

# Content.

A MAGAZINE BY ART+OBJECT  
ISSUE 01

## Light Touches

Exclusive interview and photographs from Bill Culbert's stunning Venice Biennale installation *Front Door Out Back*

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A user's guide to the greatest art show on earth

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A view of the Accademia Bridge in Venice from the canal side patio of the Peggy Guggenheim Museum. In the foreground is a detail of Alexander Calder's *The Cow*, 1970





# Content.01





## Opening day at 55th Venice Biennale, 2013

Welcome to the first issue of CONTENT by ART+OBJECT. The inspiration for this magazine is to celebrate New Zealand's visual arts in the world and at home. For those of us lucky enough to be present for the opening of Bill Culbert's *Front Door Out Back* at the Venice Biennale it was a moment we will never forget. "Wow", said

the director of the Tate Sir Nicholas Serota. Assembled guests and NZ patrons nodded in agreement and we all felt very proud. CONTENT readers still have plenty of time to make a date to visit Venice – the Biennale closes on November 24.

A little more urgency will be required to make Sydney Contemporary 2013 this coming September 19–22. Turn to page 10 to find out just why you should join the A+O team and many other Kiwi art fans for what will be a fascinating art experience and, as is always the case with a Sydney visit – a bit of a party.

In the meantime enjoy the original CONTENT on these pages.











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Bill Culbert is representing New Zealand at the 55th Venice Biennale with a tour-de-force of dazzling light dancing about the interiors of the 18th century La Pieta church cloisters. A+O's Hamish Coney visited Culbert in Venice to discuss the genesis of his exhibition *Front Door Out Back*.

The Italian language is rich in terms to describe subtle variations of light and shadow. We've all heard of chiaroscuro, a word that defines the contrast between light and dark. In the Venetian dialect things get even more specific. *Caligo* describes the misty shrouded light which descends on Venice in autumn. *El sbarlusego* alludes to the play of deflected light on internal ceilings from the canals that entwine the city. It's a word unique to Venice.

In this 'light' the choice of the artist Bill Culbert to represent New Zealand at the 55th Biennale seems both logical and inspired.

Since the 1960s, this son of Port Chalmers has explored the metaphorical power of illumination via a body of work that includes photography, sculpture and arrangements of brilliant fluorescent tubes. Over the last six decades Culbert's installations have been exhibited at the Whitechapel Gallery in London, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the Jeu de Paume in Paris and the National Museum of

Warsaw as well as numerous solo shows at galleries in Japan, France, Germany, Australia, England, America along with over fifty years of exhibitions in New Zealand.

Culbert has also been a central figure in major touring exhibitions of New Zealand art internationally such as *Headlands: Thinking Through New Zealand Art* at the opening of the MCA in Sydney in 1992 and *Toi Toi Toi: Three Generations of Artists from New Zealand* at the Museum Fridericianum, Kassel in 1999.

In New Zealand Culbert is perhaps best known for his large-scale collaborations with Ralph Hotere. Installations such as *Blackwater* from 1999 and *Pathway to the Sea - Aramoana*, 1991 are acknowledged as being amongst the most significant in recent New Zealand art history.

With these great works in mind I set out to meet the artist at the site of his Venice exhibition with a great sense of anticipation. Culbert and Venice seemed like a natural fit, but how would

his searing light meets found object schema translate from the controlled environment of the public gallery space to the more freewheeling and well 'found' space of a Venetian church complex.

The first part of preparing for Culbert's exhibition is the journey to arrive at the Istituto Santa Maria della Pieta. It is easy to become distracted. The desire to explore partially glimpsed courtyards and cloisters is one of the unique flavours of a Venetian sojourn. Venice is teeming with tourists and we/they are everywhere. Locals have recently lamented the decline of the resident population to under 60 000, that it was 70 000 in 1996 and 174 000 in 1951 gives an indication of the rapid depopulation trend. On the other hand over 15 million tourists visit annually. This equates to 50 000 tourists or the population of New Plymouth pouring into Venice every day. Actual numbers are much higher in midsummer and reach a peak during the opening week of the Venice Biennale.

La Pieta becomes then, as much a refuge as an art destination. A sense of calm and shelter from the 'storm' just a few steps from some the most visited 'must sees' in Europe was my first impression on entering the 18th century church's vaulted sacristy.



Bill Culbert in the 18th century interior of La Pieta



The internal courtyard showing from left *Walk Reflection* (2001/2013) and *Walk Blue* (2001/2013)

Opposite: Room with a View... *Level* acts as an interface to the external Venetian canal





Shelter from the storm, The 'front door' of La Pieta looks directly onto the lagoon of Venice. *Drop* is elevated in the entrance alcove

*Bebop* in all its syncopated glory

*Daylight Flotsam Venice* occupies the heart of the La Pieta complex

Bang! I run straight into Culbert's *Bebop*, a vast hovering 'chandelier' of fluorescent tubes entwined within a tangle of domestic chairs. This is the 'front door'. The wry choice of title alludes to the musical history of La Pieta; Vivaldi himself was music master here in the early 18th century. The jazzy title is classic Culbert, keeping the energy loose, even playful. *Bebop* in fact takes its name from the vintage brightly coloured formica chairs that Culbert tracked down in a rural town near Avignon, not far from his French home in Provence. The chairs moved with a family emigrating to France from Algeria and

came with their original receipt naming the furniture as *Bebop*.

The jaunty name becomes re-calibrated by Culbert into a metaphor for the transforming power of art and the voyage of the works to Venice itself.

What Culbert brings to the party is a Charlie Parkeresque sense of improvisation jiving within a modernist discourse with roots that go back to Cubism, Duchamp and the Bauhaus inspired experiments of Lazlo Moholy-Nagy, an early art school favourite of Culbert's in the late 1950s.

*Bebop* sets the tone for the exhibition as it weaves through the corridors,

highlighting the high and low points of

For the New Zealand viewer it proposes as a sophisticated variant on the kiwi No.8 wire philosophy. Informal formalism is a good way to think of it

cloisters, courtyards and canalside spaces of La Pieta. Next up is *Daylight Flotsam Venice*... a carpet of found objects and fluro tubes in a dark chamber that opens to the adjacent canal. The work itself is situated only centimetres above the

the exhibition. The other works that complete the exhibition are entitled *Drop* – a companion piece to *Bebop*; *Strait* – a longform version of Culbert's signature punctured plastic detergent containers; *Hut*, *Made in Christchurch* – about and

for the earthquake ravaged city; *Where are the other two?* – stark sculptural amalgams of domestic furniture penetrated by hefty vertical fluro insertions. The works that constitute *Front Door Out Back* riff along the overriding theme of found objects and furniture redefined by both by the play of light and the stuff of lighting. The electrical enablers: fluro housing, wiring and cords play a vital graphic and structural role in Culbert's work.

There is one 'analogue' odd man out. *Level* consists of seven carafes of water arranged in a horizontal row at eyelevel. Installed to the





canalside of La Pietà this deft arrangement acts as a watery Camera Obscura – elegant ‘fish-eye’ lenses. *Level* speaks to millennia of optical enquiry and reveals Culbert’s alertness to the expressive opportunities of found objects.

My first question for Culbert related to the moment that led him away from painting to working directly with light itself. One has to recall that from his earliest training at the Canterbury School of Fine Arts and the Royal College of Art in the 1950s Culbert was fundamentally a painter. The question was, “what was it that working with light enabled you to do

that you could not achieve with painting?” His response was immediate, “I adored painting”. A small pause followed and I could see the artist in his mind’s eye back before a canvas.

Culbert went on to explain that the decisive moment came in the late 1960s when he began to think about getting out of the frame of the canvas, “removing the edge” was the phrase he used to describe his aims.

From this point Culbert began to see the relationship of the object and light in the round, the space between functioning as an enlarged Camera Obscura with the

viewer inside – immediately one’s field of vision is dramatically enlarged.

*Front Door Out Back* is then a summary of forty years of enquiry into objects caught in the “gaze of the light”. If this sounds a bit artspeak it only serves to re-inforce Culbert’s conceptual credentials. For a more complete elucidation on this topic I recommend a thorough read of Ian Wedde’s recent publication *Bill Culbert Making Light Work*.

Above all, what is communicated is the delight of the maker. Culbert’s joyous discoveries look like

play. Culbert’s signature blend of virile conceptual confidence alloyed to an innocent’s sense of wonder is the beating heart of this grand exhibition.

For the New Zealand viewer it proposes as a sophisticated variant on the Kiwi No.8 wire philosophy. Informal formalism is a good way to think of it.

I, along with most New Zealand visitors to La Pietà, naturally experience an exhilarating sense of national pride. Having recourse to the glowing reviews of the international media does the job of balancing any residual art

lingoism. On opening night Nicholas Serota, director of the Tate, began his address with the words, “Wow, Bill you have surpassed yourself.” In the following days the impact of *Front Door Out Back* was echoed by respected British art commentator Waldemar Januszczak, writing in the *Sunday Times* whose praise was unequivocal. “My favourite pavilion was New Zealand’s where Bill Culbert’s lovely neon interventions, scattered about a crumbling Venetian church, avoid the spiritual angst that characterises much of the Biennale, and replace it with delicacy and light.”





Santa Maria Della Pietà is just minutes from St Mark's Square on the main thoroughfare of Riva degli Schiavoni in the Castello Sestiere, a short walk from the Arsenale and the Venice Biennale Giardini

Highlighting one of the themes that has emerged at this year's Biennale, the sense of modernist ideals of simplicity and material eloquence reasserting their relevance amidst the more strident conceptual claims of much contemporary art the *Independent's* Marcus Field writes, "...there is a treat for fans of transcendent minimalist art created by two veteran practitioners. A retrospective at the Correr museum of work by Anthony Caro, 90 next year, is a reminder of what beauty can be produced from simple planes of coloured metal. Bill Culbert represents New Zealand at the Biennale, but he is an honorary Brit, having trained in London and settled in the city. His installation of fluorescent lightworks in the church where Vivaldi taught music creates a dramatic dialogue with the architecture, an

effect which delighted Tate director Nicholas Serota who opened the show."

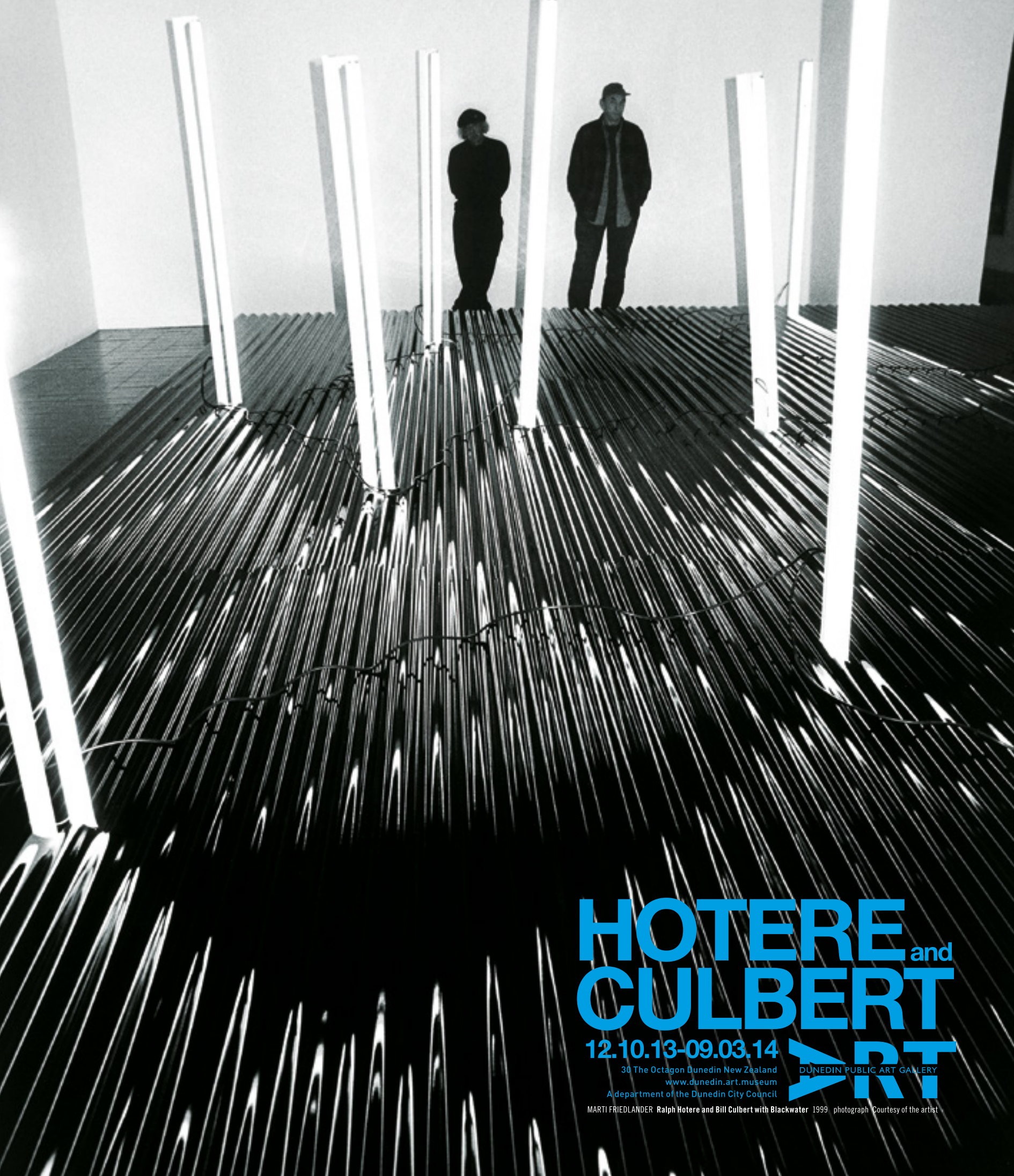
As the images on these pages attest Culbert's works fill La Pietà. In 2011 Culbert spent a good deal of time exploring Venice for a location that could accommodate the multi-part exhibition he had planned. He found an inspirational partner in the grand 18th century church, one that acts as a metaphor for Venice itself – spaces of dark and light, intimacy and exaltation.

In speaking with Culbert, he wryly acknowledged both the unique challenges of working in Venice where everything has to arrive at the location by boats of various capacities and tides must be judged to the hour so component parts can be unloaded. Supply of electricity is by no means

a given or constant. But Culbert is an artist used to doing much more than hanging works and for him La Pietà was the opportunity of a lifetime. His description of *Front Door Outback* as a show without a distinct beginning or end, both inside and outside at the same time, is perfectly suited to the diversity of spaces of La Pietà. After speaking with Culbert I wandered around the exhibition with his final words still fresh, "I've used every part of it".

Coming soon... look out for the book of the exhibition, *Front Door Out Back* published by Christchurch Art Gallery in association with Massey University and Creative New Zealand, featuring numerous colour installation views alongside essays by Justin Paton, Ian Wedde, Yves Abrioux and Andrew Wilson. Available through [www.christchurchartgallery.org.nz/shop](http://www.christchurchartgallery.org.nz/shop)





# HOTERE and CULBERT

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30 The Octagon Dunedin New Zealand

[www.dunedin.art.museum](http://www.dunedin.art.museum)

A department of the Dunedin City Council



MARTI FRIEDLANDER Ralph Hotere and Bill Culbert with Blackwater 1999 photograph Courtesy of the artist



# SYDNEY13 CONTEMPORARY

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AUSTRALIA'S NEW  
INTERNATIONAL  
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In September a new art fair opens with a bigger and better model. Content speaks to Sydney Contemporary 13 director Barry Keldoulis and finds out why Kiwi art fans should be booking tickets and organizing their diaries to attend.



**Content: Melbourne has a long established art fair as does Auckland. It feels like a long time coming for Sydney. There is a bit of buzz in the air for Sydney Contemporary. How come it has taken so long?**

Barry Keldoulis: The life of a city goes in cycles. After the high of the Olympics in 2000, there was a bit of a lull. In the last few years Sydney has really become re-energised. People have always asked why doesn't Sydney have a premium art fair. We are about to give them one. I think it is a good time. The cycle is on the up. There are a lot of young new collectors on the scene and the energy is very good. I think the regeneration of the MCA has been very positive. In the

first nine months they had about one million visitors. The Art Gallery of New South Wales has also doubled the amount of floorspace committed to contemporary art. So the timing and energy for the visual arts is positive right now. Sydney is ready for the fair.

**So the timing is right. But what was the catalyst for the art fair now? What was the X factor to get things going?**

So let's say the kindling was there but credit for the spark that lit the flame has to go to Tim Etchells, who is the founder of Art Hong Kong that is now Art Basel Hong Kong. Tim has been a long time visitor to Sydney and one who has asked the question why doesn't Sydney have an international fair? Actually, he has been badgering me for years at various fairs around the world, so good on him for stumping up the money and the enthusiasm to kick start a premium fair in Sydney. We think we are

onto a good thing as the general level of excitement amongst the galleries and the collector base is there. I think Australians are great travellers to cultural events but everyone is excited about the idea of *not* having to travel to a major fair.

**The Carriageworks location looks incredible. Tell us a little about the choice of venue?**

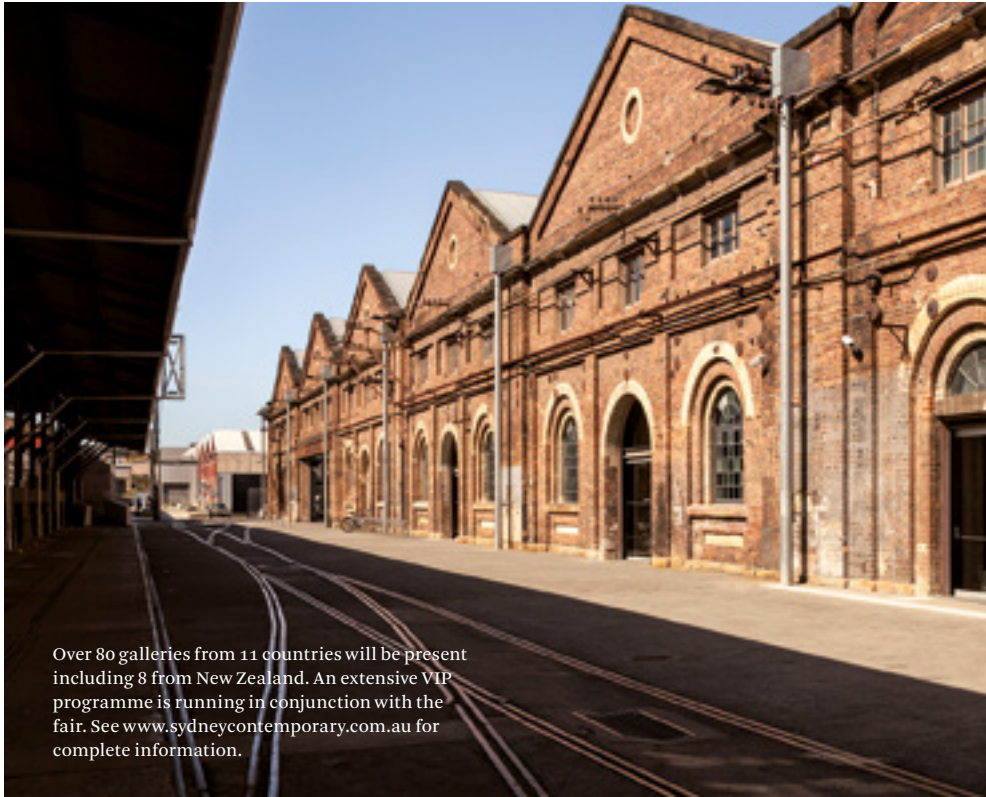
This ties in with the "why now" question. Sydney has a convention centre which is much like any similar centre in the world. But Carriageworks is a site that is unlike anything else. The venue is central – only five to ten minutes from the centre of the city. It is an architectural award winning intervention into a Victorian era railyards. So there are these fantastically grand spaces which have had theatre spaces installed into them whilst retaining the heritage features. The complex has a great flavour. For Sydney Contemporary

we are opening up some new spaces which will make the fair dynamic and fresh. The Carriageworks will immediately make the fair feel different from anything else on offer around the world.

**I know you have put a lot of work into the different zones and installation spaces. Can you tell us about these?**

We have three distinct programs for installation, video and talks, each of which is curated. Performance artworks will be something new. The nature of the spaces allows for working on a larger scale than many of the artists are used to, creating enormous opportunities. I think this will be a real highlight for visitors. For example, Seung Yul Oh, who will be well known to New Zealand collectors, is creating a work with large inflatable balls inserted into the roof spaces. Then there are hanging sculptures by the South African artist Lyndi Sales.





Over 80 galleries from 11 countries will be present including 8 from New Zealand. An extensive VIP programme is running in conjunction with the fair. See [www.sydneycontemporary.com.au](http://www.sydneycontemporary.com.au) for complete information.



Liam Benson, *The Opal Queen*, 2012  
pigment in ink on cotton rag paper, edition of 5

**These really become some of the memorable visual signifiers of the art fair experience.**

Yes, I want it to be a bit of a surprise but some of the artists in the installation program are Liu Zhuoquan, A.D.S. Donaldson, Tully Arnot & Charles Dennington, Dane Mitchell and Paul Yore. Installation Contemporary is being curated by Aaron Seeto from 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art. Video contemporary is curated by Mark Feary from Artspace Visual Arts Centre. He is preparing a program of projected video works in a theatre space. Also, Bang & Olufsen have contributed some superb hanging screens which will be distributed throughout the space.

**So we have installation, video and performance as the extra elements at the fair in addition to the 80 international galleries?**

Yes, the space will be tremendously activated.

One performance to watch out for is *Nude Santa* by the wonderful Liam Benson. It will be an intimate one on one performance, where one leaves feeling like a good boy or girl. Hopefully! It will be quite fantastic.

**Barry, as a gallerist you have attended art fairs all over the world. What have you learnt as a participant that you think is important that you are including at Sydney Contemporary?**

Well, as you know there is a preponderance of art fairs all over the world. What that means is that the nature of art fairs has improved, because competition is higher. I used to say that art fairs were not the best way to see art but they are a great way to see a lot of art at once. That is one of the reasons they have become so popular in a globalised world. People like the idea of being to see in one moment art from their city, country and a range of international art. The sheer volume of art fairs

means now means that each fair and each stand within a fair needs to be at the top of its game. So instead of being the death of the exhibition you'll find that galleries are working hard to do more than put together a stock show. For example, Tolarno Galleries from Melbourne will be premiering a new body of work by Rosemary Laing. I'm excited because I know what the galleries are bringing and they are really curating shows, putting their best foot forward.

**A focus on quality control? Absolutely. Ultimately what makes or breaks a fair is the freshness and quality of the work. The only old and tired thing at the fair will be me!**

**One of the exciting aspects for Kiwi art followers is the range of international galleries. Tell us about some of the interesting galleries we are most probably unfamiliar with?** Sydney Contemporary will have eleven countries

represented. I don't like to pick favourites but Edouard Malingue Gallery from Hong Kong will be presenting works by French, Scottish, Portuguese, Korean and Taiwanese artists. A really fantastic international mix of artists, a microcosm of the fair. Visitors to Sydney Contemporary will definitely be seeing work for the first time.

**I think the New Zealand collectors are really interested in the VIP programme. It is impossible to do them all, but what are some of the events you are looking forward to?**

Certainly for international visitors the private collection tours are always of interest. I'm looking forward to the visit to White Rabbit. It is a collection of contemporary Chinese art since 2000. And we all know how that scene has changed and matured in the last decade. In addition to visitors from New Zealand and Australia we will have collectors from Asia, North

and South America, so for me, one of the fascinating things to watch is which events they gravitate to.

**I know lots of Kiwi art collectors are already going, the excitement is building, but for those still considering why should they make sure they visit Sydney Contemporary 2013?**

I know Kiwis and Australians have a bit of sibling rivalry, but I think we have to acknowledge that Sydney is a big and fast international city now. Kiwis, like Australians love to travel. It is second nature for us to jump on a plane when others would not even consider it. I think Kiwis would be keen to support and encourage a major international art fair right on their doorstep.

Carriageworks photo by Gary Annett. Barry Keldoulis photo by Jac and Heath Photography





Opening week at the Venice Biennale – it's all action at the Accademia Bridge on the Grand Canal as art fans scramble on to vaporetti, motoscafi and gondolas to reach the Giardini, Arsenale, and dozens of other exhibition venues



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# Mystery Creek

## A+O's Hamish Coney dives into the deep end of the 55th Venice Biennale.

*Encyclopedic Palace* is the grand title for 2013's Venice Biennale. Curator Massimiliano Gioni, incidentally the youngest curator in over a century, has jackknifed the direction of the Biennale and quite literally 'gone back to the future' including all manner of unknown, folk and visionary artists from the 19th and early 20th centuries – crashlanding these 'outsiders' alongside the 21st century's best of breed contemporary artists.

The gigantic and at times bewilderingly exhilarating result has been described by the Times of London as the best Biennale in a decade, or a little less concisely, "a brain-addling, eye-befuddling, foot-bruising experience... This brobdingnagian sprawl of cultural beano... is the most important trend-setting contemporary artworld event – artistic tastes are established, fashions are set and the future explored."

The theme of the *Encyclopedic Palace* is derived from the dream/project/folly of self-taught Italian-American artist Marino Auriti (1891–1980). His plan was to create a massive 700 metre tall, 136-storey museum in Washington, D.C. that would

contain all known human knowledge from the wheel to the satellite.

Auriti laboured away for years in his Pennsylvania garage and in 1955 filed his application with the US Patent Office. Talk about thinking big!

The palace was never built of course but the bold, ambitious idea inspired the curatorial premise that defines this year's Biennale. According to Gioni, the Palace which is represented by an enormous model on loan from the American Folk Art Museum in Manhattan, "reflects the giant scope of this international exhibition: the impossibility of capturing the sheer enormity of the art world today."

With the work of 158 artists spread over the two gargantuan spaces of the Biennale Pavilions in the Giardini and the Arsenale, Gioni juxtaposes the unknown and outré with the cool, contemporary and hip. It is the electricity between these two (bi) polar opposites that powers the 2013 Biennale. On one hand we have blackmagic-worshipping Aleister Crowley's vaguely threatening tarot inspired watercolours dating to 1930s. On the other, contemporary British sculptress Sarah Lucas' (who has recently exhibited with Two Rooms in Auckland) fleshy, bawdy but organic polished bronzes that sizzle with a viral life-force. Much the same can be said of the anthroposophic, geometric-abstract drawings

of Swiss artist/healer Emma Kunz, who in the early 20th century created a body of work that has captivated art, science and religious theorists. Only in recent years have these intricate 'puzzles' crossed into an art context.

One of the most striking 'juxtapositions' is found in the Arsenale. After being captured by cartoonist Robert Crumb's 207 page interpretation of the fifty chapters of the Bible's *Book of Genesis*, I turned the

## The gigantic and at times bewilderingly exhilarating result has been described by the Times of London as the best Biennale in a decade.

corner to be confronted by 2012 Walters Prize finalist Simon Denny's potent sculptural installation *Analogue Broadcasting Hardware Compression*. Pitched at lifesize, the work constitutes a tongue-in-cheek requiem for the fiendishly complex equipment that broadcasts into that squarefaced-loudmouth known as the domestic television. Denny's sculpture commemorates the fateful moment in 2012 when Channel 4 in the UK went digital creating mountains of redundant analogue machinery. Before this once 'hi-tech' equipment is taken to the digi-knackers yard Denny has recorded the pathos of the freshly obsolete.

These are but a handful of the more memorable moments in the onslaught that is the Venice Biennale experience. For those contemplating visiting before the circus leaves town on November 24th, perhaps it would be useful to understand what you might be letting yourself in for.

The Biennale consists of four constituent parts. Think of them as a series of onion rings, each one becoming bigger and a little crazier as you move from the centre.

**Part One:** The best place to start is the **Giardini**. In the elegant garden surrounds of the Giardini you will find the main 'La Biennale' Pavilion, site of part one of the *Encyclopedic Palace* and the thirty national pavilions of amongst others Denmark, Finland (designed by Alvar Aalto for architecture fans), Holland, Germany, France, USA, Great Britain, Australia and Japan.

Ten minutes away is the massive **Part Two: Arsenale** – containing the second half of the *Encyclopedic Pavilion* exhibition and a further sixteen national pavilions including Chile, the fabulous Italian Pavilion, China and A+O favourite Lebanon. In between pitstops and espresso breaks you will

need two days to cover the first two sections or 'onion rings' being the Giardini and Arsenale.

From there it gets a little more complex and you'll need a good map and sensible shoes. **Part Three:** consists of the balance of forty **external national pavilions** (including New Zealand) which are quite literally strewn throughout Venice. In locating these you will soon become familiar with the various Sestiere or quarters of the city.

What becomes abundantly clear on leaving the Giardini and Arsenale behind is how brilliantly located the New Zealand Pavilion is. Creative New Zealand has chosen La Pieta, a church complex on the main boardwalk Riva degli Schiavoni that runs between St Mark's Square and the Giardini/Arsenale. Almost every visitor walking to the main Biennale locations passes by the front door of Bill Culbert's *Front Door Out Back*. Another contender for prime position is the Portuguese 'pavilion' by artist Joanna Vasconcelos. The term pavilion is used loosely as her work entitled *Trafaria Praia* is in fact a Lisbon ferry or cacilhiero moored outside the Giardini entrance, a Latin cousin of Venice's ubiquitous *vaporetti*.

The A+O team had a pretty good go at visiting as many of the nearly forty external national pavilions as possible – Angola (winner of 2013's Golden Lion for best National Pavilion), Azerbaijan, Ireland,





The model of Marino Auriti's Encyclopedic Palace (circa 1955) installed in the Arsenale



The central Venice Biennale Pavilion in the Giardini houses part one of the Encyclopedic Palace curated exhibition contains twenty seven gallery spaces housing over 65 artists including Richard Serra, Carl Andre, Marisa Merz, Hilma Af Klint, Emma Kunz, Rudolf Steiner, Tino Seghal as well as Shaker and Tantric art

Work by Sarah Lucas in the Biennale Sculpture Garden



The Angolan Pavilion entitled *Luanda, Encyclopedic Palace* is installed in the Palazzo Cini in the Dorsoduro. Artist Edson Chagas' installation won the Golden Lion in 2013



Alfredo Jaar, representing Chile questions the power structures behind the placement of national pavilions within the Giardini. *Venezia, Venezia* consists of a scale model of the Giardini which rises and sinks within a pool of polluted water

*The 387 houses of Peter Fritz (1916-1992) Insurance Clerk from Vienna* is in fact a vast grouping of found of carefully constructed models that reveal the typology of suburbia





*S.S. Hangover* by Icelandic artist Ragnar Kjartansson consists of a horn playing sextet aboard a refurbished 1934 fishing boat which charts a small circuit within the Arsenale docks. A slow mournful tune composed by Sigur Ros founder Kjartan Sveinsson reads as an elegy for Iceland coming to grips with the aftermath of a financial binge culture pre-GFC. Hence the 'hangover' of the title.





Top left: The Japanese Pavilion features an affecting installation by artist Koki Tanaka ruminating on a post-earthquake and tsunami Japan, thinking about new community based approaches to everyday tasks which re-inforce our fundamental connectedness and the basic human desire to care for each other – a very moving body of work for Christchurch visitors

Top right: The Portuguese Pavilion is a Lisbon ferry moored outside the Giardini entrance. Joanna Vasconcelas has taken the opportunity to illuminate the similarities and peculiarities of a life on the water as experienced by residents of both Venice and Lisbon

Middle left: The Korean Pavilion houses a dramatic light based work by Kimsooja – remember to remove your shoes

Middle right: The United States Pavilion and Sarah Sze's winding installation entitled *Triple Point* was a fan favourite

Bottom left: The French Pavilion was home to Germany in 2013. Curator Susanne Gaensheimer's concept united Chinese artist Ai Weiwei and artists from South Africa, India and Germany making links to an international co-operative

Bottom right: The Alvar Aalto designed Finnish Pavilion presents Antti Laitinen's *Forest Square*

Macedonia, Iraq and Mexico were those that made an impression. However, given the maze-like nature of Venice it would be near impossible to visit them all. Our recommendation is to head for the Accademia Bridge west of St Mark's Square and explore from this point where there is the greatest concentration of national pavilions and

#### the all-important **Part Four: Collateral Events.**

It is in the curated shows, mini-retrospectives and single artist presentations that constitute the array of nearly fifty Collateral Events of the Venice Biennale that some of the most exciting artworks and curatorial ideas are to be found. A+O recommends allocating at

least two days to tracking these down. See A+O's top ten recommendations for a few of the highlights in wider Venice.

For New Zealanders, one of these is without question the freewheeling *Personal Structures* curated exhibition at Palazzo Bembo on the Rialto. Inside you will find the work of New Zealanders

Scott Eady and Darryn George whose *Folder Room* is an immaculately presented space conflating the quotidian design of filing cabinets into a zone of reflection and contemplation.

The Venice Biennale has been described as the "Olympics of the Artworld" and you'll need an athlete's

commitment to covering ground to get around it all. Over 300 artists from 80 countries are represented in locations too numerous to mention or find. But you can try. This year over 500 000 visitors will do just that.





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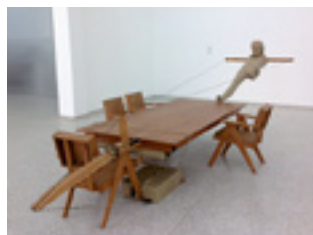
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# A+O's Best Bets

## 10 must see exhibitions in Venice 2013



**Mark Manders**  
*Room with Broken Sentence*  
Netherlands Pavilion\*  
Biennale Giardini

Manders installation combines deconstructed furniture and sectioned visages to create enigmatic pastoral interiors. A contemplative antidote to many of the more frenetic displays.

[www.venicebiennale.nl](http://www.venicebiennale.nl)

\* Designed by architect Gerrit Rietveld in 1953.



**Jeremy Deller**  
*English Magic*  
Great Britain Pavilion  
Biennale Giardini

English Magic is a witty accumulation of video, large scale painting, folk art and music. Room by room Deller proposes David Bowie, William Morris, Brass Bands, recent oligarchs and birds of prey in flight as ingredients of contemporary myth and folklore.

[www.venicebiennale.org](http://www.venicebiennale.org)  
[britishcouncil.org](http://britishcouncil.org)



**Simryn Gill**  
*Here Art Grows on Trees*  
Australian Pavilion  
Biennale Giardini

Multi-media artist Gill charts the massive landscape intervention caused by large-scale mining in the outback to dramatic effect by combining aerial photography with the found detritus at tiny scale – both bird and bug-eye perspectives.

[www.venicebiennale.org](http://www.venicebiennale.org)  
[australiacouncil.gov.au](http://australiacouncil.gov.au)



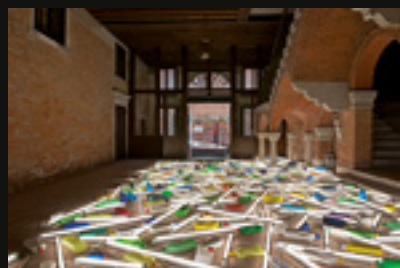
**Walter De Maria**  
*Apollo's Ecstasy* (1990)  
*Encyclopedic Palace*  
Biennale Arsenale

20 solid bronze rods from the collection of the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. An enormous and minimal presentation of metres long gleaming bronze rods in a giant hangar space of the Arsenale.



**Simon Denny**  
*Analogue Broadcasting*  
*Hardware Compression* (2012)  
*Encyclopedic Palace*  
Biennale Arsenale

Denny's recording of the final resting place of obsolete analogue equipment makes for a quirky requiem.



**BILL CULBERT**  
*Front Door Out Back*, 2013



**JUDY MILLAR**  
*Giraffe-Bottle-Gun*, 2009



**FRANCIS UPRITCHARD**  
*Save Yourself*, 2009



**et al.**  
*the fundamental practice*, 2005



**MICHAEL PAREKOWHAI**  
*On First Looking into Chapman's Homer*, 2011



**JACQUELINE FRASER**  
*A Demure Portrait of the Artist Strip Searched*, 2001



**PETER ROBINSON**  
*Divine Comedy*, 2001



**MICHAEL STEVENSON**  
*This is the Trekka*, 2003





**The Sonnabend Collection**

Ca'Pesaro (Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna)  
Santa Croce 2076  
(until September 29)

The magnificent private collection of one of the great gallerists of the 20th century. Strong on both Pop Art and Minimalism with works by Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns and Donald Judd.

[capesaro.visitmuve.it](http://capesaro.visitmuve.it)



**Akram Zaatari**

*Letter to a Refusing Pilot*

Lebanese Pavilion  
Biennale Arsenale

A very moving account of an event of human mercy amidst war as the artist tracks down an Israeli pilot who refused to bomb a Lebanese school in 1982.

[www.lebanonatvenice.com](http://www.lebanonatvenice.com)



**Pedro Cabrita Reis**

*A Certain Whisper*

55th Biennale  
Collateral Event  
Palazzo Falier  
San Marco 2906

Reis' large scale construction of lighting, aluminium beams, wiring and ancillary drawings and paintings consumes the vast Palazzo Falier and shares kinship with Bill Culbert's installation.

[www.pedrocabritareis.palzzofalier.com](http://www.pedrocabritareis.palzzofalier.com)



**Ai Wei Wei**

*Disposition/S.A.C.R.E.D.*

55th Biennale  
Collateral Event  
Church of Sant'Antonin,  
Castello

The Chinese artist documents his recent incarceration to deadpan and chilling effect in half-lifesize dioramas in which at all times there are three dramatis personae: the artist and two bodyguards.

[www.zueccaprojectspace.com/ongoing-disposition](http://www.zueccaprojectspace.com/ongoing-disposition)



*Contemporary Bestiary. Between art and science*

Italian artists from the ACACIA collection  
Museo di Storia Naturale di Venezia, Santa Croce 1730  
(until October 24)

Worth the price of admission alone for Maurizio Cattelan's outrageous *Musicanti di Brema* – taxidermy menagerie balanced on a braying donkey in perfect harmony with the Natural History Museum's over the top taxidermy collection.

[msn.visitmuve.it](http://msn.visitmuve.it)

A heartfelt thank you to our NZ at Venice Patrons

**You are our artists' champions**

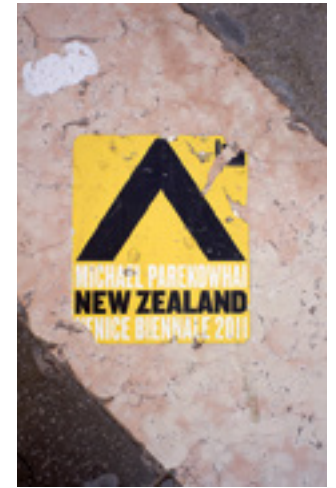


[www.nzatvenice.com](http://www.nzatvenice.com)



Celebrating the opening of the 2009 NZ at Venice exhibitions; Head of Patrons Dayle Mace, artist Judy Millar, Dame Jenny Gibbs and artist Francis Upritchard.





Clockwise from top: Champagne breakfast at the Peggy Guggenheim Museum, one of many special moments to be treasured as part of the Venice patron's experience; remembrance of things past – an advertising pointer for Michael Parekowhai's 2011 exhibition still going strong two years later; patrons Margaret Malaghan and Jo Blair; Dame Jenny Gibbs, Justin Paton Curator of the Bill Culbert exhibition and patron Robyn Spooner; Deputy Commissioner of New Zealand at Venice Heather Galbraith discusses the work of Sarah Lucas with patrons; co-chairs of the Venice patrons Dayle Mace and Leigh Melville



# Team New Zealand

Hamish Coney describes his Venice patrons experience

## In simple terms, New Zealand cannot get to the start line at the Venice Biennale without the support of over one hundred patrons. Who are they? What do they do and why?

In 2013 eighty-three New Zealand patrons from Aotearoa, but also caring Kiwis from London, Barcelona and Switzerland travelled to Venice for the opening of Bill Culbert's exhibition *Front Door Out Back*. There was an enormous sense of anticipation amongst the group on arrival at La Pietà.

The feeling of Kiwi pride in the room after Sir Nicholas Serota (Tate Director) had concluded his official opening address was heartfelt and palpable. The crowd was too elegant for high fives, but many hugs, handshakes, and even the odd tear was in evidence.

Bill Culbert's support crew of patrons had good cause to feel pleased. For co-chair of the Venice Patrons Leigh Melville, the growth of New Zealand patronage

was the culmination of over two years of planning. Melville, whose day job is Art Manager at ART+OBJECT, was particularly pleased with 2013's record level of support. In dollar terms the Venice patrons raised \$370 000 or one third of the budget for New Zealand participation, "The record level of funds raised is a clear indication that New Zealand art followers treasure that we have a voice on the largest scale. This is only the sixth Biennale New Zealand has attended, but this year we can say we are firmly part of the environment."

She went on to note that in 2011 fifty patrons were present in Venice for Michael Parekowhai's exhibition *On first looking into Chapman's Homer* and in 2005 twelve had attended the opening of et al.'s installation *the fundamental practice*.

This conversation took place over a glass of champagne on the rooftop of the famed Peggy Guggenheim Museum overlooking the Grand Canal. Patrons' invitations to exclusive events such as this are just one of the reasons that all I spoke to were overwhelmed by their Venice experience and lining up to sign on for 2015. Melville explains that cajoling potential first time patrons to join the team (entry level is \$5000) is made easier by the enthusiastic word of mouth support of former patrons.

One of the most memorable moments of my visit to Venice as a first time patron was seeing the delight on the faces of 2011 attendees as we stumbled on a weathered but still intact pavement marker for Michael Parekowhai's exhibition two years ago.

Melville notes that many patrons have been there from the beginning. For this she credits the foresight of founding chairs of the patrons of Venice Dame Jenny Gibbs and Dayle Mayce (co-chair in 2013 also), "The Patrons group was established by Jenny

and Dayle, who saw the importance of the Venice Biennale to New Zealand at an early stage and worked to ensure that increased funding would be available. The role of patron is an evolving one, with the increase in numbers their role as stakeholders in the project will be recognised by a patrons' representative sitting on the selection panel in future."

Jenny Harper, who has been New Zealand's commissioner since 2009, was absolutely delighted with the turnout of patrons this year. "Great friendships are made and renewed at Venice. I have considered it an important part of my role over the last six years to put the presentation of New Zealand at Venice on as sure a footing as it can be, to grow enthusiasm and a broader understanding of the inevitability of a country like ours standing on this world stage. Every time we take part, we build on past successes and provide a further indication of the varied and strong artistic tradition that continues to be nurtured here."

Whilst fundraising and financial support are the practical and much needed contributions of patrons in the lead up to the event proper, the benefits of being a patron soon became obvious to me in Venice. In conjunction with Creative New Zealand, the Venice Patrons are provided with tickets to the Vernissage (the Biennale is open only the artists, commissioners, accredited media and patrons during the three days prior to the official opening) and what can only be described as VIP treatment as a thank you and a reward for patronage.

For first time Venice Biennale patron Jo Blair and her husband Alistair from Christchurch, the experience was a revelation. "I now look at life BV and AV, before and after Venice. We were amazed at how easy it was to become a patron. We already know a whole group of people preparing for 2015. We'll definitely be going back."

### SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS OF A PATRON'S DIARY:

#### Opening Monday

Official blessing of the New Zealand Pavilion with a prayer and waiata this was a moving experience for all New Zealanders present.

#### Tuesday morning

Tour and Brunch at the Peggy Guggenheim Museum – *this famed museum was closed for three hours for NZ and Australian patrons to tour the entire collection and enjoy brunch on the rooftop. The pictures tell the story!*

#### Tuesday Evening

Patron's preview at La Pietà to view Bill Culbert's *Front Door Out Back* – It was at this moment that patrons realised exactly what they had contributed to – lots of smiles and proud New Zealanders.

#### Wednesday Morning

Personal tour of the Biennale Giardini with New Zealand Curator Justin Paton and Deputy Commissioner Heather Galbraith – one of the highlights, and the massive scale of the Biennale soon becomes evident.

#### Wednesday evening

Official Opening of the New Zealand Pavilion – patrons join Bill Culbert, his family, the New Zealand Ambassador to Italy Trevor Matheson, Commissioner Jenny Harper, Dick Grant (Chair of Creative New Zealand) and the curatorial team for the guest address given by the Director of Tate, Sir Nicholas Serota.

#### Thursday morning

Tour of the Arsenale with the Justin Paton and Heather Galbraith – even bigger than the Giardini, part 2 of the Encyclopaedic Palace can be daunting, but Justin and

Heather's tour was a real highlight.

#### Thursday afternoon

Tour of the Australian Pavilion – NZ patrons enjoy a presentation by artist Simryn Gill and curator Catherine de Zegher

#### Friday morning

Tour of the city's national pavilions and collateral exhibitions – Justin and Heather again help us to find some of the must see exhibitions in wider Venice, including Scott Eady and Darryn George's work at Palazzo Bembo.

#### Friday evening

Farewell drinks at la Pietà – Leigh Melville, Dayle Mace, commissioner Jenny Harper, the curatorial team and patrons join to celebrate Bill Culbert's exhibition for the final time.



# Powered by Art

The first BMW art car by  
Alexander Calder from 1975



## Hamish Coney looks at an Auckland company that wins awards for imaginative arts sponsorship.

The Bayerische Motoren Werke, or BMW to you and me, was founded in 1916. Over the last century the German marque has designed many of the most beautiful and technically advanced vehicles you might find. The gorgeous 507 roadster of the mid 1950s is a regular nominee for the most beautiful convertible ever made. Elvis himself was a famous former owner!

When I was growing up in the 1980s the BMW 635 CSI was the dream machine of choice for me and my school chums. Even today

it still turns heads, as one K Road art dealer, who owns an immaculate example, regularly tells me.

Perhaps the coolest BMWs are the stunning range of art cars that first began in the 1970s. Since 1975 major artists have been commissioned to paint a classic BMW. The first was Alexander Calder's explosion of colour on that epitome of 70s brute power, a 3.0CSL in race trim. This was followed by artists such as Frank Stella, Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol's M1, Robert Rauschenberg, David

Hockney, Jenny Holzer and most recently Jeff Koons' spectacular M3 GT2 in 2010.

In this adventurous tradition Auckland's Team McMillan BMW has been a serious supporter of the arts locally since the 1980s. In that time through the judicious intersection of arts sponsorship, commercial savvy and old-fashioned generosity, Team McMillan BMW has raised over \$500 000 for charities dear to the company's heart including Mercy Hospice, The Liggins Institute and the South Auckland Health Foundation.

For Chief Executive Bob McMillan art, business and community support go hand in hand, "I've been very

fortunate in having a pretty successful business career over more years that I like to remember. In that time I've seen lots of worthwhile and very worthy causes seeking help of some kind or other, some of which I've had the good fortune to have been directly involved with, others I've just been on the periphery of and felt that I could help financially, or offer to assist and help make a difference to people who have a much greater need than me and my family.

My own personal, company and staff contributions allow all of us to 'feel good', knowing that we are putting something worthwhile back into the community where there is a real need.

Hopefully, we've made a small difference."

In 2005 Team McMillan BMW instituted its own art award. Eleven leading artists were commissioned to decorate a customised E46 BMW bonnet with the resulting artworks to be auctioned for charity. Artists over the years including Russell Jackson, Martin Ball, Billy Apple, George Baloghly, Mary McIntyre, Neal Palmer and Jenny Dolezel to name a few, have created unique works on the unusual substrate. For the inaugural award in 2005 Fatu Feu'u was judged winner by Sir James Wallace. Judges since 2005 have included Warwick Brown, Dr. Rodney Wilson and Chris Saines, both former directors of





Clockwise from top left:

Andy Warhol in 1979 painting the legendary BMW M1

The same car on exhibition at the Auckland Museum in 2007 as part of the Team McMillan sponsored BMW Art Cars exhibition which also included BMWs painted by Frank Stella, Roy Lichtenstein, and Ken Done

The BMW art cars were exhibited at Art|Basel Miami Beach in 2012. In the foreground the Frank Stella liveried 1976 BMW 3.0 CSL

John Daly-Peoples, then Auckland Art Gallery director Chris Saines and prize winning artist Gary Currin at a recent Team McMillan BMW event



the Auckland Art Gallery. In recent years BMW Bonnet winners have included Gary Currin, Pamela Wolfe and Jenny Dolezel. Another significant part of these awards is the section for emerging artists with works selected from an invited group of artists who produce works on canvas and other media.

It may be an unusual direction to take but as we have seen it is part of a unique automotive art tradition and has been warmly responded to by artists who enjoy rising to the challenge of a different format.

Wendy Jefferson, Events and Marketing Manager, views the benefits as being multi-

## In this adventurous tradition Auckland's Team McMillan BMW has been a serious supporter of the arts locally since the 1980s.

layered, "BMW is a brand that strives for perfection. It is great to support others who are doing the same. Our staff really enjoy it. The debate internally is great. Everyone has a different favourite or opinion."

It is an approach that has seen numerous New Zealand artists commissioned to produce unique works which are exhibited for the enjoyment of many and ultimately sold to benefit important charities. In this way the BMW brand gets to

touch plenty of existing and potential customers. If they happen to sell the odd car on the way through, then good luck to them. Most importantly Team McMillan BMW is setting an example to other organisations on how to engage creatively with the arts sector.

This level of commitment has seen the company recognised as a finalist in the *National Business Review* 2008 awards for Sponsorship of the Arts.

Writer and curator John Daly-Peoples who has worked with Team McMillan BMW for over a decade sees such corporate involvements in the arts as a crucial part of the overall foodchain for artists and the viewing public, "Bob McMillan has seen the value of art in the showroom for his customers. It has always been positive. There are great synergies between a high-end product such as the BMW car and the arts. Plus with their involvement with several secondary schools they can talk to future customers. It is very much a win-win. From my experience with the artists involved in the Team McMillan art awards I know some have gained commissions as a direct result of presenting

their work to a group of people who might not encounter them in a gallery environment. Plus, I think the challenge of working with a new material in the form of the bonnet has been something for them to consider – presenting their work in a new way which is healthy."





Gourds grown and decorated by  
Theo Schoon, circa 1964, Auckland

Courtesy of Museum of New Zealand  
Te Papa Tongarewa



# From Rotterdam to Rotorua

Content's Hamish Coney explores the legacy of Theo Schoon

1. Theo Schoon, *NZ Listener*, 12 September 1947

2. Interview with author, July 2013

3. Francis Pound, *The Space Between – Pakeha Use of Maori Motifs in Modernist New Zealand Art*. Auckland, Workshop Press, 1994

Just after WWII, in a cave on the banks of the Opihi River north of Timaru in South Canterbury, the Dutch émigré artist Theo Schoon initiated a conversation that changed the direction of New Zealand art. In those damp South Island caves, described by Schoon as “New Zealand’s oldest art galleries”<sup>1</sup> two young artists came to the realisation that the centuries old taniwha drawings were the key to creating a daring new chapter in the art of Aotearoa.

In the winter of 1946, Schoon had invited Gordon Walters to join him in the field to experience one of the most ambitious art research projects ever undertaken in New Zealand. For over four years Schoon survived on the most meagre of means in his pursuit of the Maori rock drawings found in caves throughout Otago and Canterbury. What he discovered and recorded is one of numerous enduring legacies defined by Schoon’s total immersion approach to fieldwork and his propensity to share his discoveries.

In the process, Schoon established the model for a cross-cultural, multi-discipline art practice that was highly prescient. In the course of an artistic life spanning five decades Schoon’s oeuvre embraces art, applied art and literature: he was a published author, an accomplished and refined

painter and printmaker, a photographer, ceramicist and carver of gourds and pounamu.

Along the way Schoon’s collaborations and relationships with Walters, Rita Angus, Len Castle, A.R.D. Fairburn and Maori carver Pine Taiapa resulted in a dramatic flowering of New Zealand art and conceptual thinking from the 1940s to the early 1970s on both the Maori and Pakeha sides of the ledger. It was Schoon that pointed Walters in the direction of the koru; he almost singlehandedly revived the Maori art of gourd carving.

The young Dutch artist had arrived in New Zealand at the outbreak of WWII and quickly connected to what can be described as the green shoots of New Zealand’s modern art scene. European, openly gay and quite the dandy,

Schoon must have been impossible to ignore in wartime Wellington. Quite fearless, he obviously revelled in making a spectacle of himself. The Te Papa photographic archive contains a riveting suite of eleven images dated June 21, 1943, taken at Wellington’s Spencer Digby Studios, then best known for portraits of local worthies, shy debutantes *and* being the training ground of one Brian Brake. On this winter’s day who should stroll into the studio but Theodorus Johannes Schoon. Over numerous costume changes and a dazzling variety of poses, Schoon demonstrates the sensuous and intricate hand gestures of the centuries old tradition of Balinese dance. But what is communicated most clearly is attitude with a capital A, as in A-type personality.

“A cross between Nijinsky and Man Ray”<sup>2</sup> is how Former Rotorua Art Gallery Director and curator John Perry recently described Schoon. Perry nudged Schoon back to New Zealand and staged the final exhibition during his lifetime (*Theo Schoon, Collected Works* in 1982).

Theo Schoon (1915 – 1986) is the very model of the seminal figure. His shapeshifting, cross-discipline, cross-cultural and even cross-dressing persona has made him near impossible to pin down and define. As a consequence, his legacy has been fragmented. Artist, carver, author, collaborator and catalyst. Which is the real Schoon?

He is a fountainhead figure and the long tentacles of his reach have stretched into the homes, museums and the consciousness of New Zealanders since the 1940s.

Schoon’s impact on the visual language of New Zealand was early and profound. In 1947, the poet A.R.D. Fairburn seeking an income he could not hope to achieve as an author, produced of all things a homewares range of printed fabrics for use as curtains, cushions and furniture coverings.

Schoon had originally approached Fairburn to assist in publicising the importance of the rock drawings and his fears that they could soon be destroyed by impending large scale hydroelectric projects.

Fairburn seized upon Schoon’s cave drawings, transcribing them into designs for fabric material. Such was the success of the Fairburn fabrics that they were selected to be offered for sale at the United Nations gift shop in New York.

The journey of Maori art via Schoon and Fairburn to the world and its recognition as a highly evolved and unique indigenous art form anticipates by some thirty five years the global acclaim accorded the touring exhibition *Te Maori*.

After Schoon’s discoveries of the earliest forms of Maori art in the caves of the South Island, his attention became captivated by the dazzling variations of line inherent

in kowhaiwahi and moko designs. It is this research, again freely shared, that ultimately resulted in Gordon Walters Koru paintings and the synthesis of modernist abstraction and indigenous imagery.

Although only four years older than Walters, Schoon was very much a pathfinder and mentor to the younger artist. In 1969 Walters recalled meeting Schoon: “In 1941 my meeting and subsequent friendship with Theo Schoon was perhaps the most decisive factor in my development. For the first time I had contact with an artist with ideas, trained in European art schools. From Schoon I had my first real training and began for the first time to work methodically and to think of myself as a painter.”<sup>3</sup>

It is worth considering the nature of the New Zealand art scene in the post war era. It was a period that Walters considered sufficiently hostile to desist from exhibiting from 1949 to 1966. When he finally did he was again following in Schoon’s footsteps. Walters’ legendary 1966 exhibition at New Vision Gallery in Auckland followed Schoon’s 1965 show in the gallery’s opening year.

However, the situation in the 50s was altogether more insular. A suspicion of international ideas rode in tandem with a lionizing of local, vernacular ideals. This regionalist and nationalist discourse dominated the few critical airwaves that existed. These were the Kelliher art award years. The list of



4. Francis Pound, *Walters and the Canon in Gordon Walters: Order and Intuition, A Festschrift of Essays presented to Gordon Walters on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday*. James Ross and Laurence Simmons editors, Auckland, 1989

5. Interview with author, August 2013

prizewinners of the 1950s tells the story – a pretty tepid list of landscape painters, amongst them Cedric Savage, Austen Deans, Arthur Hipwell and Leonard Mitchell.

International ideas were beginning to seep into the local discourse. The significance of émigrés such as Schoon, Ernst Plischke and Rudi Gopas cannot be underestimated. Colin McCahon, Rita Angus, Milan Mrkusich and Bill Sutton formed the vanguard of New Zealand modernism at this time, but even McCahon's work in the period 1950 to 1955 was predominantly landscape based. By the mid 1950s with McCahon ensconced in the Waitakeres his subject matter, although increasingly abstracted, still began and ended in the land or in the sea of French Bay.

The simple reality was that in the early 1950s Maori imagery and the cultural underpinning for kowhaiwhai, koru and other forms were not considered as subject matter for New Zealand art. The land, in either traditional or modernist form was the only game in town. Artists such as Schoon, Walters and Milan Mrkusich were quite literally forced into hiding. Ralph Hotere was in Europe and yet to be a force.

The point however, is that at the very moment that New Zealand art was beginning to understand and embrace modernism in the early 1950s if only on the margins of a nascent art scene, Maori visual art traditions were

not yet part of the equation. The New Zealand nationalist canon was in the process of being formed in the late 1950s and its foundation pillars were masculine, rural and landscape based. Art historian Francis Pound, with some feeling, chronicles these years thus, “Both the Literati and the new (art) professionals shared the concern that there be a national style; both thought its subject would largely be landscape; and both assumed it would be figurative.”<sup>4</sup>

It was a period of internal exile for many New Zealand artists. Schoon ultimately became a casualty as repeated curatorial rejection was cited by the artist as the major contributor to his departure from New Zealand in 1972.

But two decades earlier Schoon simply pressed on. His response was to go deeper, to intensify his study and to operate on many fronts – most of which took place well outside the frame of the canvas. In the early to mid 1950s Schoon undertook research whose creative DNA still powers large sections of the New Zealand cultural environment. With no institutional support, practically zero financial assistance and but a small handful of confidantes and fellow travellers these wilderness years reveal Schoon laying down the template for a research based art practice that is now taken for granted. Extensive field research – tick. Multi-media presentation – tick. Strategic collaborations – tick.

## In the wilderness years Schoon laid down the template for a research based art practice that is now taken for granted.

Rigorous documentation – tick. It may sound like the bio of a biennale savvy contemporary artist but Schoon's program was a solo project – freelancing in the best sense of the word.

Schoon the outsider headed of all places to Rotorua. It was here that he created his first really distinct body of artwork, one which remains unique to this day – his first photographic cycle of geothermal images. When he turned his attention to mud, he struck gold.

These glorious photographs are one of Schoon's great legacies to New Zealand culture and to fellow artists specifically. The ability to see anew, to employ technology, in this case photography, in the service of his Bauhaus inspired modernism resulted in a body of work which whilst ignored should have been seized upon by local critics. After all, what is more Kiwi than the mudpools of Rotorua? This commitment to a multimedia approach set Schoon outside the mainstream of artistic thinking of the period. Few, if any in New Zealand at the time would have been exposed to such conceptual training. It comes straight from Walter Gropius himself and was perhaps best articulated in the 1938 Museum of Modern Art

publication *Bauhaus* which sets out the principles of Bauhaus philosophy, “Schools of design should, as the Bauhaus did, bring together the various arts of painting, architecture, theatre, photography, weaving, typography etc., into a modern synthesis which disregards conventional distinctions between the ‘fine’ and ‘applied’ arts.”

As a young art student in Rotterdam in the 1930s, Schoon was exposed to the latest European ideas in the hothouse atmosphere of the booming Dutch port city. Many of his teachers at the Academie van Beeldende Kunsten en Technische were proponents of the Neue Sachlichkeit (New Objectivity), most notably photographer Piet Zwart.

In pursuit of his own synthesis of Maori imagery and modern art principles Schoon, in the 50s and 60s, applied himself to a vast range of media and modes of production: photography, ceramics, carved gourds, pounamu carving, printmaking and last but not least painting.

His opportunities to exhibit or to engage with public institutions let alone the public were few and far between. He left New Zealand embittered in 1972.

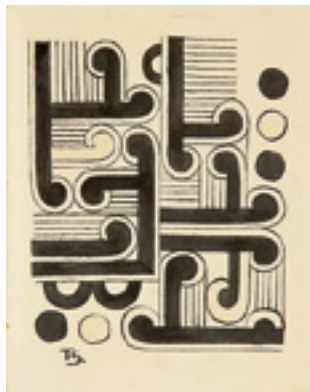
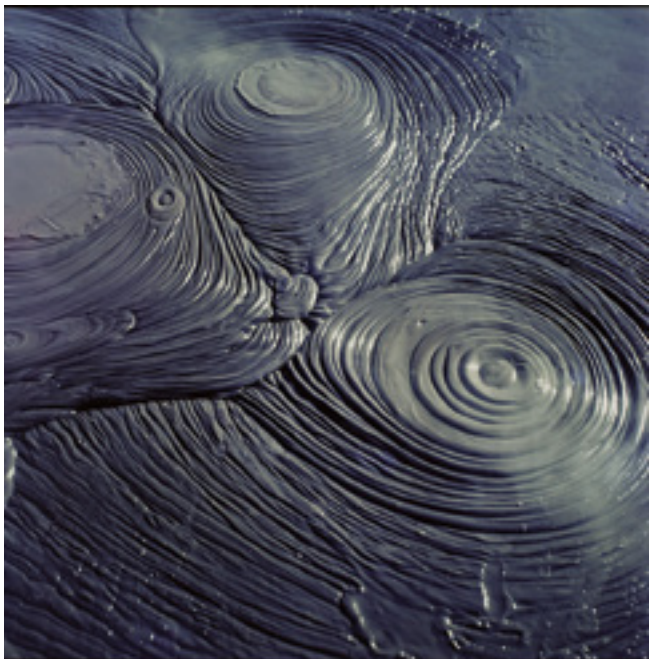
He returned briefly before his death for the Rotorua exhibition but returned to Australia just prior to his death in 1985.

In the early 1980s, Ron Brownson, senior curator at the Auckland Art Gallery visited Schoon in Australia to secure works for the Gallery archive. He was then and remains today a firm believer in Schoon's special position in the New Zealand discourse, “From my curatorial perspective, Theo was as a catalyst and mentor for New Zealand's most influential modern artists. He experienced a more rigorous art education than them and that made for daily experimentation and critique. Attending the Rotterdam Art Academy was like studying at Holland's version of the Bauhaus. Crossovers between media was expected and demanded. Theo's art is staunch, clever and culturally diverse. Sometimes his art is naughty and even raunchy, never an easy coupling for New Zealanders. He was both Dutch and Javanese in his creative temperament, a potent queer mix of East and West.”<sup>5</sup>

That Schoon was a polarising personality cannot be disputed. Friendships made in the spirit of artistic or spiritual questing frequently became severed in tragic and saddening circumstances. Schoon's Bohemian lifestyle meant key works and bodies of research were lost or distributed to the wind. But although his lifestyle was different, his work



# A selection of Theo Schoon art at A+O



**A.R.D Fairburn**  
*Study of Maori Rock Drawings*  
vintage screenprinted fabric  
mounted to board  
signed  
640 x 800mm  
Realised \$3420, November 2009

**Theo Schoon**  
*Maori Motif I*  
silkscreen print  
signed and dated 71  
470 x 720mm  
\$2975, December 2011

**Theo Schoon**  
*Mud Wave, Waiotapu Mud Pool*  
unique cibachrome photograph  
originally taken in 1967 and later  
printed in 1982 by Schoon and  
John Perry from the ektachrome  
transparency  
460 x 470mm  
\$4560, July 2007

**Theo Schoon**  
*Two Gourds with Stylised Maori  
Designs*  
gelatin silver print  
artist's name inscribed verso  
205 x 156mm  
\$2280, April 2008

**Theo Schoon**  
*Carved pounamu kawakawa variety  
modernist figural form pendant*  
L. 90mm  
\$5745, May 2012

**Len Castle and Theo Schoon**  
*19 earthenware tablets*  
umber pigmented earthenware  
tablets made by Castle, impressed  
with Schoon's stamps  
Various sizes  
\$6955, May 2007

**Theo Schoon**  
*Koru Study*  
ink on paper  
signed with artist's initials T. S  
240 x 192mm  
\$4455, The Les and Milly Paris  
Collection, September 2012

**Theo Schoon**  
*Done up in pins and curlers*  
oil and ink on paper  
signed; original 'Headlands'  
exhibition label affixed verso  
610 x 480mm  
\$29 310, August 2013







6. Michael Dunn *The Art of Theo Schoon*. Art New Zealand 25, 1983

7. Interview with author, August 2013

8. Rangihiroa Panaho *Maori at the Centre, on the Margins in Headlands Thinking Through New Zealand Art*. Sydney, Museum of Contemporary Art, 1992

9. Interview with author, August 2013

Opposite: A Schoon kowhaiwai form dating to the late 50s – early 60s

scattered and he enjoyed or endured a relationship with New Zealand that could be described as diffident at best he has not been completely forgotten. Art historian Michael Dunn writing just a year after Schoon's final New Zealand exhibition during his lifetime (Rotorua, 1982), made the case for Schoon clearly in saying, "Today the battles Schoon had to engage in single-handed through the fifties and sixties seem eminently worth fighting for. His attempts to broaden out the base of contemporary art in New Zealand appear far-sighted."<sup>6</sup>

Thirty years later, it is a position that Dunn still holds as he explained in a recent discussion, "He was very competent across a range of media in a way that was uncommon at the time. He showed the interface between craft forms and photography and painting. For him art was seamless. He didn't see any barrier between media. That is one of the reasons why I compare him to Picasso. Part of the tragedy is that he was a much bigger artist than many of his contemporaries, extremely well informed, far ahead of his time. My belief is that his legacy is still there to be discovered."<sup>7</sup>

In 1992 Schoon was accorded his first measure of curatorial acknowledgment on an international level when two works including *Done up in pins and curlers* (see illustration on page 27) was included in the exhibition *Headlands* which celebrated the opening of the Museum of

Contemporary Art in Sydney. For the first time Schoon was contextualised alongside such contemporaries as Colin McCahon, Gordon Walters, Ralph Hotere, Para Matchitt, Milan Mrkusich and younger artists such as Peter Peryer, Michael Parekowhai and Lyonel Grant.

In the accompanying catalogue a ringing endorsement for Schoon was made by art historian Rangihiroa Panaho. The context at the time was the vexed question of appropriation and the use – and the protocol for the use – of Maori imagery by Pakeha artists. This was a taxing moment in the arts in New Zealand. A time in which revered practitioners such as Gordon Walters had their conceptual basis and working methods challenged. Schoon was given as an exemplar of a Pakeha working with Maori imagery, "... the legacy Schoon has left Maori culture is as significant as what he has taken from it. This is due partly to the artist's fastidious researching of the Maori arts and crafts featuring forms (such as the koru) he was interested in. To the amazement of some of his contemporaries, Schoon saw Maori and not European art as the only major tradition in this country. In hindsight we are indebted to Schoon for his tireless inquiry into Maori art against such a background of indifference. Not content to simply transfer the koru motif to paper or canvas, he sought to discover the living



expression of the motif in its cultural context and sometimes to revive it."<sup>8</sup>

In 2013 the definitive Theo Schoon exhibition is still to be curated. The career monograph remains alas unwritten. But if those two events were to take place we would see that Theo's voice has spoken to a new generation of artists. The contemporary artists of Aotearoa revel in the synthesis that Schoon spoke of.

A clear lineage can be seen in the lustrous glitter canvases and gourds of Reuben Paterson (Ngati Rangitahi/ Ngai Tuhoe). Schoon has been both a guide and a source of inspiration for Paterson, "I see a lot of parallels between Theo and I. His use of bi-cultural material for the first time in very new ways. These traits make me want to bring him alive again. I don't think enough people know about him. He has slipped by. But I think when you begin to respect culture you start to understand it. You let it into your heart. I think that is what he did. He is that perfect example of a bi-cultural man whose heart understood Maori art."<sup>9</sup>

**Reuben Paterson**  
*Greek Gourds* 2006  
gourds, sequins, pins  
dimensions variable

**Manos Nathan**  
*Hue II* 1983  
carved gourd, smoke fired  
*Hue I* 1983  
carved gourd

Photo: Whangarei Art Museum

## A Schoon Reader

Theo Schoon, *Jade Country*. Sydney, Jade Arts, 1973

Michael Dunn, *Gordon Walters*, Auckland City Art Gallery, 1983

Michael Dunn, *Theo Schoon, Photographs of the Thermal Regions*. Art New Zealand number 32, 1984

Beverley McCulloch, John Coley, Michael Trotter, Neil Roberts et al. *Maori Rock Drawings The Theo Schoon interpretations*. Christchurch, Robert McDougall Art Gallery, 1985

Damian Skinner, *Theo Schoon's Interaction with Aspects of Maori Art*. Masters Thesis, The University of Auckland, 1996

Damian Skinner, *Primitivist Posings, Theo Schoon at the New Vision Gallery*. Art New Zealand number 86, Autumn 1998

Richard Lummis, *Embryonic Ultra-Modernism, Walters, Schoon and Turner in the 1940s*. Art New Zealand number 95, Winter 2000

Natalie Poland and Damian Skinner, *Theo Schoon, photographs & drawings*. Auckland, John Leech Gallery catalogue, 2002

Michael Dunn, *Theo Schoon: Outsider Artist, Reminiscences of a Friend and Mentor*. Art New Zealand number 102, Spring 2002

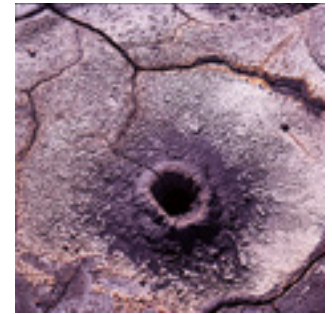
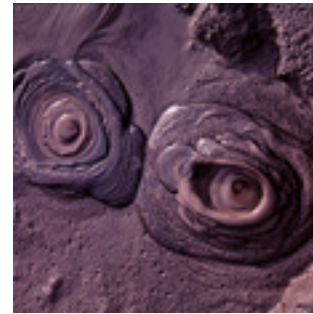
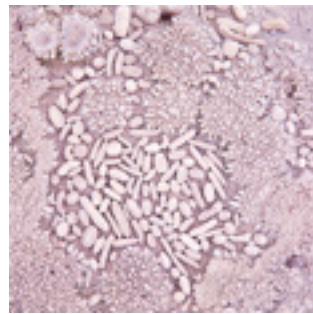
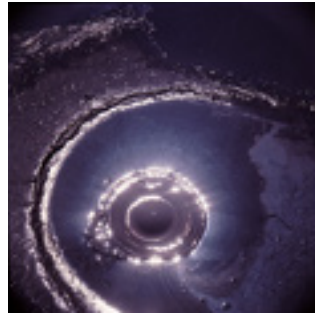
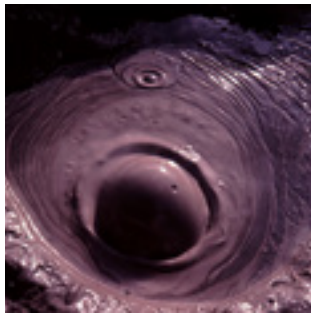
Andrew Paul Wood, *Double Vision: Redressing Theo Schoon's Absence from New Zealand Art History*. Masters Thesis, The University of Canterbury, 2003

Michael Dunn, *Rita Angus & Theo Schoon, An Unlikely Friendship*. Art New Zealand number 107, Winter 2003

Michael King and Jim Geddes, *Splendours of Civilisation, The John Money Collection at the Eastern Southland Gallery*, 2006

Francis Pound, *The Invention of New Zealand, Art and National Identity, 1930–1970*. Auckland University Press, 2009





Sometimes referred to as 'mudpool modernism' Schoon's mid-1960s colour transparencies depicting thermal activity in the Rotorua Waiotapu and Wairakei region reveal his training in the philosophies of the New Objectivity movement dating to his time as a student in Rotterdam in the 1930s

**THEO SCHOON 1915-1985  
BIOGRAPHY**

**1915**

Born Kubumen Java

**1927-1930**

Studied at the Rotterdam Academy of Fine Arts

Developed interest in ethnographic art via a text by Professor Frobenius. Other artists exploring this motif were Paul Klee and Joan Miro. Also came into contact with De Stijl and most importantly Bauhaus philosophy

**1939**

Arrived in NZ fleeing the onset of WWII

**1940**

Study at Canterbury University College School of Art and meets Rita Angus. Rotterdam bombed by the German Luftwaffe

**1941-43**

Moves to Wellington and meets Gordon Walters, Dennis Knight-Turner and Rita Angus. Schoon paints portraits of Angus, Walters, Knight-Turner and James K Baxter. Angus paints portrait of Schoon at this time

**1945-48**

Encounters Maori rock art in the Otago Museum. Commences Canterbury & South Island rock drawing study. Both Gordon Walters and John Money visit Schoon in the field. Initially on a commission from Department of Internal Affairs then made living labouring and producing hack portraits. Schoon paints portrait of John Money who becomes a lifelong patron

**1946**

Spencer Digby suite of photographs of Theo in Balinese dance poses - housed in the Te Papa collection

**1947-1948**

Photographic portraits of Rita Angus and Colin McCahon

**1949**

Department of Internal Affairs purchases 130 photographs of cave drawings. These are now held in the Alexander Turnbull Library Collection

**1949**

Schoon in Auckland - stays with ARD Fairburn who produces fabric designs based on Schoon's cave drawings. Works as an orderly at Avondale Mental Hospital in Avondale and meets patient Ralph Hattaway whose drawings become a source of fascination for both Schoon and Gordon Walters

**1950-52**

Schoon in Rotorua begins photographic studies of natural geothermal formations

**1952**

returns to Auckland, exploration of Moko and Maori Koru begins in earnest

**1953**

documents Gottfried Lindauer portraits in New Zealand collections as source material for moko and gourd designs. Initiates collaboration with Len Castle

**1956**

Schoon donates a substantial collection to the National Museum of Balinese and Javanese masks, fabric and applied arts. The collection is today housed at Te Papa

**1956-57**

begins to grow gourds at Home Street in Arch Hill, Auckland

**1959**

*Three Cave Artists* exhibition at Auckland City Art Gallery

including works by Schoon, Ruth Coyle and Dennis Knight-Turner

**1961**

travels to East Coast to study gourd carving with Pine Taiapa

**1962**

Publishes article in magazine *Te Ao Hou* on gourd carving and cultivation

**1963**

Schoon is the only Pakeha invited to exhibit at Turangawaewae Marae alongside Paratene Matchitt, Arnold Wilson and Selwyn Muru to celebrate the centenary of Ngaruawahia

**1965**

New Vision Gallery exhibition Auckland.

**1965**

Schoon returns to Rotorua and commences colour photography of rock formations and geothermal activity

**1966**

Exhibits with McCahon at *The Ninth New Zealand Art Exhibition* in Dunedin

**1968**

Commences research into jade carving and moves to the West Coast, employed by the Westland Greenstone Company in Hokitika

**1970**

Geothermal photographs exhibited at Expo '70 in Tokyo. Pounamu carvings exhibited at New Vision gallery

**1972**

Moves to Sydney

**1972**

Geothermal photos published in *Australian Photography* magazine

**1973**

Publishes *Jade Country*

**1978**

Peter James Gallery, Auckland exhibition

**1981**

Ron Brownson, Senior curator of New Zealand and Pacific art at the Auckland Art Gallery visits Theo Schoon in West Kempsey, New South Wales and acquires negatives and photos for the permanent collection

**1982**

Returns to New Zealand

**1982**

Rotorua Art Gallery exhibition curated by John Perry *Theo Schoon Collected Works*

**1985**

returns to Sydney and dies aged 69

**1985**

Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch Maori Rock Drawings exhibition *Theo Schoon Interpretations*

**1992**

Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney exhibition *Headlands: Thinking Through New Zealand Art* curated by Robert Leonard, John McCormack, Bernice Murphy, Cheryl Southeran and Cliff Whiting. Two works by Schoon included and catalogue essay by Rangihira Panaho acknowledges Schoon's engagement with Maori art

**1992-93**

*The Hit Parade: Contemporary Art from the Collection of Les and Milly Paris*, Wellington City Art Gallery includes key works by Schoon

**1997**

Lopdell House Gallery exhibition curated by Damian Skinner *Hattaway, Schoon, Walters: Madness and Modernism*

**2000**

*Inheriting the Netherlands, A Century of Dutch Art in New Zealand* inc. works by Petrus van der Velden, Theo Schoon, Ans Westra, Leon van den Eijkel, Ronnie van Hout and Saskia Leek. This exhibition curated by Natasha Conland toured New Zealand from Whangarei to Gore

**2002**

John Leech Gallery exhibition *Theo Schoon photographs & drawings*

**2006**

*Te Hue Ipu - Tracing the history of Gourds* exhibition at the Whangarei Art Gallery includes works by Manos Nathan, Reuben Paterson and Theo Schoon

**2006**

*The Splendours of Civilisation - The John Money Collection* at the Eastern Southland Gallery, Gore - exhibition and book of the same name published which includes the entire collection of works by Schoon assembled by John Money, a lifelong patron and friend of Schoon's

**2006**

Toi Te Papa - Art of the Nation includes Schoon's *Untitled (koru panel)* dated 1957

**2008**

Te Papa exhibition Theo Schoon *Opening the Archive*

**2012**

The Les and Milly Paris Collection offered for auction at ART+OBJECT featuring 14 works by Theo Schoon including photographs, drawings and the major oil *Electrical Discharge*, now in The Chartwell Collection.





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## An Audience with Sue Crockford



A visit to New York in the early 1980's was the catalyst for Sue Crockford to open her ground breaking gallery. From 1985 to 2013 she has represented many of New Zealand's modernist heavyweights including Ralph Hotere, Gordon Walters and Milan Mrkusich. In recent years her gallery was also the venue for exciting contemporary exhibitions by Julian Dashper, John Reynolds, Peter Robinson and Yuk King Tan. Sue Crockford Gallery was also the go to location for art fans to see major international artists in New Zealand with shows by Daniel Buren, Pae White, Christian Jankowski, and DJ Simpson. Sue speaks exclusively to *Content* about her inspiration, her personal philosophy and the artists with whom she worked.



Sue Crockford photographed at the opening of her gallery in 1985 in front of a hemisphere painting by Gretchen Albrecht

**Content: Let's start at the beginning. Tell us about your early art education.**

I went to Tauranga Girls High School. The teacher Claudia Jarman was very good. One day a woman came to speak to the sixth form about Ardmore Teachers College in the most amazing way. I was the first person to sign up... straight off. They were experimenting with art education and how that can help children, so I left school at sixteen.

**To go to teachers training college at Ardmore?**

Yes. I majored in art education. Bob Ellis, Marilyn Webb and Ralph Hotere were art advisors, guiding teachers on running a good art programme in primary schools. It was a really good time. I did my two years training specialising in art, then I immediately got a job as an art teacher in Tauranga for a year before returning to Auckland. Murray Gilbert took me into the Art Advisory Services of the Education Department so I could carry on with what Ralph and Marilyn had been doing, as they had left by this time. So, pretty quickly I was involved in art education.

**So you were training teachers?**

I really loved it. I drove all over the place and met a lot of people in Auckland. But I hadn't had any rest, so to speak, from school up to this point. Then I decided to leave altogether and spread my wings a bit. I became a model which paid quite well. I had a really good time for several years.

Then Murray Gilbert said the Art Advisory Service needed someone, I think Marilyn Webb was going to Dunedin for the Frances Hodgkins Fellowship for a year and they needed someone to help in the art education programme being trialled in primary schools. So I said I'd stay for a year, but I stayed for much longer. I enjoyed it immensely.

It was also a period of protesting, whether it was nuclear free or the Springbok Tour. It was a very active period politically.

**Let's look at the period before you started Sue Crockford Gallery. What was the art scene like at that time?**

I met Francis (Dr. Francis Pound, author, art historian). Francis and I decided to go to New York. We both had a complete love of art and we were both driven by it. We got married without telling anyone and we got on a plane to New York.

**That was your honeymoon?**

Yes, it was a brilliant time to go as there was so much going on over there.

**So when was this... early 1980s?**

Early 80s. Dick Frizzell had some friends who loved New Zealanders and we stayed with them. There was so much happening. We saw Laurie Anderson in concert twice, she was brilliant.

**One of the first musicians to engage with multi-media and music?**

She made a huge impression on me.

**What was the New York art scene like?**

It was the beginning of the big galleries. The whole thing was very new and exciting, a real buzz. The galleries were expanding. It was the beginning of a more professional scene.

**Are there any artists or exhibitions that you remember from this trip?**

Yes, it was a time when a lot of new people were coming into the art scene and some of them were really wild. We saw Jean Michel Basquiat's first show (1982 at Annina Mosei Gallery). I think Mary Boone picked him up shortly after that. We saw Sherrie Levine, Cindy Sherman, Jenny Holzer, Barbara Bloom, Ross Bleckner, Robert Longo, Barbara Kruger, Allan McCollum, and many others. But Anderson was the biggest thing for me, and somehow inspired me to open a gallery.

**Unlike anything in New Zealand? At that time there was only a handful of galleries in Auckland. RKS and Denis Cohn?**

Yes, but they had done a sterling job getting the whole thing going.

**So this trip was the catalyst for you to start your own gallery in 1985?**

I decided to open a gallery once we got back. I knew Gretchen Albrecht and she was very enthusiastic. So once I had one artist I was able to get a few more like Denys Watkins, Richard Killeen and Jacqueline Fraser. Oh, I also had a

1. Anne Lewis AO is a leading Australian collector, patron and philanthropist. In 2009 she donated 54 works from her collection to the MCA in Sydney. She was the director of the influential Gallery A from 1964

baby in the middle of this (daughter Veronica). I rented a space in Albert Street. The very last building to be left standing before Chase destroyed the whole of our city. Judy Millar was downstairs with her restaurant Five Columns. I opened on a Saturday with a group show, tons of people came. Then the building got completely pulled down, it was very sad we had a great feeling going on.

The patrons of the Auckland Art Gallery which had just been formed came to those early shows and were great supporters.

**Did you represent Ralph Hotere at this time?**

No, he was with Rodney Kirk-Smith and was very loyal. Rodney died in 1996 and Ralph joined me after that.

**Let's talk about the art scene in the mid 80s. There were less than half a dozen galleries. There was *Art New Zealand* magazine which had been running for about ten years.**

I came in with the American model. A representative gallery: the people that showed with you stayed with you. Previously it was a bit more free and artists moved about more.

**Is there an early show that really stands out?**

Yes. Daniel Buren (in 1990 Buren was named as a Living Treasure as part of the 1990 150th centenary celebrations). He made a beautiful work on one of the big sheds on the Wellington waterfront.

to 1983 and a foundation member of the Visual Arts Board, Australia Council as well as being a member of the International Council of the Museum of Modern Art, New York

**He would not have been a well known artist in New Zealand at this time. Daniel Buren at Sue Crockford Gallery. That would have been one of the first exhibitions by a major international artist in a dealer gallery.**

Yes and no one really had any idea what it was about. However, Alan and Jenny Gibbs were very interested in his work. Alan Gibbs later commissioned a major Buren installation for his farm — one of Buren's biggest installations — a striped fence line all over the property. Most collectors in New Zealand at this time were more focussed on New Zealand artists.

**Before the internet how did you go about marketing?**

You really had to hope that someone would review you in the newspaper, which they did thankfully and what I was doing was such an obvious change. I also had lots of relationships from the education days. Many of my artists were shown in public galleries, in the Sydney Biennale, in *Art New Zealand* and elsewhere.

**So word of mouth was very important?**

Yes. I had seen how things should be run in New York, which was a huge advantage for me.

**Were Australian collectors interested in New Zealand art in this period?**

There was one who was very important Anne Lewis<sup>1</sup>. But generally there was not much interest.





**You have mentioned the New York model...**

I wanted a straightforward way of operating. In a way, quite rigid. We worked to a four week schedule. The artists stayed with you. They signified what the gallery was.

**You mentioned the role of the Auckland Art Gallery patrons?**

The patrons became quite active at this time. They made more things happen, quite a catalyst for the scene at the time.

**Let's talk about the 80's in Auckland.**

It was a very stimulating moment. The Gibbs founded the patrons and this sparked a rise in collecting. It felt quite new and exciting.

**One of the landmark events of the early 1990's was Headlands<sup>2</sup> was this a pivotal event?**

It was, but it was complicated by the effect on Gordon Walters. It was not handled very well. It was really contentious, he felt ostracised.

**This was the appropriation debate? Pakeha artists engaging with Maori imagery?**

It was serious. The appropriation issue came up around Gordon Walters and he was stunned. I felt like the whole thing got out of control. I managed to take him in the end (to Sydney) but he was deeply shocked. His wife Margaret was a major scholar and translator of ancient Maori and he had spent a large part of his life studying Maori art here and in European museums.

**His engagement around Maori form making goes right back to the early 1950s, even earlier. Did he feel that his conscientious research had been ignored or did he feel that he had made an error?**

Gordon was in awe of Maori culture. It was hugely important to him, all the fuss was sickening to him and very upsetting. It came right in the end but I think it really affected him.

**It is fair to say that this art issue ballooned into the wider culture?**

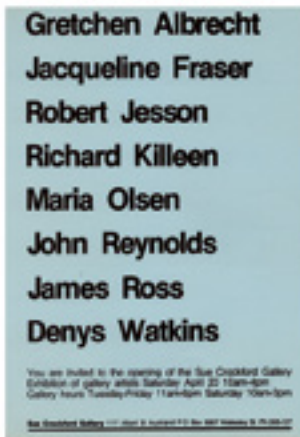
I think that the Australian curators were quite taken aback by the moves to effectively have Gordon's work removed. It almost became a nightmare.

**People are always interested in the relationship between the dealer and their artists. Can you tell us about your philosophy in managing your relationships with artists.**

I found it really quite simple. My job is to organise spaces and times. The artists could do what they liked. I was working with them because I thought they were fantastic, so it was a just a matter of them doing what they wanted to do.

**In the late 1990's New Zealand started to spread its wings and reach out to the wider world. This is when New Zealand began thinking about the Venice Biennale and the Walters Prize. Can you talk about this new phase of change?**

One of the great things that happened is that Anne Lewis took New Zealand on board.



She was instrumental in suggesting that New Zealand could be in the Venice Biennale. She loved what we were doing here and could see that New Zealand had a tiny but lively scene. I met her at the Venice Biennale in the late 1990's and she was immensely interested. Anne came to New Zealand and her relationship with Jenny (Gibbs) flourished into a fantastic combination.

**What do you think the effect of NZ participation at Venice has been on artists here?**

I think it has been really important. We can have shows here all the time and know we have good artists. But if no one knows out there then you are not going to get any further. You just have to look outside yourself. At the time we were ready to show the world how professional we were.

**Then we have had the effect of the Walters Prize (founded in 2002).**

Jenny (Gibbs) was hugely instrumental in this. It was going to be world class which it has been. The whole idea was to move things up a notch or two, become a



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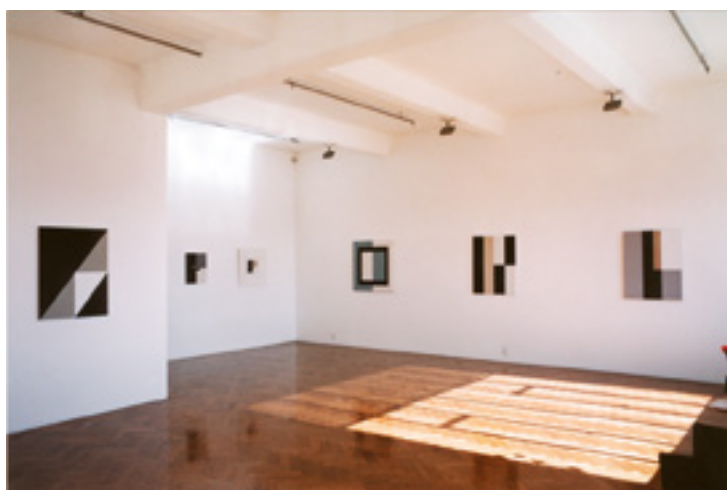
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Sue Crockford with John Reynolds, Claire McLintock, and Gordon Walters in the second location of the gallery, Achilles House, Customs St., Downtown Auckland, November 1992

An exhibition of canvases by Gordon Walters in the late 2000s in the third location of the gallery, Endeans Building, Queen St.

Installation time at Sue Crockford Gallery prior to a recent exhibition by John Reynolds. His brother, photographer Patrick Reynolds documents a major canvas



bit more international, by getting major international figures as judges

**What do you think Gordon Walters would think of this award being named after him?**

He was a very shy person; I think he'd be thrilled and also a bit astonished.

**If we look at 2013 we now have a scene where many artists, including those you have represented now have opportunities that did not exist previously. What is your take on the art scene today?**

Peter Robinson is a fantastic example. I think it has been amazing. Every step of the way there have been new things happening. But I think you have to have patrons. In a country like ours it always falls onto the same people to come up with the money. In the last few years I think more people are thinking of getting involved.

**You have represented at least two generations of artists. If we look at an artist such as John Reynolds you have represented him for his whole career.**

Yes, I can remember meeting John Reynolds. He ran a café (John's Diner), he was so captivating, full of beans. He showed me some of his work and I told him that I was starting a gallery. He said 'yes' from the beginning. It only took five minutes! John was part of the new professional gallery and artist model. I wanted the artists to realise that there was a lot going on overseas and we were just as good. That may sound a bit naive, but we have great artists.

**What was it like watching your foundation artists flourish?**

The artists just go for it! They became really involved in the studio practice and then the patrons came along. The whole thing was very exciting and new.

**Can we talk a bit about Julian Dashper. He is revered by younger artists. Sadly, he passed away recently. Can you tell us your view on his contribution to New Zealand art?**

Absolutely. Julian was just the most marvellous artist to deal with. He was very involved and always talked to younger artists. His work was quite extreme at the time and some people found this quite difficult but he loved to talk to these people and explain his work and thinking. The drumskins for example, I thought were fantastic. I have to talk about Rob Gardiner at this juncture. As a collector Rob was amazing, he saw every show and really focussed on the work. He could take anything on board and at the beginning he was one of the few to really understand those artists like Julian.

**In the last few years you have represented a new generation of artists such as Richard Maloy, Mladen Bizumic and Daniel Malone. Can you tell us your view of their practice? How do you work with these younger artists?**

You know one of the things is that it can be a little intimidating for a young artist to go into a gallery with an established roster. They have to have a lot of

confidence. I like to see them showing in another environment. Some of my established artists mention that they have seen a particular young artist — often as their teacher — and have been impressed. I think this is a very common way of dealers hearing about an artist — a dealer needs to have good ears as well as a good eye.

**Do you think it is essential to go to art school to have a career?**

I think it is a very good idea. It is quite cut-throat now and I think you almost have to have that as a background. Art history is also important; you have to know what has happened. Peter Robinson does and John Reynolds does, Dashper did, not to mention Walters or McCahon.

**Final question. 28 years is a pretty good innings. You've been a significant player in the visual arts culture of New Zealand. Tell us about your experience as a gallerist?**

To introduce a new way of showing and dealing right from the beginning was hugely exciting. I think the artists knew that the gallery was the real deal. Latterly they knew that the people overseas were watching and they really pulled out the stops. I felt that they did it for themselves and they did it for the gallery.





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# Art+Object Top 10 art sales

**Colin McCahon**

*He Calls for Elias*

enamel on hardboard,  
signed and dated Aug '59  
775 x 670mm

Realised \$571 875

Important Paintings  
and Contemporary Art  
April 2011

**Gordon Walters**

*Tautahi*

PVA and acrylic on canvas  
signed and dated '71  
1520 x 1142

\$439 684

Important Paintings  
and Contemporary Art  
April 2013

**Gordon Walters**

*Painting No.7*

PVA on hardboard  
title inscribed, signed and dated  
1965 verso  
1210 x 905mm

\$433 000

The Les and Milly Paris Collection  
September 2012

**Gordon Walters**

*Mokoia*

PVA and acrylic on canvas  
signed and dated 65-75 verso  
1220 x 980mm

\$415 000

The Les and Milly Paris Collection  
September 2012

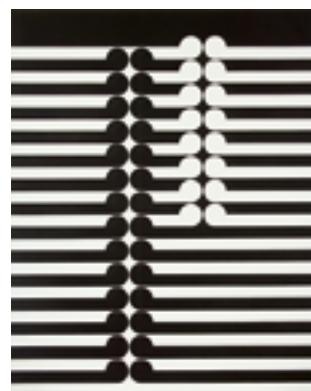
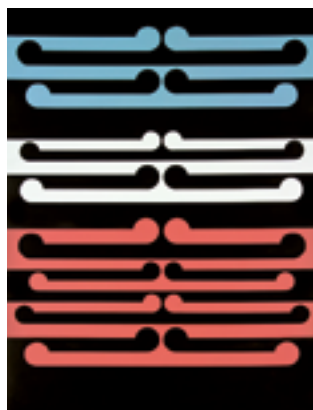
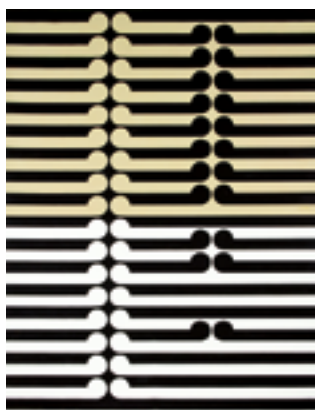
**Bill Hammond**

*Singer Songwriter*

acrylic on unstretched canvas  
title inscribed, signed and dated  
2001  
2150 x 2500mm

\$322 455

The David and Angela Wright  
Collection of Modern and  
Contemporary Art  
June 2011



A painting needs to be pretty special to sell for in excess of half a million dollars at public auction in this country. It needs to be in beautiful condition, extensively exhibited and well reproduced, impeccably provenanced, rare and most importantly, widely recognised as among the most significant artistic statements the respective artist produced. *He Calls for Elias* had all these qualities in abundance. Featured on the cover of the *A Question of Faith* exhibition catalogue, the painting is from a small series of twelve paintings in which the artist explored issues of faith, doubt and tragedy through the Christian story. It is widely considered to be among Colin McCahon's most original bodies of work and *He Calls for Elias* is among the most lucid and well composed paintings within this series. It is the fourth highest value painting of all time sold in this country through public auction.

Gordon Walters features four times in the list of the ten highest value artworks we have sold through auction and this is certainly not by chance. Like *He Calls for Elias*, *Tautahi* presented itself as an auctioneer's dream and deservedly re-set the benchmark for Walters' record price at auction, a benchmark which had only been set some eight months previously. Among the largest and most lyrical 'Koru' compositions the artist produced, *Tautahi* featured provenance every bit as impressive as its immaculately conceived interlocking forms, coming from the collection of Tim and Helen Beaglehole who had purchased it originally from Peter McCleavy in the year it was painted. It featured in the A+O catalogue alongside five later, geometric paintings by Walters and taken together, they did much to encapsulate the significance of one of New Zealand's greatest artists.

Purchased by the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Painting No. 7* is a vastly different painting to *Tautahi*, which was painted six years later. It was the highest selling lot of the record-breaking Paris Family auction and had been purchased by Les and Milly from the original exhibition at the New Vision Gallery in the late 1960s. It is one of the few larger scale Koru compositions painted on board rather than canvas – you'll find another superb example currently on display at Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki in the form of *Painting No. 1* (1964). The resultant aesthetic from the less forgiving support is strict, robust and unyielding and without the liminal 'bleed' which features in the three other paintings in this list. Further exacerbated by the more structured and less dynamic symmetry of the composition, the painting is cool, precise and unwavering.

Somewhat unusually for Walters, *Mokoia* appears to have been conceived over a ten year period and is accordingly dated 1965 – 1975. Although the artist is well-known for his painstakingly slow painting technique and fastidious execution, such a prolonged period of conception is unusual for him. Painted in the crowd-pleasing favourite of black and white, *Mokoia* is among Walters most rhythmical and lucid compositions and it is definitely in these achromatic works where the dynamic interplay of positive and negative forms plays out most explicitly. Acquired by Les and Milly Paris from Peter McCleavy in the 1970s, the work now resides in a local private collection. However for me, I will always remember it in my favourite art world photograph of all time, Les Paris smoking a big cigar at his partner's desk overflowing with legal papers with *Mokoia* and Richard Killeen's *Constructivist Grid No. 3* (1974) providing a vital backdrop of visual calm.

Unusually soft and delicate and with none of Hammond's trademark blues and greens anywhere in sight, *Singer Songwriter* not unlike the aforementioned Walters painting *Tautahi*, presented a challenge to standard audience and market preconceptions about where the artist's strongest painterly statements lie. Gently painted onto the most delicate of raw linens, *Singer Songwriter* represented an achromatic masterpiece which could only have been painted by an artist at the peak of his creative powers. At just over two and a half metres long the painting was big enough to make Hammond's otherworldly amphitheatre of theatre and drama an all-enveloping one. The painting was the centrepiece of the David and Angela Wright Collection, a collection unique by virtue of the single-minded pursuit of truly major works by New Zealand's leading artists. It featured two major Bill Hammond paintings but it was the exquisite *Singer Songwriter* which captured the hearts and minds of collectors.



## Ben Plumbly reviews A+O's ten highest-price art sales in the period 2007–2013

**Colin McCahon**

North Otago Landscape 8  
polyvinyl acetate on board  
title inscribed, signed and dated  
1967 verso  
905 x 1210mm

\$293 000

The Les and Milly Paris Collection  
September 2012



**Ralph Hotere**

Dawn Water Poem  
acrylic on unstretched canvas  
title inscribed, signed and dated  
Port Chalmers '85  
2045 x 1830mm

\$295 125

The David and Angela Wright  
Collection of Modern and  
Contemporary Art  
June 2011



**Colin McCahon**

Noughts and Crosses Series II No. V  
synthetic polymer paint on  
Steinbach paper mounted to  
hardboard  
title inscribed, signed with artist's  
initials C. McC and dated '76  
1085 x 730mm

\$281 400

Important Paintings  
and Contemporary Art  
April 2013

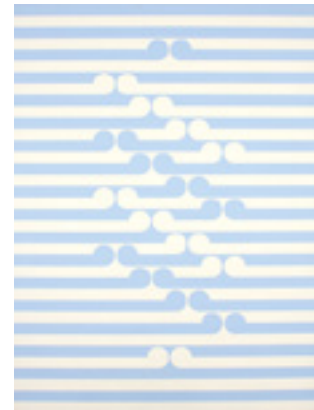


**Gordon Walters**

Untitled  
PVA and acrylic on canvas  
title inscribed, signed and dated  
1972 verso  
1220 x 910mm

\$277 200

Important Paintings  
and Contemporary Art  
March 2010

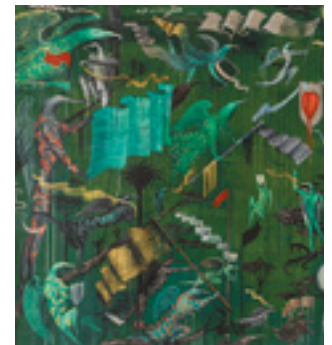


**Bill Hammond**

Flag  
acrylic on unstretched canvas  
title inscribed, signed and dated  
1997  
1410 x 2130mm (detail)

\$255 500

Important Paintings  
and Sculpture  
April 2009



Landscape is easily the most consistent theme throughout Colin McCahon's practice, from the late 1930s watercolours of Otago Harbour and environs through to the late masterpiece *A Painting for Uncle Frank* in 1980, the New Zealand landscape appears time and time again. Among the purer and more elemental landscapes the artist produced is the *North Otago* series produced in 1967. All paintings in the series share essentially the same distinguishing simplification and flattening of the landscape into three horizontal bands of sky, hills and plain. McCahon himself alluded to the existential and spiritual element at the root of all his landscapes when he remarked: "the real subject is buried in the works themselves". Among the more popular and accessible of McCahon's paintings, *North Otago* had all the right ingredients for realising its potential on the open market including rarity – it was the one of only two major works from the series to come up for sale in the last ten years. It was also in excellent and original condition.

The one consistency in Ralph Hotere's secondary market over the past ten years has been inconsistency. Most market followers will now be familiar with the phenomenal and unprecedented price rise which took place in the artist's market from the years 1999 – 2003, a rise which was, of course, ultimately unsustainable. In recent years however, the best of the artist's works have begun to sell very well again as the market has developed a greater ability to discriminate. *Dawn – Water Poem* was among the finest canvases the artist completed and featured several stylistic characteristics which the market prizes in the artist's work including: the artist's classic palette of black and red, the gestural and expressive combined with the certitude of the ruled line, stencilled text, an engagement with environmental issues and taking inspiration in the work of New Zealand poet Bill Manhire. *Dawn – Water Poem* became the third highest selling Ralph Hotere painting at auction and easily the highest since the market peak of 2004.

Only Colin McCahon could take the most rudimentary of childhood games and turn it into a body of work which so profoundly ruminates on spiritual and existential questions of life and death, darkness and light and belief and doubt. 1976 represented a fertile and prolific year for McCahon as the artist, re-stimulated by the new support of Steinbach paper provided for him by dealer Peter McLeavey, produced three small series in quick succession which for many rank among his finest: *Noughts and Crosses*, *Rocks in the Sky* and *Angels in Bed*. From the second mini-series, *Noughts and Crosses Series II No. V* is among the more vibrant and brilliantly coloured in the small series. Although they were sold at the original exhibition for \$400 each, with the strength of this artist's market and the limited supply due to several being held in public collections, *Noughts and Crosses Series II No. V* had little trouble realising just in excess of \$280 000 earlier this year.

Painted in 1972, *Untitled* is at the calmer, softer and more contemplative end of Gordon Walters' practice. Conceived in a gentle, pale sky blue one tends to read the composition from top to bottom, the eye slowly meandering down through the fine gaps where the bulbs of the Koru form meet. Originally purchased by the owners from Petar James Gallery in 1973 and in lovely original condition the painting showcased a different side of the artist's practice with the optical 'pulsing' replaced by a more restrained aesthetic which could only make *Untitled* an absolute joy to live with and the type of painting which one would never tire of looking at. At the point of sale in March 2010 this was the second highest selling Koru painting of all time.

Bill Hammond's green bird paintings, especially those from the mid-1990s, are among the most sought-after paintings in the marketplace. *Flag* is one of the more frenetic and joyous compositions of this large and ongoing series. Lurid and glossy *Flag* presents viewers with a 'swamp world' inhabited by all manner of the artist's creepy mythical bird figures, staking out their respective territories with all kinds of European markers including heraldic signs and flags. Hammond's best works are as intellectually stimulating as they are beautiful to look at and *Flag* represented an incredibly successful combination of the two, eventually selling under the hammer to a private collector for just in excess of a quarter of a million dollars.







# An Eternal Interior?

Leading New Zealand architect Pete Bossley responds to one of the most singular of 20th century architectural masterpieces, the Brion tomb by Carlo Scarpa.

It is almost impossible to imagine the work of Carlo Scarpa without the presence of Venice. The extraordinary intensity of the city, the Byzantine qualities of materials, colours, and styles, mixed with the spatial density of narrow streets, canals, and piazzas, resonate throughout Scarpa's work.

Approaching the city by sea, after a ferry trip from the airport, is one of the most expressive experiences of 'entering' and 'interior' I have had. After the relative openness of the waterways, to ease in towards the narrow canals, congested and ringing with activity, brings a sense of penetrating something new, strange and exotic, not shared by any other city I know. This interiority is further reinforced by the old city: streets and lanes so narrow they suffocate sunlight, where dark spaces hide behind shady alcoves, twisting lanes keep their locations and routes to themselves, murmurs of private lives reverberate softly above, and footsteps of strangers echo around corners in front or behind. The possibilities for becoming lost are endless.

This density of space means that the public piazzas, such as the magnificent St Marks Square, seem like vast open spaces by comparison. Emerging from the adjacent shaded lanes into St Marks engenders a release of breath, almost a sense of relief after the claustrophobia of the earlier experience.

I have been in this city in bright sunlight, when the dark spaces offer relief from the heat, and in cold wet fog, when the dampness of the atmosphere and the rising sea seem to permeate every pore of the body and of the city, when clothes absorb the damp just as the plastered walls become sodden, watermarked and eventually begin to strip themselves of their decorative coatings with an air of noble decay.

Scarpa's work carries this wonderful intensity. Most of his projects are interiors, or at least interventions, slipped in between existing walls and incoming tides, into fissures in history; poetic insertions into existing buildings and streets. His ability to work with exotic and plain materials, his propensity for gorgeously intricate detailing and decoration,

and his very personal sense of proportions, express the 'interiority' and intensity of Venice, whilst at the same time stating the contemporaneity of his philosophy. The wonderful Fondazione Quirini Stampala is one of his finest examples, almost claustrophobic in its assault on the viewer's senses. Every surface and corner is a treat, every material and pattern a delight. Here the rise and fall of the sea is manifest, with the murky threatening water literally pressing its way into the building, covering and exposing steps in a process now overpassed by the beautiful and delicate new Scarpa-designed bridge.

When Scarpa was commissioned to design a tomb for Giuseppe and Onorina Brion in 1968 he was 37 years into a 47 year career. It was to take up the last 9 years of his life, before his death after a fall on a stair in Japan. It became one of his most famous works, impressive for the intricacy of the concrete work, the complexity of the detailing, and the subtlety of the flow of spaces. The multi-layered journey from entry shrine to lake to tomb and on to the temple is articulated by compressions and expansions, visual contrasts between obstructions and longer axes, delightful details and eclectic references. The allusions are numerous, including the entry that Scarpa called the 'propyleum', and the famous double circle, which Scarpa



Left: The signature device of the Brion complex is the interlocked circles which announce and articulate the main entrance or propyleum- the symbolism of marriage and the connection of Giuseppe and Onorina Brion cannot be mistaken

Middle: water plays a central role in the Brion complex; here the chapel floats in a delicate sunken pond

Bottom: The tombs of the Brions are sheltered by a massive curving structure that sits at the axis of the two key architectural elements, the chapel and the water pavilion

Top: The Brion tomb is located in the local cemetery outside the village of San Vito d'Altivole, Treviso in the Veneto region of northern Italy





Looking north towards San Vito d'Altivole and the pre-alps beyond from the Japanese influenced water pavilion

Note: The Brion Tomb is located in the municipal cemetery of the town of San Vito d'Altivole and can be accessed by taxi or bus from the town of Treviso. The Tomb was commissioned by designer Giuseppe Brion, founder of the Brionvega company and houses both Brion and his wife Onorina. Scarpa himself (1906–1978) is buried in the adjacent cemetery

made his own but which is also the Chinese symbol for man and woman.

The L shaped site for the complex was possibly one of the most open he had to work with, over 2000m<sup>2</sup> with views of the nearby village. However, he surrounded it with a continuous wall of concrete, thereby enclosing the space and controlling the views out. The buildings are overscaled monuments inserted to control views, limit the length of axes, and enclose space. In effect, Scarpa turned this gentle open corner of the existing

**When Scarpa was commissioned to design a tomb for Giuseppe and Onorina Brion in 1968 he was 37 years into a 47 year career.**

cemetery into an intensely internal space. Within that space he compressed space even further, with the narrow entry 'tube', the heavy overhead vault of concrete, marble and ebony above the twin tombs of the Brion couple, and the square temple, set at 45 degrees to the axis, separated by a moat and arranged to focus

oblique views towards the pearwood and ebony altar.

Far from being a freestanding mausoleum in an expansive cemetery, as is common throughout Italy, Scarpa created another internal space, within which he inserted even more internal spaces and constrained views. Maybe it

is above all a song to Venice... a poetic reference back to that city of his soul.

Just as the wonderful Italian writer Italo Calvino, when he wrote of many fantastical cities in *Invisible Cities* was really describing only one city, Venice, so Scarpa carried the delights and intrigues and interiority of Venice with him when he worked elsewhere. He was, as he once described himself, '...a man of Byzantium who came to Venice by way of Greece'.



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Far left: The stepped motif employed throughout the Brion complex reveals the influence of both antique forms and the use of this device by Frank Lloyd Wright and Walter Burley Griffin, designer of Canberra

Left: Use of colourful mosaics is a signature Scarpa 'Byzantine' homage

Right: Two views of the interior of the chapel display Scarpa's way with concrete, metal, mosaic with judicious insertions of gold pigment and wood and to stirring effect. The celebrated omega circular door sits on a bed of milky white mosaic tiles. Notice also the stepped motif to the upper section behind the polished brass altar

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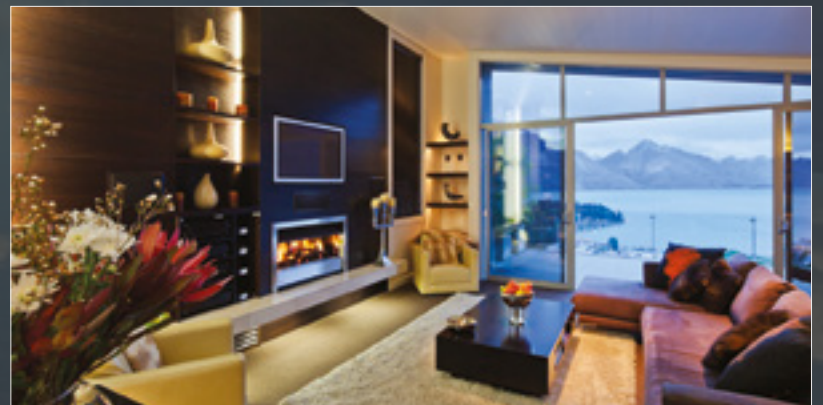


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# Scarpa's Flow

Venetian architect Carlo Scarpa (1906–1978) was notable not for large scale cathedrals but smaller, discrete interventions within existing structures and modernist gems within the historic fabric of the city of La Serenissima. After many years of anticipation Hamish Coney recalls his recent pilgrimage to find the work of this great 20th century master.

I discovered the work of Carlo Scarpa almost by accident whilst researching early concrete casting techniques for an article I was writing for *URBIS* magazine (see issue 31, 2006 *Raising Chandigarh*). I had just returned from an architectural pilgrimage to Chandigarh in northern India where I had visited Le Corbusier's government complex, so full of Nehru's dreams for an independent India after ninety years of colonial rule. Le Corbusier was the beneficiary of both an open brief and an open field. Chandigarh is a city designed and built from the ground up.

Carlo Scarpa never enjoyed such a dramatic and large-scale commission. In the main, he had to make do with smaller domestic and retail store concepts or more commonly fix-up jobs: redesigning bomb damaged museums in post-war Sicily or rethinking dilapidated structures in Venice. In many cases Scarpa was faced with logistical challenges within teetering existing buildings

and his floorplate was a partial section of a larger, older, monumental whole.

Beset with the technical, regulatory and construction constraints inherent in centuries old buildings, Scarpa produced a series of responses that belie small scale and the devilish complexity of working in the lagoons and canals of Venice.

Scarpa specialised in museum restoration and gallery design. In Venice his signature is everywhere, but in most cases it is reticent and at the service of art display – the treasures of his birthplace. Two of his most well-known gallery interiors are the majestic Museo Correr on St. Mark's Square and Accademia di Venezia, location of masterpieces by Giorgione, Bellini, Carpaccio and Titian.

However, the Fondazione Querini Stampalia in the labyrinthine Cannaregio district is a much smaller and intimate 'house-museum'

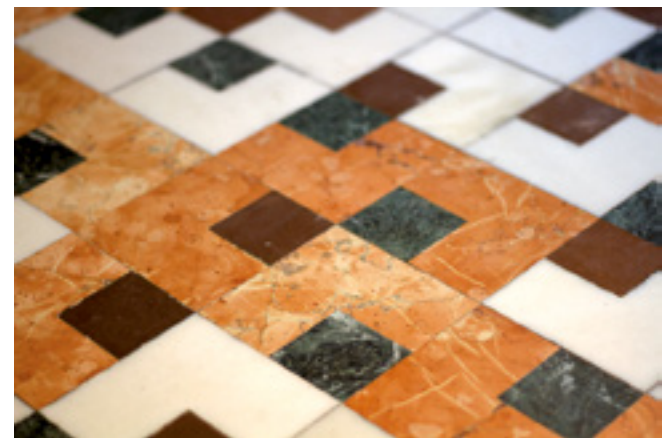


Left: The internal courtyard reveals Scarpa's intimate use of water features and delicate use of mosaic decoration

Below: Scarpa's finest hour? The device of heavy block steps acting as a buffer against the tide that can only be described as Scarpaesque. The same can be said for the mesmerising marble floor in abstract and irregular pattern

which reveals Scarpa's innate understanding of the confined spaces and canals of the quarter. To this postage stamp sized floorplate Scarpa inserts his unique ability to posit a modernist approach inside a building dating to the sixteenth century.

When Scarpa was appointed in 1959, the palazzo, like so many in Venice, was becoming increasingly vulnerable to rising tides. His response was to create a modern version of the traditional *portego* to allow the canal to enter – to a point – tidal variance is controlled and accommodated by a classic Scarpa variation of step forms into and under the highest of tides. By then raising the floorlevel and locating a series of glass doors to link to the external garden courtyard to the rear, itself a signature amalgam of Japanese and Italianate



stylistic treatments, Scarpa was able to create a generous flowing environment that dissolves traditional barriers between water, built form and garden. The entire groundfloor covers not more than a few hundred metres, likewise the garden courtyard. Within these, Scarpa has employed a diversity of glass, marble, concrete, bronze, travertine, mosaic to glorious and detailed effect. The tiny

highlight is the small Mondrian inspired fountain which feeds the courtyard's linear lilygarden. Not much larger than a teatray it is metaphor for Venice in plan and man's relationship to the movement of water. It is Scarpa acknowledging that water will find its own course, but with a little human intervention this flow can be accommodated to decorative and practical effect.



Scarpa's elemental monumentality is conveyed as a series of considered close-ups.



Top: The biglietteria or ticket office designed for the 1952 Venice Biennale still stands at the entrance to the Giardini – more sculpture than architecture

Classic Scarpa moments in the gorgeous Olivetti shop in St Mark's Square, Venice. Note the irregular steps of the monumental staircase



Not too far away in St. Mark's Square is another Scarpa classic, the small but perfectly formed Olivetti shop, designed in 1956. Sitting on a footprint of just one hundred square metres this erstwhile typewriter showroom has become a site of pilgrimage for architecture fans the world over. At the very entrance the visitor encounters another of Scarpa's near silent fountains, an homage to the canals and lagoon just metres away to the rear of the shop. There always seems to be water in and around his structures, introducing

a natural element and acknowledging this life source is a trademark Scarpa device that renders his interiors alive to all the senses. Another is his striking use of colour in the form of mosaic details or floor treatments. Scarpa was deeply influenced by artistic movements of the time, most notably abstract expressionism. He interpreted this sensual approach to colour via the ancient Byzantine craft of mosaic work. In the Olivetti shop a bold red contrasts with cool cream mosaic treatments in the entrance of the shop which leads

to Scarpa's much copied irregular, monumental, cascading staircase to the gantry style mezzanine level above. Scarpa, through his attention to detail and bold interplay of material is using the shop interior to hint at the complexity of the workings of a typewriter as a metaphor for its communicative purpose. If you are going to St Mark's Square to visit the Palazzo Ducale, the Orologio, the Basilica or Florian's, do not forget to look across to find one of the smallest contenders for the shop of the 20th century.

At the entrance to the Biennale Giardini is Scarpa's smallest and most wondrous Venetian masterpiece, the ticket kiosk designed for the 26th Biennale in 1952. In plan the ticket office sits in the shape of an eye protected by a sail cloth-like shade. It shares a kinship with the Brion monument as a design that approaches sculpture. Close inspection reveals level of detailing in wood, stone, glass, metal and cloth that rivals a boatbuilder's understanding of the unique characteristics and tensile strengths of each material.

Scarpa, perhaps forced by the very structure of Venice and the realisation that he would almost always be working in a small scale – the footprint of the kiosk is not more than fifteen square metres – made sure every centimetre counted. As a viewer one can inspect a Scarpa design at the same distance as one would a painting. There in the articulation of a gallery label, doorhinge or in the intersection of marble, concrete and glass Scarpa's elemental monumentality is conveyed as a series of considered close-ups.



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# New Zealand Design

## Top 10 at ART+OBJECT

**Garth Chester**  
Curvese Chair  
 bent plywood – design 1944

Realised \$9185

October 2012  
 20th Century Design



Arguably the world's first cantilevered plywood chair, the Curvese sits at the very pinnacle of 20th century New Zealand furniture.

Designer Garth Chester worked for another twenty years but never again produced a chair of such striking design nor in numbers that it achieved the critical mass required to insert itself into the national imagination to the same degree that the Curvese has.

Sensitive to moisture, relegation to verandahs and patios saw the number of survivors decrease over the decades – those that remain are sinuous, sexy and in demand.

**Bob Roukema for Jon Jansen**  
 1950s Wingback armchair

\$3795

August 2009  
 20th Century Design



This chair is the outsider of New Zealand design but a good long-term bet. Initial hesitation amongst collectors derived from a feeling that this piece was too strongly influenced by Australian design icon Grant Featherston – it was neither an original nor a copy. As collectors have gained confidence in recognising New Zealand design, that reticence has largely evaporated.

The Roukema Wingback chair for Jon Jansen is now being embraced for what it is – the most exuberant New Zealand design of the modernist period.

Bob Roukema designed for leading local firm Jon Jansen and the Wingback chair is perhaps his masterwork. Other, essentially more modest or restrained designs by Roukema are also gaining in popularity.

**Frank Carpay for Crown Lynn**  
 Ovoid vase with scalloped pattern in black, marked handwerk with tiki stamp. H.205mm

\$3695

October 2007  
 Contemporary Art & Objects



Frank Carpay was a very talented Dutch import caught in a downward spiral of indifference as New Zealanders failed to come to grips with his work, whether in ceramics or textiles.

Today his talent shines through and the Handwerk range remains the high point of his career. Produced entirely between 1953 and 1956, Handwerk illustrated what Crown Lynn might have become – a world leader in contemporary design. Their paths took different directions and sadly Crown Lynn and Carpay parted ways.

Carpay's works, designed for eventual mass production, remain by and large one-off designs of spectacular beauty and increasing rarity. Carpay's best works have a distinctive use of black pattern derived from the skilful play of a brush laden with black at play on a white surface.

**David Trubridge**  
Body Raft 1998  
 steam bent wych elm with stainless steel screwed and plugged joints  
 2100 x 780 x 620mm

\$8065

May 2007  
 Contemporary Art & Objects



A comparative newbie, David Trubridge's sinuous *Body Raft* has become an international design icon, at least amongst the environmentally-aware design set.

In the late 1990s *Body Raft* established a new direction for Trubridge and set the designer on the path to international celebrity status. The raft will therefore remain a seminal work, an object of importance in the designer's oeuvre and of desire for collectors.

This early one-off prototype was offered in A+O's first catalogue and another version resides in the collection of Museum Theatre Gallery Hawke's Bay. International collecting institutions have also acquired work. With those holdings already established, the *Body Raft's* status as an historically important design classic is guaranteed.

**John Crichton**  
 Mosaic tiled charger  
 d.400mm

\$1100

May 2012  
 Objects and Modern Design



John Crichton, a multi-tasking interior, furniture and lighting designer, remains under appreciated. His modernist interior schemes were the most advanced in the country and his design of one-off or limited-run furniture and accessories discreetly spectacular.

Leading the revival of interest in Crichton's works are his mosaics. Produced during the 1960s and 70s, the sophisticated colourings and subtle combinations of tile (with a fired-on permanence) make these works bold and entrancing additions to any New Zealand modernist collection.

Crichton hand made each of these pieces, including ash trays, small bowls and table tops but the scale of the wall chargers makes them unmissable collection items.



Content asked New Zealand's leading authority on modern design, Hawkes Bay Museum Theatre Gallery Director and author Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins to run his practised eye over the ten leading examples of New Zealand 20th century design.

**Ernst Plischke**

Pendant Light, circa 1953  
designed both for St Martins  
Presbyterian church, Christchurch  
and St Marys church Taihape. This  
particular light is from St Martins.  
H.350mm, D.300mm

\$4570

September 2011  
The Ross Morrison Collection



E.A. Plischke holds a seminal position in the history of New Zealand modernism as our premier emigre architect. Austrian-born and trained Plischke, a highly influential author of *Design and Living* (1947) and *On the Human Aspect in Modern Architecture* (1969) was the poster boy for European modernism for a whole generation of Kiwis.

A prolific designer of furniture and light fittings Plischke works are rare to the market and stir great interest. Plischke's work, exemplified in these light fittings, has a spectacular simplicity that speaks clearly of the modernist philosophy that underpins them.

**Michael Payne**

New Zealand Expo Chair  
Mahogany laminate shell  
with black leather upholstery

\$1775 (pair)

May 2012  
Objects and Modern Design



New Zealand designed modernism's greatest international triumph occurred at Expo 70 held in Osaka, Japan.

The New Zealand pavilion was a triumph of local design not equalled since, with contributions from Mark Cleverly, John Densem and architect/designer Michael Payne amongst others.

These sleek leather-clad chairs populated the unforgettable Geyser Room. The prototypes, sent for sign-off and approval to Keith Holyoake (who also brought you that modernist design icon the Beehive) are now in the collection of MTG Hawke's Bay.

The chairs were subsequently produced by Nova furniture and became must haves for the sleekest homes and offices of 1970s and their status remains unchanged.

**Roy Lippincott**

Senate Chair and Library Table  
Circa 1925

\$5780

December 2009  
Objects of Desire



With the arrival of Roy Alston Lippincott New Zealand acquired its own legitimate Chicago School trained architect. An associate of Walter Burley Griffin who designed the Australian capital of Canberra, Lippincott won the design competition for the Auckland University College Arts Building in 1921.

This immensely important project included the design of numerous individual pieces of original furniture. These were first used by the thousands of university students who encountered them throughout the University of Auckland until they were dispersed in the early 1980s.

Today as examples of this immense suite resurface they are snapped up as important works of a highly individual architect active in design in a key period from which little original work survives

**Crown Lynn Wharetana Ware**

A pair of bookends modelled as  
moko mokai. H.140mm

\$4790

April 2008  
Contemporary Art and Objects



Wharetana Ware represented Crown Lynn in its earlier period in which many works came with folksy overtones suggestive of raw effort rather than any sophisticated concept or technique. They are therefore much admired for what they achieved.

A commercial failure in their own day the Wharetana range speaks eloquently of this period.

Designed by Dave Jenkin, an Elam graduate and probably modelled by Harry Hargreaves their irreverent use of Maori motifs looks back to Arts & Crafts movement practice and their mass production looks forward to the modernism to come.

**Ernest Shufflebotham  
for Crown Lynn**

Large handpotted vase  
shape 14 with rare mint glaze  
H.240mm

\$1580

May 2012  
Objects and Modern Design



Ernest Shufflebotham, previously and erroneously known as Shufflebottom, probably had more impact on the appearance of New Zealand than any other commercial potter.

Trained by Wedgwood, his New Zealand works were variations, numerous in type, colour and intention, on his original employer's output. They were however almost all vases and with them he populated what seemed like every front room, local hall and church in the country.

Today their status comes from their severity of design and their variety of shape and scale. Spectacular colourings in everything from pale pink through to mint green make them particularly sought after as are extremely rare examples in black.





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

# Content.01

Issue number 1, September 2013  
 Published by ART+OBJECT  
 3 Abbey St, Newton, Auckland  
 Tel +64 9 354 4646  
 www.artandobject.co.nz

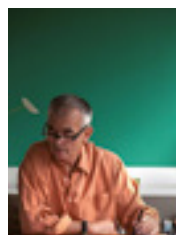
Concept and editorial management: Hamish Coney

Photography: Jennifer French (Light Touches) Sarah Smuts Kennedy (Mystery Creek, Team New Zealand, An Eternal Interior, Scarpa's Flow) Kelly Loveridge (A+O team), Tony Arrow (artwork) and where acknowledged.

Contributors: Pete Bossley, Hamish Coney, Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins, Ben Plumbly

Design: Warren Olds Studio Ahoy  
 Print Management: Graeme Brazier  
 Printing: McCollams Print

Thanks and acknowledgments: Jo Blair, Joy Bloser, Pete Bossley, Ron Brownson, Jude Chambers, Sue Crockford, Veronica Crockford-Pound, Bill Culbert, Michael Dunn, Sean Duxfield, Jennifer French, Heather Gailbraith, Jim Geddes, Dame Jenny Gibbs, John Gow, Jenny Harper, Barry Keldoulis, Wendy Jefferson, Douglas Lloyd-Jenkins, Dayle Mace, Bob McMillan, Leigh Melville, Reuben Paterson, John Perry, Scott Pothan, Francis Pound, Sally Schoon, Damian Skinner, Sarah Smuts-Kennedy, Darryl Ward, Helen Watson, Andrew Paul Wood.



Pete Bossley likes to ponder the ins and outs of architecture; he designs it too. In 2012 he was awarded the NZ Institute of Architects top award, the Gold Medal. He has travelled the world to explore architecture, and greatly appreciates the subtlety and sophistication of great buildings like those of Carlo Scapa.



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.



Jennifer French is an Auckland based photographer and artist. She has worked closely with Creative New Zealand documenting the last 5 Venice pavilions as the official photographer. In 1995 French was awarded the Moët & Chandon New Zealand Art Foundation Fellowship, Residency, Avize, France. French is represented by Antoinette Gallery Auckland.



Born in 1963 in Auckland, Douglas Lloyd Jenkins is New Zealand's leading design historian. He is author of a number of books on design and architectural history including *At Home: A century of New Zealand Design* (2005) and *The Dress Circle: New Zealand Fashion Design since 1940* (2010). He is currently director of MTG Hawke's Bay.



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 record-breaking Les and Milly Paris Collection. Last year he was called upon to value the entire fine art collection of The Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa.



Sarah Smuts-Kennedy is an Auckland based artist who recently graduated from Elam with an MFA with First Class Honours. Her work is held in numerous Australian public and corporate collections including the Art Gallery of South Australia and the Deutsche Bank Collection, Sydney. Sarah opens at Breenspace, Sydney on September 21.





Important Paintings and  
Contemporary Art: 28 November 2013

Entries invited until October 25

**Pat Hanly**

*Golden Age*

enamel and oil on board  
signed and dated '73 (twice)  
900 x 900mm

Provenance: Private collection, Auckland.

\$120 000 – \$160 000

Contact:

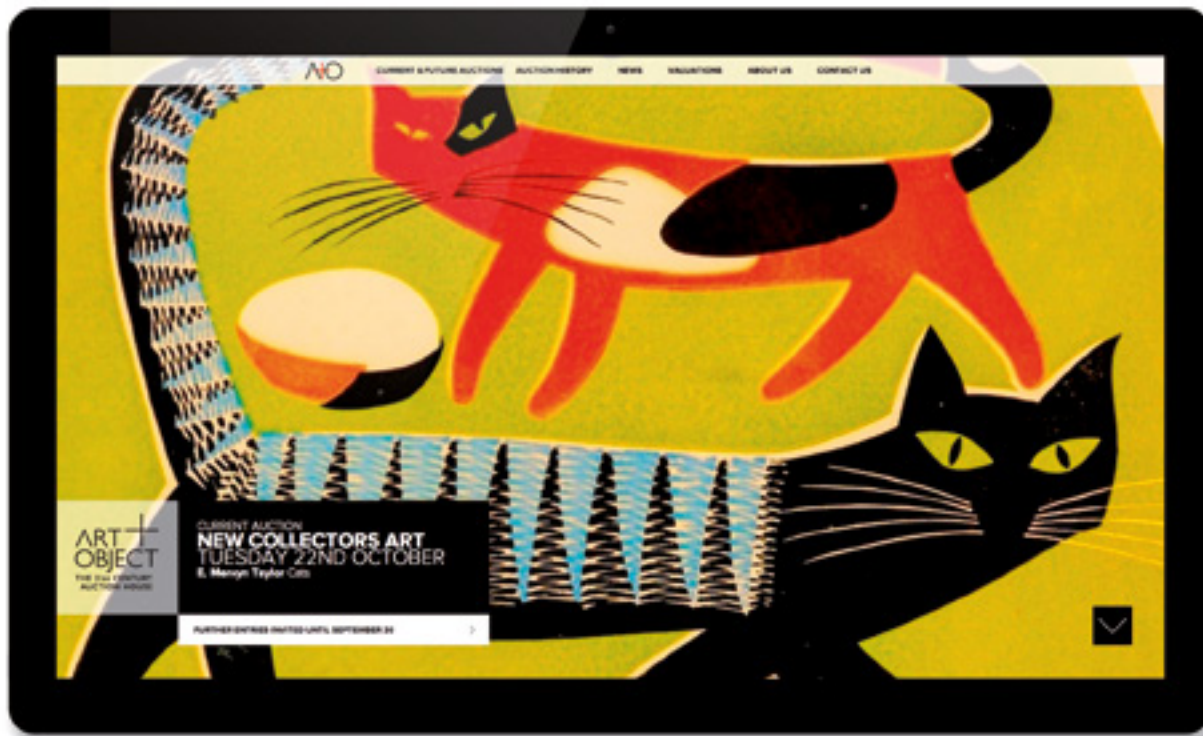
Ben Plumbly  
ben@artandobject.co.nz  
09 354 4646  
021 222 8183

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