

Sarjeant Quarterly 85

Spring 2022



Newsletter of the
Sarjeant Gallery
Te Whare o Rehua
Whanganui
ISSN 1171-3275

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FRONT COVER: **Graham Fletcher**, *Twilight's Edge (Hill & Figure)*, 2022, oil on linen. Courtesy of the artist.
BELOW: Opening of *Testing Ground* with Olivia Edginton's work pictured.



From the Director

During this last winter season things have begun to feel a little more settled as the Gallery gets back to its usual busy routines following the recent restrictions that we have all had to live with.

The Sarjeant has had a tremendous return to form with seventeen varied and well-attended public programme events spread across the last quarter. We had exhibition openings for Vicki Fanning and Tia Ranginui, which were complemented by artist talks. Following the closing of *Whanganui Arts In Review*, Milly Mitchell-Anyon, the Gallery's current Assistant Curator and 2021-2022 Blumhardt Curator, opened two exceptional shows: *Testing Ground* showcasing the talent of eight new innovative artists in the field of craft/object making, and *The Pool Room*—an extensive exhibition of Ross Mitchell-Anyon pots recently gifted by the Estate of Dolly Mitchell-Anyon, to the Sarjeant's permanent Collection.

The Sarjeant's educator, Sietske Jansma, also took the opportunity to help promote and celebrate Puanga/Matariki teaching five making classes for children of all ages. Perhaps the largest of our events held, was a rare opportunity to hear Chris Finlayson speak at the Whanganui launch of his book *He Kupu Taurangi*, which recounts his time as Minister for Treaty Settlements from 2008 through 2017. Chris is a member of the Sarjeant Gallery Trust and was instrumental in the successful restart of the Sarjeant Gallery Redevelopment when he also held the portfolio of Minister for Culture & Heritage and we were privileged to be able to host him and to help launch this important book.

As this quarterly goes to print we have just opened two new exhibitions. The first is *Twilight's Edge* by Graham Fletcher featuring seven new paintings produced as a result of his time in Whanganui as artist-in-residence at Tylee Cottage in 2021. The second exhibition is a collection show titled Bill Milbank: *Selected Works*, the exhibition highlights key works acquired by the Gallery during Milbank's time as Director between 1978–2006. To complement our new exhibitions, we have many more events and activities planned. In this Quarterly our Redevelopment Project Director Gaye Batty will outline some significant developments in the design of the Gallery's new wing, Te Pataka o Sir Te Atawhai Archie John Taiaroa. Meanwhile, we look forward to seeing you at 38 Taupō Quay and we also extend a very warm welcome to Denis O'Connor our new Tylee Cottage Artist-in-Residence and his partner Clare Dunleavy.

GREG ANDERSON

Tylee Cottage News: New artist-in-residence—Denis O'Connor

Denis O'Connor

We're delighted to welcome Denis O'Connor and his partner Clare Dunleavy to Tylee Cottage where they will be in residence until early December. Based on Waiheke Island, O'Connor is a ceramicist, sculptor and writer. He is known for his emblematic limestone carvings, slate engravings and large-scale public commissions that draw references from the rich literature of Ireland and Aotearoa. His works are beautifully crafted and utilise a range of mediums. He has been the recipient of numerous residencies, most recently the Blumhardt Foundation Residency in Gulgong (2016), Frances Hodgkins Fellowship at Otago University (1985), Moët and Chandon Fellowship in Champagne, France (1996), the Rathcoola Fellowship in Cork, Ireland (2005). We're looking forward to seeing what O'Connor works on during his time in Whanganui and we are very pleased to say that his post-residency show will take place at Pukenuamu/Queen's Park. Welcome Denis and Clare.

Publications: To accompany the exhibition *Testing Ground* curated by the 2021-2022 Blumhardt Curator, Milly Mitchell-Anyon (and current Assistant Curator), the Sarjeant Gallery is about to publish a beautifully designed catalogue to accompany the exhibition. So keep an eye on our social media and in your inbox for more information about the launch.

Upcoming we also have a small publication to accompany Graham Fletcher's post-Tylee residency exhibition *Twilight's Edge* which has been produced as the result of his 2021 residency at Tylee Cottage.

On tour: We are very pleased that Andrea Gardner's exhibition—*This is the Rabbit Hole* has toured to Aratoi Wairarapa Museum of Art and History, where it is currently on view until 16 October. Gardner has made additional sculptural work to accompany her distinctive photographic portraits. As a side note we also extend our hearty congratulations to former Assistant Curator Sarah McClintock who has just been appointed as the new Director of Aratoi and who has been Curator and Collection Manager at the Suter Art Gallery in Nelson since she left Whanganui.

Upcoming: 2022 Pattillo Whanganui Arts Review: It would be remiss of us to not to remind Whanganui artists reading this that the 2022 Pattillo Whanganui Arts Review is fast approaching with submissions day the Tuesday 1 November 2022. For more information about entry requirements, head to the Sarjeant Gallery's website.

GREG DONSON, *Curator & Public Programmes Manager*

Friends Update Spring 2022

The Friends Executive Committee is working on a number of initiatives, including an education outreach programme, local events and gatherings, visits to galleries and collections in the region and further afield.

The Friends continue to be involved in Gallery openings and events such as artist talks, book launches, concerts and workshops. There is a lively programme in this spring quarter so do watch out for details on the website, in local papers and on flyers in cafes, restaurants, libraries and shops in our community. The Friends Executive Committee always wear name tags at events so please introduce yourself and ask if you need assistance.

In June, the Executive were able to tour the redevelopment site with Gaye Batty the Project Director and Barry Robin, MacMillan & Lockwood's Project Manager. We were very impressed with progress and a palpable sense of anticipation and excitement spread through the group as we stood under the 13m high dome in the old Sarjeant Gallery for the first time in years.

Since the last *Sarjeant Quarterly* was published we have welcomed the following new Friends, many of whom are new to Whanganui. John & Fran Dryden, Meg Hayes, Rose Miller & David Cauchi, Naeri Nichols, Cushla O'Brien & John Owens, Sarah O'Brien, Zac O'Brien, Briarlee Rees, Christine Sheppard, Della Slattery, Barbara-Mary Taylor and Michele Walls. New Friends are always welcome. Membership forms are available at the Gallery front desk and details are online at www.sarjeant.org.nz/membership.

**Shop at Sarjeant**

The Gallery Shop is focused on exquisitely designed & hand-made objects. We aim to showcase fine examples of jewellery, glass, ceramics and prints by the best contemporary artists from around New Zealand and locally. Your purchases help support makers throughout New Zealand and members receive 10% discount.

Collection News

Conservation treatment is well underway for one of the Sarjeant Gallery's largest framed collection works. *Fountain of Youth* by Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones (British, b.1833, d.1898) was gifted to the Gallery by Lord Leverhulme in 1924. The work is one of six gifted to the Gallery by Leverhulme following his trip to New Zealand in late 1923, which included a visit to the newly opened Sarjeant Gallery. The chalk pastel drawing, dated 1892, is an unfinished study for a portion of a much larger work which was never realised by Burne-Jones. A smaller preparatory sketch of the same title, which shows the complete planned design, is in the Tate Britain collection.

The Sarjeant's drawing was housed in a magnificent gilded wooden frame with a heavy pediment however the weight of the frame made it difficult to move safely. Following conservation treatment of the drawing in 2011 the work has remained separated from the frame due to concerns about the frame's structural integrity.

Working in conjunction with Manawatu Museum Services Conservator Detlef Klein, we came up with a plan to reduce the weight and strengthen the frame. This involved the use of a specialist product Optium Museum Acrylic, supplied by Tru-View Acrylic in the United States. Not only is it substantially lighter in weight, this product has low reflection and most importantly low static charge. Because the drawing is in chalk pastel the chalk dust could easily migrate onto the acrylic surface if a static charge was present or the acrylic placed too close to the work.

Conservator Detlef Klein designed a purpose-built metal frame to house the artwork stretcher and maintain an appropriate distance between the artwork and the acrylic, which will fit inside the gilded frame. In July 2022 the glazing frame was constructed and the artwork safely sealed inside. Work continues on stabilisation and treatment of the gilded frame and we look forward to reuniting this work with its frame in time for display in the Sarjeant Gallery's reopening suite of exhibitions in 2024. This project has been made possible thanks to a generous grant from the Stout Trust.

JENNIFER TAYLOR MOORE, *Curator of Collections*



ABOVE: Detlef Klein and Aaron Roberts of Manawatu Museum Services insert the drawing into the glazing frame, July 2022.

LEFT: Exhibition installation for 'Lord Leverhulme's Gift', 2001.



Redevelopment Update

The project has faced a number of challenges this winter as the high number of wet days and the on-going effects of the pandemic have impacted worker health and safety and site productivity. In light of this, I am proud of our project workforce who have managed to maintain the critical path programme which rests on the progress of work on the existing building. This includes earthquake strengthening and installation of new floors complete in the west, east and south quadrants. Now the focus is on completing strengthening of the northern end of the 103 year-old building, where temporary propping has been erected to support the exterior wall while the heritage stairwell undergoes restoration.

In the extension wing, Te Pātaka o Sir Te Atawhai Archie John Taiaroa, the underground collection storage area, the basement and ground floors of the new tower block are complete and attention has turned to procuring the cladding required for the rain-shield façade. The original plan was to use the same light coloured Oamaru stone which surrounds the original Sarjeant, as built in 1919. However, whereas the old building's stonework starts from the ground level and blocks are stacked in layers joined together by mortar—the cladding for the new wing will be constructed from thin panels of stone commencing at the second level, held in place using a mechanical fixing system that pins each stone panel into position with no mortar or adhesive required. This design calls for a highly specified grade of stone.

Heavy plywood substrate and weather membranes will surround the second level onto which a vertical steel rail system will be attached. These rails support the brackets which hold in place the stone panels and form the façade.



Oamaru stone is a natural, variable material and the quarry was not able to guarantee the density of the current supply creating an unacceptable risk of cracking and failure when used as a cladding material thus eliminating it as an option for the façade.

This was seen as an opportunity to explore a range of alternative façade ideas as part of a collaborative co-design process to reflect Whanganui's culture and rich history. I am pleased to share with you the inspirational new concept for the façade which will be constructed from dark stone panels, highlighted by splashes of shiny steel Tioata inserts to create the effect of light shimmering on the water, or Kānapanapa, the key design narrative chosen through a series of workshops with the architect Warren & Mahoney and Te Kahui Toi, the artist group appointed by Te Rūnanga o Tūpoho. The stone panels are trapezoidal in shape and will be formed into an Aramoana pattern unique to Whanganui using honed and polished stone finishes to create contrast and shadow.

The two buildings will be linked together by a glass atrium with a waka bridge which symbolises the partnership and the bridge between the old, with the new.

From a project management perspective, the process of stone selection and co-design for the façade has been robust. The granite chosen meets the strength and seismic specifications as determined by the building code and is readily available, with the manufacturer and builder confident of delivery within the construction programme.

GAYE BATTY, *Sarjeant Gallery Redevelopment Project Director*



The entrance way to the redeveloped Sarjeant Gallery with the new wing Te Pataka o Sir Te Atawhai Archie John Taiaoroa to the left and the original building on the right. Image supplied by Warren & Mahoney

Graham Fletcher

Twilight's Edge

27 AUGUST–20 NOVEMBER, 2022

Graham Fletcher's seven new paintings featured in *Twilight's Edge* and produced since his time as artist-in-residence (February–June, 2021) are both a continuation and departure from the narrative technique he has consistently employed in his work. In 2010 Fletcher first showed a group of paintings that combined 1950s and 60s architecture. These were like the pages of modernist magazines with interiors awash with stylish furniture and design and cultural artefacts. These works grouped under a banner of 'Lounge Room Tribalism' were inspired by a number of private collections of tribal art which led to Fletcher researching the critical legacy of Oceanic or African tribal art in domestic settings and how this legacy might be subverted within a contemporary Pacific and New Zealand context. As an extension of this, the paintings in *Twilight's Edge* evoke a similar feeling of tension. Here Fletcher collages together a variety of imagery from different sources and in doing so there is a strange kind of disconnection between what is real, imagined and reconfigured.

Fletcher used his time as artist-in-residence to compile what he terms a 'treasury of information'—visual records of Whanganui and things he saw while he was here. These included photographs taken while exploring the city—Virginia Lake where he regularly walked, Durie Hill, Castlecliff and further afield Hiruharama on the Whanganui River; research online;



collecting ephemera and making drawings. On return to his home in Ōtepoti Dunedin Fletcher collaged all these elements together, to create new composite landscapes, sparsely populated by shadowy figures, sentinel like carvings and skinny dogs that look like they have wandered into the scene from a Paul Gauguin painting.

Fletcher describes having the paintings in his studio as being akin to working on multiple puzzles all at the same time where eventually "the work tells me—"That's enough!" Ultimately each work is self-contained, but strength is in the grouping".

The landscapes in Fletcher's paintings have suggestions of time spent in Whanganui but in other ways these composite landscapes could be anywhere in the Pacific. Perhaps that's why they're unsettling, in a post-covid environment of a heightened sense of place, these works are curiously 'not of this place', but a place of the imagination.

GREG DONSON, Curator & Public Programmes Manager

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



ABOVE: **Graham Fletcher**, *Twilight's Edge (Blue Trees)*, 2022, Oil on linen. Courtesy of the artist.

Bill Milbank *Selected Works*

27 AUGUST–24 OCTOBER, 2022

The Sarjeant Gallery has a vast and diverse collection of over 8,000 items in its care which spans over four centuries of art history. For over a century the collection has been shaped by many people - donors, advisors, staff and artists. Bill Milbank was the Gallery's Director from between 1978 and 2006, and during his tenure he developed facets of the Gallery's programming and collecting that remain cornerstones of what we do today.

Many visitors to Sarjeant on the Quay and from outside of Whanganui may not have experienced visiting the beautiful neo-classical building opened in 1919, at Pukenui Queen's Park and named after local benefactor Henry Sarjeant. In 2014 the Sarjeant moved to a temporary facility at 38 Taupō Quay in preparation for the major redevelopment project currently underway involving the historic building being strengthened and restored. To the north of the original gallery will be a contemporary new wing named Te Pataka o Sir Te Atawhai Archie John Taiaroa in memory of a loved and respected Whanganui Kaumātua. This will bring the facility into the 21st Century and is scheduled to open in early-mid 2024.

This redevelopment project had its beginnings during Milbank's directorship with a competition for the design of the new wing that was awarded to Warren & Mahoney in 1999. Although the path ahead for the Sarjeant is exciting it was during Milbank's time that key strands of the Gallery's programming and collection began to develop and gather



Laurence Aberhart, *Andrew Drummond's "Coming and Going" Dome Installation, Sarjeant Gallery, 1988 (detail)*, Collection of Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui

momentum. This exhibition selected in collaboration with Milbank features four of those strands: his commitment to forming and nurturing relationships with artists; the evolution of the series of site-specific installations that have taken place in the Gallery's neo-classical 13 metre-high central dome gallery; the Gallery's artist-in-residence programme at Tylee Cottage; and the Gallery's early commitment to showing and collecting contemporary work by Māori artists.

The four strands featured in this exhibition illustrate that Milbank's tenure as Director was as he stated "a time of collaboration and facilitation" on his part. Through Bill Milbank, and each of the artists he worked with, these relationships were of trust and an ongoing engagement with spaces and place, the Sarjeant and Whanganui.

GREG DONSON, *Curator & Public Programmes Manager*

JENNIFER TAYLOR MOORE, *Curator of Collections*

MILLY MITCHELL-ANYON, *Assistant Curator*

The Pool Room Dolly Mitchell-Anyon's Collection

ON VIEW UPSTAIRS AT ISITE GALLERY UNTIL 16 OCTOBER

This exhibition is about the works that potter, Ross Mitchell-Anyon (1954–2022), gifted his parents, Dolly (1930–2021) and Barrie Mitchell-Anyon (1929–2007), from the 1970s onwards. In 2021 when Dolly passed away, the family decided to donate the pottery as a collection. The pots in this exhibition are a snapshot of a home; as well as a precis of Ross Mitchell-Anyon's different styles, collaborations, and periods of production.

When Ross's works were at Dolly and Barrie's house, they were in use; in the garden, the lounge or in the kitchen. They had passed the muster, survived decades of use and witnessed multiple generations of children growing up. There's a scene in *The Castle* (1997), an Australian movie about the Kerrigan family in Melbourne, where Sal Kerrigan gifts her husband, Darryl, a ceramic tankard. Overwhelmed with emotion, Darryl announces that the tankard is "going straight to the pool room." It was too good to use, instead it was now a cherished and valued object.

In keeping with *The Castle* analogies, the 'vibe' of these objects has since shifted with their change in scene. It might seem counter to their original use, making the domestic pottery no longer usable as intended. However, these works were used and loved for decades by both Dolly and Barrie, but also the wider Mitchell-Anyon family at gatherings and so on. It is appropriate that the collection stays together, in its new home at the Gallery to be enjoyed by others in the exhibition *The Pool Room* at the iSite Gallery at 31 Taupo Quay. Where they have officially made the transition to Whanganui's 'pool room'—the Sarjeant Gallery's permanent collection where they'll be enjoying the serenity of retirement from now on.

MILLY MITCHELL-ANYON, *Blumhardt Curator 2021–2022*

Developed with the support of:



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TOP: Barrie and Dolly Mitchell-Anyon's garden.

BOTTOM: **Ross Mitchell-Anyon**, *Garden Planter*, clay. Collection of Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. Gift of the Dolly Mitchell-Anyon estate, 2022.



Education News

We have had a great Term Two at the Gallery with lots of students visiting us from many different schools throughout the term participating in a variety of practical sessions.

We have had beautiful exhibitions to explore such as Tia Ranginui's *Tua o Tāwauwau (Away with the Fairies)* where students created some beautiful work in response to her photographs using pastel and dye. They drew their own Patupaiarehe (fairies) with red hair, pale skin, with the tell-tale signs of mist confirming their presence.

We enjoyed discussing Vicki Fanning's glass works and looking at the way light interacts with glass providing wonderful reflections and shadows. Whanganui Arts in Review, featuring the work of 23 previous winners of the Whanganui Arts Review also provided many talking points and responses from students. Brit Bunkley's sculptural work *How we Dream* was one that had students stop and contemplate what they were seeing.

June is always a busy time for us with students learning and celebrating Puanga and Matariki. We celebrated by learning new skills like weaving stars out of strips of paper, making tissue paper collage stars to stick to their windows and making bright decorative kites to hang on the wall.

Our first Matariki Holiday was

celebrated with Puanga Rising in Majestic Square on the evening of June 24th. We ran some workshops for students and adults to make work to decorate the Square for the evening. We made Lamprey out of paper cups and flying Kereru to hang from the lamp posts. We also made a flock of fabulous shiny Ruru (Morepork) out of aluminium pie plates to go into the trees, using the simple and effective method of Metal Repoussé.

SIETSKE JANSMA,
Education Officer

Exhibitions

Testing Ground

18 JUNE–16 OCTOBER 2022

Featuring eight contemporary craft practitioners from Aotearoa at the forefront of experimentation, generously supported by the Blumhardt Foundation and Creative New Zealand.

The Pool Room:

Dolly Mitchell-Anyon's Collection

18 JUNE–16 OCTOBER 2022

Works of Ross Mitchell-Anyon's that were gifted to the Sarjeant Gallery by the estate of his mother, Dolly Mitchell-Anyon.

Graham Fletcher Twilight's Edge

27 AUGUST–20 NOVEMBER 2022

Graham Fletcher's post Tylee Residency exhibition, generously supported by Creative New Zealand.

Bill Milbank Selected Works

27 AUGUST–24 OCTOBER 2022

Works from the collection that are representative of the collecting and programming strengths developed by former Sarjeant Gallery Director Bill Milbank between 1978 and 2006.

New Zealand Society of Artists in Glass—Members Show 2022

22 OCTOBER 2022–29 JANUARY 2023

The largest showcase of glass in the country, in collaboration with NZ Glassworks.

2022 Pattillo Whanganui Arts Review

12 NOVEMBER 2022–26 FEBRUARY 2023

An annual showcase of the Whanganui region's artistic output each year.

Heritage Month Events

Public Talk: Monuments & Memorials

Join Curator of Collections Jennifer Taylor Moore on an exploration of Whanganui's monuments and memorials as seen in the Sarjeant Collection. Sat 8 October 2022 at 4pm. Free, but bookings essential.

Tour: Sarjeant Gallery Collection Store

Take a tour through the Sarjeant's Collection Store to look at some important historical artworks in the Sarjeant Collection. Stair access, limited numbers. Four tours, all at 2pm: Sat 8 Oct, Sun 9 Oct, Sat 15 Oct and Sun 16 Oct 2022. Presales \$10 and door sales (if still available) \$15. Bookings essential.

Workshop:

Create Your Own Heritage Annual

Annual editors Kate De Goldi and Susan Paris lead this hands-on workshop for 9–13 year olds. Their hugely popular Annuals are chocka block full of NZ stories, comics, puzzles and games. Tues 11 October 2022 between 2–4pm. Cost \$10, numbers limited to 24 with materials supplied. Bookings essential.

Book Launch: Annual 3

Kate De Goldi and Susan Paris launch Annual 3, the latest of their miscellanies for 9 to 13-year-olds—a contemporary take on the great heritage Annuals. Book sales and signing. Refreshments

served. Tues 11 Oct at 5:30pm. Bookings essential.

Public Talk: History Speaks, The Sarjeant Time Capsule

Curator of Collections Jennifer Taylor Moore shares the incredible story of the 1918 time capsule found hidden in the walls of the old Sarjeant Gallery during the redevelopment. Tues 18 Oct at 7pm. Free, but bookings essential

Public Talk: The History of the Wanganui Glass Company Ltd

Te Herenga Waka (Victoria University of Wellington) Museum and Heritage Studies students present their research into the history of The Wanganui Glass Company on Keith Street. Sat 29 Oct at 2pm. Free, but bookings essential

Wet Plate Portraits



A 45 min wet-plate portrait session with photographer Adrian Cook. Take part in a process developed in the 1850s. Watch your image slowly appear on a metal plate and document the process as it happens. Sat 29 and Sun 30 Oct, sessions between 10.30am and 4pm. Cost is \$150 per portrait. Bookings essential: <https://calendly.com/tintypecentral/sarjeant>.

The Pukenamu Archaeological Dig

1 OCTOBER–31 OCTOBER 2022

A small exhibition of the historical artefacts found during the archaeological excavation at Pukenamu/Queen's Park in 2020. At the Gallery.

All bookings can be made at the Sarjeant shop, by ringing 06 349 0506, on the website www.sarjeant.org.nz or found on our Facebook Page.

 facebook.com/SarjeantGallery
 @sarjeantgallery. For more information & to keep up to date with news visit: sarjeant.org.nz

Thomas Carroll, *Kauri Pūtōrino*, 2022, kauri, paua, rope. Courtesy of the artist.



Testing Ground

18 June –
16 October 2022

Thomas Carroll
Olivia Edginton
Areez Katki
Maia McDonald
Zhu Ohmu
Ben Pyne
Moniek Schrijer
Ted Synnott

Made possible with
support from:



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Left: Thomas Carroll, *Kauri pūtōrino*, 2022, kauri,
paua, rope. Courtesy of the artist.



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Sarjeant Gallery is a cultural facility of the Whanganui District Council