

# Sarjeant Quarterly 87

Autumn 2023



Newsletter of the  
Sarjeant Gallery  
Te Whare o Rehua  
Whanganui  
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# Contents

Message from the Chairman **3** /  
 Sarjeant News **4** / Friends Update **5** /  
 Redevelopment Update **6** / *The Sun Sets  
 Beneath the Ocean* **8** / *Theatre Country* **10** /  
*Aves: Sculptural Works from the Collection*  
**12** / *Observations: From the Collection* **13** /  
 Education Update **14** / Shop Update **15**

FRONT COVER: Zahra Killeen-Chance and Solomon Mortimer, *Tracing Pumice*, 2021.

BELOW: Zahra Killeen-Chance and Solomon Mortimer, *Culvert of my nightmare*, 2021.



## Message from the Chairman

Greetings from the Sarjeant Gallery and the trustees of the Sarjeant Gallery Trust.

After a busy Christmas and summer, planning is underway for the reopening of the redeveloped Sarjeant Gallery in April next year. The iSite exhibition space has now been vacated by the Sarjeant team and the temporary gallery space at 38 Taupō Quay will close at the end of June. This will allow the staff to focus on moving back up to Pukenua Queen's Park and prepare for the reopening exhibitions.

Before the closure in June, there will be a new suite of shows for Autumn featuring Zahra Killeen-Chance and Solomon Mortimer's Tylee Cottage residency exhibition *The Sun Sets Beneath the Ocean*. Additionally, there will be two collection shows—*Observations: From the Collection* and *Aves: Sculptural Work from the Collection*. Our outgoing Assistant Curator, Milly Mitchell-Anyon, will be opening *Theatre Country* before leaving for the Dowse Art Museum. We wish her the best in her new endeavours.

During the temporary closure, we plan to stay in touch with our supporters by hosting a series of events and programmes leading up to the reopening. More information on these events will be provided in the next Sarjeant Quarterly by our new Director of the Sarjeant Gallery.

Our new Director, Andrew Clifford, was appointed in December. He leaves his role as Director of Te Uru Waitākere Contemporary Gallery in Titirangi to join us in Whanganui in late March. We look forward to welcoming him and partner to Whanganui.

The Sarjeant Gallery is embarking on an exciting year, and we look forward to sharing this new chapter in its history with you.

**NICOLA WILLIAMS**, *Sarjeant Gallery Trust Board Chairman*

## Sarjeant News

The Gallery team has returned refreshed after a summer break and we hope that all of you have managed to do the same. The 2022 *Pattillo Whanganui Arts Review* and the members show for the New Zealand Society of Artists in Glass were popular shows with our summer visitors, and at the end of January the glass show finished in the Gallery's object gallery upstairs at the iSite. This was our last show in the space as we prepare for our move back to Pukenui Queen's Park. Although we have been exhibiting in that space for over a decade, it by no means signals the end of the Sarjeant's commitment to craft/object art, which forms a foundation for our programming. We have a great new suite of shows being installed over the coming weeks, which you can read about in this Quarterly.

We are also pleased to welcome Areez Katki as our new Tylee Cottage artist-in-residence as the craft/object-based practitioner for the next five months. Areez is based between Auckland and Mumbai, India. Welcome to Whanganui, Areez!

We are delighted that Milly Mitchell-Anyon, who has been our Assistant Curator covering Jessica Kidd's parental leave, has secured a position as Curator at the Dowse Art Museum in Lower Hutt. Prior to being Assistant Curator, she was the Sarjeant's inaugural Blumhardt Curator and curated the wonderful exhibition *Testing Ground* with its accompanying publication. The position at the Dowse is well-deserved and we will miss having Milly on board.

At the end of 2022, we bid farewell to Raewyn Johnson, our terrific Functions Coordinator. After a legendary 27+ years of service as an employee and long-time volunteer before that, Raewyn has retired but will be on board on a casual basis until the middle of this year. We're hoping to hear from Raewyn reflecting on her time at the Gallery in our next quarterly. As a team, we'd like to thank her for her remarkable service to the Sarjeant and for being a much-loved and respected colleague.

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

## Friends of the Sarjeant Gallery update Autumn 2023

Membership forms for lapsed Friends of the Sarjeant have been arriving in your letterbox. The current membership period has been extended until mid-2024 to ensure that Friends are connected with the Gallery over this next critical 18-month period as the Gallery gears up for its reopening. This is a wonderful time to join the Friends or to gift someone a membership.

Since the last Sarjeant Quarterly was published, we have welcomed five new Friends, some of whom are new to Whanganui while others have lived here for some time. Welcome to Dorothy Churchward, Jenni Corbett,

Gareth St. John Thomas, Lynette Stratton-Williams, and Emma Willis.

The Friends have continued to support the Gallery, helping out at the November launch of Paul Diamond's book *Downfall: The destruction of Charles Mackay*, the opening of the 2022 *Pattillo Whanganui Arts Review* (in which we sponsor a Merit Award), and Martin Edmond's talk on his upcoming history of the Sarjeant Gallery. Planning is underway for a number of initiatives supporting the Gallery's reopening, including something special to celebrate the Gallery's rosy future.



ABOVE: The Friends of the Sarjeant Executive Committee at the Pattillo Whanganui Arts Review in November last year with Anne Pattillo. L-R: Kate Smith, Margaret Samuels, Libby Wood, Andrés Salinas, Anique Jayasinghe, Lari Steward, Anne Pattillo, James Kirkwood, and Tom Turner.



## Sarjeant Gallery Redevelopment Update

As our main contractor continues work on the new Te Pātaka o Sir Te Atawhai Archie John Taiaroa wing and the original Sarjeant Gallery, preparations are underway for the internal fit-out and refurbishment works.

The fit-out includes the detailing for the reception counter and retail space, the various interior floor coverings for the ground floor and main entrance in the new glass atrium, the overhead walkway connecting the old and new buildings, the café, event spaces,

boardroom, and staff offices. These areas will all experience heavy use and traffic from staff and the public, so the fixtures, fittings, and furniture need to be carefully selected to be both fit for purpose and extremely durable.

Installation of these fit-out elements will be timed in stages to follow the completion of the structural works for the new wing. In the old Sarjeant building, plastering and restoration of the original architectural features will commence once the scaffolding and interior

support structures associated with the seismic strengthening works on the roof have been removed.

The café will be fitted out in accordance with a café operator. A specialist retail and hospitality agent is working alongside the Sarjeant Gallery team, Whanganui District Council, and Whanganui & Partners to find and select a suitable operator to run the café. A call for expressions of interest from experienced café operators to take on the tenancy will be issued shortly.

The ground-floor café opens

out to an outdoor patio, the final detailing of which is currently underway. This patio sits atop the underground collection store and will be tiled. Facing northwards, the view from the café on the patio toward Mount Ruapehu will be spectacular.

**GAYE BATTY**, *Project Director*

**BOTTOM LEFT:** The Sarjeant Gallery building site from atop a crane.

**BOTTOM RIGHT:** The underground collection store and Te Pātaka o Sir Te Atawhai Archie John Taiaroa.



# The Sun Sets Beneath the Ocean: Zahra Killeen Chance and Solomon Mortimer

11 MARCH–30 JUNE 2023



Within weeks of arriving in Whanganui in July 2021 for their five-month residency at Tylee Cottage, Auckland-based photographer Solomon Mortimer and his partner, choreographic artist Zahra Killeen-Chance, became more familiar with the confines of the cottage than many other residents before them. In mid-August, the entire country was placed into Level 4 lockdown, which curtailed their ability to explore Whanganui, but provided a framework for their new photographic and video work that can be seen in this post-residency exhibition.

The two have been making collaborative work since 2012, with Mortimer behind the camera lens and Killeen-Chance often in front of the lens. However, the choreography of these images is a collaborative process. In their exhibition, *The Sun Sets Beneath the Ocean*, they consider the architectural details of the historic cottage, using it as a stage for a slow-moving exploration of their time at Tylee—the changing light and family life, with their infant daughter and Killeen-Chance pregnant with their second daughter. They describe their process as “a dialogue between the topography of the body and the topography of the environment.”

Although the cottage was a key site, the family still managed to explore the wider environs of Whanganui, as seen in the wonderful suite of images in the exhibition that adds to the rich legacy of photographs made by former photographers who have been in residence at Tylee Cottage.

A key part of their practice is the production of artist books, and this exhibition will be accompanied by a publication featuring a generous selection of works produced during their time in Whanganui. This will be their second book produced as a result of their time in Whanganui; last year, their photobook *A Room in Whanganui*, which was a result of their time at Tylee Cottage during lockdown, won the top prize in the 2022 Aotearoa Photobook Awards.

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

The Gallery's artist-in-residence programme is generously funded through Creative New Zealand's Toi Uru Kahikatea Investment programme.



OPPOSITE: Zahra Killeen-Chance and Solomon Mortimer, *Ascending at Tylee Cottage*, 2021.



# Theatre Country

25 FEBRUARY–14 MAY 2023

*Theatre Country* pivots around artist and designer Cecelia Kumeroa (Te Ātihaunui-a-Pāparāngi) and environmental scientist Dr. Billy van Uitregt's (Ngā Rauru, Te Ātihaunui-a-Pāparāngi, Tuhoe, Dutch) collaborative moving image work—*Dawn Chorus* (2022). Their collaboration uses the sounds of birds recorded at Bushy Park Tarapuruhi by Dr. van Uitregt, which are then animated by Kumeroa as a moving image work. It speaks very specifically to being here in Whanganui and to a future where native birds like hihi, kōkako, kererū, robin, and tieke—are flourishing.

The title of the exhibition *Theatre Country* references ecologist Geoff Park's seminal collection of essays on landscape and whenua; examining the ongoing effects from colonisation on the natural habitat. He writes about the unfortunate contradiction in the history of conservation, that it was a "turn-of-the-century scenic urge that cut Māori out of nature."<sup>1</sup> The burning of lowland forest and ecosystems had a devastating effect on people, wildlife and whenua: "Largely because of the gutting of Aotearoa's lowland forests and swamps by the Britain of the South project, those ecosystems now have a mere fraction of the birds they had all through the centuries of Māori habitation."<sup>2</sup>

Works from the Sarjeant Gallery's permanent collection speak to this history. Gabrielle Belz's (Ngāpuhi, Te Ātiawa) work laments the loss of habitat for birds, with the destruction of the environment inextricably linked to the health of people. Matt Pine's (Te Ātihaunui-a-Pāparāngi, Te Ātiawa, Ngāti Tūwharetoa) installation, of Xeroxed Whēkau, Huia, Stirons and Pouākai—reference the reality of the situation—that extinct birds like these live on merely as reproductions. Unseeable to us today. Pine's sculpture of Weka, still standing and still around despite their status as a vulnerable species.

Conservation islands [fenced inland areas] like Bushy Park Tarapuruhi may have been borne out of a sense of duty to restore the forest and wildlife, but to truly resuscitate ecosystems, they need people "who consider them home and invest them with love and vigilance."<sup>3</sup> Bushy Park Tarapuruhi sits within the rohe of Ngā Rauru Kītahi and Whanganui and was given the name *Tarapuruhi* for its "abundant bird life."

Cecelia Kumeroa and Dr. Billy van Uitregt's *Dawn Chorus* ties these ideas together. It would have been inconceivable to make this work twenty years ago. It is an emanation of life, abundant bird song in a breathing ecosystem.

MILLY MITCHELL-ANYON, Assistant Curator



ABOVE: Gabrielle Belz, *Nga Manu Tangitangi*, 1995 (1996/1/1). Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. Purchased, 1995.

#### FOOTNOTES:

- 1 Geoff Park, "Theatre Country," in *Theatre Country: Essays on landscape and whenua*, Victoria University Press: Wellington, 126.
- 2 Geoff Park, "Theatre Country," 127
- 3 Geoff Park, "The Ecology of the Visit," in *Theatre Country: Essays on landscape and whenua*, Victoria University Press: Wellington, 142

## Aves: Sculptural Work from the Collection

11 MARCH–14 MAY 2023



This exhibition, displayed in conjunction with *Theatre Country*, showcases sculptural and installation works from the Sarjeant Gallery's collection that were inspired by birds and bird watching.

Messages communicated by these works include the loss of native habitats and extinction of native species in New Zealand, efforts to preserve what remains, and the principle of kaitiakitanga (guardianship and protection). *Candy Twitcher* (2010) by Whanganui-born artist Kay Walsh was made in collaboration with architect John

Verstappen during her three-month residency at Tylee Cottage in Whanganui in 2009. Taking the form of a bird-watching hut and constructed from recycled tongue and groove timber, Walsh invites the viewer to enter and view the gallery from a different perspective. The work was in part inspired by Mynah birds who were resident in the garden of the cottage during her stay in Whanganui, these birds were captured by Walsh in a moving image work that sits alongside the hut. The structure also reminded Walsh of childhood huts remembered from her time growing up in Whanganui.

Auckland-based sculptor Warren Viscoe has had a long-held interest in exploring environmental issues through his large-scale sculptural works. In the 1982 installation work *Fifteen Bird Calls* that we have on view in the Gallery we see the artist using his preferred media—wood. The work is quite cryptic and as Curator Justin Paton noted that it explores the way “we endanger other forms of life even as we attempt to collect and care for them...” The work is a strange riddle with shuttlecocks—symbols of flight, contained in glass jars, like butterflies we captured as children and kept hostage in similar receptacles, thinking that puncture holes in the grease-proof paper lids would save the poor creatures from certain death.

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

## Observations: From the Collection

18 MARCH–30 JUNE 2023



Drawn from the Sarjeant Gallery collection, this small exhibition looks at some of the ways we see and experience the world around us and how these methods of observation have altered over time. The artworks on display include painting, sculpture, and photography; highlighting some of the senses and tools we have employed in making these observations. These observations include our use of sight and hearing; cameras and mobile phones.

In Michael Illingworth's *Photographer*. 1968 the viewer becomes the subject.

The smartly dressed photographer waves his arm to keep your attention while you ‘pose’ in front of his vintage camera. The observer becomes the observed once more in Anne Noble's *Penguin (Nagoya Aquarium) Japan* from her *Antarctica* series (2003). While the visitors are supposedly there to see the penguins, Noble makes the point that they are recording the view through tiny mobile phone screens rather than watching the expansive underwater vista in front of them, causing the real penguin to become a secondary blur. Perhaps we are spending too much time recording our observations and scrolling through endless user-generated content rather than being active participants ourselves in the world around us.

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

OPPOSITE: Installation of **Warren Viscoe**, *Fifteen Bird Calls*, 1982–1996 (1997/25/1). Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. Gift of the artist, 1997.

ABOVE: **Michael Illingworth**, *Photographer*. 1968, oil on canvas, 1977/15/2. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. Purchased, 1977.



## 14 Education Update

It's great to be starting the year and getting ready to enjoy the last few months of classes in our current temporary space here at Sarjeant on the Quay before our big move to our new building.

We have some fabulous shows coming up that students will enjoy exploring and interacting with. I can't wait to see what exciting things we will create as they respond to what they see and experience.

We are continuing our after school *Making Mondays* programme for terms one and two. These are for students aged 6-10 years old. These sessions are a fun 60 minutes of making art where we try out new ideas and explore various art techniques and materials. If you know children who are keen to come you can find more information on our website under education.

Although the physical Gallery will be closed after June, we will be busy planning how our education programmes will operate in our exciting new facility and also designing some exciting community based projects that will be part of our return to Pukenuamu Queen's Park.

**SIETSKE JANSMA**, *Education Officer*



ABOVE: *Native Birds at Twilight* prints by students from Fordell School, a response to the exhibition *Twilights Edge* by Graham Fletcher, 2022

LEFT: Works by senior students from St Anne's Catholic School creating Monster cups, 2022



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[sarjeantgallery](https://twitter.com/sarjeantgallery)

[@sarjeantgallery](https://www.instagram.com/sarjeantgallery)

For more information & to keep up to date with news & events visit: [sarjeant.org.nz](https://www.sarjeant.org.nz)

## 15 Shop Update

"Exit through the gift shop" is phrase we have often heard in context to gallery and museum retail spaces, but it isn't always as simple as having racks of postcards or fridge magnets positioned to catch your eye at the end of your visit.

In Whanganui we are blessed to have so many talented local makers/artists/craftspeople who supply us with one-of-a-kind pieces, which brings new visitors to the gallery and allows us to be a hub showing our city's skill and creativity.

So, it is with sadness that we say that when the gallery closes its doors at the end of June, the shop and online shop will close temporarily too. The logistics of having the retail space open while we are moving, could cause issues with security and safety. This will also allow our amazing Front of House team to work assisting with the move. We are also looking forward for the opportunity to re-establish the shop in our new space at Pukenuamu Queen's Park and see how we can best serve our makers.

On behalf of all the team at Front of House thank you for all the support you have shown, and we look forward to seeing you when we reopen.

**TERESA CIMINO**, *Gallery Operations Manager*



The Sarjeant on the Quay's temporary Gallery space at 38 Taupō Quay will be closing its doors on 30 June 2023.

The iSite Gallery at 31 Taupō Quay closed on 30 January 2023.

Keep an eye out in the Quarterly, newspaper, website and social media for events and programmes in the interim while we are closed and moving to the newly strengthened and extended Gallery facility at Pukenua Queen's Park.



**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

