

# Sarjeant Quarterly 88

Winter 2023



Newsletter of the  
Sarjeant Gallery  
Te Whare o Rehua  
Whanganui  
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FRONT COVER: **Frances Stachl** *Kia mataara, kia matapopore (be watchful, be attentive)* 2023, oxidised sterling and fine silver, pāua shell, stainless steel pin.

BELOW: **Raukura Naani Waitai** *Kapereira* 2023, oil on board. Courtesy of the artist.



## From the Director

Nau mai, haere mai,

I'm pleased to introduce the latest edition of the Sarjeant Quarterly, my first in the role of Director at Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui, and the last to feature exhibitions at our much-loved Taupō Quay site.

Thank you to all the kind people from the extended Sarjeant Gallery whanau for making myself and my wife, Karen White, feel so welcome as we adjust to life in the beautiful river city of Whanganui after relocating from Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. We have already been spoilt for choice with things to do, and we look forward to making the most of this lively scene, but without the additional stresses of big city life.

The other big change is that it's nearly time to close the doors here at Sarjeant on the Quay, our temporary location that has been home to the Sarjeant Gallery for nearly ten years. Before we go, we have one last exhibition to open especially for Puanga/Matariki: *He Tohu Tēnā Pea | It Is Perhaps a Sign*. We do hope you'll visit us here one last time and wish us well as our preparations ramp up for the move back to Pukenua Queen's Park.

Although we won't have a gallery space for a period, as well as getting on with packing and other arrangements, we will also be busy organising a series of outreach events and activities so we can keep in touch and continue making new friends. It's an exciting time for the Sarjeant and Whanganui as we enter this next transitional phase that brings us closer to reopening in our original home. On behalf of the Sarjeant team, I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported us on this journey. We can't wait to celebrate with you when we reopen in 2024.

Mā te wā,

**ANDREW CLIFFORD**

# From the Sarjeant Gallery Trust

It never ceases to amaze me how generous New Zealanders are when it comes to supporting their communities. This can be in all sorts of ways: giving of their money, but just as importantly, time, resources and knowledge. In this edition I would like to share with you the stories of two bequests we have recently received for the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui.

The first one came out of the blue from the Estate of Jonathan Preston, sheep farmer from Raetihi. Jonathan lived in Raetihi from the age of 14 where he worked for the Manson family as a farm labourer. The Mansons took Jonathan under their wing and semi adopted him as their son, in the words of long-time friend Graham Berry. When Mr Manson died, he left Jonathan half of his farm and Jonathan remained living on that land until his death four years ago at the age of 90. He has been described as “a real character”. He attended Whanganui Collegiate School briefly and was a proud

member of the Alumni, still able to fit his school blazer at Old Boy’s functions up until the end. He was active in the Repertory Theatre in Raetihi, musical events in Taihape and was a frequent visitor to the Sarjeant. His other interests included conservation and travelling. He left no children and never married. Jonathan’s generous bequest of \$850,000 to the Sarjeant will greatly help Whanganui ratepayers as the larger portion will go to the redevelopment whilst a smaller amount has been apportioned to the Sarjeant Endowment Fund.

The second bequest came from the Estate of Eleanor Burgess. Eleanor was a well-known Whanganui identity, having headed the iconic Londontown Department store from 1947 to 1976. One of Whanganui’s best-known gardeners, she has been a generous benefactor towards projects that could be classified as the beautification of Whanganui. These include donations to Bushy Park Tarapuruhi, James McGregor Memorial Park, and Rotokawau



Virginia Lake. In 1985 she gifted the delightful bronze statue of children playing leapfrog to Virginia Lake created by sculptor Hamish Horsley. John Wilson, retired accountant, has facilitated the donation of \$200,000 to the Sarjeant Endowment Fund which will wind up Eleanor’s estate. This is a significant gift for the Endowment Fund which has been established to fund the Gallery’s art acquisitions, ongoing restoration work of the collection, traveling exhibitions and education programmes.

Finally, I would like to share with you some special news we have been told by “a little birdie”.

One of our valued supporters, John Keesing, has recently reached the auspicious age of 100 years. John in his quiet and unassuming way is still actively involved in his community at all levels, including his business interests in Whanganui companies Tasman Tanning and Air Whanganui. He tells me he is looking forward to the next 100! Congratulations John and we wish you and your family all the very best.

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

ABOVE: Well-known Whanganui identity Eleanor Burgess ran the iconic Londontown Department store from 1947 to 1976. Image: Mark Braunias *London Town* 2008, ink and acrylic on canvas.

# Redevelopment Update



TOP: Ply being installed on the roof of Te Pātaka o Sir Te Atawhai Archie John Tairaroa  
 BOTTOM: Complex steel frame works on the roof of the original Sarjeant Gallery building

The current economic environment is challenging for many including those in construction and, in particular, two well-established sub-contractors involved with the Sarjeant Gallery redevelopment. The liquidation of the project's structural steel sub-contractor in March fortunately caused minimal interruption to workflow, with much of the structure already fabricated enabling a Whanganui based business to step in and pick up where the previous company had left off. However, when the HVAC sub-contractor, responsible for the heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems was unexpectedly placed into liquidation by their Australian parent in April, it was a quite a blow for the Wellington based business and its employees. HVAC is a complex trade and the ducting installation was only just beginning on site. The project team had ensured all plant and equipment had been pre-purchased in advance to avoid inflation rises, and the project's main contractor McMillan and Lockwood Central Ltd quickly secured key personnel from their former sub-contractor so that the on-site works could be re-started and move ahead. An independent commissioning agent has also been engaged by the project team to ensure all fire, electrical and HVAC systems are fully compliant.

While each of these cases has been able to be resolved, it is a sign of the times and indicative of the stresses in the industry at present. The project team is also mindful that the project timeline may still be impacted as a result.

Currently on site at Pukenua Queen's Park, there is a wide array of specialist trades working simultaneously on the redevelopment project, but interestingly in two completely contrasting construction environments—one very old and one very new. The Category 1 heritage listed gallery building was constructed mostly by hand 104 years ago and the strengthening and restoration of this nationally recognised fragile building requires a delicate touch, and a lot of support—more concrete, more reinforcing, more foundations. It never ceases to surprise me that anomalies are still being uncovered this far into the project and the list of necessary construction design variations feels never ending. Meanwhile the new wing Te Pātaka o Sir Te Atawhai Archie John Tairaroa is a state of the art modern construction project, built from the ground up using every efficiency of the 21st century.

As these pictures show, this juxtaposition of old and new is starkly visible when viewing the roof of each structure at this stage of the project. Clearly obvious is the vast amount of support and reinforcement on the roof of the old gallery in comparison with the clean and clear surface on the roof of the new wing.

**GAYE BATTY**, *Sarjeant Gallery Redevelopment Project Director*

# He Tohu Tēnā Pea *It Is Perhaps a Sign*

27 MAY–30 JUNE 2023

One might say “He tohu tēnā pea?” to acknowledge when one feels something they are witnessing is a sign something is about to happen, is happening or has happened.

This exhibition builds on the success of the 2022 Puanga show *Huritau* held at Whanganui Arts at the Centre to showcase practising Māori artists from the region. Since then, the last year has been challenging for many as we struggle to make sense of the ever-changing world. As we once again move into the phase of Puanga, we start to reflect on our struggles, our losses, our achievements and our growth. What can we learn from this?

For Māori, tohu (signs) are often environmental indicators developed and used to signal, monitor and forecast changes in the natural environment. The busy-ness of our everyday lives, however, can rob us of our senses by disconnecting us from our environment, ourselves and each other. This exhibition is a Māori response that reminds us to slow down and take notice of the signs all around us and within us.

Puanga is one of those signs, signalling the ending of one phase and movement into a new one, prompting people to come together in wananga, to rest and reflect. It is especially a time to remember those whom we have lost; those whose names we will say so they may become stars in the night sky.

Likewise, this exhibition signals the end of a phase of time, almost a decade, of Sarjeant on the Quay. It beckons us to celebrate and reflect whilst shifting into a new phase as the Gallery team prepare for the return to Pukenua Queen's Park in 2024. We are pleased as Awa Rere Roa—Whanganui Maori Visual Arts Collective to have the opportunity as the last scheduled show in this space to fill it with a Māori narrative acknowledging our losses and struggles, but also manifesting our hopes and aspirations.

*Nā VANESSA WAIRATA EDWARDS, Kaiwhakarite Kaiwhakahaere Awa Rere Roa*

OPPOSITE: Brigham Anderson 'Taurapa Roimata  
Toroa' 2023, wood & acrylic paint. Private collection.



The staff of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui are pleased that our last programmed exhibition at Sarjeant on the Quay is one that celebrates Puanga in Whanganui but is also the perfect way for this institution to acknowledge that we are moving forward into a new chapter of our history.

The exhibition brings together exciting new work produced by a selection of this region's innovative Māori makers and it signals a new way for us to weave collaborative ways of working into our programming.

We would like to thank Vanessa Edwards for her mahi with Awa Rere Roa – Whanganui Maori Visual Arts Collective and Te Ātinga Contemporary Māori Arts New Zealand. Most importantly we'd like to congratulate the artists in the show who have produced work that explores the kaupapa of the exhibition in sensitive, innovative and thought-provoking ways.

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

# The Final Countdown

It's close to 25 years since architecture firm Warren & Mahoney were confirmed as the winners of a public competition to design an extension to the Sarjeant Gallery, and many decades more since it was first mooted that an extension would be needed. So it's almost hard to believe this much-anticipated redevelopment is rapidly taking shape in Pukenuamu Queen's Park and plans are now well and truly underway for the relaunch.

While construction continues at Pukenuamu—both on the new wing, named Te Pataka o Sir Te Atawhai Archie John Taiaroa, and the restoration and earthquake strengthening of the Gallery's 104 year-old heritage building—things are also getting busy at our current Taupō Quay address. On June 30 we'll close the last of our exhibitions at Sarjeant on the Quay and the packing will begin. But don't worry, we're also planning a lively series of events and activities in a variety of locations in the intervening months so we can keep connecting with audiences.

The first task, which is already underway, is cataloguing and packing the library and archival materials currently held in an off-site location, and moving them into the gallery spaces before that lease expires in August. We will also be auditing and packing all of our equipment at Taupō Quay to see what will be needed in the new building, and preparing the artworks needed for our opening exhibitions at Pukenuamu.

In early 2024, after blessing the building, we then get to move into the new offices and start the fit-out in both back of house and public areas, including commissioning new equipment and bedding in the new HVAC climate control system. We can then start installing our first exhibitions across the nine main gallery spaces, including under the central 13-metre high dome, as well as stocking the shop and setting up the cafe.

After we re-open in 2024, we will then move the remaining works of our 9,000-piece collection from storage at Sarjeant on the Quay into our new state-of-the-art storage facility. Meanwhile, in September 2024, we'll be celebrating the Sarjeant Gallery's 105th birthday, and it's wonderful that we'll be able to do so from our original home. We hope you'll join us on this journey, and for the big celebrations ahead.

**ANDREW CLIFFORD**, *Director*



Raffaello Romanelli's *Bust of Henry Sarjeant* (1922) undergoing restoration by Marco Buerger in preparation for exhibition at Pukenuamu Queen's Park

# Behind the Scenes: *Documenting Complex Multi-part Installations*

With a collection of over 9,000 items we are always looking for opportunities to exhibit works that may have been in storage for a long period of time. Our recent exhibition *Aves: Sculptural Work from the Collection* (11 March–14 May 2023) included two significant sculptural installations, one of which was last displayed at the Sarjeant Gallery more than twenty years ago in the Warren Viscoe survey *Life and Limb*, and gave us an opportunity to fully document it for the future.

*Fifteen Bird Calls* by Warren Viscoe is a complex installation comprising of 79 parts including wooden towers, rocks, glass jars, shuttlecocks, twigs, and wall-hung mirrors. Each of the parts is stored separately and the work has to be constructed in-situ in the gallery space to make it ready for display. There was no installation diagram in our records and only one photograph

taken from a single viewpoint that we could use as a reference. We also discovered that the rubber bands on the jars were disintegrating and needed to be replaced. The Auckland-based artist, now nearly 90 years old, was unable to travel to Whanganui to assist us with the installation so we discussed it with him over the phone

and he gave us permission to replace the perished rubber bands.

Installing the work was akin to working on a jigsaw puzzle, using a process of elimination to match each of the 79 parts to what was visible in the older photograph. Each part was allocated a unique number, measured, photographed individually, and marked off on the installation image. The data and images were then added to the artwork's record in our collection database. Once installed we took detailed photographs which will be kept on file to be used as a guide for next time the work is displayed, and we are now in the process of upgrading the packing system for the work before it will be relocated to the new collection store at Pukenua Queen's Park next year.

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



ABOVE: Installed at Sarjeant on the Quay  
BELOW: **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. As seen in the recent exhibition *Aves: Sculptural Work from the Collection*



## Tylee News



Chris Ulutupu will be our Tylee Cottage artist-in-residence from July–November 2023

Christopher Ulutupu (Samoan, Niuean and German) is based in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington and will be at Tylee Cottage as the recipient of our photographic/new media residency for five months from July 2023. Ulutupu's practice uses moving-image and photography to explore the Pacific diaspora in Aotearoa. His interest in this began while researching postcards of Sāmoa created in the 1900s for European audiences, which gave rise to the stereotypes of the dusky maiden and the muscular warrior. Through his moving image and photographic work he wants to investigate how this western gaze has often been the predominant lens for indigenous people to view themselves.

There's an element of collaboration to Ulutupu's practice in that he often involves and works with family and friends—as inspiration, but also as crew to help produce the works he makes, and this is an approach he took whilst he was artist-in-residence at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery in 2022. The large scale two video channel work *The Fall*

depicted a new reading of what the end of the world could look like for migrant families in Aotearoa. During his time in Whanganui Ulutupu wants to continue in a similar vein and produce a large-scale video and photographic images that will engage specifically with his new environment. His engaging works are cinematic and, while exploring relationships between landscape and indigenous identities, they also have an element of humour and abound with references to popular culture.

Ulutupu has a Master of Fine Arts from Massey University Wellington and since 2017 has been included in numerous solo and group exhibitions. The Gallery team are looking forward to welcoming Christopher and his partner to Whanganui, and to the project that will emerge from the residency, which we are excited to say will be one of the first artist-in-residence exhibitions to be held in our newly opened spaces at Pukenuamu Queen's Park.

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

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





**Sarjeant on the Quay will close its doors on 30 June 2023 in advance of the reopening of the Sarjeant Gallery at Pukenua Queen's Park in 2024**

Keep an eye out in the Quarterly, newspaper, website and social media for events and programmes 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