

Sarjeant Quarterly



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From the Senior Curator

by Greg Anderson

Late 2012 saw two positive and momentous events occur in favour of the Sarjeant. Firstly, through Mayor Annette Main's press release we learnt that the Ministry for Culture & Heritage earmarked \$10 million for our Redevelopment Project; and secondly that the Council had made its decision regarding a temporary relocation of the Sarjeant Gallery operation.

It was a long and anxious interval from May 2012 until December of that year, when we heard the Ministry's good news. The \$10 million apportionment to our project is the second largest award to an art gallery from this fund, behind only the Auckland Art Gallery. What this commitment explicitly signals and recognises, is that the Sarjeant Gallery is very much a vital component in New Zealand's cultural life and, as such, is worthy of considerable government funding despite financially challenging times. Having outlined in great detail the benefits not only to the Gallery but also to our community of this redevelopment, we may also see this contribution as a vote of confidence in the future of Wanganui as well. Indeed in a video to support our *1000 Stars fundraising initiative* the Hon. Chris Finlayson himself noted *...there's a big ask on Wanganui at the moment in terms of earthquake strengthening... but the Sarjeant is really the one I'm focussed on*. This small city does indeed carry a disproportionately heavy burden in being responsible for its quake-prone building stock and it's reassuring that one of the key landmarks in this city has substantial funding behind it, which will help ensure that seismic strengthening can take place. It is worth noting once again at this point that we will not proceed with the redevelopment until all funds are in place.

The next landmark event took place at the Council meeting of 20 December, attended by a good number of our long time Members and supporters. As readers will be aware, the Gallery is rated at only 5% of the current new building code. This triggered a response from the Chief Executive of the Wanganui District Council (employer of Gallery staff) in terms of his responsibilities under the Health & Safety Act. Initial mitigation of the Earthquake-Prone Building problem was to install enormously sturdy furniture in the Gallery to provide some shelter for the public, as well as new and strengthened desks for those staff who have

offices in the Sarjeant. The next phase was to investigate and cost options for moving the staff and the entire Gallery operation and Collection, to safe premises from which to temporarily operate. Over the course of many months Gallery staff worked in close collaboration with Council's Property staff and external experts, to find a suitable location and plan the decanting process and all associated costs. Not only was this move motivated by the requirements of the Act, it was also going to be a necessity if we were to undertake the Redevelopment, since we would have to vacate the premises anyway. This interim shift will provide a good central city location from which we can operate our programmes (education included), while we fundraise to get the Redevelopment moving and return to Queen's Park.

Now that we know it will take up to a year to fit out, renovate and move into the temporary premises, we can plan solidly for the remaining time we have in the existing Sarjeant building. This means that we can work confidently on the exhibition schedule and events, and factor in the 2013 Whanganui Arts Review before we have to close the doors. We can also plan innovative traditional and contemporary exhibitions which will coincide with WW1 remembrances over the 2014-2018 centenary years. 2013 will be a challenge for us but it signals great progress for the Sarjeant. With all the stories in the press of late, please feel free to talk to us about our plans – we're happy to discuss them!

Cover: Johann Kändler (Germany, b.1706, d.1775), *Dresden Meissen Snowball Vase*, c. 1770, porcelain. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Wanganui. Gift of J.A and M.L. Harris of Pembroke Vale, Turakina, 1961. 1961/1/3A-C.

Education News

by Andrea Gardner and Sietske Jansma

The education team is looking forward to another full year ahead of new exhibition-based programmes, exciting visiting artist workshops and continued displays of student art out in the broader community.

Five bright paintings of New Zealand flora and fauna were on display on the construction walls on Victoria Avenue this summer. The murals were produced in a painting workshop for secondary students led by visiting artist Adrian Jackman. The murals were returned to Wanganui High School and Wanganui Girls College at the end of February.

From 2 - 10 March we will be focusing on Sea Week. This year the theme is *Toiora Te Moana Toiora Te Tangata... Healthy Seas Healthy People*. We will be working down at Castlecliff Beach's the Duncan Pavillion with the Whanganui Regional Museum, Castlecliff Coast Care, Horizons Regional Council and the Department of Conservation to provide a week of fantastic hands on learning. It is a fantastic experience for students; offering them diverse learning opportunities from within their own community.

We have also been busy exploring the wonderful world of play-dough with students visiting Glenn Burrell's exhibition *Operation Fizz!* Although play-dough and paint differ greatly neither media keeps its shape well when faced with gravity. Students found this an interesting challenge when recreating an oversized object like a whisk, pair of high heels, watering can or aeroplane.

In the second half of the school year we will be putting on an exhibition in the Gallery of student art which has been created in our school sessions. Our previous shows "Feathered Friends" and "In the Garden" were wonderful experiences for the students and very much enjoyed by adult visitors as well. We will be deciding on a theme soon for this year's student exhibition.

Many of you will have noticed that the education classroom now has very strong earthquake proof tables. With slightly larger tops, they feel roomier for doing artwork and have been great for painting, drawing, sculpture, printmaking, and mixed media projects.

Members' News

A warm welcome to new Gallery Members Edward John Scott Dudley, Carol Woodbury, Kim Yvette Haddon, Helen Russell, H, R, K & S Fleming, Chris Cantillon, Diana Doyle, Penelope A Joll, Judith Robinson, Wanganui Collegiate School, Brenda Gregory, Joan Rosier-Jones, Barb Nixon Mackay & Alistair Mackay.

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 encourage you to utilise their services whenever possible.



Murals by Wanganui High School and Wanganui Girls' College students who participated in the artist workshop with Adrian Jackman.

William Lee-Hankey, *The Rivals*, c. 1895 – 1905, watercolour on paper. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. Bequest of William Francis Barraud, Wellington, 1926. 1926.2.1



Collection focus:

The Rivals by William Lee-Hankey

by Sian van Dyk, Curator of Collections

This painting is a quintessential example of how a work of art can capture your imagination. It doesn't matter if you don't know the artist, their style or original intention; this painting has its own humble power in what it implies. How you draw on your own experience can give you the key to enjoying it.

Most people could admit to having a good friend who they have been a little competitive with. Whether on the sports field, in the classroom, playground, at work or with family, a little bit of healthy competition is part of life. Contemplating this work, you might notice two such friends participating in a bit of rivalry, coyly hanging alongside each other. Seemingly close and affectionate, they sweetly show off to win the attention of the boy in front of them.

Remember your first crush and how you tried to get their attention? Suddenly, you have a connection.

Your own visual instinct will probably also tell you that *The Rivals* is not a contemporary work. One of the girls' wears a cap and both bear formless long skirts, definitely not of this century! Even the background gives us a clue, suggesting more historic European architecture lining a village square.

Keeping in mind what we know from looking at this work, you might be interested to learn a little snippet about its context and the artist. William Lee-Hankey was British and lived from 1869 to 1952. Known earlier in his career for his watercolours, and later on for his etchings, Lee-Hankey's style was constant in his sentimental capture of intimate moments and everyday scenes in rural life. You can see this in *The Rivals* with the artist's use of light hues of colour and soft shapes for example. While he completed his studies at the Royal College of Art in London, he was drawn to France and many of his more well-known watercolours were painted in Brittany and Normandy, fondly capturing the simple things in life. Putting this work in the artist's active watercolour period, it was likely painted in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

Just like that, our imagination can be validated. This time lapse reminds us that people have been behaving the same way for hundreds of years, despite class, location or nationality. So, next time you look at a painting take a second glance and think about what you do know. You might be surprised at what it leads you to see.

miranda parkes

S H E B A N G

16 March - 7 July

Since its inception in 1986 the Sarjeant Gallery's artist-in-residence programme at Tylee Cottage has provided artists with an opportunity to take stock of their artistic practice, pause and often chart a new direction. Particularly over the last six years the residencies have been followed by an exhibition and often a modest publication and both provide a vital and lively component to the Sarjeant's exhibition and publishing programme. Often these exhibitions have been produced whilst the artist was in residence and open prior to their departure, but others take time and will emerge in the gallery's programme a year or two after the residency has taken place.

Christchurch-based painter Miranda Parkes was in residence at Tylee Cottage for four months in 2009 and initially her post residency exhibition was planned for late 2010 but any prospect of an exhibition was abruptly interrupted by the first devastating earthquake to hit Christchurch on 4 September, 2010. This led to her studio in an inner-city historic building being red stickered and subsequently demolished. Although she managed to salvage work from her studio, what she had been working on was covered in the dust and debris of a severely compromised building. Despite these set-backs and the ongoing and long term after effects of the earthquakes, both personally for Parkes and for Christchurch she has remained committed to her practice as a painter and over the last three years has produced a dynamic body of work that is both a continuum of her previous style and an organic evolution of it.

As if the unwelcome interruption of the Canterbury quakes wasn't enough of a sting, Parkes post Tylee show was again put into a holding pen in 2012 when the Sarjeant Gallery was deemed an earthquake prone building and there was uncertainty as to whether we would remain open to the public. That decision has now been made and we are delighted that Miranda's post residency exhibition *Shebang* can finally be shown in the Sarjeant before we close and relocate to a temporary site in 2014.

The silver lining in all these delays has meant that the scope of this exhibition has been broadened to include work produced since 2009 by Parkes. After her graduation with a Master of Fine Arts (Distinction in Painting) Degree from Canterbury University in 2005, Parkes has become widely known for her brightly coloured abstract paintings that literally slump, sag and scrunch off their frames. She is part of a new generation of painters who are liberating the painting from the frame and stretcher, such as Glenn Burrell (another former Tylee resident), Rohan Wealleans and fellow Cantabrian Helen Calder.

The grid and the stripe have been a constant presence in her work since her graduation from art school, these formalist devices have been deliberately subverted by making the canvases three dimensional. After working on the floor of her studio, these canvases are then stretched onto ill-fitting frames creating the 'scrunched' works for which Parkes has perhaps become most recognised for. During her time at Tylee Cottage she began experimenting more with flat canvases and works on paper. After her departure and subsequent dealer gallery exhibitions it was suggested that her work was in transition from three dimensional to flat and that perhaps this was the 'new' Parkes signature. As the work featured in the exhibition shows this is certainly not the case, Parkes is still 'scrunching' although this is sometimes not in a three dimensional sense. Recent works such as *Holy Roller* and *Heavenly High*, 2012 literally scrunch and morph the grid, so it pulsates in a bilious rainbow of fluoro colours into the picture plane through a carefully ruled up framework of pencil lines. Rather than pushing the grid and stripe out into the space we occupy - the gallery, she's sucking them back into the painting. Turning her painting outside in and with a similarly active and pulsating resonance. The exhibition will also feature a site specific wall work that will be painted directly onto the Gallery walls.



Image credits

Top: Miranda Parkes, *Spinner*, 2011

Middle: Miranda Parkes, *Mettler*, 2010

Bottom: Miranda Parkes, *Slinger*, 2010

Greg Donson
Curator and Public Programmes Manager

After You

Copying and Homage in Historical and Contemporary Art

23 March - 21 July, 2013

Drawn from the Sarjeant Gallery Collection and loans from artists and dealer galleries throughout New Zealand, *After You* considers the impact artists have on each other's practice. Art is never created in a vacuum, from Old Masters to art students; artists compare themselves to and find inspiration in, the work of those who came before. Copying has an important place in art history, particularly in New Zealand as the primary way we engage with 'Old Master' and international works is through copies, text book reproductions and recently the internet.

In some cases an individual artists can become so famous and popular that their art is used as a cultural yardstick for greatness. In the context of New Zealand art this figure is undoubtedly Colin McCahon. Today an artist who uses text in an image or creates a monochrome landscape is invariably compared to McCahon. In this exhibition the work of Dick Frizzell, John Reynolds, Robin White, Nigel Brown and Ronnie van Hout is used to explore this influence.

Anthony Van Dyck (Flemish, b.1599, d.1641), *Petrus Breugel*, etching on paper. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. Purchased on behalf of the Gallery by Mr and Mrs J.A. Neame, 1922. 1922.1.51.



In contemporary art much of the engagement with the work of another artist is done in a self-conscious way. An artist like Richard McWhannell takes portraits by painters such as da Vinci, Manet and Ramsay and recreates them using people from his community. His paintings are at once faithful reproductions and visually jarring as modern faces stare out of historical scenes. Artists who engage with the history of art are not 'stealing' or simply copying the work of another but engaging with it; using the theme, composition or palette of another artist comment on the symbiotic nature of creativity. Paying homage to heroes, or starting a visual conversation with another practitioner, has become a central theme of many artists work. For an artist such as Cat Auburn, the subject of the Richard McWhannell portrait in this exhibition, the act of homage has become increasingly complex in her work. In the works of Fiona Pardington and Cat Auburn this complex relationship between established and young artist has been never more apparent. In a recent collaborative project Auburn has reinterpreted a selection of Pardington's photographs and in turn Pardington has created images drawn from Auburn's life and aesthetic. This project, first displayed in the Courtney Place Light Boxes in Wellington and represented by two works in the exhibition, is a witty and engaging look at the roles artists play in each other's lives and works.

Richard McWhannell, *Cat Auburn* is Allan Ramsay's 'Anne Bayne', 2009-10

Sarah McClintock
Assistant Curator

Collection focus:

Photography

16 February – 7 April

The Sarjeant Gallery is fortunate to have one of the finest collections of photography in New Zealand. This Collection began shortly after the Gallery opened in 1919 when noted Wanganui photographer Frank Denton was commissioned by the Gallery's governing committee to acquire a collection of international Pictorialist photography. The fruits of Denton's labour were first presented at an exhibition in September 1926.

It has only been since the late 1970s and 1980s that collecting photography has been considered a legitimate and worthy medium to be acquired by public galleries in New Zealand. That Frank Denton assembled this collection so early on in the Sarjeant's collecting history makes it remarkable in that the Gallery was not only the first in this country to start collecting photography but one of the earliest in the world, the first being the Victoria and Albert Museum in London which began collecting photography in 1856.

Although Denton's contribution was critical to establishing a precedent for collecting photography it was most notably under the leadership of the Gallery's second professional director Bill Milbank in the late 1970s that the Gallery again actively acquired contemporary photography. Fostering relationships with a stable of photographers who have since gone on to become New Zealand's leading photographic practitioners, has meant that the Gallery is fortunate to have been able to purchase the work of these artists at the early stages of their careers. In turn they have been very generous in donating works to the Collection.

Alongside the work of Frank Denton the exhibition features a selection of works from five other photographers - Peter Peryer, Wayne Barrar, Ans Westra,



Paul Johns (New Zealand, b.1951), *Untitled*, 2006, photographic paper on aluminium. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. Tylee Residency exchange, 2006. 2006.10.1

Anne Noble and Paul Johns with the latter three having all participated in the Sarjeant Gallery's artist-in-residence scheme at Tylee Cottage.

This exhibition provides both a snapshot of the oeuvre of six key photographers featured in the collection and a snapshot of the Gallery's rich photographic collection, for which we would require the entire gallery and then some.

Greg Donson, Curator & Public Programmes Manager



Frank Denton (New Zealand, b.1869, d.1963), *Dear Father Christmas*, c.1907, black and white photograph. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. Gift of Mary Powell, Marjorie Marshall and Harold Denton, 1965. 1965.1.4

Quay Gallery News



Front and rear view *Sevres Vase (Empire Period)*, painted by G Poitevity (France), 1802, porcelain. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. Purchased by Mr and Mrs Neame on behalf of the Gallery, 1992. 1922.1.68.

Porcelain pompoms to terracotta tricks

Ceramics from the Sarjeant Gallery's Collection

At the Quay Gallery, 31 Taupo Quay, upstairs in the I-Site Building, on view from 9 March – 4 August

The Sarjeant Gallery's Collection is representative of nearly a century's worth of collecting and gifting of works by a wide spectrum of both staff and generous donors. It is undoubtedly a very rich collection and spans four centuries of both European and New Zealand art, it is diverse and at times eclectic and surprising. There are many strengths to the Collection, one widely known is photography as discussed in the Collection Focus exhibition featured in this issue of the Quarterly. Ceramics on the other hand is not something that the Gallery is particularly noted for having collected with any specific focus as has been the case at the Dowse Art Museum. However, this exhibition brings together at the Sarjeant Gallery's satellite space, the Quay Gallery, a selection of works that show the diversity of this strand of the Collection. The exhibition features works that are indicative of New Zealand's ceramic history particularly over the last 30-40 years.

Alongside these are some extraordinary historic ceramics whose provenance is relatively unknown but whose presence in a small provincial New Zealand town is nothing short of astonishing given that they arrived on our shores from overseas and in some cases were made over 200 years ago. This is the case with the beautiful pair of Sèvres vases from the Empire Period of the early Nineteenth-Century, these vases are perfect examples of the neoclassical simplicity. With impeccable attention to detail, the painted scenes on each side of the vases attest to the high quality of the porcelain manufacturers of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.

The first of these porcelain manufacturers in Europe was the German company of Meissen, established by the King of Saxony in 1710. The Sarjeant Gallery is fortunate to have a perfect example of their opulent Rococo work and this is featured on the cover of this Quarterly. The designer of this vase was Johann Kändler, sculptor and chief modeller for Meissen from 1733 until his death in 1775. Kändler was a true master and is credited with inventing the ceramic figurine. In this visual feast of a vase we see an example of his delicate birds and immense skill.

Another highlight of the exhibition is a selection of works from a collection of ceramic boxes that were amassed by local potter Rick Rudd from the time of his arrival in New Zealand from the UK in the early 1970s. This extraordinary collection reads like a who's who of New Zealand ceramics and features an array of diverse works on a small and intimate scale.

Ann Verdcourt (Great Britain, b.1934), *Huddle*, 2003, ceramic, slips and stains. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua, Whanganui. Purchased, 2010. 2010.4.1A-U.



SHEBANG

miranda parkes

16 March - 7 July



Miranda Parkes, *Holy Roller*, 2012