

Sarjeant Quarterly 78

Summer 2020/21

Newsletter of the
Sarjeant Gallery
Te Whare o Rehua
Whanganui
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FRONT COVER: Interior photograph of the Sarjeant Gallery, November 2020.



From the Director

With COVID Alert Level One has come business as usual at the Sarjeant. The much-anticipated official opening of Andrea du Chatenier's exhibition *Eigenleben* happened successfully on 17 October, with an artist's talk followed by opening celebrations; and the multitude of public programme events that had been postponed due to previous physical distancing requirements, are now all back on track.

A great joy too, as well as a signal that normalcy is returning, was the successful opening and subsequent events for the exhibition *Te Awa Reo* on 31 October, featuring the work of fourteen artists led by Marilyn Vreede. Three years in the making, this show is dedicated to the science and spirituality surrounding the Whanganui River and its significance to Whanganui iwi. A moving and heart-warming occasion, the show and accompanying talks saw nearly 300 people in attendance and adds further to the broad array of exhibitions on offer.

As the Sarjeant Gallery Redevelopment Project Director Gaye Batty mentions in her item later in this *Quarterly*, work on site at Pukenui Queen's Park is moving along steadily and impressive engineering solutions are being applied to the challenges provided by the century old building. Anyone who has been past the construction site can't fail to notice the substantial buttressing that has been installed against the west and eastern walls and the extensive earthworks which will form the basement areas of the new wing. The cover of this *Quarterly* shows the Sarjeant as we have never seen it—the floors have been removed in preparation for the strengthening and new foundations to be laid. While our completion date of 2023 seems distant, we know that time will pass quickly and preparations are underway for the building fit out, the re-opening series of exhibitions, opening celebrations and the mammoth task of relocating the Sarjeant's collections one last time.

It would be a brave person who predicts what is likely to occur in 2021, but it is clear that staff at the Sarjeant have their work cut out for the foreseeable future. Our last two exhibitions scheduled for the year—*WAI: the water project* and *Corner Dairy*—have now opened. In the meantime, on behalf of all who work at the Sarjeant, thank you for your support during the madness that has characterised 2020, we hope you have safe and happy holidays and we look forward to your company again in the New Year.

GREG ANDERSON

OPPOSITE: Jasmin Ratana, Marie McKay and Rosemary Hovey at the opening of *Te Awa Reo*

Redevelopment News

In this past year since we signed the main construction contract, the team has overcome many hurdles, making many wins along the way on this unique project.

Retrofitting and extending a historic building is a very different project than a new build. Our team includes experts from all areas of the construction industry working together to innovatively find solutions.

After starting demolition in January, all work was paused on-site for the COVID-19 lockdown in March. Once the site was blessed by Tupoho in May, the perimeter fence went up and earthworks started. Now the majority of earthworks are complete for the new wing and we're laying basement foundations for the new collection store.

Inside, thousands of brick ties are now screwed through the walls to bind the double layer of bricks, giving the building rigidity as part of the seismic strengthening solution.

We've stabilised the ground at the rear of the Sarjeant using a retaining system to prevent subsidence. We've also installed two A-shaped buttresses on opposing sides to support the walls as we take out the interior wooden floors for access to the basement underneath the dome.

Work slowed a little while we designed a way to install the concrete foundation in the basement beneath the dome. We had to raise the level of the foundation beams to avoid excavating further than necessary under the 100 year old building.

Design solutions have also been found for new drainpipes so these hidden ducts won't degrade or allow rainwater to leak into the Gallery or cause cracking and damage to the Oamaru stone.

It's been a test of endurance drilling long vertical holes down the interior walls so post-tensioned steel bars can be inserted. Some cores took hours as the hollow drill-bit inched its way from roof to floor level. The cylindrical cores, literally pieces of brick and stone, are being removed from site and stored by the Gallery team.

With the project fully funded and work well underway, I'm looking forward to another big and productive year ahead.

GAYE BATTY, *Sarjeant Gallery Redevelopment Project Director*



TOP: The first stage of the retaining wall to support and stabilise the ground at the rear of the Gallery.

BOTTOM: McMillan and Lockwood carpenters lift the last of the floorboards enabling access to the basement.



Anne Noble at
Tylee Cottage,
2020. Photograph:
Michael McKeagg

A conversation with Anne Noble

How do you describe yourself as an artist? Photography, video and installation art practitioner.

What is your proposed undertaking whilst at Tylee Cottage? The residency is an opportunity to begin a new body of work related to the history of the Tongariro Power Development Project, and the associated impacts on both the environment and the people of the Whanganui River region.

What medium/s do you work in? My practice spans photography, video, sound and installation art. I am particularly interested in how an art practice that incorporates these media can amplify dialogue about the histories of our relationships to land, place and environment. I am interested in the power of images to prompt the telling of stories, and to amplify critical dialogue about the significant histories of the places that we inhabit.

Can you please give us a brief description of your hopes for your Tylee Cottage Residency period? My hope is to use this time to do foundational research for a longer-term project; to rekindle relationships and reconnect with the people who I have known earlier in my time in Whanganui including the Whanganui River.

Do you have a connection to Whanganui? I live in Wellington now, but I was born and grew up in Whanganui. I have a strong family connection to Whanganui and the river.

Tell us about your experiences making your art. For instance, how long does a piece take you generally? I might be involved in development and the creation of a project for 4–5 years.

Do you do research? My practice is always informed by research. In the case of the Tongariro Power Development project, there are multiple histories to be aware of, and much to learn and to understand about the impact of this project on the environment, on the Whanganui River and its people.

The opportunity of a residency in Whanganui provides the gift of time:

to research, to meet people and to re-establish connections through my earlier work, while also developing ideas for this proposed new project.

Is your creation process very physical, very cerebral? Yes, it involves walking, observation and discovery, in search of ways to imagine and represent places in a manner relevant to our current political climate.

Is there an audience you particularly want to reach or a message that you hope to communicate? I try not to begin any new project with a preconceived message in mind. It is important that the form of a work arises out of the research and is also informed through conversations. This is an approach that is open to potential collaboration and participation in both the creation and the dissemination of a work. This is certainly important in regard to the Whanganui River whose people have long experience of their voice and the voice of the river not being heard.

Are there themes that seem to pop up again and again in your work? What are they? Do you know why they are there? I am interested in how our imagination is formed by our specific cultural relationships to place. I am interested in human connections to the non-human world. I am also interested in the growing threats to both biodiversity and cultural diversity which I see as closely aligned. Art has an important role in amplifying understanding and awareness of these issues.

What or who influences you? Is there something you find particularly inspiring? I am inspired and challenged as an artist to explore how art can stimulate new kinds of dialogue about the politics of land, water, place and environment. As an Aotearoa NZ artist, I am also inspired to embed cultural dialogue in the Kaupapa of any art project.

Do you have any concurrent art projects at the time of your residency?

I often work on multiple projects in tandem. While I am developing a new project here in Whanganui, I am also working on a book about my bee projects with the curator from the Queensland Art Gallery, which exhibited a survey of my bee projects for the APT9. This will be published by Massey University Press in 2021.

I also have an ongoing project called *A Line Between Two Trees; Observations From the Critical Zone*. The 'critical zone' refers to the ground beneath the forest floor, which is suffering the greatest loss of biodiversity in the microbial world. I am making a series of works investigating the time of the forest and the language of trees. In 1976, I first photographed the great Northern Rata 'Ratanui' at Bushy Park sanctuary and I will be returning there to photograph the forest at night as a component of this larger project.

Te Awa Reo

31 OCTOBER, 2020–14 FEBRUARY, 2021

We all love a challenge, and uniting the diverse worlds of pūtaiao (science) and wairua (spirit), has been nothing less than exhilarating, a tad bit more than exasperating at times, and the most worthwhile project I have had the honour to be involved in for a long time. Over three years in the making, *Te Awa Reo* has evolved into an artistic interpretation of scientific research led by Professors Mark Macklin of Lincoln University in England and Dr Ian Fuller of the School of Agriculture and Environment at Massey University. The project has not only energised the fourteen artists involved but also engaged the scientific mind into exploring yet another perspective of a world natural to the discerning indigenous eye.

The whakatauki 'I am the River and the River is me' has been the maxim by which the artists have been influenced in their interpretation of the 2000 year journey through the core samples of sediment extracted from the Ātene Meander in the Whanganui River. Penned in the late 1980s by author, kaumātua, mentor and renowned tohunga Rangitihi Rangiwaiata Tahuparae, known affectionately as John Tahu, the now famous whakatauki is recognised worldwide:

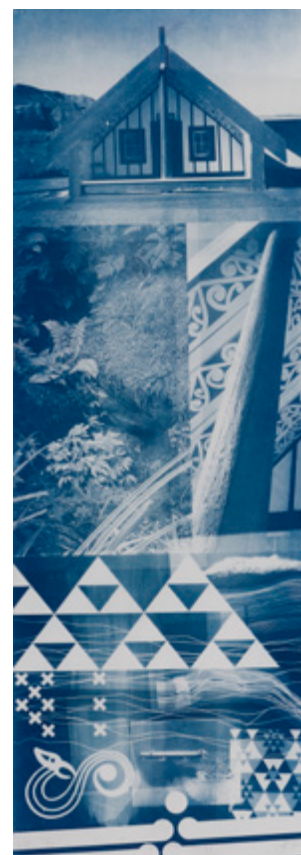
E rere kau mai te Awa nui	<i>The mighty river flows</i>
Mai i te Kāhui Maunga ki Tangaroa	<i>From the mountains to the sea</i>
Ko au te Awa, ko te Awa ko au.	<i>I am the River, and the River is me.</i>

The simplicity of the message is profound and to us undoubtedly real. They are not just words. 'I am the River and the River is me' would be seen as metaphorical in most modern languages but in the ancient language of our tūpuna (ancestors) the whakatauki or proverb referred directly to the relationship between tāngata whenua (the people of the land) and the land, their environment.

And so, from a Te Ātihaunui a Pāpārangi mokopuna perspective (that's me), the following adage encapsulates all that it is to be a living, integral part of Te Awa Tupua today and the sense of pride as a descendant of the Whanganui River is palpable. It is a feeling that all iwi (tribes), hapū (subtribes), kaumātua (elders), pākeke (adults), tamariki (children) mokopuna (descendants) in fact, te kaupapa tāngata (all people) puta noa i te ao (throughout the world) can and should embrace. We were always intended to be one.

Nāku i te māhaki (in humility)

nā MARILYN NGAHUIA VREEDE, Kaituitui (Co-ordinator) Te Awa Reo. Te Ātihaunui a Pāpārangi, Ngāti Hauiti, Ngāti Tūwharetoa



TOP: **Gail Imhoff** (Ngāti Rangī, Te Wainui a Rua), *Papa Mata* 2020, digital photograph.

LEFT: **Jasmine Horton** (Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Te Ātihaunui a Pāpārangi, Te Āti Awa), *Putanga Kōrero II* 2020, cyanotype.

ABOVE: **Rena Star** (Ngāti Tūwharetoa), *Embodiment: No te Whenua* 2020, gaffer glass and found objects. Photograph by Tracy Grant.

WAI: *The Water Project* is a multimedia exhibition that celebrates fresh water as a natural element essential to our wellbeing. It considers notions of public and private responsibility to our shared resources and our legacy for future generations.

Two years ago, thirteen artists were invited to explore the cultural, conceptual and imaginative qualities of water. Initiated by Ashburton Art Gallery Director, Shirin Khosraviani, they embarked on a road trip around Canterbury's waterways—lakes, rivers and wetlands—in what was known as *The Water Project*. Bruce Foster and Gregory O'Brien were two of those artists and together, they have curated this exhibition that has recently been shown at Pātaka Art + Museum and now here at the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. The other artists included in the exhibition are Jacqui Colley, Phil Dadson, Bing Dawe, Brett Graham, Ross Hemera, Euan Macleod, Jenna Packer, Dani Terrizzi, Elizabeth Thomson, Peter Trevelyan and Kate Woods.

In traditional Māori culture, fresh water is revered as an essential resource and is fundamental to the spiritual, cultural and economic lives of tangata whenua. In the present era of global warming, intensified farming and concerns about pollution, the relationship between humanity and water has become a confronting issue on local, national and global levels. Water is at the heart not only of physical life but also the spiritual, cultural and imaginative lives we all lead. Spanning numerous media—sound and video projection, painting, drawing, photography and sculpture—this exhibition seeks to redress this imbalance, highlighting the element as a 'source' as well as a 'natural resource'.

IMAGE: Bruce Foster, *Untitled, Te Waihora* 2017, pigment print on Hahnemühle paper

WAI: *The Water Project*

CURATED BY BRUCE FOSTER & GREGORY O'BRIEN

21 NOVEMBER, 2020–7 FEBRUARY, 2021



Corner Dairy

5 DECEMBER 2020–28 MARCH 2021



The proliferation of the New Zealand dairy developed out of necessity—during the depression of the 1930s, front rooms of houses were either built or converted to accommodate a small shop selling grocery items and confectionery. From the late 1930s onwards, the term ‘dairy’ became commonly used to describe small shops selling groceries. As built structures, they are instantly recognisable in the New Zealand urban environment. They are domestic in scale, integrated within existing houses, or part of suburban shopping complexes. With their bright colours, plethora of signage advertising confectionery, soft drink and basics like bread and milk, the dairy represents a way into small enterprise for migrant communities, the place to go for a sweet treat after the beach, and an essential part of the urban infrastructure.

Unfortunately, the dairy operates on very slim margins and its future may be uncertain. Nonetheless, in New Zealand during level four of the COVID-19 pandemic, the dairy was considered an essential service, with dairy owners becoming frontline workers putting themselves at risk for the benefit of the community. Therefore, dairies sit in the unenviable position of both precariousness and necessity.

The exhibition positions the New Zealand dairy as representing ingenuity, economy of means, nostalgia and a sense of fun. It brings together works that depict everyday items, for example lollies, fruit and staple food items—the kinds of things found at the dairy—or reference the dairy itself, the works ranging from the mimetic to the satirical. *Corner Dairy* could be seen as paean or lament to the shifting status of the dairy in New Zealand culture.

JAMES HOPE, *Assistant Curator*

Corner Dairy is at the Sarjeant Gallery's object space above the i-Site, 31 Taupō Quay

IMAGE: Ann Verdcourt, *Ceramic fruit tray and fruit ceramic*, E2017/85. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. Gift of the artist.

Arts review Submission Day announced

The 2021 Pattillo Whanganui Arts Review Submission Day is Tuesday 23 February and the exhibition will open on Saturday 6 March with the awards function at the War Memorial Centre the night before. This means it is time to start very seriously thinking about your entry. The Arts Review has been displaying the Whanganui region's creative output for over 30 years and it always attracts a huge variance in mediums and style from a vast range of local artists. The only conditions of entry are, firstly that you live in the eligibility region which is Whanganui or an area that links to the Whanganui River, including Ruapehu, Rangitikei and South Taranaki, and secondly that the work is completed between the months of February 2020 and February 2021.

Tracy Byatt took out the 2020 Pattillo Whanganui Arts Review Open Award with her work *Parrot Tulips—A Study in Sugar*. Since her win, Tracy has been featured in *Art Zone* magazine and invited to exhibit in a group show at the Dowse Art Museum. Winning the Open Award means Tracy is the 2021 Pattillo Project artist. We cannot wait to see what she will do with the solo artist showcase opening on February 13 at the Sarjeant.

Please find the 2021 Pattillo Whanganui Arts Review entry form online on sarjeant.org.nz or collect your copy at the gallery's front desk.



Tracy Byatt (left) with Anne Pattillo. Tracy won the Open award at this year's Whanganui Arts Review.

EXHIBITIONS

Summer 2020–2021 season

Te Awa Reo

31 OCTOBER 2020–14 FEBRUARY 2021

Fourteen artists respond to scientific research on an 8.75 metre core sample of sediment taken from the Ātene Meander on the Whanganui River. This project has been three years in the making and is a beautiful collision of science and art that is deeply connected to the Awa.

WAI: The Water Project

21 NOVEMBER 2020–7 FEBRUARY 2021

A multimedia exhibition that celebrates fresh water as a natural element essential to our wellbeing. It considers notions of public and private responsibility to our shared resources and our legacy for future generations. Featuring the work of thirteen dynamic New Zealand artists.

Corner Dairy

5 DECEMBER 2020–28 MARCH 2021

In the Sarjeant's object gallery, above the iSite, 31 Taupō Quay
The New Zealand dairy represents ingenuity, economy of means, nostalgia and fun. This exhibition brings together works that celebrate the dairy and its contents, as well as the treasured place it holds in the New Zealand psyche.

My Choice

Each month a member of our community is invited to browse our online collection and select six of their favourite artworks. Each 'My choice' selection, together with personal responses to the works, will be available to view on the Sarjeant Gallery website for one month at a time.

December: **Airini Beutrais**



Check your emails: While we totally recognise there is nothing quite as divine and exciting as receiving an invitation in the mail, it has been decided that on occasion we will send out invitations by email only. This will save on postage costs annually and creates less paper waste. However, it means checking your email inbox regularly so as not to miss an invite! For those of you who don't use email, we will still be able to send out hard copies of invitations—but you will need to let us know by calling the Sarjeant on 06 349 0506 and requesting 'hard copy only communications'.

www.facebook.com/SarjeantGallery [sarjeantgallery](https://twitter.com/sarjeantgallery) [@sarjeantgallery](https://www.instagram.com/sarjeantgallery)
For more information & to keep up to date with news visit: sarjeant.org.nz

SUBMISSION DAY
TUESDAY 23 FEBRUARY
ENTRY FORMS ONLINE
AND AT THE GALLERY

2021 PATTILLO WHANGANUI ARTS REVIEW

6 MARCH - 16 MAY

A SNAPSHOT OF THE
REGION'S CREATIVE
OUTPUT NOW.



PATTILLO

Image: 2020 Pattillo
Open Award Winner,
Tracy Byatt, Parrot
Tulips - A Study in
Sugar 2019

Sarjeant Gallery
Te Whare o Rehua
Whanganui

38 Taupo Quay
Whanganui 4600
New Zealand

Phone 06 349 0506
www.sarjeant.org.nz

Sarjeant Gallery is a cultural facility of the Whanganui District Council

