

# JOE SHEEHAN: *Other Stories*

## Stone Works: 2002 - 2012

8 December 2012 - 3 February 2013



■ Joe Sheehan, *Shit Creek*, 2010, Courtesy the artist and Tim Melville Gallery

Exhibition curated and toured by Pataka Art + Museum

# Sarjeant Quarterly



volume **47**

December 2012 - February 2013





From  
the  
Senior  
Curator

by Greg Anderson

October and November have been busy months at the Sarjeant. Labour Weekend saw the opening of *Profile: Claudia Borella* at the Sarjeant-run Quay Gallery, Taupo Quay Wanganui. With over 120 people in attendance, including visitors from the United States, it was a most successful evening highlighting one of the leading lights in New Zealand glass making. A discussion and floor talk between Claudia and Assistant Curator Sarah McClintock, will be held at Quay Gallery on the 8th of December.

The opening in October for Glenn Burrell's exhibition *Operation Fizz!* was a similar success. Former Tylee Cottage artist-in-residence, Burrell created a series of objects made from paint. These items were to form a part of his adventures in painting expeditions around the Wanganui region, the results of which form the exhibition in paint, photographs and video.

On the 2nd of November the Sarjeant Gallery received its own award for 'Enduring Architecture' from the New Zealand Institute of Architects. This award paid tribute to Donald Hosie, the young architect who designed the Gallery but never saw it completed before he fell in action at Passchendaele. The Gallery was noted as being an "...exemplar of architectural excellence for 90 years". This is exactly what we are doing our best to preserve and enhance through our Redevelopment plans and the application to the Regional Museums Fund. Because the Sarjeant is officially recognised as one of the finest purpose-built galleries in the country, we are doing our best to ensure Henry Sarjeant's legacy is here for public enjoyment for generations to come.

Lastly, but certainly not least I wish to mention the excellent Pasifika celebrations held at the Gallery over the weekend of the 17th and 18th of November. Held in association with the Frangipani Pan Pasifika Whanganui Trust, 690 people attended the Gallery over two days and were treated to artwork made by all members of Wanganui's Pasifika community as well as: Tattooing/Tatau; Dance performance – Pasifika style; Tongan dance performance and numerous other craft events. A great community-based weekend event – it was an excellent chance to introduce and reintroduce a vibrant part of our community to the Sarjeant's public programmes.

Members'  
News

by Raewyne Johnson

A warm welcome to new Patron Member Quality Decorating Ltd and Gallery Members Ray & Joy Sisley and Rosemary Baragwanath

The Gallery is pleased to acknowledge the following as Corporate Members:  
**ASB Bank, Bryce Smith & Associates Ltd., Central City Pharmacy, ComputerCare NZ Ltd, Doyle + Associates – Chartered Accountants, Energy Direct NZ., GDM Group Ltd., Mars Pet Care, Mary-Ann Dickie, Meteor Design & Print and OPD, Richard Millward & Associates, Nicola Williams, Pamela Williams Family Trust, pattillo Ltd., Seresin Estate, Te Reo Irirangi O Wanganui – AWA FM, The Radio Network Wanganui, Pak'n Save, Wanganui Branch – New Zealand Institute of Chartered Accountants, Whanganui UCOL – Creative Programmes**

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

Members of the Sarjeant Gallery

Our AGM was held on 7 November 2012. There was a good turnout of over thirty people, all of whom are enthusiastic about the future of the Gallery.

So far we have confirmed funding of \$7,000 to purchase Solander boxes to house works on paper. \$5,000 has come from a Whanganui Community Foundation grant, and \$2,000 is from members of the Sarjeant Inc. This \$2,000 would normally have been put towards new acquisitions. However, in consultation with the Gallery staff it was decided that the storage and preservation of the existing collection was a higher priority so this money will go towards the boxes. The Curator of Collections, Sian Van Dyk, and the other Gallery staff are very pleased to know the boxes will soon be available to house precious works.

Several volunteers are helping the staff with work in the gallery. As always, this contribution is welcomed and appreciated by all concerned.

The transfer of the membership database has been completed, and this will simplify communication with our members.

Your executive now consists of:

<b>President</b>	Libby Wood	<b>Committee</b>	Ian Glenny
<b>Secretary</b>	Ian McGowan		Cecelia Kumeroa
<b>Treasurer</b>	Cath Watson		Henry Ngapo
			Karin Strachan
			Tom Turner
			Anne Webber

I would like to welcome the new members of the executive, and thank Ian for his invaluable service as president.

The year to come holds great promise, and we look forward to working together for the good of the Gallery.

Libby Wood  
President

Education  
News

by Andrea Gardner  
and Sietske Jansma

Term Four began with a wonderful dive into luscious colour! Students from Wanganui High School and Wanganui Girls' College came to the Gallery to participate in a two day mural painting workshop led by visiting artist (and former Tylee Cottage artist-in-residence) Adrian Jackman. On five large plywood panels the students first planned their murals, focusing on native birds and plants of New Zealand. Once their imagery was in place, they divided the background into large flat sections of bright colour, inspired by the bold cut-outs of Henri Matisse. Students also gained an insight into Adrian's work as a professional mural painter in Auckland and the methods he uses to create his large public murals. The students really enjoyed the opportunity to work together and create large works for public display. Their mural panels will be installed along Mainstreet for the summer and then returned to Wanganui Girls' College and Wanganui High School at the beginning of Term One.

This term we have also been working with small groups of Wanganui Collegiate students exploring charcoal. Students have been looking at artworks by artists John Beard and Anne Noble that focus on the Whanganui River. These magical black and white works lend themselves well to drawing with charcoal. Students enjoyed getting messy and seeing their drawings slowly turn into beautiful moody scenes which possessed a lovely tonal range. It even inspired some students to draw on a larger scale and create A2 sized river landscapes.

We have recently been busy working with Gonville Kindergarten, senior students from Aramoho School and children from the Frangipani Pan Pasifika Whanganui Trust, all creating work for the *Colours of Pasifika* display which was held the 16th-18th of November.

We finish off the year with some Christmas themed programmes where students learn the techniques of metal repousse using aluminium pie plates to create their own Christmas ornaments, decorations or gifts.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the teachers, students and parents that have participated in the Gallery's Education programme over the last year. It's been a bright and busy year and we look forward to working with you all again in 2013.

Best wishes for the summer festive season.

**Cover:** Glenn Burrell, *Bicycle Expedition*, Cape Palliser, Wairarapa and Hawkins Hill, Wellington, April - September 2012

Tylee  
Cottage  
News

Wellington-based photographer Ann Shelton is the new artist-in-residence at Tylee Cottage for three months until February, 2013. Shelton's internationally recognised large-scale, hyper real photographic works interrogate the unfixed histories embedded in place and located in archival collections. Operating at the nexus of conceptual & documentary modes, they investigate the social, political & historical contexts that inform readings of the landscape and its contents. Shelton is Chair of Enjoy Public Art Gallery, Wellington's longest running artist run space and Director Undergraduate Studies in Photography at The School of Fine Arts, Massey University, Wellington. With an impressive track record of exhibiting both nationally and internationally and with a previous residency at the Govett Brewster Art Gallery in 2004, we are looking forward to seeing what Ann produces during her time in Wanganui. Ann will give an illustrated talk discussing past and present work at 7.30pm on Tuesday, 11 December.



BECOME ONE OF OUR THOUSAND STARS\*

AND HELP BUILD A LEGACY OF INSPIRATION

Our goal is to raise one million dollars over four years for the redevelopment of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare O Rehua Whanganui, building a strong financial base for the Gallery's future development and enhancing its collections.

The redevelopment will look after the Sarjeant's nationally-important collection with environmentally-controlled storage and exhibition galleries; enhance public access through improved exhibition and education spaces; and enable the earthquake strengthening of Wanganui's most iconic building.

We are asking donors to commit to donating \$5 (or more) per week over four years to the Sarjeant Gallery Trust. The donation qualifies for a refundable tax credit deductible as determined by current legislation and a receipt for your generosity will be sent to you at the end of every tax year or on request.

It is intended that the names of the contributors to this fund – our **Thousand Stars** – will be commemorated in the redeveloped Gallery.

As the Gallery celebrates the centenary of its founding bequest we look to establish a new foundation of support to start the Gallery's second century of inspiration.

Find out more about the Thousand Stars and register your interest on the Gallery's website or pick up a leaflet and sign-up form from the Gallery.





■ Glenn Burrell, *Ski Expedition*, Tukino Ski Field, Mount Ruapehu, September 2012



# OPERATION FIZZ!

## A painting expedition by Glenn Burrell

27 October, 2012 - 24 February, 2013

Over the last decade, Glenn Burrell has been pushing the boundaries of what a painting can or should be. His work has no support, no canvas, no board, no stretcher, it is pure paint and regular acrylic paint at that.

It was during his final six months of art school in Taranaki, while working on a house painting job, that Burrell first became interested in the three dimensional possibilities of paint. The owner of the property removed the interior skin of paint from a four litre tin and threw it to Burrell exclaiming “see how much of my paint you’ve wasted”. From there, Burrell experimented in covering objects with layers of paint and then removing the ‘skins’ from the host. His first object was a banana and over the last decade his ambition and confidence with this painting methodology has spanned the mini to the maxi; from gold ants and flies, to a candy pink trampoline complete with springs.

Burrell’s choice of objects is very considered and all of them have been drawn from the everyday. Often he has taken objects that have active qualities - a lawnmower, a bicycle, a wheelchair - all of which

imply or require energy and movement. In creating paint skins from these objects, Burrell has de-activated, relaxed and disabled them. There was nothing abstract about these works, they were and are literally paintings of themselves.

The idea for Burrell’s ‘painting expedition’ originated from his time as artist-in-residence from May – July, 2011 at Tylee Cottage here in Wanganui. Over the last year Burrell has made a series of objects – skis, gumboots, a car tyre, bicycle and skateboard wheels, flippers and more recently and ambitiously a paint skin dreamboat. All of these objects have been tested by Burrell in the field at sites in the lower North Island and the results of this madcap relay have been captured in film and photography. What is displayed in the Gallery are the battered remains of these objects after the act, scuffed, broken and splintered to reveal the strata within. The final objects in their half alive half dead state capture the fizz of the events that took place.

Greg Donson  
Curator and Public Programmes Manager



■ Glenn Burrell, *Gumboot Expedition*, Mount Taranaki, September 2012



■ Glenn Burrell, *Gumboot Expedition*, Mount Taranaki, September 2012

# COMEBACK *by Sarah Maxey*

a dome installation 15 December, 2012 - 3 March, 2013

Sarah Maxey is a graphic designer and handlettering artist with a distinguished career in book design. She has produced award-winning work for literary publishers in the UK, Australia and New Zealand. It is her collaborative work with poets in particular that has inspired her to develop her own singular voice in concrete poetry using hand-drawn type. Her recent collaboration with a poet and a typeface designer won the 2011 Purple Pin Best in Discipline in New Zealand’s design industry awards, and a Certificate of Excellence from the International Society of Typographic Design in the UK. Her work has recently been published in 'Artists' Postcards: a compendium' a 2012 title by Reaktion Books.

Sarah has recently returned to New Zealand after eighteen months in the United Kingdom and Germany and is currently regrouping on the banks of the Whanganui River and working on her largest scale project to date, a text based work entitled 'Comeback' for the Sarjeant Gallery's Dome Space. Here curator, Greg Donson talks to Sarah about the project which will be on view at the Sarjeant over the Summer.

**G.D:** You’ve had an award winning career as a graphic designer over the last decade, notably for your memorable book covers, how has your focus changed over the last few years?

**S.M:** During my years in book publishing I was able to indulge my interests in handlettering to an extent that I perhaps might not have been able to do in other commercial fields, and my work has evolved almost without any conscious strategy into the field of typographic illustration, the sort that falls into that occasionally awkward space between art and design, where type and image and meaning are equal partners. As a book designer I became known most in the literary world for my work on slim volumes of poetry. This was something of a double-edged sword. Poetry, especially in New Zealand, has a very small market and so I felt as though my best work had a short reach. However, I do get a lot of pleasure from reading and responding to poetry, and a lot of the poet’s sensibility has seeped into my work.

**G.D:** Working in gallery spaces is a fairly new direction for you, how are you crossing the spatial divide between the page and the room? What’s it like moving from print to painting on the walls?

**S.M:** Although I usually work quite small, I’ve become interested in the way meaning can be influenced and altered by scale. My original drawing for ‘Comeback’ is tiny, just A5. And at that scale it has a slightly plaintive sorrowful sense that recedes when enlarged to the scale of the Gallery Dome, and a bolder more confident meaning comes to the fore. I like to think the finished installation looks like a giant calligrapher with big hands has been in the house.

**G.D:** The Sarjeant’s Dome is a fairly epic room, what’s been your response to the space? Talk to me about the word ‘comeback’ and also the poem you’ve developed for the space?

**S.M:** I used to hang around in the Sarjeant Gallery when I was living in Wanganui as a teenager in the 80s. It’s a great honour to be back installing my own work in the dome, and so it feels like a comeback of sorts. I’ve also just returned to New Zealand from a year in Europe, so the notion of reappearance is on my mind. I had a typically morose teenage-hood in Whanganui, so my return has been tinged with a slight apprehension. I’ve been surprised by the emergence of some previously latent fondness for the river. As a teenager I barely considered it but as an adult I regard it with a deep admiration. The poem I’ve written for the dome is about the river and is positioned in the niches of the space and explores the idea of a continuous flow . It finishes on the same word it starts with, so it can be read from any starting point. There’s probably a term for that sort of poem, but I don’t know it.

**G.D:** How have you arrived at the letter forms used in the dome project?

**S.M:** I trained early as a textile designer. Although I’ve never worked directly in the field, some of the influence of textiles has made it into my work. This particular lettering was meant to look like folded fabric, as if the letters had been carefully folded ready for packing or unpacking.

**G.D:** You’ve had a lifelong interest in literature and typography, tell me where this comes from?

**S.M:** I was always a big reader, and from an early age my interest in reading collided with an innate love for letterforms. I was completely obsessed with my own handwriting from the age of about 7, and still am to this day. I was lucky that I grew up when we were taught to write with fountain pens, so I developed an early love for nibs and ink, and a strong interest in experimenting with them. This love carried through to my later work as a book designer and typographer. Somebody recently referred to me as a concrete poet. He was joking, but I thought ‘Hell yeah, that’s what I wanna be’. Concrete poetry is that in which the typographic arrangement of words is as important in conveying the message as the conventional elements such as text, meaning and rhythm. I’m fascinated by language, and by what the American artist Ed Ruscha calls ‘the noise of everyday life’. I care deeply about language, about its potential for double meaning, for simultaneous hilarity and melancholy, recognition and mystery. Sometimes important moments in our lives can be overlooked or not awarded their real significance, and can be given particular poignancy by being unexpectedly highlighted. I’m really happy when people are amused by my work, but it’s actually some kind of melancholy I’m after as well. You could say I’m striving to be divinely ridiculous.



The word 'COMEBACK' is rendered in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Each letter is filled with a dense, blue, woven or knitted pattern, giving it a three-dimensional, tactile appearance. The letters are set against a plain white background.

SARAH MAXEY *Comeback*  
a dome installation at the  
Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare O Rehua Whanganui  
15 December 2012 – 3 March 2013



■ Joe Sheehan, *Stllllh...*, 2010, Courtesy of the artist and Tim Melville Gallery



■ Joe Sheehan, *Song Remains The Same II*, 2008, Courtesy the artist and Tim Melville Gallery



■ Joe Sheehan, *Bulb*, 2011, Courtesy of the artist and Tim Melville Gallery

## JOE SHEEHAN: *Other Stories* Stone Works: 2002 - 2012

**8 December, 2012 – 3 February, 2013**

This exhibition brings together a selection of Joe Sheehan's immaculate, hand-carved sculptural objects from the past ten years of his creative practice. Sheehan has fashioned a unique identity for himself creating work which explores the contemporary relevance of stone carving in New Zealand. His exquisitely carved, carefully considered sculptures, beautiful replicas of everyday objects in stone, engage with the classic tradition of stone sculpture yet confound the usual expectations of the medium. Over the past ten years his work has evolved from his translucently beautiful green

pounamu objects to his precisely crafted black and grey stone objects, and on to his recent large-scale work in marble. Yet his work remains as fresh, restrained, intriguing and relevant as ever.

Sheehan's stone sculptures replicate real objects. With extraordinary technical skill he transforms greenstone into exact replicas of instantly recognisable yet unremarkable domestic objects. He likes to make things we know well, familiar things that are in every day use; scissors, bic pens, safety glasses and keys. He takes

something ordinary and makes it extraordinary using precious materials. Sheehan's luminous pounamu objects have presence. By creating his work in pounamu he invests it with new meaning beyond its physical properties. His intricately carved sculptures become culturally loaded objects, resonant with emotional implications.

Exhibition curated and toured by

**PATAKA**  
ART + MUSEUM



■ **Left.** Joanna Margaret Paul (New Zealand, b.1945, d.2003) *Plato's Cave/Wanganui River IV*, 1987 coloured pencil and pencil on paper. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare O Rehua Wanganui. Gift of the artist, 1989. 1989/16/4

■ **Right.** Paul Rayner (United Kingdom, b.1959) *Cloudbank, July 1991*, 1991, acrylic on paper. Collection of the Sarjeant Art Gallery Te Whare O Rehua Wanganui. 1994/7/2

## Something in the Water

*Artists working in Wanganui 1910 – 2012*

**8 December, 2012 – 3 February, 2013**

For a town with a population of just over 40,000 people Wanganui has been and is home to a huge range of practicing artists. To exhibit all of these artists would require the whole gallery and then some, however many of these practitioners have their work included in the Sarjeant Gallery's Permanent Collection and they are the focus of this exhibition which is divided into three sections.

The first section features the work of a number of artists whose work and reputation has survived and strengthened despite their passing. Edith Collier's standing as one of this city's most significant artists is reflected in the Sarjeant's on-going commitment to having her work on permanent display. In this exhibition a selection of works have been made that are indicative of key periods in her career, in the United Kingdom in London and St Ives and her return to New Zealand where her focus was primarily centred on landscapes.

Norman Hurn, Joan Grehan, Barbara McPhail and Neville Mawhinney were all resident in Wanganui in recent years and although their work may not have made a splash on the national art scene or have been shown widely in public art galleries, they all made valuable contributions to the local arts community and

each of them are included in the Gallery's Collection. Each had an entirely different focus in their practice and are represented here by works that are indicative of some of the finest examples of their output.

Joanna Paul (1945 – 2003) was resident in Wanganui from 1984 and, during her time here, the Gallery acquired some fine examples of her work for the Collection. *Plato's Cave / Wanganui River*, 1987 is Paul at her best and this work is also a touchstone for the title of the exhibition. Paul's 'something in the water' is the slightest of lines and reflections from sky and the surrounding riverside.

The second section of the exhibition features the work of artists who moved to Wanganui and have remained for a variety of reasons – employment, the arts community, environment or as artists-in-residence at Tylee Cottage. Each of these artists are represented by works from the collection and these are complimented by contemporary works that are indicative of their current focus. The artists included are Brit Bukley, Sue Cooke, Andrea du Chatenier, Peter Ireland, David Murray, Prakash Patel, Paul Rayner and Rick Rudd.

To conclude is a portion of the Gallery space focusing on the work of a number of artists who have spent time in Wanganui as artists-in-residence at Tylee Cottage, with the exception of photographer Neil Pardington who was employed at the Sarjeant Gallery in the 1980s. All of these artists, (excepting our current artist-in-residence, Ann Shelton) left Wanganui but their time here is marked by a selection of works that have come into the Collection and are indicative of the productivity experienced when people come to Wanganui as the artist-in-residence. Mervyn Williams, Julian Hooper and Charles Butcher all created bodies of work that were indicative of a shift in each artists oeuvre. Photographer Ann Shelton is the current artist-in-residence at Tylee Cottage and in the year to come we look forward to seeing the work she produces during her three months in Wanganui.

We hope you enjoy this selection of works from our Collection and beyond and agree with us that there must be 'something in the water' that has attracted and sustained such a rich platform of artistic talent in our community.

Greg Donson  
Curator & Public Programmes Manager



# OLD NEW WORLD

## Mary Macpherson

8 December, 2012 – 10 February, 2013



■ Mary Macpherson, *Waikouaiti*, Otago, 2008

The Sarjeant Gallery is pleased to host Mary Macpherson's exhibition *Old New World*, a photographic study of the changing face of small town New Zealand.

With a keen eye for detail and irony, Wellington poet and photographer, Mary Macpherson spent seven years travelling around the country documenting the changing face of small town New Zealand. This has culminated in an intriguing exhibition of 46 colour photographs along with a significant new book of New Zealand photography, entitled *Old New World*.

The striking colour photographs feature buildings, houses, statues and murals to tell the story of a shift from the remains of the traditional New Zealand of the 1950s and 60s to places of boom and prosperity that look very different to our remembered past.

***"Within that major story arc, I wanted to show the major social and economic trends I saw over the seven years – towns painting up the main street to attract custom and celebrate their identity, places that remained resolutely themselves and those that were heading into decline," – Mary Macpherson.***

The exhibition is accompanied by the book which features an interview between noted art writer Gregory O'Brien and Mary Macpherson and 62 full page images. The photographs cover towns in many regions including Southland, Otago, Canterbury, Marlborough, Wellington, Taranaki, Manawatu-Whanganui, Gisborne and the Bay of Plenty.

Old New World is a valuable addition to the fascinating picture of New Zealand, its history and culture.

Toured by Lopdell House Gallery.

## Quay Gallery News



■ Claudia Borella, *Transference 22*, 2012, fused kiln formed and resist blasted glass

## PROFILE: CLAUDIA BORELLA

21 October, 2012 • 10 February, 2013

The fourth Quay Gallery exhibition is a solo show of work by local glass artist Claudia Borella. Borella's art relates to her personal and sometimes spiritual journey of art making in New Zealand. Born in Australia, Borella moved to New Zealand in 2001 to take up a teaching position at Wanganui Regional Community Polytechnic (WRCP) now Wanganui Glass School. This exhibition surveys her practice up to the present time and shows the ways in which her work in New Zealand has evolved as she has explored her new cultural environment. Of her practice she says –

*"The work serves to encapsulate layers of meaning, a presence, a mood, and the suggestion of cultural practices and traditions specific to a nation new to me. Through colour and texture and form, practices of jade and bone carving, and the technological transitions of culture are all quiet reflections imbued within the works."*

Symbols have shared meanings across cultures. When we see circles in Borella's work we know it may represent the sun, the moon or ripples in water. Similarly a horizontal line can be the horizon or signify passage. We carry the understanding of these symbols within our subconscious and Borella uses their connotations in her work. Her 'boat forms' metaphorically reference a gondola and her Italian heritage as well as her personal journey to New Zealand, the boat being the way in which people came to this country for centuries. The sense of passage is further emphasised by the circular designs on the works, with their evocation of the moon, tides and traditional navigation methods.

The Quay Gallery, situated on the first floor of Wanganui's visitor information centre, is a purpose-built exhibition space curated by the Sarjeant Gallery. Situated in Taupo Quay, on the riverfront, the centre is a prime destination for visitors to Wanganui.

Sarah McClintock  
Assistant Curator  
Sarjeant Gallery / Quay Gallery.

## Collection focus: A royal photographer in Wanganui

Anyone who has visited the local portrait photographer to have your ritual family photographs taken, will know it is never easy getting your little ones to keep still and make the appropriate face. Marcus Adams, 1875 – 1959, was a British photographer who gained a rather special reputation forgetting his subjects to do just that.

In 1920, Adams joined a portrait studio with two others on Dover Street in Mayfair, London. While his colleagues Bertram Park and Yvonne Gregory concentrated on the adults, Adams' portraits of children became an overnight success. Such was his reputation that he was commissioned to take images of the rich, royal and famous; his sitters including the children of authors A.A. Milne and Agatha Christie, and even princesses Elizabeth and Margaret.

What was Adams' secret? Essentially, he believed that capturing an image of a person was just as much a psychological process as a technical one. He built his camera into a case resembling a toy cabinet and hid his tripods and lights in the design of his studio, which included many toys and distractions for his sitters. Adams' images transcended parents' resigned acceptance of their children's vacant stares, glum pouts or forced smiles, and created an environment where they could feel at ease, capturing who they really were.

Looking at *A Figure Study*, you may notice this child is not a small stiff version of an adult, but looks instead to have been caught in a moment of stillness. Her wild untamed hair and mischievous demeanour leave the impression that she was likely a bold child, full of character. It is also a thoughtfully composed image, as you might expect a painted portrait to be; a work of art in its own right any parent would have been proud to own.

The son of Walton Adams, a photographer associated with early developments in the field, at 15 Adams was accepted into the Reading College of Art, after which he became apprenticed to his father. In his early career, Adams experimented with subjects including capturing architectural and archaeological images for the writer Charles Keiser. He was also often hired to photograph special events, such as King George V and Queen Mary's visit to the local Suttons Seed Factory. However, something continued to draw him to the pursuit of portrait photography, in particular, that of children.

After he joined the portrait studio on Dover street, it continued to prosper for over a decade, until people's priorities and financial situations changed with the onslaught of World War Two. During this time, the artist's unflinching commitment to his work saw him build a portable camera to photograph people in their own homes. He continued taking photographs, his last sitting at the portrait studio completed when he was 83, the year before his death. Today he is represented in the Royal Collection which is exhibited throughout Great Britain, and can also be seen in the Royal Palaces and Residences.

This work came to the Sarjeant early in the artist's time at the portrait studio in Dover street, in 1925. It was part of a collection of over 80 photographs gathered specially for the Gallery by local photographer Frank Denton, who was commissioned to do so by the then Mayor Charles Mackay. These photographs were created by internationally respected artists, and are all fine examples of pictorial photography. Not only are they a reflection of the important role photography played in capturing a specific time and place, but also the beauty that can be found every day, un-manipulated situations.



■ Marcus Adams, *A Figure Study* c. 1920 – 1925.  
Toned black and white photograph.  
Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare O Rehua Whanganui.  
Collected for the Gallery by Frank Denton, 1925.