



chrysalis seed trust



Is that you, Caravaggio. Kees Bruin, 2004, Oil on Canvas, 550 x 500mm.
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Super Realism and the vision beyond

A year ago we looked at how painters such as Cristina Popovici use Abstract Expressionism as a way of expressing themselves and therefore their faith. One of the hallmarks of Chrysalis Seed exhibitions to date is that within the framework of a common faith, a diverse spectrum of styles are used. Christian art is not determined by either style or content, rather by the convictions, belief and life of the artist. To explore this reality further in this edition we look at the life and art of Kees Bruin and Helm Ruifrok, both of Dutch ancestry and building on this heritage in contemporary ways - Kees showing a strong link with Vermeer, Helm with Rembrandt.

Kees Bruin's compositions would be among the finest examples of visionary super realism today. Helm combines the talent for detail seen in Kees' work with the raw mystical emotionalism of Popovici's work, explored in our October issues last year.

All three styles reflect a passion to express the unseen and the link between the visible and the invisible, the human and the divine, natural/supernatural. Kees does this through his remarkable facility to observe and record in details aspects of the visible world, then reset them in unexpected juxtapositions. Cristina explores the link through her intuitive manipulation of paint and colour in careful compositions, such as *Waterfall of Energy* 2003.

In his recent *Vanitas*, Bruin uses emblems of

consumer society and the 'good life' to expose the vanity of it all. Other less obvious more enduring values and realities are alluded to, echoing sentiments in the book of Ecclesiastes, and McCahon's final works. This reflects the 16th century Dutch heritage of highly detailed metaphysical symbolism. One of his most poignant examples of carefully recording visible reality as a link to the divine, is in his *Elizabeth and Goldfinch*. Part of the collection of Te Puna, the entire painting is very physical and personal. The allusions are to death, resurrection and life beyond our daily existence. The goldfinch is a traditional symbol of the passion of Christ and links it with the artist's fiancée's battle and death with cancer (see *CS News* April 2004). *Easter Lily and Eve* (1996) presents a Lily in details that can almost be smelt and picked, along with a nude reminiscent of Venus in Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*, and ancient Greek sculptures. This figure symbolises women universally, from Genesis to Picasso's daughter. This composition, with its strong chiaroscuro suggests both the creation of night and day, and the emerging tension between them.

As with Colin McCahon's *Takaka Night and Day*, it references the garden of Eden in a contemporary context.

Beyond Night and Day

Bruin and Ruifrok provide a link between our two group shows 2004-2005. The last issue of *CS News*

CS NEWS
ARTS
QUARTERLY

JANUARY 2005 - ISSUE 19

www.c.s.o.r.g.n.z

Who we are

Founded in 1998 the Chrysalis Seed charitable trust serves a growing number of contemporary artists. We aim to 'help resource the arts community from a Christian perspective'. We meet regularly to encourage each other and participate in a range of activities designed to support artists and their profession. We operate a resource centre in the heart of the Arts Centre, where all are welcome.

CS News

This is our main publication, which goes to artists, galleries, poets and supporters around New Zealand and overseas. Designed for the wider arts community, it engages with contemporary artists, art issues and events.

We have a number of groups and collectives. The main collective is for contemporary visual artists.

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Note: The writing and views contained in this publication are not necessarily the personal views of the editor.

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Steve Mulqueen, 2004, 5 brass/poppies made from '303' bullet casings, *Beyond* CS Group Exhibition: 2 - 26 October 2004, Peter Rae Gallery, Dunedin. See *Wreath 303* on page 10.



Ascending Angel, Helm Ruifrok, 2003, oil on aluminium with light box, 900 width x 710 height x 200mm depth.

focussed on the theme of 'making the invisible visible' as seen in our Otago group exhibition *Beyond*. The artists were exploring various ways of reflecting the physical world as a bridge and a reflection of the unseen. Bridie Lonie in her review reflects further on where this show fits in the canon of 'Christian art'. Our next group exhibition in Canterbury (March 2005) will be at CoCA, called *Night and Day*. Strong interest in the use and play of light in both his media and subjects links Ruifrok with both shows in spirit. His recent adoption of light boxes and engraved copper paintings highlights this in works such as *Ascending Angel* (above). In Bruin's latest work *Is that you. Caravaggio*, he contrasts the night of Christ's betrayal (according to Caravaggio) with an incredulous modern woman gazing in at the scene (cover image this edition).

The number of reviews in this issue reflects the growing number of exhibitions by contemporary artists who identify themselves as Christians.

Public installations, night and day

Other interviews in this issue include those with Deborah McCormick (Art and Industry) and Steve Mulqueen. Their installations explore social, civic and spiritual aspects of public sculpture. Steve Mulqueen's work in the Dunedin Public Gallery and *Beyond* (Peter Rae Gallery) reflect a strong social conscience and observation of industrial development, war and their impact on people and the land. Material is provided to document tensions which ultimately trace back to biblical concerns for social justice, peace and the environment. Instead of turning swords into ploughshares, he is turning bullets into poppies.

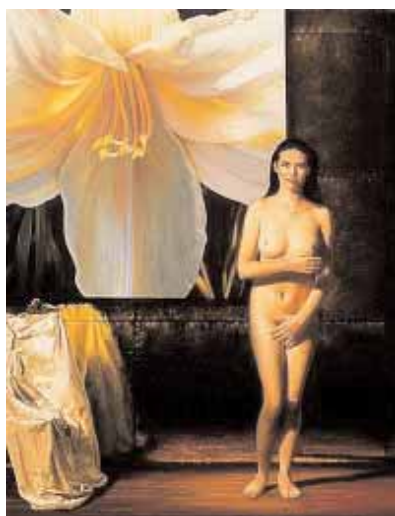
As part of *Scope* during the first few days of

September, Christchurch pedestrians along some of the inner city streets were treated to *LightSCAPE*. "This was a series of public installations which explored urban narratives by illuminating important natural and built features along the intersection of the Avon River and Worcester Boulevard." Curated by Jonathan Mane-Wheoki and Deirdre Brown, they physically formed the shape of a cross, as they linked river and street, cathedral and gallery. The most dramatic of these was the installation *Alphabetic*, a laser projection by Paul Hartigan. Electrifying the atrium of the new Christchurch art gallery at night, its dynamic gyrations alluded to the process of creation itself. 'The oscillating patterns suggested the vigorous gestural drawing in the process of art making.' Two permanent art works remain from *LightSCAPE*, lighting the dark in Worcester Boulevard. Jim Speers 'multi coloured light box in the Oriel window of Te Puna', and the new circular work by Peter Roche, installed by the clocktower in the ground outside the Arts Centre, 'to celebrate Lord Rutherford's momentous achievements'. All three works vigorously and creatively generate circuits of fluctuating light interacting vibrantly with the darkness of the night. An interesting juxtaposition to the current exhibition *Christchurch After Dark*.

These themes remind us of the purpose of Christmas as described in the book of John¹. "The Word was the source of life, and this life brought light to mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out."

Peter Crothall

¹ John 1: v. 4, 5. Good News Bible, New Testament, p. 118.



Easter Lily & Eve, Kees Bruin, 1995, oil on canvas, 500 x 650 mm, private collection.

A Vermeer in our Sumner Midst:

An interview with Kees Bruin Super-realist painter, Sumner.



**Retrospective exhibition,
Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu
17 February – 20 May 2006.**

We can blame Bill Sutton for Kees Bruin's painting career. In the early seventies Bruin was studying at the Canterbury School of Fine Art in sculpture and Sutton (then Head of Painting) persuaded him towards brushes. "My grades were as good, if not better, in sculpture, but he and some of the other staff encouraged me to take to painting." It's just as well he did. The painter has produced 30 years of exquisite works since, most often reflecting Canterbury landscapes (particularly Sumner and surrounds), now held in collections all over the world. As such, he is an important contributor to, and ambassador of, Canterbury's story of art.

Bruin, just turned 50, has been painting seriously for over two decades, a fact acknowledged by the Christchurch Art Gallery's planned retrospective exhibition of his work in early 2006. Born in Roxborough, he was educated in Christchurch graduating with a Diploma of Fine Arts (Hons) in painting. He also received a Teaching Diploma and a Certificate in Film Production. He has exhibited frequently since 1977 and has won a number of awards, including:

- first prize 1977 NZ Royal Commonwealth Overseas League Art Award
- first prize 1983 Tauranga Art Award
- finalist 1986 Montana Lindauer Award
- finalist 1993 James Wallace Art Award
- finalist 2001 Cranleigh Barton Drawing Award

After a series of paintings using an ascendant bride image (usually over Christchurch landscapes) as a metaphor for the Bride of Christ (his 'bridal series') Bruin turned to more figural

allegorical motifs. *Vanitas* (2004), *Reading* (2004) which critiques Vermeer and was an entry in the 2004 CoCA Art Awards, and *Achilles' Halo* (2004) are all ambitious oil on canvas works that demonstrate a widening interest and empathy in the emotional life of chosen human subjects. Viewers are still incredulous that Bruin's works are not photographs, but his work remains 100% brushed. There is no Photoshop at work here.

JS. Was there a progression of thought between your recent work and your 'bridal series'?

"Only very slight. In the background of *Vanitas* there is a nude on a couch. She is a metaphor for one of the foolish virgins, one of the brides not ready for the Bridegroom in the biblical parable. She's resting, not there with the other brides. Before, I was painting larger landscapes with smaller figures in the tradition of the German romantic landscape painters. In my recent work the figures have become more dominant, more centred, than the environment in which they are placed."

What are you heading towards?

"The main development I wanted was a more obvious emotional response from my paintings. I was satisfied with *Reading* being a contemplative work harking back to Vermeer's tradition of women reading letters. I introduced contemporary aspects, like the Picasso work on the cover of the *CS News* that she's reading as well as historical references. My latest work is a woman in profile in front of a Christ by Caravaggio. When you view my latest work, compared to *Reading*, the subject is more emotionally engaged and engaging. Reading is more passive and restrained."

Bruin was approached by the Christchurch Art Gallery for a 30-year retrospective of his work. The Gallery holds over five of his original works, including *Elizabeth and Goldfinch* (1994) which depicts Bruin's fiancée who died of cancer before they could marry [The Collections catalogue, Christchurch Art Gallery, p. 90].

What are you hoping to achieve with the retrospective?

"I'm looking forward to presenting an overview of my career for the first time. It will be a difficult task as we can only fit perhaps 25 works from the hundreds I've painted over the years, perhaps from a pool of 130 to 150 canvases."

Because of the intricate nature and scale of his work, Kees Bruin is only able to complete between five or six paintings a year, three of which go to a gallery in Amsterdam. With a waiting list for commissions, he can now choose what he wants to paint. In recent years a partnership has formed with dealer Cheryl Kinder (Kinder Bruin) to pioneer high class giclee reproductions of Bruin's work, such as are used in museum galleries in Europe (like the Louvre) to



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what I believe to be
the truth I would be
very confused about
why or what I
should be painting.**

protect originals which are kept in storage. This allows admirers to have copies of his work at a fraction of the price of originals which now sell for sums beyond the reach of many.

"A few years ago I looked at reproducing my work using normal litho reproductions to make them available to people who had expressed interest in prints. *Christchurch Bride Number Two* was the first work I reproduced and it sold hundreds. Then I met Nathan Secker at Windsor Gallery who put me on to Andrew Budd, a specialist giclee printer in Ohoka. It grew from there."

Kinder Bruin recently represented his work at an international art reproduction trade fair in Atlanta where connections were made with industry distributors in the United Emirates, Europe, South America and Canada.

You've always been a close supporter of the Chrysalis Seed Trust and are quite open about a personal faith. How does Christianity express itself in your work? Is it important to have a Christian narrative in your art?

"I'm a painter who happens to be a Christian but I don't know what I'd do without my faith. I consider my beliefs to be Truth in an objective sense. Before I started painting, prior to art school, I was a very mixed up person. I never knew what the truth of life was. That affected my art a lot, I didn't know what to do, how to paint or sculpt. My art now is an expression about the truth of life.

"My faith is absolutely essential to my painting. If I didn't know what I believe the truth to be I would be very confused about why or what I should be painting. Now I'm confident about what I'm doing, why I'm doing it and what I'm trying to achieve.

"Since becoming a Christian I've grown in a knowledge of the Bible and Christ, which I'm extremely grateful for, as I feel I've got this huge storehouse of ideas and images, themes and theology to offer my painting, to draw upon, in a hidden kind of way. I do feel it should be a bit hidden. My latest work is quite obtuse that way."

How did Elizabeth's untimely death affect your art making?

"Oh dear. That particular painting was formulated before she passed away and wasn't meant to be a requiem of her, it just so happened she did die while I was painting it. In a way the painting does reflect her pain and death, inadvertently, because of the way I work, which is to be very exact and accurate about what I'm depicting.

"It's a bitter sweet picture. She - also being a Christian - was sure about where she was going, and very excited about that, but at the same time she was bitter and hurt about what she was leaving behind, like her two young boys, and our marriage and future together."

John Stringer, October 04.

Freelance contributing writer for CS News, and independant arts advocate

Reading, Kees Bruin, 2004, oil on canvas, 610 x 560mm, private collection.



Vanitas, Kees Bruin, 2004, oil on canvas, 3000 x 920mm, private collection.



“
**What are we yearning for?
 A little piece of paradise.
 ... we're all looking for the same thing.**



Interview: Helm Ruifrok

Wilhelmus C. Ruifrok is a talented Christchurch artist, painter and penciller (a finalist in the 2003 Cranleigh Barton Drawing Award) with a deeply reflective almost mystical interest in the metaphysical and temporal world. It is a perception that permeates his art. Recent works include: *Angelic Multiplicity*, oil on aluminium, 900 x 600 mm, "when groups of people, simultaneously feel uplifted in spirit, a benevolent, adventuality, giving rise to acts of understanding and kindness. A wide view of history, ancient cities remembered, remembering angelic multiplicity"; *Crucifixion*, oil on canvas, 460 x 560 mm, Easter 2003 depicting the moment Christ surrenders his spirit to the Father. If I had to 'box' Ruifrok, which I don't, stylistically I'd say a 'Rembrandt' with a contemporary eye.

Do you perceive yourself as a Christian artist?

Not directly, but I have a deep need to know. I'm interested in the dream world of humanity. What is it that people want, I think it's peace and harmony. I seek deep insights into that, the human condition. Gauguin and Van Gogh all asked the big questions. That's what my art is about. That I am a Christian, since I was seven, is there. My mind is obsessed with finding out the big questions. My painting is secondary, superfluous to that.

What are the big questions for you?

What do each one of us (in our heart of hearts, in our deepest being) want?

What are we yearning for? A little piece of paradise. There are differences, but we're all looking for the same thing. The Bible has answers, and other religious books. Hinduism and Buddhism have some of the same themes.

It's amusing that in the 1400s a painter [Bosch] was able to show the *Garden of Earthly Delights* with black and white people living in harmony. I am touched by that vision of paradise.

What else motivates you?

Life itself. It's not perfect on earth, but when the sun shines it's almost brutal with humans here. If we lived alone, could paradise emerge? When we're sitting in the garden with friends, what element is missing? Rushing seems counter intuitive to things. Preparing *The Fall* [one of five large epic works completed over the last fifteen years] it dawned on me that 'reason' was the crowning glory of humanity, but also our curse. That painting focuses on the shift that occurred when, according to the Old Testament, human kind ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge, a subject that has always interested me. Before humans came along, animals were the highest consciousness in the form of sentient creatures. Having instinct and ultra senses they knew inwardly how to interact with nature, they in a sense are nature.

Is grace an important theme to you?

I'm studying it, looking intently at it, like Da Vinci did. He birthed that interest, which was not apparent before. I'm writing a lot about grace, where and how, grace is present. I'm also interested in light and I'm researching its origins and effect on humanity. We know that human beings enjoy light very much. Not only for warmth, but for the full colour of life itself. Colour therapy has been around for sometime, some days you could consciously be drawn to a particular colour - particularly if you are deprived of that colour. From green foliage to a blue sky, they all have an effect on the human psyche.

Ruifrok on light

"From Stonehenge (3000 BC) to 1500 later when the Egyptians linked the sun with God, calling it 'Ra'. The Maori people coincidentally also called the sun 'Ra'."

"The myths of ancient Greece refer to Helios, but he became absorbed into the central figure of Apollo - Son of Zeus."

"In 500 BC the Greeks and Chinese took a keen interest in the physical world of light - from Empedocles, to Aristotle and Plato; then Leucippus and Democritus devised the almost prescient concept, that everything was made up of indivisible particles, atoms. From Euclid to Archimedes - light was considered as something to understand. From Alhazen to Ptolemy, each scholar made their contribution - in understanding light. Isaac Newton, more recently, did experiments which showcased how white light can be broken down into the seven colours - scientists today can take a spectrograph of a distant star, and through analysis of the colours present, find what elements exist in that star."

"Some progress in understanding light has been made but I am particularly interested in how light has a direct affect on human beings. The paintings that I will create will look at this relationship."

"But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings." [Malachi 4:2]

John Stringer

Light

If you had thought back
to the empty darkness
at the very beginning
if you had remembered
the very first instruction
and then remembering
had looked up
into the clear arc of sky
shining its brightness
you might have shivered
in your heart's deep
if you had

Diane Neutze

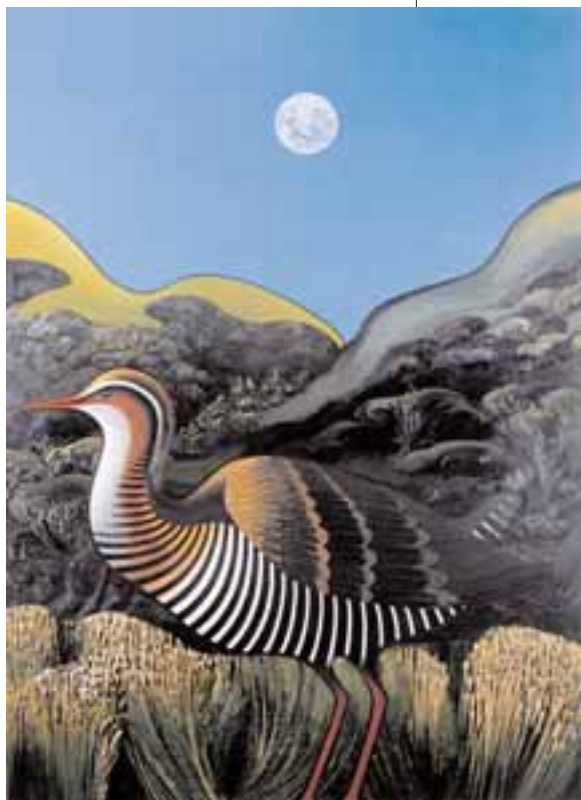
Reproduced from *A Routine Day*
Diane Neutze
Hazard Press 2004 p. 48



Review

Binney 40 Years On, Don Binney

5 June – 12 September 2004, Te Manawa, Palmerston North



Under the Moon, 1969-70, Don Binney,
Oil and Acrylic on canvas, 1830 x 1670 mm,
Private Collection, Auckland.

Do you see the birds? Do you really see, appreciate and respect the environment that we and they inhabit? In a survey of the artist's work, *Binney 40 years On*, it's as if Don Binney is giving us his binoculars and highlighting what's important to him - confronting us with the wildlife and environment that he experiences and respects, and that we often take for granted.

The artist's passion and deep regard for environmental issues is evident. Binney's birds hover, majestically over uncluttered, bold, crystal-clear landscapes. His birds (often filling half the composition of his paintings) are an integral part of the environment rather than being relegated to a small insignificant detail within the overall landscape. There is a kind of reverence and awe attributed to them; Binney's birds have character. They are

not a generic symbol of 'a bird', but rather they are specific birds from a lifetime of observation - Pipiwharauoa (Shining Cuckoo), Kokako, Tui, Kotare, Malay Dove... Likewise his landscapes are not 'any landscape' - Ngataringa Bay, Te Henga, Tiritiri and Calixtlahuaca in Mexico are amongst the environments featured.

Over a span of forty years Binney has displayed an enduring focus and sense of direction, a rare clarity of vision, and a sustained passion for his chosen subject matter(s). Through a distinctive, highly developed and refined visual language, the artist engages with issues pertaining to the environment, such as the extinction of native birds, the effects of colonisation, the clearing of forests and the regeneration of natural habitats. When Don Binney creates an image through paint, one gets the impression that he wants to help the environment to endure, and enable the wildlife to defy extinction.

In *Binney 40 Years On*, Binney re-enforces his concerns about caring for our wildlife, by presenting 'Bird Boxes' alongside his paintings. The green boxes resembling bird houses are used as an educational tool, displaying the words "What bird is this?" The viewer is invited to guess the name of the bird pictured, then lift up the door of the box to reveal ornithological information.

"I paint and draw because I'm thoroughly committed and involved with the environment, natural stimuli - the landscape - the wildlife" (Binney, 1977)

Born in 1940, Binney studied at Elam Art School: "With the end of Elam studies, the idea of synthesising naturalist sketches with an acquired oil-paint method presented: the ensuing *Pipiwharauoa* works of 1962-3 being the first three paintings in this survey". His early works are more abstracted, and rawer in colour, paint application, and composition than later paintings. There is a marked difference between the 1962, *Pipiwharauoa in Advent* and *The Madness of the Pipwharauoa* of 1963. The former is rawer in colour and compositionally awkward, whilst the latter exhibits a lighter change in mood and a greater spatiality, that would develop as being a recognisable 'hallmark' of a Binney painting.

Binney created a strong personal visual language or 'style' early on in his career. The format of the paintings varies but he's used mainly portrait (or vertical) format. This gives the impression that Binney has portrayed a 'slice of the land'. In 1969/70 Binney created *Under the Moon*. Here he uses impasto to emphasise the foreground texture - in contrast with the smooth painted surface of the bird and background 'scape and sky. *Under the Moon* signalled his subsequent move to painting landscapes without birds.

The artist's pristine landscape paintings such as *Te Henga from Man's Head III*, 1971, *Wainamu*, *Te Henga '74 III*, 1974, and *Erangi, Te Henga, Southward*, 1976 demonstrate this shift. When I think of stillness and calm, a peaceful New Zealand beach scene, I could be imagining one of these Don Binney paintings.

In the 1980s Binney experimented with other media such as printmaking, photography and collage and images from old coins, stamps and scrapbooks. He used collage as a compositional strategy that allowed him to bring different motifs together in new ways. In *VRI/Tokatoka*, 1982, he uses this way of working combining Maori moko and an image of Queen Victoria to make a statement about colonisation and sovereignty.

Other Binney motifs include a ceremonial cape (*A Cape for Father Damien II*, 1993) and solitary buildings (*Malay Dove, Wooden Mansions*, 1999). "Such forms - facades [of buildings] in the foreground context, usually attended by some bird - have often marked my moments of visual experience" .

In this survey show of Don Binney's paintings (1962-2002), we are privileged to witness the artist's deep regard for God's creation apparent through the artists visual experiences and distilled on canvas over his forty year career.

Wendy Grace Allen

Formerly lecturer in art theory and history in Australia and Nelson, currently developing her own instalational art practice in Palmerston North.

Review

Foreshore etc, Jessica Crothall

21 October – 10 November 2004, Left Bank Art Gallery, Greymouth

Jessica Crothall has become a regular exhibitor at Greymouth's Left Bank Art Gallery – and this year she is allowed to flex her artistic muscle in both of the gallery's exhibition spaces.

In all, 20 works emblazon their way across the gallery walls, marking their territory and loudly proclaiming, with their exuberance, what has become the artist's signature style. These thickly drawn landscapes possess a visceral nature: the paintwork bold and brash in a defiant way that the artist herself is not.

Crothall is a colourist – less concerned about representation and more about mood – and this is clearly evident in the best of these 20 works. The use of the palette knife helps to carve out

(almost literally) an expression based more on form than fact, giving this series a deeply evocative translation. Her response to the land is primal and energetic, and shows how powerful painting can be when it deals in emotion over exactness.

Mixed in amongst the work within *Foreshore etc* are a series that continue Crothall's exploration of the medium, this time through the use of metallic paints – most notably gold and silver. A smaller work such as *Golden Tussock Country* radiates with these colours, doing for landscapes what the use of gold leaf during the renaissance did for portraits. One can not help but sense a devotional quality to the artist's response to the

Top: *Tussock Country*, Jessica Crothall, 2004, acrylic on canvas, 910 x 455mm, collection of artist.

Bottom: *West Coast Beach Silver*, Jessica Crothall, 2004, acrylic on canvas, 71 x 560mm, collection of artist.



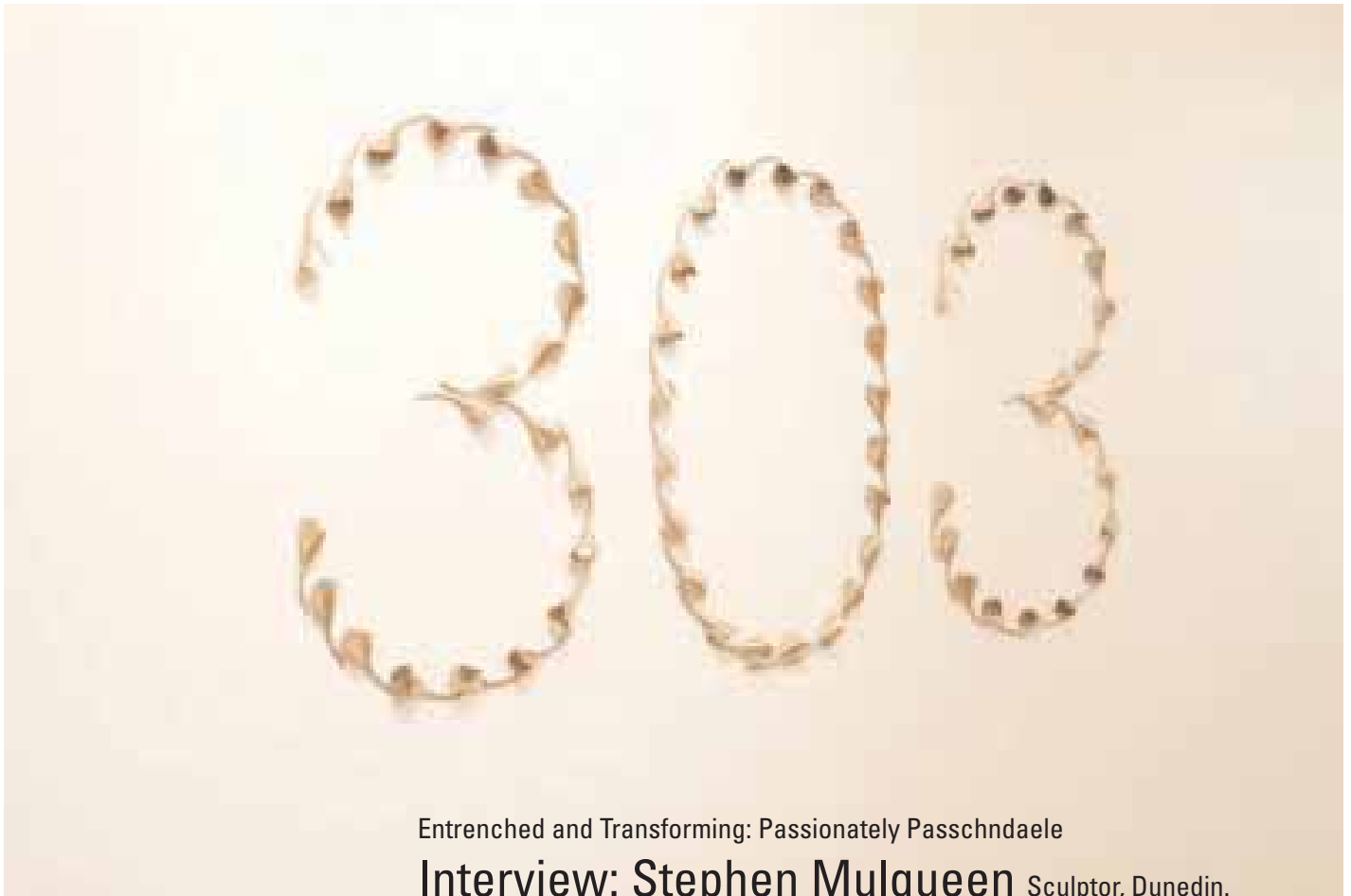
land, and so the gold paint is an apt addition to her repertoire.

Other works, such as *River Valley* and *Foreshore*, also benefit from this process, with a more subtle underscore of silver and gold. A visual warmth and inner glow adds to the appeal of these paintings, acting as a foil from which Crothall's rich colour palette can explode. There is a sense very occasionally that this explosion gets away from Crothall, but this is part of the exploration and can also add to the feeling that these are works with a life of their own.

Foreshore etc (great title by the way) is a satisfying smorgasbord of colour and emotion, contained (to a lesser or greater extent) within 20 fascinating works that enhance Crothall's reputation as colourist. Moments of true bravado are mixed together with periods of paintwork so lush as to seem almost edible. It is colour that speaks to the soul and produces some of Crothall's very best work to date.

Wayne Lorimer

Director, Left Bank Gallery, Greymouth



Entrenched and Transforming: Passionately Passchendaele
Interview: Stephen Mulqueen Sculptor, Dunedin.

Wreath 303, Stephen Mulqueen, 2004, brass/poppies made from '303' bullet casings, 120 x 60 mm, *Beyond* CS Group Exhibition: 2 - 26 October 2004, Peter Rae Gallery, Dunedin. Collection of the artist.

Called variously an 'alchemist', 'artist/archaeologist', a 'cultural worker', a 'post-modern surveyor of the Dominion of Signs', Stephen Mulqueen is a Southland sculptor hailing from Greenhill's, Bluff Harbour, Southland. He resides between Dunedin and County Leitrim (Ireland). Born in 1953, with an Irish heritage (his grandfather was Irish) he trained as a jeweller in Invercargill before moving to Dunedin where he graduated from Otago Polytechnic School of Art followed by Postgraduate Studies at The Australian National University in Canberra, ACT. He was a founding member of the Fluxus workshop and gallery (1983-2004) and his major solo projects have included: a 1994 DOC commission for the new viewing platform at Bluff Hill - Motupohue; *Papakihau 'Slapped by the wind'* (1993-1996); and - most recently - *Tiwai Project* (Dunedin Public Art gallery, 2004) and *Beyond* Chrysalis Seed group show (Peter Rae Gallery, Dunedin). He has three children aged 22, 20 and 6 spread across the world from Christchurch to Ireland and Australia.

Mulqueen's 2000 work at the Hocken, *Whakamaoritanga/Translations*, is indicative. This is an artist of cross roads, interested in how things translate and cross over. "Leaving the landscape where I grew up (for Australia and Ireland) helped me to focus on where I was from." The Treaty of Waitangi is a principle guiding light in his exploration of biculturalism and the deconstruction of identity politics, which he critiques through his sculpture and installation practice.

In *Tiwai Project* for example, Mulqueen exhibits two wakas of assembled aluminium ingots and billets that juxtaposed historical forms in a discourse about global trade and exchange (*Waka Tiwai ingot canoe with Toki-Adze*, 2004). As an artist he's interested in tensions and contradiction (industrial products set against ancient artefacts for example), mining potent images from our past and amalgamating them with modern reinterpretation.

Alongside *Tiwai Project* his current work in *Beyond* is an installation transforming brass bullet casings into a 'poppies wreath' a memory and commemoration of New Zealand involved in 20th century global conflicts.

"In late 2001 I made a journey down from London into Belgium and visited a number of First World War memorials and museums. I arrived at the Tyne – Cot Cemetery at Passchendaele a very poignant place for antipodean memory; in terms of the lives lost there - it was a slaughter – on a scale never conceived before. I'd been collecting 'trench art' which is a folk art made by soldiers from bullet casings, tins, and other war accoutrements, etc. I had obtained some brass 303 cartridges on my travels and when I got back to my Dunedin workshop in early 2002, I began playing and created a hybrid between the casings and the poppy emblem, a conjunction where 'terror meets beauty'. The work in *Beyond* sprung from that experience."

JS: So was your contribution to *Beyond* [alongside Mary Horn, Claire Beynon, Shelly

Waka Tiwai billet canoe,
Stephen Mulqueen, 2004,
1000 x 120 x 70cm.

Johnson, Maria Kemp in October 04] an exploration of war themes?

"Yes, but more than that - it's about the nature of memory and remembrance really and finding a way to make a poetic meditation. Commemoration should be healing a bonding experience and should help us to focus on contemporary challenges. This is at the heart of my piece for *Beyond* titled: *WREATH 303*. Firstly it's about a specific response to the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Monte Cassino that had its anniversary this year 2004 – but it's also



about '303' as an archetypal killing artefact playing its roll on the many battlefields throughout the 20th century and still - even today".

Why are you interested in commemorating and looking back?

"The Irish historian R. F. Foster states: ' We make history by remembering things'. In New Zealand and Australia the idea of self-validation through received memory has grown apace if the public response to ANZAC outings on the 25th of April each year is anything to go by. As a sculptor;

working in the early 21st century these notions of commemoration are important to me - they ask the question "how does memory operate in our current contemporary context?" Sculpture as a practice, and form of cultural production, has always been linked to manifesting memory and commemoration. All societies tell and retell their pasts. Commemoration is central to national identity; it's the social and cultural glue that reinforces shared beliefs and offers collective reassurance. The recent return, after 90 years, of an unknown kiwi soldier from a First World War battlefield in Northern France to the National War Memorial in Wellington - is a good example of how powerful a tribute - the 'dead' can affect the collective memory of the living as a collective expression of mourning and remembering.

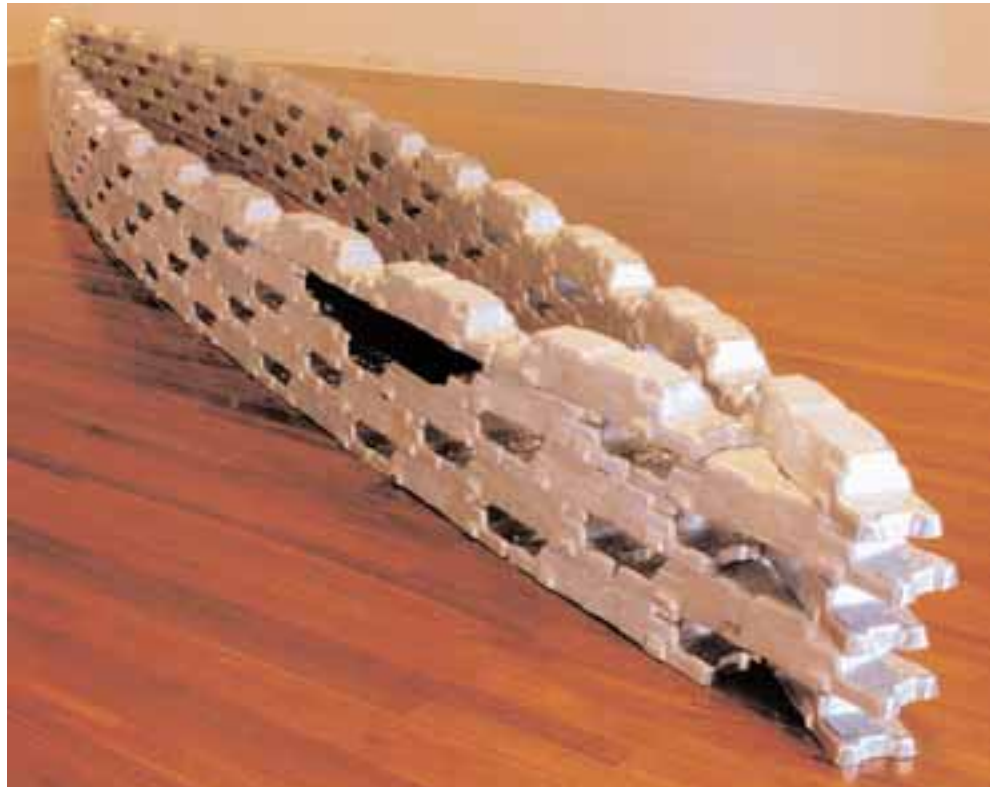
As a writer and cultural practitioner, King forged a way, particularly for Pakeha, to be open to and explore this landscape we're living in."

What are you looking to, artistically, in the near future?

"I'm pretty much staying with the brass – cartridge/poppy theme and looking to explore some more thematic variations around this material. There will be more travel next year to Australia. I want to work with interrelated sites. The Tiwai smelter is part of a complex industrial conduit, connected to places like Weipa in Cape York (Northern Australia) where the bauxite is mined, and the Gladstone Refinery which produces alumina powder for the Tiwai smelter. Aluminium is a geo-cultural product – it's 'Australia refined' really I want to develop these Trans –Tasman and Pacific Rim links in my practice."

John Stringer

Waka Tiwai ingot canoe with Toki-Adze, Stephen Mulqueen, 2004, 1100 x 120 x 60cm.



As a writer and cultural practitioner, King forged a way, particularly for Pakeha, to be open to and explore this landscape we're living in.

Interview: Deborah McCormick Director, SCAPE

Began in 2000, *SCAPE (Art & Industry Urban Arts Biennial)* occurs every other year with the Christchurch Arts Festival, providing the city with a rich and continual celebration of the arts. Art works are grouped around a general theme (2004 "from a different angle") and are sited in public spaces. The BiennialTrust, working with Strategy Advertising & Design, developed a brand identity that could be attached to the event; "SCAPE" was settled upon as a suffix to notions of landscape, cityscape, nightscape, lightscape, etc.

A tangible benefit of the festival is the contribution every two years of a permanent public artwork to the city. In 2004 it was Peter Roche's neon *Circuit* (2004) installation set in the clock tower entranceway at the Arts Centre.

Deborah McCormick has been involved from the beginning and was director for the second and

third *SCAPE* festivals (2002, 2004). She hails from Oxford and Christchurch, is a graduate of the Canterbury School of Fine Arts (in Photography) and has exhibited herself.

JS. Where did it all begin Deborah, as a response to Millennium celebrations?

"I was a recent graduate of film and finished up some art history papers and was looking for work opportunities and the next step to go into. I came up with an idea for a one-off exhibition called *Art & Industry*. I had been working with industrial processes to create photographic installations and wondered how that could be taken further to assist artist practice. I took a proposal to the city council who directed me to Warren Pringle at Artworks, who had just come back from London where he'd been working as an independent producer and promoter. Warren was looking for a way back into the Canterbury arts scene. He was

SCAPE 2004 Festival was expressed in five ways:

1. **ECHO** a site specific response at Riccarton House and Bush
2. **HOME/GROUND** at the Museum
3. **LightSCAPE** a nocturnal galleries experience
4. **WORK IT** a series installed in unexpected sites around the urban scape of Christchurch that explored the gap between art and industry
5. **Partner Galleries Programme**



fostering opportunities for arts employment for recent graduates, and that was me.

"We developed the concept for the *Art & Industry* exhibition into a city-wide biennial event. Through his knowledge I was able to look for opportunities. We noted there was nothing of its kind at that time in New Zealand, but very quickly a number began to pop up: The Auckland Triennial, *Art & Industry 2000*, The City Gallery's *Prospect* show, all major visual arts events.

"Warren then moved to work with the council, took the portfolio with him and it grew into a Trust. He has now gone, working with the Auckland City Council in public art. I learned most of my arts administration skills working with him, then flew solo in 2002."

What were some of the hurdles and victories along the way?

"We've always had good people come on board, and the energy of the steering group was a key factor. We were rejected for funding, but you have

been very focussed on that. Mike Kelly from N.C.C. had some good ideas on how to attract business. We held a launch function at the Convention Centre; we made a sample project and marketed that to other people, we held functions. Getting the original projects on the ground demonstrated to others how they could become involved.

"The Fulton Hogan and Pauline Rhodes collaboration is a good example. Fulton Hogan were making a kind of structure in their commercial environment, along came an artist who said, "what about doing this?" and they were excited by that. Then we could go to other businesses with a tangible model. It's about developing real partnerships. It sits well with the whole 'knowledge wave' model flowing into businesses, promoting different ways of thinking."

Is that a key benefit, drawing the strengths of the arts and business worlds and cross-pollinating them to get a holistic thing going?

"That's what drives me. Taking the ideas of artists to other people."

What other benefits does SCAPE bring to the city?

"A sense of surprise in the environment. In our daily activities we can stumble across works. It changes how we might feel about our environment. Reactions are positive and challenged. *SCAPE* is a shop front for industry as well as artists and promotes both. It contributes a level of sophistication, demonstrating Christchurch is a culturally diverse and forward thinking city, a place of different ideologies, not just one or two."

How does it mesh with the Christchurch Arts Festival?

"The city council has undertaken some research on this area, to look at festivals and how they sit. For Warren and I and the steering committee, we noted how quickly the Arts Festival became established in Christchurch. It excels in the performing arts, and has very good quality visual arts. To have both in the opposite year helps create an arts and culture profile in Christchurch."

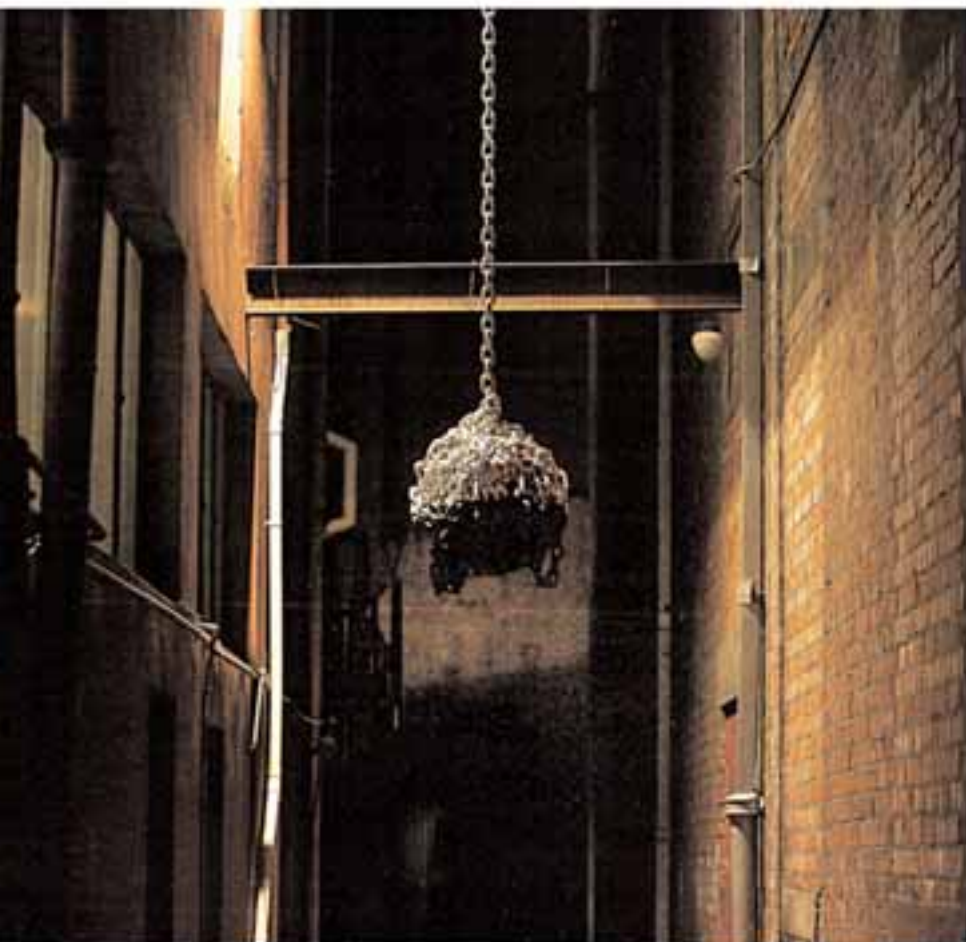
Highlights for you?

"The 2002 *Black Maria* project (Nathan Coley) at the Physics Room in Tuam Street was a fascinating project. The Parekowhai 'bunnies' situation was challenging but I enjoyed working through the logistics of that and the dialogue that emerged. It allowed dissonant voices. I commend Parekowhai for being such a strong and bold artist.

"Working on *LightSCAPE* in 2004 to create a city-wide 'nocturnal art gallery' as a central municipal project was also very satisfying."

SCAPE is funded by the Christchurch City Council, Creative New Zealand, New Zealand Community Trust and a cluster of community sponsors including British Council NZ, Asia 2000, Strategy Scotwood Group, Urbis, the Carter Group, and others. With *SCAPE* 2004 over, a strong review is under way to assess the strengths and weaknesses, and reinvent the wheel again for 2006.

John Stringer



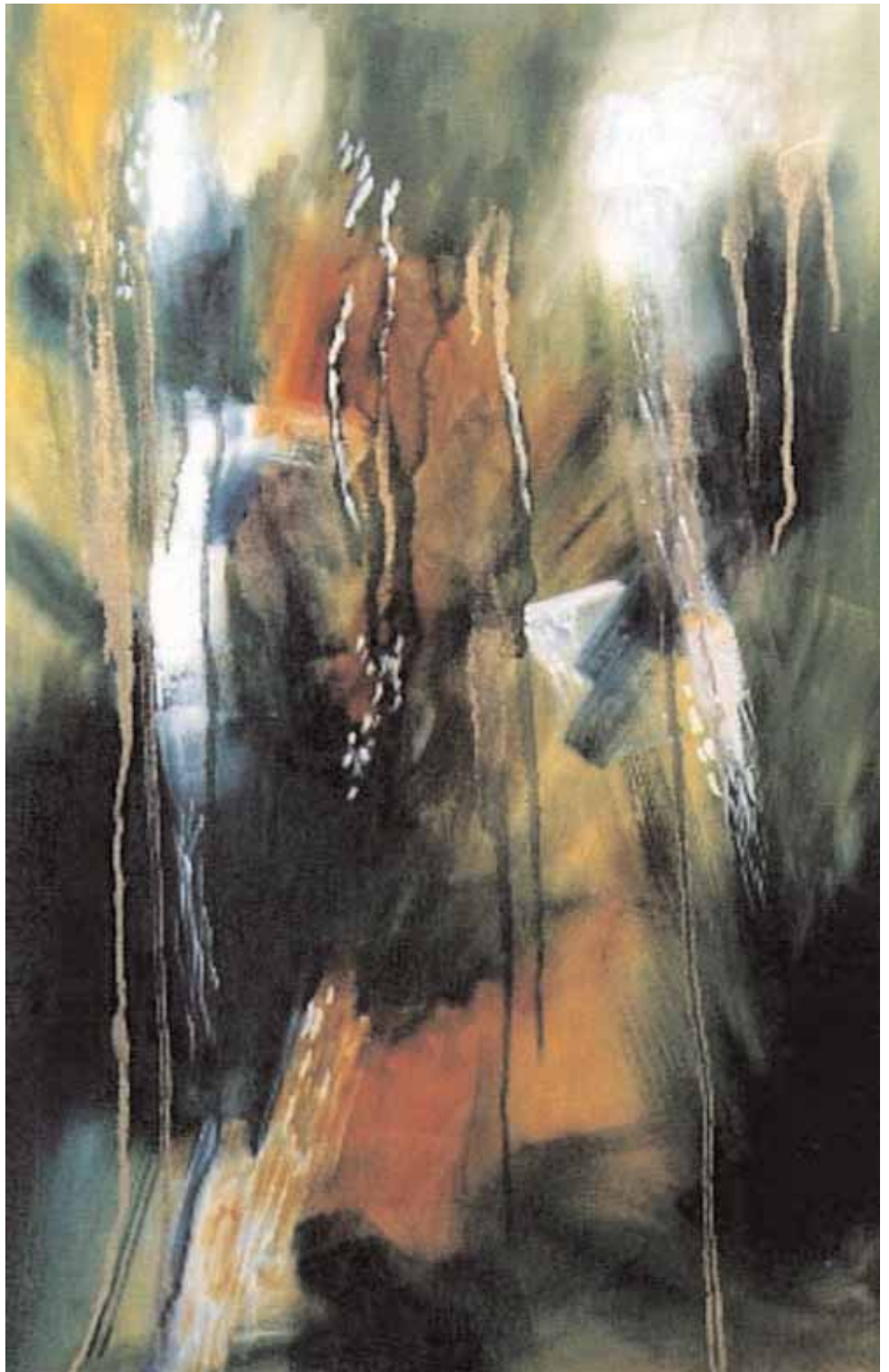
Knotted, Monica Bonvicini, 2004, chain, asphalt. Photograph: Lightworks Photography

"*Knotted* was hung in an alleyway off Tuam Street, behind 84zero3 Gallery. Framed in the narrow space by tall brick walls, *Knotted* was illuminated at night, taking on an ethereal quality as it emerged from the darkness above."

to be tenacious. A quality art component was very present in 2000 through a wealth of public artists who hadn't really had an opportunity to do big works for Christchurch: Pauline Rhodes; Andrew Drummond; Margaret Dawson; Julia Morison had just come back from overseas; there was great energy around."

So it was simply a matter of growing the initial pool of sponsors?

"We've always had good trustees and a mix of arts and business. The Chair and Trustees have



Gold Weeping, Mary Horn, 2004, gold dust and oil on canvas, 860 x 430mm.

Review

Beyond, CS Group Exhibition
Peter Rae Gallery, Dunedin
2 – 26 October 2004

On the radio this morning Michael Smither spoke of the advantages for an artist of a Roman Catholic upbringing. Churches were the places you found art, and, by implication, stories which had sufficient resonance to provide support for art-making. But Christian art can be divided, for argument's sake, into two categories: that which loves narrative imagery; and that which prefers a non-mimetic symbolic journey into spirituality.

New Zealand Christianity is to a large extent iconophobic, nonconformist, not attached to those Catholic images which articulate the life and agony of Christ. Yet key New Zealand artists were schooled in that tradition, most obviously McCahon, Hotere, Rita Angus, Jeffrey Harris and Michael Smither. McCahon and Hotere in different ways moved symbolic iconography into the areas of landscape and abstraction. Islamic artwork, for instance, makes of letters a beautiful form, and represents non-conscious things: plants, gardens in particular. The art focuses not on the narrative, which is mimetic, but beauty, which is a quality that requires of the artist discipline and skill and imagination.

Through that mixture something else occurs. The aesthetic qualities of imagery: tonality, colour, line and form become imbued with metaphorical power. Non-iconic art returns to narrative through these means. And, like Islamic artists, the land – a wider garden – becomes the vehicle for spiritual discovery and perhaps struggle. Safely past the excesses of narrative expressionism, artists of a more iconoclastic bent could work in landscape, secure in the knowledge that its reflective qualities worked as metaphors for the impact of spiritual knowledge, exemplified as light, upon the substrate of materiality, exemplified as land. Otago artist Elizabeth Smither did this, for instance.

In *Beyond*, at Peter Rae gallery, with artists Claire Beynon, Mary Horn, Shelly Johnson, Maria Kemp, sculptor Stephen Mulqueen and sound artist Susan Frykberg, the works are predominantly semi-abstract landscapes or abstract images modified by light. The metaphor is well understood by the artists who play with it in different but related ways. The iconoclastic position is never simply about rejecting the imitation of the world that we can see. It usually presents a religious world that is, as the title of this exhibition suggests, beyond, somewhere else: an eschatological view.

The works in *Beyond* are celebratory. There is an emphasis on orderliness, on the endurance of

lapped sound work recalled the medieval sung texts of Hildegard of Bingen, complementing the celebratory nature of the work and insisting upon the importance of logos, the word as experience and law.

Stephen Mulqueen works in a different modality. His comparatively brutal work aligns poppies and bullet casings with the enigmatic relationship between the 303 of the rifle's calibre, the principles of the Trinity and the notion of Omega. Soldiers dealing daily in questions of life or death played with such loaded images.

Current exhibitions by student artists

Indicating the growing interest in Christian art, this exhibition coincided with *Defining Hope* at Retort Artspace and Studios, showing photographers Inge Flinte and Joanna Osborne, and painter Rosy Harray (see images on page 16). Inge Flinte places the evanescence of lit cherry blossoms against deep blue backgrounds. Joanna Osborne's photographs are enlargements of tiny incidents of the transformations of materials. Their details appear to generate light. Rosy Harray's paintings scratch texts into light-filled surfaces.

On the whole, these artists work in a way which presents a problem not experienced by those who work with given narrative imagery. The risky continuum between elegance, control and the



Beyond artists from left to right:
Peter Rae (gallery director)
Claire Beynon
Steve Mulqueen
Shelly Johnson
Maria Kemp
Mary Horn (missing)

the modernist tropes of formal structures which contain an element of chaos resolved into cohesion; the play of disruption and resolution. This is apparent in Mary Horn's work, which has moved toward much greater control of her once rebellious structures; Maria Kemp's whorled forms, which resolve again and again, like wood grain or the curls of kelp. Texts within the works position them as Christian. Shelly Johnson's works on the theme of the burning bush place heart and fire together before an abstract landscape scrolled with text. Claire Beynon works between the Pythagorean abstraction of the square, its potential as a gateway, and the passage of light. Susan Frykberg's rhythmically

languages of design can subvert the work's metaphoric power. An inept or commercialised image of the Crucifixion is an image one, as it were, looks through. Deciding not to represent the narratives that faith depends on, such artists choose instead to work within the numinous metaphors of faith itself. In doing so they must, to some extent, become theologians themselves or at the least test their faith against their ability to visualise and depict the nuances of spiritual experience.

Bridie Lonie

Lecturer in the history and theory of art at Otago Polytechnic School of Art, Dunedin.

Sakura #1, Inge Flinte,
2004, colour photograph, 350 x 350 mm each.

Part of *Defining Hope*, an exhibition of works by
Joanna Osborne, Inge Flinte and Rosy Harray,
29 October - 5 November 2004,
Retort Artspace and Studios, Dunedin.



Separating Light, Rosy Harray,
October 2004, acrylic on canvas, 800 x 1000 mm.



Streams of Living Water 3, 4, 5 and 6,
Joanna Osborne, 2004,
colour photograph, 350 x 500 mm each.



Review

Word and Music event, Zeit Geist
Peter Rae Gallery, Dunedin
6pm Friday 8 October 2004

The Peter Rae Gallery in Dunedin presented a 'words and music' event on the 6th October, as part of the *Beyond* Exhibition. The co-ordinator of this event, Susan Frykberg, curator of the exhibition, hoped to 'create a kind of sound-text-art performance with instruments and spoken/sung voice, in dialogue with the visual works of Claire Beynon, Mary Horn, Shelly Johnson, Maria Kemp, and Stephen Mulqueen.' The improvisatory talents of *Zeit Geist*, a Dunedin-based group made of Trevor Coleman (keyboard, trumpet), Ian Chapman (hand percussion), Rob Burns (bass) and Alan Starrett (viola) combined to create a musical response to the artworks – 'playing the paintings', shall we say – and texts provided by poets Susan Jones, Elizabeth Isichei, and Claire Beynon.

I was intrigued at the concept of 'playing paintings', having observed improvisations in many different artistic contexts, but never the incorporation of a still visual image as inspiration for a live musical response; intrigued, and not a little wary of encountering musical shenanigans of a particularly obscure nature... After all, the difference in mediums – one sonic, one visual – raises large and age-old questions about music's capacity to relate and refer to the extra-musical, and how exactly it does that.

Yet I was pleasantly surprised and, despite myself, moved by the musicians' spontaneous responses – and, no less, could identify with them. The different mediums of spoken word and visual image were each capable of eliciting musical responses through their incorporation of image, narrative, mood and evocation, motion and journeying – more explicitly through poetry, implicitly through art. The idea of journeying was a key element in both the poetry and the

paintings – whether through bereavement, from doubt to faith and through the cycle again, from cynicism to hope, from death and destruction to beauty; through the multiple stories of landscapes speaking their histories. Elucidated subtly through the various materials used in the visual art, the idea of journeying was paramount – the journey of the artist, of the viewer, and of the listener, in finding meaning; and the music conveyed these same elements through changing moods, motion, musical narrative, timbre, harmony and discord. Each artistic medium contributed to the tapestry of response and identification that the words and image had provided an impetus and a catalyst for.

The musical group was sensitive to the changes in mood and emotion, and to the narratives being described and woven; from the catalysts of word and image, they went on their own musical journeys with a clever variety of effects from bass and keyboard, sensitive and subtle percussion, and evocative viola with plenty of double-stopping for a folksy harmonic effect. They effectively conveyed the cycling through confidence and buoyancy to uncertainty, fear, and doubt in Claire Beynon's pieces *Songs of Certainty and Doubt*. *Gold Weeping* elicited a sonorous and sombre evocation, and in Elizabeth Isichei's poetry the viola and melodica took us through a quietly witty journey of the old churches of Dunedin and their various current uses – but always conveyed the stirrings of faith and life that was present in all of the poetry and art works.

This event was an important discovery for me and perhaps others: the mutual enhancement of poetry, visual art and music can provide an integrated experience that is indeed more than the sum of its parts. Check out the next sound-text-art performance near you.

Janna Dennison

Post graduate student in music at Otago University.

Fabricated Landscape (detail), Maria Kemp, 2004, oil painting, 600 x 700 mm.





The Longer Conversation

Review

*A turn in the garden your grace?
Walking past each other,
on location with the Bishop.*

Group Exhibition

**The Suter, Te Aratoi o Whakatu Nelson
10 September – 17 October 2004**

A turn in the garden, your grace? Walking past each other, on location with the Bishop was a product of Allie Eagle's time as Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology's artist-in-residence. As the title suggests, the exhibition was intimately linked to place: The Suter Te Aratoi o Whakatu, its location in the Queen's gardens and its ongoing conversation with the community about how to upgrade the gallery in a way that is sympathetic to the seemingly opposed opinions of various factions.¹ The title also references a 1978 study,² *Talking past each other: problems of cross-cultural communication*, reflecting the ambition of the exhibition to open up a series of dialogues that might encourage people to talk 'to' rather than 'past' each other. A tall order, but one that Allie Eagle was equipped to co-ordinate, having become as passionately involved in

contemporary issues of history, culture, place and identity, as she has been with feminist issues. By drawing together works by Michael Parekowhai, Pippa Sanderson, Derek March and Stephanie Ross, as well as works from the Suter collection, Eagle created a space in which the issues surrounding the Suter redevelopment could be explored.

In *A turn in the garden, your grace?* the evolution of Eagle's personal and artistic volitional impulse was traced. From a position of resistance, of pushing against the patriarchy, embodied in *We Will, We Will* (Resist the Patriarchy) of 1979, she is shown to have arrived at a point of yielding, acknowledging the need to give and take, and to resume from a position of faith, not a crisis of faith.

Eagle has taught herself to paint as a 'lady painter' might, reflecting her preoccupation with our colonial heritage and her present 'heroine', Dorothy Kate Richmond. The watercolour is overlaid with pigment impregnated encaustic wax, producing a double transparency of watercolour and wax, a fitting media for Eagle's multilayered works. For example, *We Still Are, We Still Are*, 1996, shows a naked middle-aged woman redirecting a John Kinder painting of an



Eagle strongly believes that, although largely vilified in contemporary revisionist histories, there was a genuine intention of goodwill amongst the early colonial missionaries and church builders

equally denuded landscape, generating a plural commentary on colonial, feminist and environmental issues. These issues have increasingly become underpinned by a gentleness of spirit in Eagle's work. It is this spirit that she seeks to uncover in our colonial past, demonstrated by her chosen companion piece, an 1867 oil painting by William Yeames, *The Dawn of the Reformation*, brought to New Zealand by Bishop Suter. Eagle strongly believes that, although largely vilified in contemporary revisionist histories, there was a genuine intention of goodwill amongst the early colonial missionaries and church builders, and that this aspect of New Zealand's history must be remembered.

The treason of memories was the subject of Ross's lightbox, *Okarito*, 2004, where a westcoast beach, startling in its initial impact was reduced to a series of faded misty lines. This simplification of visual memory to its most basic elements provides a metaphor for the way cultural stories and histories are recalled differently (and contradictorily) by various groups and individuals. One such story cited on a 'living' wall in the show told of how the tops of Norfolk pines were shaped into a cross, so that both

with March's work, which provided a more contemporary awareness of the impact of the colonising process on the land we inhabit.

This exhibition, particularly when enlivened by Eagle herself in a series of spontaneous and unrehearsed talks, drew visitors into the longer conversation. A long awaited and scarcely begun, but much needed conversation about the issues arising from our colonial past and postcolonial present.

Rebecca Rice

Rebecca Rice is a regular contributor to Art New Zealand and is undertaking a PhD in Art History at Victoria University, Wellington.

Footnotes

1. See *CS News Arts Quarterly*, September 2004, Issue 17
2. This study investigates the common communication misinterpretations between Maori, Pakeha and Samoan peoples. See Joan Metge and Patricia Kinloch, *Talking past each other: problems of cross-cultural communication*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1978. Conversation with the artist, 16 October 2004. The italicised words were wall text that underscored Eagle's works from recent years.



We Still Are, We Still Are!, Allie Eagle, 1996, watercolour and wax on panel, 1000 x 2100mm, Purchased by The Suter from the Women's Art Auction 1996.

Maori and Pakeha travellers might identify the safe haven of a missionary outpost. Thus a more gracious history is granted to the pine than as a colonial invader, its role in Parekowhai's triptych, *The Irish Guards*, 2000. Here, in the midst of a forest of sentinel-like pines, the stubborn shoot of a pig-fern pushes through, symbolic of the persistence of Maori as a presence that will not go away. A similar spirit was expressed in Sanderson's lively watercolour images of an irrepressible colt, unable to be tamed by 'civilisation' despite the victor's delusions. The optimism of early colonists, represented by John Gully's work, who saw the land as a place of potential habitation, was paired to good effect



We Will, We Will (Resist the Patriarchy), Allie Eagle, 1979, watercolour on paper, glazed in wooden frame, 800 x 950mm, collection of Sandra Coney.

Review

New Works, Glenys Brookbanks
64zero3 Gallery, 117 Manchester St, Christchurch.
October 2004

Encountering Glenys Brookbanks' exhibition for the first time is like glancing out an airplane window at the land-patterns far below. At first the view gives up little and suggests only distant patterns of texture and muted colour. However, if your stare lingers, the passing subtle rhythms of agriculture and civilisation begin to tell their story.

Brookbanks seems to draw upon the concept of quilt as allegory through these discreetly chosen 7 works. They are almost mathematical in their process and presentation, and like mathematics, the language is code. The three sub-sets (two images, then three images, then two images) of work are distinct in and of themselves and are suggestive of a Rosetta Stone-like cipher key. Within the sets are intriguing and recurring geometric patterns of squares, stripes, lines and perforations reminiscent of old keypunched computer cards. Yet these are not high-tech, slickly finished artworks. Rather, they offer up rustic attributes of an earthy, textural and tactile complexion. It is this visually flat sensuality which makes them all the more interesting.

While this body of work leans comfortably upon the visual dynamics of symmetry and rhythm it was colour and texture that engaged my sensibilities. Greys, browns, reds, black, ochre, terra cotta and judicious use of white create a tonal range not overly warm yet natural and, somehow, intimate.

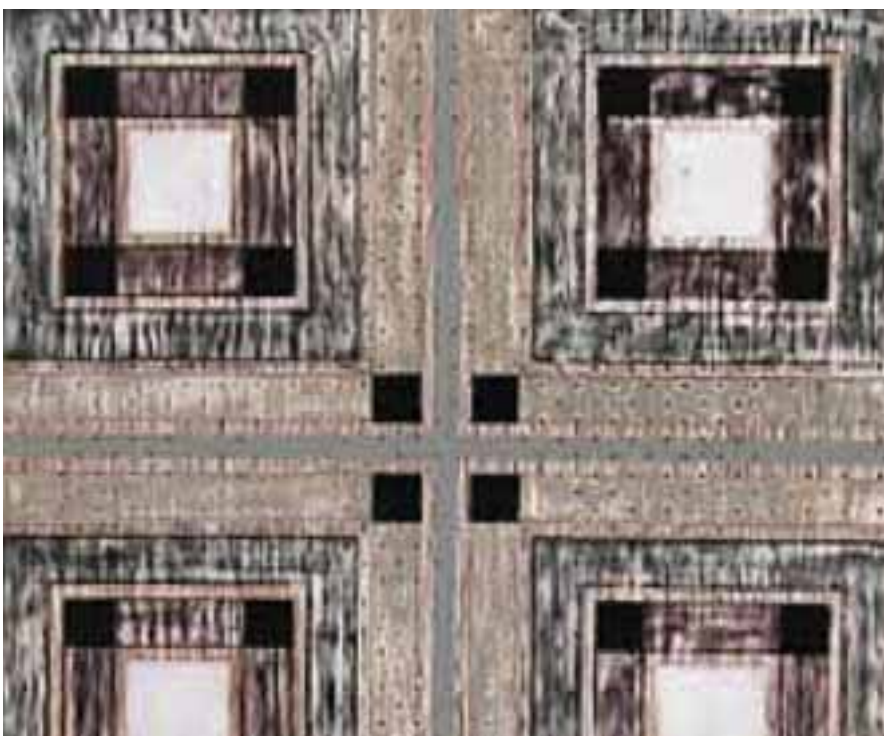
I should say that it is a show too easy to walk past, this due to its overt symmetry and dubious simplicity. It requires a second visit for the works to reveal themselves as smaller, subtler parts of a bigger story. Sometimes ambiguity can be rewarding, much as an archaeologist is challenged by some newly discovered yet obscure artefact. Your patience is required as you encounter this exhibition. *New Works* does not demand that you look at it. Instead, it delicately whispers in your ear to see it. Glenys Brookbanks is an established, award-winning Auckland based artist.

New Works, by Glenys Brookbanks, along with John Hurrell's captivating show, *Particles in (Canterbury) Space*, served to launch Christchurch's newest addition to the dealer-gallery mix, "64zero3" on Manchester near Tuam.

Rick Lucas

School of Art & Design
Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology

Oil paintings produced in 2004,
Glenys Brookbanks (lower painting, detail).



Review

Word About, Janet Joyce
Creation gallery, 105 Worcester St, Christchurch.
November 9 – 12 2004

On entering the white cube underground at Creation gallery one is immediately confronted with a cross fire of colour and movement. On closer examination, the busyness reveals multilayered works which allow room to rest between the relentless movement.

These works are the culmination of three years' study by the artist at the school of art and design. The command of colour within the frame of complex but resolved compositions shows a maturity beyond what one would expect of a student. The intuitive confidence of the works augers well for a future career in the arts and

reflects the value of life's experience and another career before art school.

The exhibition rewards careful study and reflection. One of the central concerns of the painter is to explore the integration of text and image. Because of the way it is embedded within the colour and composition, the full presence of the text is not revealed on an initial glance.

She has met the challenge of working successfully with such a range of colour and line in most of the paintings.

The artist's statement states 'In these recent works I am attempting to create an expressive picture space through the use of painterly text. The work is an explication of the uniqueness of the individual's hand writing'.

While she is drawing upon McCahon's tradition of using text in painting with spiritual purposes, she imbues it with her own creativity and personal vision.

The works will reveal clues about the artist's personal life and faith, only to those who persevere beyond the surface of these thoughtful works. Strong intuitive passion is imbued with the advantages of the analytical tools that are sharpened through tertiary art study.

A range of emotions and experience are reinforced not only through the text but also through the depth of tones and palette.

A sense of suffering, hope and celebration are combined in the title work *Orange and Black* as various tones of green and orange, black and white, are contrasted and combined together.

Peter Crothall

Orange and Black (detail),
Janet Joyce, 2004, oil on canvas,
1000 x 1600 mm, collection of the artist.



Review

Times and Seasons, Anne Fountain
CoCA, Christchurch, August 2004

Fountain, still reworking her chessman theme, is demonstrating creativity and freshness. She has branched out into a darker palette and the use of copper wire stitching and textural additions to her pieces (metal squares and canvas). Her works are still engaging, contrasting and present despite a well worn path. This is a tribute to a mature artist working repeatedly within a consciously narrow theme.

John Stringer August 2004



You cannot see my face, Anne Fountain, 2004,
mixed media (including tin, stitching canvas on canvas, acrylic,
280 x 350 mm, private collection.

Review



World of Wearable Art Awards Trafalgar Centre, Nelson, New Zealand, September 2004

The Montana World of Wearable Art (WOW) Awards is truly a celebration of the strange and wonderful; attending each show always reminds me that the earth is much bigger than my small world – some kind of rich pageant.

This year's event was the last to be performed in Nelson (where it originated in 1987) before becoming an ongoing part of the Wellington International Arts Festival. And so a sense of bitter-sweetness pervades Nelson; everyone wants WOW to be progressive and gain more international exposure, while at the same time many business people grieve losing a major tourist revenue earner to another city.



But as they say, life goes on, and while I sat in the audience witnessing the carnivalesque Children's Section unfold (like a fairytale dream), I thought about how both alike and different us humans are in our experiences and character. Change is inevitable, events move on, people become successful and then, eventually, they die. As Solomon put it, "There is nothing new under the sun."

Moving on from the Children's Section we were swept into a lush South Pacific section, whose production must have been inspired by surrealist painter René Magritte. Acknowledgement and compliments are due here to the entire WOW production crew, especially the art and costume departments. Often the 'in-house' costumes

designed for each section's production are much better than many of the actual awards entries! For sheer visual impact the Illumination Illusion Section's twirling orange-rimmed white skirts and fluorescent orange 'marching' boots were breathtaking!

As usual WOW has attracted a proliferation of spooky goddess-themed designs – the Open Section featured more than enough of these. Having said this, *Eos*, 'the all seeing Greek Goddess of the Dawn' (Reflective Surfaces Section) by Claire Prebble, is a beautifully crafted work (sterling silver/copper wire, beads, dupion, organza silk) and deservedly won this year's Supreme Award.

I did find several of the judges' decisions very puzzling however. Jeff Thomson's *Flora* seemed to be robbed of first prize in the Artistic Excellence Section, as did Mary Turner's *On Line* in the Illumination Illusion Section.

The Avant Garde Section presented some absolutely stunning designs including *Harlow* by Melanie Kelly and *Fantasy Nouveau* (exhibition piece) by Jennifer Harlim. The Bizarre Bra Section proved for another year an inexhaustible source of creative humour.

WOW has certainly staged some beautifully transcendent moments using electronic music and 3-D lasers in previous years. This isn't to say I disliked all the opera and choral in 2004, but really, who isn't tired of hearing Ennio Morricone's soundtrack from *The Mission* again? (And I own that CD!) Since 1994 I've had the privilege of attending several different WOW performances and although this year's show lacked the overall hair-raising atmosphere of some previous ones, I was definitely moved!

Andrew Clarkson

WOW entrant and finalist 1997, 1998, 1999.

Review

Tristan & Isolde,
Michael Parmenter and Taane Mete
Southern Ballet Christchurch
(touring to October 21, 2004)

Parmenter's adaptation of the operatic romance *Tristan & Isolde* set to contemporary dance and Wagner's music is a moving passion of love and death. It was beautiful to watch every utilised muscle of Parmenter's sculpted body, a human being at the peak of physical development. He is strongly supported (quite literally) by Mete.

A minimal set emphasises the score and the dark/light emotional contrasts of the story, reiterated with light and black/white costumes. Parmenter makes very skillful use of back curtains and a tension-stretched sail across the floor as a metaphor for his struggle with death, and as a chasm between the two in the opening sequence.

I felt the opening was too prolonged and drawn out, the point over made, and there was too heavy a reliance on ponderous circuit walking elsewhere in the performance, which felt like padding (perhaps a chance for dancers to catch their breath in what is an exuberant and extremely physical accomplishment). Judicious

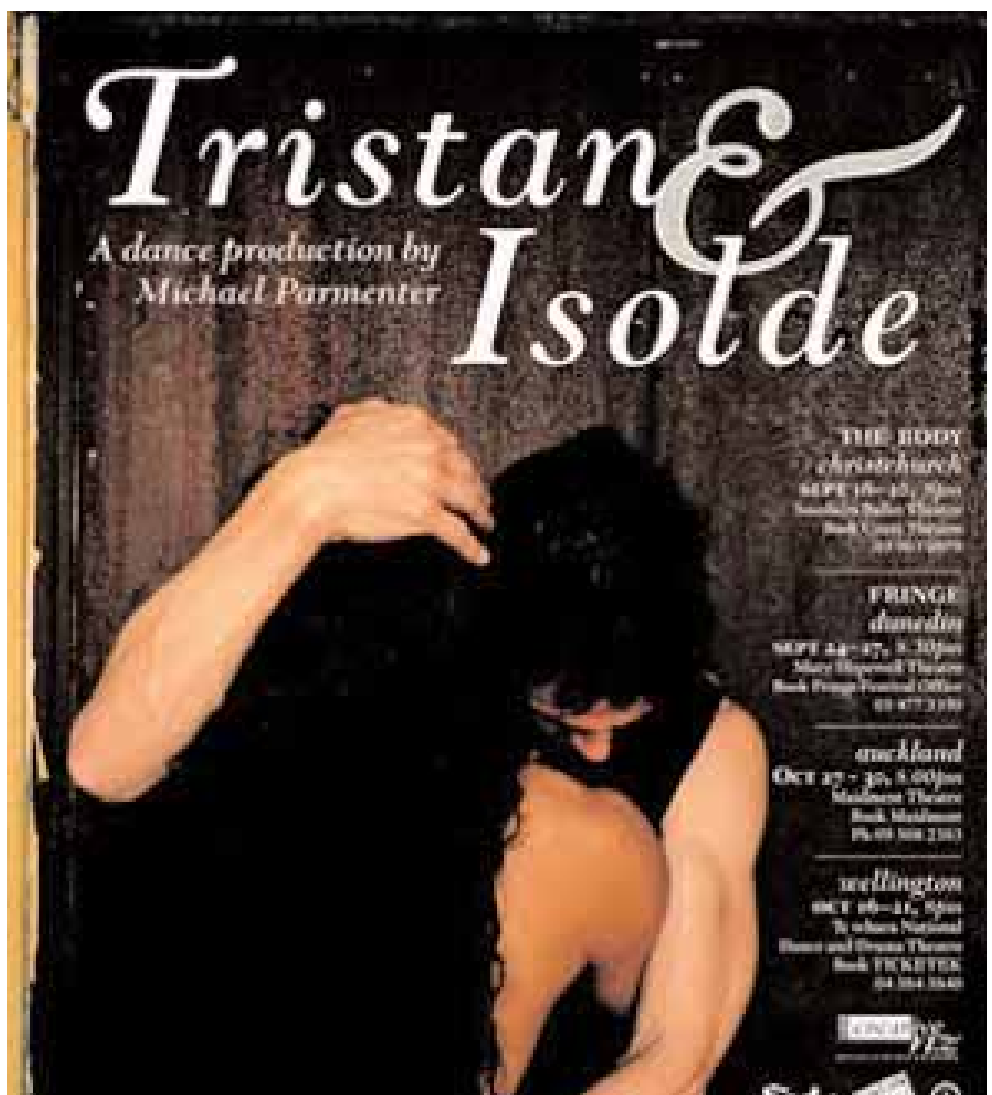
editing here would have enhanced the piece.

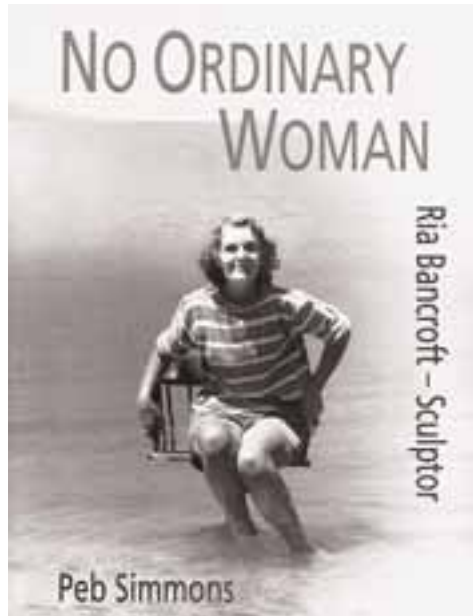
Scene four's powerful dance by Mete as 'she' tries to duet with the dead Tristan mimicks clumsily the light and energetic cavorting of scene two. It is full of pathos climaxing strongly in a pathetic glance toward the audience by the dancer. Parmenter's trademark 'crucified' choreography is well supplemented with dying, tumbling and entwining motifs well-crafted for a two-man performance.

I thoroughly enjoyed it, a strong return to Christchurch after his wonderful 2002 *wilderness/weather*. *Tristan & Isolde* is a deeply romantic and physical dance. I found the casting of gay dancer Mete (drag alter ego Kornisha who has danced with Mika) alongside Parmenter ("Queer Nation" Entertainer of the Year) in a traditional heterosexual love story a bit in my face. Better to leave the gay agenda at home than appropriate a traditional love story to make some sort of point. The scenes with Mete dressed in a bridal gown were too redolent of contemporary politics for me.

That being said, a stunning and moving performance; I'd go anywhere to see Parmenter, and Mete is a stunning dancer in his own right.

John Stringer





From the Resource Centre

No Ordinary Woman: Ria Bancroft-Sculptor

By Peb Simmons

208 pages, David Bateman Ltd, 1997.

Peb Simmons thorough and engaging biography of her mother Ria Bancroft (1907-1993) is an interesting and colourful introduction to this New Zealand artist. Bancroft, who was born in England, knew a hard childhood and a brutal first marriage, but had an interesting early adult career as a busking musician, singer and dancer in the theatre set with second husband, entertainer Eddy Bankey/Bancroft. Varied marriages, a range of names (Blanche/Violet/Ria Wack/Ivy/Wright/Wakowskra/Bancroft) and travels abroad before settling in New Zealand in 1962 made for a varied and substantial life lived 'outside the square' of her day ("no ordinary woman").



Peb Simmons

Simmons structures the book in four parts following the countries of her mother's primary creativity: England, Canada, Italy and New Zealand. I appreciated this approach; chronologies work best for biographies and we follow Bancroft as she grows, dips, survives, returns, always determined in her creative - and finally sculptural - vein. The book is handsomely illustrated, not only with examples of her work (sculpture, paintings and drawings) but photos of friends, family, work colleagues and other incidentals, such as contexts of importance (homes, schools, her studio, etc.).

Bancroft was a determined eventual artist. Her genius is evident as well as her later success (public commissions, one of three women featured in *Three Women* 1976, National Film Board of New Zealand, etc) but the strength of this story is a personal life of courage, vision, and the striving to enact a creative dream. She was purpose driven, but her ideals and personal expectations were so high, she did not realise her artistic career to a level of satisfaction until

much of her life was over. Such, often, is the artistic temperament, but it makes for great reading on art and its creators.

Bancroft arrived at an interesting time in New Zealand's emerging modern art history and played a shaping role in the mix of individuals propelling New Zealand's newly self conscious art sense forward.

Written as a first person witnessed account, Simmons's narrative is an intimate revelation of an artistic journey of test, faith and eventual accomplishment. It is often autobiographical in aspects, as elements of her own life story entwine with that of her mother's.

"Towards the end of 1955 Ria and I exchanged an unusual and prophetic conversation. We were discussing marriage and I, with twenty years of wisdom, stated I would never marry as it appeared to cause only unhappiness. But I qualified the statement. If I did find a man to care for, I would not be interested in colour or culture, but would seek for unity in the matter of religion. Ria dismissed my words, claiming I could not know what I was talking about.

[Peb married soon after] "Our young finances meant that after the wedding we needed to share the flat with Ria. She offered to turn the small studio into a bedroom for her own use... In years to come Aldren grew to respect and be proud of Ria's work..."

Peb Simmons has lived in Christchurch since 1961 after 26 years in England and Canada. In Toronto she worked as a market researcher and attended Toronto University. She is a published writer of poems, children's stories, essays and articles and was a broadcaster from 1978 -1991. I first met Peb while working collaboratively on *With Our Eyes Open* (selected poems of 12 poets, Chrysalis Seed Trust, 2002). She lived in the street I grew up in and impressed me as a woman of deep humanity and faith, grace, poise and creativity; another remarkable woman.

John Stringer



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