



Newsletter of the
Sarjeant Gallery
Te Whare o Rehua
Whanganui
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Sarjeant Quarterly 76

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FRONT COVER: **Sara McIntyre**, *Totika Road*, 2019. Courtesy of the artist and Anna Miles Gallery.

LEFT: **Tracy Byatt**, *Parrot Tulips—A Study in Sugar*, 2020, sugar and ceramic vase.

Please note, Sarjeant Quarterly 75 was at the printers when we went into lockdown and due to this and uncertainty around postage and our reopening we did not proceed with publishing this edition. However it can be found on our website and Tracy Byatt's extraordinary Open Award winning work from the 2020 pattillo Whanganui Arts Review can be seen on the front cover.

From the Director

It was with a real sense of relief that Sarjeant on the Quay reopened its doors on the 14th May, when New Zealand's COVID-19 response moved down to Alert Level two. Prior to that point we had been closed to the public since 21st March and Gallery operations on all sites were shuttered.

After an initial period of adjustment to working from home and making sure that staff were connected to Council computer networks, we set about continuing to offer educational content online along with a blog that provided articles, programmes and videos of interest. Our small curatorial staff worked diligently to reconfigure exhibition programmes and schedules while faced with complete uncertainty which, when you understand that we typically plan 18 months to two years in advance, you can imagine the downstream complications of such an upheaval. Still, the planning placed us in good stead and enabled us to reopen the Gallery promptly, as soon as restrictions were lifted.

As Whanganui and the rest of the country move into a recovery mode, we recognise the enormous financial strains that have beset many of our small business supporters. With that in mind we are preparing a 'Local Business Supporters Page' on our website which will promote the goods and services of those businesses that have stood by us and supported the Sarjeant over many years. We urge all of our Gallery supporters to view this page and to take advantage of the wonderful array of products these businesses have to offer. Likewise, please keep in mind the Sarjeant shop which is once again available for you to browse in person or online. All purchases made at our shop support makers in Whanganui and across New Zealand.

The Gallery is delighted too that redevelopment work has finally begun on site at Pukenamū Queen's Park. With the mauri stone ceremony led by our kaumātua John Maihi, the site is now fenced and work is ramping up. Project Director Gaye Batty gives an update on progress later in this Sarjeant Quarterly edition.

In closing, I would just like to acknowledge the service of one of our key staff. Raewynne Johnson our Events Co-ordinator, will celebrate 25 years at the Sarjeant on 3rd June. She is a hostess extraordinaire and vital in making sure every single event at the Gallery runs seamlessly and professionally—from rallying volunteer support, to organising catering and looking after dignitaries, all areas are handled with aplomb. Congratulations on the milestone Raewynne and, as our lives slowly return to some kind of normality at home and at the Sarjeant, we look forward to seeing you at the centre of the whirl once our events and programmes revive.—**GREG ANDERSON**

Redevelopment News

With the archaeological authority in hand we were given the green light to break ground at Pukenamu Queen's Park and proceed with construction of the new wing. This was the pivotal consenting element needed to move forward with any earthworks on the historic site. While it's been a time consuming and challenging process, it meant we could move forward with the blessing and burial of the mauri stone ceremony. However, all construction activity was put on hold when the country went into lockdown on 24th March due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Behind the scenes the project team focussed on finalising the work method for the restoration of the Sarjeant which was informed by the structural peer review from Auckland University. Peer reviews ensure the community gets the best design and fit-for-purpose solution and often prompt questions that require detailed design variations. As a result of the review, there have been changes needed to the sequencing of strengthening work to protect the area under the dome from vibration and increased the programme length, and as a consequence, the total construction cost has increased.

It's now June and I am pleased to report there has been a smooth return-to-work as restrictions were lifted and two mauri stones have been buried beneath the location of the entrance to the new Pataka o Sir Archie John Te Atawhai Taiaroa wing, a service carried out by kaumātua John Maihi and four members of local Iwi in accordance with health restrictions at the time. While the ceremony was in a much reduced format, this was still a significant event, and we received positive media reporting both locally and nationally.

The contractor has erected full height construction fences around the perimeter of the work site, and the earthworks have started with relocation and re-direction of underground services. I must say that the tall wooden fence presents the team with a blank canvas for artwork and imagery and the Sarjeant has been quick to mobilise. Watch this space.

As the site becomes secure, excavation and construction of the foundations for the basement level will start, where the precious Sarjeant Gallery art collection will be housed in a secure, temperature-controlled environment. The project archaeologists who prepared the archaeological plan—local firm Archaeology North—will actively monitor the earthworks during the early phase when we scrape back the first layer of soil. We're

also working with Te Runanga o Tūpoho through this process. Any items recovered will be stored and managed according to the conditions of the authority. This project on the historic site of Pukenamu Queen's Park is a once in a lifetime undertaking for Whanganui archaeologist Michael Taylor.

After taking out the small stand of oaks and Phoenix palms behind the Gallery in January and three oaks adjacent to the Bandroom in May the contractor is now fully mobilised on site and our traffic management plan with a new road layout around Pukenamu Queen's Park has been activated. As it's always safer for pedestrians and public parking to be completely separated from heavy vehicles, the existing library carpark has been set aside for the contractor's project office and site vehicles for the project's duration. The 2 metre-high fence encompasses a much wider area than the building footprint to allow for construction equipment, storage units, and space for heavy vehicles to turn and load. Mobility parks and the loading area in front of the Whanganui District Library will remain and visitors to Pukenamu Queen's Park and libraries still have parking alongside the Alexander Heritage and Research Library and beyond.

—GAYE BATTY, *Sarjeant Gallery Redevelopment Project Director*



ABOVE: The kōhatu gifted by Ngāti Tūera and Ngāti Hinearo was chipped from the bluff overlooking the Whanganui River. It was one of two stones buried beneath the location of the entrance to the new Pataka o Sir Archie John Te Atawhai Taiaroa wing.

Interview with Dr Kathryn Wightman about her exhibition *Digital Parent*

Kathryn Wightman, winner of the inaugural *pattillo project*, opened her ambitious exhibition *Digital Parent* at the Sarjeant Gallery on 15th February. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, visitors were not able to experience these innovative works for a period. We were able to extend the season of the show for a few weeks when we reopened and would have kept the project up for longer if it hadn't been for an exciting opportunity for the artist and the work. Dr Wightman submitted the exhibition's major piece, comprising 54 panels and measuring 3.4 by 5.5 metres to the FUSE biennial glass prize. It is presented by Adelaide's Jam Factory, whose glass studio is the longest running hot glass facility in Australia. Open to Australian and New Zealand Glass artists, Dr Wightman was announced as the only New Zealand based finalist for the prize. The work is now on its way to Australia for the FUSE prize exhibition of finalists. An article about *Digital Parent* by Assistant Curator, James Hope can be found online in Sarjeant Quarterly 75. For this edition James catches up with Kathryn about the exhibition, the FUSE prize and her plans following lockdown.

James Hope: *Looking back on your exhibition with a bit of distance, have you thought about the issues explored in a different way? During lockdown the internet became a lifeline for many; I even saw articles suggesting the internet had become 'nice'. What was your experience of the digital realm?*

Kathryn Wightman: I read a couple of those articles too. My isolation experience felt pretty connected and that was mainly down to the internet. It will be interesting as things progress to see how our digital habits evolve after the Pandemic. In 2011 the Corning Museum of Glass released 'A Day Made of Glass'. The video looks at the role glass plays in the communication technologies of the future. Their vision doesn't seem too far away anymore!

One thing I did notice though that relates to the work I created for the *pattillo project* is how quickly COVID-19 themed content has infiltrated content supposedly for kids on YouTube; numerous Peppa Pig gets COVID-19 videos for example!

JH: *You have been a finalist in the FUSE prize in both 2016 and 2018. What did you submit on those occasions? Is Digital Parent a continuation of themes and techniques in those works?*

KW: My 2016 entry was a wall installation titled 'Wallpaper' and was inspired by the book *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. It was heavily patterned with small mirrored sections that reflected the viewer back into the

pattern as a shadow. In 2018 my entry represented the struggle that a lot of new mums face post-partum. It took the form of a still life that transitioned from a dark inky blue in the centre to full colour at the left and right edges. This year's selected entry can be somewhat seen as a combination of the two. A large patterned wall installation that utilises a gradient shift in colour to draw attention to the small lenses of fragmented kids YouTube content.

JH: *What are your plans now that Digital Parent has concluded and you're awaiting the outcome of the FUSE prize? I'd imagine this time has been especially challenging for you with a new baby on top of the lockdown. Are there any projects you have in development that you can divulge?*

KW: Making the most of my remaining maternity leave! Life has been pretty crazy since November so it is nice to be able to relax a little.

One thing that I didn't get to play with as much as I had hoped when developing the work for *Digital Parent* was the 3D scanner. It attaches to my iPad which makes it transportable and easy to use. I'm keen to scan some people and miniaturise them. Any willing participants out there...?

Thank you Kathryn, it was a pleasure exhibiting *Digital Parent* at the Sarjeant. Congratulations on becoming a finalist for the FUSE Prize, and best of luck for the outcome!—**JAMES HOPE**, Assistant Curator

The Gallery and artist would like to thank pattillo and Creative New Zealand for their generous support of this project.



Dr Kathryn Wightman, the *pattillo* project. *Digital Parent*, 2020.

Lighting the Fire: Whanganui Potters from the Sarjeant Collection

4 JULY–4 OCTOBER, 2020

Drawing upon the Sarjeant collection this exhibition showcases six of Whanganui's celebrated potters and acknowledges their contribution to ceramic practice in New Zealand. Over the years these potters have nurtured and influenced generations of students at various Whanganui ceramic schools, and some of them are still teaching today. The earliest represented is Esme Hawkins who, in the 1950's, taught night tech classes at Wanganui Boys College. In the 1980s – 1990s the Wanganui Regional Community Polytechnic (now known as UCOL Whanganui) became an exciting ceramics hub with full time tutor George Kojis, as well as Ross Mitchell-Anyon, Raewyne Johnson, April Pearson, and Rick Rudd among those who tutored there part-time.

Rick Rudd also tutored regularly throughout New Zealand and in 2013 he set up the Quartz Foundation and opened the Quartz Museum of Studio Ceramics in Whanganui the following year. In the recent 2020 Queens Birthday Honours Rudd was listed as a Member of the New Zealand Order of

Merit for his lifetime of service to ceramics in New Zealand.

In 2000 Rudd generously assisted the Sarjeant Gallery to purchase his collection of ceramic boxes which provides a comprehensive survey of New Zealand ceramics. This exhibition includes Sarjeant collection works by each of these potters and teachers, as well as examples from the Rick Rudd Box Collection by some of those whom they have taught.

—JENNIFER TAYLOR MOORE,
Curator of Collections

Esme Hawkins Vase, circa 1950's-1960's, hand thrown glazed stoneware, 2017/1/1. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. Gift of Jewel Bristol, 2016.



Tylee News

Having said our goodbyes to Laurence Aberhart who was in residence at Tylee Cottage for a month before lockdown we're delighted to welcome Matthew McIntyre Wilson to Whanganui as our new artist in residence for the next four months. Wellington-based McIntyre Wilson [Taranaki, Ngā Māhanga and Titahi] trained as a jeweller at both Whitireia Polytechnic and Hawke's Bay Polytechnic. During this period he began learning traditional Māori weaving techniques from master weaver and friend Rangī Kiu. He works across the disciplines of jewellery, craft and object.

It's a bit of a family affair at the Sarjeant as Matthew's mother Sara McIntyre's exhibition *Observations of a Rural Nurse* is part of our Winter season. As a child Matthew spent holidays at Kākahi with his maternal grandparents, the New Zealand painter Peter McIntyre and his wife Patti, whose house, which is still in the family, is sited at the confluence of the Whanganui and Whakapapa rivers. His whakapapa is to Puniho Pā in Taranaki and Kākahi is

his Tūrangawaewae. For his residency Matthew is planning on exploring his personal connections to Whanganui and the wider region and we look forward to seeing how this project evolves during and after his residency. We extend a very warm welcome to Matthew and his whānau who will be spending periods of time with him at Tylee Cottage.—GREG DONSON,
Curator & Public Programmes Manager



Matthew McIntyre Wilson on the verandah of Tylee Cottage

Sara McIntyre: Observations of a Rural Nurse

27 JUNE–18 OCTOBER, 2020

Sara McIntyre describes herself as a ‘late developer’—she started her nursing career at 38 and had her first solo photographic exhibition at Anna Miles Gallery in Auckland in 2016 at the age of 64. Photography has been a lifelong interest for McIntyre and this can be traced back to a photograph from 1960 by her father Peter McIntyre. Taken at Kākahi, a small settlement 20 km from Taumaranui in the King Country, it shows Sara with her brother Simon and on close inspection she can be seen holding a camera. The McIntyres initially visited family friends with the major lure being a place for her parents to indulge in their love of fishing, with the settlement being at the junction of the Whakapapa and Whanganui Rivers. Subsequently they purchased land and built a house and when the McIntyre children left home for boarding school, their parents would divide their time between Wellington and Kākahi.

Sixty years later, Sara and the wider family consider the place their Tūrangawaewae and this was cemented by Sara in 2010 when she left her Wellington life as a neonatal intensive care nurse and moved to Kākahi permanently, working as a district nurse, based at Taumaranui Hospital.

The post involved a lot of travel in the area and often to remote sites to visit patients and her constant companion along the way was her trusty camera and iPhone.

What has resulted is a unique photographic portrait of the King Country. What sets Sara’s body of work apart is that the portraits, images of buildings and people’s homes show that she operates from the unique position of someone who’s observing her world not only through the eyes of a photographer and nurse but also someone who is of the place. She captures day-to-day realities—these are people and places that she knows intimately.

She’s not an outsider looking in and it shows in the warmth and trust of the photographs. If you talk to Sara, each one of these images has a story, a yarn.

The exhibition *Observations of a Rural Nurse* is the first time that this body of work has been seen in a public gallery and the exhibition featuring over fifty photographs is a companion to a wonderful book of the same name published by Massey University Press and available for purchase at the Sarjeant shop.

Sara’s father, the celebrated painter Peter McIntyre, published his book *Kākahi New Zealand* in 1970 which showed his deep affection for the place. Fifty years on Sara’s take is completely unique and initially disseminated through the thoroughly modern medium of Instagram. It’s easy to look at these images with a certain nostalgia or a lament for the supposed decline of the area from being once thriving communities. But it’s not about dying or decline, it’s just life and the passing of time.—GREG DONSON, *Curator & Public Programmes Manager*



ABOVE: Sara McIntyre, *Mrs Ruruku's Porch*, 2015. Courtesy of the artist and Anna Miles Gallery.

Like many galleries around the country a seven week closure has had implications on our schedule for this year but the silver lining has been that it has provided an opportunity to bring together three collection-based exhibitions for our winter season.

The lockdown was a unique experience for us all as for the first time ever, everyone throughout the country was in the same boat. We were all in it together, yet at the same time remained alone in our bubbles. Life as we knew it suddenly halted and we had to adapt to a new way of living and communicating. This exhibition brings together a selection of works that hint at some of the experiences we shared or could not partake in during lockdown.

Large scale gatherings were definitely off limits as well as the norms of personal greetings, such as hongi and hugs, replaced with 'East Coast Waves' and elbow bumps. With the recent move to Level One at the time of writing this, many of us will probably consider with caution whether we will attend such occasions in the near future. Ans Westra's wonderful photograph of the packed temple at Rātana Pā reminds us that we need these large meeting places to congregate in.

The small room of the Zoom (video conferencing app) has proven a useful tool of communication but the isolation of our home bubble is not the same as the jostle, noise and conviviality of a room of people coming together for a common purpose. There was certainly no room for ritual—instead Anzac Day took place not in front of memorials around the country but at our front doors and at the ends of our driveways. Many people were also in the painful position of being unable to mourn together at funerals and tangi.

For better or worse we were confined to our home with our families, while for others lockdown may have been a lonely experience without interaction beyond the confines of their homes or the clumsy balancing act between human connection and maintaining social distancing at the supermarket.

Whatever our experiences looked like, the fact that the dreaded pandemic did not take hold in our country as we had feared means we can now look out again with caution. Thanks to us all pulling together we can take the time to reflect and remember those who fell victim to the virus in New Zealand and the hundreds of thousands worldwide that have died so far. We may nearly be out of the woods in New Zealand but as we continue our social distancing the title of the 1993 Crowded House song 'Together Alone' is very apt for our position in the world at this time.

—GREG DONSON & JENNIFER TAYLOR MOORE, *Co-Curators*

Together Alone: Works from the Collection Exploring Human Connections in a Post-lockdown World

27 JUNE–8 NOVEMBER, 2020

What It Is Not: Abstract Works from the Sarjeant Collection

'The only way to say what abstract is, is to say what it is not.' —AD REINHARDT

To define abstract art is quite challenging, as the above quote by Ad Reinhardt (b.1913, d.1967), an influential American abstract painter, so aptly sums up. Abstraction, in its purest form, is generally perceived as artwork with no subject however the term is used to encompass a much broader spectrum of work. In essence all artwork can be seen as an abstraction from reality and in some way derives from and presents the essentials of an artist's observations or perceptions of the world in which they inhabit. Paul Gauguin famously stated 'Do not copy nature too much. Art is an abstraction.'

Early pioneers of abstraction in 1950s New Zealand include Gordon Walters (b.1919, d.1995) who engaged with international Modernism with his series of geometric abstract paintings and prints; and Milan Mrkusich (b.1925, d.2018) who worked with large fields of colour and was influenced by both Mondrian and Kandinsky. Mrkusich's 'Chromatic Suite I No. 4', dated 1968, is the earliest work in this exhibition and is most likely a precursor for his well-known 'Corner' paintings, several of which are also in the Sarjeant collection.

This selection of works from the collection demonstrates the wide scope of New Zealand abstraction: from the calm Minimalism of Stephen Bambury's (b. 1951) 'Grey Transmuting'; the crusty Colour Field of Geoff Thornley's (b.1942) 'Grey/Albus No. 10'; to the Lyrical abstraction of Judy Millar's (b.1957) untitled drawing with paint; and the Abstract Expressionist colour explosion of Allen Maddox's (b.1948, d.2000) 'Life's Hurdles'.

A few of the artists have used found items or recognisable shapes and transformed them beyond their original context into an abstracted form. Don Driver's (b.1930, d.2011) salt bag sacking and fabric remnants in 'Pacific Salt', 1977, demonstrates his renowned mastery of colour and texture; Julian Dashper's (b.1960, d.2009) 1994 installation of drum kit skins becomes a composition of concentric circular forms that visually pulse; while Paul Hartigan's (b.1953) 'Hybrid', 1999, shows an infinity symbol transformed into an image of cells under a microscope, particularly when viewed through the hyper-aware lens of our current COVID-19 world.

—JENNIFER TAYLOR MOORE, *Curator of Collections*



Paul Hartigan, *Hybrid*, 1999, ink on vinyl, 2003/20/1. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. Purchased with generous assistance from the artist, 2003.

EXHIBITIONS

Winter season

What it is Not: Abstract Works from the Sarjeant Collection

6 JUNE–2 AUGUST 2020

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For more information & to keep up to date with news & events visit: sarjeant.org.nz

Andrea du Chatenier Eigenleben

New ceramic works
15 August–8 November, 2020



100
YEARS

Sarjeant Gallery
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Whanganui

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On the Quay

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Sarjeant Gallery is a cultural facility of the Whanganui District Council