Content.

A MAGAZINE BY ART+OBJECT
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The exterior of the Len Lye Centre, New Plymouth, July 2015. Photograph by Patrick Reynolds.

Content.03

Welcome to the third issue of CONTENT by ART+OBJECT. This edition celebrates the vital role played by collectors and collections in shaping our visual arts discourse. In 2011 the Christchurch earthquake shattered the city and forced the closure of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu. Thankfully the gallery is now about to re-open – *Content* interviewed Director Jenny Harper who explains that soon there will be cause to celebrate an important new chapter for the gallery and how adversity has been the catalyst for some new thinking.

In recent years CONTENT has travelled the world to revel in the impact our artists are making on the international scene. This volume is focused closer to home as we take the pulse of Aotearoa New Zealand in 2015. Our journey takes us to Hamilton, Christchurch, New Plymouth and Whanganui to witness the art of our time being expressed in the homes, public galleries and schools of the country.

ART+OBJECT was founded by collectors for collectors. This issue of CONTENT reveals just what a unique group they are – from individual collectors to public gallery curators and directors, all dedicated to supporting and understanding an increasingly complex and exciting contemporary scene.

On these opening pages is illustrated one of the most significant international acquisitions of New Zealand art in recent times. Colin McCahon's *Teaching aids 2 (July)* is now installed at the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Colin McCahon
Teaching aids 2 (July) 1975
synthetic polymer paint on paper
10 panels: each sheet 109.2 x 72.8 cm
Art Gallery of New South Wales
Foundation Purchase 2014

Photo: Jenni Carter/AGNSW

"This Kiwi masterpiece has just been acquired by the AGNSW Foundation, the latest in a history of ambitious purchases that includes modern masters like Twombly, Giacometti, Bonnard, Kiefer and Philip Guston."

— Justin Paton Head Curator of International Art (AGNSW)

A New Temple

New Plymouth's Govett-Brewster Gallery has a proud history as a pioneering contemporary art institution. In July of this year the gallery was reborn with the addition of the mesmerizing Len Lye Centre designed by Patterson Associates. *Content* visited the gallery and spoke with new director Simon Rees on the eve of the gallery opening. Photographs by Patrick Reynolds, Keith Allum and Glenn Jeffrey.

Content: You are a New Zealander of course and you were previously at the Govett-Brewster, so your role here is very much a homecoming . Tell us what you have been doing in the intervening decade?

Simon Rees: In 2003 I had the opportunity to go to IASPIS in Stockholm which is best known as a famous international artist residency. Daniel Birnbaum who was director at that time decided to add curatorial residencies to his program. I was the second curator in residence. I was invited when at Artspace Sydney but travelled from my job at the Govett-Brewster. My hope and dream, when I got to Sweden and on my travels in Europe, was that I would meet a director nice enough to offer me a job and fortunately that is what happened at the CAC in Vilnius, Lithuania. So whilst Vilnius and Lithuania, from a New Zealand perspective remain unknown quantities, the CAC is a powerhouse institution within Europe amongst non-collection based spaces. Because of the vision of the director there and the artist Deimantas Narkevicius , who worked as a curator there and because of the rising influence of Raimundas Malasauskas, who is now one of the world's superstar curators and then my addition we had this team doing multiple events to make the CAC a hot zone for contemporary art.

Content you give a few examples of projects you were involved in?

SR: In Vilnius I published a magazine called CAC Interview. I launched a series of monthly CAC café talks which have become synonymous with Vilnius in an influential salon style speaking experience, now copied all over Europe.

Content: Who were some of the speakers in the interview series?

SR: You know the far north of Europe is very cold and lectures in the great big spaces, because CAC is cavernous, meant you would be huddled with fifty chairs at one end of the room . Then add the complications of language which meant sometimes a lecturer would speak, no one would ask any questions and then run from the room. So you'd get some really famous people wondering what they had done wrong. They had flown all this way for no engagement. So I said to the director "Why don't we do these talks in the café." We served food and drink. The speaker would sit on the bar or a bar stool, we would set up a TV on the bar if required. It was all more conversational. I could pick up a second microphone and we would have questions back and forth. It got up and running and really took off.

We had all sorts of people: Michael Kimmelman from *The New York Times* who was the European Affairs editor at that time but also one of the art critics. He is now the Cultural Affairs editor back in New York. Then we hosted Germaine Greer and Jan Utzon, the architect of the Sydney Opera House. Then I think it was Bernard Blistene, director of the Centre Pompidou. Sometimes the talk would relate to the exhibitions of that time or sometimes a writer who had just released a book. We also hosted Matthew Slotover, *frieze* publisher and Barry Schwabsky, critic and International Reviews editor of *Art Forum*. The program was all about internationalising conversations.

Content: And your next step in Europe?

SR: From the CAC I moved to Austria where I was head of programming and development at the MAK, which is the Austrian Museum of Applied Arts and Contemporary Art. I had a brief which included architecture and design in all its facets which included ceramics, glassware and furniture.

Content: I am guessing in your time at the MAK you would have seen contemporary artists engaging with applied arts. It seems to have happened overnight. In New Zealand we think of Francis Upritchard and artists such Isobel Thom and Kate Newby of course. But it has become one of the defining moments of the 21st century – this evaporation of the barriers between contemporary art conceptual thinking and applied arts. You must have been right in the middle of that conversation?

SR: Yes I was. At the MAK I launched a series called, in German Sicht Wechsel which in English translates into 'New Look' which was all about young artists responding to the collection. The first artist was Benjamin Hirte who has gone onto much bigger things. In fact all four artists we started the series with are currently in the New Museum New York's new artist triennial at the moment. That is quite gratifying. There was an article by Dominikus Mueller, the co-editor of *frieze d/e* which identified my work as a key connector within this dialogue. This is natural as Vienna is the home of the Secessionist movement and all of this work is contained in the MAK collection.

Content: So here we are and the new Govett-Brewster and of course the incredible Len Lye Centre is about to open. Can you tell us about your journey to return to New Plymouth?

SR: I've been back in New Zealand for just over twelve months. At the Venice Biennale in 2013, a group of New Zealanders sat me down over dinner and told me about the opportunity that was about to arise at the Govett-Brewster and they suggested to me that this would be a good time to return to New Zealand. I listened of course and here I am. At that time I had been away for more than ten years so New Zealand was not on my radar. But your first directorship is your first directorship. Plus doing it in your own language and in a context that you know at an institution that I was dedicated to spiritually seemed to me a perfect position from which to work positively for New Zealand art and artists and engage with the long term vision of the Govett-Brewster.

Content: The pictures tell the story of course. Can we talk about some of the logistics and raw numbers of what I am anticipating many *Content* readers will be experiencing in the flesh in the near future? The physical nature of the buildings.

SR: That is an interesting question which I'll get to in just a minute but the impact of a building now in the art space is a very interesting concept. One of my final curated exhibitions at the MAK in 2013 was entitled *Envisioning*

Simon Rees with Len Lye's *Four Fountains* in the Large Works gallery.

Buildings: Architecture Reflected in Contemporary Art Photography. One of the things that exhibition acknowledged was that architecture circulates in photos more than people visit the actual buildings. So the success of a building can be measured by its circulation. There is a sense that the architecture here engages in this wider discourse. You know getting to New Plymouth for someone sitting in Uruguay or Cape Town is pretty difficult so maybe it is only ever going to register with them via a photo, but it will register and that is a good thing.

But to answer the original question the overall footprint of the building is about three times larger than the previous Govett-Brewster. This project has required the demolition of a former wing of the Govett-Brewster which opened in the late 1990s. So some space was removed to add more. The Large Works space created for large Len Lye sculptures is important as the tallest gallery space in New Zealand with a ceiling height of nearly ten metres. The principal new gallery space in the Len Lye centre is over 340m^2 with a 6.8 metre ceiling height. All up the new footprint is about 2300m2. It is what I would call a cathedral experience but like many new gallery spaces some of these will be quite challenging for the installation of art.

Content: And then there is the cinema

SR: This is a real addition. It is a 62 seat cinema which is fully kitted out for high end cinema projection. So we will be able to work with the cinema industry as well as art films... and Len Lye moving image works as well of course.

Content: Len Lye holds a unique position within the New Zealand art historical story. Our great artists within the canon tell New Zealand stories but Len Lye sits outside a New Zealand narrative. We can discuss how we feel New Zealand may inform his work but really he is located in an international context. Plus of course we do not get to see much kinetic art. It is a bit like the Greenland shark: the stuff of legend. It must be very exciting for you to anticipate seeing Len Lye's works installed in this incredible exhibition space. I think this is the time to acknowledge the role of John Matthews here and his relationship with Len Lye.

SR: The connection with Len Lye the man was woven through a set of personal relationships with John Matthews which started in New York in the 1970s where Len Lye lived. John Matthews visited him there, as did Max Gimblett, Roger Horrocks, Wystan Curnow and Evan Webb, who all lived in the United States as post-grads. They all became Len Lye Foundation members. His coming to New Plymouth and the Govett-Brewster was via an invitation of educator and director Ray Thorburn and enabled by John Matthews, the young engineer whose family engineering company was able to realise the technical aspects of Len's sculptures and through John's beneficence continues to do so to this day. Engineering support from Evan Webb, Stuart Robb and a team of engineers at the University of Canterbury is also under the patronage of John Matthews which realises Len's work for the foundation.

Content: So when you visit the Len Lye Centre you are

Leonard Charles Huia ‘Len’ Lye (1901–1980)

Len Lye was a pioneering artist across film, sculpture, photography and painting. In almost every case his approach varied from the traditional: his sculptures ‘dance’ and his films are frequently made without a camera. Lye’s relationship with the Govett-Brewster was formalised shortly before his death in 1980 with the establishment of the Len Lye Foundation which facilitated the return of his work to New Zealand. His collection includes kinetic sculptures, photograms, rare books, paintings, dozens of films, hundreds of audio tapes and thousands of slides. An inventory of the Len Lye Collection and Archive totals some 18 000 items.

Lye spent the bulk of his life overseas, Sydney in the 1920s, London from the 1920s and living in New York from the early 1950s. Internationally his work is held in the collections of the Art Institute of Chicago; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York and the Berkeley Art Museum, California. Exhibitions of his work have been shown at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; the Centre Pompidou, Paris and Ikon Gallery, Birmingham.

Above: Len Lye in studio 1958 unknown photographer Courtesy Len Lye Foundation Collection Govett-Brewster Art Gallery.

Right: Len Lye, *Universe* and photograms.
Photo Glenn Jeffrey.

“The most exhilarating show of 20th-century art to be seen in this country right now is by the New Zealand artist Len Lye. To describe his works as energetic would be true, but insufficient. Everything Lye created – from the pioneering films made without the use of cameras to the fabulously cool kinetic sculptures that sashay and vibrate to their own self-made music – is by all accounts a direct reflection of the man himself: great dancer, sprightly poet, free spirit.”

— English art critic Laura Cumming writing in the *Observer*, December 2010 on the occasion of the exhibition *Len Lye: The Body Electric* at the Ikon Gallery, Birmingham.

A Len Lye Reader

Andrew Bogle, Gerhard Brauer & Roger Horrocks, *Len Lye A Personal Mythology*, Auckland City Art Gallery exhibition catalogue, 1980

Roger Horrocks, *Len Lye: a Biography*, Auckland University Press, 2001

Roger Horrocks, *Art that Moves: The Work of Len Lye*, Auckland University Press, 2009

Roger Horrocks, *Zizz! The life and art of Len Lye, in his own words*, Awa Press, Wellington, 2015

At the opening night of the Len Lye Centre, July 2015, from left: John Matthews Anthony Wilson and Mark Bruhn.

Opening night in the Todd Energy Foyer.

going to see his kinetic sculptures at scale in a purpose built gallery?

SR: You will see all the old favourites, many of which have been restored and or improved with new engineering in their motor actions so they will last longer and play more reliably. There will also be a series of large works which only existed in Len's lifetime as drawings or maquettes which is pretty exciting. There is a testing process around these put in place by the foundation. They have to have existed in documented form or there has to be a certain number of drawings or sketches. There has to have been the potential that they existed. We have film footage or photos of Len experimenting – it is not as if a new Len Lye has just 'appeared'. The foundation applies itself very rigorously before any sculpture is released.

Content: That is very much at the heart of the role of the artist and Len Lye in particular. In 2015 the technology now exists to produce these works that were conceived at a time when technologically they might not have been possible. But thirty five years later the engineering capability has caught up with the artist and they can be realised. Hopefully Len Lye is looking down from somewhere and saying "Finally there it is!"

SR: Too true. Len Lye was one of the great innovators of the world. The fact that it was an artist who was able to come up with such brilliant applications of engineering and the physical sciences reveals he was a visionary thinker who could predict the future. We have so much material recorded on tape or in sketchbooks for posterity. We really have to acknowledge him as a thinker equivalent to a figure like Professor Tim Berners-Lee. Imagine when Berners-Lee first thought of the internet, it was designed so scientists could work in parallel in real time and compare notes in different cities around the world. Think about how that relatively closed application is now available on hand held devices. Len thought on a similar future scale.

Content: The gallery is about to open. This is a great opportunity for you, for New Plymouth as a city. What are some of your hopes and dreams for the Govett-Brewster and the Len Lye Centre. What are we going to see in the future?

SR: On a practical level an important thing that the full refurbishment of the Govett-Brewster in conjunction with the new Len Lye Centre has enabled is loans of works from major institutions abroad. Previously the Govett-Brewster did not have the climate control and security conditions to work with major loans. Because of Len's permanent presence here which puts the contemporary in contact with the modern we can contextualise the contemporary with the modern much more. Working with our colleagues at MOMA, Centre Pompidou, the Art Institute of Chicago, Berkeley Art Museum and so on, we can reach deep into their collections to give a new view onto 20th century modernism from a New Zealand perspective.

Content: That connects the Govett-Brewster to its foundation vision?

SR: That is important here. Not too many plastic examples of modern masters have travelled to New Zealand. Nor are many held in collections here. We know how influential Henry Moore exhibition was at the Auckland Art Gallery in the 1950s and the impact of the Monet exhibition in the 1980s.

Content: Queues around the block!

SR: I was in those queues! Otherwise we have been underexposed. Te Papa has works by Goncharova for example, that early moment of early Russian modernity, but they are few and far between. So one of the things we are doing in the opening hang is including some Gaudier-Brzeska drawings. Gaudier-Brzeska who was part of the London Group and worked in London in the decade before Lye, who knew his work so there is a connect. The third exhibition which will operate between both houses simultaneously is entitled *Emanations: the Art of Cameraless Photography*.


Seresin
SAUVIGNON BLANC
MARLBOROUGH
NEW ZEALAND

That will be one-third historic, one-third modern and one-third contemporary. This will be the first time all fifty nine odd of Len Lye's shadowgraphs will be hung at once. The show will also include Man Ray, Lazlo Moholy-Nagy but also going back to Fox-Talbot and Felix Nadar and copper pressplate works. It turns out that there are exemplary collections at the Auckland War Memorial Museum, Te Papa, National Library, National Gallery of Australia, The National Gallery of Victoria and the Art Gallery of New South Wales of the early modern and the modern which to a great extent have never been shown. Professor Geoffrey Batchen of Victoria University who is curating this exhibition knows this work and is bringing it to light.

Content: This is a field of dreams moment for the Govett-Brewster. Do you look to other galleries such as MONA in Hobart or the Guggenheim Bilbao, where they are not a main centre, but where the art component of that city has become a major cultural tourism attraction. Is that a hope and dream for New Plymouth?

SR: Yes that is very much the goal for the Len Lye Centre. And we made that explicit when we bought one of the curators from MONA, Jarrod Rawlins out to New Zealand for a speaking tour in Auckland, Wellington and New Plymouth. We wanted to make that connection explicit and public, suggesting that we might be able to harness that type of energy for the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery and Taranaki.

Just before the opening of the Len Lye Centre in late July 2015, *Content* also spoke to architect Andrew Patterson on his inspiration for what he describes as a temple for art.

Content: It is such a radical building. On first sight you really do have an sharp intake of breath. What is the conceptual underpinning for the design of the Len Lye Centre?

Andrew Patterson: The building is a response to Len Lye's philosophy. Not particularly to any one thing but more his overriding philosophy that great art and great architecture go together 50/50. Lye thought that each piece of art is an identity and I like his ideas on a temple setting for art. There is that processional homage or route if you like, then you start to find the god in the space. That is what is a temple is all about, that an inanimate object starts to take on an identity. That is similar to Maoridom where the wharenui has an identity, the mountain has an identity, the river and so on. If you create a presence for the building and the art that inhabits the building, this takes on a presence for the viewer. That was the goal we set ourselves. We did that not by using a standard classical temple design process but by a systems approach. So rather than creating aesthetic patterns we tried to create thought patterns.

For example the stainless steel façade is designed as a showcase for the stainless steel industry in Taranaki which is a really innovative, mature industry care of the dairy and oil and gas industries. As well, coming at it from a different direction, it is all about light and coming at it from another direction Len Lye's sculptural material in his later years was stainless steel. All of those are notions which together they tell a story of why Len Lye ended up in New Plymouth. Because he ended up there for the same reason as the stainless steel industry started. If you like it is their local stone down there. If you put all those concepts together as a kind of pattern of environment they tell a story. It has a sense of theatre about it.

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A Canterbury Tale

In February 2011 a major earthquake changed life in Christchurch forever. There were many casualties and irreparable damage. The insidious effects of liquefaction meant everyone was affected. The Christchurch Art Gallery was forced to close for substantial underground and internal repairs. After nearly five years this process is nearing completion and the gallery can look forward to getting back to business. *Content* spoke to director Jenny Harper about both the hardships and the new sense of optimism that pervades the gallery as it prepares to open its doors again after such a long time closed. Photographs by John Collie.

Content: The gallery has been closed for almost five years now. This is a time to think about celebrating the gallery re-opening. How is the Christchurch Art Gallery planning to re-embrace its public in terms of an opening exhibition?

Jenny Harper: Five years is a long time for any city's gallery to remain closed, but when we reopen, we're really going to engage our public with our collections. Partly, it's pragmatism because the timing of our reopening remains somewhat fluid. But, most importantly, it's because the collection will have been unseen for almost five years and we know how much people are missing it. So, we'll be proudly presenting the collection upstairs and down, taking all the spaces we have for it. We have never done that before.

We plan to open just before Christmas and we're preparing for a Summer of Art to follow in the forecourt and foyer. There will be a range of performances, music and events for all ages across this whole period. Both the Gallery and our forecourt will be active spaces – with a children's art trail. Christchurch Art Gallery has a reputation for generating good children's programmes that don't talk down to 'kids of all ages', as I like to call them. We are planning to embrace the social function of the gallery better. We'll have Wi-Fi throughout helping to make more information directly available to visitors.

Content: In the context of everything that has happened, is there a particular work that feels deeply important to you and by definition the people of Christchurch? A talisman work, if you like?

JH: I find that a hard question because I love the collection, and its varying strands as a whole. There are some obvious long-term favourites, like Petrus van der Velden's *Dutch Funeral* which people in Christchurch have grown up seeing each time they come to the Gallery. Personally, I'm most interested in the new works we're integrating into the opening shows, those which we've been able to acquire since our closure.

Content: That sounds quite exciting. What are some of the notable new works?

JH: I'm especially looking forward to showing a 1952 painting by McCahon, *There is only one direction…* It is a portrait of Mary and the child Jesus looking boldly out at the viewer; and the written statement will resonate like a mantra for us in Christchurch. It is one of two works, acquired over the last four years which McCahon made when he and his family lived in Phillipstown, Christchurch. Both show how extraordinarily adventurous and abstract he was, at the time relative to his peers. *There is only one direction* was given by McCahon to James K. Baxter's daughter when the McCahons became her godparents. We acquired it from the Jacquie Baxter Estate.

Content: This must have been a very difficult five year period for the gallery and for you as Director. How has the gallery kept its flag flying over the last five years and how have you kept your spirits up in this period?

JH: During the first year we imagined we would re-open three times and we planned three opening programmes. But then it was realised that the ground underneath had settled in a different formation, and this began affecting the building itself. Once we accepted it was going to take longer to renovate the building and prepare it for a stronger future life, we decided to concentrate our efforts in two areas: our website and our 'Outer Spaces' programme. We had been working on a few projects within the gallery's footprint, but we decided to go further afield, to expand ourselves out into the city. But, yes, it's so much simpler within your own area and spaces. Working in a place like this, you realise how contested transitional spaces are.

Content: Is there a particular highlight of this programme?

JH: The Wayne Youle wall in Sydenham was very timely and is a particular beauty. It has a great title, *I seem to have temporarily misplaced my sense of humour*. Gapfiller found the site and asked us to become involved. The wall was revealed when some 19th century brick shops fell down as a result of the earthquake. We'd been planning a Youle show in one of our re-opening programmes, but now we asked him to design a large wall. Every member of our staff participated in making this work, whether by cutting out stencils or painted the wall according to Wayne's design and we had a celebratory barbeque onsite with the local community. It is still up and has only had minimal tagging, although

this area is a bit crowded visually with other street art now.

Content: You've had to get outside the gallery to function as a gallery?

JH: That's right, we've become a Gallery Without Walls. Despite our closure, we've tried to keep art at the heart of Christchurch and to maintain the profile of the Gallery here and elsewhere. We've put videos in a disused building. We have rented three consecutive spaces to exhibit works. We organised Shane Cotton's exhibition and publication, *The Hanging Sky,* and sent that to the Institute of Modern Art in Brisbane during the 2013 Asia Pacific Triennial. It subsequently toured to Campbelltown in Sydney which has a large Maori and Pacific population, and to City Gallery Wellington. We were able to show a much smaller version of Cotton's work in one of our temporary spaces and we showed *Haymaker,* a piece we recently co-purchased with the Dunedin Public Art Gallery at the School of Fine Arts Gallery at UC.

I think our quarterly magazine *Bulletin* has also been very successful in keeping our profile up. In fact, when I travel to Australia colleagues seem surprised that we are still closed because of the vitality of the *Bulletin* which has become an important communication tool for us. In addition, every fortnight our staff write about a work from the Gallery's collection in *The Press*.

Within Christchurch, our education staff have continued to present programmes in schools. Just last weekend there was a feature on mask-making for Matariki in the paper. I've also make a point of frequently talking to local community groups. I've given about fourteen talks to various U3As and other groups over the last year. That is a good way of keeping us and art in front of people and keeping their interest in what we do. So, we have remained as active as we can.

Content: From a distance we see how hard the Christchurch Art Gallery is working. You have been dealt a challenge that no one could anticipate. Now as you are not too far from re-opening can you tell *Content* readers about some of the things that you have done to keep your spirits up to lead your team?

JH: Sometimes I can't imagine how we have kept our spirits up. It wasn't easy laying off a number of staff once we realised we weren't going to open as quickly as we'd thought initially. And there were a series of disappointments as time wore on. There are so many unpredictable aspects of a repair project, compared to a new build. And, some staff still have their own housing issues unresolved.

But, if you decide to stay in Christchurch, as we have, you have – or have to develop – a strong sense of hope. We've talked together, perhaps realising how dependent we are on each other; we've kept a great management group which is really determined to see us reopen in style; and perhaps also we've celebrated the small things more. We've placed more emphasis on social get-togethers to keep the team intact. And there's a good buoyant spirit now as our work is oriented to reopening and we see gallery designs coming out and

"It is indescribably difficult being closed, it is not a natural state. It's also been hard to work through the repairs and learn the language of project managers, engineers and architects."

— Jenny Harper, Director of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu

blown up images for our forthcoming collections book.

Content: Looking over the last five years, have there been any wins for the Gallery or is it just slog?

JH: It is indescribably difficult being closed, it is not a natural state.

It's also been hard to work through the repairs and learn the language of project managers, engineers and architects. We have had to move the collection twice within the gallery to accommodate a demolition next door, but were then able to repair storage areas in advance of moving them back. On the other hand, we know now we have good systems and we've managed to fit more into our storage spaces. I think when we open again people will be amazed and surprised at what we have got and how much we enjoy showing it. What I've missed most is seeing people in the gallery, that sense of people coming and being there all day.

Content: Five years is a long time in the contemporary art world. What are some of the things you are looking forward to engaging with in terms of contemporary art when the gallery re-opens?

JH: We are not specifically a gallery of contemporary art, but of course much of what we have continued to collect is contemporary work and some will be on display in the first show. We will begin to re-assess our connection to the contemporary after the first six months of the opening show and expect to be showing a Fiona Pardington exhibition being organised by City Gallery Wellington (and we have a couple of surprises in store as well)! In the meantime, we have been developing our 'Together' endowment fund with the Gallery's Foundation. And, we are seeking to buy five major works to mark this time in a positive way. These will all be major and we started well with Michael Parekowhai's *Chapman's Homer* purchased literally by the citizens of Christchurch with more than 1074 individual donors and 14 Leaders of the Charge, as we called them, helping us to make that initial purchase. We have bought Bill Culbert's *Bebop* from the 2013 Venice Biennale; it will soar above our white marble staircase and look magnificent. We already have a Rose Nolan painting on the back of our gallery building, at least until someone builds next door again. And we're looking to present an important Martin Creed at our Foundation dinner in September! An Antony Gormley work for Christchurch is to be launched at the SCAPE Biennale shortly after. And, of course, CoCA – with Paula Orrell, a new UK director and almost next door to us – is due to reopen again at the end of this year. Worcester Boulevard and what we used to term the Cultural Precinct is becoming quite international! More importantly, we're working together to make the best of what we've been missing for some time now.

Colin McCahon, *There is only one direction*, 1952, oil on hardboard, 810 x 670 mm. N Barrett Bequest Collection, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu. Purchased, 2011. Purchase supported by Christchurch City Council's Challenge Grant to Christchurch Art Gallery Foundation. Image reproduced courtesy of the Colin McCahon Research Trust.

Content: This may be a strange question to conclude with but I think it would be interesting to know just what works have been undertaken at the Gallery as a consequence of the earthquake.

JH: The gallery building was structurally sound and withstood the earthquake very well. But the ground underneath liquefied at the time of the earthquake and then it settled in a different formation. About twelve months later we began to notice that the building itself had settled unevenly. Some floors began to crack, that sort of thing. That's when we realised we had to remediate the ground under the building before the base isolation we were planning. That was a very interesting process in engineering terms with the building 100% level now. At the moment we are retro-fitting base isolation. A lot of buildings in Wellington have had to address this. Te Papa had this done from the beginning. The old Parliament buildings and a number of others have had base isolation retro-fitted. In Christchurch, the Women's Hospital was the only building fitted with base isolation prior to the earthquake.

I recognise it will take time, but it's important for our continued vibrancy that we can prove to international colleagues that this gallery has a gold-plated engineering certificate, that it is no more dangerous lending to us than to the Getty or the San Francisco Museum of Art or any others on the Pacific Rim.

For more information on the Christchurch Art Gallery Foundation log onto http://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/support/foundation/

TIMELESS TAILORING

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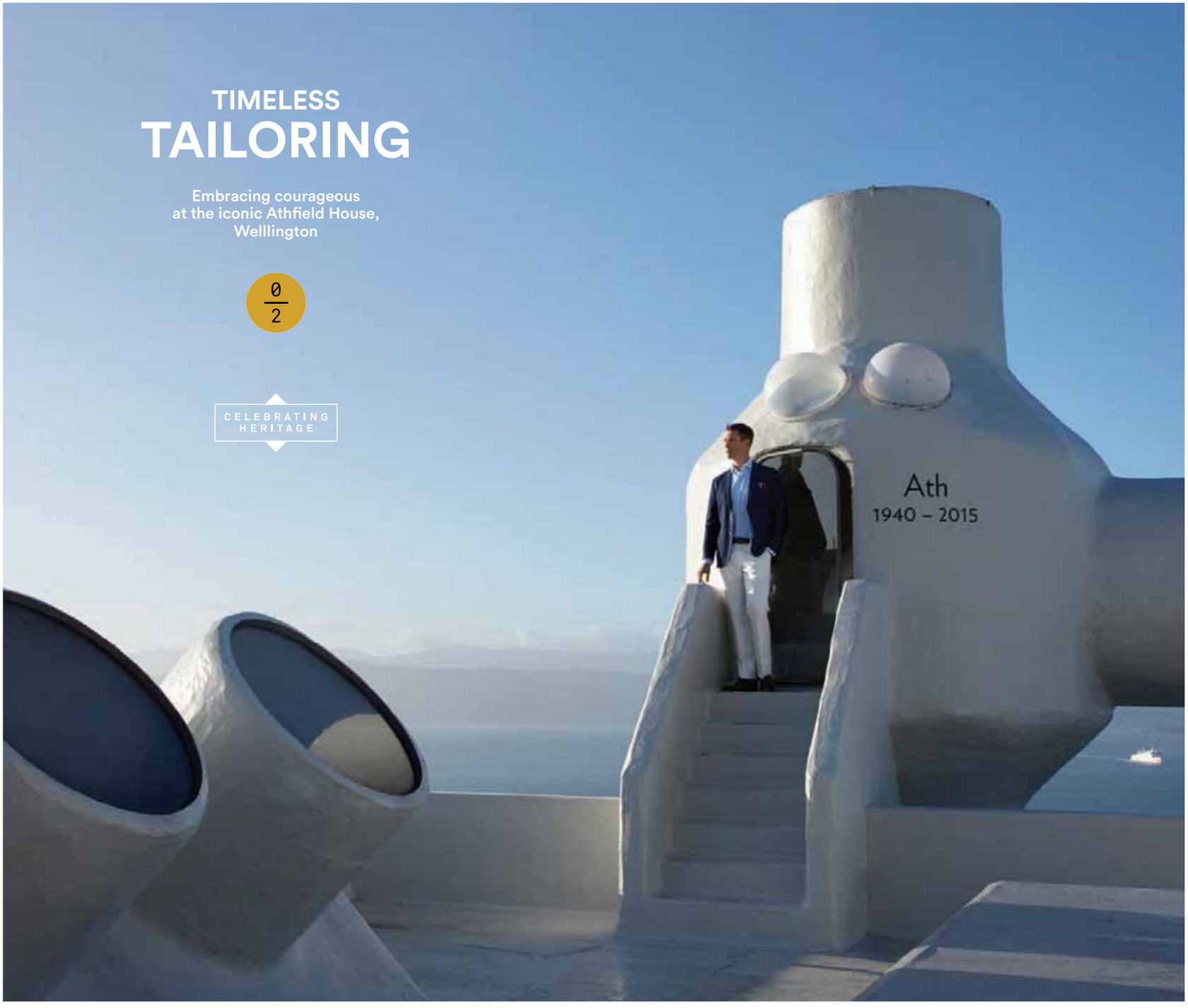

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2015/16

In the Quotidian

Photograph by Anton Mogridge

Content meets artist Oliver Perkins, who has recently relocated to Christchurch, to understand how artists are adapting to the 'new' city.

Content: Artists in post-quake Chch have had to improvise to find working studio space – how have you adapted?

Oliver Perkins: I wasn't living in Christchurch at the time of the quake, so I haven't had to go through the trauma and adapt. I can't imagine the upheaval of such a disaster; I have friends who lost a lifetime's work. For me, it was more a case of coming back to a very different city and adapting to the change. Most buildings were still being demolished when we returned last year. I had this naive idea that all the derelict spaces would make for cheap studios. Uninhabited buildings are usually awaiting demolition and it's very hard to find art specific studio spaces, although just recently I have heard of a few becoming available. We also returned last year with a four-month-old baby so it was 'adaptation' on all fronts. I am lucky that the flat we live in has a garage that has been converted into a studio. This is my day-to-day studio, the whole flat is set up like a live/work space, overflow from the studio ends up in the living room, bedroom etc. When I'm working on a larger scale I use my father's woolshed, which is on the way out towards Oxford.

Content: Your work sits within both an ongoing and a 'new' conversation with abstraction. Tell us about some of the artists that inform your work and how you respond? I see echoes of Victor Passmore, Albers and Don Peebles.

OP: Painting is an activity that talks directly to its own history. Abstraction as a sub-category has a relatively short but layered past. So any painting is part of this conversation, they are all encoded to a relative history. Painting can adapt to 'new media' and the virtual but always needs a route back to the material or historical as a kind of marker. I see my own work as an unfolding constellation of references encoded within a visual language that is part formal intent and part material process.

Some of my early inspirations as a kid came from visiting the Robert McDougall on Sundays with my Dad and seeing the Van der Veldens, Suttons, Woollastons, Peebles and the occasional Driver, Hotere, or Walters. This was an important place for me growing up and I can still smell it. It's sad seeing it now, it looks structurally fine and it would be amazing to see it back. It could be operated as a kind of Canterbury Kunsthalle! Seeing the McCahon exhibition at Auckland Art Gallery when I was fifteen, that was a big deal so was going to the National Gallery in London at 16 and seeing Manet. I studied art history at school and university before completing my undergrad so the position of Chelsea next door to the Tate Britain was incredible. It was great being able to revisit works so easily. The Salon hung rooms of Pre-Raphaelites to the British Modernists; Hoyland, Law, Joseph, Passmore as well as Nicholson and everyone in between including St Ives painters such as Lanyon. The YBA's, Carl Andre, Schwitters, Hoch, Frankenthaler, Agnes Martin...so many. It's an ever increasing list that inspires and possibly informs but my paintings are sometimes equally informed by quotidian observations.

Content: Tell us a little about your working day in the studio – the job of being an artist.

OP: I'm with Frida, our daughter, until midday when she goes to daycare. So my day is a lot more structured now that it once was. She might have a morning sleep, which is when I work out what I need to do that day. After I drop her off I have the afternoon and early evening in the studio. Much of this is procedural; making stretchers, sizing canvas, making colours, unpicking canvas etc. I'll often make scale drawings of the forms I'm looking to work with. The business end of a painting then arrives in its own time.

Saying that, I do draw a lot, quick sketches that act as lists or notes. As I approach completion on a painting each move gets more acute and once a work is finished then I'll usually spend some time with it.

Content: There must have been quite a lot of movement of artists in and out of Christchurch in recent years. How do you and other artists maintain your relationships within this flux and closure of so many venues?

OP: I was part of High Street Project before I left and keep in touch with most of the other artists involved. A few are slowly returning but everyone left, it seems everyone that was flexible to leave did. I think Jonathan Smart was the only dealer gallery that continued. There have been artist run projects: Dog Park previously and now North Projects, Physics Room is back in the original building and COCA is reopening with a new director/curator and seems to be taking a more updated direction as a centre of contemporary art.

Content: You work and exhibit in both London, Auckland and Christchurch. Does the nature of the upheaval in Christchurch provide any new entry points into thinking about your work?

OP: Living in a giant construction site like Christchurch offers up so many building methods. I've always been interested in and photographed architecture in its lowest forms, like the doorstop someone makes out of two pieces of wood to keep a door ajar. I like the rudimentary problem solving; some of the construction methods have maybe inspired certain structures in my work. Colour is also something I bring into the studio from outside, I will often take notes or photographs of colour relationships that interest me, the colours are an index of place in some respect. I'm equally informed by these everyday observations as I am by art history. My studio is often a mess of various parts until something is found that holds my attention or reveals a pertinent narrative. The constructed logic of my paintings allows me to view them from a distance, acting as hand rendered models for grander themes. I enjoy the porosity of the studio to allow the outside in, making the activity of painting a gesture that is not only inherent but an abstract documentation of time and place.

Oliver Perkins was born in 1979 and studied at Christchurch School of Art and Design (CPIT) from 1999-2002. In 2005 he was awarded the Tanz Scholarship, which saw him complete his MA at Chelsea College of Arts. Recent exhibitions include: *Dean Leavin/Oliver Perkins*, Rod Barton, London (2014); *When I paint my masterpiece*, Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland (2014). His work is held in various collections worldwide including Chartwell Collection/Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, University of the Arts Collection, London, Saatchi Gallery, London and Zabludowicz Collection, London.

Oliver is represented by Hopkinson Mossman, Auckland and Rod Barton, London.


AQUAMARINE

Simon Denny, Secret Power, Marco Polo Airport. Photo Paolo Monello.

Our Man in Venice

In 2015 New Zealand's presence at the Venice Biennale is stronger than ever. Simon Denny's exhibition *Secret Power* is installed across two locations in Venice: the arrivals hall at Marco Polo airport and within the venerable Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in Piazza San Marco. Attendance is strong, with an average of 6000 people viewing the exhibition each week. *Secret Power* is undoubtedly one of the big successes of this year's biennale, attracting an enthusiastic response from local and international media including *The Guardian* in the UK, *Wall Street Journal* and *The New Yorker*.

The subject matter of Denny's installations is contentious, documentation sourced by the infamous Edward Snowden exploring the mechanics of the Five Eyes surveillance project, coverage more often found on the front page as opposed to the arts page. Denny's unique response to the 'need to know' data and livery of 21st Century geo-politics carries the essential cut-through required for an exhibition to garner attention amongst the 89 exhibiting countries of the 56th Venice Biennale.

ART+OBJECT director Leigh Melville is a Biennale regular in her capacity as Chair, NZ at Venice Patrons. The patrons group has become a vital stakeholder in NZ at Venice, raising a significant chunk of the million dollar budget required to get to the starting line at what is often called the 'Olympics of the Art World.' *Content* spoke to her on the role of the Patrons and the reception to Denny's complex presentation that has been described as 'digital anthropology'.

Content: The Venice Patrons play a key role in advancing New Zealand art internationally. What can you tell us about them?

Leigh Melville: Over the past four Biennale the NZ patrons group has grown tenfold. We are fortunate to have a group of loyal supporters who have been there since 2001, however the number of patrons has mushroomed in recent years. They come from all over the country, Auckland, Wellington and a strong contingent from Christchurch. It's also an opportunity for New Zealanders based elsewhere in Europe, for whom it is easy to get to Venice. This May we had around 60 travelling patrons, as well as many who were not able to be there. Around half of this year's patrons were attending the Vernissage for the first time, a sign of the growth of the program. It tells me that the message is getting out there, collectors are responding and are keen to participate in what is a special event for New Zealand.

Content: Tell us about the Patrons experience. Obviously there is the Venice Biennale but there are other components I understand?

LM: We are continually refining our programme. It's important to keep it dynamic so that we get return visitors. This May we enjoyed a five day program which included a variety of daytime and evening events. We are fortunate to have a fabulous wine sponsor, Black Estate, which enables us to host cocktail evenings where patrons can enjoy some lovely New Zealand wine in a gorgeous Italian setting. What's not to like about that? One of our most popular evenings this year was held in the beautiful cloisters of the Museo di Sant' Apollonia, where NZ first exhibited in 2001 with Peter Robinson and Jacqueline Fraser. The patrons were also hosted by Simon Denny's art dealers to a party the famous Danielli Hotel – it was a fabulous occasion. But it's not just about the parties! Our program also included an architectural tour of key sites of Carlo Scarpa architecture in Venice, a guided tour of the Peggy Guggenheim Museum and we co-hosted an ANZAC event at the new Australian pavilion.

Simon Denny, *Secret Power*, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana. Photo Nick Ash.

Content: What does a patron do and what does it cost?

LM: The patrons group is a very inclusive and diverse group of individuals that has grown essentially via word-of-mouth. I host a variety of events in the campaign leading up to the Biennale, in NZ and Europe. Previous patrons are our most effective recruiters as everyone always has a great time! To be a patron we request a minimum tax deductible donation of $5000. In return you receive Vernissage passes to the Biennale, a copy of the exhibition catalogue and perhaps a small gift from the artist. However it's the less tangible things that I think patrons value most such as the wonderful experience of the Vernissage week, access to the artist and to curator's and their knowledge. Friendship also plays an important part. I have seen numerous friendships forged over art and a Bellini in magical Venice! To be honest, selling the patrons program is a bit like selling ice cream to Eskimoes. What is not to like about travelling to one of the most beautiful cities in the world with a group of like-minded souls and seeing some incredible art? This is the time to thank the founders of the Venice patrons, Dame Jenny Gibbs and Dayle Mace. They have been there from the beginning when a small group of twelve patrons first went to Venice to support et al. in 2005

Content: This is your fourth Venice Biennale. Can you tell me about some of the changes you have noticed over the last eight years?

LM: Yes, my fourth Biennale. It really is true when they say that Venice gets under your skin. Changes I have noticed include people – there seem to be more and more people attending the Vernissage. I have heard it said that the relevance of Venice is decreasing as art fairs develop in other parts of the world but I don't think that is true at all. Along with Basel, Venice remains truly relevant for showing the best of contemporary art.

Content: Once you visit Venice you understand the importance of location. Venice can be quite hard to navigate.

LM: That's correct. New Zealand was fortunate this year to secure a pavilion in a central location right on Piazza San Marco. So we weren't travelling small lanes and getting lost and the ease of the location means we are welcoming large numbers of visitors to the exhibition.

Content: There was controversy about Simon Denny's work in New Zealand in advance of the Biennale. What has been the New Zealand patrons response to the installation *Secret Power*? It is pretty contentious subject matter and it puts New Zealand right in the middle of a conversation that feels like a hot coal.

LM: Controversy aside, Simon Denny's work is always challenging, it's pretty tough stuff to get inside. But New Zealand has been so fortunate to have an artist who could not only could produce an amazing body of work, but is so generous and capable in discussing it. Time and time again I saw Simon talking to patrons, media, museum directors and other visitors to explain and share his thinking behind the project. It was satisfying for me to have patrons look at me and say, "I finally get it! I like it! I understand it!"

Content: And there were two locations as well?

LM: The Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana is a library and Renaissance

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Artwork: Chris Booth, *Te Waimate*,
Basalt stone, 6550mm x D450mm

building, one of the earliest surviving public manuscript depositories in Italy. It is almost a sacred space, the home of many historic documents and maps, but the salon is also home to major paintings by Veronese and others. It's ornate and classically Venetian but somehow Simon's very contemporary take on what's happening in the world, in terms of the 'Five Eyes' subject matter, felt very much at home here. The Marco Polo airport installation literally throws the library at the feet of visitors arriving in Venice. It is a subtle statement and Simon Denny is to be commended for his detailed planning and execution of that part of the exhibition.

Content: International media attention must be one of the measures of success for New Zealand's participation at Venice and I'm guessing it is a pretty important one. Has *Secret Power* raised the profile for a New Zealand artist at Venice?

LM: This is New Zealand's most successful outing to date in terms of meeting our objectives. We have had a series of successes at Venice over the years but Simon's show has put us in a very strong position to plan for the future.

Content: You work with Creative New Zealand and there must be a set of objectives that are tabled in advance and of course, just because we go this time does not guarantee we can go next time?

LM: Yes, but that's changing. I think New Zealand has to realise that this is a really important part of the arts calendar. Lithuania goes, Tuvalu goes! It's not just for the major nations and we need to get our heads around that. New Zealand's participation at Venice is becoming one of the most successful public/private partnerships that exists in our industry. You can measure the success of the exhibition by studying visitor numbers and media interest but also by opportunities for the artist to take his project further afield. Michael Parekowhai's 2011 exhibition travelled to the Quai Branly Museum in Paris. I am sure we will see similar outings in Europe for *Secret Power*.

Content: Let's talk about the next project in 2017. When do the Patrons and Creative New Zealand begin planning for the 57th Biennale? What is the cycle to get to the starting gate?

LM: We are already in planning mode for 2017 and have just announced the appointment of Alistair Carruthers as Commissioner. Creative New Zealand is calling for proposals from artists and curators with a very open mind about what the 2017 project may be. I really enjoy the planning that goes into this comprehensive project and look forward with huge anticipation to NZ at Venice 2017.

Simon Denny, *Secret Power* can be viewed online at www.nzatvenice.com

On view daily Tuesday to Sunday, 10am to 6pm at the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana (Monumental Rooms) Piazzeta San Marco, Venice and 24/7 at the Marco Polo Airport Arrivals Lounge.

The 56th Venice Biennale concludes on November 22, 2015, online at www.labiennale.org

Simon Denny in represented by Michael Lett, Auckland, Galerie Buchholz, Berlin & Cologne, Petzel Gallery, New York, and T293, Rome & Naples.

Above: New Zealand patrons enjoy a visit to the Punta della Dogana during the 2015 Venice Biennale. A+O Director and Chair, Patrons of the Venice Biennale, Leigh Melville at far right.

Séraphine Pick

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SÉRAPHINE PICK, *EASY LIVING*, 2015
COURTESY OF HAMISH McKAY GALLERY

Robin Morrison
Hamilton Hotel
1981
Cibachrome photographs
258 x 388 mm

Courtesy of Waikato Museum
Te Whare Taonga o Waikato.
Gifted by the Chartwell Trust.

Morrison Hotel

In the course of any given year A+O is commissioned to undertake a number of large scale public gallery valuation mandates. It was in the course of working away in the archive of the Waikato Museum Te Whare Taonga o Waikato that the A+O team uncovered a previously unpublished body of work by the photographer Robin Morrison (1944–1993).

The large-format, colour saturated cibachrome photographs document the final moments of the venerable old Hamilton Hotel before its early 80s rescue and rebirth as the first exhibiting gallery for the Chartwell Collection, The Centre for Contemporary Art.

Thirty five years after Robin Morrison stalked the halls of the dilapidated Hamilton Hotel, *Content* examines the context for these singular images and meets Chartwell founder Rob Gardiner to discuss his early ambitions for a collection that is now established as a major force in New Zealand's contemporary visual arts scene.

Robin Morrison is perhaps most well-known for a body of photographic work that enunciates a particular period of New Zealand social history. In the 1970s and 80s Morrison's anthropological eye fixed on the phenomenon of the past as it resonated, in many cases near forgotten, in what was then the present. Today that past is well and truly gone, but in suites such as *Ponsonby Calendar 1977*, *From the Road 1981* and *Images of a House 1978*, Morrison sought to capture the fading days of Empire in a New Zealand that was hitherto unrecorded, but by no means unloved. These images share a keening sense of lives lived without ostentation, sometimes on the edge, in country towns, secondhand shops and behind closed doors.

Morrison's images affect by revealing what loneliness looks like, in that spartan era before colour television. These are photographs that evince the frugal poetry of the hinterland, full of whispered memories and the ties that bind. They are images that illuminate that great opening line from the L.P. Hartley novel *The Go-Between*, "The past is a foreign country, they do things differently there."

Morrison, of course, was not the only photographer in this territory. In the 1970s William Eggleston and Stephen Shore were capturing the internal exiles who occupied the motels, bars and mobile homes of the American Midwest and South.

In New Zealand, Robin Morrison was the natural choice to document the abandoned Hamilton Hotel as it lay moribund before transformation into a circuit breaking artspace. There is something fitting also in that these images have remained, pristine yet unseen, within an art museum archive for some thirty four years and are published here for the first time. The very nature of these images, ravishing colour cibachromes, itself a now obsolete technology, magnifies their mystique and speaks to photography's unique ability to capture one moment in time, for all time.

In 1981 Robin Morrison captured the final moments of the Hamilton Hotel as it was and had been since 1923. There had been a hotel on the site since 1865, this incarnation having been erected in 1922 after a fire gutted and destroyed the former wooden hotel, a casualty of the blaze was the celebrated war artist Horace Moore-Jones. Until it fell into obsolescence in the mid 1970s the hotel had been a centre for Hamilton's social life, reaching its apogee in 1953 when Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Phillip stayed there during their coronation tour. The luxurious bathroom of their suite in all its faded yet still pink tiled glory is one of the images in the Morrison suite.

The thirteen photographs in the suite were a very rare commissioned body of work

for the Chartwell Collection. *Content* met founder Rob Gardiner to discuss the early days of the collection and to hear his thoughts on the hotel and gallery.

Content: What was the nature of the Chartwell at the time of the commissioning of this body of work? It must have been quite a big step to consider taking on a building of this scale.

Rob Gardiner: The project started in the early 70s with an ambition to generate resources for the visual arts in Hamilton. It arose from my interest in the establishment of the Waikato Museum of Art and History. The trust was established in 1970 and the first acquisitions were in 1974. I had formed the view that Chartwell would buy works taking into account what the Museum had or might collect in the future. It was always conceived, and still is, as being complementary to a public collection. At that time, Campbell Smith, who was curator at the Museum in the mid 1970s, was collecting prints for the Museum and Chartwell acquired a complementary group of Australian prints during a trip to Melbourne galleries with Smith. Later that year, Chartwell acquired the first major painting, a Bill Sutton landscape.

At that time, the area near the site of the Museum was as dead as a dodo. There was no vision for connecting the city to the river. So I started to follow the future of property in the area and in particular Victoria Street. Then I found out this hotel was in receivership. It was owned by New Zealand Breweries and they wanted to quit it. I put in some effort to assess the potential of this building and the prospect that this would provide lots of space for a collecting facility and perhaps for galleries. I began to get excited.

Content: So you envisaged it as being a home for the Chartwell but also for other galleries?

RG: It was such a large property and sitting on an acre of land on the banks of the Waikato. The property was a mess, bottles everywhere, but a beautiful building with a great history. I resolved to start the gallery. The whole complex was remarkable as a gallery space and we opened a restaurant as well. People spent more time eating food than looking at art (laughs). So the Hamilton Art Centre was born and the art gallery was called the Centre for Contemporary Art. For fourteen years I ran what can now be seen as New Zealand's first privately funded public art gallery. I'm not sure there has been one before or since. Then I had my head down and tail up running all these exhibitions.

We had all sort of people coming down, Ray Hughes the art dealer from Sydney, Jenny Gibbs bought the trustees of MOMA down for lunch! Lots of artists from New Zealand and Australia.

Content: Tell us about the early shows.

RG: I was approached by Edward Bullmore to be his accountant. I had to spend a lot of time in pubs drinking beer! I had this Bullmore connection. The first show was his drawings, big nudes. It was pretty controversial and got us started. Our system was that we would have two shows, sometimes three at once, I'd take Mondays off to work on the installation. Plus I was writing the press releases to hand out to the media. There was a great fraternity of people who would help. John Reynolds and Julian Dashper used to come down and help with installations. So I got to meet a lot of artists. There were some remarkable shows... Ralph Hotere with his number eight wire was one.

Content: Let's talk about the Robin Morrison suite of images. Did you take a moment in 1980 at the beginning to commission these works to record the hotel before the Chartwell occupied the space and it became the Centre for Contemporary Art?

RG: That's right. This came out of the extraordinary experience of acquiring this building. You know I inherited a tavern licence. I had to study licensing law (laughs). Upstairs there was a series of spaces, forty to sixty hotel rooms. Also I had to completely earthquake strengthen the upper part of the hotel but we were able to remove a lot of weight by removing all the bricks in the upstairs hotel rooms' walls. But with regard to Robin Morrison, I am sure that I had seen a superb body of work which I think was of a Gummer House in the Hawke's Bay. It was to record the hotel as it was that Robin Morrison and Kees Springer* were commissioned to do those bodies of photography.

Content: But the Hamilton Hotel had been very much an institution in the city hadn't it?

RG: The town was full of stories and memories about the hotel. People used to come up to me and tell me that they had spent the first night of their marriage there. The Queen stayed there in 1953. Horace Moore-Jones died in a fire at the hotel in 1922 trying to rescue a young girl. That sort of thing.

*The Kees Springer suite of photographs can be viewed online at www.chartwell.org.nz

Content thanks Chartwell intern Rebecca Ward for her assistance in preparing this article.

March 1982. The Hamilton Hotel under refurbishment.

December 1982. Rob Gardiner at his desk in The Centre for Contemporary Art.

1988. Andrew Drummond installation at The Centre for Contemporary Art, Hamilton.

November 1989. *Cries and Whispers: New Works from the British Council Collection.*

September 1992. John Reynolds working on the installation of the Ralph Hotere exhibition *No.8*.

May 1993. Allen Maddox, *Paintings*. At left, *For Alexis*, sold at Art+Object in June 2011 ($36 000). On the far wall is the 1993 canvas *Six Enclosed* which later sold, for a then record price of $45 000, at A+O in May 2008.

In the 1970s and 80s Morrison's anthropological eye fixed on the phenomenon of the past as it resonated, in many cases near forgotten, in what was then the present.


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The Aristocrat

In 2013 an important late Charles Goldie portrait emerged after eighty years sequestered in the family collection of the 1st Viscount Bledisloe, the 4th Governor-General of New Zealand (1930–35). *An Aristocrat* is the 1933 portrait of Atama Paparangi (1817–1917), a chieftain of the Rarawa tribe and a veteran of the battles of Okaihau and Kororareka in the 1840s.

The work has been restored to New Zealand ownership and now resides in the home of a passionate Kiwi who chooses to remain anonymous in print, but the very fact that is it now in his guardianship appears pre-destined. He recently spoke to A+O's Hamish Coney on his connection to this prized Goldie.

Content also explores the lives of the artist, the subject and the first owner of this work to illuminate one of the more storied New Zealand paintings of the first half of the 20th century.

Charles Frederick Goldie (1870–1947) holds a unique but vexatious position within the canon of New Zealand art. His works were and are expensive. It is a rare year when a Goldie does not feature amongst the most valuable artworks sold at auction in New Zealand. This example sold at a recent Christie's auction in London for a substantial six figure sum. None of this will be news to anyone who pays even cursory attention to the New Zealand art market.

Nonetheless, this canvas, even for a Goldie, is special and its story is well worth telling. In 1930 Charles Goldie's career could be described as on the wane. For the twenty years after his 1898 return from five years' study at the Academie Julian in Paris, Goldie had been the alpha-artist of the New Zealand artworld. He scooped all the prizes, plaudits and commissions. One of many early peaks occurred in 1903 when two celebrated canvases *Darby and Joan* and *The Widow* were purchased via public subscription by the people of Auckland and gifted to the departing and highly esteemed Countess of Ranfurly, wife of the departing Governor General of the then colony of New Zealand.

Thirty years later it was the intervention of another GG, Lord Bledisloe that was the catalyst for Goldie's late career resurgence. But in the early 1900s Goldie was a young artist on the rise, reaping the benefits of his early blue ribbon academic training, winning prizes at the Society of Arts and receiving rapturous reviews as each new canvas was greeted with acclaim, "No one with any knowledge of art could walk through this exhibition and fail to pick out the work of the master which makes the show. The work of C.F. Goldie stands out pre-eminently." [1]

In the first decade if the 20th century, critical adulation and dwindling subject matter spurred Goldie on to a phase of sustained productivity. It is this period of depicting the last of the mokoed Maori that secured Goldie's fame and sowed the seeds for later critical diffidence. Goldie was indeed in a race against time to find Maori with traditional moko. When one examines Goldie's most regular subjects such as Ina Te Papatahi (died circa 1910) of *Darby and Joan* fame, Anaha Te Rahui (died 1910), Patara Te Tuhi (1823 – 1910) Te Aho o te Rangi Wharepu (died 1910) and Atama himself who died in 1917, it becomes evident that the generation of traditionally mokoed Maori, those born in the first three decades of the 19th century, was indeed dying, just as the generation of men who served in WWII is almost gone today. Then as now, these are passings of great sadness and time for reflection.

A wide variety of contributing factors led to the decline of ta moko after 1840 but perhaps the most far reaching of these was the expansion of Christianity after the Treaty of Waitangi. The missionaries in their zeal 'paganised' many traditional practices. To the prohibitions of the Christian faith we can add further impediments such as the destabilising factors of regional land wars from the 1840s, increased exposure to a virulent range of European diseases and intertribal tensions. The net result was that, according to 19th century historian James Cowan, the widespread practice of ta moko had all but ceased by 1865.

Atama Paparangi was from a generation, those born before the Treaty of Waitangi, for whom men of rank were identified by their moko. In his case, so much so that the name of his tohunga ta moko Huitara is well known and noted in the historic records. The deep cultural significance of ta moko for his sitters such as Atama cannot have been lost on Goldie or his audiences for over a century, both Maori and Pakeha.

What we must also acknowledge is that after about 1915 almost all of Goldie's portraits were posthumous. Of the approximately twelve known portraits of Atama only three of these were completed during his lifetime.

Atama Paparangi was one of Goldie's most oft depicted portrait sitters. The earliest portrait dates to 1912 and the final, entitled *A Noble Relic of a Noble Race,* in the collection of the Hawkes Bay Museum Art Gallery and Museum, dates to 1939. Other Atama portraits are located in the Auckland Museum (*Atama Paparangi*, 1912) and Dunedin Public Art Gallery (*In Doubt*, 1938).

Notwithstanding the frequently mawkish and paternalistic titles of Goldie's canvases, it is clear the artist enjoyed relationships of high mutual regard with his longstanding sitters. Such affection is revealed in a letter by Atama, to Goldie from Mitimiti on the Hokianga, in which the then 97 year old chieftain writes, 'Such are the feelings of my heart for you. Many are the wishes beautiful and that I would wish you, but words fail. The sum of the words of greeting, of love and of good fellowship is expressed in this phrase: 'May Health and prosperity attend you and all whom you love.' [2]

Paparangi was a high ranking chieftain of the Te Rarawa tribe, his marae of Matihetihe still records

1. Clipping from The New Zealand Herald, 19 October 1900 compiled in Goldie scrapbook XI and quoted in Roger Blakely, *Goldie* (Auckland Art Gallery, 1997), p.15

2. Takahi Atama Paparangi to Charles Goldie, 1914 from Goldie scrapbook XIII, pp.105-107 (Auckland Museum Library)

These two original 1930s photographs by C.F. Goldie, with handwritten inscriptions on the verso describing their relationship to The Govenor General of New Zealand, were acquired in Hamilton in the early 2000s by a NZ businessman based in London.

Inscription on verso by C.F. Goldie reads:

A Noted Chief of the Rarawa Tribe, Hokianga

The original is the possession of Lady Bledisloe

Inscription on verso by C.F. Goldie reads:

The famous friendly Ngapuhi Chieftain

Tamati Waka Nene

Tamati Waka is probably the most noted Maori we have any record of and was very paramount before and at the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi.

The portrait was painted at the request of Lord Bledisloe to be presented to the Waitangi Museum, where it now hangs

his influence today and his devout Catholicism also links him to the earliest days of European settlement in the far north, such as the French mission at Pompallier House in Kororareka (Russell). Atama is also in the record as an active participant in the Maori landcourts of the early 1900s and it is obvious to this writer from these documents that Atama Paparanagi was a man of great mana in the Hokianga region. Perhaps the best contemporary account of him comes from an article by James Cowan in the *Auckland Star* published in 1920, 'There must be Aucklanders who will remember a tall tattooed Maori who used to appear in Queen Street occasionally and attract attention by his singular rigout – a koti roa (long black coat) and black belltopper – which suggested in cut and colour that it was a legacy from one of the very early missionaries. This was Atama Paparangi, of the tribe of Rarawa, and he hailed from the banks of the Hokianga, the home of heroes and fighters. Atama was a famous warrior, and had used his 'tupara' (double-barrelled gun) with much affect at the fight against the white man at Kororareka and in the battle of Okaihau, two famous incidents in Heke's war of 1845-6, Atama died some time in 1917.'

In a very real sense Atama was one of the very last of a highly visible and lamented generation of Maori and their loss was felt acutely. But the fading of these mokoed 'relics' should not be confused with a narrative that this was a harbinger of the end of the Maori race or culture. That this sad 'fact' was debated cannot be denied, but for every doomsayer there was a vigorously postulated opposite view. Goldie would have been highly sensitive to both the debate and his contribution to the discourse.

New Zealand racial politics was not the only conversation that Goldie was a party to and it was by no means the most urgent or keenly felt for the artist. Goldie's pre-eminent position was threatened in the 1920s by the arrival of modern art to the colony, or more accurately one A.J.C Fisher who arrived in 1924 from England to take over the directorship of Elam School of Art and promptly set to upsetting as many apple carts as he could lay his hands on. The Royal College of Art educated young Englishman made his feelings clear with this acerbic comment, 'On my first visit to your art gallery, I felt I would like to pull the rubbish down and get it away, with the exception of about four pictures which I would not destroy.' [3]

There was little doubt in whose direction such comments were directed. In the late 1920s Goldie was increasingly marginalised as an ethnographic documentary painter and there were increasing calls for his paintings to be hung in a museum as opposed to an art gallery.

So it must have been with some relief that a

3. Art in New Zealand. Caustic criticism, *The New Zealand Herald*, 24 October 1924, p.10 and quoted in Roger Blakely, *Goldie* (Auckland Art Gallery, 1997), p.31

**Tamati Waka Nene*, 1933 was commissioned by Lord Bledisloe and gifted to the nation along with the Waitangi Estate in 1934. The work is now on long term loan to the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

"Goldie is the only Artist in New Zealand"

— Viscount Bledisloe in response to a question on Goldie's pre-eminence within New Zealand, early 1930s.

beleaguered Goldie greeted the first signs of vice-regal favour articulated by Charles Bathurst, 1st Viscount Bledisloe and his wife Alina, soon after their arrival in New Zealand in 1930. Bledisloe was an admirer of Goldie's work to such an extent he intervened on the artist's behalf to smooth his path to exhibit at the Royal Academy in 1933 and commissioned the portrait of 19th century Ngapuhi leader Tamati Waka Nene which the Governor General donated to the nation along with the Waitangi estate in 1934.

It can be argued that much of Goldie's late career prestige, Royal Academy and Paris Salon success in the later 1930s is due to the patronage and promotion of Viscount Bledisloe. *An Aristocrat, Atama Paparangi, a Chieftain of the Rarawa Tribe of Maoris, New Zealand* to give the canvas its complete title was acquired by Lady Bledisloe in 1933, prior to the work's exhibition at the 1934 Royal Academy in London. Exactly eighty years later it was offered for sale at a Christie's auction and acquired by a London based New Zealander for whom the chance to own a Goldie, and in particular this very work, had been a dream he had held for some time. His story resonates as an Kiwi expat success story. The following transcript is of a recent interview conducted by A+O's Hamish Coney.

Content: Tell us about your background in New Zealand.

London based Kiwi expat (LBKE) : I was born and bred in Napier, New Zealand but have lived outside of NZ for the past 24 years, some 8 years in Washington DC and 16 years in London where I now reside with my family. However, it was the first 28 years of my life that has formed my strong sense of being a New Zealander. I fondly recall my days of growing up in the Hawkes Bay, the striking landscape and wholesome life. I had a happy childhood and played a lot of rugby. I am still a huge rugby fan and actively follow the All Blacks around the globe. I am looking forward to the Rugby World Cup in the UK this year. After graduating from Massey University, I joined the Reserve Bank of New Zealand in Wellington and after a couple of years the Bank sponsored my post-graduate studies at the London School of Economics. I was bonded to the Bank so I returned for a few more years after which time I was given the opportunity to join the World Bank in Washington DC. This was the start of my international career. It was the early 90s and it was during the time of the break up of the Soviet Union. I was among the first wave of foreigners to venture into the Central Asian region of the Former Soviet Union to assist and advise on the economic and social development of the newly formed countries in the region, most notably Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. After a few years my journey took me into the Treasury of the World Bank where I began to manage money. Hungry to venture out on my own, I had the opportunity to join a start-up asset management business at the turn of the century and have been in London ever since. That is a quick pocketed version of my history, so to speak.

Content: At some stage you saw the pair of original Goldie photographs, one of which is a portrait of Atama Paparangi, both inscribed by Goldie. How did you come to find these?

LBKE: Fortunately, my work takes me back home to NZ regularly and in the early 2000s, I was making a presentation to one of the Trusts in Hamilton to potentially manage funds for them. After the presentation, I went for a walk and wandered into a local gallery. I couldn't believe my luck to see these stunning old 1930s photographs of Goldie paintings. Upon further inspection, I discovered his handwritten notes on the back to a friend saying 'I've just painted these for Lord Bledisloe, one of which he is going to give to Waitangi as a gift to the nation* and the second one as a gift to his wife' (Atama Paparangi). At first I just thought they were beautiful photographs. Then they had the added angle of his hand on the back. As I have grown up and gone through life, I have developed a greater appreciation for art and the art of New Zealand. For me, Goldie, is arguably New Zealand's pre-eminent artist and I have aspired to own a Goldie for some time. Upon my return to the UK, I showed my wife the photos and told her that if I was ever lucky enough to be in a situation to afford a quality Goldie, that was my aim.

Content: But in the meantime at least you had the photographs?

LBKE: Correct! I had the poor man's versions. To put it into context, at that a time, we were a start-up business and struggling to make our name in a very internationally competitive field. If a Goldie had come up during this period, we could not have afforded it. Since then, with a lot of hard work and good fortune, the company has become established and we could consider the possiblitly of acquiring a Goldie.

Content: So it must have felt like destiny when you saw the exact same work come up in the Christies' catalogue in 2013?

LBKE: That was an incredible moment. As it happens a very close friend who works at Christies knew of my desire to find a Goldie, if one ever became available at some point. He alerted me to this work and was in touch immediately. He sent me the catalogue with the scrawled note, *I think this may be of interest*. Upon viewing the painting in the catalogue, that was a wow moment: it was the original painting of one of the two photos hanging on our wall. My personal journey together with the provenance and history of the painting left me with no doubt I would bid on this painting. It seemed like fate. So from that moment, it wasn't a question of whether we should acquire this work, it was a question of whether we could afford to buy it.

Content: You must have been aware by that stage that if you wanted to own a Goldie in London and live with this work you most probably would have to find such a work in London because of course it is very difficult to export a major Goldie from New Zealand to another location.

LBKE: I was very much aware of that issue and that I would get very few, if any, chances to find one of such quality and provenance. The combination of those two factors makes this work quite special. I think the history of this painting makes it very important.

Content: You've lived with this work for nearly two years now. We've heard about the

Charles F. Goldie, *The Artist Trimming the Whiskers of Atama Paparangi*, Chief of the Rarawa Tribe, circa 1905. Courtesy of The Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, purchased 1990.

romantic back story of how you came to make contact with this work and then acquire it. What has been your response to the work in this time now that you have lived with it on a daily basis?

LBKE: We have quite purposefully placed this work in the dining room to give it prominence of place in our lives. My family and I look at it everyday as we spend a lot of time in this part of the house. Goldie holds a strong connection to home for me and notwithstanding the fact that my life has evolved outside the country, I'm very much a Kiwi at heart. To look at the portrait of Atama Paparangi daily is a very real connection to home and to have that painting is a clear link for me. There is a sense of stateliness and calmness about that painting. For me and my family this is an important connection to New Zealand. I have a very international family. My wife is from California and my daughters were born here in London but they know culturally about our connection to New Zealand. That is really what I find most powerful about this painting.

Content: I think that one commonly held picture of Goldie as something of a gruff, reactionary, establishment figure is belied by the degree of sensitivity, warmth and feeling towards his fellow man that is clearly in the paintings, in my opinion. He is a master of painting age. What we can see in these works is not so much a view of a dying race, which is how Goldie has been criticised, as almost an artistic mortician. You see an artist who is deeply sensitive to the ageing process.

LBKE: It is funny that you say that because that is one aspect of my feelings towards the work that has developed after living with it for nearly two years. I think you are right. What I've noticed is that the painting is much more sensitive and subtle than you think upon first looking at it. I think Goldie has captured this. You are right, Goldie is a master of age, and the more I live with Atama Paparangi, I know exactly what you are saying. I have had the same sort of feelings. He has captured the calmness of age if that makes sense. As you grow older, you are either going to age angry or you are going to age gracefully. There is a majestic quality in Goldie's work as it captures that sense of contentment in age.

Content: You have New Zealand guests and family visiting, but you must have a lot of international visitors to your home. What is their reaction to Atama Paparangi?

LBKE: They are amazed and intrigued. They are all mesmerized by the quality of the painting and the meaning behind it. I like that our guests immediately get a sense of the culture of my homeland. We have people visiting from America, all over Europe, Iceland, South Africa... everywhere. It is a global cast of characters! They all highly regard the painting. Many of these people own beautiful paintings themselves. I think it is very clear that Goldie can hold his head up very high on an international stage.

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What about the glowing one?*

* Paul Hartigan, *Revolution XIII (The Robinson)*, 2007, neon light

That's just one of dozens of questions fired at Real Art Roadshow educator Sonia Hart by the kids of Kai Iwi School, near Whanganui – one of 68 schools the roadshow will visit in 2015.

Content caught up with the RAR team, including founder Fiona Campbell and Operations Manager and husband Possum Heward, in between exhibitions at Waverley Primary School and Whanganui Girls College to discuss the impact the Roadshow makes on the artists and collectors of tomorrow. Photographs by Tracey Grant.

Content: Let's start with the Real Art Roadshow Crew. Tell us about the team who make it all happen.

Fiona Campbell: There's me, I'm the general dogsbody, I drive the desk. There's ops manager Possum and our driver Ray Miller who is our only full-time paid employee – they drive the big rig. We also have a team of educators. Sonia Hart is on at the moment. There are six five week slots per year that are allocated to our floating team of educators.

Possum Heward: We also have Paul Forrest who is part of the team. He is an educator, art advisor and on the board. He educates the educators and is a vital part of the on road team.

FC: As well as myself, Paul and Possum, we have three other board members, Rob McLeod who has been with us since the beginning, he is an art and education advisor and he keeps us on track as far as our delivery mission is concerned, Sharon Paine who is a master at making things run smoothly... and Frank Aldridge who is very enthusiastic. He gets the best deals for us in terms of logistics, postage, insurance, that sort of thing . The team on the board and the team on the road work really well together.

Content: You have five week regional tour blocks. How many schools do you visit over these tour blocks?

FC: Eleven or so. Over the thirty week tour we hit about sixty five schools. Those schools will also host about another fifty schools in their area. So, for example, Ongaonga School near Dannevirke will invite the smaller schools in the district, some of whom might only have eleven pupils. We love going to those geographically isolated schools because those are the ones that aren't just down the road from a public gallery. They have not seen a whole lot of contemporary art and they are very open to it.

Content: So when you arrive in a more isolated area it is a big event?

PH: The isolated areas embrace the experience wholeheartedly. On the East Cape, Ruatoria, South Auckland, on the West Coast, they love it. They get the most from the whole experience.

Content: So you have been from Cape Reinga to Bluff?

FC: Yes, we are on our third lap. It takes us three years to get around the country.

Content: How many schools have you been to?

FC: Since 2007 we have visited about 600 schools. Over a quarter of a million kids have seen the Real Art Roadshow. Many of these kids may not have seen anything like this, you know, any art, in their district.

Content: Let's go back to the beginning. What was the genesis for the Real Art Roadshow?

FC: It was Gary Brain who was a NZSO timpanist. He has just died which is very sad. He came to my school when I was fifteen and set up and performed a lunch time concert with all the different types of percussion. He explained his love of music and the role of percussion in the orchestra. Even though I was not musical I could see his passion for his area of expertise. He had travelled all around the country for years doing school concerts.

My former husband and I were investors in TradeMe and sold our shares and did quite well, obviously. I had to figure out quickly how to make life meaningful when you don't have to work a forty hour week to put food on the table for your family. I went back to the idea from Gary Brain but with a focus on the visual arts, of course.

Content: So at that time you were a private collector?

FC: Only in a limited way. I had worked in dealer galleries when I was younger, but had taken a break from that scene to get my career underway. So I had a good grounding and had always valued the visual arts. So then we began to collect for the Roadshow concept. We began by looking at the thirty 'big' names in art but in choosing those big names we also saw so many emerging and mid-career artists who were doing amazing things that we hoped would have real resonance with the students. We started by choosing for an audience of fifteen to eighteen year old NCEA students so you don't need dusty old political portraits or boring vases of flowers, you can go for much more cutting edge and unusual, fun and funky art. Bold choices.

Content: So when you look at the Real Art Roadshow collection you see works by Warwick Freeman and the Ricky Swallow Blanket Shark which I am guessing the kids love. Many of these works must pose questions about the very nature of art. Is this Art? What is Art? This must be a very important part of the experience for children. Tell us about some of the reactions you have witnessed from some of the 250 000 young New Zealanders who have seen the work.

FC: I hear a lot from the educators, of course, because they are on the road a lot more than me now. However, one I personally saw was in Cromwell. One of those popular girls, I remember them well because I was never one of them (laughs), she was tossing her long blonde hair and she walked up the ramp to the roadshow and said, "This is going to be dumb. I hate art!". Five minutes later she was engrossed in conversation with her friends about one of the artworks and I thought to myself, "yay I've caught you." It hasn't been boring for them. It has let them expand their perception a bit.

That is all we have wanted to do with the Roadshow. We didn't want to shove art history or technique down the kids' throats. It's about opening their eyes, their minds and their hearts to art and creativity and the possibility that this is important. You know we are a sports loving nation. That is all good, but creativity it vitally important as well, but not as well supported.

Clockwise from top left: Kai Iwi School is approximately 20 minutes north of Whanganui on State Highway 3, Kai Iwi School pupils enjoy making their own artworks in the RAR gallery truck, Ricky Swallow's *Blanket Shark*, acquired in A+O's first auction (May 2007), Sonia Hart discusses an artwork by Warwick Freeman, Teacher Emma Kidd and her class display their finished artworks.

Opposite: The Real Art Roadshow team from left: Sonia Hart, Ray Miller, Fiona Campbell and Possum Heward.

I wanted to plug that gap with this project.

PH: You know in the affluent areas you expect those kids to be exposed to art. But in the lower decile areas such as the East Cape, Northland, the West Coast they really get it. Frequently, we can't get the kids out of the truck. These remote communities get involved and really support the roadshow in their region. In Ruatoria they put down a hangi!

Content: Eight years down the track you have your systems in place. But in the beginning how did you insert yourself within the education system?

FC: Initially, we thought that the collection would be pitched at NCEA level students and we wanted to shape the collection to a certain extent around some of the NCEA exemplar artists. But we couldn't get traction with the department of education. So after that experience we decided that we certainly did not want to usurp NCEA but would work alongside it completely independently. After a few years on the road we realised that NCEA students are very focused on the curriculum and if the roadshow did not tick the boxes for what they are working on at that time, then they may not have the focus for it, but the intermediate and primary school students are really wide open for it! They are a delight to bring the resource to. You know I've learnt more about the collection from eight year olds than I have from art history books or essays. These kids just have an open minded way of looking at art. In fact, as a five year old the kids can start quite narrow minded. To them if it's framed, painted and colourful then it must be art. So photography or a black and white unframed drawing doesn't register as art. I think that has pretty much come from their parents. But, you see them slowly unpicking those ideas as they get older. By the time they are eight to twelve they are so open minded it is just magic.

Content: So in effect you engage directly with schools?

FC: In the first year we had a schools co-ordinator who would ring up the schools on our schedule and explain who we were and we would craft an itinerary from there. Then word of mouth started to spread and that process became a lot easier. We now have a large list of schools and contacts within the schools so we can now simply email the schools and of course, now they come to us. Plus, of course, teachers move around too and contact us.

Content: I'm guessing you are on your second and third visit with some schools?

FC: First on the road we had the Black Collection which was painting and drawing, our more conservative collection perhaps. Then after a year or so, we responded to what the schools were saying which was that they had a lot of jewellery, photography and sculpture students and could they have a bit more of that. So we put the silver collection together and they would both leapfrog around the country for three years. We toured with the Black Collection for three years and the Silver Collection for a further three years so

we were not going to the same kids with the same collection. We are now on our third tour of the country with our touring favourites. They are the ones the kids really respond to and are fun to teach with.

Content: A really diverse slice of contemporary practice.

PH: We had a weekend a while back in Wanaka when we got the collections together in a hangar and really tore them apart curatorially and bounced off each other to reconstitute the Real Art Roadshow collection. We learnt a lot in the process.

Content: How does it work on the day? Do the children come through class by class?

FC: Yes, we can cope with classes of up to forty although that is a bit cramped. Every educator has a different approach. I like to ask the teacher what they are studying in class that we can relate to. That is very interesting because it is not always art that they are studying. It could be ancestry or mask making or patterns, it could be an English class and they are in the middle of doing a play. Then we have a really full on looking and talking session and we finish up with the kids doing their own drawings in response to what they like.

Content: Do you find that sometimes that the kids can be a bit resistant to this new experience?

FC: It breaks down pretty quickly. There are a few things in the gallery like the small, sweet nude by Illingworth that spark a few eight year old giggles. But when they are not told off for giggling they realise that they can have their own opinions and this starts to open their eyes and this starts a dialogue about what else is missing apart from her top – the answer is her left arm and mouth. Why? How does that make her feel, especially missing a mouth and the opportunity to communicate? If they look really hard there a few rude words on some of the artworks and sometimes they ask about the rude words. We explain that that is what the artist was thinking at the time and the artist's job in the world is to truthfully explain what they see and how they are thinking and this artist was thinking was thinking swear words and the kids are like, "Wow, this is blowing my mind!" (laughs)

The next day *Content* spoke to Kai Iwi School teacher in-charge-of-art Emma Kidd as her students were drawing inside the Real Art Roadshow gallery, who reported that the Real Art Roadshow has become an important resource for the school. This visit by RAR was the second for Kai Iwi School and the previous exhibition sparked an ongoing school project.

Content: I understand there was one specific artwork from the previous visit that became a favourite at Kai Iwi School.

Emma Kidd: Last time the Roadshow was here the teachers were inspired by the Reuben Paterson work. In our artists' studies classes we learn about the works of a specific artist and we interprete this into our own artwork. It might be the subject matter or the material. In this case, we made our own glitter artwork and this inspired us. We made a magnificent backdrop for a stage production. The children loved it. Already on this trip the kids have been talking about ideas for some new artwork. We are a rural school and so it is hard for the kids to see art. We have also asked another rural school from Ngamatapouri, which is about an hour away, as well as our local community from Kai Iwi Beach to join us in this engaging resource.

To find out more on the RAR, the collection and to see if the team will be visiting a school near you please log onto www.realartroadshow.co.nz

'I'conoclast

Maurice K. Smith is a shadowy figure within the New Zealand post war art and architecture story. Hardly any of the handful of his 'alternative Modernist' buildings survive. Most have been destroyed, barely recorded or are little known. Born in Hamilton in 1926, in his own country the Emeritus Professor of Architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology is something of a creative Scarlet Pimpernel: his presence more felt than seen. But his resonance lingers, his ideas endure and he can indeed be found if you know where to look.

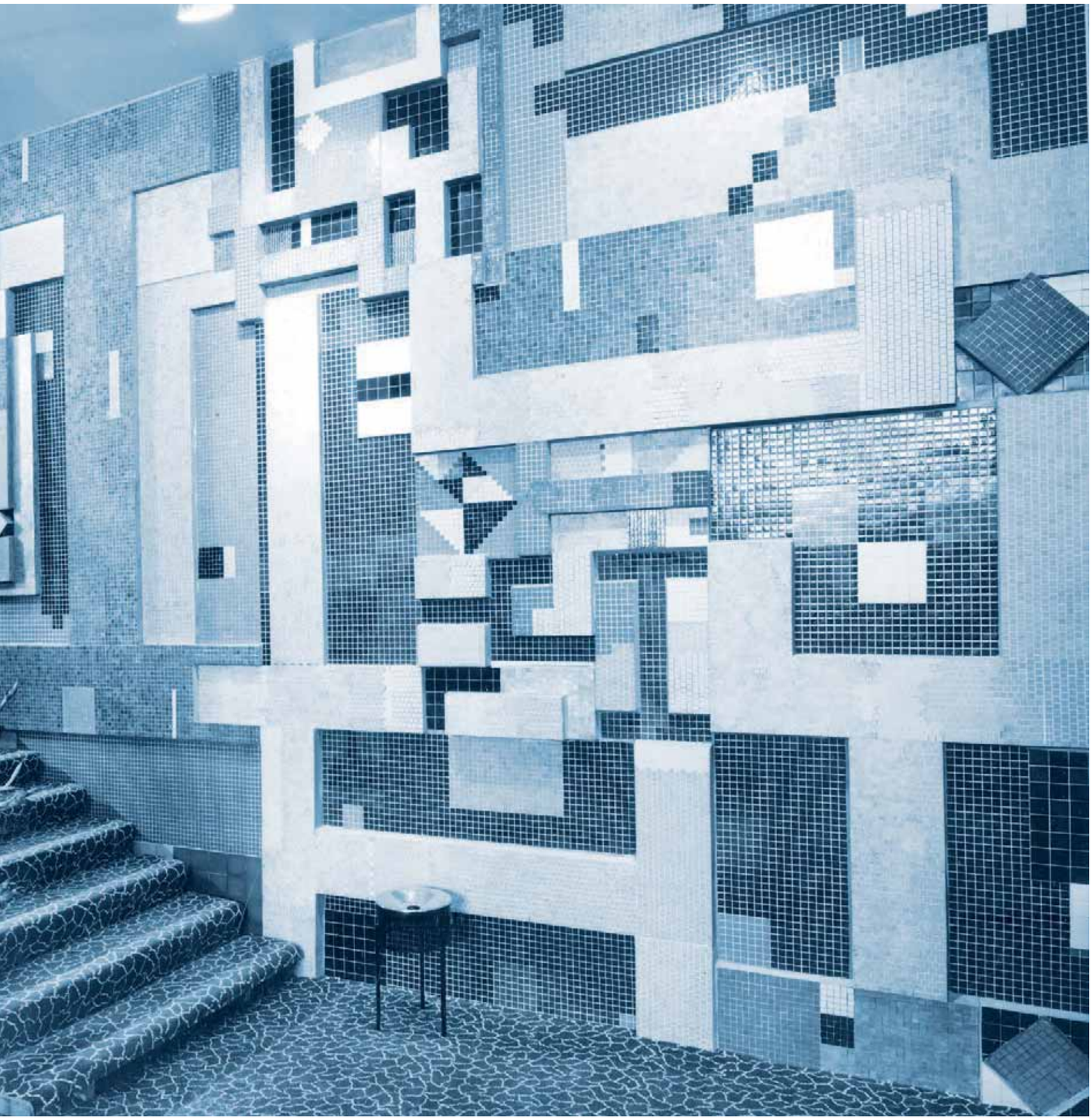
Content picks up the scent after two recent exhibition sightings reveal that a new generation of artists is decoding his spatial thinking within a contemporary art as opposed to an architectural context. Not all the facts are in yet, perhaps they never will be, but this 'lost property' clearly is not forgotten.

Maurice K. Smith resurfaced to this writer's eyes in 2014. First he was, albeit elliptically, the subject of an intriguing exhibition at Artspace in Auckland by two recent Elam MFA graduates Andrew Kennedy and Blaine Western.[1] Then a few months later a work simply signed Maurice and dated 1955 was on exhibition at the Gus Fisher gallery in Auckland.[2] This small mixed media on board is like Smith, a curate's egg. It is a work that seems incredibly knowing of the moment in terms of the development of Modernist practice in New Zealand in the mid 1950s. Theo Schoon and Gordon Walters were in the early stages of their investigations, the first documented koru works were still a year or so away. Several of the motifs employed appear to presage Colin McCahon's tau cross as seen in the *Necessary Protection* series by at least a decade and this small wonder clearly displays an eye for tāniko design and whāriki weaving patterns. Polynesian image making such as tapa design was the preserve of the museum ethnographic department and not yet on the radar in terms of art practice in the mid 1950s. But all of these 'readings' seem valid within M.K. Smith's prescient amalgam of heavy abstract blocks of colour and structured graphic notation. *'I'conoclast* feels like a missing link in the development of post war New Zealand art. That it appears so open and available to these interpretations is no surprise. Maurice K. Smith's work across two and three dimensions is porous in the extreme conceptually and so asymmetrical that all analyses feel part right and maybe damn wrong at the same time.

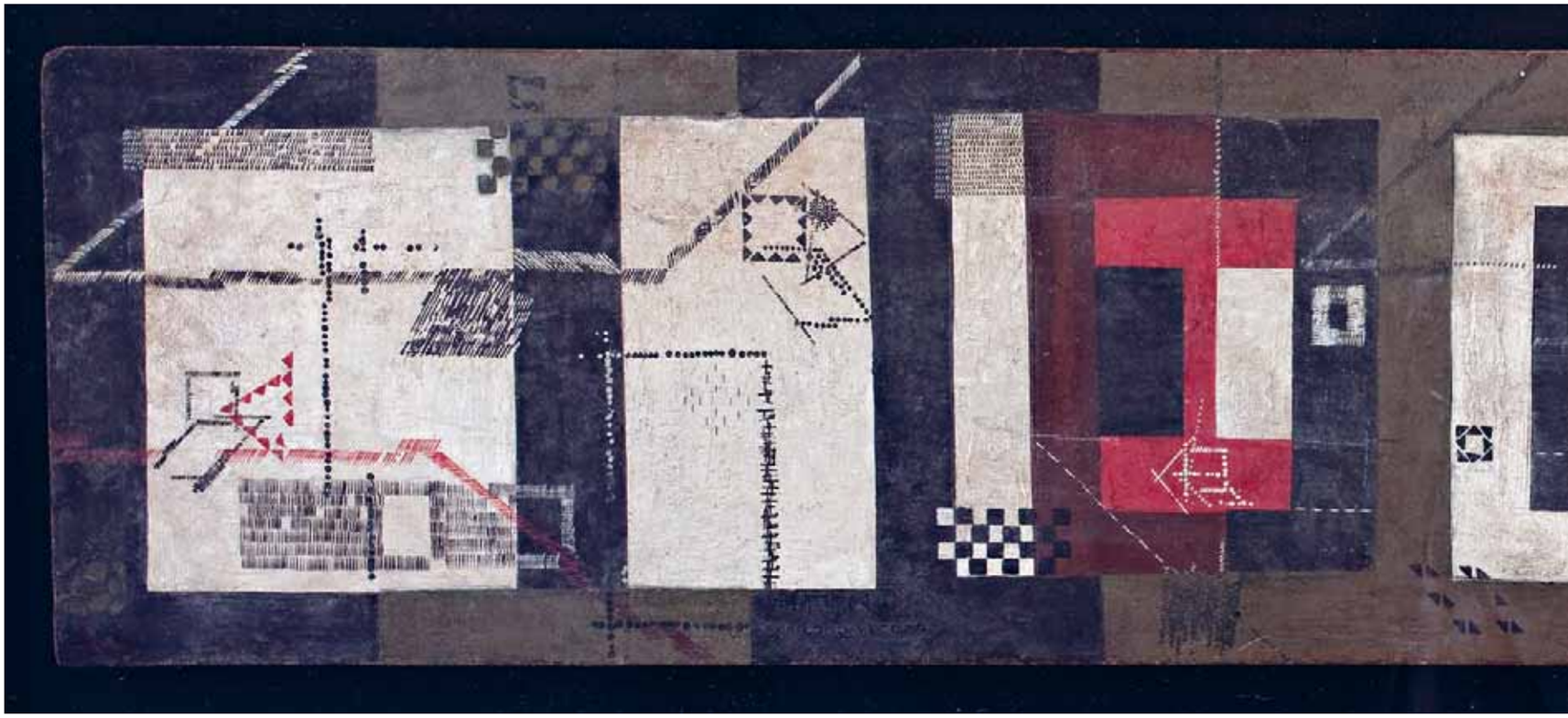
'I'conoclast is all the more remarkable as it is quite likely a working drawing or visual thought piece for one of the most popular mainstreet, as in Queen Street, attractions of the late 1950s and 60s. Smith was the designer of the Modernist tile mural that still stands to this day (just) and which can be seen in its heyday in photographs of the Odeon

1. *a hollow action, a room held together by letters*, Andrew Kennedy and Blaine Western at Artspace, Auckland, November 2013 – January 2014 and accompanying catalogue

2. *Gifted: works Gifted to the University Art Collection*, Gus Fisher Gallery, September – November 2014



Odeon Cinema, Queen Street Auckland, staircase featuring mosaic panel by Maurice K. Smith, 1958.
Image courtesy of The Fletcher Trust Archive.



dating to 1958 from the Fletcher Archive.

Smith had returned to New Zealand in 1955 after studying on a Fulbright scholarship at MIT, commencing in 1952. He returned to the US in 1958 after a few whirlwind years in New Zealand. Apart from one term teaching at the Auckland University School of Architecture in 1968 Smith has spent his entire life in Harvard, Massachusetts as a hugely influential architectural teacher and theoretician.

In those three years in the 1950s a few now legendary structures were completed: the Dargaville Fire Station, the Smith house in Glen Eden (later acquired by Bob Harvey), the Firth offices in Hastings, the Odeon mural on Queen Street, Auckland, and other houses in Titirangi, Hillsborough and Herne Bay. Smith also designed the huge geodesic dome installed at Western Springs for the Auckland Carnival in 1956. Smith had studied under Buckminster Fuller at MIT in the early 50s and the dome which housed a diorama display was an absolute show stopper for visitors to the carnival and sent shockwaves through the architectural community in New Zealand.

Bob Harvey's connection to M.K. Smith dates to this time and he is one of a handful of New Zealanders who have kept the Smith candle burning, in his case via owning and maintaining one of the few extant Smith designed structures still standing. *Content* recently spoke to Bob Harvey on his love for his Smith designed family home and the moments his and M.K. Smith's paths crossed.

Content: Can you describe your relationship with MK Smith?

Bob Harvey: In the winter of 1968 I was moving from a small cottage in Titirangi and I had nowhere to live and not a great future in advertising (laughs). I had yet to meet Norm Kirk and the Labour Party.

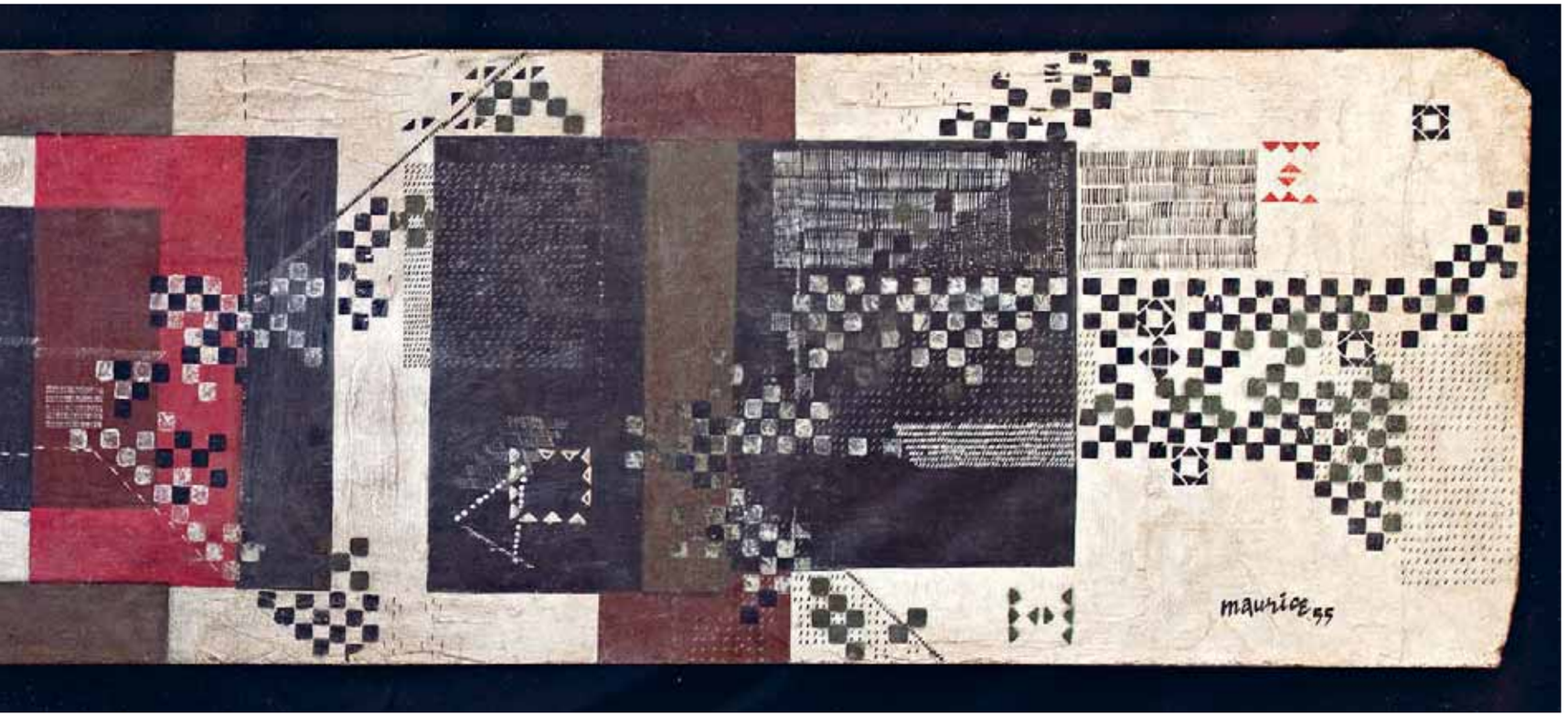
Content: They saved your bacon?

BH: Not only saved my bacon but made me the man I am today. I was looking for a new house. I think it was Allan Smythe who said "You would just love Maurice Smith's house." Allan was a designer and a musician who worked at the University of Auckland. He explained it to me... and at that moment I remembered that when I was a schoolboy of twelve or thirteen I would be on the train from Henderson into the city and see this huge structure being built across the valley from the Glen Eden railway station. It looked like a massive church. I have such a clear memory as a schoolboy of looking at this structure and thinking 'what the hell is that?'

On that Sunday in 1968 'what the hell is that' revealed itself to me as I drove up a very bumpy metal drive and I remember tiles which I later found out came from the Odeon. I came up the drive and I find this massive, unpainted, unfinished barn structure. I knocked on the door and Maurice K Smith came to the door and rather grumpily said, "I'm not interested if you are not interested." I said "Well. I am very interested". He explained that he had been trying to sell the house for a while and was leaving for America the next day. He asked me if I was married and I replied I was not and he said the house was very big and could get a bit cold. Jesus, was he right! So I wandered into this glorious space, it had no decks or spouting and I remember it being dreadfully cold. My long suffering wife of some forty five years agreed when she turned up about a year later.

Maurice said, "Well, if you are interested I want a $25 deposit to show that you are interested. By the way, you'll probably pay $25 a year for the rest of your life." I was like "Oh my God. Most of the houses in this street were about $4000 and he wanted $5000. Can I afford this?". I said, "I'll take it". I went to my mother and father's place in New Lynn to borrow the twenty five bucks. I was probably taking home from the advertising business about thirty five dollars a week. Then, you could rent a flat in Ponsonby for six or seven dollars a week. Interest rates were eighteen percent. But I was buying a labour of love. Maurice said I should treat it as a barn. He made

Maurice K. Smith, *Tconoclast*, 1955, mixed media on board, 245 x 1210mm.
The collection of the University of Auckland, reproduced with permission.



"Ahead of any others in the game, Maurice Smith embraces Maori art in his painting, using not only the shapes but also the characteristic colours of red, black and white. These he weds to an architectural structure to make a uniquely New Zealand design,"

— Linda Tyler, Director of the Centre for Art Studies at the University of Auckland in reference to *Tconoclast*, July 2015.

me promise that. He said I was not to paint it, flash it up or tart it up. He said the floors are not meant to be stained and not to put up spouting. The section was covered in two metre high gorse and blackberry up to the windows. There was no lawn. But we shook hands and he said, "It's a deal. Here is the name of the lawyer you should deal with. Goodbye." From there my life turned into a celebration with this house. I moved in a week later. Then I started to scythe the half acre of gorse and blackberry and threw a few parties. The second one was an engagement party for Barbara Pollard, my wife.

Content: And you have stayed in touch with Maurice Smith since then?

BH: Yes, I have. His relatives were quite regular visitors. A year later I was married and Barbara and I had a baby. I had to put some spouting up! Barbara and I love this house. It is a timber house. The beams are made from American Oregon pine and the roof is weathered pine. The northern and southern sides are ply. The beams are all bolted. There are hardly any nails.

Content: But you had a MK Smith connection when you were a schoolboy didn't you?

BH: Yes, when I as a boy I sold programmes in his geodesic dome during the Auckland Birthday Carnival at Western Springs in 1956. The dome was the centrepiece and I sold the programmes for five shillings during the day and in the evening I worked in the circus having a cigarette whipped out of my mouth!

Content: You've kept in contact with Maurice over all this time?

BH: Yes, he left in 1968. But my connection to him has been through correspondence. And Maurice's friends and architecture students just turn up at my door. Japanese, Italian and American architecture students turn up. So it has become a bit of an open house.

Content: There is so little of his work in New Zealand, but his legacy really does linger on. Like many expats he has perhaps a diffident relationship with New Zealand. What is it about his work that has kept his work alive?

BH: Space. His use of the spatial within a living house. I think if you look at the buildings he has designed he really understand the idea of visual beauty in a house. If you look at our house it really unfolds as you move about, it opens out. It is not a busy house but you get a lovely sense of warmth and airiness. It is almost like a large ship on a meadow. It is also a house of sound, there is no quiet space. But you know our children are great communicators and I think living in this house has made us a terrifically close family. There is no place to be angry or hide. You have to have a conversation in this house. We have had a forty five year conversation in this house.

Just before going to print *Content* made contact with artist Blaine Western in Berlin, where he now lives after concluding studies at the Jan Van Eyck Academie in Maastricht in the Netherlands. The following notes are taken from correspondence between *Content* and artist in late July 2105.

Content: What is within MKS's practice that has resonated with your body of concerns? Some forty/fifty years after the fact you have found an entry point into a 'lost' body of work?

Blaine Western: My entry into MKS's work was very gradual. I first came across mention of his name upon reading about an experimental construction project that he had done with students at the University of Auckland in 1968 upon returning to New Zealand after teaching at MIT, where students effectively designed and physically constructed their own 4 storey studio building, a kind of collage of recycled and new material (there is a lovely thesis publication in the School of Architecture archives/library that details in words and images this process) – the level of autonomy and collaboration that was possible within this project had stayed with me. Separately I had also been interested in the remains of the tiled wall mural in the former Odeon Theatre below Queen Street, with its awkward geometries, I think through the help of Gregory Smith's website/archive *Lost property* the two projects/author were married and this kind of led me to seek and peruse any further traces of his projects I could find. I later came across an article he had published in a journal by MIT where he referenced the poet Charles Olson's writing/concept of *projective verse,* relating it to his own methods of architectural composition, I had for some time prior (to state it a bit crudely) been interested in the relationship between language and space and I was pretty taken by the way in this article he used the composition of language across a page to articulate thoughts around buildings.

Content: MKS has been described as an 'alternative Modernist' – something of a romantic notion. After your research and exhibition how do you think he can be contextualised within a wider discourse or does he sit in a unique position?

BW: From what I gathered both through conversation with people that either knew or worked with him personally and through reading, he was very much against a lot of the principles put forth through post-war modern architectural discourse, that instead of a structure being closed or finished through design, it should embody the potential to shift and grow through occupancy, but maybe this came to full fruition later in his career, in houses that were realised in the US. I like in the earlier fragments of his work still in existence in New Zealand that there is a kind of wrestling with certain architectural archetypes but also a very distinct idiosyncratic style. I think as well as the sparsity of his projects in NZ, the few examples are elusive and difficult to canonise in a national architectural/art historical discourse because they are not instantly comprehensible and maybe this is also what interested me. His work and thought in many ways could be seen as post-modern, but not in the traditional sense of the word, in that it worked against certain dominant pedagogies. He seemed to blur the boundaries between all of these and it was very rare for this to happen. His oeuvre is diverse, complicated and sometimes contradictory. I think because of this it makes it very difficult to cement his work in one particular discourse.

Left: Interior detail of the M.K. Smith designed Blackman House II, Massachusetts (1989-1993). Image courtesy of Masschusetts Institute of Technology.

Above: Exhibition view from Andrew Kennedy and Blaine Western, *a hollow action, a room held together by letters,* Artspace 2014. Photo: Sam Hartnett. Courtesy of the artists and Artspace.

Acknowledgements:

Other reading: *Content* recommends M.K. Smith followers read the article by Allan Smith (M. K. Smith's nephew) entitled *DOCument of MOMO: continuities/differentiations/collaged intensities* in distracted reader #1 Mixtures: Xin Cheng and Allan Smith, split/fountain publishing, Auckland, 2013.

Also Greg Smith's superb website www.lostproperty.org.nz contains excellent information on M.K. Smith and other early pioneers of New Zealand post war architecture.

What possible right would New Zealand have to create a world-class contemporary art museum? We're world-class when it comes to growing stuff. And we're world-class when it comes to knocking people over, rowing quickly and throwing things a long way. So why set out to build a world-class contemporary art museum in New Plymouth? Because there's no point wasting everyone's time creating one that's average. And because art makes the world a bigger place. It lends you someone else's brain for a minute. It throws your gaze on places you wouldn't otherwise see. The job of the Govett-Brewster is to provoke. The point, surely, of visiting an art museum is to feel something. We get that you can live a life that's insulated but we just can't see the point. The value of experience lies in the depth of feeling. So we want to make you angry. In fact, we suggest you stop by Giovanni Intra's *Needle in Glove*. Get angry. Get annoyed. Get delighted. But get something. Then visit the Len Lye Centre. Spend some time with his *Universe*. It's beautiful and it's puzzling and that's ok. Then spend some time with Ngahina Hohaia's *I am your Lord*. Poignant, sad and inspiring. We believe the point of art is to challenge people's perceptions. To challenge them. Not to gently nudge them. Art isn't mild. Art is full-fat. Art isn't polite. Art punches, screams and kicks. We are the Govett-Brewster. Provocateurs since 1970.

New Plymouth, Aotearoa New Zealand
govettbrewster.com

Govett-
Brewster
Art
Gallery

Evergreen

For more information on Rose Seidler House see
www.sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/rose-seidler-house

… is the term used by Ron Sang to describe Australian Modernist architect Harry Seidler's design sensibility. *Content* visited his dramatic first statement of intent – the seminal Rose Seidler house situated amongst the gums of leafy Wahroonga in northern Sydney. Photographs by Sarah Smuts-Kennedy and Robbie Wells.

The drive from the city north gives the *Content* team time to discuss some of the Viennese born Seidler's most prominent Sydney landmarks. As we drive past COVE, Australia Square, Blues Point Tower, Horizon Apartments and Seidler's own architectural HQ at Milson's Point, we marvel at how prescient of contemporary design Seidler's sensual, curving forms are. Riding shotgun with the *Content* team is Sydney -based designer Robbie Wells, a principal of 4Design, a firm which specialises in complex industrial design that fully utilizes the ability of new mapping and design software and 21st century production technology to produce elegant user-friendly objects.

Wells notes that Seidler's 'in the round' designs were created well before architectural software programs came into being and revolutionized architecture in the hands of practitioners such as Frank Gehry and Zaha Hadid.

Our destination is without question the purest distillation of Bauhaus inspired Modernist architecture in Australasia. Completed in 1950, 'the most talked about house in Sydney' is today the site of pilgrimage for architects and design fans from all over the world. This 'first house' of Australian architecture marks the introduction of Modernist principles that Seidler had learnt under the tutelage of Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius at the Harvard Graduate School of Design in the mid 1940s. Seidler's pedigree was further embellished as Marcel Breuer's first 'employee' in post-war New York (intern is the current term) and finally burnished in the studio of the 'Picasso of concrete' Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer with whom Seidler spent three months en-route in Rio de Janiero before landing in Sydney in September 1948.

In 1946 Seidler had also studied at the famous Black Mountain College in North Carolina under another Bauhaus luminary Josef Albers – few, if any, young architects anywhere in the world could boast such impressive conceptual 'bloodlines'.

Harry Seidler (1923–2006) was lured to Sydney with the promise of his first architectural commission, to design a house for his parents, recently arrived immigrants from war torn Europe. His path to the Antipodes was similar to émigré architects such as Vlad Cacala and Ernst Plischke who arrived in New Zealand. Seidler arrived in Sydney bursting with a desire to put into reality, his freshly minted training, "Gropius … made us feel… that we were destined to change the physical world." [1]

On completion, the house was a game changer and launched Seidler as an overnight architectural star. The Rose Seidler house has been described as a 'built manifesto… as an attention getter it remains unbeaten – this house with its TV screen frontality, open pinwheel plan and elevated trapdoor entry – perches on its grassy site like an arrival from space.' [2]

In 2015, sixty five years after completion, this rather modest 148m² three bedroom family home still crackles with the shock of the new. Two bold elements startle: what Seidler calls the house's 'tentacles' in the form of the signature dramatic ramp, hewn stone walls and louvre screen which anchor the 'floating' cube form to planet Earth *and* Harry Seidler's own abstract mural – a daring melange of Miro-esque forms, Mondrian's primary colours and Le Corbusier's flair for dramatic placement a la the Pavilion Suisse at the Cité Universitaire (1933). The effect is similar to viewing Corbusier's Chandigarh Parliament building for the first time: the blasts of colour are unanticipated and liberating. The insistence of much black and white

architectural photography to focus on sculptural form is overwhelmed by Seidler's exuberant and surefooted use of colour, both in the mural and in detailing throughout the interior.

One of the central tenets of the original Weimar era Bauhaus was the elimination of barriers between the plastic, design and fine arts. Josef Albers (1888 – 1976), whom Seidler had sought out in his time at Black Mountain College, was a leading proponent of this deconstruction of the

1 Helen O'Neill, *Harry Seidler A Singular Vision*, Harper Collins Publisher, Australia, 2013, p.94

2 Elizabeth Farrelly, *Good Weekend*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11-12 June 2004, p.39

3. Helen O'Neill, *Harry Seidler A Singular Vision*, Harper Collins Publisher, Australia, 2013, p.105

4, 5. Ron Sang in conversation with Hamish Coney, May 2015

traditional silo approach to creative disciplines and his influence was felt keenly by the young architect who described his time with Albers thus, "This man made me recognise that certain things have more dynamics, have more tension, more interest to our eyes than the phlegmatic, traditional way of creating compositions." [3] The placement of his own mural in the very heart of the Rose Seidler house, both conceptually and physically, appears to be a clear homage to his Bauhaus masters and a statement of intent. Over the next fifty years, Seidler's collaborations with artists such as Frank Stella, Sol Lewitt, Alexander Calder and Albers himself were a defining element of the Seidler experience. A fascinating curated exhibition at the Museum of Sydney in early 2015 entitled *Harry Seidler: Painting Toward Architecture* highlighted the architect's faithfulness to the Bauhaus principle of interdisciplinary partnerships.

A young Ron Sang first visited Sydney during his student years in the early 1960s to explore many of the key early commercial buildings. A later highlight was a visit to Seidler's own house in Killara dating to 1967. Sang recalls being very taken with Seidler's placement of art, "It was visiting his house that introduced me to Josef Albers.
I remember distinctly that he had an original oil painting, *Homage to the Square*. I have always wanted one. It took me nearly fifty years to get a suite of three prints!" [4]

Sang freely admits that a number of Seidler design formats have been incorporated into his own work.

"I have amalgamated some of these ideas, even to this day. The ramp is one that I have come back to many times. But what impressed me most of all was his use of modern art. It was as a result of seeing art in his building that started me collecting art and introducing art into my commercial building designs." [5]

"...the blasts of colour are unanticipated and liberating. The insistence of much black and white architectural photography to focus on sculptural form is overwhelmed by Seidler's exuberant and surefooted use of colour..."

Top 10 contemporary artworks by artist

Bill Hammond
Singer Songwriter (detail)
acrylic on unstretched canvas
title inscribed, signed and dated 2001
2150 x 2590mm

Realised $322 435

The David and Angela Wright Collection
June 2011

This 2001 canvas presents as a vast and epic sweep, almost cinematic in its ambition. Hammond's world view was recalibrated by a journey to the Auckland Islands in the in 1989. From this point 'Buller's' birds became his primary subject matter – a metaphor for a primeval period before the intervention of humans, in which the birds hold court. The allure of these fantasy pieces is in the unknowable yet courtly hierarchy at play. The range of art historical and literary reference points in these works add to the richness of the backstory.

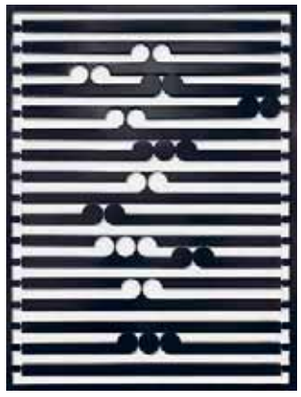
Singer Songwriter features a more restrained palette than many of the deep green works of the late 1990s. Its sale in 2011 was just shy of the record at auction in New Zealand, testimony to the rarity and scale of such a major canvas. Ten works by Hammond have fetched over the $200 000 mark in the last ten years, *Singer Songwriter* being in the very upper echelon of these achieved prices.

Michael Parekowhai
Tu Tama Ra
Powder coated steel
Circa 2005
2200 x 1650 x 65mm

Realised $164 150*

Important Paintings and Contemporary Art
April 2015

* current artist at auction record



This major relief sculpture doubled the previous high price for Michael Parekowhai at auction when offered earlier this year, making *Tu Tama Ra* the first work by Parekowhai to achieve over $100 000 at auction. This particular work with its clear reference to Gordon Walters reprises the kitset form of the major work *Kiss the Baby Goodbye* in the collection of the Auckland Art Gallery. Parekowhai, who works across multiple mediums including sculpture, installation and photography is currently the subject of a major exhibition at the Gallery of Modern Art in Brisbane entitled *The Promised Land*. The artist also represented New Zealand at the Venice Biennale in 2011 with the body of work entitled *On Looking into Chapman's Homer. Tu Tama Ra* reveals the depth of research and cultural analysis that is Parekowhai's hallmark as well as the exacting nature of his sculptural production.

Dale Frank
Ultimogeniture Brachylogy Brain Fever Dead Set (detail)
varnish on canvas
signed and dated 2006/2007 verso
2000 x 2000mm

Realised $83 247*

The Russell and Shirley Hodgson Collection
March 2012

* current artist at auction record

A work of great potency and featuring dazzling paint management ... *Brain Fever Dead Set* is the highest price for a Dale Frank at auction by some margin on both sides of the Tasman. This example dating to 2006/07 was offered as part of a superb contemporary art collection in 2012. Frank's particular genius lies in the sense of peril and 'on the edge' thrill as high density varnish and pigment travels on the paint surface as it coagulates into the complex yet sensuous forms that are unique to his brand of contemporary abstraction. *Dead Set* is a particularly vibrant 'nocturne' variant, a definitive work from the mid 2000s.

Paul Dibble
Feather Weight
bronze, edition of 3
signed and dated 2001
3400 x 900 x 900mm

Realised $76 545*

Important Paintings and Sculpture
May 2008

* current artist at auction record

Feather Weight from 2001 is anything but as the A+O team can attest to. At 3.4 metre high and weighing hundreds of kilograms it is a huge bronze that dominates any environment. Though massive in scale, the subject is almost counter intuitive – a feather from the now extinct Huia preserved forever at monumental scale. The engineering and foundry skill required to execute such a work means the Palmerston North based artist is one of only a handful of sculptors anywhere who can realise such a magnificent piece. The work was keenly contested in A+O's second art catalogue of 2008 and remains a record price for Dibble's work at auction seven years later.

Peter Stichbury
Liberty
acrylic on linen
title inscribed, signed and dated 2001 and inscribed *(The Hip Squad)* verso
607 x 506mm

Realised $70 350*

Important Paintings and Contemporary Art
November 2012

* current artist at auction record

Peter Stichbury is an artist with a growing international reputation, plenty of publication coverage and sell out shows in New Zealand and America. His subject matter sits in the 21st century fashion, body image and beauty zeitgeist. Many of his emblematic subjects such as *Liberty* are sourced from a blizzard of online sources. Stichbury's skill as a painter is breathtaking in the flesh and the ravishing subject matter alloyed to his facility as a painter is a dynamite combination. This example from the classic *Hip Squad* series of 2001 is a paean to feminine allure. The kicker with this work and with much of Stichbury's oeuvre is the hint of tempus fugit melancholy that is a counterweight to the shiny perfection of the image. This tension lies at the heart of his wider market appeal. Such works are extremely rare to market and, as Stichbury's career is increasingly internationally focussed, becoming harder to access in New Zealand.

Ben Plumbly reviews ten of A+O's highest 21st century artworks at auction.

Seraphine Pick
Hide Out (detail)
oil on linen, diptych
title inscribed, signed and dated 2006 verso
1500 x 2400mm

Realised $58 625*

Important Paintings and Contemporary Art
August 2014

* current artist at auction record

Seraphine Pick is currently the subject of a major exhibition at the Dowse gallery entitled *White Noise*. Her subject matter can at times appear obtuse but within the calvacade of figures and tableau that populate her large scale canvases of which *Hide Out* is one of the finest to be offered at auction, a fuzzy logic asserts itself. The dreamscape of subconscious role-playing of *Hide Out* takes place over a brilliant lime green background making for a diptych of graphic impact – quite literally a show- stopper. This work was hugely admired in the August 2014 viewing and subject to keen competition on auction night resulting in a record auction price for the artist. John Bywater in his catalogue essay for the work noted an art historical lineage in such a work that travels to artists such as Bruegel and Bosch. This is entirely appropriate as Pick's work often has a tone of the medieval.

Shane Cotton
Gate (I – XII) Nga Rangi Tuhaha (detail)
acrylic on 12 panels, each variously inscribed, signed and dated 2003
Each panel 250 x 250mm, 600 x 2000mm installation dimensions

Realised $58 625

Important Paintings and Contemporary Art
November 2009

Shane Cotton's conflation of Maori symbolism and contemporary art tropes has made him both a critical and market favourite. His works are densely layered and informed by Maori and European texts, mythological beliefs and the cross-pollination between these, frequently from a Maori point of view. *Gate (1-XII) Nga Rangi Tuhaha* relates to the 12 heavenly precincts of Maori mythology, hence the 12 panels that comprise this work. The insertion of the grisly moko mokai heads of 19th century trade is a tactic to externalise the perils of bi-cultural trade in both an economic and cultural sense. Such loaded subject matter makes demands on the viewer and gives his work enduring power.

John Pule
Hake Ago Pato Pato (Rising, Falling)
oil and ink on canvas
signed and dated 2004,
title inscribed verso
2000 x 2000mm

Realised $55 100

The David and Angela Wright Collection
June 2011

John Pule's Hiapo or Nueian tapa based works are amongst the most distinctive produced in New Zealand over the last two decades. Pule is a polymath, a painter of note and a celebrated poet. *Hake Ago Pato Pato (Rising/Falling)* from 2004 with its distinctive blood red clouds and trailing cordyline vines is a classic exemplar of his anthropological world view. Such works are notable for myriad graphic annotations in the form of churches, hybrid creatures and moments of lyrical sensuality. There is plenty to be 'read' in these canvases – symbols of both death and regeneration abound. It is this elastic complexity within a ravishing painterly composition that makes his work so absorbing and so highly in demand by collectors.

Stephen Bambury
Column of Light (detail)
acrylic and resin on seven aluminium panels
title inscribed, signed and dated 2001 – 02 verso
3680 x 700mm

Realised $52 690

Important Paintings and Contemporary Art
November 2010

Stephen Bambury holds a pivotal position in any discussion of New Zealand abstraction. His ladder or chakra works are amongst the most sought after. This seven panel work rises to a height of over 3.5 metres making it an imposing sight. Bambury is able to allude to a full suite of conceptual precursor figures and spiritual sources for such a work. At the same time his knack for adding to the conversation in such a muscular yet balanced manner makes his work instantly recognisable. *Column of Light* from the early 2000s features a celebratory yellow and orange palette realised in hefty blocks of resin, giving the work a physical presence to match its columnar form and scale. Such works are highly sought after and this work achieved the record for his work at auction when it sold at A+O in 2010. This figure has been surpassed twice since at A+O with the record standing at $64 485 achieved in April 2015 for a similar seven panel work entitled *"That Reveals Itself Continuously"* dating to 1999.

Andrew McLeod
Kowhaiwhai Sun (detail)
oil on canvas, 4 panels
1800 x 4000mm overall

Realised $43 380

Important Paintings and Contemporary Art
April 2013

Kowhaiwhai Sun whilst positioning as a boldy graphic, large-scale contemporary painting is also a work deeply steeped within the culture of Maori image making and the green shoots of New Zealand Modernism. It is a painting that draws a long bow. Andrew McLeod's ability to span such a broad range of conceptual inputs is a feature of his complex and often free-wheeling canvases. This four panel work re-contextualises the kowhaiwhai form via a psychedelic prism with a nod to the Modernist primitivism of Theo Schoon, a figure frequently quoted in his work. The massive 4 metre series of canvases is a knowing 'colour field' painting that operates on a layered structure of design, art history and pop culture reference points. McLeod is one of the most distinctive voices to have emerged in New Zealand in the 21st century and his star is very much in the ascendant.

Mark Adams
1978. Triangle Road Massey. Afa. Sua Suluape Paulo tufuga tatatau
35mm Kodak Ektachrome transparency

The Past Never Goes Away

Mark Adams' practice is embued with the traces of our colonial history. From his large plate camera to his chosen subject matter Adams practice is multi-layered but open-minded and ended. *Content* caught up with Adams during his recent exhibition at Two Rooms in Auckland entitled *Nine Fathoms Passage*.

Content: We live in a digital age yet your work is avowedly analogue, large plate photography not unlike the first photographers of New Zealand. Why do you choose to work in this way and is this connection to earlier photographic practice important to you in terms of tradition, legacy, stylistically?

Mark Adams: I picked up a large format camera at art school at Ilam in the 1960s and have never put it down. It produces the best images with the most resolution, the closest thing to the well-focused human eye that there is. This is the closest approach to the subject possible within the medium. Subjects enlarged from 10 x 8 inch negatives up to mural scale carry the most information possible. In my case the medium itself is also the subject. The technology is close to the 19th century technology of the photographers from whom I can claim to descend such as Alfred Burton or Dr Barker for example and although not a large format photographer, the Modernist Theo Schoon.

In the late 70s I set out to break out of the pre-Modernist and the Modernist paradigms represented by these people. They were the colonial photographers photographing the burgeoning colony and it's 'others'. In Theo's case he represents a classic example of the problematic relationship between Western Modernism and primitivism and its sources, the colonised indigenous.

Content: Tell us about your encounter with the work of Theo Schoon. Why it was you visited him and are there discussions you had about his practice that you could pass on?

MA: In 1973 I was living in Sydney with a good friend who knew Theo who was living in Coogee Beach and we used to go over and stay the night there. I used his darkroom and his enlarger to do my prints sometimes. Theo showed us all his stuff. I spent one afternoon sitting on the floor going through boxes and boxes of his 120 format Ektachrome transparencies which comprised his Rotorua thermal or 'Mudpool Modernism' work. They were fabulous. I 'got' them, got what he was doing. I also saw work that used kowhaiwhai patterns. He saw himself as using and improving the motifs in a way that only he, as a European art school trained Modernist, was capable of doing. He was a naughty boy, an arrogant sod, although loveable intermittently.

Content: Your work is deeply rooted within specific narratives of New Zealand colonial history. Why has this been such a constant in your work and what first drew you in this direction?

MA: In my case I am playing an 'as if' game. As if I am an ethnographic or colonial photographer, but in my case the subject is not Maori or Polynesian people and their cultures... it is my relationship, as a white boy settler descendant in Polynesia, with specific Maori and Polynesians and their cultures at specific times and places. It is only by looking at Maori that Pakeha become visible. The pressure of Pakeha becomes visible. This stance positions me as the enemy. That is the position I have to work from. Any other way is dishonest. The reason I work in this field is because to me it is the only interesting thing about this place. The past never goes away. It is always here writing our script now. I have always read history and I research the areas I want to work on. I read everything from archaeological bulletins to tribal histories, 'I also approach the relevant tribal authorities and elders and try and explain what it is I am trying to do and get their permission. I need a dialogue. This is what both Theo and Gordon Walters didn't do. They didn't attempt to establish relationships with tribal authorities which is why their work using Maori forms remains problematic. If there really is a 'space between' it is not a space of empyream calm it is a turbulent space'.

Content: The image we illustrate is of a Samoan wrestler in the 1970s. Can you tell us about this body of work and this image?

MA: The body of work is called Tatau and has been widely exhibited but this image less so. It came about by accident. I was commissioned to shoot a guy with a tattoo for an Australian magazine and then I subsequently discovered that Paul Suluape was living in Auckland, He is the main tattooist of his generation and I set out to meet him. This was early 1978. Tony Fomison and I went to meet him in Mangere one Sunday and said "Hello, we're artists" (laughs). We wanted to connect with a Samoan artist. I asked him if I could photograph his practice and he took us at face value and said yes.

I found this process very powerful. When I saw the first tatau image I took I went "Wow". The image had the ability to interrogate me... you know a white boy in a Grey Lynn living room with this guy with this fabulous tattoo. Who is the stranger in the frame here? Well actually it's me. Is this Auckland? Is this Polynesia? Yes, it is Polynesia. I'm a white boy in Polynesia and the implication of that is the guts of everything whether we like it or not – our colonial history. Our whole weird fabulous mess.

Mark Adams was born in 1949 and studied at the Canterbury School of Fine Arts, Ilam from 1967-1970. His photographic practice has been the subject of major publications including Land of Memories (1993), Cook's Sites: Revisiting History (1999), Rauru: Tene Waitere, Maori Carving, Colonial History (2009) and Tatau: Samoan Tattoo, New Zealand Art, Global Culture (2009). Examples of his work are in public collections including Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa and Christchurch Art Gallery, Australian National Gallery, Queensland Art Gallery, Cambridge University, Auckland University. In 2009 He was named as the Marti Friedlander award winner by the New Zealand Arts Foundation. Mark is represented by Two Rooms, Auckland and McNamara Gallery, Whanganui.

Above: Theo Schoon, *Mud Wave, Waiotapu Mud Pool*. Image circa 1967 and later printed in 1982 by Schoon and John Perry from the Ektachrome transparency

Hidden in Plain Sight

E. J Bellocq (John Ernest Joseph Bellocq 1873 – 1949), *Prostitute, Storyville, New Orleans, circa 1912*, gold toned P.O.P print. This example with original blind stamp applied verso reads Photograph by E.J Bellocq. New Orleans circa 1911 – 1913. Collection Lee Friedlander and signed by Lee Friedlander. From the collection of Michael Seresin, offered at ART+OBJECT, June 2011.

Content met Fiona Pardington on the eve of her major career survey at the City Gallery in Wellington to discuss her working methodology and her enduring regard for the New Orleans Storyville images of E. J. Bellocq (1873–1949).

Content: You have chosen a fascinating body of work that struck you early in your career?

Fiona Pardington: Bellocq's works that touched me very deeply and are as important to me now as they were when I first met them. They were like thunderclaps in the midday sky, suddenly your whole world gets jiggled around. My horizons shifted. I had a desire to know these works and that desire is lasting a lifetime. You can't say that about many things… your dogs die, your lovers run off with somebody else. I can go back to the book when I am feeling dry and slake my thirst.

Content: The Bellocq images were produced in Storyville before the 1920s, then lost and rediscovered in the 1970s. When did you first encounter them?

FP: I have to thank Mark Adams who, once he learnt that I was a fan, gave me an original hard back book of the these photographs which I cherish. Mark is one of the reasons I am a photographer. That would have been just as I started at Elam (in the 1980s). At that time I really didn't know very much about anything to do with art, until I got to Elam. I'd lived in beach and farming communities up until this time. My parents were blue collar. Mum worked at the TAB part time and Dad was a painter and paper hanger and then became a commercial fisherman. Mum was great. She used to take me to the Auckland Library every week. Mum was very assiduous about my interest in art and my education generally. So I had seen a bit of art but I hadn't really understood the first thing about photography until I had a chance to get into a darkroom at art school.

Content: So that first period at Elam must have been an avalanche of new information?

FP: Yes, everything kind of broke down and I had to start again, but that was inevitable. For me, there was something special, even transformative, about the darkroom. The dark is close and intimate. Sound is heightened, the sound of water, darkened colours. The photography department then was for failed painters (laughs). People who couldn't hack it in other departments, but I quickly realised that it was full of adventuring, bold people who were on a mission.

Content: So what is it about that Storyville body of images that struck you then and you find that there is still a place for it in your life?

FP: I loved that idea that they were lost in a drawer and then discovered. There is something about the found nature of these works which is very like the actual photographic moment.

One of the ideas that I have built up in my own work and through reading theory is the idea of haecciety, the moment in time that Deleuze and Guttari describe. It is referred to in their book *One Thousand Plateaus* and I find it works very well for me, this concept of haecciety. These are also moments of hallucinogenic 'claritas'. It is the same for me taking a photographic image. I witness a moment coalesce – it is just for you and you must recognise it in order for it to exist. That is why it is good to have faith in, and maintain your practice… so you can decide swiftly when that moment occurs. So coming back to Bellocq, it is that whole idea of being snatched from the grips of oblivion. Hidden in plain sight if you like.

Content: You have been exhibiting now for thirty years?

FP: Over thirty years. My first show was with Patrick Reynolds in 1983 at Real Pictures.

Content: Your next show is quite an important one I hear.*

FP: Yes, I've got my survey show coming up at the City Gallery in Wellington which opens on the 22nd of August. My brother is designing a fantastic tome for me! It will have about one hundred and fifty plates. I've got nothing to worry about because my brother Neil is in control. He is a perfectionist. I feel very proud of that. I had been avoiding a survey because it is a bit like digging a grave and jumping into it. But Aaron Lister, the curator at the City Gallery, talked me into it! We want to introduce work that most will not have seen, but where the core themes relate, expand and resonate amongst themselves.

Content: You've chosen a work from 1997 to illustrate this article. Tell us about this striking rose.

FP: Yes, this is a favourite titled *Deep Secret*. It is a dew laden rose. I photographed it when I was doing the Frances Hodgkin Fellowship in Dunedin. I had a huge rose garden out the back that I tended. *Deep Secret* is the name of this beautiful, old fashioned dark red rose, heavily petalled and with a heavy, striking fragrance. *Deep Secret* reminds me of my childhood with my mum and beloved grandmother. When I would go to school, Mum used to pick a rose, put it in tinfoil and I would give it to the teacher. The sheer weight of the precariously collected, jewel-like dew on a fat, single, fully open rose, draws the blousy petals softly earthwards, it is a subtly weighted movement that is delicate, luxurious, and burdened. The roses weepy perfection will tumble from bloom to blown, the dew falling like a child's tears.

Fiona Pardington, *Deep Secret* 1997 gelatin silver photograph taken with a 4 x 5" Sinar camera printed on fibre based archival paper . Courtesy of the artist and Starkwhite, Auckland.

Dr Fiona Pardington was born in Auckland in 1961. She is of Maori (Ngāi Tahu, Kati Mamoe and Ngāti Kahungunu) and Scottish (Clan Cameron of Erracht) descent. She holds a Doctorate in Fine Arts from the University of Auckland.

Fiona has received many fellowships, residencies, awards and grants including the Moet & Chandon Fellow (France) in 1991-92, the Frances Hodgkins Fellow in both 1996 and 1997, the Ngai Tahu residency at Otago Polytechnic in 2006 and an Arts Foundation Laureate Award in 2011.

In 2008 the New Zealand Government gifted a suite of her heitiki prints to the Musee du Quai Branly, Paris.

Fiona is represented by Starkwhite, Auckland, Suite, Wellington and Nadene Milne Gallery, Wanaka.

* Fiona Pardington, *A Beautiful Hesitation*, Aaron Lister curator at the City Gallery Wellington, August 22 to November 22, 2015. Also Fiona Pardington, *Childish Things,* at Starkwhite Gallery, Auckland, August 12 to September 19, 2015.

A+O Top 10 studio ceramics sales at auction

Dame Lucie Rie and Hans Coper

Six place coffee set comprising a coffee pot and milk jug each with side handles, sugar basin and six cups and saucers. Stoneware with manganese glaze with sgraffito banding to the exterior and white tin glazed interior. Circa 1960. Impressed LR and HC seal marks to the base of the cups, the coffee pot, milk jug and sugar basin with LR seal marks

Realised $16 415

The Martin Hill Collection
of International Ceramics
June 2011

Hans Coper (1920–1981) and Dame Lucie Rie (1902–1995) are inextricably linked via both the turbulent upheaval of WWII and the fact that Coper began his ceramics career as an assistant in Rie's studio in 1946 and continuing there as his work matured until 1958. Collaborative pieces are amongst the rarest of all and highly sought after by collectors. The provenance of this piece is confirmed by the impressed marks of both ceramicists to the bases. This complete coffee set is notable for Rie's signature sgraffitto pattern motif. A small number of pieces by both practitioners was imported into New Zealand and sold through Stockton's in Wellington between 1952 and 1962.

Len Castle

Sulphurous bowl

Realised $13 505

The Ron Sang Collection
March 2015

Len Castle's early training as a chemist is manifest in the dazzling array of unique glazes he created to pay homage to the volcanic and geothermal characteristics of the New Zealand landscape. The late sulphur bowls of which this is a supreme example are particularly notable for this brilliant matte yellow sulphur glaze with pronounced crackelature to the cavetto. These particular works were produced in collaboration with Graham Ambrose and the fugitive glazing process resulted in only a small run of examples.

Roy Cowan

Little Forest
salt glazed stoneware
H.700 x W.500mm

Realised $12 610

The Ron Sang Collection
March 2015

Roy Cowan's large scale ceramic sculptures form a special crossover category within the New Zealand history of studio pottery. These large slab like stoneware forms encapsulate concepts of organic or mechanical growth, in this case the budding tree as it emerges from its tubular trunks. Such examples are a rarity and a triumph of the ceramicists arts, not the least of which is engineering as the sheer weight of clay in these pieces made them subject to many elements of chance in construction, glazing and firing.

Len Castle

Crater Lake bowl with alkaline blue glaze to the well and textured and sculpted cavetto
D.500mm

Realised $12 310

The Ron Sang Collection
March 2015

The crater lake bowls form a distinctive and instantly recognisable group within the oeuvre of Len Castle (1924–2011). The crystalline' lake' that pools in these works is formed by a special alkaline, near transparent glaze that refers to a volcanic body of water. This example from the Ron Sang collection is particularly notable for the pronounced crust that surrounds the perimeter.

Hans Coper

An early angular stoneware vase, the interior in mat manganese, the exterior textured with a buff white slip, raised on a cylindrical foot
circa 1958
Impressed HC seal mark to the base
H.150mm

Realised $11 725

The Martin Hill Collection
of International Ceramics
June 2011

This is a fine example of Hans Coper's modernist project to unite the earliest forms of pottery design with 20th century sculptural form, most notably the columnar forms of Constantin Brancusi. Coper at the time took the utilitarian roots of pottery as far as anyone into the realm of sculpture with his spade, Cycladic and angular vases. This piece is notable for Coper's reductive and weathered surface treatment. Such an example is extremely rare in New Zealand being the only second example I have catalogued and offered in 22 years working with New Zealand and international studio ceramics.

A+O director of Valuation and Collections Management James Parkinson reviews ten significant international and New Zealand ceramics offered since 2007.

Len Castle and Theo Schoon

Nineteen high-fired earthenware umber tablets made by Castle, impressed with patterns representing an almost complete dictionary of examples of Schoon's stamps. The stamps were subsequently deposited at Te Papa circa 1984
The tablets bear approximately 153 impressions, while 144 stamps appear individual
various sizes, largest being 40 x 110 x 8mm

Realised $11 425

Modernism in New Zealand
May 2014

The collaboration between Theo Schoon (1915–1985) and Len Castle was sustaining for both artists and they remained artistic friends and colleagues for over thirty years. These earthenware tablets sit within the context of the documentary as much as studio ceramics being amongst the final works made by Schoon to record the variety of Maori, Polynesian and Indonesian inspired motifs that he employed to stamp into his own ceramic platters and bowls.

Len Castle

Inverted volcano
moulded earthenware with matt black exterior and interior red lava glaze
The jagged rim with splashes and spills of the red lava glaze
W. 850mm

Realised $10 810

The Ron Sang Collection
March 2015

The inverted volcano is one of the most distinctive of all of Len Castle's signature forms. In this case the title is self-explanatory and the play of 'erupting' lava glaze from the well over the jagged upper line and onto the exterior is amongst the most pronounced of any example offered at A+O. Like much of Castle's later work this piece is a showcase for the artist's command of his medium alloyed to an exuberant display of brilliant glazing control to depict powerful forces of nature.

Roy Cowan

Little Managed Forest
salt glazed stoneware
H.830 x W.450mm

Realised $10 810

The Ron Sang Collection
March 2015

Roy Cowan (1918–2006) led a multi-faceted career as not just a ceramicist but also a designer and printmaker of some note. His ability to organize complex forms in the round is the hallmark of this fine example from the Ron Sang Collection. in 2014 Cowan and his wife Juliet Peter were the subject of a major career retrospective at the Dowse Art Museum entitled *A Modest Modernism*.

Dame Lucie Rie

Coffee set comprising a coffee pot with side handle, milk jug and seven coffee cups and five saucers, each with manganese glaze with vertical radiating sgraffito bands and tin glazed interior
impressed seal mark to each

Realised $10 550

October 2014

A+O has only offered a handful of pieces by Dame Lucie Rie, this being the only coffee set by Rie alone. Each constituent piece bears the hallmark of her fastidious approach and sensuous manganese glaze. Rie's work was sold for a short period of time in New Zealand in the 1950s and 60s. This came about through her association with fellow Austrian, the architect Ernst Plischke who emigrated to New Zealand prior to WWII. This relationship was celebrated in a recent exhibition at the Dowse Art Museum

Len Castle

Lava lake bowl with sculptured cavetto and red lava glaze to the well and black matt stained exterior
D. 450mm

Realised $9365

The Ron Sang Collection
March 2015

Volcanic themes recur continuously in the work of Len Castle over almost six decades. The striking Lava Lake bowls are the companion pieces to the more contemplative crater lake bowls. These works feature an 'active' fiery red interior that is alive with the portent of dangerous activity.

The Art+Object team in the gallery at 3 Abbey Street, Newton, Auckland. From left: James Parkinson (Director, Valuation & Collections Management), Ben Plumbly (Director, Art), Hamish Coney (Managing Director), Giulia Rodighiero (Front of House Manager & Asian Art Specialist), Georgi du Toit (Front of House), Leigh Melville (Director, Art). Absent: Pam Plumbly (Manager, Rare Books).

Content.03

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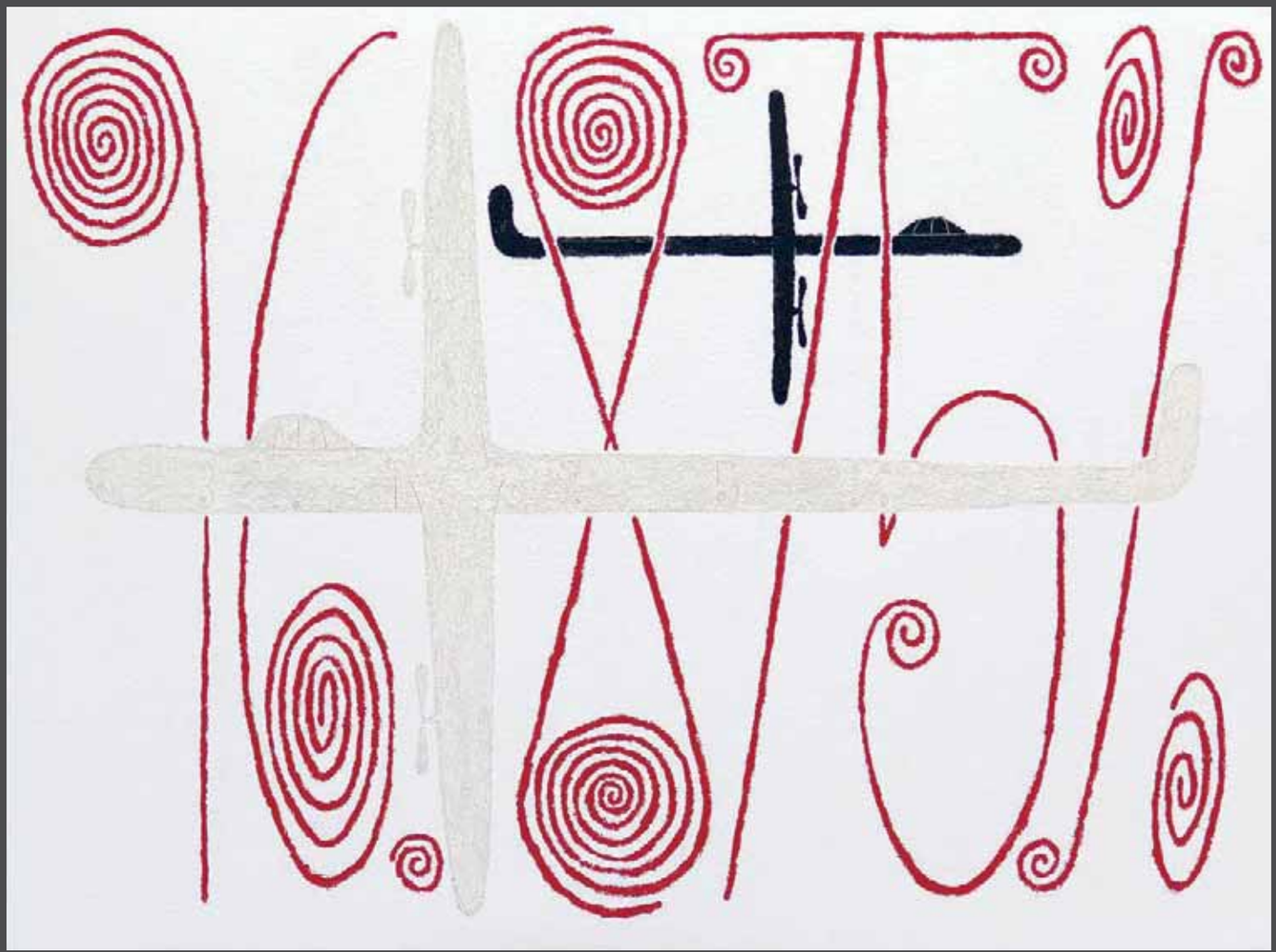
ART + OBJECT

Hamish Coney is Managing Director of ART+OBJECT and has devised and managed the CONTENT project. He was a winner of the Qantas media awards Arts columnist of the year in 2009 and has contributed to numerous magazines and journals. Hamish is a trustee of The Kauri Project.

Ben Plumbly is a widely respected art valuer, auctioneer and market commentator. He holds a first class honours degree in Art History and has managed the sale of many of the country's most important artworks and collections including the Les and Milly Paris Collection in 2012 and in 2015 the collections of Ron Sang and Dame Judith Binney and Sebastian Black.

Leigh Melville manages the A+O art department in conjunction with Ben Plumbly and was appointed a director in 2014. Leigh boasts wide connections within the New Zealand artscene in her capacity as Chair, NZ at Venice Patrons. Her report on pages 20–24. details the role played by New Zealand's most prominent patrons group.

James Parkinson is New Zealand's leading institutional valuer. In his role as A+O's director of Valuation and Collections Management he oversees major valuation mandates for clients such as Te Papa Tongarewa, Heritage New Zealand, The Waikato Museum and many others. James is also an authority on New Zealand and international studio ceramics which he reviews on pages 58–59.



Peter Robinson, *96.875%*, acrylic, oilstick and bitumen on canvas, 1800 x 2400mm. $120 000 – $160 000

IMPORTANT PAINTINGS AND CONTEMPORARY ART: 26 NOVEMBER 2015

ENTRIES INVITED

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Creativity takes courage.

- Matisse

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