator of architecture and design. Can you talk about the major project he realised there? JB: Woods had a dialogue with Aaron Betsky who in the mid 1990s was the curator of architecture and design at the museum. Following the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake that shook the Bay Area and the series of earthquakes in the 1990s that included Kobe and Los Angeles, Betsky commissioned Woods to come to the Bay Area and do a project based on the idea of the earthquake. Woods responded by attempting to take the event of the earthquake and turn it into something that was not necessarily chaos and destruction but a potential creative power. He was looking at the way that we perceive natural disaster as a negative, almost like an affront to humanity and to the evolution of civilisation. And he was challenging that idea and saying that we are looking at these seismic events in a backwards way. What if, instead of being victimised by the earthquake, we used architecture to embrace it, allowing variations within our architectural programmes that are generated by seismic activity? Woods created these amazing panels





describing different types of houses or spaces of inhabitation that were all engaging with different aspects of seismic activity.

JP: Thinking of Christchurch and the many discussions here about building, I'm interested to know how the project, called Inhabiting the Quake, was received. What uses did local architects or viewers have for it? Did it have an appreciable effect on the wider conversation?

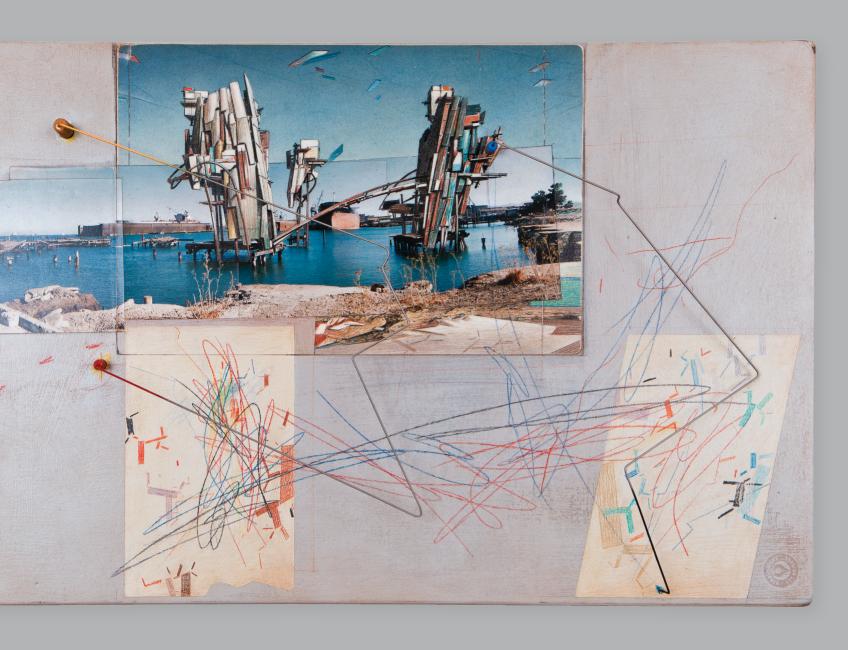
JB: I think with Woods's proposals, his goal is to plant a seed for other architects, engineers, planners and urban designers to start thinking more broadly and 'outside

the box' about the way that we construct buildings, the way we inhabit buildings, even the way we take buildings apart. Because his proposals are very radical we can't really hope to see them realised by other architects yet. But what we can hope for is incremental change. This might begin with a shift of focus from the aesthetic of architecture to more concentration on things like base isolation and allowing certain kinds of flexibilities to begin to inform a building's design.

JP: That word 'inhabit' in Woods's title is fascinating. It seems to suggest that words like 'post-quake' are misnomers—that we are always living in the quake,

and that we should never consider that it is behind us. What's your understanding of the phrase?

JB: Yes, it's multilayered. It's the idea of 'inhabiting' not only in space but in time, and it's not only a physical act but a mental one too. He's suggesting that we embrace or acknowledge the fact that we are responsible for the effects of the earthquake. He's calling attention to the fact that the problem isn't that the earthquake, operating independently, destroys the buildings, it's that the buildings have not been built for the earthquake. So he's encouraging us to inhabit the mindset of nature, inhabit the moment of the earthquake and, instead of being passive, to be an active participant in the process.



Far left: Lebbeus Woods WAVE House, from the series San Francisco Project: Inhabiting the Quake 1995. Graphite and pastel on paper. Collection SFMOMA, purchase through a gift of Cathy and Ned Topham and the Accessions Committee Fund. © Estate of Lebbeus Woods

Left: Lebbeus Woods
SHARD House, from the
series San Francisco
Project: Inhabiting the
Quake 1995. Graphite
and pastel on paper.
Collection SFMOMA,
Accessions Committee
Fund purchase. © Estate
of Lebbeus Woods

JP: That reminds me of another work by Woods that you presented in your Christchurch lecture, which I think many in the audience took away as a lasting mental image. It was a postcard, is that right?

JB: It's a note from his initial workings for the Inhabiting the Quake project. Woods is looking at the ways seismic actions present themselves and the ways we deal with those actions. He's looking at whether we should resist the earthquake with our architecture, or whether we should try and use or harness it. Or whether we embrace it, and even imagine an architecture that causes minor seismic activity so as to prevent major catastrophic

quakes. He's generating these little notes that present a

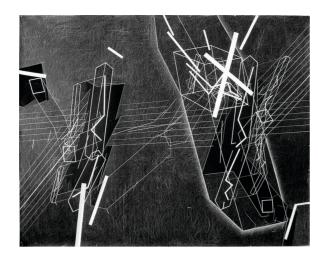
series of possible responses. And the key linguistic tool he uses here is the word 'fault', which is of course the fault line but also the idea of responsibility. So in the image I showed in Christchurch [see overleaf] he says, 'The fault is ours,' which is incredibly poetic. It inverts our traditional understanding of responsibility.

JP: It's terrific—a catchphrase for Christchurch to live by. With Woods's images in your mind's eye, how did the current Christchurch cityscape strike you? You arrived not long after some large tracts of the 'red zone' had been reopened to the public.

JB: It was hugely fascinating to see not only the effect

on architecture but also on the physical landscape. As I walked and drove through, two different paths of thought began to intersect. One concerned the incredible dynamism within that landscape, where the ground has dramatically shifted and kind of laid its evidence bare. And then also there was the undeniable feeling of vacancy and emptiness in the city, which has been cleared out not only due to seismic activity but also, to some extent, due to political activity. It's a landscape of orange cones and surveyors and demo crews and within all of this change there is such a wonderful underlying feeling of optimism and potential regarding the built space, the open space, and the city as a whole.

EARTHQUAKE ARCHITECTURE. IS IT THE ARCHITEC ARESISTS THE QUAKE? INHABITS THE QUAKE? SNEE QUAKE? THE QUAKE? THE QUAKE? THE QUAKE? IF A), then (most often) it resists laperal forces; only in the timespace of the grake; () 11 Cres expanded, or completed by the grake; () come energy released by the grake, or the vertices infleenth commen the release; E) sets off Son diffusing the big one. Penhaps The SF project of COMPENDIUM of these possibilities. THE FAULT 1 July 1995, 5:30 mm - Sourise at the hours bruck The mometains still surprise and mispine me priss frem. Felling my prepried firstet at the prisses from to IFK- her sunth. I've will perfect in the Austrian personal. ECTURE THAT EEDS THE LTIS OURS. SO FAR...



Far Left: Lebbeus Woods **Sketch** 1995. © Estate of Lebbeus Woods

Left: Lebbeus Woods Conflict Space 4 2006. Crayon and acrylic on linen. Collection SFMOMA, purchase through a gift of anonymous donors and the Accessions Committee Fund. © Estate of Lebbeus Woods

JP: Visitors to the city sometimes confess to feeling guilty for finding it so interesting to look at. Is there a danger of aestheticising disaster? What do you think Woods's position on this question would be?

JB: I think Woods would say there is really no danger in looking at the beautiful aspects of chaos. Out of this kind of destruction can come a kind of creation, a realisation, an inevitable shift in strategy or in perception. I think that, in order for that shift to occur, there needs to be an event. And seeing things distorted or twisted and laid bare can suggest alternative architectural approaches, even if those alternatives are not yet functional. You mentioned Piranesi's Carceri, his views of prisons, and it resonated a bit. They are very dark scenes in which these interweaving pathways are almost towering over you and burying you. But at the same time there is something so compelling about those images that describe a fantastically complex space. Similarly, in the architectural environment that we experience, there is something so captivating about looking at something that is both so huge and such a feat of creative energy, and simultaneously at the brink of coming completely apart.

JP: It has been like that in Christchurch, where we have been constantly exposed, through the sight of demolitions in process, to all this new knowledge about what buildings are made of—all the sinews and structures that are usually hidden inside or within. It would be nice to think that, despite the stress and trauma of demolition, some understanding comes of it.

JB: Given that there is such radical change coming to Christchurch, with so many buildings coming down and presumably new buildings coming up, there is a remarkable opportunity for people to feel directly engaged in the architecture and planning, and to start to feel like the city is again your own.

JP: The temptation is always to ask visiting authorities what they would build in the new Christchurch. But since Woods put the emphasis on unbuildable projects, I'll try a different closing question. Why does architecture need speculative and unbuildable projects to set alongside its real building projects? What might the value of the 'unbuildable' be in a city like Christchurch, currently mired in the practicalities of recovery?

JB: For understandable reasons it's all too easy to fall into the same comfortable patterns of architectural development. But the key takeaway from looking at Woods's work is that a process for any kind of radical change might take a long time, so you have to embrace the potential of subtle and small shifts in perception—in the perception of the geotechnical engineer, of the urban planner, the designer, the architect. People can come in and propose potentially great things like mixed-use densities and pedestriancentric urban spaces, but in addition I think it benefits everybody involved to stand back and take a serious look and think again about the potential effects of living in an urban environment. Is the architecture challenging those effects? Pushing them? Stimulating them? And in my understanding of Woods, we need that thinking to take place, alongside the work of building, if we're going to move forward in a progressive way.

Joseph Becker is assistant curator of architecture and design at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. He spoke with Justin Paton in October 2013 following a speaking tour of New Zealand in August organised by the Adam Art Gallery Te Pātaka Toi, Victoria University of Wellington, and funded by the New Zealand Institute of Architects.

SHIFT NG LINES **SH FTING L** NES **SHIFTING** LINES SH FTING **L** NES SHIFT NG LINES

IT'S WHERE WE LIVE: the encrusted surface of a molten planet, rotating on its own axis, circling round the star that gives our daylight. Geographically, it's a mapped-out city at the edge of a plain, bordered by sea and rising, broken geological features. Zooming in further, it's a neighbourhood, a street, a shelter—all things existing at first as outlines, drawings, plans. And it's a body: portable abode of mind, spirit, psyche (however we choose to view these things); the breathing physical location of unique identity and passage.

This show is about drawing, as an idea and as a means of connecting us to different kinds of places. In doing so, it brings together the work of six artists—Andrew Beck, Peter Trevelyan, Katie Thomas, Pip Culbert, Gabriella Mangano and Silvana Mangano—all of whom use line to investigate space and structure in unexpected ways. The claim that their work might help redefine how we view drawing here seems reasonable. From tracing and rubbing, cutting and subtracting, measuring and ruling; to video performance and construction with delicate pencil leads, drawing as an idea is allowed to take very different forms.

The grouping conveys a sense of spacious minimalism; for some, perhaps, the thought that there's not much in it. A slowed down reading, however, allows each work to be recognised as a distinctive balancing act of simplicity and contemplative complexity. Each disrupts physical space with line, and deftly deals with imagined or symbolic space. Visual connections and metaphorical associations unfold into broader ideas, ranging from the planetary, geological or geographical to the personal, bodily or psychological. The artists' varied tactics show them to be engaged, agile and skilfully adept.



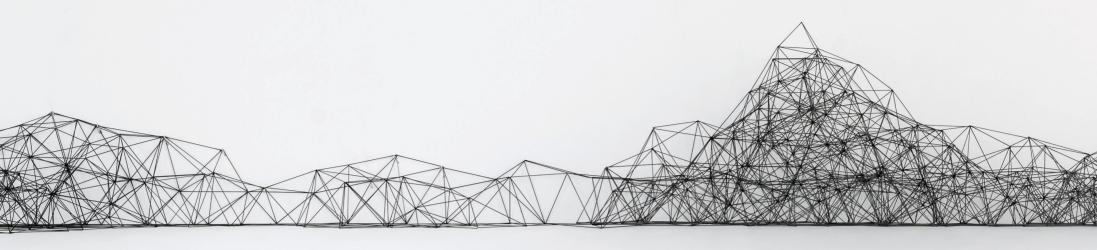
Andrew Beck Unison (11.45am, 5 November) 2013. Oil paint, sunlight. Courtesy of the artist and Hamish McKay Gallery

LANETARY SPACE

Auckland-based Andrew Beck is a 2010 MFA graduate from Massey University School of Fine Arts, Wellington who is already building an impressive local and international exhibiting record. In his investigations into the nature of matter and light, he acknowledges the influence of artists such as Nancy Holt, Robert Smithson, Richard Serra, Robert Irwin, James Turrell and Lee Ufan. His theoretical underpinnings range from classical philosophy (he cites, for example, Parmenides' theories and understanding of change) to Isaac Newton's understanding of inertia, and 'the Māori proposition of Te Korekore', an esoteric realm of potential being.¹

From this framework, Beck has created for this show a striking, rigorously minimal work. At the time noted in the title, *Unison* (11.45am, 5 November) existed as an angular, hard-edged shape marked out in black oil paint

in a window corner, falling at an angle from the place it began, an architectural segment of sunlight. Continuing in a band around a projecting column, it angled down again on a different plane, ending at the shadow's edge, neatly joining two portions of light. With each global rotation and within a few days, the alignment became increasingly inaccurate—if given one year's wall space, it would briefly realign. Located somewhere between drawing, painting and installation, this temporary intervention existed most plainly within a recurring moment of passing light. In pinpointing a moment and location in the universe—and in matching our preference for bringing the unfathomable to a scale we can deal with—it also proves the artist's position that time and space are materials to work with.



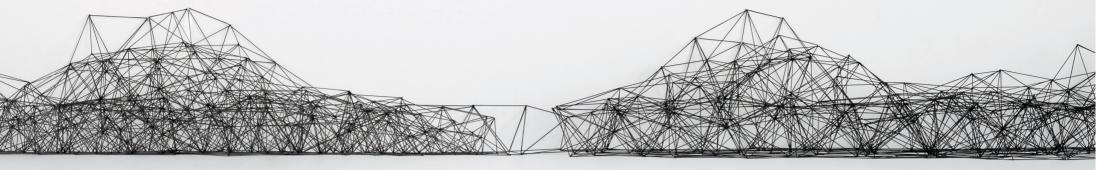
Wellington-based Peter Trevelyan's *survey #4* (2013) is a quietly mind-boggling three-dimensional drawing that more obviously claims the territory of sculpture. At around four metres long, an elongated, wall-based structure constructed of 0.5mm mechanical pencil leads, it is a feat of originality and exquisite engineering precision. While the whole construction retains the detailed sharpness of its chosen medium—and much of its fragility—the interconnecting trigonometric systems that form its internal workings make it relatively robust. The work is airy and light, but within its interlocking geometry, fine darker points are formed in concentration where multiple lines converge.

Viewed from a distance, its spread out form suggests topography, hills outlined from far away, as seen from shipboard by late-eighteenth or early-nineteenth-century European explorers. While alluding to mapping or surveying for future reference, Trevelyan's investigation is also evidently about testing and proving provisional structures, an aspect aligning it to drawing's traditionally understood role. Part of a growing body of work, survey #4 displays Trevelyan's pleasure in seeing drawing being made to exist in a literal, three-dimensional sense, and his interest in setting up layered propositions. Whether tiny or vast, his spatial drawings can seem impossibilities, and in existing at all neatly knock the stuffing out of complacency or boredom.

(For more about Trevelyan and for more of his work, see 'Pagework', p.53.)

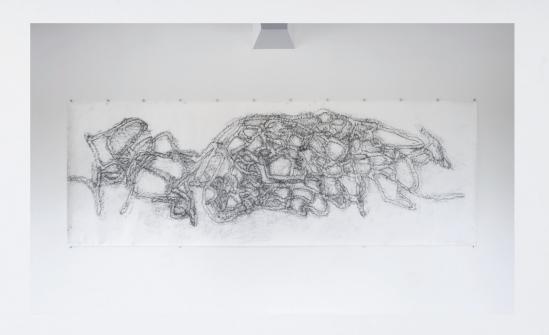


Peter Trevelyan **survey #4** 2013. o.5mm mechanical pencil leads. Courtesy of the artist

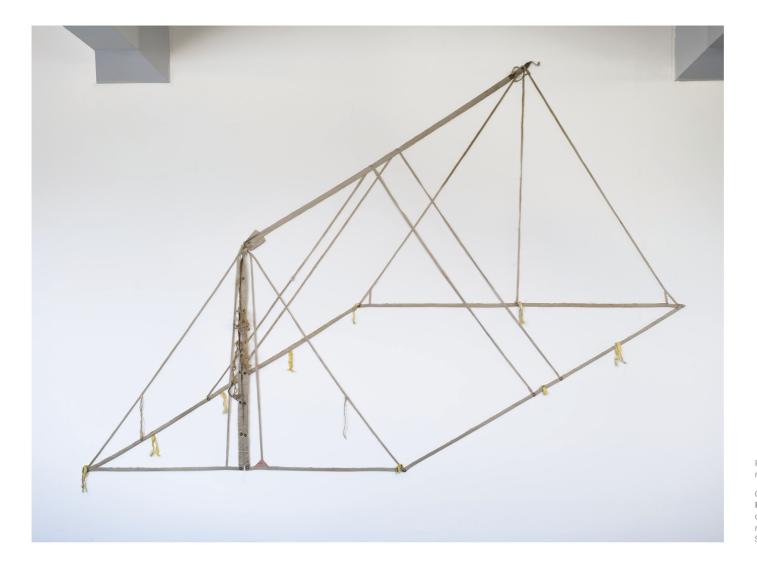


Graphite, topography and a sense of risk come together in different ways in Katie Thomas's 4.25 metre drawing Westenra Terrace (2011), a frottage rubbing from the surface of a road on the Cashmere hills. Thomas was at the Christchurch Arts Centre on 22 February 2011, hanging a solo exhibition just as everything shook, meaning that her MFA Painting (School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury) show was a bit delayed. In the time that followed, her attention was drawn to the clusters and patterns of lines starting to appear on city roads: temporary repairs to cracks, intended to keep out water and to prevent further damage. Thomas's interest in the amorphous 'found drawings' resulted in several large-scale rubbings (with assistance during the process from thoughtful locals sailing in with protective orange cones).

These are less about a historical moment or posterity, however, than they are aligned to the surrealist impulse of collecting imagery connected to an evolving and established painting practise. As Max Ernst used the frottage technique from 1925 as a starting point for more elaborate painted or collaged compositions, Thomas has viewed the large drawings as reference material; plus-sized notebook diagrams connecting to and feeding into her painting. With its smudged hand-marks, fine road texture and abraded directional lines, this drawing holds completion as an entity, and with its organic, macro/micro structure links strongly to her recent canvases. Despite being unorthodox, even extreme, it may in this sense be the most traditional type of drawing in this show.



Katie Thomas **Westenra Terrace** 2011. Graphite rubbing on paper. Courtesy of the artist



Pip Culbert **Pup Tent** 1999. Canvas, metal, rope. Courtesy of the artist

Gabriella Mangano and Silvana Mangano Rewind 2012. Single channel high definition digital video 16:9, black and white, 4 minutes. Courtesy of the artists and Anna Schwartz Gallery

FINDING

Drawing is further redefined by Pip Culbert, a British artist based in France with whom (I hope it's all right to say) we feel something of a family connection.² Culbert graduated from the Royal College of Art in London in the early 1960s, her specialities then being industrial design and engineering. She began exhibiting her fabric-based works in 1985 and first showed in New Zealand in 1993.3 Pup Tent (1999) belongs to a significant body of work that began in found objects constructed in cloth (her inventory also includes shirts, tarpaulins, flags, pockets, surf sails, trousers, quilts, ties, bags, ironing boards, upholstery, parachutes, aprons and handkerchiefs). Culbert's technique involves cutting away to remove everything but the bones—the essential, strengthened lines of stitching. Drawing in effect by subtraction, this is also drawing in the sense that it renders three-dimensional objects two-dimensional. Pinned to the wall, her diagrammatic tent projects like an isometric plan, denied perspective but retaining a spatial sense.

As with all of her reductive cutaways, *Pup Tent* holds divergent metaphors; the tent in its temporality is a very old metaphor for the body. Like one of Plato's ideal forms, it also speaks here of structure, shelter and support. In a city that has been shaken back to its pioneering roots, awaiting new structures again on almost every street, for me its A-frame form recalls the well-known 1864 photograph by early Canterbury Association settler A.C. Barker, as well as paintings in the Gallery and Canterbury Museum collections featuring tents by artists including William Holman Hunt, William Fox, James Edward Fitzgerald and Austen Deans. (That I mention these is possibly due to an odd fact: with the city's public art collection presently safely locked away, Culbert's 1999 work might now be one of the most historical works of art currently on public display.)



Through performance, video and sound, Melbourne-based Gabriella Mangano and Silvana Mangano bring a particular kind of symbiotic relationship and understanding to their art, having worked collaboratively since 2001 (they completed BFAs in drawing at the Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne in 2001 and 2003 respectively). They have featured regularly in their videos—sometimes drawing, choreographically and simultaneously—and maintain strong links in their work to ideas around drawing.

The digital video *Rewind* (2012) feature shows a solo performer and her shadow, and is structured around the body's movement, rhythm (including through a quietly pulsing soundtrack) and changing compositional balance. With balletic poise, she manoeuvres a rectangular black shape, carefully held at each end, which moves and divides the screen, sometimes disappearing out of frame. With face concealed, the performer appears to respond to her shadow as well as her own ghosted image, which is simultaneously screened. The camera zooms slowly in and out; movement changes pace to the changing tempo of a digital heartbeat. The black shape is the dominant form and

a kind of riddle: what is this thing that the artist carries and treasures? Is it changing identity and self-definition, a capital 'I'? A stand-in for the other? Or simply a formal graphic device? It is fine to stay guessing. As with each of the artists' works shown here together, it will nonetheless have me trying to figure it all out.

Ken Hall

Curator

Shifting Lines is on display at 209 Tuam Street until 19 January 2014.

NOTES

- Te Korekore was defined as 'the realm between non-being and being: that is the realm of potential being' by Māori Marsden, quoted in Te Ara http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/te-ao-marama-the-natural-world/ page-3
- Pip Culbert is married to Bill Culbert, who recently represented New Zealand at the Venice Biennale, in Front Door Out Back, curated by Justin Paton.
- 2. She has also shown her unique brand of minimalism in solo and group shows in UK, France, Australia, Japan, Germany and the US.



The Brook Gallery 1975—20

Bill Hammond The Fall Of Icarus (detail) 1995. Acrylic on canvas. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased, 1996. Reproduced with permission. Exhibited in W. Hammond 'New Paintings' at the Brooke Gifford Gallery in 1996

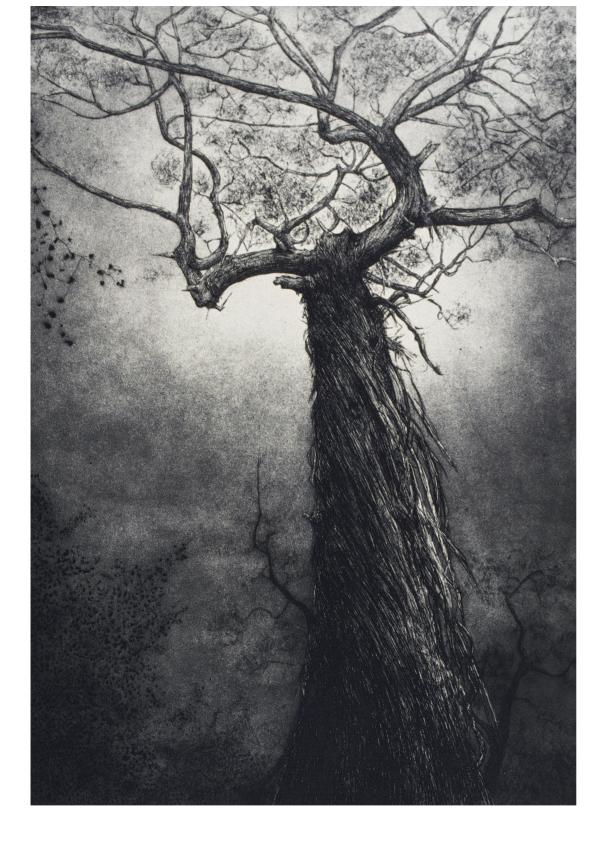


BASED IN CHRISTCHURCH since 1975, the Brooke Gifford Gallery has been a stalwart of the New Zealand art scene for thirty-eight years, so it was sad news to hear mid way through this year that it was to close its doors. Originally run by Barbara Brooke and Judith Gifford, the gallery can be listed as one of the pioneering dealer galleries in New Zealand and, as such, contributed to major changes in this country's visual culture and the way art was presented to the public. Although Barbara Brooke died in 1980, Gifford continued to run the gallery, and in so doing became one of this city's major promoters of the visual arts.

The seventies and eighties were a time of increased professionalism in New Zealand's arts, with the result that many artists were more able to support themselves through their practice. Gifford stated in 2000 that when the gallery opened its doors, 'there was no real investment art market... People simply bought art because they loved the work and were keen to support their favourite artists—people like Fomison and McCahon.' She saw part of her role as 'raising public awareness to the point where people saw artists as more than bohemian, half-hearted, eccentric characters..."

The last time I entered that door off Manchester Street and climbed the creaky wooden stairs up to the gallery was a sad affair. I was part of a team that gained access to the building a few short weeks after the 22 February earthquakes to recover the art and archives. We made two trips and were in and out as fast as possible—the old Excelsior Hotel next door had partially collapsed onto the backroom of the gallery and created a massive hole in the tin roof. We managed to save the artworks in the stockroom and on display as well as the extensive archives of letters and invites stretching back to the mid 1970s.

I first started visiting the Brooke Gifford Gallery in the early 1990s, so I was a late comer. One of my most memorable openings was gatecrashing Jason Greig and Ronnie van Hout's combined *Miscreant* and *Mephitis*; as a fan of the band in which Jason and Ronnie play, Into The Void, this exhibition really struck a chord with me. It included some stunning monoprints by Greig, a medium which he had only recently begun working in, and the *Evil*, *Hell* and *Undead* photographs by Van Hout which were subsequently acquired by Christchurch Art Gallery.



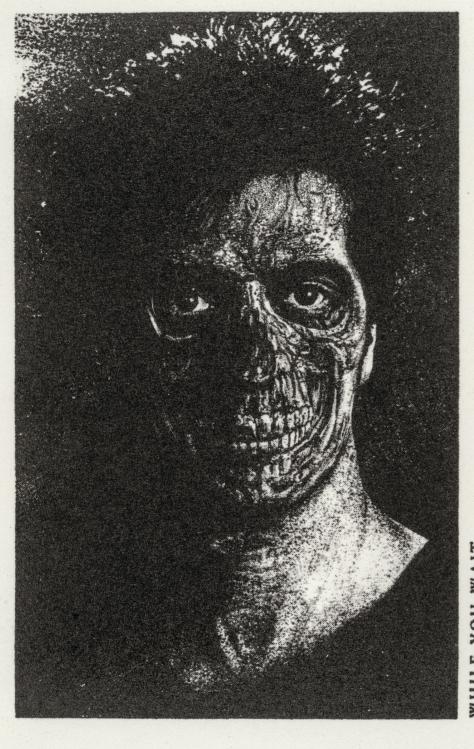
Denise Copland Indigenous II 1991. Etching, aquatint. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased from the Brooke Gifford Gallery 1993

Ralph Hotere Dawn/Water Poem 1986. Acrylic on canvas. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased with assistance from the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council 1986. Reproduced courtesy of Ralph Hotere. Exhibited in *Ralph Hotere: Black Rainbow* at the Brooke Gifford Gallery in 1986

D NURULO A N

DAWN / WATER POEM

I also recall seeing Shane Cotton's 1994 series of brown paintings featuring potted plants and elements of colonial topographical art, Ralph Hotere's glowing leaves of gold on blackened glass, Tony de Lautour's menacing saws and machetes overpainted with crazed drug-fuelled kiwis, and a much later opening of Peter Robinson's in the 2000s where the classic country tunes of Glenn Campbell belted out on a beat box. But perhaps one of the best openings I ever attended at the Brooke Gifford was the very last one, post quake and held at Chambers241 Gallery in 2011. 36 years in the zone was a group show featuring established artists who had come to be closely associated with the Brooke Gifford. A great night with some fine words spoken in tribute to Judith and the Brooke Gifford Gallery.



HOTOGRAPHIC STUDIOS

Jason Greig **While You Wait** (1995). Lithograph. Private collection, Christchurch. Exhibited in *Miscreant* at the Brooke Gifford Gallery in 1995

NOTES

- Adrienne Rewi, 'Instincts build gallery success', Sunday Star-Times, 28 May 2000.
- 2. Ibid

Gifford continued to show younger artists alongside her more established stable of artists right up to the earthquake, and over the years provided many emerging artists with the break they needed. In the early 1990s she took on the group of young artists that was to become perhaps most synonymous with the gallery—Robinson, Séraphine Pick, de Lautour, Greig and Cotton. All were fresh from art school; Gifford later said, 'I don't analyse. I go with my gut instincts. I've stuck at it and I've been lucky to have a group of loyal artists who have stuck with me'.² Other key artists included Bill Sutton, Philip Trusttum, Bill Hammond, Gretchen Albrecht, Richard Killeen, Laurence Aberhart, Don Peebles, Joanna Braithwaite, Tony Fomison, Gordon Walters and Leo Bensemann. Quite a roll call.

Gifford was very responsive to art collectors from across the spectrum, whether you were broke and paying off a Fomison lithograph in fortnightly instalments from your student allowance or a high-rolling lawyer rocking up with a cheque book to pay for a Hammond painting. The Brooke Gifford Gallery fostered interest in the arts for all.

In total Christchurch Art Gallery acquired some 188 artworks from the Brooke Gifford over the thirty-eight years it was open, the first being the woodcut *Matapetre No.3* by Tom Field in 1975 and the last being a suite of four photographs titled *Called by the Sea (II)* (1988) by Marie Shannon in 2012. Some of the Gallery's purchases, like Ralph Hotere's large unstretched canvas *Dawn/Water Poem* (1986), Bill Hammond's *The Fall of Icarus* (1995) and Richard Killeen's *Black Insects, Red Primitives* (1980), have gone on to become key works in the collection. One of my favourite acquisitions, however, is the smaller and more intimate *In the Southern States of America* (1988) by Laurence Aberhart—fifteen stunning photographs from the artist's sojourn to the US contained within a beautifully bound and printed album.

We wish Judith all the best for the future and thank her for the contribution she has made to Christchurch and the wider New Zealand arts scene.

Peter Vangioni Curator

29

THE STRANGER IN THE FRAME

- DAMIAN SKINNER

IN HIS COOK'S SITES PROJECT, Mark Adams photographs the various localities where Captain James Cook and his crew set foot during their three voyages from 1768 to 1779. In focusing on Cook's visits to Dusky Sound and Queen Charlotte Sound in the South Island of New Zealand, Adams explores the moments of first contact between the British Empire and the indigenous people of Aotearoa that have become central to the foundational histories of this country. With his long-term collaborator, historical anthropologist Nicholas Thomas, Adams presents his photographs as part of a wider project that, in concert with Thomas's texts, grapples with the images, texts and historical narratives that create and sustain contemporary political and social identities.

Of course, when you say that, it seems so dry and academic; very distant from the experience of viewing Adams's photographs up close and in person. An image doesn't do justice to the spectacular, large-scale multiple prints, which leave you in no doubt that Adams is both technically and conceptually in control of his chosen art form. When, in *Cook's Sites: Revisiting History*, Thomas writes that history becomes tactile at Astronomer Point in Pickersgill Harbour, Dusky Sound, you know, standing in front of Adams's photograph, exactly what he's talking about. The tree stumps that Adams photographed over two centuries later, chopped down by Cook's crew and now covered with lichen and moss, appear as beautiful fetishes. They seem to promise, in their verisimilitude and striking beauty, to grant the viewer a direct experience of the past.



'THE INTENTION BEHIND THE COOK'S SITES PROJECT IS NOT TO REPLACE OLD COLONIAL CERTAINTIES (COOK IS A HERO) WITH NEW POSTCOLONIAL ONES (COOK IS A WEAPON OF EMPIRE), BUT TO EVOKE THE AMBIGUITY THAT ALWAYS ATTENDS TO CROSS-CULTURAL INTERACTIONS LIKE THIS.'



'ADAMS INVITES HIS SETTLER VIEWERS TO ASK: WHERE AM I IN THESE IMAGES?'

Adams is not only following in Cook's footsteps in these photographs, but also in those of artists like William Hodges who accompanied Cook on his second voyage. Hodges's A View in Dusky Bay, New Zealand (1773) becomes a 360-degree panorama consisting of eight photographic prints, looking out from the position in which Hodges's Māori figure stands. Cascade Cove, Dusky Bay (1775) becomes a sequence of four photographic prints in which Adams traces the movement of the water down the face of the rocks and out of sight, into the sea. Here Adams opens up a dialogue with the earlier paintings, revealing new insights about the location in which Hodges staged his images and the artistic conventions that structure them. It is as much an intellectual argument as any art historian might make but with the added virtue that these are artworks themselves and therefore a demonstration of the ongoing power and saliency of Hodges's art for the present.

At the heart of the settler colonialism that has shaped countries like Aotearoa New Zealand sits a logic of extermination. European settlers invaded land inhabited by indigenous peoples, while persistently defining that land as virgin or empty. The point was not to govern or enlist indigenous peoples in economic ventures, as happened with other forms of colonialism in Africa and Asia, but to take their land and push them beyond an ever-expanding frontier. In settler societies, it is the non-disappearing native that causes a problem: to get in the way, all the native has to do is stay at home.

The physical displacement of indigenous peoples is always accompanied by cultural and symbolic displacements. Natives disappear or are transformed in art and literature at the same time as social and political policies separate them from their land. In turn, the settlers remake themselves, seeking to become indigenous through a process of adopting aspects of indigenous culture to mark their difference to the place they came from, and through a persistent forgetting of the foundational violence against the original inhabitants.

From the late 1970s, Mark Adams has been tackling head on the conditions of Aotearoa New Zealand as a settler society. It is this, I think, that underpins and unites all of his different photographic projects, whether they involve following in the footsteps of Cook (and his artists), photographing tatau (Samoan tattooing), or documenting the ways in which colonialism is registered in the landscapes of Rotorua or the South Island. Part of what makes his photographs so powerful is that they seek to represent or capture Pākehā—an identity that, like all forms of politically dominant whiteness, operates successfully by remaining unseen or invisible. I'd describe the questions that sit at the heart of Adams's photographic practice like this: What is this place? Why do these elements belong together? What forces of history and culture have led to these encounters, environments and identities?

Here is how Adams describes these dynamics, speaking of a 1978 photograph of Mr Salati and his pe'a (tattoo), which was taken in the subject's home, a Grey Lynn villa:

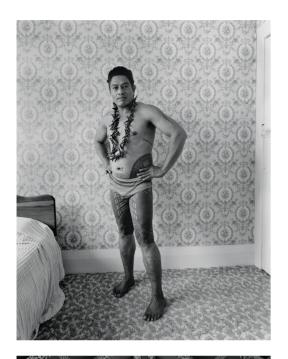
What happened at that moment was complex and a bit confusing, but it is important because it inflected everything that happened from then on. It was the visual combination of pattern in the context of the interior and Mr Salati and his tattoo. It looked to me like an image—a powerful image which wasn't easily accounted for. At one level I was thinking about my situation. The stranger in the frame was me, not him. He already knew he was in Polynesia. That was what I needed to know. Up to that moment that wasn't exactly

clear to me. What I saw at that moment was my position. I was the exotic in the frame, even though at that other level he and his fabulous tattoo were obviously exotic to me, as you would expect. Of course it's more complicated than that, but that was my first reaction. I was thinking, is this Polynesia or is this New Zealand, or is it both simultaneously, or is it Polynesia on Sunday mornings, or what? And this all seemed contestable and unstable.¹

Effectively, Adams invites his settler viewers to ask: where am I in these images? To frame it in terms of local politics, Adams aims his camera at Pākehā by pointing it at Māori (and Pacific) subjects. In a settler society like Aotearoa, this is not straightforward, as settlers quite often dress up their claims to be indigenous (and thus push aside the original inhabitants of the land) through the appropriation of native art and cultural practices. We are Kiwis, who do the haka while overseas, and who wear pounamu to indicate our connection to home.

Adams's photographs explore the tensions between Pākehā and Māori that result from settler colonialism. His images are an attempt to stare down this troubling history, and to locate Pākehā—the settler usurpers—as actors in the scene. Whatever other histories Guide Rangi's meeting house points to—her role as a famous Māori guide to the geothermal wonders; the innovative work of her grandfather, carver Tene Waitere, who was responsible for the artworks—Pākehā are also here, in details like the furniture, a 1960s lounge suite purchased from a department store that could also be found in many Pākehā homes.

I find Adams's willingness to actively look for the settler both unsettling and thrilling. That's one element that sustains my interest in these photographs. The other is what I would characterise as Adams's facility with the complexities of colonialism. His photographs offer no resolutions, only





Mark Adams **Grey Lynn, Auckland, Mr Salati Fiu** 2/4/1978. 4 x 5 inch black and white negative

Mark Adams Interior of Guide Rangi's house 'Hinemihi', carved by Tene Waitere, Whakarewarewa, Rotorua 26/11/1984. Silver bromide print. Rotorua Museum

problems; patiently tracking the material traces of various forces that coalesce in specific sites (whether the loaded landscapes of Dusky Bay, or the South Island, or the domestic spaces of an Auckland villa, or the institutional spaces of a museum) and periods in time (the moment when the photograph was taken, but also a conception of the present as a porous entity that is affected by unexpected and uncontrolled leakages from the past). As Nicholas Thomas suggests, speaking of Adams's photographs of carvings by Tene Waitere, 'What comes into view is not a sense of identity based either on continuity or on difference, but a double condition, of distance and co-presence, awkward intimacy and apparent incommensurability.'

The intention behind the *Cook's Sites* project is not to replace old colonial certainties (Cook is a hero) with new postcolonial ones (Cook is a weapon of empire), but to evoke the ambiguity that always attends to cross-cultural interactions like this. Adams's photographs are part of a project that seeks to remind us of the tensions and doubts embodied in these historical moments, but which get lost in the authorised accounts of history.

Dusky Sound, with its untamed and now uninhabited wilderness, and the complicated interaction between European and Māori that occurred there, is a perfect location for the kind of clear-eyed and politically committed ambivalence that Adams specialises in. What is it, his photographs seem to ask, to establish a national history on an overgrown tree stump, or a cleared space in the landscape? What kind of signs are these? Ambivalent ones, clearly, that are open for misinterpretation, and not just by us in the present. Johann Reinhold Forster, the naturalist on Cook's second

voyage, totally misunderstood what kind of sign the act of bush clearing represented. As Nicholas Thomas writes, 'Forster supposed that the cleared area would degenerate again into chaos, but the disorder that strikes us now is not a primeval condition but the upshot of contact.' The land-scape that Adams represents in his large format, beautifully detailed photographs, is not a sign of civilisation's lack, as Forster thought, but historical evidence of its beginnings.

Cook's Sites capitalises perfectly on a point Adams's photographs have been making for what seems like a long time now. Something's up, and the traces left on the land-scape don't tell the whole story. How these narratives are to be represented isn't easily discerned, and Adams is too canny to think this can be successfully answered by any photograph, although he certainly makes sure we look—and are rewarded for our time spent following the stranger in the frame.

Damian Skinner is curator of applied art and design at the Auckland Museum, and a Newton International Fellow, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge.

Cook's Sites, Revisiting History: Photographs by Mark Adams features a selection of stunning photographs depicting contemporary views of South Island sites in Dusky Sound and Queen Charlotte Sound, and will be exhibited at 209 Tuam Street from 25 January to 2 March 2013.

NOTES

- "An uncomfortable edge": A conversation between Mark Adams and Nicholas Thomas March—April 2005', in Sean Mallon, Peter Brunt, Nicholas Thomas, Tatau: Photographs by Mark Adams, Te Papa Press, Wellington, 2010, p.66.
- Mark Adams and Nicholas Thomas, Cook's Sites: Revisiting History, Otago University Press, Dunedin, 1999, p.20.

Phil Dadson Bodytok Quintet: The Human Instrument Archive

Andrew Clifford

FROM A CERTAIN PERSPECTIVE, the videos that make up Phil Dadson's Bodytok Quintet: The Human Instrument Archive are reminiscent of Andy Warhol's screen tests, an archive from the mid 1960s containing hundreds of short film-portraits in which not much happens but much is revealed. By using a movie camera to take portraits, Warhol was able to break through the fixed pose of the conventional portrait, unreservedly staring back until the slightest glimpse of personality is revealed—a knowing wink, smirk or laugh that establishes a connection with the filmmaker and the viewer. Around this time, Warhol also acquired his first tape recorder and began collecting thousands of hours of idle conversations, gossip and phone calls. In capturing not much more than time passing, Warhol captures life (and death) at its most basic and mundane, reduced to observation for its own sake.1

Bodytok Quintet starts from a similar premise, gathering together a network of people to document idle activities—fidgety sound tricks that are usually performed without thinking, when bored or otherwise preoccupied, using nothing more than the performer's own body.

Through an open call-out, Dadson invites people to have their own special skill filmed and added to the *Bodytok* archive. But unlike Warhol, Dadson's project celebrates life and diversity, allowing time to stop and start rather than grinding on in a relentless mechanical march of mortality and repetition. Whereas Warhol cynically strips away the dynamics of performance to leave nothing more than the everyday, Dadson seeks out the ordinary to release its potential through the hidden properties of sound. He presents entertainment at its most basic, using the oldest instrumental repertoire available—our bodies. It reveals secret pleasures we are all guilty of indulging in, whether subconsciously or not, and encourages us to explore our own sonic selves.

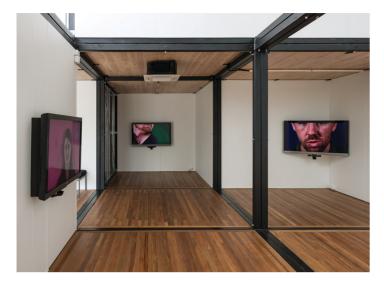
Arguably Warhol's most minimalist film, *Empire* (1964) is an eight hour static portrait of the Empire State Building, and is even more vacant than the screen tests; equally empty in appearance are some of Dadson's *Polar Projects* works, produced in the barren landscape of Antarctica.² *Aerial Farm* (2004) shows the wiry form of a large antenna mast, barely there as it disappears into the



Installation view of Bodytok Quintet: The Human Instrument Archive at ArtBox in November 2013

white-out of a blizzard, and Flutter (2003), a lone flag on a bamboo pole, vibrating against the backdrop of slowly shifting Antarctic light. It is telling that Dadson's career began in the aftermath of the Dada and Fluxus movements, the latter influenced by composer John Cage, when the possibilities of what was considered art, including performance or music, expanded to absorb everyday objects and chance activities from the surrounding world, rather than just the controlled experiences framed by a gallery or concert hall. For Dadson, the energy and rhythms of the planet became an ongoing source of fascination, from the early film Earthworks (1971–2), in which participants from around the world simultaneously observed and recorded the equinox, to the Polar Projects series, where Dadson observes an aerial acting like a giant Aeolian harp in 50km/h gusts, or a flag dancing in the wind like a Len Lye sculpture.3

An important early experience for Dadson was his involvement with the formation of Cornelius Cardew's Scratch Orchestra in London in 1968–9, which shared several members with the Portsmouth Sinfonia and had a





Installation views of Bodytok Quintet: The Human Instrument Archive at ArtBox in November 2013

similar policy of recruiting participants regardless of their music experience or ability. This egalitarian approach has remained a fundamental principle of Dadson's, including his subsequent work as founder of the group From Scratch, whose interlocking phrases of shared hocketed rhythms favoured combined participation over lead solos, and reflected the interwoven cycles of the natural world.

The most populated of Dadson's *Polar Projects* is *Echo Logo* (2003), in which a 100-foot ice face dwarfs a performance by eight Antarctic researchers; recruited by the artist to engage in simple tasks, they pace about while shouting and banging rocks at periodic intervals, activating the acoustic echo of the glacier wall behind them. It is like a strange primeval ritual or conversation in one of the most inhospitable places on earth. I found approaching *Bodytok Quintet* in Christchurch had a similar effect, presented in a barren landscape of empty spaces that overwhelms the occasional distant figures that scurry between the broken buildings and gravel lots. But it is the evasiveness of memories in these strangely neutralised streets that is most disorientating, refusing to provide any context or history.

The name *Bodytok Quintet* is derived from the Melanesian pidgin term toktok, which means 'conversa-

tion'; it is a reassertion of people and voices within this otherwise empty streetscape. The contributors to this quirky performative archive have been gathered as an accumulated community from a range of places where Dadson has worked and visited (mostly New Zealand but also South Delhi in India), then grouped into random quintet ensembles through the installation's five video screens—from time to time, Dadson has made an open call for new participants to add their own performance to the archive, and new contributions were added to the mix here in Christchurch too. The interactive structure allows viewers to activate each of the five screens or performers, as if the installation itself is an instrument to be played, while the accessibility of the techniques being demonstrated often results in an empathetic response as viewers mimic the work.

Visitors might recognise some of the contributors; perhaps they are familiar local faces from the most recent recordings, or artists, musicians and acquaintances from other cities, drawn from Dadson's extended social networks. I'm there snapping my fingers, and so is my wife, who can whistle with her tongue out. Many will recognise musician Chris Knox, who suffered a stroke in 2009 and has become reliant on non-verbal communication.

'Visitors might recognise some of the contributors; perhaps they are familiar local faces from the most recent recordings, or artists, musicians and acquaintances from other cities...'



Combined, the result is a strange conference communicated through pops, clicks and other basic bodily sounds, which offer a joyous form of genuine, universal expression.

Using the transformative power of sound as a latent energy, Dadson (aka sonicsfromscratch) uses primal conversations to establish a social interaction from scratch—free of the constraints of formal language—as a precursor to the architectural spaces that will soon redefine the Christchurch CBD. It is the power of human interaction through cultural experiences that can help restore or replace lost memories of an earlier time, and this kind of fundamental experience is what *Bodytok Quintet* helps to reinstate—an essentially humanist expression of

communication and interaction, which, like a belch or fart (or an earthquake?), removes the barriers of convention and reveals a common ground.

Andrew Clifford is director of Lopdell House Gallery in West Auckland. He has written for a wide range of publications and periodicals throughout the Asia-Pacific region. He was curator of the 2011 edition of Auckland Council's public art series, Living Room, Reuben Paterson's 2012 survey Bottled Lightning, and co-curator of the 2010 Sean Kerr survey Bruce Danced if Victoria Sang... He is a trustee for the Audio Foundation, CIRCUIT and the Len Lye Foundation.

NOTES

- See Philip Brophy, 'Die, Warhol, Die' in Sarah Stutchbury (ed.), Andy Warhol, Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery, 2007, pp.71–83.
- For more on *Polar Projects*, see Andrew Clifford, 'A Quiet Revolution: towards ecological and egalitarian listening', *B.150*, spring, 2007, pp.20–3.
- For more on Aeolian harps and other experimental instruments, see Andrew Clifford and Phil Dadson, 'Sonic Invention: Experimental sound-making' in Glenda Keam and Tony Mitchell (eds.), Home, Land and Sea: Situating Music in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Pearson, Auckland, 2011, pp.245-64.
- 4. Michael Parsons, 'The Scratch Orchestra and Visual Arts', Leonardo Music Journal, 2001, vol.11, pp.5-11.

'A coast of sun, plenty, bodies, beaches and blue, blue, blue.' That's the popular image of the south of France, as painted by Picasso and Matisse among others. For this summer edition of Bulletin, our senior curator Justin Paton takes a trip through the art museums of the Riviera, where he lived last summer as the recipient of the 2012 Katherine Mansfield Menton Fellowship. A century since modern artists began painting it, how is paradiseon-the-Riviera looking?

'JOY' IS A NOT WORD YOU HEAR very often in current discussions about art. 'Anxiety', 'austerity', 'crisis' and 'rupture'—they're all keywords of the current moment. And 'uncanny' and 'uneasy', though perhaps not as current, are likewise often heard. But 'joy' is one of those words, and one of those subjects, that seems to have dropped almost wholly from circulation, unless it's in watereddown Sunday supplement phrases like 'the joy of cooking'.

I started wondering about the fate of the J-word while living last year in the south of France, where the joy of life—or *joie de vivre*—is a topic it's impossible to swerve. This is the place artists and travellers started visiting in the late nineteenth century, drawn by the fabled warmth and light and their life-enhancing promise. 'What I bring back from here', the Impressionist Claude Monet wrote, 'will be sweetness itself, white, pink and blue all enveloped in the magical air.' This is where Henri Matisse set his painting

Luxe, calme et volupté [Luxury, calm and delight], in which bathers seemingly arrived from an Arcadian past also pulse with modern colour. This is where Pablo Picasso, in the wake of the Second World War, made his own painting of 'the joy of life' in reply to Matisse's from forty years earlier. And this is the place to which, in the twentieth century, tourists came in their millions, drawn not by the real Riviera (whatever that might be) so much as the image of it that the artists first provided: a paradise of worldly



pleasures, an available Arcadia—a coast of sun, plenty, bodies, beaches and blue, blue, blue.

It's not hard to see why such a vision might fall from favour among contemporary artists. As nine out of ten travel writers point out, the Riviera of legend is now disappearing, if indeed it ever fully existed—overrun by rapacious developers, butt-ugly infrastructure and industrialised tourism. Once you add global warming, polluted oceans and a European financial crisis, finding paradise

in the south of France starts sounding like the wispiest fantasy. Yet the truth is that, for a visitor from New Zealand lucky enough to live there for seven months, the place does feel like paradise—a provisional paradise, with traffic and dog shit, but a paradise nonetheless. (And don't get me started—really, don't—on the frequent loveliness of the coast round Menton, where on summer nights the sea turns pearlescent and the air is impossibly soft…) For better or worse, the Riviera is one of those places on the

Pablo Picasso Joy of Life or, Antipolis 1946. Oil on canvas. Musée Picasso, Antibes, France / The Bridgeman Art Library. © Pablo Picasso/ Succession Picasso. Licensed by Viscopy, 2013 'As nine out of ten travel writers point out, the Riviera of legend is now disappearing, if indeed it ever fully existed—overrun by rapacious developers, butt-ugly infrastructure and industrialised tourism.'

planet where people come in pursuit of happiness, and pointing out that the quest often fails doesn't negate the reality of the desire. With this in mind, I conducted a minor quest of my own through the museums of the Riviera, looking for the painted paradises that artists have made in this part of the world. Is the joy of life as pictured back then still transmitting in the twenty-first century? How is paradise looking?

I kicked off the quest by taking the train west towards Antibes, with the Côte d'Azur unfolding on each side in all its simultaneous grit and glory: motorways and apartment blocks out one window; stony beach and blazing sea out the other.

Like many resort towns on the coast, Antibes today is famous chiefly for being a famous resort town on the coast. The unavoidable spectacle in high season is the town's huge population of holidaying Brits, who wander, sunburned, through local shops stocked with Bovril, Harry

Potter books and beer (so much for getting away from it all). The next stop for daytrippers is the marina nearby, a vast nautical carpark full of yachts so grandiose (some sport their own helicopters) that you half expect a class war to break out on the spot.

The town's older claim to fame, however, and the best reason to shoulder through the summer crowds, is its Picasso museum. Sited on the edge of the old fortress town in a twelfth-century castle called the Château Grimaldi, the Musée Picasso is one of a remarkable number of museums along the Riviera devoted to modernist masters. From Cannes in the west all the way to Menton in the east, tourist maps of the region show a coast mosquito-bitten with culture: the Bonnard Museum in Le Cannet, the Léger Museum in Biot, the Matisse Museum in Nice, the Maeght Foundation near Saint-Paul-de-Vence, and, squatting on the Menton waterfront like a set of surrealist dentures, the new Cocteau Museum. The artists in question all played their parts in evolving the image of paradise-onthe-Riviera. And there's a sleepy and shuffling feeling to the museums that now bear their names: crowds move

through in huge numbers, bemusedly absorbing what's on view; no one's arguing about this art any longer. It's as if, having fought and won its battles back in the twentieth century, modern art has come here to the coast to retire.

What makes the Musée Picasso stand out in this company is a uniquely close connection between the paintings and the place they're shown in. The Château itself stands on the site of the ancient colony called Antipolis, which was established by Phoenician-Greek traders in 5BC. And it was in this building in 1946, in a big secondfloor studio with windows overlooking the Mediterranean, that Picasso spent six months painting what is now known as the Antipolis suite. He had invoked Greek antiquity on this coast before, in his 1920s paintings of big-limbed bathers. But in 1946 he brought the antique back in a looser and funnier mood. Working with boat paint in washy blues and dirty whites that make the paintings seem older than they are (think flaking frescoes, weather-beaten hulls), he set forth a kind of comic Arcadia, a cartoon fantasy of the antique past unleashed on the shores of Antibes.

Take the most famous painting of the suite, *The Joy* of Life (Antipolis), which at eight-feet wide has the visual presence of a mural or substantial frieze. Up high on the left, a sailing boat has moored on a triangle of blue. From it spills a wonky cavalcade of revellers and musicians. The landscape itself (look at that elastic horizon) seems to dip and rise in response to the music. And the same tootling, prancing rhythm moves wonderfully through the figures: the rubbery centaur; the rearing and leaping lambs; and above all the wild-haired nymph. Spinning up off one foot, arms high, her waist twisted thin and hair and breasts flung wide by the momentum of her turning, she's a one-woman maypole, a benign dervish, the whirling centre of this mock-mythic world. Having absorbed the conventional narratives about Picasso as a shatterer of conventions—the heroic innovator of Art History 101—I was startled by the gentle humour and high spirits of the Antipolis works. Arcadia as Picasso imagines it is a place of inspired goofiness and formal play—a world where every line and shape seems eager to become something else.

Is it a believable Arcadia, though? A plausible vision of happiness? In his brilliant survey of the modern Arcadian tradition in The Shock of the New, Robert Hughes delivers a rousing verdict to the contrary, accusing Picasso of 'going through pantomimes of innocence in a sort of Hesiodic never-never land that nobody, perhaps not even Picasso, believed in any more.' This, after all, was 1946, and the worst war in history had just ended. To paint paradise against such a backdrop could seem like frivolity or even denial—art burying its head in the sands of the south while rubble still lay heaped across Europe. Yet surely, judged by such stern standards, all art starts to look frivolous. Could any painting hope to comprehend or meaningfully comment on the horrors of the five years previous? Perhaps a fierce and disillusioned silence is the only position left to art in such a context. But I think there is a less scolding way to understand the mood of Picasso's painting. Compared with the brutal stupidity of the conflict just ended, the serene silliness of *The Joy of*

Life seems cherishable and even moving—an attempt to remember, within the artificial world of the painting, the long-neglected human capacity for delight.

A problem for art-watchers on the Riviera is the deadening accumulation of cliché. Monet and Co. may have forged a new visual language on the coast, rendering its light and landforms with fattened brushstrokes and heightened colour. But their innovations have since been taken up and watered down by a century's worth of enthusiastic imitators—so many, in fact, that it's now hard to imagine how strange and startling the originals must have seemed.

You encounter the problem at full force in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, a charming fortress village whose narrow streets are now choked with commercial studios, almost all of them retailing eye-hurting quantities of modern-arty kitsch. Shopfront after shopfront brims with the conventional markers of pleasure-seeking modernism: seas and skies; simplified forms; buckets of blue and cadmium yellow. 'Happiness!' is what these works all scream, at the top of their tourist-savvy lungs. Yet the sum effect is not one of joy but of forced cheerfulness. This, you realise as you stagger away, is the trouble with optimism in art. While seriously miserable art is easy enough to find, art of the seriously happy kind is a much rarer proposition. It's not enough to simply crank up the colour; the joy has to feel *earned*.

For a lesson in how that happens, the artist to consult is Henri Matisse. Popularly renowned for saying that art should be like an armchair for a tired worker to relax in, Matisse is too often seen as a dispenser of uncomplicated pleasures, the go-to guy for warmth and colour—a museum gift-shop favourite. This reputation, surely, is what draws crowds through the heat to the Musée Matisse in Nice. And the ground floor of the museum, it's true, does offer up familiar pleasures: the pomegranates on the table; the palms in the window; the model reclining on

'Arcadia as
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a patterned background. With summer roaring outside, it was a cool pleasure to dwell in air-conditioned rooms with these paintings, which celebrate common objects and spaces with what Julian Bell calls 'reverent sensuality'. But, throughout, one also senses the common plight of the underfunded provincial museum, where too few paintings of the highest rank are forced to do a little too much work.

Upstairs, however, in the museum's summer exhibition, things became more interesting. Called Le Ciel Découpé (The Cut-Out Sky), the show offered a loose tour through the elating last chapter of Matisse's career, when the ageing painter, sometimes confined to a wheelchair, began to compose pictures from hand-coloured and hand-cut paper shapes—'painting with scissors', he called it. The perfect head-clearer and palate-cleanser after the sickly surfeit of Saint-Paul-de-Vence, the exhibition placed a welcome emphasis on the madeness of Matisse's works. The surprise for me was the sheer quantity of trial cut-outs: leaves, birds, coral, algae, leaping figures and more, all arrayed like samples in vertical stands. Flipping through these fragments was like peering over Matisse's shoulder as he schooled his cutting hand, endlessly tuning and re-tuning the relationship between the solid shape and the white space around it.

The common assumption, when artists approach the end of their lives, is that their art will turn dark and heavy; Rembrandt and Goya deliver late style of this kind. But Matisse with his cut-outs, like de Kooning in the early 1980s, is an artist of the opposite kind, who becomes, as he approaches the end, lighter and clearer. The beauty of the big 'finished' cut-outs is that they seem, if anything, even freer in spirit than the small working collages. And their expansiveness is bound up intimately with the colour of the show's final rooms, a colour that belongs as much to modern French art as burnt sienna belongs to the art of Australia—namely, ultramarine. Cutting into sheets of card that had been prepared with blue gouache, Matisse was also cutting up—reshaping and recasting—the entire paradise tradition, with its bathers, blue skies and blue



seas. His scattered shapes catch with amazing precision the feeling of life in motion near water: the twist of a torso, white light on a wave, the underwater drift of anemones. And at the same time they look as they though they might simply lift and scatter in an offshore breeze.

Did I mention blue? Of all the Riviera's painters of blueness, no one claimed the colour more energetically or eccentrically than Yves Klein, who was born in Nice in 1929. Nothing if not a self-mythologiser, Klein traced his obsession with the colour back to a day on the beach in Nice in the late 1940s, when he stared into the cloudless blue above and—as he put it—'signed the sky'. The defining moment, in practical terms, arrived in 1956, when Klein concocted and patented a colour of his own called International Klein Blue, or IKB. From then until his early death in 1962, Klein played out what he called (with characteristic promotional zeal) 'the blue revolution', attempting to catch and fix feelings of freedom and infinitude in a series of real objects.

The products of this revolution were on show through the summer at Nice's contemporary art museum MAMAC, in a brilliantly staged show called <code>Klein/Byars/Kapoor</code> that marked fifty years since Klein's death. For this New Zealand onlooker it was a rare chance to measure Klein's reputation against some actual objects. Aside from a few choice items in Australia, there are no Kleins to see in our part of the world. And it doesn't help that Klein pushed so noisily into the foreground of his own art, with his mediasavvy stunts and spacey pronouncements about 'the void' and 'unknown worlds'. Looking at the grainy old films and photos of Klein or reading his oracular pronouncements, I could never quite shake the feeling that I was missing something essential, that some twinkle of wit or self-mockery was getting lost in translation.

Klein's paintings, however, as the Nice show proves, require no translation. Indeed they do what the best abstract paintings do: make words seem thoroughly redundant. Their

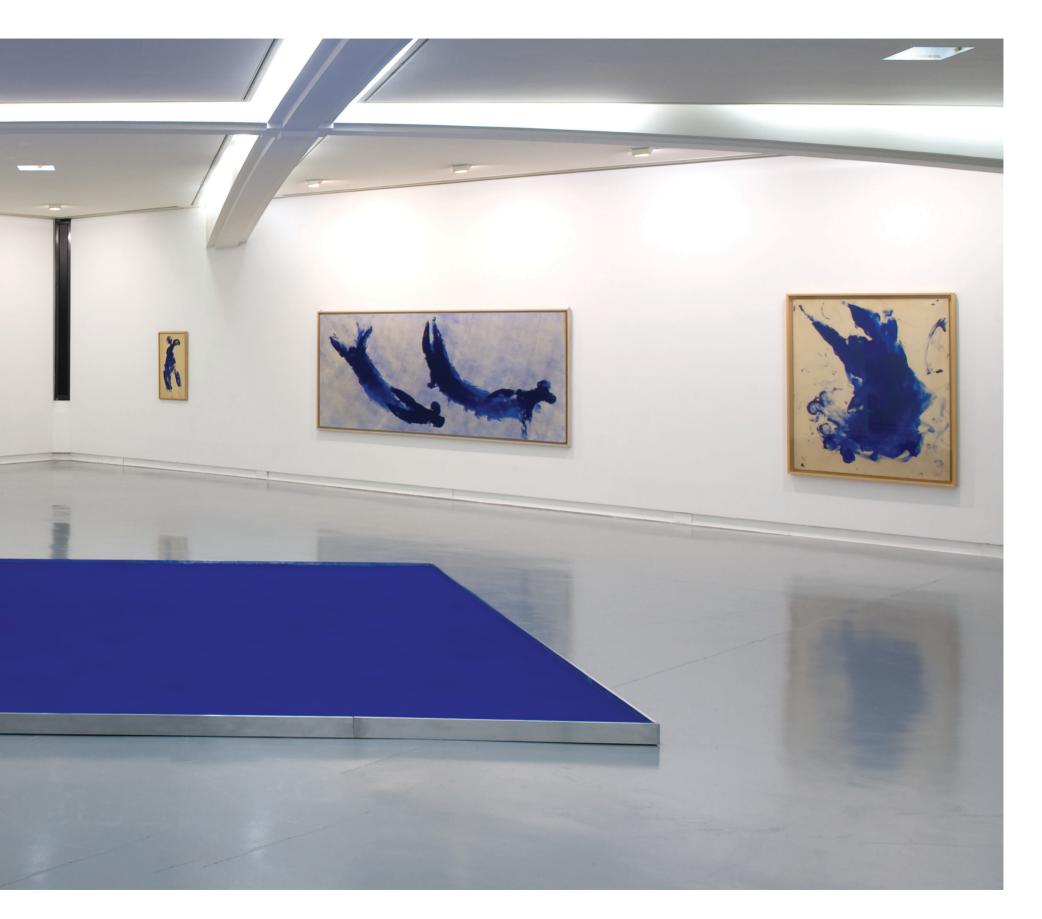
presence derives not just from the ultramarine pigment but the special polymer in which Klein suspended it, a fancy-sounding concoction (he devised it with chemists) that binds the pigment while preserving its powdery appearance. As you can observe by opening a jar in any art supply store, pigment in its dry state has an uncanny visual intensity. And Klein's simple but profoundly effective move was to put this intensity centre stage. Whether he applied IKB to a branch, a model of the *Victory of Samothrace*, or a conventional canvas (all these objects get the treatment in Nice), the effect was—and is—to endow the object with a gorgeous visual energy, a strange optical and physical hum.

That effect becomes engulfing in Pigment pur, the floor-bound centrepiece of the Nice show [see overleaf]. Consisting of a vast pan of gently undulating pigment, the work evokes and conflates three kinds of vastness: beach, ocean and sky. There is, too, a lunar quality, as if we're surveying the surface of a Klein-blue planet. Overwhelmingly, though, there is the experience of sheer colour, a sensation of blueness so strong that it seems to shake free of the material that contains it. Klein's pronouncements about transcendence and immateriality may sound a little flaky today. But in this big work you can really see, really register with your body, what he was after as an artist—a feeling that there is more colour and energy present than the material carrying it can handle. Whether this counts as a spiritual effect is up to each viewer to decide, but it certainly has the power to momentarily unhinge your sense of what is solid and what isn't. I couldn't blame the little girl who, to the horror of the guard who saw what was happening too late, reached right into the artwork to find out what it was made of. Walking past later I could see the trace of her hand still there in the blue surface, a bit like the fabled signature that Klein said he wrote upon the sky.

Twenty minutes east of Nice in Monaco, it's easy to forget Klein's blue sky is even up there, because the apartment 'Cutting into sheets of card that had been prepared with blue gouache, Matisse was also cutting up—reshaping and recasting—the entire paradise tradition, with its bathers, blue skies and blue seas.'

Henri Matisse Blue Nude III 1952. Gouache on paper. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France. © 2011 Succession H. Matisse/ DACS, London / Giraudon / The Bridgeman Art Library





blocks are so tall and densely built that they almost block it out. With a cultural reputation built on the three pillars of gambling, the Grand Prix and tax evasion, Monaco is not exactly a compulsory stop for art-watchers on the Côte d'Azur. A Teflon kingdom, a kind of ghetto for the superrich, the place is so fanatically safe and clean that it makes both art and ordinary humans seem somewhat beside the point. Monaco, however, is clearly eager to add a dignifying burnish of Culture to its Eurotrashy image, and its major summer offering on the art front (comically enough, for a tiny principality) was Extra-Large, an exhibition of outsized artworks from the collection of the Centre Pompidou. It was here, in a glorified convention centre known as the Grimaldi Forum, that I encountered my favourite painterly paradise of the entire trip, a glorious mess of a triptych by Joan Mitchell called La Grand Vallée XIV (For a Little While).

Mitchell died in 1992 aged 67, but her art still feels shockingly alive. A Chicago-born American who made her name in the tough-talking and testosterone-driven New York art world of the 1950s, she lived from 1968 onwards in Vétheuil northwest of Paris, a village famous for its association with the great Impressionist Claude Monet (Mitchell lived on Rue Claude Monet and her gardener lived in Monet's old cottage). On first glimpsing Mitchell's La Grand Vallée XIV, it is Monet's great late waterlilies you think of: the immersive scale; the dusky blues and purples; the feeling of light and air moving through foliage. But the comparison also reveals what makes Mitchell distinctive. Monet, in the big waterlilies, conducts colour symphonically, tuning up every square inch of his vast compositions touch by patient touch. Mitchell, by contrast, comes at her canvas in a spirit that's closer to jazz, releasing bursts and flurries of improvisatory brushstrokes that seem to ride up and over each other. She paints, in short, with that distinctively New York quality known as nerve: a willingness to risk all-out failure in the pursuit of freshness and surprise.

The title sheds light on this urgency. As Yvette Y. Lee explains, 'La grand vallée' is the name of a childhood place described to Mitchell by her friend Gisèle Barreau: a secret valley that Barreau visited often with her cousin when

they were young. Many decades later when he was close to death, this same cousin asked to return to the place, but died before he was able to make the trip. Mitchell, who in 1982 had lost her own sister Sally, loved this story of a remembered place, and in 1983 she set about making her own 'grand valley' in a series of twenty-one paintings. What we see in her big triptych, then, is an inner landscape, a paradisiacal place that Barreau passed on to Mitchell in the form of a story. Swarming up the canvas through showers of dripped paint, Mitchell's brushstrokes evoke air, movement, dappling, moisture, leaves, petals. But this landscape is never fully present; it's provisional and only half-grasped—an imaginary place pulled together in haste and always on the brink of coming apart. The result is beautiful, but with an urgency which suggests that Mitchell was impatient, even irritated, with beauty—that she knew she had to catch it on the wing and get it down now if it wasn't going to get away on her.

Mitchell's painting matters because it blows open the assumption that the portrayal of joy is unserious. Far from being an exercise in nostalgia or simple 'celebration' of childhood pleasures, *La Grand Vallée XIV (For a Little While)* strikes me as a great and very grown-up meditation on art, loss, memory and pleasure. Brightsombre, sweet-sad, seriously happy, it closes in on the paradox at the heart of all representations of paradise, which is that, even as an artwork brings an ideal world into view, it also stills it and holds it at bay. Can a painting edge up on that paradise? Can it recover lost time? Can you close in that moment of bliss, catch it on the painted surface? Can the painting even *be* a paradise? Mitchell's answer is there in her title and her painting: Yes, for a little while.

Justin Paton

Senior curator

Thanks to the Winn-Manson Menton Trust and the Katherine Mansfield Menton Fellowship.





Previous page: Yves Klein

Pigment pur 2012. Recreation of
a piece made in 1957. Dimensions
variable. Installed at MAMAC,
Nice, in the exhibition Klein/
Byars/Kapoor

Joan Mitchell La Grande Vallée XIV: For a Little While 1983. Oil on canvas. Paris, musée national d'Art moderne—Centre Georges Pompidou. Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Philippe Migeat © Estate of Joan Mitchell

SOURCES

Two terrific books addressing the gap and overlap between art and reality on the Riviera are Jim Ring's Riviera: The Rise and Rise of the Côte d'Azur, 2004, reprinted by Faber and Faber 2011, and Kenneth E. Silver's Making Paradise: Art, Modernity and the Myth of the French Riviera, The MIT Press and Axa Gallery, 2001. Robert Hughes's verdict on Picasso's Antipolis works appears in his essay 'The Landscape of Pleasure' in The Shock of the New, revised edition 1991, p.151. A kinder appraisal appears in Gauguin Cezanne Matisse: Visions of Arcadia, Joseph J. Rishel (ed.), Philadelphia Museum of Art in Association with Yale University Press, 2012, p.92. Julian Bell's 'reverent sensuality'

is on p.370 of Mirror of the World, Thames and Hudson, 2007. Yvette Y. Lee's account of Joan Mitchell's 'Grand Vallée' paintings is "Beyond Life and Death": Joan Mitchell's Grand Vallée Suite' in The Paintings of Joan Mitchell, Jane Livingston et al., Whitney Museum of American Art in association with University of California Press, 2002.

Turning a New Leaf



Collecting books at Christchurch Art Gallery Library

THE INACCESSIBLE NATURE of most of the Gallery's collection for the last sixteen months has prompted us to look at alternative ways of exhibiting, and in particular, at an area of our collection that has perhaps been somewhat overshadowed in the past. The result is a series of exhibitions focused on the book. Working in partnership with Christchurch City Libraries, the Gallery has developed exhibitions examining the collaborative nature of the relationship between artists, writers and letterpress printers; the artist book; graphic design and typography, and nineteenth-century illustrated books based on New Zealand subjects.

Over the past four years the Gallery's Robert and Barbara Stewart Library and Archives has added an extra dimension to its activities, with a concerted effort to develop a collection of artist books as well as editioned examples of fine-printed and privatepress books as funds allow. With this new focus it has been quite amazing to see the collection swell as more examples of what are sometimes termed 'rare books' are acquired. While acquisitions have primarily been made through the library's general budget, the generosity of several benefactors has really added some depth and much needed breadth to the collection. Notable among these is the estate of Peter Dunbar, which assisted in the Gallery's acquisition of Peter's incredible collection of publications from the Caxton and Nag's Head presses, and other printed material highly relevant to Christchurch's cultural scene from the 1930s through to the 1970s.

A large selection of book arts practice by contemporary New Zealand artists was presented by Jim Barr and Mary Barr—a collection that includes one-of-a-kind artist books by L. Budd, John Reynolds, Michael Smither and Patrick Pound as well as



self-published and produced editioned books by artists including Ronnie van Hout, Richard Killeen and Stuart Page. There are several highlights in this collection but my personal favourite has to be *The Shock of the Newt*. A kind of group show within a book, artists visiting Jim and Mary were often invited to contribute an intervention to their copy of Robert Hughes's iconic history of late nineteenth and twentieth-century western art, *The Shock of The New*. Artists including Reynolds, Julian Dashper, Max Gimblett, Marie Shannon, Merylyn Tweedie, Ruth Watson, Neil Pardington, Neil Dawson and many more made additions or deletions to the pages within this book. Other recent gifts to the rare books collection have been received from Gimblett, Alan Loney, Tara McLeod, Richard and Anne Horsemann, Bill Culbert and Anne Kirker.

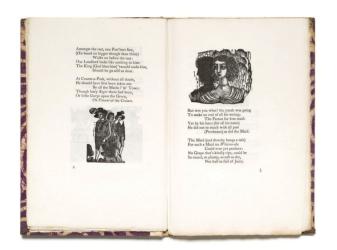
Perhaps one of the most significant gifts to the Library and Archives was received earlier this year from the family of artist, graphic designer and publisher Leo Bensemann, who donated the artist's library. The gift also included his comprehensive collection of Caxton Press publications and ephemera, with many items having been illustrated, designed and printed by Bensemann himself. Among the gems in this collection is a pristine copy of *Sirroco* (1933) that features an original linocut by Rita Angus, as well as numerous rare examples from twentieth-century New Zealand private presses including Bensemann's own Huntsbury Press.

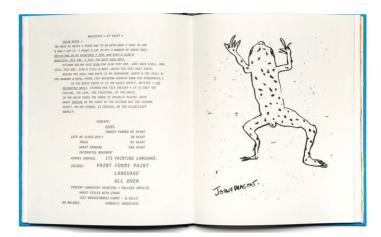
The collection is not confined to New Zealand however, with a selection of books published by the Golden Cockerel Press also acquired recently. One of Britain's leading twentieth-century private presses, the examples now resident in the Library's

Philip Trusttum **Drawing Book #48** (detail) 2013.
Felt pen on paper.
Collection of the artist



Installation view of
A Caxton Miscellany:
The Caxton Press 1933-58





Sir John Suckling, A Ballad Upon a Wedding (illustrated by Eric Ravilious), Golden Cockerel Press, Waltham Saint Lawrence, 1927. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, Robert and Barbara Stewart Library and Archives

Max Gimblett, Searchings: selections from the artists journals chosen and arranged by Alan Loney, Holloway Press, Auckland, 2005. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, Robert and Barbara Stewart Library and Archives, presented by Alan Loney

collection relate directly to the Rex Nan Kivell gift of British prints made to the Gallery in 1953. Among this gift are over 100 wood-engravings by notable printmakers Gwen Raverat, Mabel Annesley, Eric Gill, Robert Gibbings, Eric Ravilious, John Farleigh and Gertrude Hermes. These artists were often engaged to produce engravings as illustrations to Golden Cockerel books so it is appropriate that the Library has secured representative examples of their illustrative work to complement the prints held in the Gallery's collection.

To date the Gallery has organised six exhibitions focusing on the book at Central Library Peterborough, with several more planned over the coming year. The overarching theme of artists working in collaboration with writers and letterpress printers was highlighted in Pressed Letters: Fine Printing in New Zealand since 1975. Filled with examples from leading private presses over the past thirty-seven years this exhibition showcased collaborations between many of New Zealand's most significant artists and writers, working together in beautifully designed and printed books.

Fernbank Studio: away past elsewhere surveyed printed books and ephemera from one of New Zealand's finest private presses. Operating out of Wellington, Fernbank

Studio's proprietor, Brendan O'Brien, describes himself as a printer and bookmaker and the exhibition contained examples of his collaborations with artists and writers including Ralph Hotere and Bill Manhire, Joanna Margaret Paul, Pip Culbert, Jenny Bornholdt and Gregory O'Brien, as well as Brendan's own work as an artist.

One of Canterbury's most respected artists, Philip Trusttum took to drawing in books after the earthquakes demolished his house and he found himself with reduced studio space to paint in. He filled no fewer than fifty books with felt-pen drawings based on his extensive collection of children's toys and Asian masks and puppets, and mixed with the unsettling influence of Hieronymus Bosch. In DONE: Recent Drawing Books by Philip Trusttum, Trusttum's books burst with energy and colour. Combined with a degree of psychological anguish, they could be read as reflecting the unsettling experience of living through the recent Canterbury earthquakes.

Historical art has been hard to find in post-earthquake Christchurch as our permanent collection remains in lockdown, unavailable for public viewing until we reopen in 2015. New Zealand Illustrated: Pictorial Books from the Victorian Age revealed some of the gems held in the Christchurch City Libraries and our library and provided a

small but unique opportunity for Christchurch audiences to see historical art presented in a selection of beautifully illustrated books from the Victorian period. Examples include George French Angas's *The New Zealanders Illustrated* (1847), Walter Buller's *A History of the Birds of New Zealand* (1873), Edward Wakefield's *Illustrations to Adventure in New Zealand* (1845) and Emily Harris's stunning *New Zealand Flowers* (1890).

The collection of artist books, rare books and privatepress books (call them what you will) held in the Robert and Barbara Stewart Library and Archives will continue to grow and develop in the years to come. When the Gallery reopens its library will be uniquely well placed to collect, display and emphasise this often overlooked aspect of New Zealand art.

Peter Vangioni Curator

THE BULL - BACKED

Christchurch Art Gallery Trust
thanks all the donors to the Back the
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generosity. Below we formally
acknowledge the individuals, friends,
families and companies who gave \$500
or more via the PledgeMe website or as
a direct donation to the Trust. For their
support, and that of others who wished
to remain anonymous, we are indebted.

About the Christchurch Art Gallery Trust

The Christchurch Art Gallery Trust was formed in 1991 by the Friends of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. It was established as a vehicle to raise and hold funds for acquisitions and to ensure that the Gallery's collection remains one of the foremost in New Zealand. The Trust also undertook the management of fundraising and receipt of funds for the building of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu.

The Trust continues to play an important role in cultivating relationships between Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu and its generous supporters. As a not-for-profit organisation its primary objective is to provide ongoing, practical support to the Gallery by making funds available for collection development, collection-related and other special projects—including the development of international exhibitions—and senior staff development.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit www.christchurchartgallery.org.nz/support/

The following double-page spread is given over to the twentieth 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.

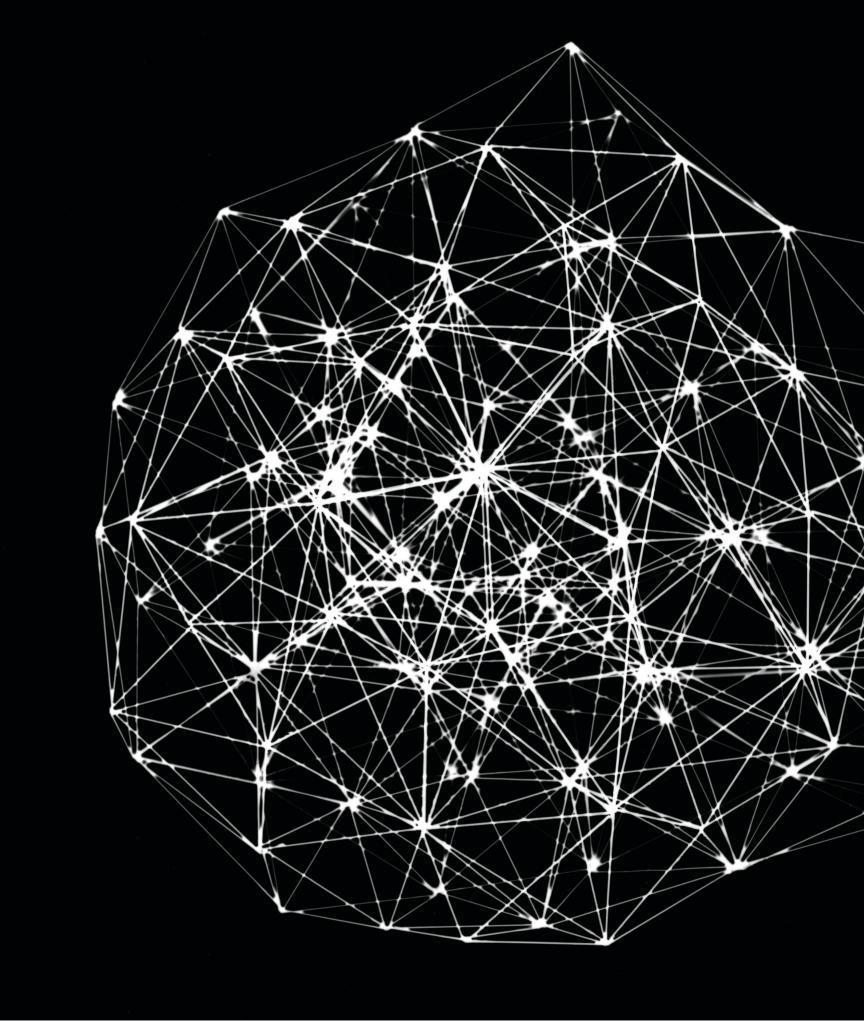
PETER TREVELYAN

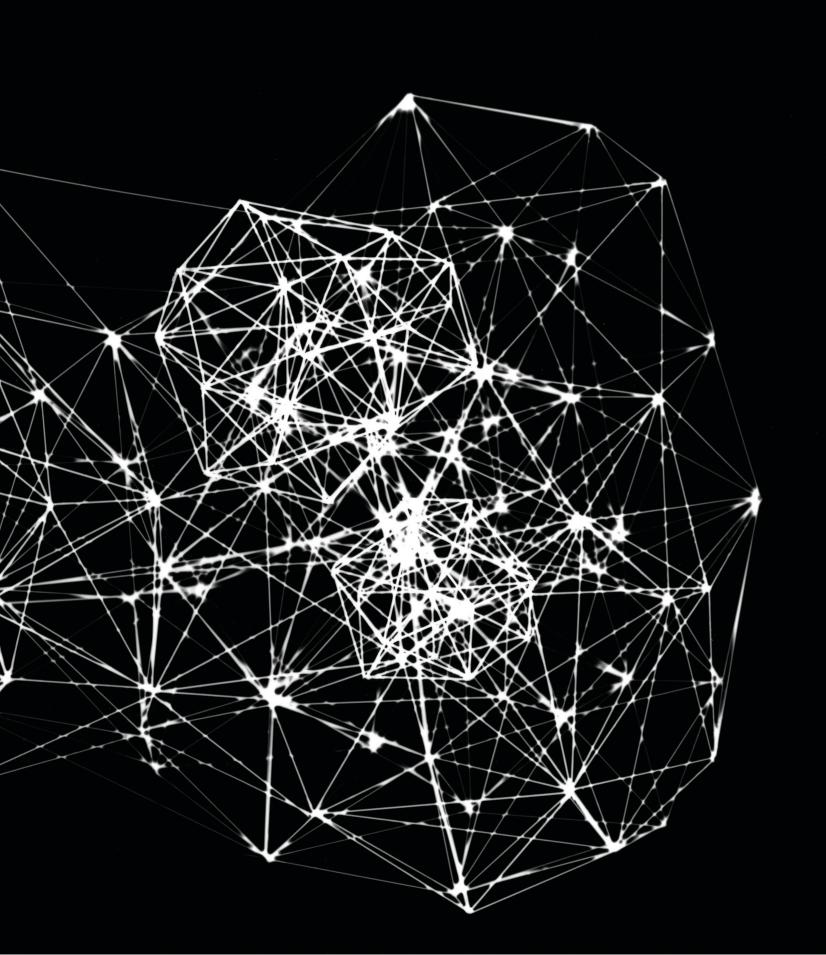
From twenty seconds of light: Peter Trevelyan's photogram is the shadow imprint of an ingenious structure created from 0.5mm mechanical pencil leads. Here the dual structure reads as a modest, expanding universe, with brighter points formed where fine, white lines join or overlap. An object with internal intelligence, it recalls splitting and regenerating cells; star chart diagrams; constellations; plant structures; or spiders' nests. The original object is viewed by Trevelyan as something provisional, a piece of three-dimensional drawing, but through the photographic process it has been transformed to exist on a single plane. Peter Trevelyan is a BFA sculpture graduate (2000) from the School of Fine Arts, University of Canterbury and an MFA graduate (2008) from Massey University School of Fine Arts, Wellington, where he is presently undertaking a PhD. His extraordinary sculptural work, survey #4, is currently showing at 209 Tuam Street in Shifting Lines.

Ken Hall *Curator*

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

Peter Trevelyan **photogram** 2013. Digital image from silver gelatin photograph









SINCE I MOVED TO Christchurch quite recently, I don't have a particular old friend in the collection that I miss spending time with. However, I do have fond memories of my first visit to Christchurch as a University of Otago student during the summer holidays. I came to attend my first conference, 'Symposium 2000: An International Conference on Post-Object Art in New Zealand', and it was, quite simply, outrageous. The art world figures I had been studying—Billy Apple, Carolee Schneemann, Lita Barrie, Tina Barton, Blair French—all came to life. More than that: there were catfights and breakdowns, old grudges and new alliances, moments of camaraderie and hot debate. Watching from the sidelines, I was enthralled.

On one of the evenings, there was a performance from Peter Roche, and along with the intellectual rigor of the symposium, this is what cemented my love of contemporary art. That night, we signed a waiver at the door and were ushered into a gallery with the artist, and a chainsaw. When he started the machine, the roar was exhilarating and I still recall the pungency of the petrol fumes pervading the room. There was a metal chain attached to the chainsaw handle and Roche slowly swung it into action until it was hurtling around him in a circle, his body the only anchor point. It was terrifying and the audience quickly retracted to the edges of the space. I remember shielding myself behind the crowd, thinking that if it slipped from his grasp, someone would lose a leg.

The physical, visceral thrill of this performance suggested to me that art is potentially dangerous in other ways: that it can scream, excite, challenge and demand something of its audience. This untitled drawing from Roche, with its dramatic red circles and the swift, firm pressure of the artist's hand, is for me a representation of the centrifugal force in that performance. It asserts the necessity to take risks, in art and in life.

Melanie Oliver

Peter Roche **Untitled** 2011. Lithograph. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, gifted by Muka Studio 2011



Melanie Oliver is a curator, writer and the director of The Physics Room, a contemporary art project space located in the Old Post Office Building, 209 Tuam Street.



A Key Announcement and Congratulations

Senior curator Justin Paton has accepted a new position as head curator, international art at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Justin will finish here before Christmas and is starting at AGNSW in January 2014.

Here's an extract from AGNSW director Michael Brand's statement about Justin's appointment:

Justin will be responsible for providing overall vision and direction for the Gallery's international collections and exhibition programs. Justin will bring a wealth of expertise and experience to our Gallery along with a reputation for highly creative thinking and writing. I am delighted he will soon be joining our team in Sydney as we plan for our ambitious Sydney Modern transformation and building expansion. His recent work has been marked by both innovation and community service. At Christchurch Art Gallery, Justin was curatorial leader for the complete reinstallation of their collection and then led their award-winning post-earthquake programme of public art installations and public programs. His ability to work creatively with artists and to speak to a global audience was clearly evident at this year's Venice Biennale.

Collectively, all at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu wish him well.



Director Jenny Harper, senior curator Justin Paton and deputy director Blair Jackson at the launch of Wayne Youle's Sydenham mural in 2011.

Findnzartists.org.nz

Our librarian and web maestro Tim Jones has been working with Catherine Hammond, librarian at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki on a project to produce the definitive resource to help you find information on New Zealand artists. The result is findnzartists.org.nz. The site works as an index to combine the artists mentioned in eleven different places into one list. Some of these eleven places are already online in which case you will be steered towards them, some are seriously offline and you will be steered towards some old-fashioned library resources such as books and cabinets of artist files.

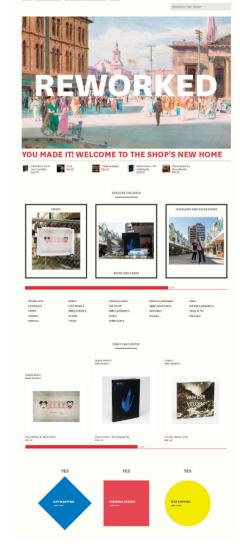
Find New Zealand Artists lists every artist with an artist file at the libraries in Auckland Art Gallery, Christchurch Art Gallery, Hocken Collections and Te Papa Tongarewa, as well as every artist who exhibited with the country's major arts societies, and every artist mentioned in Nineteenth Century NZ Artists by Una Platts and Te Ara: the Encyclopedia of New Zealand.

On the site you will also find full details about the project, how it came about, who did the work, who paid for it, how it's organized and how it might be developed in the future. Feedback, criticism and suggestions are welcome.

Gallery Shop Update

In early November the Gallery Shop's Lichfield Street location closed for the last time. The site was on land earmarked for the new Justice Precinct, and the entire block is now being cleared so contractors can start on foundation work. So the Shop is now, by necessity, an online experience only. In mid November we launched our redesigned Shop site, with a refreshed selection of prints and posters to expose new areas of our collection. We also now have a great 'look inside' function for books and magazines, and for a limited time, free shipping on all purchases. Click on in for a browse.

The redesigned shop homepage.





A range of Gallery publications available from the Shop.

Looking for Last Minute Christmas Gifts?

Head online to our newly relaunched Gallery Shop, and you'll get 20% off all Gallery publications. That means the Shane Cotton book is now retailing at under \$100, Van der Velden: Otira is down to \$40, and Bill Culbert: Front Door Out Back only \$36. Throw in free shipping, and that's Christmas sorted for your art loving friends and family. Just remember, last postage day for domestic shipping is 19 December, so you'd better be quick.

Best Awards Success

When the BEST Awards 2013 were announced in October we were extremely pleased to get a bronze for our beautiful Shane Cotton book (although we would of course say it deserved a gold...). And we were thrilled to receive a gold for the iPad edition of *Bulletin*. All in all, a great result for the Gallery. A big thank you to Aaron Beehre, and to our long-standing design partners Strategy Design and Advertising.

Out and About

In October curator Peter Vangioni attended a hui at Te Manawa, Palmerston North, which brought together an interesting array of curators from across the sector. The theme was 'Collections and Collaborations' and Peter's paper, titled 'In Outer Space without a Place' surveyed a selection of projects under the umbrella of the **Outer Spaces** programme. The hui was a fantastic opportunity for museum and art gallery professionals from throughout New Zealand to meet, listen and discuss ideas and challenges currently faced by the museum sector.

Films

All films are shown at Alice Cinematheque / 6pm / free

F is For Fake

Trickery. Deceit. Magic. In Orson Welles's documentary the legendary filmmaker (and self-described charlatan) gleefully engages the central preoccupation of his career—the tenuous line between truth and illusion, art and lies.

89 mins / Wednesday 22 January

Picasso and Braque go to the Movies

How did Charlie Chaplin influence the Cubist movement? This documentary looks at how early filmmaking influenced these painters. Produced and narrated by Martin Scorsese.

62 mins / Wednesday 29 January

Wasteland

Renowned artist Vic Muniz journeys to his native Brazil to the world's largest rubbish dump, located on the outskirts of Rio de Janiero. There he photographs a band of self-designated pickers of recyclable materials. This film is a testament to the transformative power of art and the alchemy of the human spirit.

Winner of over 30 film awards.

100 mins / Wednesday 12 February

Hotere

In remembrance of Ralph Hotere (Te Aupōui) on the first anniversary of his death.

This documentary by the late Merata Mita offers an impressionistic portrait of the artist, while offering us a look at his art in hopes of better understanding the man who created it.

77 mins / Monday 24 February



Red String performance.

Public Programmes

Performance: Shifting Lines
Well known choreographers Fleur de

Thier and Julia McKerrow with dancer Sarah Elsworth perform in relation to and alongside the artworks of **Shifting Lines**. The recent dance work *Red String* and this exhibition lend themselves to an exciting collaboration where the relationship between art and movement inspires an innovative show.

8pm / Wednesday 11 and Thursday 12 December / 208 Tuam Street / \$10 Bookings www.christchurchartgallery.org or (03) 941 7382

COMING SOON

BURSTER FLIPPER WOBBLER DRIPPER SPINNER STACKER SHAKER MAKER

Opens 15 February 2014, ArtBox

Powered by the excitement of seeing ordinary things transformed in unexpected ways, Christchurch Art Gallery's latest exhibition explores the shape-shifting, experimental and seriously playful work of making art. Artists from near and far test the limits of their materials with morphing pencil sculptures, stretchy paint skins, gravity-defying stacks and videos of exploding paint-balloons. Featuring works by Rebecca Baumann, Mark Braunias and Jill Kennedy, Judy Darragh, Steve Carr, Lionel Bawden, John Hurrell, Tony Bond, Helen Calder, John Nicholson, and Miranda Parkes, the exhibition is supported by a lively and engaging programme for both children and adults that includes floor talks, workshops and publications.

Screen Shots: Bumblebee (details) 2011. HD file transferred to Blu-Ray, nine channel video work. Chartwell Collection, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 2011













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The Gallery is currently closed to the public. Our off-site exhibition spaces are upstairs at 209 Tuam Street and at ArtBox CPIT, corner of Madras and St Asaph streets.

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