

# Sarjeant Quarterly 81

Spring 2021



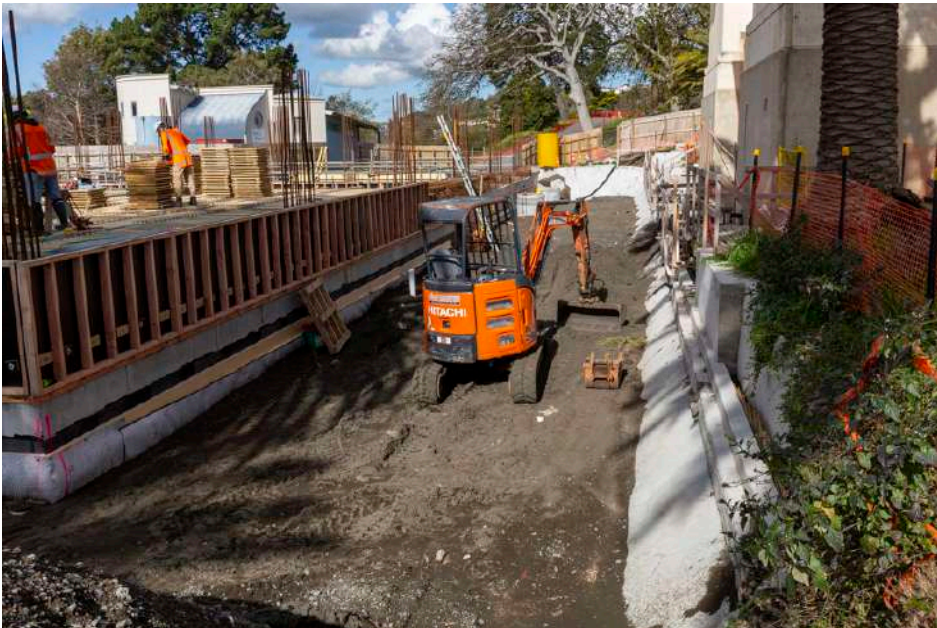
Newsletter of the  
Sarjeant Gallery  
Te Whare o Rehua  
Whanganui  
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FRONT COVER: Marie Shannon, *Upstairs Window* 2021, archival digital ink print

BELOW: A McMillan and Lockwood contractor completes the last of the backfilling between the Sarjeant Gallery's new wing and the rear of the existing Sarjeant Gallery. This will ultimately be the point of entry to the redeveloped gallery.



## From the Director

*Sarjeant Quarterly* 81 was written and at the printers ready to go on the very day that we were once again put into lockdown. Ground Hog Day. Déjà vu.

As with the rest of the country all of our best laid plans were put on hold or cancelled completely. This meant an immediate halt to twenty two events—so disheartening for the staff who have put in a great deal of work to organise them, along with the many people who had bought or reserved tickets in expectation. Still, the alternative could have been so much worse as we keep seeing elsewhere in the world.

All of these disruptions and the additional changes that have had to occur with the Sarjeant's exhibition programming has meant that this *Quarterly* is later than expected and a slightly reduced size. Not to worry, as there will be at least an extra page in the next edition!

The lockdown has occasioned a significant alteration to the Sarjeant's exhibition programming. As many will know, our exhibitions and public programmes are largely planned up to 2 years in advance. Any disruption early on in that timetable means a significant knock-on effect down the line. The reshuffle of upcoming exhibitions has caused a real headache for the curatorial staff, but the new programme will be revealed online and in future *Sarjeant Quarterly* issues.

Lockdown brought us all some sad news as well. Ailsa Stewart QSO, former Whanganui District Councillor, nurse, DHB board member and long-time supporter of the Sarjeant passed away on 25 August. The Sarjeant sends Ailsa's friends and family our deepest sympathies as we mourn the loss of someone who gave so selflessly to the city over many years. Vale Ailsa Stewart.

While uncertainty abounded, as soon as New Zealand went into Level 3, work recommenced at the Sarjeant Gallery Redevelopment building site. The McMillan & Lockwood team swung back into action, working carefully under the necessary restrictions. Once again much background work continued online during Level 4 and work on the ground was able to start up again without delay.

The last few weeks have been a mixed bag for us all and at the time of writing this, our colleagues and friends in Auckland are still dealing with a lot of uncertainty. Hopefully the coming weeks will bring us not only better weather, but also a welcome respite from gloomy news.

GREG ANDERSON

## Education News

*Lights on Bikes* held on Friday 25 June was a fabulous night, and the many decorated bikes and people shone brightly throughout the evening. Leading up to this event we held a range of workshops at the Sarjeant for all ages. Families came and made amazing flowers that lay on the grass in Pākaitore. Children made fabulous animal ears to go on their helmets, bike shields and triangular lanterns.

As part of our school programme we ran three different sessions. Room 6 from St John's Hill School made giant fish filled with

bright lights swimming high up in the breeze on bamboo poles along the boardwalk. Year 1–5 students from Te Kura o Kokohuia came and painted beautiful bright butterflies and moths using fluorescent paint. Placed up in one of the Pohutukawa trees in Pākaitore under a black light they glowed magically in the dark! Whanganui Home Educators made paper tissue chrysalis lanterns which swayed luminously in the trees.

It was wonderful to see so many people exploring and interacting with the different artworks. Thank you everyone who came and created work with us.

**SIETSKE JANSMA**, *Education Officer*

## Joanna Margaret Paul: *Imagined in the context of a room*



ABOVE: **Joanna Margaret Paul**, *Self-portrait* 1970, pencil on paper. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. Gift of the artist, 2002.

BELOW: **Joanna Margaret Paul**, *Inventories* 1977, gouache on paper. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. Purchased 1981.

Over two years in the making, the Sarjeant Gallery is delighted to have partnered with the Dunedin Public Art Gallery who have led the project in bringing together a major survey exhibition of the work of Joanna Margaret Paul, who from 1985 until her passing in 2003 called Whanganui home. The exhibition *Imagined in the context of a room* and an accompanying large-scale publication of the same name was launched at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery on Friday 6 August. The exhibition has been co-curated by Greg Donson, Curator & Public Programmes Manager at the Sarjeant and Lucy Hammonds and Lauren Gutsell from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. The exhibition spans Paul's art practice that included drawing, painting, poetry, photography and film. The Sarjeant has had a long association with Paul and her extended family from when she moved to Whanganui in 1985 and in 1989 Paul's first major survey exhibition *A Chronology* was staged. The last exhibition of Paul's work the Gallery curated was *Beauty, even*, a partnership with City Gallery, Wellington in 2003. After its Dunedin season the exhibition will be shown at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū later this year and we look forward to hosting the exhibition in our programme when we reopen at Pukenuamu Queen's Park.



# Redevelopment Update

As the Sarjeant Gallery's new extension wing, Pataka o Sir Te Atawhai Archie John Taiaroa, begins to take form we're reminded of the 100-year-old building's majestic presence and get a real sense of its size and scale.

Driving through Pukenui Queen's Park, past the band room, there's now a steep driveway from Pukenui Drive down to the Collection Store. With the new concrete floor of the collections storage area just poured and many of the walls and columns of the first floor in construction, you can visualise the whole building. At this basement level the loading dock has been purpose-designed with input from Gallery staff, professionally trained to manage, care for and handle the Sarjeant Gallery Collection and loaned artworks/taonga.

The entrance to the redeveloped Gallery will change from the city side to the front lobby of the new extension wing, which will be accessed from the Davis Library side. The contractor has recently placed steel mesh on the main site entry gate next to the library which allows visitors a clear view of the construction.

Meanwhile the existing 100-year-old Gallery has presented a unique set of challenges as we work to bring this architectural gem into the modern day and extend it with a contemporary building. At ground level we're working sequentially on the crucifix-shaped building's quadrants, and have completed bracing work of the east and west sections' delicate foundations. The matai floors were all removed several months ago to enable seismic strengthening work on the foundations and the basement walls.

On the roof, core drilling for post-tensioned steel bars that will create a virtual cage within the double brick cavity walls is nearly complete and insertion of the steel bars is underway. The bars will be held in tension by concrete capping at roof level and foundations at basement level. It's a hive of activity on-site behind the safety hoardings with up to 60 workers on-



site each day with specialist teams from Taranaki and Wellington in regular attendance.

Every week, the Sarjeant Gallery redevelopment project team, based across Whanganui, Wellington, New Plymouth and Palmerston North, receives a digital timelapse video of the previous week's construction progress on site. The video camera is installed high on the bandroom building, looking to the rear of the Sarjeant and as such, has a perfect view of the progress on the new wing and collection store. If you would like to view the video for the week July 12–16 2021, check it out on [sarjeant.org.nz/video](http://sarjeant.org.nz/video)

*GAYE BATTY, Sarjeant Gallery Redevelopment Project Director*

# Marie Shannon: *Sleeping Near the River*

14 AUGUST–14 NOVEMBER, 2021

Auckland-based artist Marie Shannon was the Sarjeant Gallery's artist in residence at Tylee Cottage for three months in 2019. Working in photography and film, the cottage and Whanganui inspired two distinct bodies of work – paired back photographs of the cottage's architectural details, as well as video works. Shannon spent time at the North Mole where the Whanganui River meets the Tasman Sea and she was interested in the wildness of the beach and how the two bodies of water met. During her residency she filmed the outgoing tide and the incoming waves and this moving image forms the background for a work titled *Sleeping Near the River*.

Shannon has sometimes used her own dreams to construct narratives for her video works. She comments "During my time as artist in residence I was interested in the way the river might sit in my subconscious. I kept a dream diary, for no specific purpose other than to observe where I went when I was asleep, now that I was no longer home". In her video, text appears on the screen – a date, then a list of words emerging one by one, containing the themes of that night's dreams. This is followed by a single sentence of spoken text, which is the first sentence of the narrative of the dream. The work is expanded in the form of an artist's book where the full narrative of the dream is reproduced.

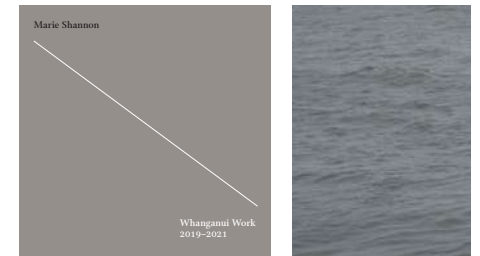
In contrast to this video work are six photographs of architectural details from the cottage – the corners of the attic bedroom, a dormer window, a lightshade, bookcase and a ceiling beam. To create these sparse images, Shannon returned to model making, which was a feature of her earlier photographic work. These replicas of simple spaces are to scale and allowed Shannon to photograph the interiors of the cottage when she returned to her Auckland base, where she was careful to light them from the same direction as the light falls in the cottage. In these photographs it's difficult to tell what is fact and fiction as Shannon's images are faithful facsimiles. In a world where image making is instant, Shannon's use of a large-format camera means that many elements need to be considered very carefully before an image is taken. The photographs in production and subject matter are contemplative and considered. Shannon's Whanganui residency focused on her immediate environs and the quiet conversation of light, line and the slow passing of time.

**GREG DONSON**, *Curator & Public Programmes Manager*



**Marie Shannon**, *Ceiling light* 2021,  
archival digital ink print

To accompany Marie Shannon's exhibition we are excited to have two publications available from the Sarjeant shop. The first is a limited edition artist book produced by Marie as a companion to her video work 'Sleeping Near the River'. This features the full transcript of the artist's dream diary that she kept while she was artist-in-residence at Tylee Cottage. The second is an illustrated catalogue that features excerpts from 'Sleeping Near the River' and an interview with Curator & Public Programmes Manager – Greg Donson.



The Gallery's artist in residence programme is generously supported by



# *On the Move: Modes of Transport from the Collection*

11 SEPTEMBER–7 NOVEMBER, 2021

*On the Move* was curated to coincide with Whanganui Heritage Month, originally scheduled to take place in September and based on the theme of transport. Unfortunately due to COVID 19 restrictions this celebration of Whanganui's unique heritage has been postponed until 2022. Regardless, the exhibition is on display at Sarjeant on the Quay until 7 November, 2021 and provides the opportunity for viewers to delve deeply into the Gallery's archives and historical images, discovering more about Whanganui's sites and history. Exhibited are a selection of photographs, watercolours, prints and paintings showing a variety of transport from sailing boats, ships, and waka on the Whanganui River to horse-drawn carts, bicycles, motorbikes, cars, and, if you look closely enough, even a tinker's cart drawn by a dog.

One of the works in the exhibition is an early watercolour by W. Pharazyn, dated c. 1857–1882, given to the Sarjeant Gallery in 2004 from Arthur Bates'

estate. The watercolour depicts a view across the Whanganui River from near St George's Gate looking towards Mount Ruapehu. Today, the bare fields and hills in the image are the suburban sprawl of Whanganui East and Bastia Hill near Nixon Street. The imposing two-storied house on the far bank is Sedgebrook Grange and was the home of the Nixon family. John and Julia Nixon arrived in Whanganui in 1841 and moved to this 900 acre property in 1857.

John Nixon was a captain in the NZ Militia and later promoted to the rank of Major. He commanded the Whanganui Cavalry Volunteers, was an early Justice of the Peace in Whanganui, and worked as an immigration agent. He also purchased one of the first sewing machines in the district for his daughter Lucy. In March 1882, Sedgebrook Grange was destroyed by fire and the house was rebuilt on a grander scale, designed by Mr A Atkins, with a 66 foot river frontage and five bedrooms. Unfortunately in 1914 this house also burnt down, leaving only the chimneys standing. In May 1884 Major Nixon died and in 1896 the Sedgebrook estate was sub-divided and the land sold off.

**JENNIFER TAYLOR MOORE**, *Curator of Collections*

**W. Pharazyn** *Whanganui* circa 1857–1882, watercolour on paper, 2004/8/7. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. Gift of Arthur Bates estate, 2004



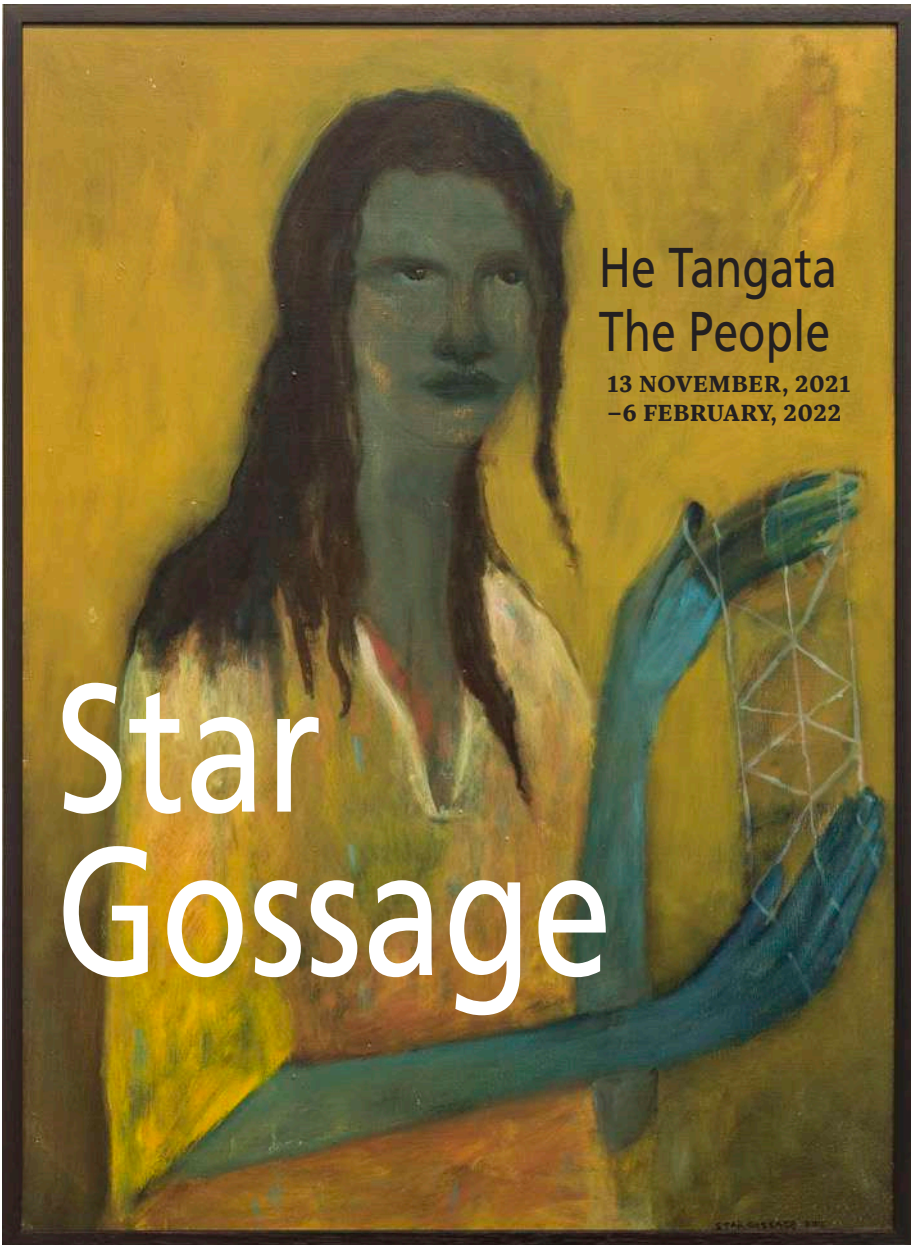


Image: **Star Gossage** *What* 2011, oil on board. Private Collection, Auckland

# Star Gossage

## He Tangata The People

13 NOVEMBER, 2021  
–6 FEBRUARY, 2022



**Sarjeant Gallery**  
**Te Whare o Rehua**  
**Whanganui**

## **Sarjeant** On the Quay

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Sarjeant Gallery is a cultural facility of the Whanganui District Council