

Sarjeant Quarterly 77

Spring 2020



Newsletter of the
Sarjeant Gallery
Te Whare o Rehua
Whanganui
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FRONT COVER: Andrea du Chatenier, *Glomerate*, 2020, ceramic.

From the Director

I note that in my last item for *Sarjeant Quarterly* 76 I was breathing a sigh of relief that normal business had resumed and that we were once again fully functional at COVID-19 Alert Level 1; now as I write this item we have once more reverted in the midst of the latest Alert Level 2. Sadly we have had to postpone numerous events, not the least of which was the opening occasion for Andrea du Chatenier's wonderful show *Eigenleben* along with a multitude of education classes. When conditions again allow it, we will certainly celebrate Andrea's exhibition with a proper launch.

Thankfully work on the Gallery's redevelopment project at Pukenamu Queen's Park has continued unabated. With visits from Minister Shane Jones and more recently from Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern there is a tremendous sense of activity and optimism and we look forward to reopening the Sarjeant in mid-2023.

The archaeology project is ongoing with archaeologist Michael Taylor of Archaeology North uncovering artefacts from Pukenamu Queen's Park's past as a historic fighting pā, then later a habitation area connected to the Rutland Stockade and a squatter's site. Pukenamu Queen's Park is a site of much significance and all excavations are being monitored by a team of cultural monitors who are on site to observe, record and direct tikanga for the handling of any cultural materials. So far the site has unearthed items such as broken crockery, pieces of porcelain figures, military buttons, bricks and metal pins, bolts, nails and hinges. An unexpected item which gained the attention of

many was an undetonated cannonball from the 1860's. One can only speculate at how it came to be buried deep in the park behind the Gallery.

Because it is an extremely busy construction site, the Sarjeant Gallery redevelopment site is ringed by an enormous white wooden fence of 2 metres high and almost 200 metres long. It is obviously a perfect artist's canvas and we are very excited to announce that we have major redecorating plans for this fence. We have been lucky enough to be supported in this effort by the Whanganui Community Charitable Trust who are sustaining local artists Cecelia Kumeroa, Si Omer AKA Cracked Ink, Dan Mills and Mike Marsh to create a range of artworks for giant strips of the Sarjeant site fence.

Sadly the Sarjeant's object gallery above the i-Site has been closed in Level 2 and in light of this we have extended the season of our *Lighting the Fire* exhibition through until 22 November. In the meantime however, we push on and if you haven't yet been able to view the current exhibitions at Sarjeant on the Quay you really must—as the Gallery is a marvellous mixture of some favourite collection items in *Together Alone*; joyous chaos in ceramic by Andrea du Chatenier in her exhibition *Eigenleben* and the exceptional photographic portrait of Kākahi and the King Country by Sara McIntyre in her exhibition *Observations of a Rural Nurse*. There is something here for every taste and we look forward to welcoming you through the doors.—GREG ANDERSON



Sara McIntyre (centre, wearing glasses) with her family at the opening of her exhibition, *Observations of a Rural Nurse*, 10 July 2020.

Redevelopment News

After changes were needed to the method and sequencing of seismic strengthening work on the historic Sarjeant building, the project team proactively sought additional funding to make up the consequential increase in refurbishment costs and was delighted to receive the news of a \$12 million funding boost from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment on 2 July. Shortly after, the team hosted a site visit by the PM, Jacinda Ardern, who as the Minister for Culture and Heritage showed great interest in the redevelopment, taking the time to learn about the techniques that will be used to repair the historic building.

Work is progressing in two concurrent stages. Within the first stage, at the northern end of Pukenua Queen's Park, much of the grass inside the construction fence has gone and excavation and laying of foundations have been completed for the underground art storage space, located beneath what will eventually be a landscaped patio area facing the mountains to the north. Ground works for the Pataka o Sir Archie John Te Atawhai Taiaroa wing have benefited from periods of wet weather which has kept dust levels low in the sandy soiled environment where the archaeologist, cultural monitors and the excavation sub-contractor have been working together to complete the ground works.

The archaeologist Michael Taylor cordoned off an area of interest in the north eastern corner of the excavation zone where a cannon ball was unexpectedly discovered. It was removed by Police, though later returned after being declared inert. Additional security patrols are in place to protect the dig from enthusiastic amateur archaeologists with a mind to breach the 2m high construction fence. As part of a series of video stories about the redevelopment, we have recorded an interview with Michael Taylor talking about the artefacts he and his team have discovered including beads, military buttons and house-hold china of European origin. A small fist sized piece of pounamu has been discovered and not far from that, a small greenstone adze. These being the only cultural items to have been found thus far.

For stage two, the restoration and repair of the historic Sarjeant Gallery, the enabling works and underground service connections to the existing building—power, water, storm water and sewerage, have been disconnected or redirected and the old carpentry workshop which was built as an add-on at the rear entrance of the gallery has been demolished exposing the original Oamaru stone exterior. Ground stabilisation and installation of temporary wall supports on the exterior of the building will begin in the coming weeks.



LEFT: Archaeologist Michael Taylor shows Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern some of the artefacts recovered from the excavation zone.

ABOVE: Porcelain doll's head, found at the excavation site at Pukenua Queen's Park.





Initially the seismic strengthening solution for the Sarjeant was a highly destructive base isolation scheme which involved the application of a layer of concrete to the decorative interior gallery walls. This has been replaced with a Post Tensioning Strand System which uses stainless steel rods inserted vertically through the double brick cavity walls and connects with a new concrete diaphragm on the roof. A structural concrete foundation in the basement below the existing timber floor has been lifted to allow access. These steel rods create a rigid steel cage. The system also uses horizontally inserted Python screws which strengthen and tie together the layers of masonry, brick and timber to complete the strengthening system. Demolition of the Gallery wall linings has commenced to allow pre-drilling and installation. —**GAYE BATTY**, *Sarjeant Gallery Redevelopment Project Director*

Q & A with Emma Bugden, *Strategic Lead: Creative Industries & Arts, Whanganui and Partners, Whanganui's economic development agency*

With two decades of experience in the arts, Emma stepped into her role at Whanganui and Partners in the midst of COVID-19 Alert Level 4. Here she discusses the demands of starting a new job in such an uncertain period, what her work entails and what she relishes about the position.

You started in your role during lockdown. What were the challenges you had to contend with during that time? Starting in lockdown was surreal. I got to know my colleagues as Zoom avatars. But there was also an intimacy to it—everyone working out of spare bedrooms with their kids bursting in. Lockdown accelerated the process of reaching out. The arts were especially vulnerable, with so many freelancers and the cancellation of so many exhibiting and performing opportunities. My focus was to support creatives as directly as I could. I started a Facebook group, Whanganui Artists & Creatives, to share information. It turned out everyone in lockdown was surfing Facebook, so it was popular. I ran a funding clinic to help artists access Creative New Zealand's Emergency Relief Fund; and gave direct advice over Zoom, Whatsapp, Facetime, cell phone and landline. I feel proud of what we achieved but I'm so happy to now be meeting people in real life.

What does your day-to-day role involve? In short, my role is to retain talent by enabling professional pathways that keep creatives here, attract new talent and opportunities, and promote Whanganui as an arts destination. Right now I'm working on establishing a Regional Film Office in Whanganui (working with Double Farley) to attract film productions here to employ our local labourforce; from sculptors to garment makers. I'm developing Making It: professional workshops for visual artists, working with Money Poppins, Sarjeant Gallery, SPACE, Tanker Creative and Thrive. Day to day that's fueled by conversations, manilla folders and plenty of coffee to help make good things happen.

What is the most rewarding part of your job? Working at an economic development agency, I love that my role puts art at the heart of a discussion about the city we want to live in, instead of marginalising it as a "nice to have" once decisions are reached. I'm lucky to work alongside talented artists, craftspeople, writers, musicians, performers, designers, film makers and architects. My role is to champion what they do—locally, nationally and internationally—and ensure creative people can sustainably live and work in Whanganui.

Andrea du Chatenier

Eigenleben

15 AUGUST–8 NOVEMBER, 2020



In 2013 Andrea du Chatenier began working in ceramics and since that time the material has become the focus of her practice, with the artist stating that she has “fallen for clay big time. It’s a proper love affair”. Over the last seven years she has pushed the boundaries of ceramic practice and this has coincided with a general resurgence in interest from makers in the qualities of clay. No longer is the medium in the realm of craft and not art; the fault line between the two has been well and truly shaken up.

Eigenleben features works that are a complex and glorious mashup of polarities: mountainous and majestic; fortress-like and fungal; slippery and sharp. Each of them has come into being from the artist pushing herself and her materials to the brink but also subjecting them to multiple firings with each taking the works into another realm. This is reflected in the title of the exhibition, a German concept which roughly translates to meaning ‘a life of its own’.

The works included in the exhibition have been made since du Chatenier was awarded two overseas residencies in 2017 and 2018. The first at the Portage Ceramic Awards as the recipient of a residency at Guldagergaard—an International Ceramic Research Centre in Denmark. The second as the winner of the Wallace Arts Trust Vermont Award for a three month residency at the Vermont Studio Centre in Vermont, USA.

Although the residencies gave her time to think, they didn’t give her the same latitude and flexibility to be able to experiment as she has in her own studio. There she can take risks with different types of clay and glazes and more importantly with the kiln, undertaking multiple firings and working on a large scale. Du Chatenier comments “I love the alchemy of clay but that level of experimentation is very hard on kilns and you have to be prepared to ruin a few kiln shelves; not something you’d do in a shared kiln! Some of the architectural elements are influenced by brutalist architecture but I don’t think of the works as brutal—more wabi-sabi, the Japanese concept of acceptance of transience and imperfection.”



LEFT: **Andrea du Chatenier**, *Drowned Pyramid*, 2020, ceramic

OPPOSITE: **Andrea du Chatenier**, *High Priestess*, 2020, ceramic and glass

Some of these works were made during 'lockdown' which was a kind of enforced home-based residency, balanced with the demands of teaching remotely. Although these works have not been made in response to that collective experience they are imbued with a sense of instability, anxiety and precariousness.

These works may be imperfect but they are part of an evolution of the artist's own journey with ceramics and in turn part of a much bigger movement that deconstructs and disassembles the conventions of ceramic making. Although du Chatenier may have moved away from the figurative in her practice, through the physicality of making these works they are imbued with spirit and personality.—**GREG DONSON**, *Curator & Public Programmes Manager*

Unfortunately due to COVID-19 Alert Level 2, the opening and floor talk scheduled to accompany Andrea's show was postponed. We will notify an alternative date for these events once we are in Level 1. In the interim please visit the [Eigenleben exhibition page](#) on our website to hear Andrea in conversation with Greg Donson, Curator & Public Programmes Manager, as they discuss the exhibition.

BELOW: **Andrea du Chatenier**, *Ruin*, 2020, ceramic



Bill Hammond (New Zealander, b.1947). *Living Large No.5* 1995, acrylic on unstretched linen. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. Purchased, 1995. 1996/18/1

Collection Focus

Looking Out, Looking In

With our borders closed to overseas travellers during and since lockdown there's been a sense that we've all been 'looking out', trying to fathom what might be on the horizon and in the future. These three works by Bill Hammond and Laurence Aberhart are currently featured in the collection exhibition *Together Alone*, on view until 8 November, suggest a sense of looking out, seeing a new landscape but not quite grasping what it is. Hammond and



Aberhart are two artists whose practice has embodied a fair bit of looking out and looking in.

In 1989 Bill Hammond and Laurence Aberhart travelled to the sub-Antarctic Auckland Islands south of Bluff. Their destination was Enderby Island which was once used as a whaling station. Getting to the island was a challenging experience in stormy weather and it took two attempts. In conversation with Gregory O'Brien in 1996, Hammond described the island as a 'birdland'—a paradise free from predators. 'You feel like a time-traveller, as if you have just stumbled upon it—primeval forests, ratas like Walt Disney would make. It's a beautiful place, but it's also full of ghosts, shipwrecks and death'.¹ *Living Large No 5* is one of Hammond's many paintings that are occupied by his distinctive otherworldly bird figures. They stand sentinel—seemingly on guard, waiting, looking out to their watery interior world. Woven in with Hammond's 'birdland' is his ongoing conversation with the deeds of the Victorian ornithologist and lawyer Sir Walter Lawry Buller (1838–1906), who was responsible for the killing and trading of thousands of rare New Zealand birds.



Laurence Aberhart was the Sarjeant's inaugural artist-in-residence in 1986 at Tylee Cottage and it was during that year that he began photographing Mount Taranaki from afar. This image is part of an ongoing investigation of the horizon line that is now known as his 'last light' series that has spanned over thirty years. Here, Taranaki floats on the horizon much like the mountains in Hammond's painting. In an earlier image from 1980 Aberhart photographed Lyttelton Harbour from one of the gun emplacements that were built to monitor the Japanese threat during World War II. The narrow slot of the gun emplacement serves as a framing device for the landscape beyond.

—GREG DONSON, *Curator & Public Programmes Manager*

1. Cited in *Bill Hammond: Jingle Jangle Morning* published by Te Puna o Waiwhetū Christchurch Art Gallery, 2007. p25

OPPOSITE: **Laurence Aberhart** (New Zealander, b.1949). *Taranaki* 1986, selenium toned silver gelatin print. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. Purchased 1988. 1988/3/3

ABOVE: **Laurence Aberhart** (New Zealander, b.1949). *Harbour Heads Lyttelton* 1980, selenium and sepia toned silver gelatin print. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. Purchased 1982. 1982/6/2

Esther Rose, Fiona Goulding, Michelle Koedyk, George Flutey, Adele Dubarry, Rhys John Carr, Mary McIntyre, Katherine Forster, Wendy Bainbridge, Jenn Dickie, Justine Palmer, Jennifer Kenny, Wendy Watson, Robert Jaunay, Chris Stone, Sandra Brumby, Jan Penn, Amanda Burgess, Wally Franklin-Browne, Kate Sellar, Chrys Hill, Chris Carter, Mark Dawson, Richard MacDonald, Orlaith Hammersley, Robert Pedersen, Darla Brewer, Pam Robbie, Charlotte Mackereth, Garry Crowhurst and Jana Fernando.

Thank you to our Corporate Members

Louise Barnicoat and Des Healy, Moore Stephens Markham Whanganui Ltd, Nicola Williams, Pamela Williams and Peter and Beryl Warnock.

We also wish to acknowledge our Corporate Sponsors

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Buy art

Covid-19 has caused a large disruption to so many aspects of our daily life, including the ability for artists, makers and creatives to make, teach or exhibit. Creative New Zealand was quick to respond with its emergency response package which allows makers to apply for loss of income during this time, which will be a huge help to a lot of our community. The Sarjeant Gallery is

a major part of the Whanganui art scene and we are proud to promote and stock so many talented local and national artists and makers. Our goal is to sell high quality New Zealand made items as a way to complete the visitor experience of the gallery. As we have grown so has the range of what we stock, we want to offer unique and beautiful pieces. The backstories we can give for each maker and piece makes each item special. The knowledge that every purchase helps a maker continue making and gives back to the local economy is a wonderful feeling. All our members receive 10% discount and we are pleased to be able to offer this discount at our online shop also. By using the code MEMBERS you will receive 10% off your entire order at shop.sarjeant.org.nz



Together Alone:

Works from the Collection Exploring Human Connections in a Post-Lockdown World

27 JUNE–8 NOVEMBER 2020

This exhibition brings together a selection of works that hint at some of the experiences we all shared or could not partake in during lockdown.

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 in 2016. The exhibition *Observations of a Rural Nurse* is the first time that this body of work has been seen in a public gallery and features over 50 photographs taken in Kākahi and the sparsely populated surrounding King Country.

Lighting the Fire:

Whanganui Potters from the Sarjeant Collection

4 JULY–22 NOVEMBER 2020

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.

Andrea du Chatenier: *Eigenleben*

15 AUGUST–8 NOVEMBER 2020

The German title of this exhibition, translates to 'one's own life' and refers to these new ceramic works by du Chatenier as having a life and evolution of their own. Eschewing anything resembling a vessel, these elaborate constructions privilege surface and exuberant glazing techniques.

A note on Sarjeant operations: COVID-19 restrictions mean the Sarjeant's operating capabilities change according to Alert Levels.

Level 1—Sarjeant on the Quay and Sarjeant's object gallery above the iSite are open as usual. Events as scheduled.

Level 2—Sarjeant on the Quay open as usual. Contact tracing in place, hand sanitisers, numbers in the gallery limited to 20. The Sarjeant's object gallery above the i-Site will be closed. No events in Alert Level 2.

Level 3—Both Sarjeant on the Quay and Sarjeant's object gallery above the i-Site closed. No events in Alert Level 3.


Level 4—Both Sarjeant on the Quay and Sarjeant's object gallery above the i-Site closed. No events in Alert Level 4.

Upstairs at i-Site:

LIGHTING THE FIRE

Whanganui ceramics from the Sarjeant collection

Season extended until
22 November 2020


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Whanganui

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Sarjeant Gallery is a cultural facility of the Whanganui District Council