

B.179

Bulletin
Christchurch Art Gallery
Te Puna o Waiwhetu

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Cover and inside cover:
Base isolation work continues in the Gallery. Photos: John Collie.
With thanks to Fulton Hogan

Director's Foreword



This is my first *Bulletin* foreword in 2015—and it's set to be a big year for us. Presently, **David Cook: Meet Me in the Square** is a little over a month into its run at 209 Tuam Street, with the accompanying publication flying off the shelves at booksellers throughout the city. It is a carefully constructed, weirdly fascinating exhibition. David gives the impression of being a kind of spy, but one who has worked with warmth and respect for his subjects' individual and collective humanity. Anyone who lived here in the 1980s will find snippets of self in the work. Indeed, we've been contacted by several who have recognised themselves, friends or family members in the photographs—with one of the bell-ringers introducing himself to me at the opening on 30 January. The giant Kiwi Bacon kiwi on the Moorhouse Avenue/Colombo Street overpass in two of Cook's photographs was also recognised by a Gallery staff member as the giant kiwi now at Orana Park.

The exhibition remains on display until 24 May, and it is our final in the Tuam Street premises we've been leasing for the last two years. We opened this space for art with a bang in March 2013 as Seung Yul Oh's *Huggong* filled every corner of the gallery with comically vast balloons. Since then we've kept up a diverse range of changing exhibitions and a steady beat of public programmes and artist's talks. However, it's now time for us to withdraw from presenting in temporary and transitional spaces and put every ounce of personal and professional energy into the opening of our mother ship—our second in thirteen years. For from December this year, we will once more become a *gallery within walls*.

We expect to be able to move back into our building in September, and then the physical work needed to

create our major opening exhibition can begin in earnest. There are spaces to plan, walls to build and paint, conservation work to undertake, a programme of opening events to organise—and of course, art to hang. It's an understatement to say we're looking forward to reopening. It will be almost five long years since the Gallery building was closed to our local audiences and visitors to the city. To celebrate we're proposing a summer of art. We know several anchor projects and much of the city's rebuild is delayed, and ours will be the first major civic building to reopen in the central city for some time. So we're going to make sure it's an extended and visible community event. Watch this space.

Through all our time of forced closure, we've presented well over ninety art projects, toured exhibitions, shown art in unusual spaces, offered educational programmes and talks off-site, continued to publish this magazine and other books, collected art and written about our collection in *The Press* fortnightly. We've worked behind the scenes and online, blogged, spoken to numerous groups and told the world about our adventures at different symposia. Christchurch has been acclaimed and lauded elsewhere because of what we've done.

Reflecting on this time, I recognise that, while there will be huge gains for us when the Gallery reopens (and we can't wait), there'll also be some losses. Like all in the city, we've been changed by this transitional time, and I hope for the better. But unfortunately we cannot afford to continue with a lively programme of off-site projects within the Gallery's current and reducing means.

In addition, I have become conscious of how this Gallery must become increasingly clear locally about

its core role as visual archivist of, and for, this place, its histories and our cultures. Art galleries are not ‘nice to have’ institutions in any city. Like libraries, they are needed to extend the visual literacy of their communities; like museums, they are needed to extend understandings of our identity and sense of place. Art is tangible and real. Art galleries provide cultural, social, educational and economic benefits to a city; Christchurch needs its gallery more than ever.

We know how art shapes people, how it inspires us and makes us laugh, how it helps us think and reflect. We know that the collection we build and the exhibitions through which we interpret it are key means of ensuring our community respects the past, debates the current and imagines our future. But we and you—our key supporters—need to be clearer and more united about this Gallery’s role in this city with its core funders, our Council. For we are becoming increasingly reliant on our community and supporters to help us manage our programmes and to build a nationally-significant collection that the Gallery can show for decades to come, one that marks this time for the city. Ours is not an activity we can stop and start; our energy is not like electricity at the end of a switch which can be turned off and on.

When our Foundation launched the TOGETHER endowment fund in August 2014, it was reaching for a means to help us continue to build the city’s collection with increasing confidence and with greater independence from the cycles of local government change. There is now an even greater sense of urgency and purpose as we have become aware of proposed major cuts to our core funding in Council’s forthcoming long-term plan. (I am

dismayed, but I accept this is a city with multiple priorities and I know not everyone thinks like I do.)

There’s a major task ahead, then, at and after our opening. We shall re-establish ourselves as a core source of civic pride. Our elected leaders and our people will place us in the kete of what is core and what defines Christchurch as a good place to live and be. The city has invested in the continuing resilience of our building and we’ve waited and waited for progress. Obstacles remain, but from our reopening, it will be as unthinkable to close this cultural facility again as it would be to sell Hagley Park. We shall be once more recognised as a glistening jewel in the crown of this province, a place everyone wants and knows we need. This year holds many challenges for us—together we shall face them and triumph.

Jenny Harper

Director

March 2015



The Significance of Everyday Things

Tim Veling and David Cook discuss the documentary urge and Cook's *Meet Me in the Square* project.

During the winter of 1984 my mother, father and I packed an overnight bag and climbed into Dad's Hillman Hunter. I was five years old and, as far as I could remember, it was the first time we'd ever ventured outside of Blenheim. When we crossed the railway tracks on the way through Riverlands, I leaned forward in my booster seat. 'Dad,' I whispered. He flicked his cigarette out the gap in the top of his window before winding it up. 'We're finally going overseas! We're finally going to Christchurch to pick up Mum's flash new car!' My mother turned to look at me, smiling. Her big hoop earrings swung as we rounded a corner and Dad negotiated a dip in the road. The Hillman Hunter was never the smoothest of rides, certainly not as comfortable as Mum's Corolla turned out to be. 'We're not going overseas, just to Christchurch,' she told me. Dad started laughing. 'Mate, compared to Blenheim, Christchurch is as exciting as it gets,' he said. 'Before the end of the day, we'll be in the Big Smoke. The big city!' I sat back and watched the world rush past my window. 'I hope we have time to look in Ballantyne's,' Mum said. 'Or at least

climb the Cathedral spire. You'd like that, Tim. You can look out over the whole city. It's so high all the people in Cathedral Square look like ants.'

Unfortunately, we didn't have time to explore Christchurch at all. We lost an hour or so parked on the side of the highway while I stared at the bottom of an old ice-cream container, regretting the Mello Yello I'd downed at the service station in Ward. Mum sat in the front seat. 'Next time we do this, we should stay a few nights,' she said, as Dad stood watching me from outside, checking his watch and sighing.

We eventually arrived in Christchurch after dark. Mum picked up her new car while I slept in the hotel and we left for home again before first light. Mum didn't get to browse the racks in Ballantyne's for another eight years—we moved to Christchurch in 1992—and despite the best of intentions, I never did climb the Cathedral spire.

I remember all of this when I sit down to contemplate *Meet Me in the Square*, a new book of photographs by David Cook, published by the Gallery. The images within it were taken

Opposite page:
David Cook. Photo: Tim Veling



David Cook **Christchurch 1984.**
Photograph. Reproduced courtesy of
the artist

between 1983 and 1987 and, as David mentions when we talk, the cover image was taken around the time I first visited Christchurch.

David Cook: That photograph was taken in 1984. It was my first year out of the University of Canterbury, where I'd gained a Diploma in Fine Arts. I'd originally gone to art school to become a designer or a painter, but I became obsessed with the photographic medium and its power for storytelling. I had been an awkward, painfully shy and quiet young man, and the camera gave me an excuse to explore and engage with the world. Finding photography was incredibly liberating for me.

For my end of diploma assessment I'd submitted a body of work on Christchurch city, but found I was hungry for more. The work just didn't seem complete, so I kept photographing for years after graduating, even after I'd moved to live in another city.

Tim Veling: How did you find yourself up Christ Church Cathedral that day? What were you looking for and what was your intention for being there? I ask this because, years after it was taken and after the earthquakes, the photograph now seems very loaded; what might have been considered a relatively sentimental image of a sleepy city centre now conjures up quite potent and mournful feelings of place and time.

DC: I was always challenging myself to try and see the city from different vantage points. I wanted to try and bring to light the significance of everyday things and to prompt people to think differently about familiar surroundings.

I can't remember exactly why I climbed the spire that day—I often photographed in and around the Cathedral—but I was struck by the shadow and the way it moved across the space; the way people walked through the shadow without knowing or thinking about how they were in its space.

TV: This is a city built around an Anglican cathedral. In this picture, the shadow of the

neo-Gothic spire does seem quite oppressive.

DC: There is more in the picture, though. There's a preacher standing on a little step stool, right in front of the tip of the spire's shadow. There are men lounging in the sun—I think they're topless—and a group of punks in leather jackets. There's a businessman wearing a suit and tie and carrying what looks like a manila folder. There are couples walking together with shopping and the shadow of a seagull that's flying above, outside of frame. I guess I enjoyed the pattern of the bricks and the shapes and forms they presented, too. The scene must, at the time, have reminded me of Rodchenko's photography.

You asked me what my intentions were for my work. I grew up a member of the Salvation Army—a Salvationist. That meant, for me at least, Christchurch was a safe but very interesting place. The Salvation Army was located in the city and because of that I had been exposed to all sorts of interesting aspects of social work. I had encountered people on the streets from all strata of society. As well as giving me a good sense of *tūrangawaewae*, those encounters gave me the interest and hunger to go out and investigate society on all sorts of different levels. Ultimately, I wanted to depict those social layers within my photographic work.

TV: Perhaps we could talk about issues of influence and art school. You said you initially wanted to become a designer or painter. Back then, there were some big personalities teaching at the School of Fine Arts. How did they influence the way you went about making your work and the possibilities you saw for yourself within the medium?

DC: There are big gaps in this conversation. I can talk about art school, but I should also mention I studied photography *after* gaining a degree in botany. I loved scientific fieldwork. I especially enjoyed doing transects and building an impression of the ecology of a place; how a place changes over time and space, day and night and seasons. From there, I developed an urge to work

in the visual realm. I went to night class to study art and eventually enrolled at Ilam. Initially I was taught by Glenn Busch, whose deeply serious influence was the idea of just stopping, pausing and spending time *reading* photographs—I mean, really critically looking at the relationship between content and form. I remember him showing me Bruce Davidson's *East 100th Street* and the light went on. I thought, yeah, this is what I want to do.

In my second year, wham! Larence Shustak was back on the scene after a year's sabbatical. That was the best and worst thing in the world; he was an immense provocation to me. He was an intense guy and I needed to be shaken up—I was very much in danger of being really conservative in my approach to the medium. Larence was a crazy New Yorker who oscillated between a stoned 'I don't care' kind of attitude, and a macho critical style. He made me an independent photographer because he was someone to fight against. Ultimately, he liberated me to look and try harder to develop my own voice.

TV: I'm asking these kinds of questions because I think when analysing photographs, especially those that depict what we might politely call a bygone era, it's important to understand the broad context in which that work was made. In that sense, I think one of the great things about *Meet Me in the Square* is that it reads like a re-exploring of old, archived material. The way it's put together; it's a series of half-truths and fragments of memories. I get the sense that you have been a lot looser with the material from your archive than you would have originally intended when making it.

DC: I always intended to make a book and exhibit this material. At one point in the 1980s, I actually did have a small exhibition of twenty photographs at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery. Back then I was looking for that Cartier-Bresson, Robert Frank kind of image. I was looking to capture those moments when all

‘I’ve left behind that concern about the single, heroic image and tried to find ways to immerse the reader in a kind of experience of the city.’

the visual elements come together in front of the camera to say something poetic about time, place and life. I was mostly concerned with the artistry of making good, single images. That’s how I edited my work. Years later, I don’t feel a need to prove myself as a photographer any more. I’ve left behind that concern about the single, heroic image and tried to find ways to immerse the reader in a kind of experience of the city. I’m thinking about things like graphic novels or the Japanese *Provoke* photobooks. I want people to consider the materiality of the raw content and the book as an object in its own right; for it to be an experience in itself. I want people to feel like they are digging into a whole stack of proof sheets with me, looking at them with various levels of scrutiny. From close ups, to standing back and looking at joining negatives on strips of film. I’ve tried to encourage a reading of peripheral details and of things happening just outside of the frame. This meant being open about technical mistakes, like bad exposures or focus errors, all for the sake of conveying something more faithful to my sense of exploration back then.

TV: That’s one of the things I like about the book. When I sit down and analyse all the little details and think about the way it’s put together, I sense the development of a young photographer. I sense someone working with intention, working their way in to moments with the camera, then working their way out of them. The overall final impression is not only of a city

in flux, but also of you learning your craft.

DC: Yes, throughout the book I can see myself asking questions and experimenting. Glenn introduced me to that humanist side of photography, then Larence introduced me to provocative photographers like William Klein, who’d use the camera almost like a weapon. In my own way, I’d try to do things to replicate those models of working. Some days I’d stand back and observe things happening, and on others I’d ambush people and press click.

TV: I’d like to talk about your body of work, *Lake of Coal*. I opened the interview asking questions about your Cathedral spire photograph because it effectively frames *Meet Me in the Square* as a body of work to be considered with reference to what we’ve lost. In 1984, you could never have foreseen this. With *Lake of Coal* and the work you made in Rotowaro, however, you set out to document the loss of a community from the outset. Unlike your work in Christchurch, there was a very specific and charged story to follow.

DC: I started *Lake of Coal* as a year-long commission for the Waikato Museum—part of a larger project that looked at the impacts of energy developments in the north Waikato region. I chose Rotowaro because of the potent story and, after the commission finished, I found various ways to fund and continue making work. With Rotowaro I could see the whole story unfolding in front of me. It was in some ways a classic piece of storytelling for an ethnographer or photographer. There was incredible upheaval, both in terms of the social and the physical environments. I hung in there and developed strategies to be able to express and reflect on all that was happening. I harvested words, images and documents to try and tell that story. I mean, I had seen a lot of stuff in museums and books that was all about salvaging relics of history and trying to rebuild things, but here I had the opportunity to actually be in the moment and to collect information as things happened.



Pages from David Cook, *Meet Me in the Square: Christchurch 1983–1987*, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, 2014



Botswana village and mine, 1954/1985

Pages from David Cook, *Lake of Coal: The Disappearance of a Mining Township*, Craig Potton Publishing, 2006

TV: Again, what strikes me with *Lake of Coal* is that when you pick the book up, you're instantly aware of the purposeful way in which the content is presented and sequenced. There are some amazing spreads containing images that depict the community and its people above ground, with images of miners carving tunnels beneath those people's homes and streets. By way of forcing people to engage with the book in this way, the reader can begin to understand something of the sociopolitical and commercial conflict playing out.

DC: I didn't want to convey an experience of sifting through an archive of material with weepy eyes, full with sentimentality. I never took the photographs as curious images of the past—I have always been more interested in the here and now. To me, they were images with currency, of things I was seeing happening around me and affecting a lot of people. With *Lake of Coal*, I wanted to create a record of what was happening, but I also wanted to invest that here-and-now currency into the book. By way of editing and design and reflexive story telling—bringing my reflections on my role as documentary maker into the work—I wanted to make that story feel real for the reader. Coming back to my image of the Cathedral spire, I always intended to go back up there and spend an entire day photographing the shadow as a sundial, moving across the square. I wish I could go back in time and do it.

TV: Perhaps they might rebuild the Cathedral. If the Anglican Church choose to restore it, maybe you will get another chance?

DC: I don't live here any more and that is a very contentious story. I'll avoid voicing an opinion on it.

TV: Well, if they do, perhaps I can photograph it for you. I always wanted to climb up there, but never took the time to do it. One thing's for sure though, if they did I'd see a very different view of the city.



Tim J. Veling is a photographer and senior lecturer at the University of Canterbury, School of Fine Arts. He is a key contributor to and administrator of Place in Time: The Christchurch Documentary Project. To see a selection of his work, visit www.timjveling.com.

David Cook: *Meet Me in the Square* is on display at 209 Tuam Street until 24 May. It is accompanied by *Meet Me in the Square: Christchurch 1983–1987*, a beautifully designed book of photographs of 1980s Christchurch.



BLOG



REVIEW

Summer Reading Series #3: Martin Rumsby on Ken Jacobs' *The Guests* (2013)

JAN 29, 2015

In CIRCUIT's Summer Reading Series we asked 6 writers to respond to a work they'd recently encountered which left an indelible impression on them. Martin Rumsby chose Ken Jacob's 3D film *The Guests*, which screened in association with the 2014 Adam Art Gallery exhibition *Cinema and Painting*.

0 COMMENTS

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Spiriting Waste - Brydee Rood

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Going Online: Digital Streaming and the New Art Audience

Mark Williams



Above:
Gray Nicol **Construction of a Cube** (video still)
1976. Video. 33:28mins. Courtesy of the artist

Right:
Alex Monteith **Red Sessions** 2009. Live action
still, Stent Road, 29 January 2009, Taranaki,
Aotearoa. Reproduced courtesy of the artist

I've never actually seen the *Mona Lisa*, and it's a fair bet that most people reading this article haven't either. Yet, according to Wikipedia, the painting is 'the best known, the most visited, the most written about, the most sung about, the most parodied work of art in the world'. So how to account for the fame of an artwork we haven't seen? And what have reproductions of Da Vinci's sixteenth-century portrait got to teach us about time-based art and the online environment in 2015?

Throughout the twentieth century the canon of Western art gained worldwide fame through reproductions in books, magazines and catalogues. Perhaps nowhere is this truer than here in New Zealand, where geography isolates us from the major centres of its production.

While not a direct experience of the work, secondary resources give scholars and historians some measure of confidence regarding an artist's intent, and photography has been the dominant mode of study for the past 100 years. Indeed, most people's primary experience of art is via photography. However, the emergence of time-based mediums such as performance, sound art and moving image, sharply exposes the limits of the still image.

Logging on to the CIRCUIT website to watch the video of Gray Nicol's 1976 performance work *Construction of a Cube*, we see a thumbnail image of a young, neatly dressed man standing at a table. Between the still and the title we understand the basic premise of the piece, yet it is only by watching the performance unfold that we experience Nicol's deceptively easy display of craftsmanship and intuition; a quiet authority gained from time, study and application.

I find *Construction of a Cube* utterly mesmerising. Like many of Nicol's works from the 1970s it has a deeply thoughtful and elegant conceptual premise, married to a precise visual realisation. I worked for the New Zealand Film Archive as a curator for ten years from the late 1990s, and was lucky enough to be situated back-of-house, where I could watch a large collection of early video work by practitioners such as Nicol. For the casual visitor, access to works like these was reliant upon institutional processes; was a viewing copy available?



Was the work catalogued? How likely was it to be found within a large institutional database? Were the institution's opening hours keyed to the casual visitor or only scholars and industry professionals?

As a curator programming contemporary work for the Archive's gallery, issues of access were even more frustrating. There were a wealth of practitioners actively creating shows around the country, but from afar I found these difficult to engage with. What could a still image convey about the dynamic modes of exchange in any number of Alex Monteith's works utilising the RNZAF, a fleet of surfers or dual motorcyclists? What was Sean Grattan doing with the unfashionable world of narrative? Based in Wellington, how could I know more about the exciting

developments in Pacific art emerging out of Auckland? What was happening in Christchurch or Dunedin?

While access to physical copies and geographically dispersed installations was problematic for the viewer, the emergence of digital technologies began to spawn a dizzying multiplicity of legal and illegal online streaming sites, offering various modes of access from pay-per-view to invite-only membership to open slather. Within the realm of art, perhaps the most liberal was the American site Ubuweb, whose founder Kenneth Goldsmith famously declared 'If it doesn't exist on the internet, it doesn't exist.' Could these new technologies be utilised to develop new audiences for New Zealand art?

CIRCUIT Artist Film and Video Aotearoa New Zealand

was launched in February 2012. Supported by Creative New Zealand, it was established to support New Zealand artists working in the moving image through distribution of works, critical review and professional practice initiatives. CIRCUIT's brief was specifically artists' film and video—known elsewhere as video art and experimental film.¹ Today on the CIRCUIT website you can watch 500 streaming videos by ninety New Zealand artists, and in the past twelve months the site has received 70,000 page views from 15,000 unique visitors. Most are from New Zealand, followed by the UK, US and Australia.

While many local curators use the site as a research tool, CIRCUIT's growing profile has led to a demand to supply curated programmes for a

variety of international display platforms including web, cinema and gallery. As I write this, an eyecontact review of *Other Waters*, an exhibition at Te Tuhi Centre for the Arts curated by Eu Jin Chua, cites the availability of many of the moving image works in the show on the CIRCUIT site. An upcoming installation at the Dowse Art Museum curated by Bridget Reweti features works by CIRCUIT artists Denise Batchelor and Candice Stock. A suite of works by Gavin Hipkins, Tahi Moore, Phil Dadson, Sorawit Songsataya and Andrew de Freitas has recently been shown at the Rotterdam Film Festival. And over the 2014/15 New Year a collection of sixteen works were shown on the Italian film website filmessay.com.

In 2015, CIRCUIT will distribute several new screening and installation works it has commissioned, providing artists with financial support to make new work and a subsequent return on distribution. Where university art, film and media courses previously taught by showing foreign material streamed on Ubuweb, a number of lecturers now use CIRCUIT. This is a major cultural shift.

Setting up CIRCUIT, I approached an initial pool of sixty-five artists with a proposal to stream their work online. Fifty-five replied saying yes, nine didn't reply and only one said no. I offered the option of showing an excerpt of each work, ghosting a logo over the image or showing the complete work; almost all preferred to show the complete video. Clearly artists are on board with the new model of digital distribution, and the resultant screenings, installations and commissioning activities generated by the presence of their work on CIRCUIT has begun to generate a moderate income for the artists, which we aim to grow substantially over the next few years.

Yet for the collector or collecting institution, this distribution of video on the website can provoke some anxiety. Why should I buy this as a limited edition artwork if it's available to view online? So let's be clear about what you're watching online, and what you're not.

Each video on the website is compressed to fit playback specs that will enable it to stream quickly in a browser. In the gallery you should— if the gallery is doing its job—be watching a full resolution image of a digital work, where the installation utilises size, scale, relationship to site and other media to bring the work fully into existence.

A recent discussion at the Adam Art Gallery for the series '21st-Century Collecting' gave me an opportunity to cite a specific example of the material differences between web and installation platforms. When I watch Phil Dadson's *Aerial Farm* on my 12" Macbook I recognise the essential audio/visual elements of the work; I see the image of a wire mast in a snowstorm, and from the



onboard speakers I hear the wind buffet the mast. But projected to fill a wall in the Adam's Kirk Gallery, the work achieves a measure of physicality; the image seems to hover, to drift in and out of sculptural relief. Played back through a decent sound system the sonic whip of the wind curls around our ears and the space. We sense our human vulnerability in the face of the elements.

All of this is of course hardly new, or medium specific. In the case of Da Vinci's famous portrait, the *Mona Lisa's* ubiquity has spread across books, magazines and academia to popular culture. Obviously not all of these reproductions say much about the work, and I am struggling to see *Aerial Farm* on a coffee mug. But surely the spread of the *Mona Lisa's* reproduction—at the very least within the realms of art history—has contributed to the cultural impact of the work and a desire to see the real thing. In pure financial terms, can

Previous page:

Phil Dadson **Aerial Farm** (video still) 2004. Single channel digital video and sound installation; 21:8mins. Courtesy of the artist

This page:

Sean Grattan **HADHAD** (video still) 2012. Digital video / sound; 41:21mins. Courtesy of the artist

anyone say that these ‘poor’ copies have done anything more than boost the material value of the original?

A 2009 essay by Hito Steyerl entitled ‘In Defense of the Poor Image’ summed up the characteristics of the twenty-first-century digital copy. ‘The poor image ... is a ghost of an image, a preview, a thumbnail, an errant idea, an itinerant image distributed for free, squeezed through slow digital connections, compressed, reproduced, ripped, remixed, as well as copied and pasted into other channels of distribution.’ Where Steyerl’s essay first appealed to me was in its identification of the possibilities for audience development. ‘In the age of file-sharing, even marginalized content circulates again and reconnects dispersed worldwide audiences. ... It builds alliances as it travels, provokes translation or mistranslation, and creates new publics and debates.’²

During the mid to late 2000s, I curated several programmes of New Zealand artists’ video for venues in Europe and the US. On paper, showing at many of these institutions felt like something to be celebrated. And sometimes, like showing Len Lye in New York or San Francisco, it was. On other occasions, particularly related to contemporary work, with no existing frame of reference (such as Lye the New Yorker) one realised that showing work from New Zealand was simply a once in a blue moon event with zero context to draw in an audience. During a brief period I spent working for London-based distributor LUX in 2009, the director told me that ‘until I met you I had no idea this kind of work existed in New Zealand’.

So Steyerl’s identification of the poor image as fleet-footed messenger was welcome. Could new





Len Lye **Rainbow Dance** (video still) 1936. 35mm Gasparcolor sound film; 5min. Courtesy of the British Post Office and the Len Lye Foundation from material preserved and made available by The New Zealand Archive of Film, Television and Sound Ngā Taonga Whitiāhua Me Ngā Taonga Kōrero

technologies lay the groundwork for future showings in foreign locales? Could the work arrive, not as an uninvited guest, but as an accepted part of the larger world culture of moving images? Could we develop a network of advocates worldwide who could place it in an international contemporary context?

One artist whose work is not represented on CIRCUIT is Len Lye. Born in New Zealand and with an artistic legacy forged in the UK and the US, Lye's stature and place in twentieth-century modernism is actively promoted by the Len Lye Foundation, based in New Plymouth. Distributed officially on DVD and with a handful of clips available on the Film Archive website, his work is nevertheless well known on YouTube, where bootleggers/advocates have shared digital versions of beaten-up prints for years.

As Len Lye Foundation curator Paul Brobbel admits, online streaming via platforms such as YouTube can have a positive outcome, driving demand to see the actual works in their full resolution: 'For curators or film programmers, research or familiarity with Lye's films is almost instantly available. That will have had a considerable impact on demand for screenings.'³

But while the fan has a role to play, Brobbel makes the point that letting online users take the lead can be a double-edged sword: 'Misleading information becomes gospel online and in an environment like YouTube it's hard to combat. I've experienced situations with gallery visitors who contest the information we present, deferring to their experience online.' Brobbel also notes that the online environment provides opportunity for repurposing the work. '[Within] the YouTube sphere, there is a degree to which the work becomes malleable or flexible in a way that other art media don't (I'm meaning "mash-ups", "remixes" or otherwise farming for material). There's a discomfort for me there.'

In the end, nothing can disguise the fact that the world has changed. The volume of artists who have chosen to stream their work on CIRCUIT (and many submissions are rejected) shows that artists are enthusiastic about the possibilities offered by distributing their work online. For audiences, content on demand is simply the norm.

At the same time, the world is still much the same. Just as the great paintings of the twentieth century are reproduced in glossy texts, the works on CIRCUIT are a folio, an introduction. If Gray Nicol's time-based work had been more readily available for research and study over the past forty years, would it have been so overlooked?

As Brobbel notes, it is up to institutions to consider how they will manage the torrent of water pouring from the dam. In the meantime, the poor copy continues to circulate, buoyed by public enthusiasm for open access and the quality of the work.

Mark Williams is director of CIRCUIT Artist Film and Video Aotearoa New Zealand. www.circuit.org.nz. CIRCUIT is supported by Creative New Zealand.

NOTES

1. Aotearoa Digital Arts (ADA) was already established as a network researching the expanded field around media, new media, electronic and digital art. <http://www.ada.net.nz/>
 2. <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/in-defense-of-the-poor-image/>
 3. All quotes from email correspondence with the author 27/12/2014.
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THE WISE

CROWDS

DOM OF

In recent years, crowdfunding and crowdsourcing have become big news in the arts. By providing a funding model that enables would-be-investors to become involved in the production of new works, they have altered traditional models of patronage. Musicians, designers, dancers and visual artists are inviting the public to finance their projects via the internet. The public are also being asked to provide wealth in the form of cultural capital through crowdsourcing projects. The Gallery has been involved in two online crowdfunding ventures—a project with a public art focus around our 10th birthday celebrations, and the purchase of a major sculpture for the city. But, although these projects have been made possible by the internet, the concept behind the funding model is certainly not new. The rise of online crowdfunding platforms also raises important questions about the role of the state in the funding and generation of artwork, and the democratisation of tastemaking. How are models of supply and demand affected? Does the freedom from more traditional funding models allow greater innovation? Do ‘serious’ artists even ask for money? It’s a big topic, and one that is undoubtedly shaping up in PhD theses around the world already. *Bulletin* asked a few commentators for their thoughts on the matter.



Lara Strongman

Lara Strongman is senior curator at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu

When Michael Parekowhai's bronze bull—*Chapman's Homer*—goes on display, its label is a crowded affair. It includes the names of twenty-seven corporate donors and private individuals, as well as '1,074 other big-hearted individuals and companies' who gave money to purchase the work for Christchurch. *Chapman's Homer* caught the public imagination as a symbol of the resilience of local culture when it was exhibited amid the devastation of the Christchurch earthquakes; a successful crowdfunding campaign kept it here.

While online crowdfunding for art and culture is a recent phenomenon, the practice itself is not. Historical antecedents cited by the US funding platform Kickstarter include Alexander Pope, who generated 750 subscribers for his translation of Homer's *Iliad* in 1715; Mozart, who crowdfunded the performance of three piano concertos in Vienna in 1784; and the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty in 1885, which was paid for by more than 160,000 New Yorkers after a fundraising campaign run by Joseph Pulitzer, mainly through individual donations of less than \$1 apiece.

Christchurch Art Gallery has a long history of crowdfunding. Many of the Victorian paintings and sculptures in the collection were acquired by the Canterbury Society of Arts (and later transferred to the Robert McDougall Art Gallery) from the 1906 New Zealand International Exhibition with a fund of £2,442 raised from council members and local businessmen. A 'group of citizens' purchased Dame Laura Knight's *Les Sylphides from the Back of the Stage* in 1935 after an exhibition of her work toured New Zealand; Jonathan Mane-Wheoki persuaded a group of ex-Christchurch students each to chip in £5 to buy Karel Appel's *Personnage Jaune* in London in 1973. Other groups came together over the years to acquire works for the city's collection by Raymond McIntyre, Louise Henderson, Eric Lee-Johnson, Archibald Nicoll, and Marté Szirmay, among others.

Controversial crowdfunding campaigns were behind the acquisition of two well-known modern works in the collection. The long list of subscribers to the picture fund for Frances Hodgkins's *Pleasure Garden* in 1949 included artists Rita Angus, Olivia Spencer Bower, Doris Lusk and Colin McCahon; led by local potter and painter Margaret Frankel, they battled for many months to have the work accepted into the city's collection. Frankel wrote that 'it had not been at all difficult to find subscribers ready and willing to give money for this painting so that the Robert McDougall Art Gallery might have at least one picture by this famous New Zealander.' What *had* been difficult was the heated argument over the merits of modern art (later described as Christchurch's 'Great Art War') which took place at public meetings and in the pages of the newspaper.

History repeated itself in 1960, when the gift of McCahon's work *Tomorrow will be the same but not as this is*—funded through a public subscription organised by the city's librarian, art patron Ron O'Reilly—was initially refused by the director of the Robert McDougall, W.S. Baverstock, who had been instrumental in the rejection of Hodgkins's work a decade earlier. The work was finally accepted in 1962, and is now regarded as one of the Gallery's most important modern paintings.



W.A. Sutton **Homage to Frances Hodgkins** 1951. Destroyed. Artist Bill Sutton, then a young lecturer at the art school, registered his protest at the rejection of *Pleasure Garden* by painting a large composite portrait of Hodgkins's supporters grouped around the work. It was an imaginary meeting; and likely to have been based on Henri Fantin-Latour's *A Studio in the Batignolles (Homage to Manet)* (1870), now in the collection of the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. At the centre of the image is Hodgkins and a young Colin McCahon. In the foreground, a discarded copy of *The Press* lies crumpled on the floor. Sutton's painting was damaged beyond repair a few years after it was painted, but photographs of the work remain.

Giovanni Tiso

Giovanni Tiso is an Italian writer and translator based in Wellington. He has written about media and politics for a range of publications including *The New Inquiry*, *The New Humanist* and *The Guardian*, and is a featured writer for the Australian literary journal *Overland*. He blogs at Bat, Bean, Beam (bat-bean-beam.blogspot.com).

Crowdfunding is both an opportunity to increase the role of individuals in supporting creative projects and a potential threat to the democratic investment of the whole of society in culture and the arts. This apparent paradox is older than the internet or crowdfunding: every time a voluntary organisation supports an institution or offers a service that amounts to a public good, it means that local and national government don't have to provide; and if they don't have to provide, then someone might argue that it's not their place to do so.

When it comes to crowdfunding, we have heard the argument already. In the United States, where the money raised by Kickstarter alone has long-since surpassed the disbursements of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Republican candidate at the last presidential election pledged to end Federal contributions to the fund; whereas in the Britain of new austerity and the Big Society, the role of the Arts Council established by Keynes in 1946 is routinely questioned. Taking part in a debate hosted by *The Economist*, Adam Smith Institute researcher Pete Spence declared that 'The dead hand of the state doesn't have much going for it—we should put it to rest and embrace the messy, diverse, vibrant tapestry of commercial funding.'

The rhetoric is familiar, and the key word is 'commercial'. Although major institutions such as the Louvre have used it to secure funding for permanent exhibits, crowdfunding in the arts has mostly been successful to date as a mechanism for pre-selling, whereby individuals might invest in a project in exchange for a book, CD, DVD, print or concert ticket. But the arts aren't the sum of consumer products, including live performances or exhibitions, nor is commercial success the only measure of an artist's work. Crowdfunding is often said to democratise patronage and investing, but art is a public good, and ensuring that the state remains committed to its support means above all protecting a collective democratic stake. Our methods for determining artistic value may be imperfect, but this doesn't mean that we should defer the responsibility of making those decisions solely to the market, or to the people with enough disposable income and time on their hands.

This is not to deny the value of crowdfunding, which lies precisely—and it is no paradox—in creating more opportunities for the public to participate in those decisions; in extending and deepening the commitment we make as a society to activities that cannot be reduced to a cost-benefit analysis, yet define us.

Eric Crampton

Eric Crampton is head of research with the New Zealand Initiative in Wellington. From 2003 to 2014, he lectured in Economics at the University of Canterbury.

Crowdfunding is a new take on an old method for funding the arts: patronage. Count Ferdinand von Waldstein earned lasting fame by his early sponsorship of Beethoven. While patrons supporting the arts through Kickstarter can hardly expect similar name recognition, they can similarly enjoy a sense of part-ownership of the final production.

Arts patronage was typically, and remains, the domain of the wealthy. Smaller patrons could never really be sure how much difference their contributions made. Consequently, donations can suffer from what economists call a *public goods* problem: because everyone can benefit from a work when it is produced, it is often best to sit back and wait to see whether the work might be produced without your contribution. And so arts organisations provide special bonuses for members of their affiliated groups of supporters.

While this comes some way towards solving the public goods problem, crowdfunding alternatives provide a more direct approach: no donor is charged unless the project has enough pledged support to go ahead. Each donor can then feel part-ownership of the project. Because of the donor's support, along with that of like-minded others, an artist could make something new and beautiful—as judged by the donor. The *New York Times* reported in January that the traditional fine arts have some of Kickstarter's highest success rates.¹

The public goods problem remains where some would-be supporters delay pledging in hopes that the threshold is reached without their contribution. Clever crowdfunding initiatives can mitigate the problem by providing bonuses to early pledgers, like signed tokens from the artists that can be produced at low cost but are of high value to supporters as it enables them to display their affiliation and support.

Even better, arts organisations can use crowdfunding mechanisms to gauge support for the different initiatives they might undertake. A gallery could propose commissioning several different works; patron support through PledgeMe would determine which were commissioned, and supporters could receive small versions of the commissioned work in acknowledgement, from pins through prints.

PledgeMe supporters of a [hypothetical] Christchurch Art Gallery commission of a new painting (by an artist like Jason Greig, for example) would hardly earn Waldstein's fame. But, a supporters' limited-edition lithograph of the newly commissioned work could be fame enough for many supporters—including me.

1. Stephen Heyman, 'Keeping up with Kickstarter'. *The New York Times*. 15 January 2015.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/15/arts/international/keeping-up-with-kickstarter.html>

Michael Lascarides

Michael Lascarides is the manager of the National Library online team at the National Library of New Zealand in Wellington. Prior to joining the NLNZ, he managed the web team at the New York Public Library, where he helped create a number of successful crowdsourcing projects. He is a contributor to the recent book *Crowdsourcing Our Cultural Heritage* (2014, Ashgate Press, edited by Mia Ridge).

‘The crowd’ is now also capable of creating value for an institution directly, through their participation rather than their donations. But successful use of this social currency requires us, paradoxically, not to think of ‘the crowd’. Instead, we must work to ensure that the act of a single participant offering a single contribution is as *meaningful, effortless and joyous* as possible.

Members of the public arrive already filled with enthusiasm for our cultural heritage institutions. Tapping into that reservoir of goodwill requires empathy as much as technical savvy or financial resources. Without an understanding of the motivations of potential participants, even the most generously funded project has little chance of receiving their time and attention. The key questions are: What things in our collections do they find most interesting? What makes them want to contribute something to those collections? And, crucially, what makes them want to *continue* to do so?

Some collections are more charismatic than others, in that the stories that they tell are entertaining and readily understood. It’s no accident that the most successful project of this type that I’ve worked on was a collection of restaurant menus. Anything related to family histories, local communities/iwi, maps, beautiful pictures—and yes, food—is always innately interesting to people.

Software interfaces for crowdsourcing are crucial to their success, and need to be relentlessly tested and edited. When evaluating a design, I am constantly looking for its ‘core gesture’. An early prototype that might require four or five steps to get anything done must be revised until it’s ground down to one. This is the hard work of design: the sanding-off of all of the sharp edges until the participatory flow is as free and easy as possible. If an interaction is the least bit difficult to get through once, forget ever asking people to repeat it over and over.

Crowdsourcing appeals to participants’ better nature. When as little as ten seconds of ‘micro-volunteering’ can create some new value, both institution *and* volunteer benefit. While editing, correcting and adding to a collection, a participant gains a deeper knowledge and understanding of its inner workings than she could ever get from a simple Google search. It’s a very active form of learning. The sense of ownership this engenders has the side effect of keeping the quality up; I commonly hear from managers of these projects that the bad input or vandalism they initially feared turned out to be almost non-existent.

When everything comes together, though, the act of contributing becomes its own reward. That same simple thing that makes people spend hours playing Candy Crush on their phones—a satisfying response to a simple gesture—can be harnessed in the service of improving a part, however small, of our shared cultural heritage. And the double good feeling that that instils in the participant will make her want to come back often, and to share her experience with others.

Simon Bowden

Simon Bowden is executive director of the Arts Foundation and creator and trustee of Boosted.

Arts philanthropy is about participation. Being part of it, close to the action, this is what excites people to donate to the arts. Crowdfunding is fast philanthropy in a modern context. Artists that engage with donors understand the potential for deeper relationships when they share their creative process.

At Boosted we provide a simple plan that significantly increases an artist's chances of success with online fundraising. As part of the plan we advise artists to invite audiences into their studios, to collaborative sessions and on research trips during their campaigns. Audiences that experience an artist at work become invested and sometimes lifelong supporters.

I am excited by the potential for crowdfunding to inspire artists to increase engagement with audiences; to open up the process of creation as part of the experience for audiences in the final work. This won't suit all artists, but for some it could be an enriching part of their process.

Eliot Collins launched his Boosted campaign on Auckland's waterfront with the opportunity for people to paint the first strokes of his mural. He had a ceremony to hoist a flag and a party. Eliot said 'I want to reintroduce the romance of the waterfront to the people of Auckland'. Boosted helped Eliot create engagement in his message and investment of hearts, minds, and wallets in his project.

Opening up the creative process and/or providing ways for audiences to help artists create work provides a new level of artistic risk. The deeper the relationship with the audience, the less financial risk there is to reach a crowdfunding target. Invested audiences donate.

Crowdfunding has the potential to dynamically increase the level of knowledge people have about the arts, but it does not turn the public into curators. The relationship between donor and artist is one on one; it is very rare for donors to visit a crowdfunding site to choose between projects. The artists with the best philanthropic strategies are the ones that reach their targets.

Public engagement in the funding of arts projects has the potential to increase government and civic funding. Projects that are funded on Boosted demonstrate innovation in raising funds and a high level of engagement with audiences. Artists that achieve targets on Boosted can increase the confidence of funders by providing tangible evidence that audiences care.

We can't wait to see artists use Boosted to create work with audiences. The potential for audience interaction to become integral to the art experience is one of the most exciting things about the future of crowdfunding.

Jenny Harper

Jenny Harper is director at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu

Let's start with taste making, for I'm not sure that public institutions do so much of this these days. Private collectors have their own ideas and, in a culturally-active city, dealer galleries, artist-run spaces, academics and auction houses also play a role; advertising, magazines and journals further shape tastes (I prefer to think of them as multiple and diverse) as well. Relatively speaking, art galleries in New Zealand are less able-to-buy than an active range of private collectors.

Public galleries certainly confirm and maintain a record of what's visually significant at a given time. And we operate within a broader market place; dealer galleries may discount works for art museums; artists will list collections they are in, public as well as well-known private collections. But relative to some, our means are limited.

It's part of our job to be aware of market values and negotiate appropriate prices for collection items. But we work with an eye for the longer term and it's important to know when a collection will be so enhanced that it's necessary to pay top price for a given work, to wager that this specific investment *will* pay off in terms of cultural understanding and community pleasure. The price might seem high at the time, but a gallery's reputation is judged on what it collects, not what it fails to acquire. Others trust our judgements—and we anticipate market catch up.

Now to sources of funding. There's a big difference between receiving public funding and being fully funded. About three-quarters of Christchurch's operational funding is secured via the ratepayer base and we could not maintain the city's collections nor open to the public without this reliable core funding. So Gallery staff are expected to maximise an income stream in support of what we do—more than the current allocation from rates is needed to maintain the quality and relevance of what we present.

Our situation is worsening, however. In this city with multiple priorities, the new long-term plan proposes halving acquisitions funding from July 2015. Our task of representing this time and ensuring the city's collection remains nationally significant continues. We'll become even more reliant on our Foundation raising money from private individuals for at least the next four years.

This institution needs to be increasingly clear about the importance of our role as visual archivists of a place, our histories and our cultures. We know how much good art really matters—we've seen how it shapes a community, inspires us, make us laugh, helps us to think and reflect. Collections like ours (and the exhibitions through which we interpret it) are a key means of ensuring our community respects the past, debates the current and is given tools to imagine the future.

This Gallery, its partners and friends, will work energetically to ensure all our key tasks are supported to play their part. The means may change from time-to-time, but the fact of fundraising is not new. Various mechanisms are used, with online crowd-funding a recent innovation. We know from experience that this takes careful planning and a heap of personal energy. You couldn't do it often.

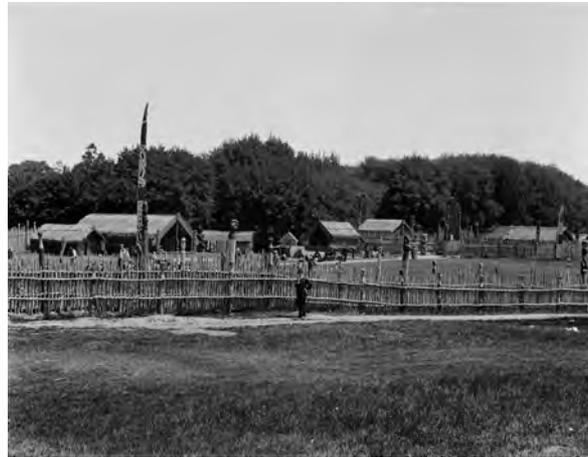
Is it me, or does our role as taste-maker suddenly seem a bit inconsequential?

He Ngākau Aroha



Four years after the earthquakes, Ōtautahi is a new frontier; the city that was can never be again. A new city is emerging, and though it is yet to be fully understood by its people, with help, guidance and love, its identity will become apparent.

Nathan Pohio



I feel very fortunate to be involved in aspects of my city's regrowth. My current role sees me representing a few parties. Firstly there is my Ngāi Tahu whanau—Ngāi Tūāhuriri and Ngāti Wheke, and my ancestral connections to Ruapuke Island, Arowhenua and the Chatham Islands. And secondly I am an artist and I work at Te Puna o Waiwhetu Christchurch Art Gallery.

It was through the combination of these things that I found myself involved with Waitaha Cultural Council, the official hosts of Te Matatini 2015. As part of the Paemanu, Ngāi Tahu Contemporary Visual Artists collective, my role is project coordinator for the dressing of the site. It has been twenty-six years since Ōtautahi last hosted Te Matatini, the biennial national kapa haka festival. In 1986 it was held at QEII Park, a venue physically large enough to hold the event but perhaps not the most appropriate place to hold such a significant cultural occasion. This time Christchurch City Council has provided North Hagley Park as the location. The theme for the event is He Ngākau Aroha—a loving heart.

In all things, Māori relate to the land. Within Te Waipounamu or Te Waka-o-Maui or the South Island, there are many histories; with that comes

a responsibility to acknowledge and sustain our memories. In a past life the many-braided rivers of Waitaha ran through what is now the city of Christchurch, and Hagley Park, out towards the estuary in Sumner; the area was a major source of kai moana—fresh river fish and tuna (eel), shellfish and freshwater crayfish of monstrous size. Close by, at what became the Town Hall and the courts, whare (houses) were maintained seasonally to offer hospitality and exchange. In the more modern times of early European settlement, Little Hagley Park was used to shelter horses by Māori bringing food to markets. The Commons are currently located at that market site. Where possible, this history will be brought into play at Te Matatini through artworks for the site, as will wider views of our histories including the art and architecture of Te Waipounamu.

It is with a sense of responsibility to memory that Waitaha Cultural Council and I sought to acknowledge Āraiteuru Pā, built for the 1906 New Zealand International Exhibition in Christchurch. The Pā was located on the east side of Victoria Lake; Te Matatini is located on the other side of the trees east of Albert Lake, where festivals are held throughout the year.

Canterbury Museum has generously allowed me access to their collections; their glass-plate negatives of Āraiteuru Pā during construction and during the opening days offer an extraordinary insight into the past. In using these images on site, we respectfully make an offering to those coming down from the north who are descended from many people present in the images.

When first thinking about developing a way to adorn the site for Te Matatini, I set out a kaupapa, a guiding process. At the forefront of my mind was what the art world calls relational aesthetics: a similar concept is well known to Māori as whakawhanaungatanga—the sense of family connection, a sense of belonging, and the relationship between humans and nature. I worked with Ngāi Tahu artists to support what they bring of themselves in what has been at times a daunting project. We bring our work together as one to represent our people; the work is diverse and, although there may be some challenging juxtapositions, there is unity. Ultimately, the work is born of He Ngākau Aroha.

I would suggest that Ngāi Tahu art history has its roots in the relationship between the body, the



garment and the architectural form. Expressions of fine beauty and great meaning are to be found in the adornment of these things, but it is the adornment of architecture in particular that for me carries over into our collective approach to Te Matatini. Ngāi Tahu artist Simon Kann is preparing one of his whakawhanaungatanga projects, which have seen excellent work produced as far afield as Melbourne and Santa Fe, New Mexico. For Te Matatini, Simon will adorn a building of great importance for Māori, the *whare kai*. Priscilla Cowie is preparing shade sails, decorated with designs that spring from the magnificent expressions of consciousness found in 600 or more caves upon the South Island. Priscilla is well known in France for her work in shade sails—both architectural and protective, for her they carry the tradition of dwelling sites around Te Waipounamu.

Hori Mataki and Ephraim Russell have taken on the challenge of the front of the pā—a vast area. There is senior guidance at hand making sure the tikanga around the work is appropriate, but the designs indicate fantastic presence at the time of writing. In addition to this, Fayne Robinson is fabricating four large po to make the entrance gate at the front of



the pā. Senior artists are also present; particularly exciting to me is the inclusion of Reihana Parata and Morehu Flutey-Henare, masters in the field of weaving and design who consistently produce work inlaid with strength, elegance and beauty. These artists and more are all working together with a single purpose—representing their people and upholding the mana of Ngāi Tahu.

Te Matatini will see the city's population rise by at least 9,000 visitors—all hotels and motels have been booked for over a year now, as well as all the marae from Tuahiwi, through the city and as far afield as Koukourarata / Port Levy. Hagley Park will be the fixed point where all the tribes will gather for an incredible powhiri, the like of which has not been seen at that site since the Āraiteuru Pā powhiri of 1906. This will be the moment that Ngāi Tahu claims the site for the duration as Te Pito O Te Ao / The Centre of the Universe.

Nathan Pohio is an artist and exhibition designer at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu.

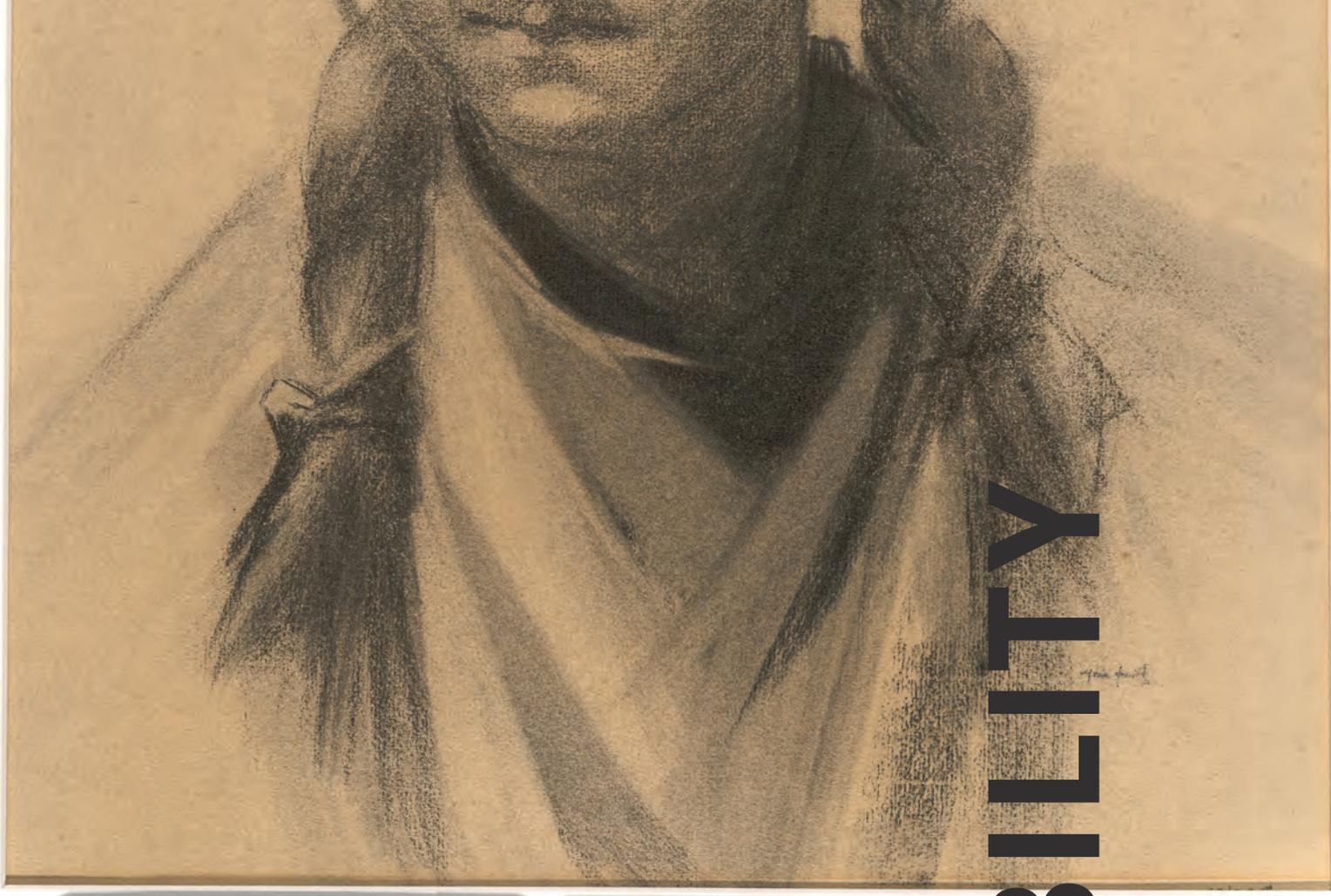
Te Matatini National Kapa Haka Festival 2015 is in North Hagley Park, Christchurch from 4 until 8 March.

Opposite page, left:
The Māori pā constructed for the New Zealand International Exhibition 1906–7, Hagley Park, Christchurch. Charles Beken collection, Canterbury Museum 1955.81.691

Opposite page, right:
Carved storehouse created for the Māori pā and village in the exhibition grounds, New Zealand International Exhibition 1906–7, Hagley Park, Christchurch. Charles Beken collection, Canterbury Museum 1955.81.690

This page, left:
The outer fence (*pekerangi*) and entrance to the Māori pā site, New Zealand International Exhibition 1906–7, Hagley Park, Christchurch. Charles Beken collection, Canterbury Museum 1955.81.66

This page, right:
Three Māori girls posing in the Māori pā constructed for the New Zealand International Exhibition 1906–7, Hagley Park, Christchurch. Canterbury Museum 1979.91.108



THE ART OF INVISIBILITY

John Collie

Mina Arndt **Plaits** (detail)
c.1918. Charcoal. Collection of
Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna
o Waiwhetu, presented by John
and May Manoy, August 1961

I remember going to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York many years ago and being confronted by a giant red colour-field painting by Mark Rothko. The colour was so intense and immersive; how could this be conveyed in a tiny art book reproduction? While scale isn't something that can realistically be dealt with in a book, accurate colour and a sense of texture can aid in defining the characteristics of works of art.

An important part of my role as photographer at the Gallery is the accurate recording of new and existing works in the collection. I get perverse satisfaction in knowing that when done well my work is completely invisible; the viewer of the image sees an artwork, not a photo. They have no knowledge of the set-up and processes that lie behind the successful image of that artwork.

The photography of artworks presents interesting and complex issues. From the thoughtful lighting of three-dimensional objects to the delicate textures and transparent glazes of oil paintings, all impose technical and aesthetic challenges which, no matter how precisely one works, always seem to require an element of intuition to get right.

My aim here is to outline some specific issues and solutions to common technical problems around photographing artworks. But first, an overview. There are some basic questions to ask that inform the approach to recording the work: Is it reflective or behind glass? Is it textured and is it desirable to see that texture? Is the required output a website? A billboard? A printed publication? These questions must be answered, and that may require input from designers, curators or editors.

Almost everything I do is now done digitally. I began in the days of black-and-white 35mm film. I developed hundreds of films and made many prints, and while I miss the happy accidents of the chemical darkroom, I don't miss the lingering smell of fixer. I have also processed and printed colour negative and Ilfochrome (formerly Cibachrome), whose more unpleasant chemicals required masks and gloves. While the film purists are definitely still out there, digital technology presents the advantage of instantaneous feedback about quality, exposure and focus, without the expense and environmental issues present with film and its production. Film does of course offer a certain forgiving quality (especially colour negative), attractive grain and, arguably, subtler colour, especially at the red end of the visible spectrum.

Digital photography has come a long way in a short space of time, and the quality is amazing. Professional digital cameras offer the option of shooting RAW files—great hunks of unprocessed image data that exist in a large theoretical colour space, they cannot be printed and can be likened to the latent image on a piece of undeveloped film.

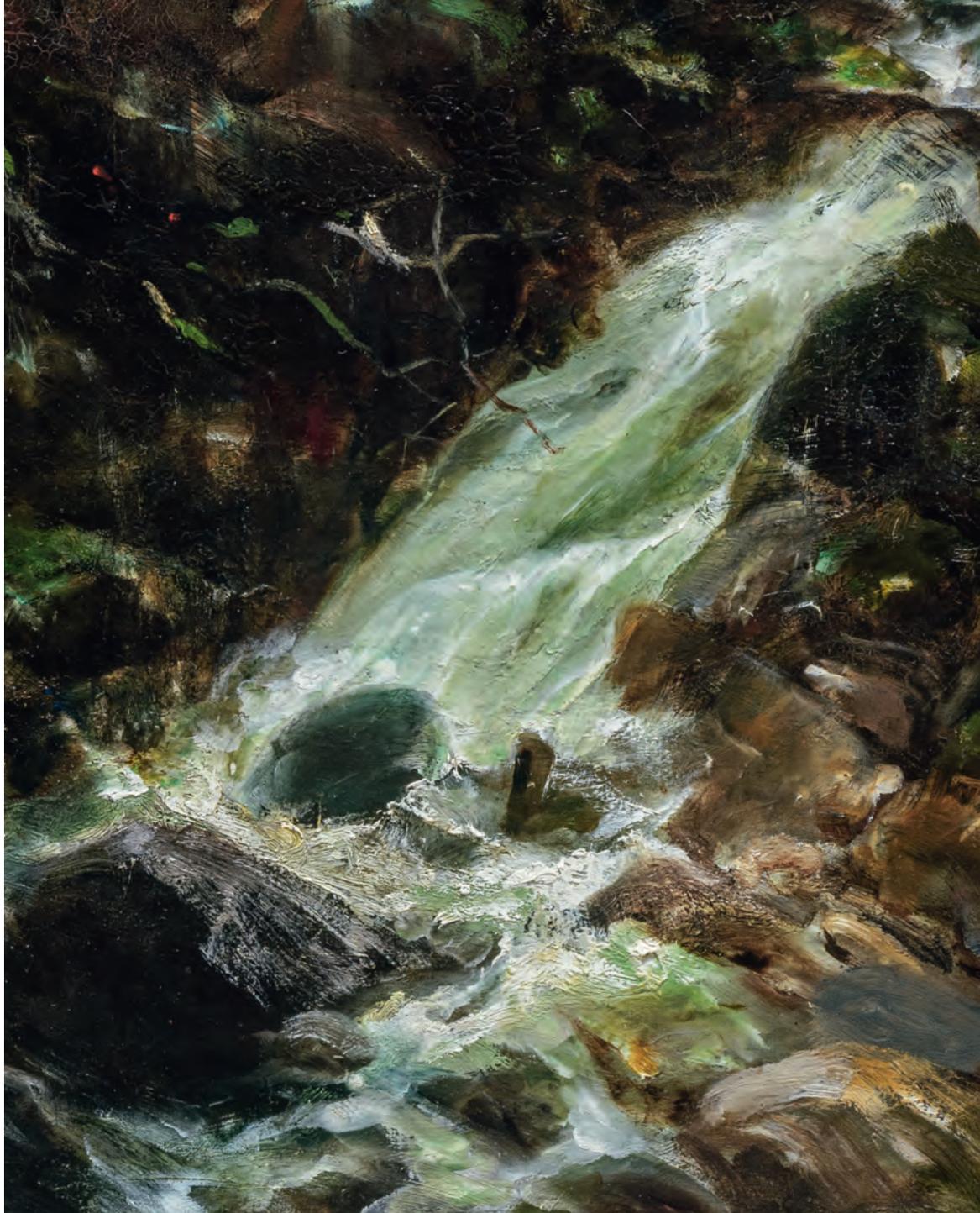
Once downloaded, the RAW file is processed. Here

many of the attributes that form the image can be manipulated. Exposure, white balance, sharpness, lens aberration, colour and more can all be adjusted as if the photographer were there at the camera controls again. In addition, many effects may be applied, from film grain, vignetting and spot removal, to various filters and effects (black and white for example). All this before you get anywhere near specialised image-manipulation software like Photoshop.

While contemporary aspherical lenses have assisted, the massive resolving power of modern image sensors means that they show up any flaws present in the lens—usually distortion and chromatic aberration. The result of blue light (high wavelength) and red light (low wavelength) arriving in slightly different locations when they hit a flat image sensor, chromatic aberration is most pronounced in wide-angle lenses, where the most distortion occurs (the corners). The Adobe Camera Raw processor has the characteristics of a vast number of lenses pre-programmed into it, and uses the metadata captured with the image to apply the appropriate lens-correction data to the image during processing.

When working in the studio my camera (currently a Nikon D800E) can be connected directly to the computer. This allows live-viewing during set-up for perfect focus. Once shot, the RAW file appears on screen and can be instantly assessed for sharpness, lighting, exposure and colour.

One of the most common problems occurring during the photography of artworks is reflection, whether from glass-framed works, uneven glossiness on the surface of a painting or the specular highlights on ceramics or sculptures. I have a well-used piece



Petrus van der Velden
Jacksons, Otira (detail) c.1893.
Oil on canvas. Collection of
Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna
o Waiwhetu, purchased with
assistance from the Olive Stirrat
Bequest 2003

of black matte board with a hole in the centre that is perfect for shooting small, framed works behind glass. Just poke the camera through the hole and the reflections are gone. For larger works I have a large blackout curtain with a Velcro slit down the middle that I hang in the studio.

There is another, trickier kind of reflection to deal with: the glossy surface of a work on canvas. In this instance it is common to use cross-polarisation techniques. The polarising filter takes scattered light and converts it into directional light, the angle of which can be altered by turning the filter. Two strobes (flashes) can be set up at 45 degrees to the painting with polarising screens on them, then a third polariser placed over the camera lens, out of phase to the others. This usually removes all reflections which is good, but it can lead to a lifeless and textureless result. I remember shooting a Bill Hammond painting that had gold paint on the surface—the polarisation had the effect of making the gold disappear. To bring the painting back to life and pick up texture as well (a painting is, after all, a three-dimensional thing) a third strobe can be set up in the centre to emulate how it might be lit in a gallery setting. In my studio, I bounce it off the ceiling. Of course it is preferable to keep it simple: if reflections are not a big problem, the centre light may be all that is necessary, sometimes with an additional reflector below.

Objects such as jewellery pose unique problems, not the least of which is their small size. The closer you get to an object the shallower the depth of field (depth of focus) and the greater the amount of light required for correct exposure. It quickly becomes a trade-off between high ISO noise, shallow depth of field and blurriness due to diffraction from the aperture when stopping down too far. And that's before you consider bright highlights or transparent elements, which require careful lighting. It may also be necessary to give the object a sense of scale, especially if the image is required for archival purposes.

There may be situations when an artwork emits its own light—Bill Culbert's *Pacific Flotsam* being one obvious example from the Gallery's collection. In such instances the colour of the light emitted becomes an intrinsic part of the work as it affects its immediate surroundings. Fluorescent lights in particular may



Bill Culbert **Pacific Flotsam** (detail) 2007.
Fluorescent light, electric wire, plastic bottles.
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o
Waiwhetu, purchased 2008. Reproduced with
permission

be daylight balanced, pinkish, greenish or office white; and depending on their age that colour will change.

Achieving accurate colour is obviously critical, but there are many colours that simply cannot be reproduced on a printed page. Trying to reduce all the theoretical colours in an additive (screen-based RGB) colour model to a small subtractive (paper-based CMYK) colour model is a giant squashing exercise. In addition, brightly coloured paints (and many pre-mixed printing inks, or spot colours) are impossible to reproduce on paper with CMYK inks. Maybe that is where intuition and experience come into play; it's important to know the limits of the technology at each stage of the reproduction process.

Photographers have certain calibration tools at their disposal to assist with accurate colour rendering. First among these is the colour checker. This is a series of colour swatches of known values that can be used to ensure accurate colour and white balance (the colour of the light under which the work is being illuminated). With Camera RAW processing it is a simple step to click on the grey swatch in the image with an eyedropper tool, which will neutralise the

grey swatch to equal values of red, green and blue light. Providing the image was not shot in mixed lighting, the colour will be very accurate. The same calibration target may be used to make an individual camera profile that can be applied to the RAW file during image processing or used in-camera.

Another important tool is a monitor calibration device. This sits on the screen and measures a series of known values which are fed back into a computer's colour management system to provide a monitor profile. An accurately calibrated monitor for precise, predictable colour viewing is essential; making critical colour changes on an inaccurate screen is like working blind. Generally, people tend to have their screens too bright and consequently often complain their prints are too dark—rarely the opposite. If a monitor is too bright a print will always come out dark as a consequence.

Working digitally offers an interesting variety of techniques for assisting the photographer. If a very large file is required a work may be shot in sections and then joined using photo-stitching software to form one giant image file. If a work cannot be shot straight-on

because of its location, or reflections have been reduced by shooting the work at an angle, it can be easily skewed straight again. Multiple exposures can be combined into a single image, thus overcoming the situation where extreme contrast is a problem, or multiple images can be shot with various focal points and 'stacked' to form a final shot with extreme depth of field.

There is a presumption that photographing artworks is probably a fairly rote process. This is far from the truth. The photograph can arguably have as much 'art' applied to it as the work being photographed. I've sometimes heard how the photograph of a work (particularly sculptures shot with specialised lighting) can make the work look much better than it actually is. In the end the art is occult—the process works when the viewer looks at the reproduction and sees the painting, not how it got on the page.

John Collie is photographer at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu.



Norman Lemon **Untitled**. Wood. Collection of
Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu

MY FAVOURITE

At first glance I thought that this was a hei tiki. On closer inspection, my reaction was one of amusement, and I likened this piece to busy people needing an extra pair of hands when they are running around feeling like headless chooks. However, it is tagged as a Māori mythical or legendary animal and I respect that it is indeed a very serious piece. What I like about this work is the flowing carving style; the artist allowing the chisel to do the work and bring out the best in the wood and form. The intense facial expression he has captured allows me to imagine that this piece may well be a kaitiaki or guardian of something very special, and as such would more than likely have been a favoured piece had it been available in times long gone by.

Norman Lemon (Te Whata) exhibited work at the Canterbury Museum in 1966 alongside other well known Māori artists including Selwyn Muru, Arnold Wilson, Fred Graham and Buck Nin. Lemon's work for that particular exhibition was a woven wire presentation of *Christ in Agony*.

Along with Ngāi Tahu's own Cath Brown, Lemon was from the 'class of '66'—graduates of the legendary Gordon Tovey, the Department of Education's supervisor of arts and crafts (1946–66). Lemon was from the Bay of Plenty and was an active participant in the early

years of Ngā Puna Waihanga (Māori Artists and Writers Collective). He was affectionately considered by his peers of that time as being 'on the fringe'.

Lemon also carved bone but the only other work of his that I know of is *Muru*—a figurine carved from rimu.

The origins of this particular mythical animal are at rest with the artist. I lament that it is unnamed as I would have liked a clue to its hidden history. As I continue to admire this piece I like the challenge of imagining more from it, but let me share with you that deep down, it still makes me smile!

Ranui Ngarimu

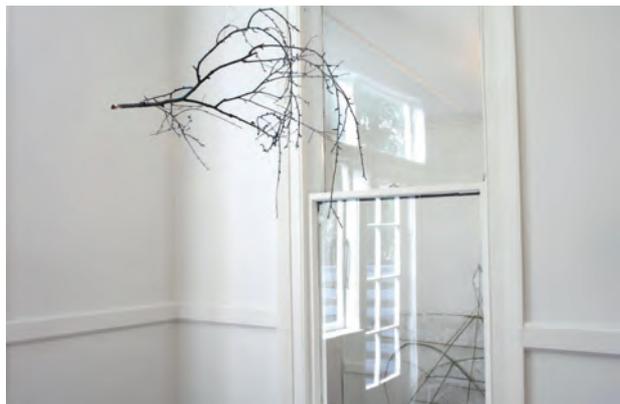
BACK MATTER

New Outreach Art Lessons Available for Terms 2 and 3

Term 1 is now fully booked so teachers are encouraged to get in early and take a look at our outreach programme for Terms 2 and 3. From clay creatures and Pacific printmaking to surrealist collage and glitter painting, we've got a lesson that will challenge your students to think creatively. Each workshop takes ninety minutes and is held in your classroom, and we provide all the materials plus a teacher to facilitate. For more information or to book a workshop for your class call (03)9417373 or email Bianca.VanLeeuwen@ccc.govt.nz.

North Projects

Founded by local practitioners Sophie Bannan, Sophie Davis and Grace Ryder in September 2014, North Projects is an artist-run initiative operating out of a former house and courtyard at 201B Bealey Avenue. After concluding their 2014 exhibition schedule with Auckland artist and curator Eleanor Cooper's *Man with sword arrested*, North Projects has been running a summer residency programme and hosting a series of events by residents Cameron Ralston and Natalie Kittow until 13 March. Keep an eye on their website and Facebook page for more details: <http://northprojects.co.nz>.



Man with sword arrested. Installation view, 2014



Installation view of *Implicated and Immune*, showing Grant Lingard's *Swan song* (1995-6).

Implicated and Immune

In January Jenny Harper attended the opening of *Implicated and Immune* at Michael Lett in Auckland. The show takes its name from another one twenty-five years previous, which drew attention to AIDS and provided a way for artists to support the fight against the disease. Organised by Louis Johnson (now le Vaillant) it was shown in Fisher Art Gallery (now Te Tuhi) in Pakuranga, and included works by artists such as Richard Killeen, Fiona Clark and Julia Morison. As far as practicable, Lett has borrowed works shown in the original exhibition but in places newer, sympathetic and, in some cases, very moving pieces have been included.

The Gallery is always delighted to see our collection given some exposure in a curated context, perhaps especially now our own spaces are closed. And although the relative lack of climate control means we are usually unable to lend to exhibitions in commercial galleries, in this case good advanced notice meant we were able to make the loan happen.

Given the context and the nature of this exhibition, we lent *Swan song*, the last work made by Grant Lingard, who died from AIDS in Sydney in 1995. It was a gift to the Gallery from Lingard's partner, Trevor Fry, who was at the opening (as was artist Ruth Watson, who first approached us about the gift). We are reminded that, although AIDS is less in the news now, it remains a threat.

What Kind of BULLder Are You?

We know some of you may have been a little surprised by the recent PlaceMakers promotion around our favourite bull, *Chapman's Homer*. PlaceMakers Riccarton are on board with our mission to ensure good art gets to everyone—as well as 'bull-sitting' Michael Parekowhai's great work, they ran a selfie competition this January, which saw hundreds of DIY enthusiasts taking their photo with *Chapman's Homer* and sharing it with their friends for the chance to win an amazing \$10,000 instore spending voucher. Here are ebullient winners, Rob and Francis Kay—we look forward to seeing their new deck.



The Gallery is on Instagram

In January we took another step into the murky world of social media and started our page on photo-blogging site Instagram. Follow us for an insight into what happens behind the scenes as we plan, design and install our reopening exhibition. [@chchartgallery](https://www.instagram.com/chchartgallery)

Christchurch Arts Leaders Forums Continue

Brown Bread and Christchurch City Council are continuing their quarterly Christchurch Arts Leaders Forums in 2015. These 'happy hour' events provide a casual platform for arts leaders in Christchurch to get together, share success stories, triumphs, hopes and challenges, and advocate for the arts to take a lead role in Christchurch's rebuild. Representatives from Christchurch City Council, CERA and Arts Voice Christchurch will update the arts community on their progress and plans, and individuals are also given the opportunity to speak about their institutions, projects and ideas. To date, the forums have featured talks from COCA, the Arts Centre, Free Theatre Christchurch, Christchurch Art Gallery and the Body Festival, among many others.



Photo: NayHaus

Art Bites Back for a Limited Time Only

Art Bites are back for 2015, and running through to the end of May at our Tuam Street exhibition space.

Presented by our friendly and informative volunteer guides, these thirty-minute lunchtime presentations help you to re-unite with old favourites and discover new favourites. Because we can't access our collection we need to use digital reproductions, but these short talks are a fantastic chance to learn more about the works and how they came to be in our collection, and to understand more about the artists who made them.

Art Bites take place fortnightly on Fridays at 12.30pm, and are repeated the following Sunday. In May we'll double the offering, with weekly Art Bites until 24 May. Check out our website for more information, or pick up a flier from 209 Tuam Street.

Public Programme

Film:

Benson and Hedges Fashion Design Awards 1986

Padded shoulders, geometric prints and garish colours—relive the 1980s through the biggest fashion event of 1986. Maysie Bestall-Cohen and Bob Parker host this GOFTA award-winning show. Former Miss Universe, Lorraine Downes is a guest presenter and the line-up of models include a teenage Rachael Hunter and future television presenter, Hilary Timmins.

6pm / 4 March / Alice Cinematheque / free
77 mins

Guest Speaker:

Russell Brown—Legacy of Strange

In 1980, there were record shops on either side of Cathedral Square: The Record Factory at 719 Colombo Street and the EMI Shop at 731. Somewhere between them, there emerged a music scene whose influence echoes even now. Russell Brown, media commentator, blogger and television presenter, looks at the birth of Flying Nun Records in a city whose music has always been stranger than the rest. The music, the media, the places to play.

6pm / 11 March / CPIT, DL Theatre, Madras Street / free

1980s Quiz Night

Get ready for a night of fun remembering the 1980s with quiz master (aka Gallery librarian) Tim Jones. Think music, movies, current affairs and fashion; even a bit of art. Teams of four can be formed on the night or created in advance. Great prizes. Bookings essential.

7.30pm / 18 March / Elevate Bar and Function Centre, 2 Colombo Street, Cashmere / \$10 (first drink free)

Film:

Easter in Art

This illuminating film explores the different ways artists as diverse as Rembrandt and Chris Ofili have depicted the betrayal, crucifixion and resurrection of the Easter story through the ages. Presented by Tim Marlow.

6pm / 1 April / Alice Cinematheque / free
73 mins

Guest Speaker:

Richard Robinson—Beneath the Lens

Photojournalist Richard Robinson, formerly of the *New Zealand Herald* and the 2014 Canon Press Photographer of the Year, talks about capturing the country's biggest news and sports events. Away from the pressure of deadlines, he combines his love of photography with a passion for our oceans, and is known for his unique and haunting images of life below the waterline.

6pm / 15 April / 209 Tuam Street / free

Film:

Man with a Movie Camera

Dziga Vertov's 1929 film is considered one of the most innovative and influential films of the silent era. Startlingly modern, this film utilises a groundbreaking style of rapid editing and incorporates innumerable other cinematic effects to create a work of amazing power and energy. In 2014 *Sight and Sound* named the film the best documentary of all time.

6pm / 6 May / Alice Cinematheque / free
68 mins

Guest Speaker:

An Evening with Arts Laureate Stuart Devenie

A leading light of theatre in New Zealand, Stuart Devenie relives some of the finest moments of his time as an actor and associate director of the Court Theatre in the 1980s.

7pm / 18 May / WEA, 59 Gloucester Street / free

School Holiday Programme

Weaving a Watercolour

Children will have fun exploring the colour wheel and playing with watercolours to create a gorgeous woven abstract painting.

All materials supplied. Suitable for ages 5+

10.30–11.30am / 8–17 April / weekdays only / WEA
59 Gloucester Street / \$8

PAGEWORK no. 25

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.

In a playfully democratic process that layers up the real and the illusionary, Tjalling de Vries juxtaposes seemingly incidental leftovers from the business of painting—masking-tape stubs, colour strips, cloud-like varnish spills—with other unexpected motifs. Comic-book explosions, graffiti, smudges, creases and pencil marks with restless, glancing trajectories are reclaimed and repurposed with enigmatic humour. In *Dead Head* (2014), purchased recently by the Gallery, he swapped out his usual linen support for one made from transparent polyethylene, allowing the view of the wooden stretcher behind to dominate the composition and disrupting the comfortable conspiracy of painting's fourth dimension. De Vries's pagework for

this issue takes similar liberties, quietly recalibrating expectations and generating new possibilities; encouraging us to look more closely at what we think we see.

Felicity Milburn
Curator

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

Tjalling de Vries *Vakwerkstuk* 2015

TOGETHER

WE'RE ON A MISSION

If you share our obsession with art, artists and the power of art—and if you believe that art makes a difference—let's get together.

We *need* to represent this time, support the creative community and strengthen the national significance of Christchurch's art collection.

Christchurch Art Gallery expects to be open at the end of this year, and we want you there from the start.

**CHRISTCHURCH
ART GALLERY
FOUNDATION**

If you want to know more visit
christchurchartgallery.org.nz/together or
email together@christchurchartgallery.org.nz





MAKING GOOD PRINTING GREAT

30 BIRMINGHAM DRIVE CHRISTCHURCH

PHONE: 03 943 4523

The Gallery is currently closed to the public.
Our off-site exhibition space is upstairs at
209 Tuam Street.

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