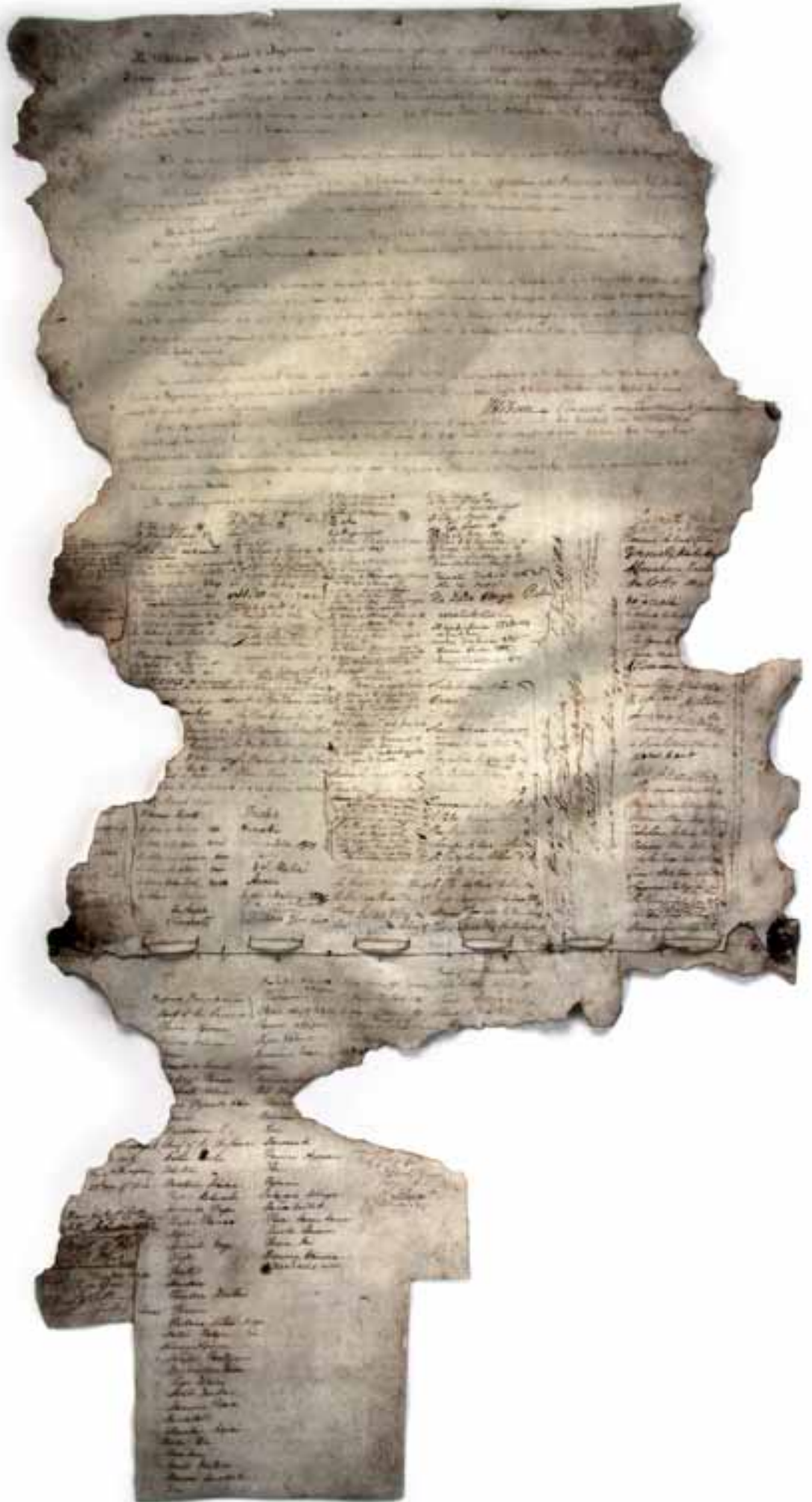




chrysalis seed trust



CS ARTS

FEBRUARY 2008 - ISSUE 29

www.cs.org.nz

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'.

CS Arts is our main publication, distributed to individuals, institutions and businesses throughout the arts community. It seeks to engage with contemporary artists, current art issues and events.

We have a number of groups who meet regularly to support each other professionally.

Our office and library are located in the heart of The Arts Centre, where all are welcome.

Chrysalis Seed Trust

2nd Floor, Scott Block, The Arts Centre

PO Box 629, Christchurch 8140

New Zealand

ph +64 3 374 5721

fax +64 3 379 3762

info@cs.org.nz

www.cs.org.nz

Library Hours: Monday–Friday, 1–4pm

Editor Peter Crothall

Sub Editor Rob d'Auvergne

Producer Gloria Heazlewood

Designer Andrew Clarkson www.snowsite.co.nz

Printer Rainbow Print

Trust Board

Peter Phillips (Anthony Harper lawyers)

Derek Craze (Kendons Scott Macdonald)

Don Kempt (Spreydon Baptist community)

Sarah Newton (the black rubric)

Jessica Crothall (artist and founding Director)

Peter Crothall (founding Director)

Note: The views contained in this magazine are not necessarily representative of the values of Chrysalis Seed Trust.

© No images or text here can be reproduced without written permission.

ISSN 1177-4592 (print)

ISSN 1177-4606 (online)

Contents

INTERVIEWS

4 *Identity and iconography*

Sculptor and Maori Studies lecturer Robert Jahnke discusses the impact of colonisation, the Church's role in it and 'Maori art' as a cultural construct

6 *Heartwood*

A radical shift in focus led Moana Tipa away from a corporate career path and into an arts programme that is changing lives

9 *Another view*

The teachings of TW Ratana were a powerful part of Kura Te Waru Rewiri's upbringing, demanding an artistic response later in life

28 *Ratana Revisited*

Author Keith Newman's 20-year labour of love has come to fruition, with a publication that goes deeper than ever into part of New Zealand's heritage

EXHIBITIONS

14 *Existence: Life According to Art*

Group Exhibition
Waikato Museum, Hamilton

18 *Shrouded*

Chrysalis Seed Group Exhibition
Centre of Contemporary Art, Christchurch

22 *Countdown*

Darryn George
Wellington City Gallery, Wellington

23 *Mystic Truths*

Group Exhibition
Auckland New Art Gallery, Auckland

24 *I Muri O Te Ua—After The Rain*

Linda Waimarie King
Oriel Gallery, Picton

25 *re: make*

Tim Brown
Centre of Contemporary Art, Christchurch

27 *7xLight*

Cristina Popovici
SoCA, Auckland. The Arthouse Gallery, Christchurch

26 *[still looking]*

Stefan Roberts
Campbell Grant Galleries, Christchurch

BOOK REVIEW

30 *Taiawhio II*

Huhana Smith and Norman Heke

31 EVENTS AND NOTICES

35 THE CHRYSALIS SEED TEAM

Cover image: *The Treaty of Waitangi* – replica, Daniel Reeve, mixed media, 620 x 1170mm.
This work is an accurate replica of the original Treaty of Waitangi signed in 1840 and was created as an educational exhibit to tour this country. As New Zealand's founding document, the Treaty of Waitangi establishes the relationship between the Crown and Maori as tangata whenua (first people) and requires both the Crown and Maori to act reasonably towards each other and with utmost good faith.

EDITORIAL

Kia ora! It was Saturday 20 October (2007), and we had just been looking at the latest work by Andrew Panoho. His latest paintings draw from Maori meeting houses, Colin McCahon and *the Fauves*.

We were swept into the well-organised studio of Linda Waimarie King in Blenheim. On the ceiling hangs a large harakeke (flax) woven mat. Semi-abstract landscapes explore a mix of texture and materials. Paua shells and feathers mix with bronze and varied ridges of paint. The artist explains passionately about different layers of meaning. Her prophetic biblical visions for New Zealand are expressed through materials and themes that refer to both Maori and western traditions.

February 6, Waitangi day, draws every response—from impassioned debate to stony indifference. Whatever our personal view, we are reminded of the meeting of two deeply contrasting cultures and the covenant that was made.



Anituhia's Weave (detail), 2007, Linda Waimarie King, oil paint, acrylic paint, dried harakeke (flax), copper wire, Weka feathers, gravel and river pebbles, paua shell, impasto gel, bronze gold and acrylic urethane on canvas, 310 x 310mm.

At the forefront

Maori artists are now at the forefront of experimental, contemporary art in Aotearoa and on the international stage. Te Papa's recent publication *Taiawhio II* is convincing evidence of this. In reviewing *Taiawhio II*, Andrew Panoho offers some insightful suggestions as to how and why these artists are finding creative and professional success.

Yes, attaching the label 'Maori' to certain art becomes as problematic as brandishing the label 'Christian'. Taken collectively, the stories of artists who explore 'being' Maori are as informative as they are varied.

Te ao Maori (the Maori world) helps to express and explore the spiritual in art. Traditional Maori visual culture recorded this world and guided one through it. While the media and forms through which it was expressed have evolved, contemporary Maori visual culture retains this function.

We need to seek forgiveness

The land is a central aspect of Maori identity. This is why the loss of land, and the way it happened, has been especially traumatic. The contemporary Maori psyche is unavoidably shaped by physical and spiritual colonisation. Subsequent relationships for both Maori and Pakeha are fed by this historical reality. As the current government considers how to address the mistakes of previous ones, we need to seek forgiveness as Christians, on behalf of our ancestors. We need to make restitution where necessary: taking action where loss of land and mana has been suffered.

Ratana—demanding many artistic responses

Historic Maori prophetic movements continue to challenge us today. The life and message of Ratana fulfilled the previous prophetic movement and continues to influence artists today. These include Kura Te Waru Rewiri and Moana Tipa. This edition looks at the influence of T W Ratana and his message. He successfully expressed the life and message of Jesus through Maori culture. Kura Te Waru Rewiri's work reflects the impact of Ratana. Keith Newman's *Ratana Revisited* is a challenging account of the man with 'the Bible in one hand and the Treaty in the other'.

For Ratana and his followers, Jesus Christ opens the door to redeem and change those who follow Him through te ao Maori.

Redemptive threads today

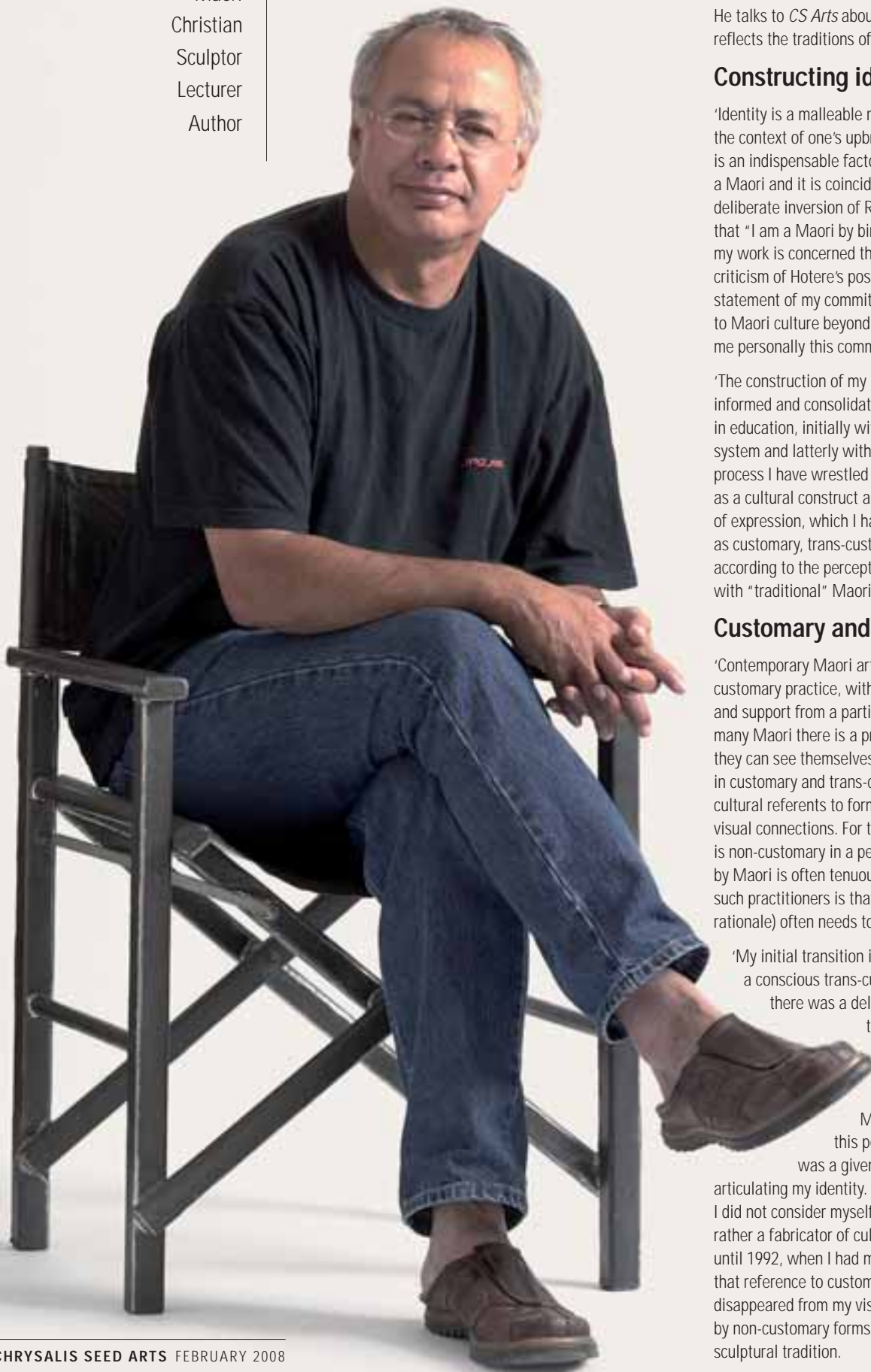
Moana Tipa expresses and experiences this power, through both her social service and her own art. The Spirit of God gives fresh meaning to te ao Maori, and inspires her work: bringing new life and hope to prisoners. *Ruia!*, the recent exhibition curated at the Christchurch men's prison, eloquently reflected her success. Moana curated this event that revealed a cross-section of styles and a high standard of art. Maori cultural elements were a dominant influence in the work shown. The exhibition grew out of months of working therapeutically with inmates; many of them had never made art before. Redemptive threads were woven through many works.

Peter Crothall

Identity and iconography

Robert Jahnke

Maori
Christian
Sculptor
Lecturer
Author



Professor Robert Jahnke's career is an exploration of what it means to be a Maori artist. The influence of Christianity on the heritage of his visual culture led naturally to an artistic questioning of the Church's role in the colonisation process. Professor Jahnke now heads Massey University's School of Maori Studies, and is Coordinator of Postgraduate Maori Visual Arts. He talks to *CS Arts* about a sculptural practice that reflects the traditions of both Maori and European art.

Constructing identity

'Identity is a malleable notion that is determined by the context of one's upbringing. Of course genealogy is an indispensable factor. I have suggested that "I am a Maori and it is coincidental that I am an artist". This deliberate inversion of Ralph Hotere's famous edict that "I am a Maori by birth and upbringing. As far as my work is concerned this is coincidental" is not a criticism of Hotere's position as an artist, but rather a statement of my commitment to making a contribution to Maori culture beyond my practice as an artist. For me personally this commitment is a cultural obligation.

'The construction of my Maori identity has been informed and consolidated through my involvement in education, initially within the secondary school system and latterly within the tertiary sector. In the process I have wrestled with the notion of Maori art as a cultural construct and its multifaceted forms of expression, which I have conveniently labelled as customary, trans-customary and non-customary according to the perceptual relationship of the work with "traditional" Maori art.

Customary and contemporary

'Contemporary Maori art straddles customary and non-customary practice, with each maintaining adherence and support from a particular sector of society. For many Maori there is a preference for work in which they can see themselves. This is particularly evident in customary and trans-customary work, where cultural referents to form and pattern are obvious visual connections. For those artists whose practice is non-customary in a perceptual sense, acceptance by Maori is often tenuous. The problem faced by such practitioners is that the kaupapa Maori (Maori rationale) often needs to be explained.

'My initial transition into sculpture began with a conscious trans-customary phase, in which there was a deliberate cultural reference to the façade of a meeting-house in a series of relief assemblages that owed much to the influence of Matchitt and Hotere. During this period my identity as a Maori was a given and I did not engage in articulating my identity. It was also a period when I did not consider myself an artist or a sculptor but rather a fabricator of cultural images. It was not until 1992, when I had moved to Massey University, that reference to customary Maori visual forms disappeared from my visual vocabulary, to be replaced by non-customary forms grounded within a western sculptural tradition.

A new iconography

'My personal recourse to Christian iconography is a condition of attending a Catholic boarding school and subsequently entering the academic arena. There the validity of alternative belief systems undermined the Christian dogma that I experienced during my high school education.

'The critical contribution that the Maori prophetic movements made towards a re-contextualisation of Christianity was the introduction of a new visual iconography where traditional values infused the rationale for its incorporation. For example, Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki encouraged the incorporation of non-customary naturalistic imagery in carving to allow ancestors to be identified. Hence, Maui was often shown with a fish or a canoe relating to his renown as the fisher of islands in Polynesian narrative tradition. Painting moved beyond the convention of *kowhaiwhai* to include naturalistic imagery of people, plants and

mitres referencing the purchase, in 1816, of 40,000 acres in the North Auckland region for 12 axes. This transaction was negotiated by the Church Missionary Society on behalf of an absentee buyer in England. The inequality of this conversion process is reflected in the title of the work—3.3 recurring, a mathematical quotient that quantifies incommensurable value and alludes to indefinite resolution. On the bishops' mitres the word "sacred" is inscribed on the base, with "acre" highlighted as an epitaph to lands lost to the Church Missionary Society. The conversion was "utter" theft. Hence the utterance—"ata"—translated as light and shadow, framing arched niches housing the mitres of Christian morality.

Sacrificial lambs

'In *Alpha and Omega*, recourse to Psalm 23 as a textual passage appears on glass cases housing freezing work attire and a lamb carcass, as a lament for the closure of works that employed Maori from



//
In 1816, the purchase of
40,000 acres for 12 axes was
negotiated by the Church
Missionary Society

even text. In both cases, this was accompanied by the application of a liberal palette of non-customary colours.

'The enrichment of imagery within Maori contexts is one of the major impacts of Christianity on Maori visual culture historically. However, there are two sides to the Christian sword. On one side an accessible iconography evolved as Maori made the transition into a literate society, and on the other customary iconography was denigrated. In my tribal area of Ngati Porou on the East Coast of the North Island, Christianity resulted in emasculated ancestors. My attempt to redress this legacy in my whare nui in 1999 resulted in castigation by kaumatua (elders) and a return to the status quo.

Dual partners

'Perhaps my most political response to the Church's role in the colonisation process has been *Con-Version 3.3R*, featuring 12 lead-covered axes and bishops'

Whakatu, in Hastings, to Patea. In supplementary neon light works, a range of depictions of the parable of the "Good Shepherd" appears as photo-engravings beneath the neon lights, maintaining an elegy to righteous and exemplary behaviour that one expects in a caring society.

'The lamb carcass is a reference both to dying industry and to *Agnus Dei*, Lamb of God, the sacrificial lamb. In this respect, Maori become the sacrificial lambs of a restructured industry driven by economic reform.

'*Alpha and Omega* is a reference to the omnipotence of the Christian God as the beginning and the end. A and O together constitute *Ao*, the Maori world; a world realised through the intervention of the Maori deity Tane Nui a Rangi in the separation of earth and sky. Despite the existence of alternative belief systems, Christianity maintains its omnipresence not only in the conversion of many Maori to the Christian faith but also in the Christian construction of *Anno Domini*—the year of our Lord.'

Opposite page: Robert Jahnke.
Photographer: Norman Heke.
Image courtesy of Te Papa Press.

Above: *Con-Version 3.3R*,
1994, Robert Jahnke, wood, axes, metal, solder, lead,
12 pieces each 1225 x 250 x 205mm,
Chartwell Collection, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki.
Photo: Norman Heke.



Heartwood

In conversation with Moana Tipa (Ngai Tahu, Kati Mamoe, Ngati Kahungunu, Celt)

Canterbury prisoners are finding understanding and personal expression through art projects facilitated by Moana Tipa. She is a woman who has seen major changes in her own life as a result of coming to know Christ. This helps her to understand the heart of others and compels her work in the arts.

Moana says that the art projects at the Department of Corrections have been low-key attempts to get around the heart of men and women; to locate, talk about, and make art about the things of importance to them. Most of the art projects have worked as a tool for personal investigation. Through them, men and women have been able to understand more about their own lives. One recent outcome in May 2007 was *Ruia!* a fundraising exhibition by prisoner artmakers who responded to the whakatauki (proverb) 'Ruia taitea, kia tu ko taikaka anake' (Strip away the sapwood so that only the heartwood remains).

Things passed down (i tuku iho)

'My father is Ngai Tahu, Ngati Kahungunu, my mother is Celtic. I sit squarely in between the cultures. I was born with a major deposit of Maori in my spirit. From an early age, things Maori demanded my attention—things of whakapapa (genealogy), things passed down.'

Moana is the firstborn of five children. Her family lived amongst whanau at Tamatea Marae, Otakou on the Otago Peninsula. Her mother's love of te reo Maori (Maori language), music, drama and the arts influenced her. Also influential were the Dominican nuns of St Mary's school, Kaikorai, which she attended from age five. 'We were a music-making family—our father taught my sister and me simple melodies and harmony. He taught us how to listen to sound.'

Stepping stones

In her early life, she lived and worked in Australia for large corporate companies 'pretty much without vision or goals' until her first child—a daughter—was born in 1974. 'It was wake-up time. I returned to New Zealand, and I experienced a spiritual awakening in the months that followed. That drew me into eastern mysticism and meditation for the next twenty years.

'Through that movement I met and made music with musicians—Billy TK, Piahana Tahapehi, Ara Mete. They were playing their own fusion of rock, jazz and meditative melody. I learned heaps through them and the audiences we played to, within both meditation circles and the commercial music market. It was through these men and their music that te ao Maori (the Maori world) opened up.'

Songwriting extended into proposal writing and fundraising for the bands Moana was working with. Her first paid work as a writer was preparing Maori health submissions to the Auckland Area Health Board. Writing and producing on-air material for Aotearoa Maori Radio followed. 'Writing for Maori radio created an awareness of the Maori voice and vision across Aotearoa. I became part of that, and it

was a pivotal time for me. Kuia and koroua (Maori elders) would ask me, "Who are you, dear?" and "What are you doing with your life?" A desire to write for print media prompted post-graduate study of current affairs journalism at Auckland Institute of Technology, which led to Maori arts writing in 1995. But Moana says more significant change was on the horizon.

Drawn back

In 1996, a Ngai Tahu kaumatua (elder) suggested she should return to live in Te Waipounamu (the South Island). The move was timely—some parts of her life had 'come to an end'—but it was also a challenging time. 'When I left Auckland city and brought my son south, I felt a massive tearing in my spirit from the meditation and the life I'd had there. It was a shocking time really.' Shortly after settling in Christchurch, a neighbour insisted she hear a visiting evangelist. Looking back, she realises that this meeting would shape her future in Christ some years away.

She started working for Ngai Tahu Development Corporation and the tribe's arts community, curating and designing arts events and content for festivals. 'It was a highlight of my working life in Maori world. I had a lot of freedom to develop a national arts audience for a collective Ngai Tahu arts voice. In that time my own Ngai Tahutanga (ways of Ngai Tahu) re-awakened within me, but something else did also.

'I was drawn back again to find out who Jesus Christ was. Those five years [with Ngai Tahu] had been a time of massive grace and choice, but now I was challenged to get hold of what He was about—to give it everything I had. So life changed quite radically around that time.' She felt challenged to leave the safety of Maori world and the Ngai Tahu work lifestyle, and establish a company as a writer/art consultant.

A programme for restoration

Some time after getting started in business, she developed an arts programme for the Department of Corrections to trial an idea amongst prisoners. A short time and a few meetings later, she started work amongst prisoners using the arts to help locate '... a goal, a dream, something hoped for'. The artwork they produced was taken out to small communities and exhibited. Comments were gathered and returned to the artmakers in the prison.

'I was interested in the heart of these men and women, and in testing their beliefs that they could have what they hoped for in their lives. I found huge skill and massive, often untapped, potential. More than that, I saw hope in a greater measure than I'd seen anywhere, against circumstances that mainstream society could barely get a grip on.'

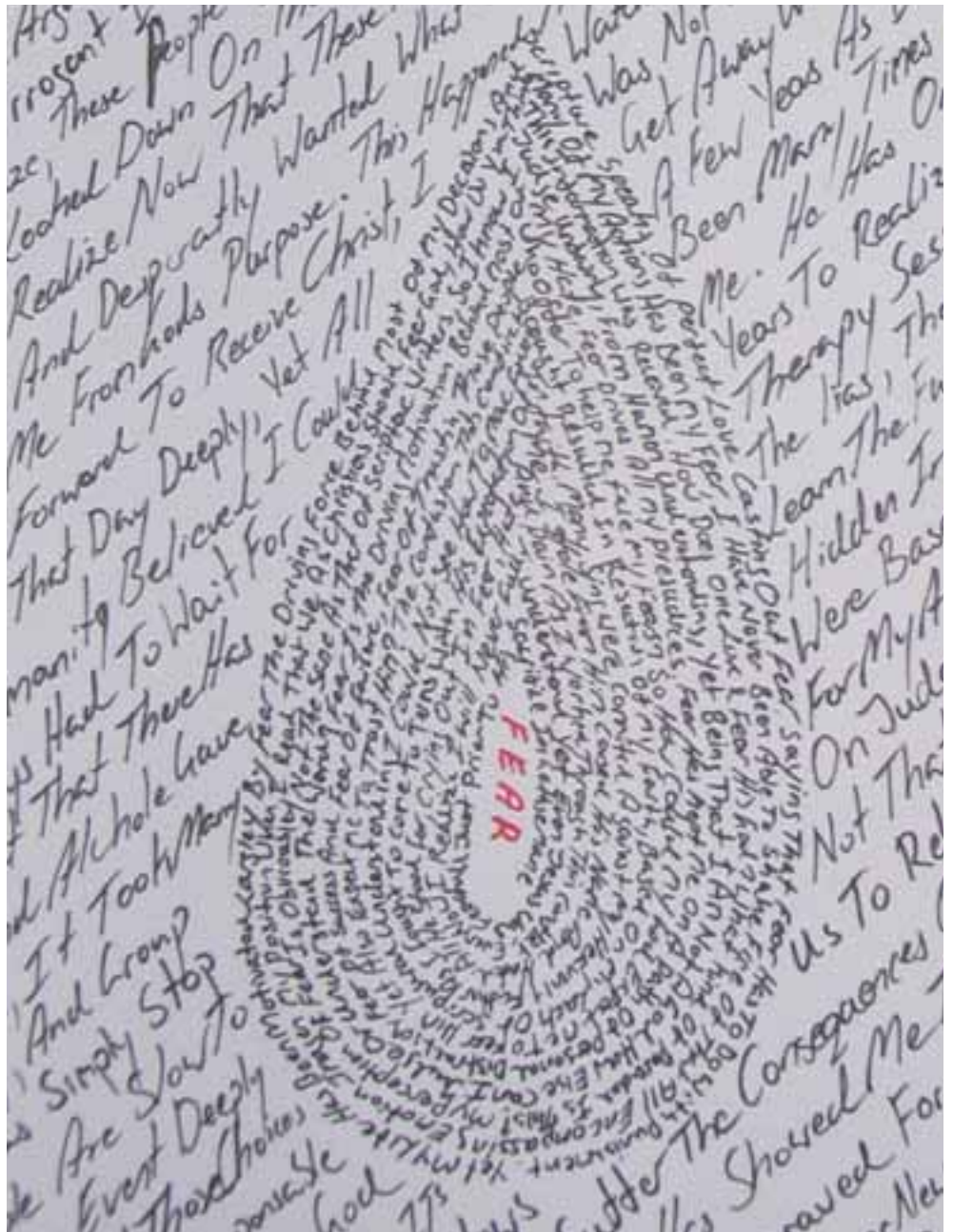
Current work with prisoners is due for installation and blessing on Waitangi Day 2008. It involves many large art panels; 12 carved, some painted works, and some steel. The project was started at the

request of prisoners who have served long sentences and wanted to see their hard-won understanding of restoration reflected through their art in the prison environment.

Synthesis

CS Arts owes a significant body of interviews to Moana. She has written about the lives and vision of Maori arts practitioners, many of whom have some relationship with Christ, either personally, through their workplace environment or through their inherited histories. 'Talking and thinking with Baye Riddell, Dr Deidre Brown, Megan Tamati-Quennell and others galvanised my experience of Maori spirituality. More to the point, it allowed me to enter firsthand the intersection of Maori spirituality and Christian faith.'

Moana's time amongst prisoners at Canterbury prisons has changed her heart entirely. She says 'they draw the truth out of me. Together we can get to the bottom line of most things pretty quickly.'



Top: *Mauri Ora*, 2007, pen, ink and pastel, 420 x 594mm.

Bottom: *Feardrops* (detail), 2006, ink on paper, 642 x 450mm.

Kura Te Waru Rewiri
(Ngati Kahu, Ngati
Raukawa ki Kauwhata
and Ngatirangi)
in conversation with
Moana Tipa



Another view

In the late summer of 1989, whilst hurrying through Auckland's narrow waterfront streets to catch the ferry, I was surprised and compelled by images in the window of the Gallery Pacific. The works were by a Maori expressionist painter, Kura Te Waru Rewiri. *Covenant*, a triptych made for the 1990 Celebration of 150 Years of the Treaty of Waitangi, stirred my interest in a way I barely understood. For years to come, I would search out those signature-layered marks. I'd also look for them in the vocabularies of other artists. Eighteen years later, I would return to look at the work through my experience of Christ, Christianity and covenant relationship.

There were three threads of interest: Kura's documented whakapapa (genealogies and histories), the title of the work *Covenant* and her layered painting style. Following the principle of Maori thinking *he taonga i tuku iho* (gifts handed down, those set in both the spirit and the genetic patterning of a person), I expected to see some reflection of these elements in her work. While the title *Covenant* points towards the covenant of the Treaty of Waitangi, there was reference to biblical covenant, well-known to her parents and the generations before them. Through her layered marks, Kura draws similarities with those of traditional Maori practitioners—carvers and weavers. She says the marks also represent political, social and cultural influences of the time.

Kura Te Waru Rewiri

The curator of the exhibition *Forever Nin*, Jonathan Mane-Wheoki, describes Dr Buck Nin as '...one of the most important artists of the twentieth century who played a pivotal role in the development of Maori art and education.

'Buck Nin followed in the footsteps of esteemed educator Gordon Tovey and the generation of artists who were involved in the Northern Maori (arts education) Project. He formed close friendships with young Maori artists, the first generation to migrate to urban centres after the Second World War, (and) who were to drive the contemporary Maori art movement.'¹

Kura Te Waru Rewiri was one of the artists of this generation. Nin was the person to influence her thinking and literally propel her to enrolling at Ilam, Canterbury University's School of Fine Art in Christchurch, where she graduated with Honours in 1973.

'Buck organised for me to go to Ilam Art School. He did everything. I honestly can't remember how I got there. He said, "I'll enrol you at Ilam" and I said, "Thank you, Sir". Later on he said, "I thought you should go to Ilam because Elam is not for you." I didn't know where Elam or Ilam were, so it made no difference to me.'²

In 1974 Kura attended Christchurch Training College where she qualified as a secondary school teacher. And after a time spent teaching, she was able to work full-time as a painter from 1983 to 1994, when she joined the staff of the University of Auckland's School of Fine Arts.

Kura Te Waru Rewiri. Photographer: Kerri Vernon.

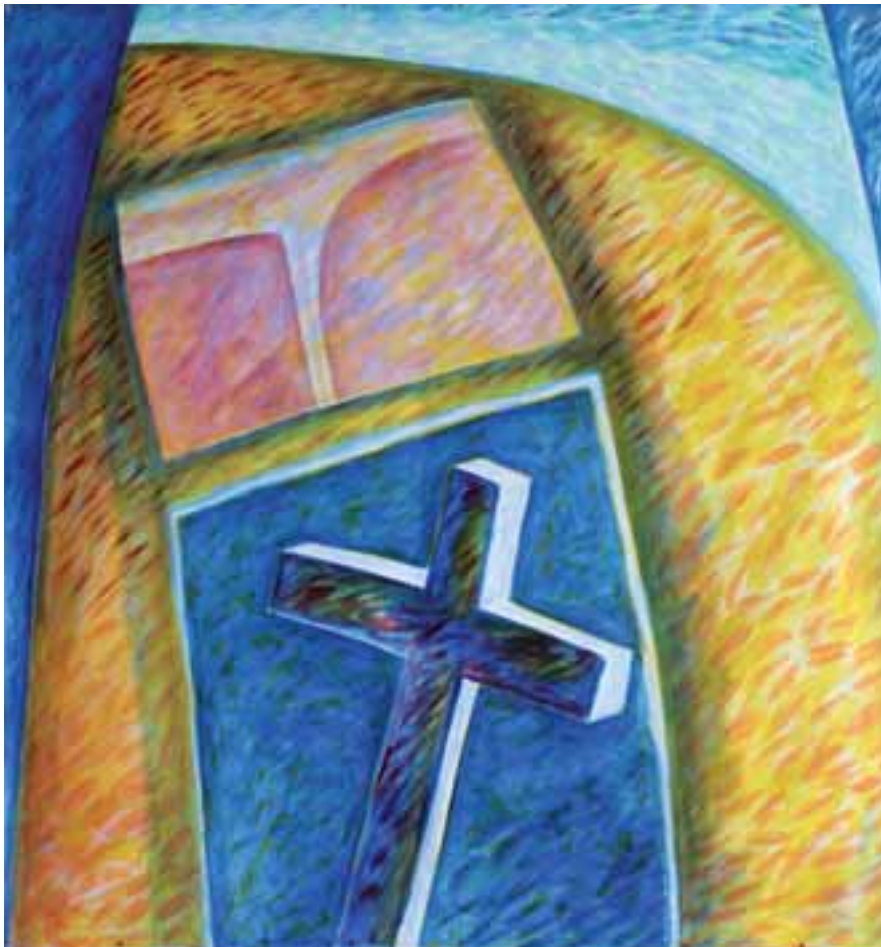
Oriwa Solomon writes: 'Kura's current works are interpretations of her lifelong experiences with the Ratana Church, especially the religious symbolism associated with, and derived from, TW Ratana. Ratana was referred to as *Te Mangai* (God who speaks through man—the mouthpiece), and his followers as *Nga Morehu* (the remnants). The term 'morehu' denotes the Ratana belief that Maori were the descendants of Abraham and Isaac from the House of Israel.'³

TW Ratana

The first decades of the twentieth century were a low point for Maori, both in numbers and in spirit. During the nineteenth century, Maori had lost their tribal way of life, lands, traditional religion, and their mana. Christianity had been accepted, but the missionaries

document signed between the British Crown and Maori twenty years earlier had brought increasingly uneasy respite from conflict. The Gospel message, preached amongst Maori for 46 years by then, produced a first generation of response through the Maori prophetic movement. Some of them were Te Ua Haumene (Hauhau Movement), Te Kooti, (Ringatu), and Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kakahi.

TW Ratana was born on 25 January 1873 in the district of Rangitikei, of Ngati Apa and Ngati Raukawa descent. He was raised by his foster mother Ria Te Ra i Kokiritia Ai Hamuera, baptised into the Methodist Church and named Tahupotiki Wiremu Ratana. In 1918 Ratana saw a vision, which he regarded as divinely inspired, asking him to preach the gospel to the Maori people, to destroy the power of the tohunga and to cure the spirits and bodies of his people. Until 1924,



Covenant,
1990, Kura Te Waru Rewiri,
acrylic and powder on canvas,
1810mm high x 1690mm wide (each panel),
Courtesy of Department of Maori Studies,
University of Auckland.
Photographer: Teodora Tinc.

had acted as chaplains to the colonial forces against these Christian converts defending their land. Many Maori regarded the missionary clergy as agents of the Government in a deep-laid plot in the subjugation of the Maori people.

Paradox was the overarching mantle. Deception and land confiscation, coupled with the attraction of new technology, including musket warfare, layered itself into the spirit of Maori, already burdened by generations of utu (reciprocal cost/exchange). It would seem miraculous therefore, that Maori were able to discern and accept the Gospel of truth—given that it was presented by those who were part of the incoming colonist tide of change.

By the early 1860s much had transpired. The Treaty

he preached to increasingly large numbers of Maori, and Ratana established a name for himself as the 'Maori Miracle Man'.

Initially, the movement was seen as a Christian revival but it soon moved away from mainstream churches. Many thousands of people, mostly Maori, were touched through Ratana's ministry. However, change was on the horizon and two roads became evident for Ratana. Increasingly concerned with the health, the welfare, and the economy of Maori, in 1923 he made his interest in party politics known. The following year the church committee took control of religious matters and Ratana was freed to deal with the material needs of the morehu (survivors).

The Bible and the Treaty became symbols of the

//
Hobson sent traders to remote places to get chiefs to sign the Treaty. The cross marks placed next to the names could have been made by anyone



//
In particular, the 'X' symbol questions the Pakeha perception that by signing, Maori were giving away their sovereignty

spiritual and political elements of Ratana's mission. And the Ratana Independent Members of Parliament were the first to represent a political party whose members were mostly Maori. Statutory recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi, righting the confiscation grievances of Maori and equality in social welfare, became major aims of the Movement.⁴

The Treaty

Much is known of the disparity of languages, value systems and beliefs. The circumvention of Treaty agreements by settler governments was played down—euphemised. Fraudulent decision-making processes by the Crown's governors of the day were filed as (its agents) being 'imperfectly acquainted' with the new environment and its people. Nonetheless the new nation teemed in, took up position and within

the validity of the marks and signatures of Maori on the Treaty of Waitangi. It is well known that Hobson sent traders to remote places to get chiefs to sign the Treaty. The cross marks placed next to the names could have been made by anyone. In particular, the 'X' symbol questions the Pakeha perception that by signing, Maori were giving away their sovereignty ... to Maori, the Treaty was a covenant, a solemn agreement between iwi and the Queen of England, that the land, sea, sovereignty and spirituality would be protected and respected.⁵

The Bible

The Old Testament book of Genesis is a book of many beginnings and also states the ways in which God initiates and enters everlasting covenant relationship with his people, generation after generation. This,



three generations, a very different world order became the dominant voice in the landscape—a voice that would, by necessity, politicise the Maori worldview.

Writer Camilla Highfield says: 'Kura believes that the article in the Treaty which protected the spiritual beliefs and practices of the Maori was lost. The missionaries, particularly in the north, actively discouraged the customary Maori beliefs and practices. They tried to wipe out makutu (curse) and what they regarded as superstitious ideas. The Ratana Church took on European Christianity to reach a compromise between both belief systems.

'... the large 'X' shape placed within a document format on the third panel [of *Covenant*] questions

we can be sure, constituted some part of the Gospel message conveyed to Maori by Christian missionaries since their arrival in Aotearoa in 1814.

Te Akakaramu Charles Royal (Ngati Raukawa) wrote about the power of forgiveness: 'It has been explained to me that one of the most powerful of Christian concepts, one which greatly influenced Maori views on Christianity, was the power of forgiveness. Christ says that if someone should wrong you, turn the other cheek. Now, if we consider a thousand years or more of Maori history where the doctrine of utu or reciprocity commanded one to attack those who attack you (an eye for an eye, maybe), we find a people whose culture is gripped in the consequences of such a view.

'The arrival of the gospel occurred at the same time as an unprecedented escalation of inter-tribal warfare and conflict facilitated by the arrival of the musket and other technology. The doctrine of forgiveness allowed Maori to step out of a system that was getting hopelessly out of control. Hence the doctrine of forgiveness provided peace. Peace was a concept embraced by certain Maori leaders of the time and I am sure that they looked to their own traditions to search for an equivalent Maori concept.'⁶

Dialogue with her father

Kura's father was raised in the traditions and tikanga



Crosses, 2004, Kura Te Waru Rewiri, acrylic on canvas, 2000 x 600mm, used by permission Ferner Galleries.

of *te ao Maori*. His legacy was his stand as an Apotoro of the Ratana Church; the Bible in one hand, and embracing the Treaty of Waitangi with the other. She says they had ongoing arguments in the early 1980s.

'The works concealed my anti-Christian stance, especially in reference to Ratana and that my father had become an Apotoro out of his need to put his life into focus. What could he do to implement the doctrines of Te Hahi Ratana? How could he when he, like many other Maori, was raised to believe in the existence of makutu, tohunga and tapu?

'We lost our land because it was confiscated. It was devious. I put all of those things in a Christian hat. But as I've grown older, I have developed a tolerance for people's beliefs and where I fit in terms of the picture.

'The principles of Christianity are okay by me. *Aroha* is really important. If you don't have that, you can't do much for yourself or anyone else.'

The making of marks

Mark-making is the creative language, vocabulary and voice of Kura Te Waru Rewiri's life and history. The layered marks in *Covenant* represent many influences, one of her earliest being that of her painting tutor at Ilam, Rudi Gopas, whose expressionist/modernist approach to mark-making and drawing, as well as skill in treatments of the medium of paint, was major. Through him she looked at the European movement of art impressionists and began to appreciate the depth of his skill as a painter, an artist and academic.

'Layers of paint and layers of meaning were noted in my work. This was Rudi's style also.'

The marks referenced a number of things from the world of Maori. Raranga (weaving) was one of these with the twining and weaving together of aho (the threads of cloaks), the fragility of the single thread of the kakahu (cloak) and the strength of many threads woven together. The aho is the downward thread and whenu the cross weave: connections of celestial and terrestrial movement.

No less important an influence on her marks is the thousand-year-old Maori tradition of stone tool chiselling Kura encountered in her thesis on pre-European Maori carving. She was taken by the chisel marks on wood and the spaces between the areas of marking of the *hae hae*. In Pre-European Maori carving there was minimal coverage of space. In the carving of wood, bone or stone, there were times when there wasn't a visible mark in the space; but the work was shaped. The space between the areas of pattern was equally important to occupied space.

Another viewpoint

Looking at Kura's work eighteen years later has prompted unexpected and different insights into its richly coloured layers—they appear like coloured rain, impassioned, teeming at speed and at angles out of darkness. I saw them as marks of faith, of confidence, promise and continuum.

They appeared as a kind of foundational, metaphorical earth of the heart; softened, compassionate, made whole and rich in wisdom purchased with unrelenting

loss—loss of people, land, language and tradition—over generations.

My line of thinking progressed further: that if we the 'remnant morehu' could forgive the trespasses of that time and since—in the same way that Christ forgave those who trespassed against Him—then the seed of covenant promise set in those early generations would activate in mokopuna (the generations) living today.

In *Mataora, He Tirohanga ki Muri* (looking backwards to the future), Kura Te Waru Rewiri suggests she is guided by the values that have been passed down to her through whakapapa: 'I hope that what comes through is tikanga (right ways). What I tend to work with is reality. It's a reality that comes from within and, with all of us, it may be that our memory banks need to be tapped in order to get back to what we're working with... that is, the Maori belief system. As a Maori artist, I try to embrace the tapu (sacred) nature of being Maori—the tapu nature of our tikanga, of our wairua (spirit) and our whole being, in order to resurrect or reconstruct or redefine what it is that we had. This allows a kind of decolonisation of the self to take place. Even though we are Maori and tangata whenua, my belief is that we have to get through a whole lot of colonial imprinting on our memories. So when I source the tikanga, I know I am seeking the reality of what it was to be Maori and what it is to be Maori.'⁷

- 1 'Forever Buck Nin', Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu exhibition catalogue. Main essay by Jonathan Mane-Wheoki.
- 2 Camilla Highfield, *Kura Te Waru Rewiri—A Maori Woman Artist*, Gilt Edge, Wellington, 1999, p3.
- 3 *Taiawhio: Conversations with Contemporary Maori Artists*. Huhana Smith (ed), pub Te Papa Press, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, New Zealand, 2003, p188.
- 4 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratana>.
- 5 *Kura Te Waru Rewiri—A Maori Woman Artist*, p12.
- 6 Te Akakaramu Charles Royal, *Rangiaatea: A forum for Maori Christianity*, in Stimulus: The New Zealand Journal of Christian Thought and Practice, Vol 6, Issue 2, May 1998, p9.
- 7 Sandy Adsett, Chris Whiting and Witi Ihimaera, *Mataora—The Living Face, Contemporary Maori Art*, pub David Bateman, New Zealand, 1996, p57.

Waiting to Breathe, 2001, Kura Te Waru Rewiri, acrylic on canvas, 1000 x 1500mm, courtesy of the artist and Ferner Galleries.





EXHIBITION REVIEWS

Existence: Life According to Art Waikato Museum, 14 July 2007–14 January 2008

A sneeze can arrive suddenly, unexpectedly, and involuntarily, a surprise that shakes up the whole body, tip-to-toe. The Maori phrase—*ti he mauri ora* [sneeze lustily, 'tis the essence of life]—quoted at the commencement of *Existence: Life According to Art*, is a powerful expression from a *tangata whenua* narrative of origins. So begins a curatorial storytelling, loosely framed as an anthology of art and ideas about aesthetic, cosmological, and scientific creation.

Sneezing can also be associated with spring, and allergic reactions to the pollen of newly blossoming flowers. Cherry blossoms in their very brief seasonal appearance show the beauty and transient fragility of

is cyclical, and comes around reformed, renewed in spring. Proof of human existence, according to Descartes, is given in the cognitive phrase 'I think therefore I am', a cliché cited in the exhibition. This could, in turn, playfully become: 'I sneeze therefore I am'.

The existential is played out against the spiritual, philosophic and scientific questions premised by the theme of 'life according to art'. One is firstly confronted by a voiced 'Thou shalt not touch'. Beaming intermittently from a loud speaker at the entrance of the exhibition, it is an authoritative, disembodied instruction, which places viewers on their toes right from the start. This voice from above suggests that the visitor is under surveillance, reminding one how there are systems in place by this doubling of institutional 'big brother' mechanisms. It shows how you should always be on guard, self-policing because one is continually being watched; it communicates a sci-fi sense of paranoia about a contemporary watchdog society: one is not alone.

On the top step approaching the gallery entrance, one is met by what appears to be a drunken monkey lying face down. In his hand he holds a small video monitor that plays the moving image of his demise, while the song 'The House of the Rising Sun' can be heard, from one of two fake 'stones'. Ronnie van Hout references art and science in a satire of evolutionary creation, urban development, and popular culture (music and cinema), in the form of a performance by his alter ego, the be-suited derelict chimp. The song, suitably in the crossover connections here between human and monkey, was made famous by The Animals' 1960s cover version.

In the diminutive video narrative by van Hout you see a vaguely familiar simulation of the Stanley Kubrick film *2001 A Space Odyssey*, set in the outskirts of the city of Melbourne. At sunrise, over the prehistoric/urban skyline, a distant plane comes in to land. Then the scene shifts to a park landscape and the pseudo-metaphysical appearance of 'the bottle'. A hairy hand comes into view, reaching out and grabbing this miniature monolithic upright, in its iconic brown paper bag. It in turn leads the drunken chimp on a journey to the motorway underpass, past the controversial red architectural artwork on the road connecting Melbourne's CBD with the airport, to where monkey-man collapses into his 'present' state, dead-drunk, lying face down. The film ends with the darkness at sunset.

van Hout inverts the 1960s sci-fi evolutionary tale of nature-to-culture, or monkey-to-technology—with man's conquests of outer space eventually overtaken by the machine itself, HAL, and whatever you think Kubrick is saying in his film. Meanwhile on a nearby wall, outer space is re-imaged in the reproduction of random light from far-off stars. This 'old light' was originally trapped using pinhole cameras tracking the night sky near Mount John Observatory at Lake Tekapo, with overnight exposures of photo-sensitive paper, and digitally blown up here for *Proof I and II* by Lisa Benson.



Opposite: *Eve*, 2006, Meredith Collins, oil on canvas, 1016 x 762mm, image courtesy of the artist, private collection.

Above: *Fellow* (still from moving image), 2006, Rosie Percival, short film, duration 1min. 33 secs.

life. Museums and galleries offer a different story. It is now September, and spring is evident in Hamilton and the surrounding Waikato River valley where there are many beautiful private and public gardens. At the moment, a Maori area is being added to the central themed City Gardens, but I have often been struck by a stone marker near a corner store along Peachgrove Road, which states that 'near here was the site of the peach grove planted by the Maoris' [sic]. With history things are introduced, changed (again), then pass away/disappear, to be revised and remembered by the traces left behind, like life in general.

The history of art comes to mind here too, from the quintessential rock drawings and early traditions of predominantly religious work to the emergence of museums and more specifically the custom-building of the Waikato Museum in the mid-1980s. 'Life'

So the scene is set for the exhibition. Forty-six artists, some well known and some less so, local and from wider a field, are represented in this joint Hamilton City Council (Waikato Museum) and Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec) promotion. Conceptualised by Museum curator Leafa Wilson, it is accompanied by a catalogue publication co-edited by Dr Gaby Esser-Hall. The artwork brought together under the rubric of 'existence' both fit and don't fit the collective proposition, creating discordant clashes between works on display. But one of the results of this somewhat chaotic aspect is that *Existence* does create questions for the viewer, without always producing answers to the topics it throws into the mix. Grouped under subcategories with obscure catchy titles, the exhibition covers issues that fluctuate between serious and playful. These groups could be classified according to a number of obvious links, such as natural/cultural history (origins, myths, geology, astronomy, biology, genetics, physics), technology (manipulations, adaptations), popular culture (mimicry, masquerades, disguises, social realism, death), and

A wide view of the *Existence* exhibition, Waikato Museum, 14 July 2007–14 January 2008.



//
I sneeze
therefore
I am

modern living. Several works included taxidermy, with plant/animal/human metaphoric implications. Michael Parekowhai's *Driving Mr Albert*, with a taxidermic dead bunny on an upright faux-tree trunk, is a case in point. One of a group of similar stele or pole-like works of different colours by the artist, the title is based on the book *Driving Mr Albert: A Trip Across America With Einstein's Brain*,¹ about the journey taken by a journalist and a pathologist to return the physicist's body-part to family. Parekowhai's work deals by inference with the ethics and scientific attitude of dissecting and collecting human organs as curios in archival storehouses, for 'objective' research. It hints at the return to New Zealand of human remains collected here in the colonial period and exhibited overseas, though this is not explicitly mentioned in the Waikato show. By contrast, death and technology are differently associated processes implied in Francis Upritchard's *Untitled* fibreglass and resin fake-shrunken head, and in Ricky Swallow's *iMan prototypes*, where skulls are

lined up in their Apple Mac simulated production line as variously coloured pastel replications. There are many artworks in the show that could be mentioned, but a life/death juxtaposition allows us to refer to Yvonne Todd's light jet print on photographic paper, *Fractoid*. Here a woman in a pink dress posed with crutches, face blurred-out and hair-a-flurry, can be contrasted with Andrea Wilkinson's *My favourite outfit*, large format digital posters that pose friends in a series of 'round-the-world' everyday ordinary locations, dressed in a set of her own clothes. The tensions between these artworks, and their relationship to notions of photography marking an absence or a death,² overlap with the confluence of the *Existence* themes generally. For example, consider the portrait of a young girl in her Goth-like costume of a teenage subculture—the tattoo, fake fur coat, body piercing, and neck ornament—as she looks directly at the camera in the photograph *Faux* by Stefanie Young. The subject is absent except for the image marking her presence in this guise, yet it is placed alongside Upritchard's work that is an actual grotesque 'plastic' thing of death sitting there in its vitrine casing. Or there is the artificial light of the doubled image of *Blue Water*, a diptych by Janice Abo Ganis. This photographic representation of an iconic geyser makes its technological manipulation of a 'natural wonder' apparent as de-natured and reproductive devices. The curation of thematic such as life/art, science/art, religion/art is not new. Writings by Siân Ede and Marina Warner, for instance, have covered aspects of this terrain. Likewise, Damien Hirst and Patricia Picinnini are two well-discussed overseas artists whose work has involved similar 'natural history' and cross-disciplinary questions. Just as art and science are seen as opposites, like reason and feelings (a focus of the Sydney Biennale 2004, and a flip-side of 'think with the senses—feel with the mind' for the Venice Biennale 2007), their conjunction in this exhibition and in the Waikato Museum itself is a poignant statement. The late 1990s saw the incorporation of science and technology into the art and history museum on a more permanent basis, resulting in ongoing conflicts and debates. Although tending towards the didactic and the cluttered, the *Existence* exhibition is nevertheless fun. Like the uncertainties experienced in everyday life, the confusions in this curatorial display somehow manage to work in its interest and allow the viewer to meander around and make up one's own mind about the various strands that link the art on show with real life, real existence.

Dr Deborah Cain

- 1 Michael Paterniti, 2000. Random House.
- 2 The analysis of photography in association with notions of death, loss, and mourning has been discussed by a number of people. For instance, Roland Barthes (1915–1980) has written how photography is a process that freezes, or embalms the living subject into a rigid statue-like image, with death being the 'eidos of that photograph'. *Camera Lucida*, trans. Richard Howard, 1981. Hill and Wang, New York, pp 14-15. [*Eidos*, the mental image, the spectre, an apparition]. Elsewhere Barthes suggests that the reality of a photographic image is less about 'being there' than of 'having-been-there'. 'Rhetoric of the Image', in *Image/Music/Text*, trans. Stephen Heath, 1977. Hill and Wang, New York, p 44.

//
Who am I
Where am I
Why do I
feel this way

Existence: Life According to Art

—A personal response

I enter the exhibition. Sensing my presence, a deep, gravelly voice greets me: 'Thou... shalt... not... touch'.

Annoyed as I am by the reverberating masculine tones, Jesus Jones' questions on the wall seem very appropriate: 'Who am I? Where am I? Why do I feel this way?'

I look down to find a suit-clad monkey lying at my feet. *Drunk chimp* by Ronnie van Hout (2002) reminds me of inebriated businessmen in Tokyo subway stations—living the life and dying to escape it. As an effective counterpoint, Kees Bruin's painting *Musterion* hangs on the opposing wall. I am struck by the ethereal beauty of a bride who is hovering effortlessly over an equally stunning globe-scape. She seems to know who she is, and where she is. I wonder how Bruin feels about the curator's

Temple by Bruce E Phillips, and the provocative taxidermed, jewel-encrusted lamb named *Garden* by Angela Singer. Rounding it all off nicely, the *Dance, Monkey, Dance* slide show by Ernest Cline.

Repeat visits deepen my appreciation for this extensive assemblage of work. The aesthetic quality of this collection is in no question—its visual riches overwhelm this viewer. But so does the scope of the questions it raises. The provocative contribution of curatorial text to this particular collection of paintings, installations and multimedia offers new opportunities for insight with each visit. With the questions broad in scope but the reflections relatively simple, the viewer is facilitated in their own contemplation: Who am I? Where am I? And what am I here for? With whom? For whom? And for what purpose? As I take my time, I can see pieces of my own life reflected and enriched in a world according to art.

Jo White



I disappear, 2006, Gregor Kregar, glazed ceramics, dimensions variable, collection of the artist.

interpretation, suggesting that *Musterion* refers to the Genesis Spirit hovering over the waters and '... adds to that imagery, imagining that life on the earth has been birthed and a female figure is suspended in the sky like a brooding mother bird watching over her young'. Is she not rather the bride of Revelation?

Natalie Davies captures my imagination with her humorous series *Phrenologies*—nine rabbit, dog and bird cast-plaster heads, embellished with text and pictures exploring the interconnectedness of various parts of the brain. Due to a personal history of head injuries, I often muse about the interconnectedness that remains and its influence over my own existence. Am I only what I can think and piece together? Does it matter if a bit more randomness has entered the picture?

Other pieces I find a particularly rich conceptual fit with the existence motif: *iMan prototypes*—skulls by Ricky Swallow, a classic; the very absorbing and absorbed *Boy* by Scott Eady, the tenuously-drawn

Creation, evolution, and generating an exhibition myth

Art in this exhibition becomes storyteller, inquisitor, theologian, philosopher, and scientist. Ultimately, the art speaks to the viewer—not the curator, or even the artist. As the curator, I am acting as a mythologist. I do mean this in the loosest possible sense: because I am placing works in a gallery and making them operate as a linear narrative, I am creating myths around each artist's intention for the work.

The academy-style hang, grouping works thematically according to the section of the show, lends the idea of the planet's population with all forms of life. The narrative I've created is not to be taken as gospel (pardon the pun). It is intended to leave the viewer some room for generating questions about their own belief systems. It is has been an exercise in the careful construction of a myth and the blending of science, theology and art.

Leafa Wilson

Curator of Art, Waikato Museum Te Whare Taonga o Waikato





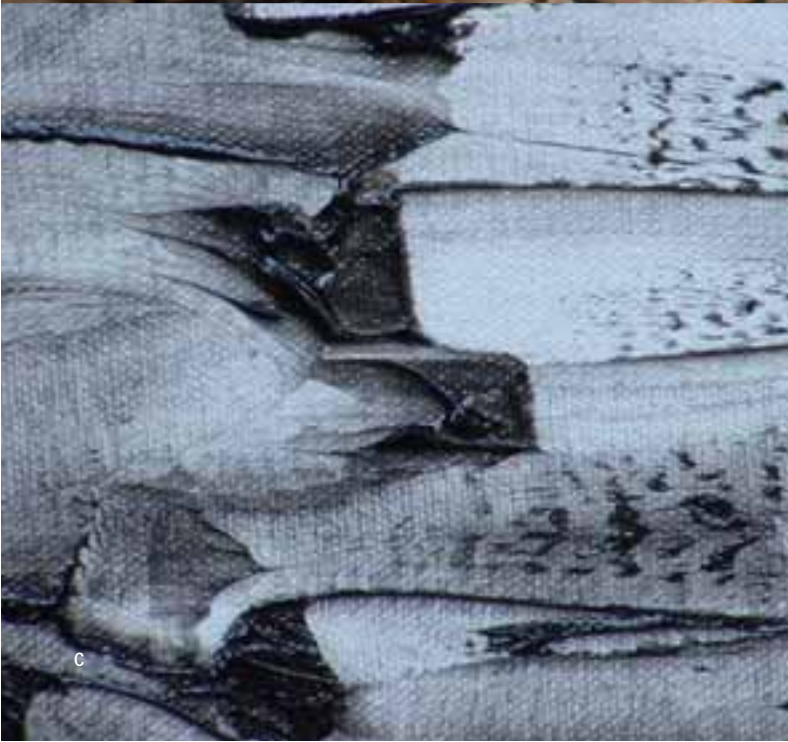
A



D



B



C



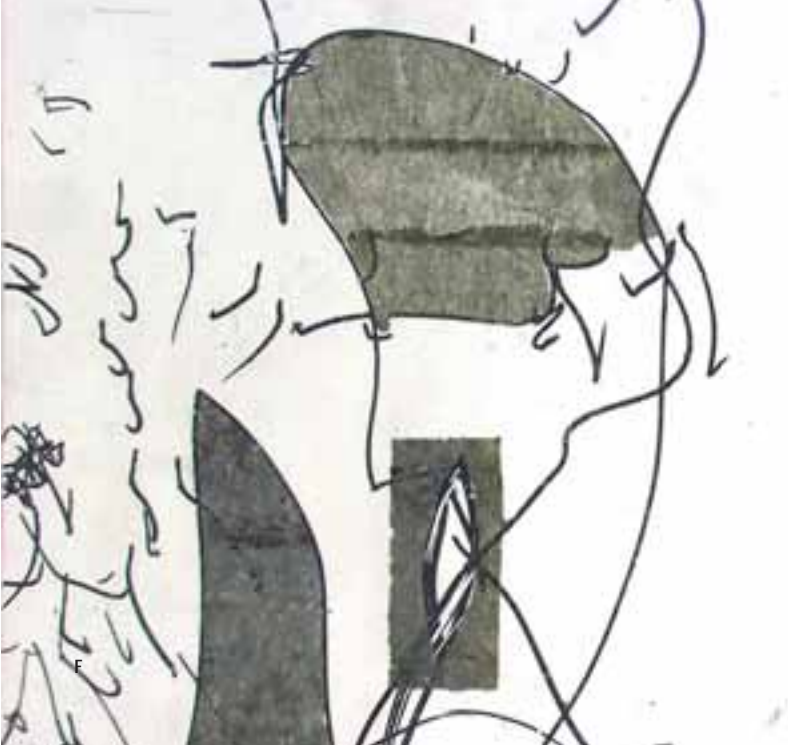
E

shrouded

Chrysalis Seed Trust
group exhibition

CoCA Centre of Contemporary Art
Christchurch, New Zealand
30 October–18 November 2007

Jonathan Baker
Janet Chambers
Jessica Crothall
Joanna Osborne



The experience of seeing

The task of painting is to render visible forces that are not themselves visible. (Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: Logique de la sensation*)

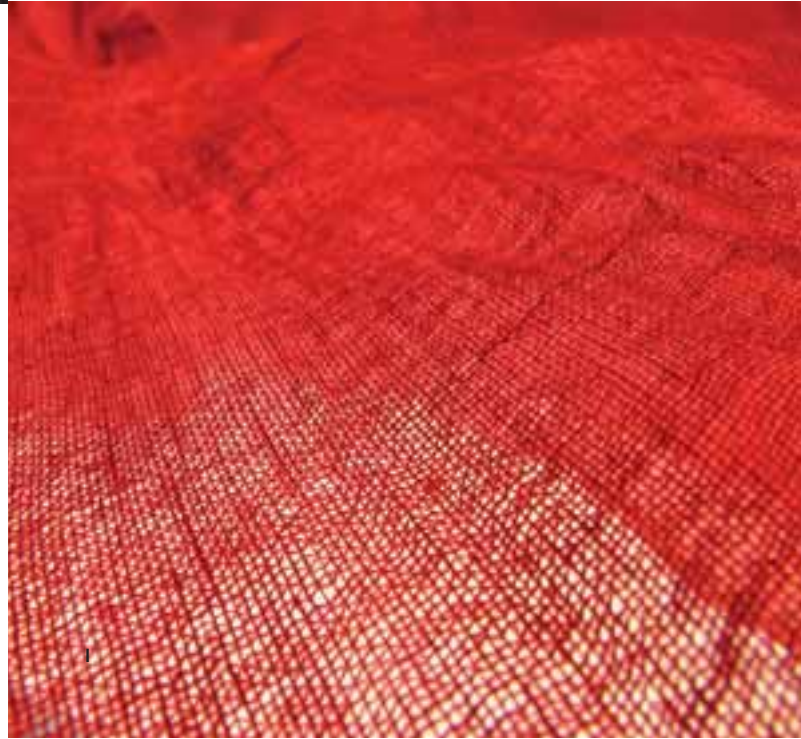
Deleuze is quoted in Laurence Simmons' publication *The image always has the last word* (2002). This series of essays on New Zealand art draws attention to the friction and dynamics between the visual arts and the written word.

In one essay, Simmons discusses Milan Mrkusich's abstract expressionist-inspired images.¹ He maintains that Mrkusich's concern is with our experience of viewing a painting and heightening consciousness of that encounter by constantly shifting our perceptions of space, surface and form, as we move forward and around the art work, seeking to connect with it in the gallery space.

In the instance of Mrkusich's 'Corner paintings' of the late 1960s and 1970s, Simmons appears to argue for the supremacy of the viewer's experience of the art work over interpretation, or the written word. It is the dialogue between Mrkusich's paintings—as we discover them within the art gallery and approach, retreat and reconsider their surfaces and

Artists' works (all details)

A	<i>Of unknowing</i>	Joanna Osborne	inkjet on cotton fabric
B	<i>We shall all be changed III</i>	Janet Chambers	unfired local clay, wheat seed
C	<i>Diagonals (bondage)</i>	Jessica Crothall	acrylic on canvas
D	<i>Diagonals (NZ)</i>	Jessica Crothall	acrylic on canvas
E	<i>Untitled</i>	Joanna Osborne	giclee on paper
F	<i>Child's Play VI</i>	Jonathan Baker	collage mixed media on MDF
G	<i>Shakkei III</i>	Jonathan Baker	collage mixed media on MDF
H	<i>The Curtain</i>	Janet Chambers	muslin, acrylic paint
I	<i>The Curtain</i>	Janet Chambers	muslin, acrylic paint
J	<i>Diagonals (bondage)</i>	Jessica Crothall	acrylic on canvas
K	<i>We shall all be changed III</i>	Janet Chambers	unfired local clay, wheat seed
L	<i>Untitled</i>	Jonathan Baker	collage mixed media on MDF
M	<i>On this mountain</i>	Joanna Osborne	giclee on paper
N	<i>The Curtain</i>	Janet Chambers	muslin, acrylic paint
O	<i>Untitled</i>	Jonathan Baker	collage mixed media on MDF
P	<i>The Curtain</i>	Janet Chambers	muslin, acrylic paint



spatial illusions—that is paramount to the artist's integrity and vision and our appreciation of these. Simmons also goes on to state:

'Our consideration of Mrkusich's art is encouraged as an experience that invites a conscious awareness of seeing... the dissolution of the defined subject and of a stable place for the gaze is in a way the pre-condition for new and interesting, and heretofore non-existent, unknown things to appear. This, it seems to me, is the challenge and ultimate reward of Mrkusich's painting.'²

Representing the unrepresentable

Simmons establishes an association between Mrkusich's abstract works and abstract iconography in Renaissance art—in particular, the Quattrocento annunciation paintings of Piero Della Francesca and Fra Angelico. An idea more than implicit in these artists' work is the supremacy of the word, at the moment the angel Gabriel announces that the Holy Spirit 'will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you'.³

In a typically Renaissance description of events, Fra Angelico's



Annunciation (c.1440) initially seems to give ascendancy to the power and authority of the word of God, appearing out of the angel's mouth in gold and traversing the space between the Virgin and Gabriel.

However, it would be incorrect to believe that Simmons perceives that Fra Angelico is simply affirming the authority of the word in our experience of the arts. He argues that the angel's message may be understood '...only through its implicitness as the logic of a secret, a logic that must in the end go beyond any explicit enunciation in mere words'.⁴

Indeed, Simmons maintains that Fra Angelico's concerns are as much with the mysterious or spiritual dimensions of events, and that this is evident in the enigmatic nature of the space and environment that the Renaissance artist's figures occupy. Simmons points to the interior of the Virgin's quarters and the typical way in which Fra Angelico has treated and defined the room. The description of abstracted marble-like surfaces seem to dissolve space, perspective and volume, creating ambiguities in the physical relationship between the angel and the Virgin. The figures appear to be both in this world and disconnected from it.

It is not so much the displacement and confusion of the room's



environment that is of primary concern, it is the way that the abstraction of the interior draws attention to the 'non-representable: the Incarnation'. Of these areas of vibrant, abstract colour Simmons observes:

'...they do not imitate anything precise, and are strange non-figurative elements for the painting of their time. It is difficult to describe these elements in the composition of Quattrocento and Cinquecento *Annunciations*, difficult to find a word which encompasses the components of the admixture of mineral and spiritual in their stains.'⁵

A welcome metaphor

It is this 'giving over' to the experience of the artwork, at the expense of interpretation and the written word, that is implied and celebrated in the exhibition title *Shrouded* (though Simmons ultimately manages to have it both ways by acknowledging that it is the 'silence of the mute word' that is vital to the annunciation paintings).

Most immediately, *Shrouded* may simply suggest associations with concealment, protection, cloaking, or veiling. However, equally implicit is the notion of allusion, envelopment and discovery, or the contradictory metaphor of confinement and security. All of this suggests that it is this open-ended relationship between the art work and the gallery visitor that is of greatest significance.

Certainly, on one level, shielding and protection are of interest to Jessica Crothall's painting and her expressive descriptions of the cross motif. Crothall's seemingly spontaneous gestures upon the surface of the picture plane are as ordered as they are instinctive, inviting a subtle reading of her work.

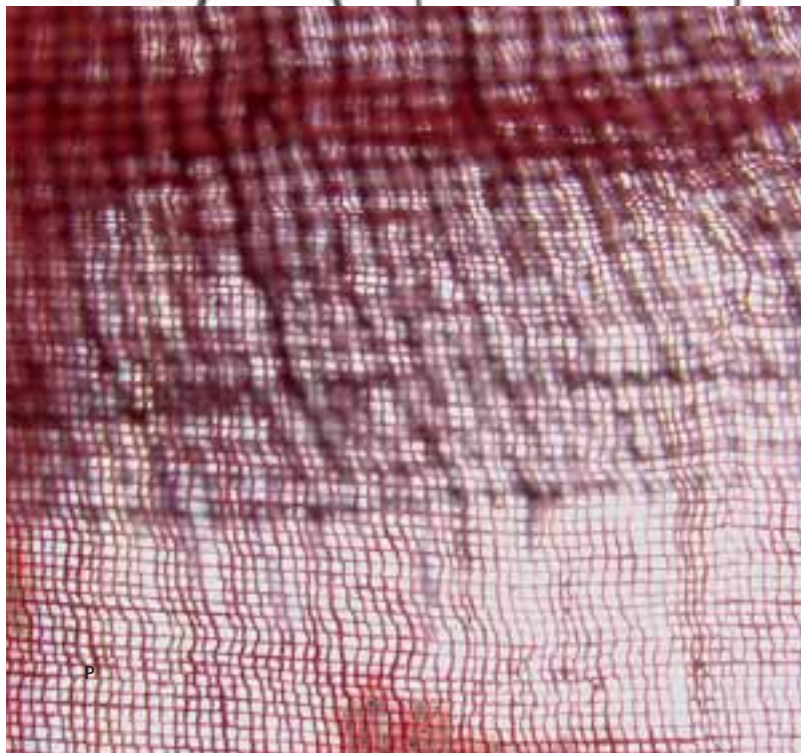
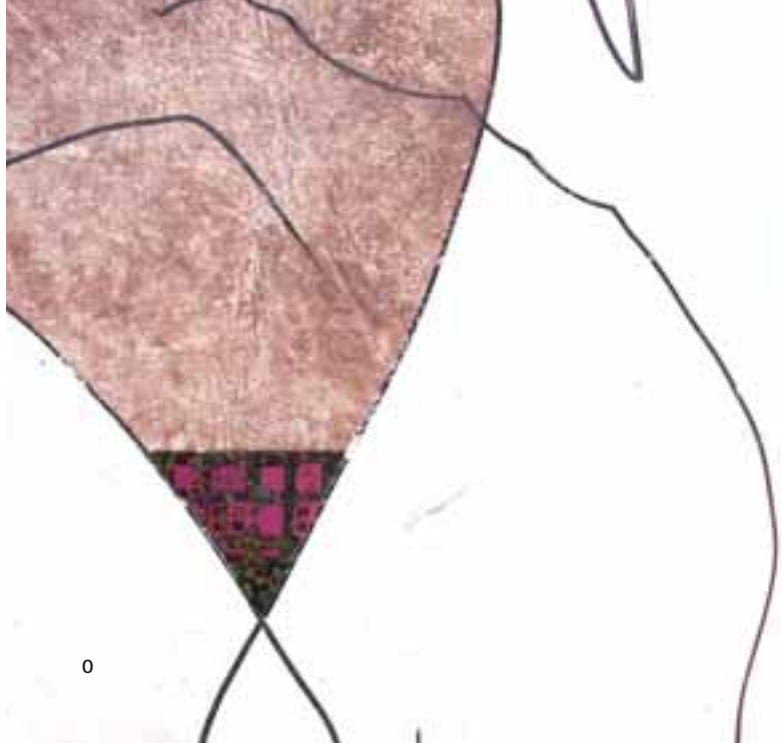
Jonathan Baker's images may appear to bring together disparate items, motifs and forms, yet the profundity of an underlying formalism seems to request that we establish a logic and resolution in our reading of them, even if this is ultimately one that is entirely subjective.

Similarly, Joanna Osborne's abstracted and figurative images reveal and celebrate as much as they allude to and veil, while Janet Chambers' interest in the visual and spatial validates the importance of the gallery visitor's tangible engagement with and experience of her work in establishing its reading and interpretation.

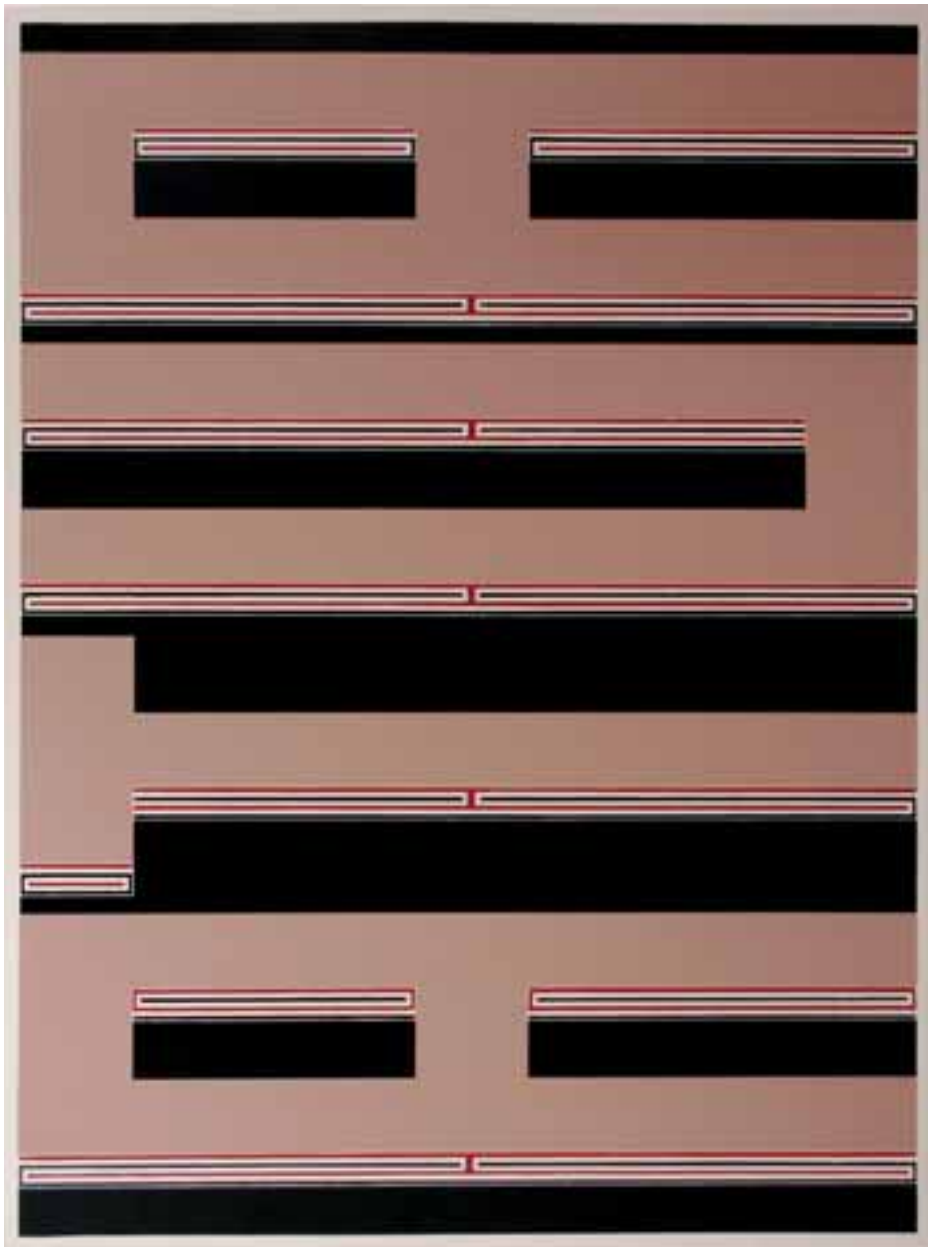
Shrouded should be assumed to be a welcome metaphor for an exhibition that protects, illuminates and reassures, but also—more importantly—veils and implies, encouraging the gallery visitor towards further interpretations and comprehension.

Warren Feeney

Director, Centre of Contemporary Art



- 1 *Mrkusich's Maculae*. Laurence Simmons, in *The image always has the last word—On contemporary New Zealand painting and photography*. 2002, Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, New Zealand.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p124
- 3 The Bible, Luke 1:35 (New International Version)
- 4 *The image always has the last word*, p111
- 5 *Ibid.*, p113



Atua, 2005, Darryn George, oil on canvas, 2000 x 1500mm, courtesy of Jan and Mark Dowland.

Countdown Darryn George 11 August–4 November 2007 Wellington City Gallery, Wellington

At the heart of Wellington City Gallery's 'Contemporary Projects' is what initially appears a modest and traditional show. Yet Nga Puhi painter Darryn George's *Countdown* is both as simple as, and far more complex than it immediately seems. It represents at once the 'now' for the artist within contemporary New Zealand practice, the ongoing development of this particular artist's identity as confluence of sources, and further readings as intricately interwoven as the kowhaiwhai patterns from which these works draw inspiration.

What resounds most clearly among the five large abstract pieces is an interest in paint and pattern; around these archetypal primary notes the formal relationships are orchestrated. Colour and pattern are themes featured consistently in George's practice, while a dynamic rapport between American abstraction, Maori heritage and Christian values, and the influence of computer technology on art continues to evolve.

Countdown is one of four contemporary projects on display in the South gallery (the others are by Eve Armstrong, Areta Wilkinson and Sarah Jane Parton). While curator Sarah Farrar does not make explicit a thematic link between the individual shows, the whole is composed to suggest a dialogue. Hard to ignore Armstrong's cascading mountain of recycled cardboard next door, or the tinny soundtrack of Parton's video work. And it's no accident that they span abstract/figurative, installation, 2D and time-based media, Maori/European, male/female and established/emerging artists.

Certainly, the atmosphere created by such hip roommates could be said to contemporise George's work, with its predominance of red, black, and beige historically associated with traditional Maori carving. Yet surely there is nothing less traditional than work that takes a customary form valued for its adherence to formulaic principles, craftsmanship and traditional narratives, and reshapes these narratives, circumvents the artisanship by way of computer technology, presents something recognisable yet fundamentally altered?

A work like *Die Brucke* (2005) not only alludes to German abstract expressionism, but incorporates the everyday: a road sign symbol indicating an upcoming bridge. Similarly, the most recent work, *Countdown* (2007) manipulates a fusion of Arabic and Roman numerals and koru forms. It alludes to Colin McCahon's number paintings, suggesting the multiple narratives forming New Zealand's visual vernacular. The fact that such works may *look* similar to traditional work, be influenced by tradition, is only the beginning. George's work is world-wise, street-savvy and cunning enough to shrug off the opacity of the superficial interpretation.

George was raised in Anglican Christchurch, and it was only twelve years ago that a trip to the Bay of Islands to visit Nga Puhi relatives kindled an interest in his ethnic heritage. Te Whitereia meeting house, carved by Pire Taiapa, caused him to reassess the relationship between 1950s abstraction, De Stijl and a local tradition of geometric patterning. George had long been interested in colour and pattern; these became the channels for him to explore a personal, spiritual and social agenda.

Farrar notes 'George's ongoing interest in forms such as ladders, stairways, bridges all explore a relationship with divinity'.¹ The journey which *Countdown* inevitably suggests could be one toward spiritual and personal enlightenment, or toward a new visual language.

The intersection of Christian upbringing and faith with Maori symbolism and contemporary practice is the 'place' in which George's work is generally considered to operate, fit most comfortably in critical discussion. There are inherent dangers in trying to locate work this way. It is both *of* and *from* this point that the work emerges, takes shape, and eternally counts down toward *now*.

Abby Cunnane

¹ Sarah Farrar, 'Darryn George: *Countdown* roomnotes, City Gallery Wellington, 2007.

Mystic Truths

30 June–14 October 2007

Auckland New Art Gallery, Auckland

In our longing for the new real, are we turning to what was formerly known as 'the supernatural'?¹

Mystic Truths is an exhibition of contemporary art curated by Natasha Conland at the Auckland New Art Gallery. The collection of 36 works by 17 artists focuses on a dialogue with Bruce Nauman's famous and compelling 1967 personalised neon street sign *The true artist helps the world by revealing mystic truths*.

Spirituality gone missing

Mystic Truths as a title for the show is problematic; in it is the tension of an oxymoron. How can absolute truth be a mystery? *Mystic Truths* raises high expectations and creates the idea that the 'spiritual is a necessary part of an artist's role'.² Conland narrowly describes the post-modern condition as cynical, faithless, sick and cursed. This viewpoint denies a voice to the vast numbers of New Zealanders who live in faith and hope.³

This is not a show that attempts to represent the awesome mystery of God. To view all the works, viewers are kept busy, bombarded, with no quiet spaces to contemplate. There are some playful elements to the show, which generate a 'mood of experimentation to attempt the connection between mind and matter'.⁴ The true nature of the show however is that it explores ideas of superstition, scepticism and experiences of the unknown. Parlour trick religions and scientific experimentations replace an actual spiritual debate.

Australian artist Mikala Dwyer's *Superstitious Scaffolding* installation is an excellent work to welcome you to the show. 'Bound sticks, stocking net and plastic gardens hang and bind an area of the gallery where a spirit guide sits.'⁵ It creates a playful and disruptive experience that defines the precariousness of linking the physical world with the spiritual. Liz Maw's paintings are also striking; they appeal to both fine art and bogan traditions. The almost life-size, full figure portraits and painted sheep's skull are decorated and embellished with a plethora of imagery from mythic traditions.

Lies and Truth

A number of works in *Mystic Truths* deal with reality versus fiction; lies versus truth. In A P Komen and Karen Murphy's *Too Much Reality*, homage is paid to the trauma of the real. It uses the *Blair Witch* sensibility of self-made video footage, from holiday makers staying in haunted hut number 13. This work explores the artists' attempts to plant fear as an idea in the minds of their subjects and viewers. What develops in the narrative is a farcical soap opera amongst the characters, and a total lack of concern with the supernatural.

The most successful work is from Dutch artist, Barbara Visser. Her video installation *Actor and Liar* has two characters reciting dialogue comparing a money-making scam selling moon real estate to Bruce Nauman's work as an artist selling an 'idea'. One actor/liar states: 'Our souls yield to obviousness'. The

dialogue is smart and questioning, a work that opens debate.

A portal for spirits

Conland acknowledges that the artists featured '... are not remaking mysticism, but reactivating its tenets'.⁶ This aspect of the show is what I found the most disturbing, in particular, Dane Mitchell's *Spirit Measure*. Mitchell uses devices like microphones and temperature gauges to measure the gallery space after a white witch cast a spell to open a portal for spirits to traverse into our realm. I wonder if the New Gallery has considered an exorcism of the space before they open their next show, or at the very least, a blessing to remove the taint?

Esther Hansen

- 1 Ann Demeester, *Mystic Truths Catalogue* p27.
- 2 Chris Saines, *Ibid* p10.
- 3 [Many New Zealanders come from at least a background of a tradition centred in Jesus Christ. It is curious that in such an exhibition there are few meaningful references to that tradition. This is in contrast to two recent exhibitions shown at the Waikato Art Museum. Here different world views and religious traditions include a Christ-centred one, amongst others. Ed].
- 4 Natasha Conland, *Ibid* p20.
- 5 Natasha Conland, *Ibid* p23.
- 6 Natasha Conland, *Ibid* p20.

Mysterious Remains,
2006, Liz Maw, oil on sheep skull,
courtesy the artist, private collection,
Wellington and Ivan Anthony Gallery, Auckland.





I Muri O Te Ua—After The Rain
Linda Waimarie King
1–25 November 2007, Oriel Gallery, Picton

Traversing New Zealand roads, I am continually reminded of the cumulative passages of time that formed, forged and reformed the rugged hill-country ranges of this land. Strata of earth can be seen at every turn in the road. And where the blades of modern earth-moving machinery have hewn the corners of mountains, the seasonal flooding events and rock movements of ancient times are quietly laid bare.

In the same way, Linda King's carefully crafted abstract paintings of layered acrylic and oils remind me of these hidden layers of time that we so nonchalantly pass over. To view this show is to expose the inner layers of the artist's life. A narrative journey is hinted at in the layered surfaces and the processes used. This thought grows in my mind, as I return later to view the paintings again.

Linda King is a Maori artist raised in Nelson, but presently living and working in Blenheim. *I Muri O Te Ua* is her first major solo exhibition. King believes all the elements of her past, her work as a creative person, her family, her circumstantial and emotional state, her Christian faith and her Maori identity are woven into the paintings. Though there is a consistency between her words and the visual mnemonics in the images, knowledge of her intentions isn't actually necessary to enjoy the show. King's design sense, and especially her seductive use of coloured textures in rich layers, indicates a technical proficiency and a growing confidence with the medium.

Perhaps the strongest painting in the show is also her largest work: *Burnt Sienna & Mangu*, which owes its strength to bold lines and stark, pared-down horizontal elements. Just one powerful black horizontal line in the middle of the painting instantly anchors the

viewer into a recognizable *Terra firma*—'ah, its a landscape'—moment. King also cleverly imbeds her *tangata whenua* (people of the land) associations, by merging organic seeds, stones and earth-like tones into the textured surface.

In contrast to this monumental painting, some smaller works appeared busy and almost crowded. Perhaps this is entirely a subjective thing, although the artist herself tends to speak her paragraphs as one long sentence—cramming her thoughts and ideas together until they flow and roll over one another.

It is always a challenge to exhibit as a Maori artist, fitting into the present dealer-gallery scene in New Zealand. It is a clash of cultures. I can remember negotiating what I 'could' and 'couldn't' do in the secular gallery space. As I usually did, Linda and gallery owner Hazel Kirkham eventually settled for a *karakia* (a prayer and a blessing). I was quite impressed with Kirkham—she seemed not only keenly aware of giving her customer audience helpful information, but also of discerning correctly the cultural needs of Linda. She transited a professional role of interpreter-mediator-encourager. Good on you Hazel, I don't ever want to be a gallery owner.

Linda King's work has come of age. She is now in control of her medium, and is also focused in her work ethic.

Andrew Panoho



Above:
Burnt Sienna & Mangu, 2007, Linda Waimarie King, oil paint, acrylic paint, dried harakeke seeds and pods (flax), manuka bark shavings, earth, gravel and river pebbles, impasto gel, bronze gold and acrylic urethane and pva glue on canvas, 1046 x 1014mm.

Right:
Ruby's tears (detail), 2007, Linda Waimarie King, oil paint, acrylic paint, impasto gel, bronze gold and acrylic urethane, wood ring and galvanised bolt on canvas, 920mm diameter.

re: make
Tim Brown
11–22 July 2007
Centre of Contemporary Art (Front Gallery),
Christchurch

The window into CoCA's Front Gallery seems to have been transformed into the shop display of a high-class European design label for part of July. But instead of production-line must-haves for the urban sophisticate, gallery-goers are met by objects demanding far deeper consideration.

Black standing forms oppose off-white ones, immediately calling to mind chess pieces laid out on a board. It's a reference that is reinforced by the arrangements of the *Club* and *Patu* triptychs—the central pieces of each stepped forward in silent menace. The names of weaponry questions the claim in CoCA's brochure that 'while previous work carried a political and social message, these works are more about celebrating purity of form'. Brown will need to work harder to escape the long, elegant shadow of his *Necessary Protection* series. This is nothing to be ashamed of—the series was a watershed for the ceramicist, and it is refreshing to see a

White Patu series,
2007, Tim Brown, white earthenware clay, terra sigillata
slip glaze, hand thrown and turned on a potter's wheel,
wood turned base, 620 x 190mm.



social conscience being exercised in a way that is simultaneously compelling and understated.

Patu and *Club*—Maori and European synonyms, black and white treatments—more than a hint that comparisons are being made. But the reference to Maori antiquities seems to go no further than the name. The turned and regular forms draw more from European traditions of woodturning than their asymmetrical, hand-carved namesakes. The grooves around the 'handles' are proof of this. However, consideration of the series' heritage takes us back again to *Necessary Protection*, and informs the dualism. The motifs employed in the *Zigzag* series bear closer similarities to the Tongan war clubs that inspired them.

What I find more fertile for reflecting on though is Brown's continued use of Brancusi-esque points of balance. The precariousness that this suggests stands in contrast with the aura of permanence and stability about the *Club* and *Patu* series. This element is not quite as well realised in the *Zigzag* series. These pieces have a wider point of contact with the plinth, which anchors them more firmly and provides a less satisfying conclusion to the forms.

Brown's surface treatment is always rich and technically excellent. The smooth matte of the black pieces sucks in the available light like a black hole, drawing the viewer in with it. The white pieces, with their delicate satin-gloss surface, seem more peaceful. Random patterns of crazing in the glaze give a semblance of age, beautifully discordant with the high finish and funky modernist forms. Simple, functional, elegant plinths avoid detracting from the ceramic forms. White plinths highlight the black pieces and grey plinths the white (chess again?). The pieces balance on small, wooden truncated cones. The addition of these pedestals strengthens the museum-exhibit quality.

The space is a tricky one for a sculptor to negotiate; long and narrow, more suited to viewing delicate paintings rather than bold, free-standing forms. Brown makes a good fist of it, but the lack of space to step back (coupled with the martial references) lends an intimidation to the works. Having to file past makes it difficult to appreciate both the show as a whole, and the interplays between the groupings. I would like to see them again in a less confrontational siting.

Initially seductive, a sense of unease grows the longer one spends with the works—a sense that one is being drawn, inextricably, into Brown's endgame.

Rob d'Auvergne

[still looking]
Stefan Roberts

18 September–4 October 2007

Campbell Grant Galleries, Christchurch

Silvery light appears to radiate from monuments in the night. Roberts' characteristic landscapes and seascapes possess a numinous quality. His work reiterates the significance of New Zealand's landscapes to our spirituality. Looking long upon the land and sea offers nourishment and identity, and an understanding beyond the conventions of religion. In the words of Elizabeth Julian, 'place actually matters'.¹ An immersion in the landscape can inspire awe, can help us know what God is like.

This time Roberts returns to a series of archetypal black and white photographs. There also seems to be more of a focus on form and meaning. Symmetrically

They are of thin and seemingly enchanted places in which to encounter a sense of timelessness and wonder. Roberts has certainly captured this sense and heightened it considerably through his photographic process.

A continual seeking, *[still looking]* is a series of concentrated gazings upon single scenes: building up light and meaning. In each photograph the camera's eye was locked open for a period of time, while many moments and minutes were wrapped onto one frame. As time increased, the light increased. More information was recorded, building the scene slowly. The stars turned, forming the backdrop. Roland Barthes described the photograph as a 'certificate of presence'⁵—in Roberts' case it's an other-worldly presence. His photography may also be certificates of time. Slices of starlight indicate the passage of time, visually measuring varying fractions of the night in lines across the sky—drawing halos over landmarks.



Above:
Pillar, 2007, Stefan Roberts, Giclee print on paper,
540 x 415mm.

Above right:
Sculpted, 2007, Stefan Roberts, Giclee print on paper,
540 x 415mm.

Below right:
Standing, 2006, Stefan Roberts, Giclee print on paper,
540 x 415mm.



framed in most cases, or through a carefully balanced tension between the main compositional elements, Roberts draws out a particular symbolic quality from each subject. In *Standing*, an ancient mossy tree grows and glows in the dark while stars streak overhead. It suggests wisdom, the tree of life. *Elevated* is a firmly grounded rock. It speaks of the solidity of faith, a promise and a reason for hope;² and *Sculptured#2* warns—it is a cave, a throat of darkness.

Although without colour, these images have an intensified sense of 'elemental awe'. Rippled silver surfaces describe each form—rock, tree or water—pulling each emblem out of the dark. Occasionally Roberts makes biblical links through a choice in title. *Pillar* implies a visual guide for the wandering,³ and *Hovering* the surrounding and covering Spirit;⁴ both allude to actions and interventions of God upon the earth.

His photographs are void of people, another characteristic. As Roberts states, this adds to the sense of quiet timelessness. As a collection of 'eternal moments', of divinity permeating materiality in silence and stillness, Roberts' photographs are incarnational.

This exhibition makes a commitment to looking, a continual exploring in the land with the hope of capturing moments of greater than ordinary clarity of vision.

Joanna Osborne

- 1 Elizabeth Julian, Landscape as Spiritual Classic: A reading from *Paekakariki, Land and Place, He Whenua, He Wahi: Spiritualities from Aotearoa New Zealand*, p101.
- 2 'Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal.' Isaiah 26:4
- 3 'By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.' Exodus 13:21–22
- 4 '...darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.' Genesis 1:2
- 5 'Every photograph is a certificate of presence.' Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1981, p5.

Floating series, Installation detail from *7xLight*, August, SoCA Gallery, Auckland. Mixed media on perspex, 7 panels, each 2440 x 1220 mm.



For pyramids only: *Icos 1-7*, fibreglass painted inside the mould with gelcoats, 2200 x 1000 x 600mm.

7xLight

August 2007, SoCA, Auckland.

September 2007, The Arthouse Gallery, Christchurch

7xlight is a process and a metaphor at the same time. Light, with its nuances, is the centre of analysis: daylight, colour, inner light, energy, joy and aspiration. The project is a metaphor for my transformation as person and artist. Colour and light witness my life-stages as an artist: my steps, doubts, hesitations and happiness. But light is also enlightenment, aim and fulfilment. This project has two parts: *7xLight* from August at SoCA in Auckland, and *7xLight* September at The Arthouse, Christchurch. Each exhibition treats light differently, but complements the other.

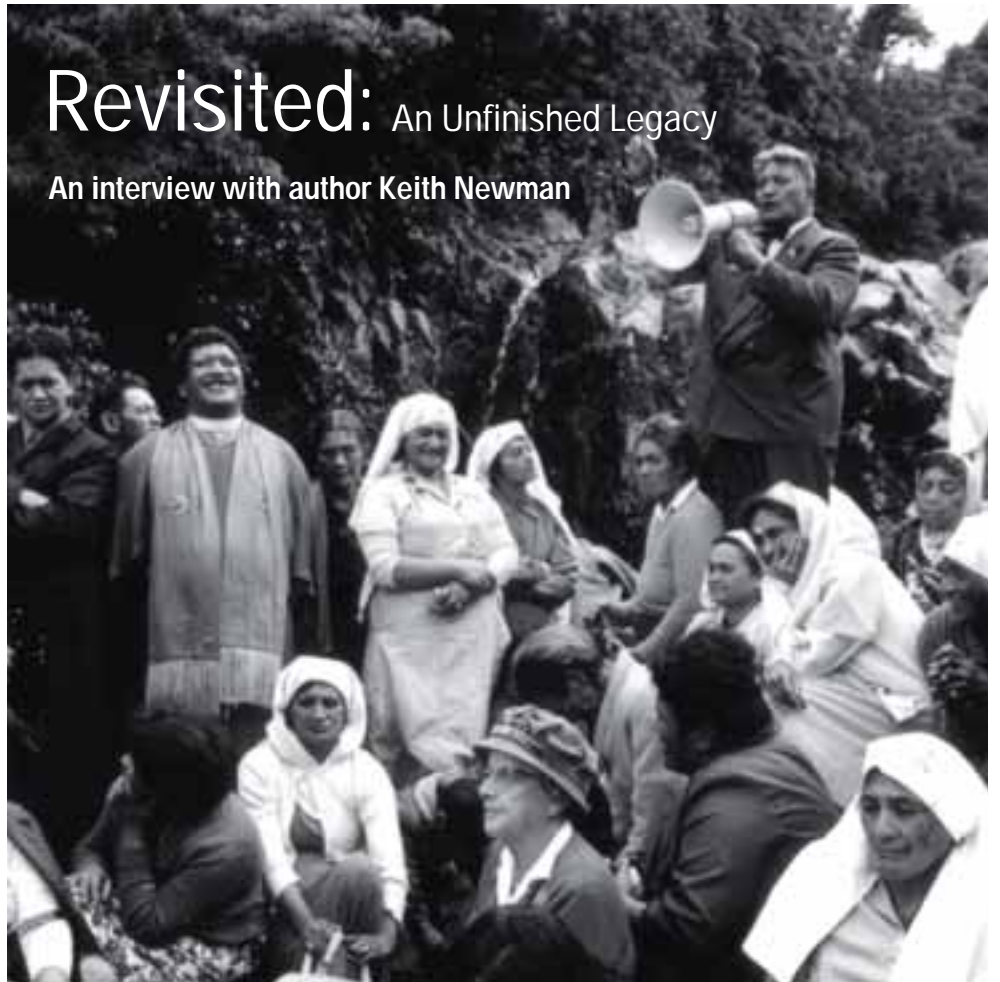
On one hand, light is the rainbow—an explosion of colour, mood and expression, full of contrast and stimulation. Close colours, deep colours, balance, blending and translucence. Swirls of colour are layered on PVC, translucent Perspex, canvas and stretched vinyl. Light in the Auckland exhibition is energy and vitality.

In the Christchurch exhibition, the formal key is the triangle in dialogue with black. The triangle is present in the stretched PVC works—which swing between painting and sculpture—and freely unfolds as three-dimensional representation in the black pyramids. The white portraits generate tension between their free expression and the definite structure of the support. The shapes are dynamic and energetic, but the palette is contained and subdued. Light is not explosive, sensual and exuberant this time, but restrained, inward and enlightening.

Cristina Popovici

Ratana Revisited: An Unfinished Legacy

An interview with author Keith Newman



A gathering of Ratana faithful at Te Rere O Kapuni at the base of Mt Taranaki where Ratana would often go to meditate and listen for the voice of the Wairu Tapu (Holy Spirit). Photographer: Ans Westra.

An urgent message for Aotearoa

Keith Newman shows the fruit of 30 years in journalism with the publishing of this book. It reflects a 20-year research process undertaken against huge odds. The author has taken on an enormous task: to present the life and achievements of TW Ratana to a new generation. The book is structured clearly and logically. Newman combines careful research with a clear and accessible writing style. *Ratana Revisited* is the first published account of the founder of the Ratana movement since the 1970s. New sources have made this account more detailed, precise and accurate. Keith Newman presents the significance of Ratana, with the passion of a visionary, the rigour of a scholar, and the accessible style of an experienced journalist.

Ratana has a story and a message that need to be brought before the nation again. He called for the uniting of the tribes under Ihu Karaiti (Jesus Christ), and performed notable healings in His name. A forerunner in many ways, he was only the second person to take the case of indigenous people to the League of Nations. He called for the Treaty to be enshrined in New Zealand law. He got a third of all Maoridom at the time to sign a petition supporting this challenge. Both the New Zealand and British governments ignored his call.

In 1921, TW Ratana called for the Treaty to go in one hand, and the Bible in the other: 'Ko te paipera Tapu ki taku ringa matau, ko te Tiriti O Waitangi ki taku ringa mau'.

Boarding the Morehu Express

Keith's long-standing interest in Ratana evolved some time ago. I asked how did his interest in Ratana develop? 'I read Jim McLeod Henderson's book *Ratana: the Man, the Church, the Political Movement*¹ and that inspired me further. I couldn't resist an invitation to go to Ratana Pa with Littlejohn's rock-reggae band Heartwarrior, which had taken its name from one of my poems. We joined about 700 others boarding the 'Morehu Express', the first train from the Far North since the late 1960s, to attend the 25 January 1986 celebrations.

'The rich symbolism in the temple and other buildings captured my attention, as did the frequent lament from Ratana adherents that they knew so little of their own heritage. I met many young people who knew fragments of the stories about Ratana, which were all fascinating—but it seemed to me that for someone who had allegedly done so many amazing things within living memory there was a sad lack of information in the public domain.'

Writing despite himself

Keith unfolded the story of 20 years of determined effort in writing the book. On asking what sustained him the writer replied: 'I was confident that there was a story here that needed to be told. For a long time I felt as though I had reached a dead end. A breakthrough was obtaining a copy of Hector Bolitho's 1921 *Ratana: the Maori Miracle Man*² ... I think it was at that point I began trying to seriously piece something together. I kept gathering as many copies

of the *Whetu Marama* [Ratana publication] as I could. No one wanted to publish what I had written. Around 1997 I did some contract work with the *New Zealand Herald*, and copied anything related to Ratana from their archives. I think I had most of what was in the public domain by that stage. However there were several times when it all seemed too hard. I wondered if I was wasting my time. Who was I to be trying to write such an important history? Every time I had that thought, I would get at least two encouragements—often in the same day.

‘There were several rejections from publishers over several years, and again I was about to put the project to one side when I gave it one more shot—and was truly surprised when Reed called me in for a meeting and said they wanted to publish *Ratana Revisited*. From that time onward I worked on completing the project with as many hours as I had to spare in the day.

‘To be honest, there was a sense that this was happening despite me, not because of me. Yes, I was determined and passionate, but this wasn’t just journalism or writing a history book. I felt after a while that this was for all those people who wanted to know more about the movement their parents, grand-parents, uncles and aunts grew up in.

Prophet, healer and political visionary

‘This was their story, but it was my story as well because so many had dismissed Ratana as a cult movement, the stories of his healing mission as myth,

and there was only a shallow representation of his political and social impact in the history books.

‘Here I was learning about a man of God who had been given an extraordinary mission—a prophet and healer, a political visionary, whom the world really ought to know about. When a book like this starts to take on that kind of dimension, when you see how all the pieces start to fit together, whether it’s the prophecies, or the healing—some of which are really well documented—or the removal of curses, or the restoration of a broken people, then it’s no longer just a history book.

‘It’s something living, and that’s what motivated me...’

The author leaves us with his own prophetic challenge and hope: ‘The Ratana story is a unique history, a legacy for all New Zealanders, and indeed for the world to marvel at and be inspired by. For those who are prepared to accept that the Paipera Tapu (Holy Bible) and Te Tiriti O Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi) go hand in hand, a new dawn may arise.’

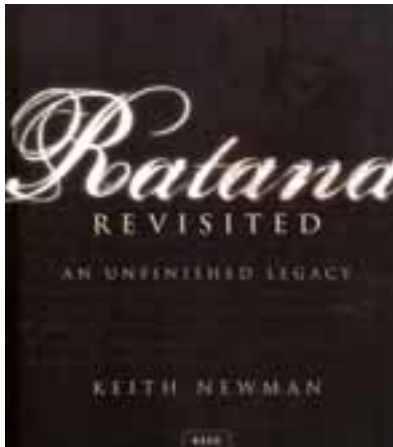
Peter Crothall

- 1 J McLeod Henderson. *Ratana: the Man, the Church, the Political Movement*, A H & A W Reed in association with the Polynesian Society, Wellington, 1963, 1972 (revised edition).
- 2 Hector Bolitho, aka Rongoa Pai, *Ratana: The Maori Miracle Man. The story of his life, the record of his miracles*, Geddis and Blomfield Printers, Wyndham St, Auckland, 1921.

Top: *Ratana Revisited: An Unfinished Legacy*, Reed Publishing, New Zealand, 2006. ISBN 10: 0 7900 1057 7.

Bottom: Keith Newman.

Right: ‘For many years the curious could come and see the artefacts, the taiaha, pendants, carvings, sacred stones and other items discarded as people gave up tohungaism, and the walking sticks, crutches, spectacles, wheelchairs, and other evidence of Ratana’s healing ministry. Each item had a story of healing and restoration and faith in the healing and restorative powers of Ihoia to tell.’ –Ans Westra. Photographer: Ans Westra.



BOOK REVIEW



Taiawhio II: 18 Conversations with contemporary Maori artists

General Editor: **Huhana Smith.**

Photographer: **Norman Heke**

Te Papa Press, Wellington, New Zealand, 2007, 300 pages, Soft cover.

Taiawhio II is the second book published by Te Papa Press that introduces New Zealand to its cultural inheritance found in the contemporary Maori arts. The first *Taiawhio* dealt with some of the more established artists in the contemporary Maori pantheon, such as Arnold Wilson, Fred Graham and Emily Karaka. This book offers a second generation of younger artists still finding their place amongst their tuakana (seniors) in the national and international art scene—artists such as Shane Cotton, Brett Graham, and Lisa Reihana.

For me one of the most endearing qualities of a good book is its humanity—its ability to talk truthfully of the human condition. In *Taiawhio II*, several artists border on being vulnerable in their honesty. I found it refreshing, compared to other aspects of the present art gallery scene. The book assists this accessibility by setting out its contents as a series of conversations, placing the reader as bystander with the artists as they share their life and work. I enjoyed reading the discoveries that these artists made as they honed their craft and responded creatively to their environment.

The artists involved are diverse: filmmakers, carvers, sculptors, painters, Taa Moko artists (tattooists), clay workers, multimedia artists, performing artists/dancers, conceptual thinkers, those working with tukutuku (lattice work) and weavers. Perhaps the single unifying thread tying these diverse artists together lies in their personal responses to 'being Maori in the 21st century'. It's an important, if at times contentious, topic with thoughts as varied as the artists' diverse backgrounds, whakapapa, education and artistic relationships.

Some of the artists were my peers back in the 1980s, as they journeyed through the pakeha arts schools to find their place within the city gallery scene. Others seem to have found their bread and butter as educators in academia, balancing their creative work with an income from teaching. Still others have taken a community focus, discovering the arts as a working tool to socially restore and heal people.

My only criticism of the book was its secular, humanist slant. Faith never appeared to be engaged within the dialogues as an integral part of the creative process. This was sad for me, as I have always observed faith as an integral part of Maori life and thought. I've observed that many of our discoveries as a people in the past (both geographically and culturally) have happened because we have been spiritually guided to move beyond our present horizons and to journey into the unknown.

Taiawhio II would make excellent reading for students of any age wanting to better understand the local New Zealand art scene. It could also be an invaluable tool of introduction for those wanting to explore New Zealand's cultural art forms in the international context. It can be difficult for pakeha New Zealanders to locate themselves within the international context, as overseas observers are more often interested in those art forms that reflect and validate our local cultural and geographical position in the world.

New Zealand as a nation is fast coming of age. We have always proven ourselves on the international stage of sport—I think it is no coincidence that over the last decade we have also begun to make an impression upon the international arts stage through music and film. Bold and successful cultural forms of expression always rest upon a nation's secure sense of identity. Since the Waitangi Tribunal has been addressing the gaping holes in New Zealand's historical fabric, we are benefiting culturally from the united weft of our differing peoples coming together, forming a strong national identity. I really look forward to the next decade as we begin to find our place as one people in God's Zone.

Andrew Panoho

EVENTS AND NOTICES

AUCKLAND/WAITAKERE AND THE COROMANDEL

Gareth Williams *Slaker*
21 October–17 November 2007
Signal Gallery, Waitakere

To slake—verb: to disintegrate by combining with water (Concise Oxford Dictionary). Gareth Williams looks at the processes of corrosion and decay, but in reality these new sculptures grow and change by the addition of metal and crystalline salts. Some works, constructed in steel, use copper sulphate with water to form copper deposits. Others in brass and copper use water and sea salt to create crystalline salt.

Tony Fomison *The Ponsonby Madonna*
27 October 2007–20 April 2008
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki

This mural is on show in 'Likeness & Character: portraits from the collection of Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki'. The exhibition 'highlights the changing face of New Zealand from colonial to contemporary times and reflects our obsession to know the answer to who we are'.

Fomison's only mural was commissioned for the chapel of St Paul's College, a Catholic boys school in Ponsonby, 25 years ago. Painted under a government PEP labour scheme, the work is a landmark of creative achievement. Senior curator Ron Brownson says the painting is a key work of New Zealand religious art. 'It locates the life of Jesus Christ firmly within Auckland city and its population.'

The show also brings together seven religious portraits by Colin McCahon. His unique 1956 portrayal of a very New Zealand Madonna and Child is on display for the first time since being gifted by a private donor.

Robert Jahnke *A rose by any other colour*
31 October–24 November 2007
Bath Street Gallery, Auckland

The exhibition title references a play by American David Muschell—a modern twist of the Romeo and Juliet story. The play finishes in an open-ended way, letting audiences draw their own conclusions about the future of inter-racial relationships.

In Jahnke's exhibition, Crown acts since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi are recast as acts in a drama. Each 'act' is meant to encapsulate the underlying theme of each decade since the signing of the Treaty. For example, Act Of Faith references the faith that Maori had in the Maori version of the Treaty, only to find the English version enjoying precedence for 120 years.

Brett a'Court *Behind the Religious Image*
(working title only)
17–31 May 2008 (preview 16 May)
Wallace Art Gallery, Auckland

This solo exhibition features 2 years of a'Court's work. It incorporates two different series, but they are very closely related and often intertwine.

a'Court has been looking at the power behind the religious image, especially the Catholic Sacred Heart and the Baroque. He tries to '... dissect it to the core,

for behind the sentimentality lies an essence beyond intellect and emotion.

'Yet I have also been looking into McCahon of our own heritage—building on the almost mystic insights, the spiritual essence.'

WAIKATO

Existence—Life according to Art
14 July–14 October 2007
Waikato Museum, Hamilton

Kees Bruin, Heather Diprose, Rosemary Pritchard, Bruce E Phillips, David Cook and Tim Croucher were among a star-studded cast of artists featured in this exhibition. Curated by **Leafa Wilson**, it boldly engaged questions of faith (see review page 14).

Tony Nicholls *Begeondan*
Trust Waikato National Contemporary Art Award 2007
11 August–11 November 2007
Waikato Museum, Hamilton

Tony Nicholls is the technician at the school of media arts at Wintech, Hamilton. Hundred of hours goes into each kinetic sculpture he devises. Originally from New Plymouth, this artist follows in the international tradition of pioneer sculptor Len Lye.

Begeondan (mixed media, kinetic and sound) is designed to generate even patterns with the gyrating string. A world within a world is alluded to. This kinetic work speaks inaudibly. It produces a sound of a frequency not audible to the human ear. The Bible refers to an unseen world of supernatural powers and activity, a world not normally seen or heard by humans.

Keeping Faith: Religious Trends in the Waikato
13 October 2007–29 March 2008
Waikato Museum, Hamilton

Through objects, photography, music and film, the exhibition explores our religious diversity, and aims to encourage a climate of mutual respect in our community.

The exhibition focuses on nine religious groups in the region, each represented by a local family. Take the opportunity to explore these religions, find out the answers to some of the most frequently asked questions, and hear why faith is still so important to so many even in the new millennium.

Visitors interact with questions, watch videos, study displays, listen at the *Sounds of worship station*, and engage with the computerised *Belief-O-Matic* to identify the religion they are closest to.

Keeping Faith was opened by Race Relations Commissioner Joris de Bres, attended by over 100 people and featured in City News, UNO magazine, Tu Mai magazine, Waikato Times, Hamilton Press and on TV Central.

As an extension to the exhibition, the Waikato Museum hosted a series of four thought-provoking panel discussions offering a unique opportunity to hear local and national speakers discuss various topics. The forums included politicians, university lecturers

Rick (pictured below) and his wife, Gloria Heazlewood are responsible for organising the CS Arts mailout. A trailer-load of magazines is prepared for shipping.



and religious figures and dealt with the impact of the Statement on Religious Diversity in New Zealand; Religious Diversity in Schools; Religious Themes in Art and the Religious Future of New Zealand.

Cerebral philosophising and personal stories were part of the mix. The most memorable contribution came from visual artist **Allie Eagle's** presentation of her own work illustrating her journey of faith. **Leafa Wilson** (Waikato Museum's Visual Arts Concept Leader) complemented Allie in this setting.

Xavier Meade and invited artists
Aotearoa—Cuba Liberation Posters

A Wintec (Waikato Institute of Technology) Mediarts research project, curated by Xavier Meade, Lecturer of Design at the School of Media Arts. It is currently being exhibited in various venues in Cuba. The posters are by invited New Zealand artists (Maori, Pacific and Pakeha) including **Leafa Wilson**, and they will eventually be exhibited at the Waikato Museum.

<http://www.wintec.ac.nz/index.asp?pageID=2145827458>

BAY OF PLENTY

Emily Hill *Autumn Leaves*
11–31 October 2007
Balham Gallery, Tauranga

As an emerging artist, Hill now exhibits regularly around the Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions and is the inaugural exhibitor of Balham Gallery. Hill 'gathers material and inspiration from natural beauty in tandem with unseen tenderness, a process that seeks to be curative to the viewer as much as it is to the artist'.

Each piece in *Autumn Leaves* draws inspiration from richly coloured fallen autumn leaves and small cuttings of living ones. These demonstrate how leaves are visual barometers of seasons, a pattern paralleled in our lives. Hill invites the viewer to observe with her the complexity and simplicity of a leaf in its transformation both internally and externally.

Regan Balzer *Te Tipu: New Beginnings*
5 November–10 December 2007, Rotorua

Temporary installations were 'appearing' and 'growing' at various locations around Rotorua. The outdoor exhibition addressed current issues of family problems such as child, woman and elder abuse and suicide.

MANAWATU AND WELLINGTON

Religious Studies
1–20 September 2007
Thermostat Gallery, Palmerston North

Three Christian photographers explored biblical themes through nature and a critique of consumerism in Hong Kong. **Andy Palmer:** *Some of the silences in my life*. **David Boyce:** *Elective affinities*. **Jodi Ruth Keet:** *When the thousand years are over*.

Jan Lucas *Wild Ocean series*
1–27 September 2007
LeSA Gallery, Petone

Jan Lucas has been based right next to the wild seas

of Paekakariki for the last 10 years. Her work has ranged between abstracted landscapes, figurative religious works and geometric abstraction. The exhibition shows a series of abstracted seascapes, responding vigorously to her immediate environment on the Kapiti coast.

Lucas says: 'In these works I wanted to demonstrate a different approach to the watery giant. This time the riveting spectacle of the great sea storms along the coast again challenged me. What some may find a frightening experience is for me, instead, pure theatre.'

Anne-Marie Verbeek *Living in Nieuw Zeeland*
Until 3 October 2007
Upstairs Gallery, Porirua

After exhibiting last month at the ROAR! gallery, Verbeek explores the perennial question of identity in Aotearoa—this time from the individual perspective of Dutch ancestry. Interested in the idea of Tangata Whenua and what it might mean to be a 'person of the land', Verbeek uses her inimitable style with lush oil paintings to explore symbols and images speaking of a colourful and vibrant identity in New Zealand. Always questioning but with a light and humorous touch, she incorporates people, gumboots and a strawberry sundae in rural New Zealand to illustrate her take on the kiwi world.



Above: Mark Lander stands before his monumental paper work exhibited at the Corocan Gallery, Washington D.C.

Right: Gallery visitors explore Mark's art.



NELSON AND MARLBOROUGH

Almond House Backpackers is a small hostel in Nelson, with a focus on Nelson art and pottery. A recent launch party was held to showcase the featured artists, who include **Marilyn Andrews** and **Mieke Scroggins**, who was commissioned to paint the mural on the hostel's front wall.

Claire Beynon *Where there is ice, there is music*
New works based on her experiences in Antarctica
17 September–10 November 2007
The Diversion Gallery, Blenheim

Welcome to the surreal world of Antarctica—through the eyes and words of award-winning Dunedin artist and poet Claire Beynon. In a new series of artworks in a variety of media, she brought this ethereal world into sublime reality for those of us not yet lucky enough to visit Antarctica.

Peter McKay *Metaphysical Heart*
October 2007
Millennium Art Gallery, Blenheim

An exhibition of contemporary jewellery curated by **Damian Skinner**. McKay's jewellery explores metaphysical themes and biblical stories.

CANTERBURY

Side Door Trust/Four Thirds *Our Place*
19 October–3 November 2007
Silvan Gallery, Christchurch

The latest exhibition from this group featured works by **Ross Gillies**, **Robin Walsh**, **Pete Majendie** and **Brian Lawrence**. The generic title aimed to provide a reflection on belonging to, and identity with, a multicultural society. *Our Place* was an eclectic mix of works in various media, with each of the contributing artists showing a continuing development of their art forms. Ross Gillies' work had some skilful references to the Treaty of Waitangi.

Richard van der Aa *Easy Pieces*
23 October–10 November 2007
Campbell Grant Galleries, Christchurch

Und Jetzt
8 December 2007–15 January 2008
I.S. and Le Petit Port Galleries, Leiden

Now resident in Paris, van der Aa returned to New Zealand to exhibit a compilation of mainly monochromatic objects mostly found on the streets of his Paris neighbourhood. van der Aa was also involved in *Und Jetzt* (And Now), a group show of non-objective work in Leiden, the Netherlands. It involved about 20 artists, mainly from Europe but also some from Australia and the United States.

Jim Instone *Sacred & Profane*
2–11 November 2007
Cloisters Gallery, Christchurch

Instone exhibited more of his well-crafted metalwork birds and some ironing board shenanigans in a joint exhibition with **Alan McLean**.

Margaret Hudson-Ware: A photographic Essay was launched at the Salamander Gallery on 5 November. **Penny Orme** writes about Hudson-Ware in the introductory pages:

'The themes or content expressed in Margaret's

images have evolved over her thirty year painting career. The paintings range from the earlier ones, exploring her own personal life experiences to her present concern to depict the timeless and universal characteristics of the human condition.

'Despite the artist's concern to convey a heightened sense of grief and despair, Hudson-Ware's ultimate message is one of redemption and forgiveness. Her work conveys a dramatic intensity as she expresses the emotions of anger, sorrow and faith with a passion that is rare in New Zealand art.'

Photographs and compilation: **Noeline Brokenshire**.

Colin McCahon: Landscape, Biography and Christian Belief Intertwined

11 November 2007

Christchurch Art Gallery

This illustrated talk by **William McCahon** addressed some of his father's major landscape works, which often set dialogue based on his personal belief within the framework of the New Zealand landscape.

A Christmas Journey of Peace

21–24 December 2007

Latimer Square, Christchurch

This Christmas, the Side Door Arts Trust, with the support of various churches, constructed a large scale interactive straw-bale labyrinth on the theme of peace, based on the labyrinth designed for St Paul's Cathedral, London.

Within the labyrinth were a number of art installations with different themes, such as world peace, peace in the community, peace in the family, peace with God, and personal peace.

OTAGO

Art in the Garden

28 October 2007

Glenfalloch Woodland Garden, Otago peninsula

This exhibition included artists **Shelly Johnson** and **Philippa Wilson**. It was tied in with the rhododendron festival, a one day exhibition and included artists working in the garden, sculpting, painting and, in Johnson's case, drawing with Indian ink and a twig.

Claire Beynon writes about the launch of *Open Book*, '... a fun, celebratory event. It took place in the bindery at Rogan McIndoe Print (Dunedin). People gathered amongst the magnificent old Heidelberg printing presses, forklift trucks and book pallets! We threw white cloths over everyday work surfaces, set out candles, flowers, food and wine and enjoyed a companionable evening. It meant a lot to me to be able to launch the book in my home city, and in the actual place it was made.'

Mary Horn will exhibit in Salisbury House Gallery in April, although the date of the opening has not yet been set. Four or five paintings from a series on TS Eliot's poems *Four Quartets* and some wall hangings on cotton will be shown. Horn has also been writing recently: the chapter 'The Fingerprint of God – Truth through Art' was published in *Towards the Intelligent Use of Liberty. Dominican Approaches in Education*.

Suzanne Kallil's latest film is a modern day version of part of Jesus' life, including the crucifixion and

resurrection. She writes, 'It is centred round the Otago University campus and I have had encouragement from many people. Even the police are happy to lend riot gear for some scenes! The actors are students, a high number from the theology department, including some lecturers. And I have tempted those of many different faiths and cultures to become involved as it is educational for them.'

INTERNATIONAL

The Little Film that Could

Screen Dunedin's short film *Cake Tin*, directed by **Rosemary Riddell** and produced by **Mike Riddell**, picked up a major award at the Moondance International Film Festival in Hollywood. Rosemary (now a District Court Judge) and Mike were in attendance when their film was awarded the Sandcastle Award for Best Short Film, selected from more than a thousand competitors. 'It was a complete and wonderful surprise,' said Rosemary, 'and a real endorsement of the Dunedin people who contributed their talents to our low-budget project.' The film concerns an elderly woman escaping from a rest home to go exploring in the night.

Details at www.caketin.org

Sudhir Kumar Duppati *How I met my soul*

21 November–4 December 2007

Tamarind Art Gallery, New York

A painting lecturer at Otago Polytechnic, Duppati is currently a resident artist at the Wesley Theological Seminary, Henry Luce III Centre for Arts and Religion, Washington DC.

His installation investigates an experiential reflective tour of the human story. By using contrasting visuals from the material and spiritual world, he attempts to evoke a sense of immediate understanding about the two kinds of human experiences. He writes: 'My main concern is to explore and understand the dualities and sometimes contradictory nature of human existence. My ideas are drawn from religious or scientific processes of evolution.'

Loburn to Washington...

Loburn artist **Mark Lander** has recently returned from his latest art adventure. He created a huge paper installation at a prestigious Washington gallery. The Corcoran Gallery is right next to the White House. According to Mark, video installations are the focus for contemporary art in Washington. The papermaker enthusiastically reflects on how visitors enjoyed his finely wrought harakeke sheets. The organic and landscape quality of his work was hugely appreciated as a contrast to a predominance of digital art in the city. It took Mark five days to make the paper from local Canterbury materials, and two days to hang the 50 sheets.

... and Ingwavuma

Recently, Maryna Heese of South Africa visited Mark Lander at his Loburn studio. She is the director of a group of artists in Ingwavuma, a remote Zulu village. The Anglican church in Sumner sponsored Lander to make a huge papermaking machine for the group. This means they can make their own greeting cards, avoiding the expense of buying materials. Lander's creative inventiveness has empowered a group of struggling African artists to take a huge step towards self-sufficiency.

Chrysalis Seed's Board of Trustees



Derek Craze (Treasurer) is a Chartered Accountant, a partner in Kendons Scott Macdonald, and produces the accounts and financial statements for Chrysalis Seed. Derek has been a Trustee for five years.



Don Kempt has been a church leader at the Spreydon Baptist Church (Community Ministries Pastor and Church Manager). Previously he was a bank manager at the Bank of New Zealand. He has also served as Trustee for a number of community trusts based from Spreydon Baptist Church.



Jessica Crothall (Co-Director) is one of the founding directors and has a Diploma in Fine Arts majoring in Printmaking from the University of Canterbury. She has exhibited her contemporary artworks for more than 25 years throughout the South Island and continues to support Chrysalis Seed by assisting in a variety of administration tasks.



Peter Crothall (Director) is one of the founding directors and has a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Art History and History from the University of Canterbury and a Bachelor of Divinity majoring in Church History from The University of Otago. Peter also has a Master of Arts majoring in Cross-cultural Communication from Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, USA. Peter is the Creative Director at Chrysalis Seed and also edits the *CS Arts* magazine.



Peter Phillips (Chairperson) has a Bachelor of Law degree from the University of Canterbury. Peter is a solicitor with Anthony Harper Lawyers and is a former Chairperson of the firm. Peter has always been keenly interested in the arts and is the founding Chairperson of Chrysalis Seed.



Sarah Newton has a Bachelor of Fine Arts majoring in Graphic Design from the University of Canterbury. She lives in Auckland and currently operates her own design business, the black rubric, specialising in graphic design and typography.

All photography by Andrew Clarkson.



Jesse Tree,
1995, Andrew Panoho, Watercolour, 230 x 330cm.

- 1 Please **put me on your CS Arts mailing list** to receive: hardcopy electronic
I am professionally involved in contemporary visual arts, as an: artist other
- 2 Please **delete** my name from the CS Arts mailing list.
- 3 Please note my postal/email address has **changed** (write new address details below).
- 4 Enclosed is a donation of \$ to help cover CS Arts running costs.
- 5 (For organisations only) Please send me more/less copies of CS Arts. A total of: copies.
- 6 I am not professionally involved in contemporary art but would like to subscribe to CS Arts.
Enclosed is my \$25 annual subscription.

Please fill in your contact details below. Make all cheques payable to 'Chrysalis Seed Trust'.

Name..... Phone/s

Email Street / PO Box

City Postal Zone Country

Please post this form to: Freepost # 154 215, Chrysalis Seed Trust, PO Box 629, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand.
(You might like to save us money by omitting our Freepost number and using a stamp!)