

Sarjeant Quarterly



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From the Senior Curator

by Greg Anderson

The 24th June was a wonderful evening at the Sarjeant. In the company of Hon. Chris Finlayson QC, Mayor Annette Main, our kaumatua John Maihi and more than 200 invited guests we unveiled a wonderfully diverse set of exhibitions including new digital work and two shows comprising significant parts of our permanent collection.

Chief among those shows was *Revealed* curated by our Curator of Collections Jennifer Taylor Moore. The exhibition was the product of an enormous and meticulously planned exercise to decant our nationally significant collection of more than 8300 items from the existing Gallery in Queens Park, down to our temporary location at 38 Taupo Quay.

The *Revealed* show highlighted forty-four of the many items that were uncovered during the Collection move. These artworks which had been carefully stored away by previous generations of staff had become inaccessible and forgotten during the course of nearly a century of operation.

Revealing these treasures for the first time in decades or for the first time in living memory was a fantastic treat. But what it really revealed to all present that night, was the unique wonder upon which all of the work going into our redevelopment plans is predicated - that we have an exceptional treasure here in regional New Zealand which represents a large part of our country's cultural heritage.

I invite you all to come and visit this as well as our many other exciting exhibitions, so you can understand the legacy we are seeking to protect and the future we are working hard to secure for both the Sarjeant and Whanganui.

Mrs McSweeney - The Gallery Cat

by Jennifer Taylor Moore

During the collection relocation Transition Assistant Te Maari Barham noticed an intriguing pencil inscription on the back of 'Ngangara', an artwork dated 1973 by Cliff Whiting, which led to an unexpected discovery. On the back of the frame, next to a simple drawing of a bone, it read 'Bone for McSweeney Sorry Jim no meat on it'. The staff had no idea who McSweeney was and assumed it was an in-joke between the artist and the Gallery custodian at the time - James Alp (known as Jim). A short while later Transition Assistant Kimberley Stephenson was reading through some of the Gallery's historic clipping files and came across a story about Mrs McSweeney - the Gallery's cat.

While researching this story we visited Grace Alp (Jim's wife) and she told us all about the unlikely Gallery staff member. Grace told us that Mrs McSweeney, a grey white and black mixed tortoiseshell tabby, joined the Gallery staff in the mid 1960's as a companion to Jim who, at that time, was the only staff member.

Mrs McSweeney made herself useful welcoming visitors and escorting them through the galleries, surveying the Gallery from her favourite vantage point on top of the marble Wrestlers at the centre



Top: Nicola Williams, Hon Chris Finlayson QC
Bottom: Shirley McDouall, Gavin Doyle, Diana Doyle, Jim Norris



Mrs McSweeney and admirer on top of Raffaello Romanelli's 'The Wrestlers', 1914, marble, 1915/2/1. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. Gift of Mr and Mrs Neame, 1915. This image was published in The Wanganui Herald, 2 July 1971, and is reproduced courtesy of the Wanganui Chronicle.

of the dome. She also assisted with packing of exhibitions by lying on top of the packaging or inside empty boxes, preventing them from being cleared away. After the gas boiler was installed in the basement McSweeney assisted the regulation of climate control in the galleries by lying stretched out on top of the floor vents, basking in the heat until she was nearly scorched.

Both Mrs McSweeney and Jim Alp retired from the Gallery in 1975, a year after Gordon Brown was appointed the first professional Director. Mrs McSweeney spent her last years with Jim and Grace at their home where she regularly assisted with the gardening.

Ngangara is one of two works by Cliff Whiting commissioned by the Gallery for the collection in 1973 while Whiting was working as an arts adviser in the Whanganui region. They were the first artworks by a contemporary Maori artist to enter the Sarjeant Gallery collection. 'Ngangara' is on display in *Revealed: Collection discoveries from our recent move* until 18 September 2016.

Members' News

by Raewyne Johnson

A warm welcome to new Gallery Members, Helen Budd, Paul Pryce Esq., Emma Bugden & Frank Stark, Chrissy & Rick Collins, Robyn, Sophie, Greg, Rod & Mike Taylor, John Botting, Alex Dowdeswell, Debra Smith, Heather Taylor, John Malcolm.

The Gallery is pleased to acknowledge the following as Corporate Members and Corporate Sponsors:

ASB Bank, Belton, Smith & Associates Ltd., Central City Pharmacy, Computer-Care NZ Ltd, Forbo Flooring Systems, Kensington Swan, Mars Pet Care, Meteor Office Products Depot, NZME, Richard Millward & Associates, Nicola Williams, Pamela M J Williams, pattillo Ltd., PR & AB Warnock, Te Reo Irirangi O Whanganui – AWA FM, Wanganui Chronicle, Whanganui UCOL – Creative Programmes

We value the support of our Corporate Members and Sponsors and encourage you to utilise their services whenever possible.

Gallery Member's events

We had a great response to our recent Members visit to the DogBox, selling out of tickets within a few days of opening the bookings. This was such a unique opportunity to view this distinctive property and to hear first-hand from its creators the story of their journey through the design and build process. We are planning more such events - book early next time!

We are looking forward to a special function for Members on Thursday 18 August from 5.30 to 7.30pm when Senior Curator Greg Anderson will give an update on the Redevelopment Project and Curator of Collections Jennifer Taylor Moore will deliver a short presentation about the recent centenary celebrations of Whanganui's Edith Collier in Bunmahon, Ireland.

Coming up shortly will be a Members only bus trip to Bulls. Many of you will have seen the Jacobean style crewel embroidery done by Lady Anne (Annie) Wilson currently on display in the exhibition *Revealed: Collection discoveries from our recent move*. We will visit the historic homestead of Lethenty, home to Annie Wilson, and her following three generations since 1874, which still houses original furniture and furnishings including more embroideries. Details will be emailed as soon as they are to hand; you may register your interest on 06 349 0506.

Member's Executive

We are delighted to welcome Rochelle Handley to the Sarjeant Gallery Member's Executive. Rochelle has long been a great supporter of the Sarjeant and brings a wealth of enthusiasm and ideas to the meeting table.



Top: On-site at the DogBox
From left: Sally Ogle, Tim Gittos, Ben Mitchell-Anyon

Bottom: The Abacus Trio
From left: Fred Loveridge, Denise McNeill, Angela Crawford, Dave Griffiths, Mike Franklin-Browne

Education News

by Sietske Jansma
& Andrea Gardner

We have had a busy term 2 with lots of students visiting us to participate in a range of programmes. Our Tote Bag project that was hugely popular in Term 1 continued to attract lots of visiting schools with students coming up with great designs depicting living things - plants and animals and sometimes mythical creatures. Keep an eye out around town to see if you can spot any students using their bag!

To coincide with Puanga celebrations students explored how different artists have painted the night sky, using Vincent van Gogh's *Starry Night* and works by James Whistler and Henri-Edmond Cross as inspiration to paint their own beautiful work using water colour.

We held another successful workshop with local photographer Leigh Mitchell-Anyon working alongside Andrea Gardner teaching Whanganui High School students who were learning about staged photography. The students explored portraiture using a flash lighting set up and worked with constant lighting where they created and arranged a scene using miniature objects and a painted background. Another highlight this term was Bill Hammond's fantastic painting *Living Large No 5* which features mysterious bird people, students made some thoughtful responses to this work using clay.

For term 3 we are looking forward to teaching to our new exhibitions, including the *See what I can see: Discovering New Zealand Photography*. There are a huge range of terrific images in the show and thanks to the generosity of the Chartwell Trust we are offering schools visiting the exhibition the opportunity to take away a copy of the book *See what I can see: New Zealand Photography for the young and curious* by Gregory O'Brien.

Revealed:

Collection discoveries from our recent move

by Jennifer Taylor Moore
Curator of Collections

11 June - 18 September 2016

During 2014 – 2015 the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui relocated its entire operation, including exhibitions and the collection, to Sarjeant on the Quay to allow for the strengthening and redevelopment of the earthquake prone Category I listed heritage building at Queen's Park. The project to relocate the collection provided an unprecedented opportunity to inventory and catalogue every single item in the Gallery's possession after more than 100 years of collecting. For this epic task the Gallery secured NZ Lotteries funding to employ a team of four transition assistants for 21 months to inventory, pack and move the collection.

The collection had previously been housed in extremely cramped conditions in the basement of the heritage building. Many items were almost impossible to access for display in exhibitions or to catalogue their records. At the start of the relocation project the Gallery had just over 5,500 records on its computerised database. During the project an additional 2,800 items were inventoried, making the total number in the Gallery's possession now just over 8,300 items.

Having undocumented collection items is not unique to the Sarjeant Gallery as most historic museums and galleries worldwide are continuously working to fully catalogue their collections. The Sarjeant Gallery's collection is one of the oldest in New Zealand and started in 1901 with a gift from the Wanganui Arts & Crafts Society of an oil painting by C.F. Goldie from 1900.

During the relocation project, while the collection was inventoried and packed for transport, many fascinating and sometimes humorous stories emerged as the team



Unknown artist 'Untitled (Portrait of a man with a ruff)' oil on canvas, X2014/1101.
Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare O Rehua Whanganui.

discovered items that were unknown to existing staff hidden away behind shelves and in old sealed crates in the labyrinthine Gallery basement. Any item that could not immediately be matched to an existing record was given a unique number prefixed by an X which easily identified it for further investigation once the collection move was complete.

This exhibition features many of these items and a selection of older impressive paintings that have been difficult to access for display until now. The relocation project has and continues to be a journey of discovery as we research our wonderful collection and investigate the stories of the works.

Highlights include the escapades of the Gallery's resident cat, Mrs McSweeney, who accompanied visitors as they viewed exhibitions in the early 1970s; the 'Tree of Life' crewel work embroidered by Annie Wilson, an early settler in Bulls, and gifted by the artist to the collection in 1922; a mysterious portrait of an Elizabethan gentleman discovered on a shelf; and a selection of four lithographs from a series by William Simpson of the Crimean War which were found inside an old wooden crate under a group of empty ornate frames. We are delighted to be able to present this exhibition which reveals a small selection from our rich, varied and surprising collection.

Annie Wilson 'Jacobean Style Tapestry (*The Tree of Life*)'
Circa 1858-1922, wool embroidered on to linen, 1922/4/1.
Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare O Rehua Whanganui. Gift of Lady Wilson, 1922.



A strange box walks the earth. Whatever it sees, it stores away. Sometimes it only sees what it wants to see. It has been known to steal things or take them without asking. The strange box has a shutter and a glass eye. It is a camera. Although, in the world today, it might also be a telephone or a computer or a gadget. A camera can do many things and, especially these days, it can be many things.

See
what
I can
see



Victoria Birkinshaw, from *The Circus* series 2003, digital c-type print

Discovering New Zealand Photography

18 June - 11 September 2016

Photographs have plenty to tell us about the world. Yet they are often full of mystery and complication. Great photos are alive with hints and echoes and mysteries—and they can change every time you look at them. Nearly all of the images in this exhibition were made by New Zealand photographers—or photo-artists, as they are often called these days. With a few exceptions, all of the photographs were taken in New Zealand, so they have a lot to say about this place and about the people, young and old, who live here. Beyond the surfaces which they render so vividly, photographs capture our dreams, imaginings and fears, aspirations and inner lives. This exhibition is a celebration of the things a camera can do, the places it can go and its capacity to record and reinvent the world around us.

The exhibition is a companion to Gregory O'Brien's book *See what I can see—New Zealand photography for the young and curious* published by Auckland University Press in 2015. Included are selected images from the publication alongside works drawn from the Sarjeant Gallery's rich and nationally significant photographic collection.

The curators would like to thank Auckland University Press and the Chartwell Trust for their support of the publication. We are also grateful to private individuals, dealers and most importantly the artists for making the works available for the exhibition.

The exhibition has been curated by

Greg Donson &

Curator & Public Programmes Manager

Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui

Gregory O'Brien

Independent Curator & Writer

Mark Smith, Untitled 2014, Archival pigment inkjet print



glen hayward

super ordinary

14 May - 4 September 2016

Glen Hayward's work has consistently been preoccupied with the back story of objects. Since graduating from Elam School of Fine Arts, Auckland University his source material has been the everyday – a study of pedestrian, occasionally ugly and mass-produced things. At first glance Hayward's works appear as ready-mades in the Gallery space and are a little puzzling - why would someone place used buckets of paint, paint trays and rollers in a locked glass cabinet? But look a little closer and you will discover that everything in this exhibition has been painstakingly crafted and carved from wood and then methodically painted to be a replica of something deeply ordinary.

In 2014 Hayward returned to Whanganui, the town where he was born, to be the artist-in-residence at Tylee Cottage. During his residency Hayward's attention shifted from recreating everyday objects to using found objects and detritus as the material for a new body of work. In doing so he has taken overlooked items and made them newly visible as hybrid forms. The hand and eye of the unknown maker is both obscured and amplified by Hayward's additions and subtractions.

Super ordinary features a selection of Hayward's works produced since 2000 alongside the new body of work. What can be seen in surveying his practice is that Hayward is an artist who has mastered his chosen medium. The type of wood he uses is entirely dependent on what he has had to hand or what the object he wishes to make requires, sometimes this could be a beautiful piece of native timber like rimu or kauri and on other occasions he turns his hand to the ultimate fraudster in wood - MDF. What wood offers Hayward is a more conversational approach to his work, he can return - he can subtract but he can also add over time.

Although manmade objects have been the primary inspiration for his work Hayward has turned his attention to the natural world, the exhibition features two intricately carved rat skulls, a giant snail and a circular log that is like an ouroboros (the ancient symbol depicting a serpent eating its own tail). The sap of this freakish log would be cyclic, constantly churning around and around and in turn the log gets thicker and the diameter of the circle gets wider. A little like Hayward's practice, his circle of vision gets wider and more objects at the fringes capture his attention for their super ordinairiness.

by Greg Donson
Curator & Public Programmes Manager



Glen Hayward, from *The River Glean* 2014-2016



Brydee Rood, *River Survival Series: Whanganui River Gold Waters*, 2016, performance/video installation

Still Water Goes Stagnant

7 May - 31 July 2016

by Sarah McClintock
Assistant Curator

Still water is dangerous. It renders life-giving water toxic as it conceals and cultivates manifold diseases. The duality of this existence – an element that is at the same time essential to human life and a potential threat – is the central theme of this exhibition.

Examining the divergent states of landscape, documentation, connectivity, and simulacra, the exhibition includes new video work by New Zealand artists Kate Woods and Brydee Rood alongside the Indonesian collective Tromarama. It is not a coincidence that each of the artists lives or has spent significant time in Asia. The flow of people, art, and discourse between Asia and the Pacific is becoming increasingly vital to contemporary New Zealand art and these connections are investigated and assessed in each of the works on display in *Still Water Goes Stagnant*.

Brydee Rood, an Auckland based performance artist, floated with survival blankets on the Whanganui River in February of 2016. The resulting installation, which is accompanied by photographs from her survival performance in India, speaks to the state of emergency faced by many rivers across the world and our role as poisoners and potential saviours.

Using Nam June Paik's seminal 1974 work *TV Garden* as her inspiration Kate Woods' *Carryback, Carryover* is ancient and modern, referential and original, eternal and ephemeral. Using samples from found visual and audio media the work flickers and pulses with mystery and memory.

Intercourse by Tromarama captures the viewer between two worlds. Trapped by both the physical and digital the work questions the nature of the real, surreal, and hyperreal state of contemporary life. This is the first time Tromarama has shown in New Zealand and the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui is delighted to have brought their exciting work to Whanganui.



Kate Woods, *Carryback, Carryover*, 2016, digital video/sound (still)

