

Sarjeant Quarterly 89

Spring 2023

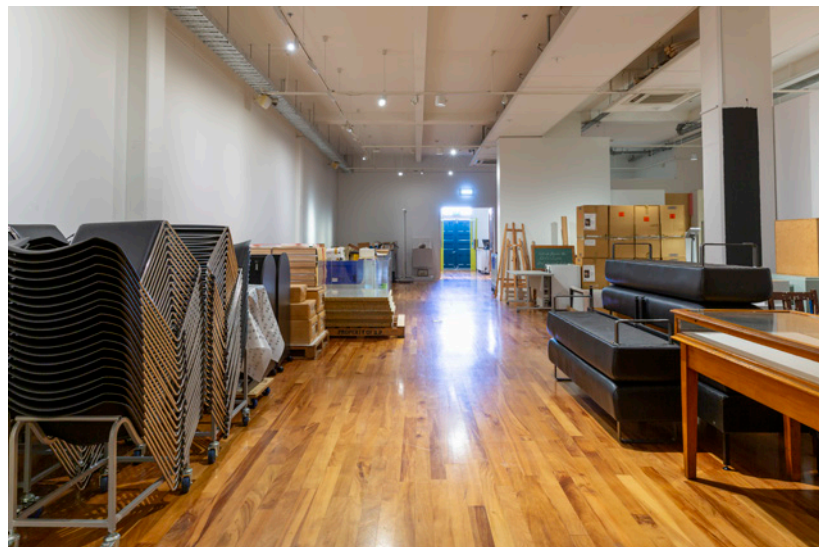


Newsletter of the
Sarjeant Gallery
Te Whare o Rehua
Whanganui
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COVER IMAGE: The iconic Sarjeant Gallery dome undergoing restoration and resurfacing at Pukenuamu Queen's Park, August 2023



ABOVE: Sarjeant on the Quay filling up with exhibition furniture and archival material

RIGHT: Our offsite store before relocation to Sarjeant on the Quay



From the Director

Nau mai, haere mai,

Welcome to the latest issue of the Sarjeant Quarterly, which documents a dynamic period in the life of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. Following Puanga, as spring arrives and daffodils and cherry blossoms start to appear, the gallery is now well into transition mode and our reopening at Pukenuamu Queen's Park mid-next year is edging closer each day.

On Friday June 30 we closed the doors to our Taupō Quay gallery space after a week of special events and activities to mark the occasion. It's hard to believe that nine years have passed since we opened Sarjeant on the Quay as a temporary space and we were honoured to have former Mayor, Annette Main, speak at the final closing event, having originally helped launch the space in 2014.

Since then, the gallery spaces have been rapidly filled with archives, library resources, gallery furniture and other items that had been stored in an adjacent building. The big move is definitely underway and we couldn't have waited another week because the lease to our storage space expired in August and wasn't able to be extended.

As you'll read in our Project Director's update, things are also moving rapidly on the building site at Pukenuamu Queen's Park, with the interior walls of the new wing going up, the steel work for the entry atrium now linking the new and heritage buildings, and the dark granite cladding soon to cover the exterior of Te Pātaka o Sir Te Atawhai Archie John Taiaroa. Our community's long-held vision—for a fit-for-purpose gallery that will support our region's growth for the next 100 years—is coming to fruition.

Meanwhile, also detailed in this Quarterly is a programme of outreach events that will provide opportunities for us to keep in touch and connect with new audiences in a variety of locations while we're closed. We are delighted that the first two of these events were extremely well attended. Opera tenor Sid Chand with pianist Ben Kubiak at the Whanganui Memorial Centre in July was presented in partnership with the New Zealand Opera School, and touring

Auckland group, *Carnivorous Plant Society*, made their Whanganui debut at the Gonville Town Hall in August. There will be plenty more events like this, as well as regular artist talks, so please keep an eye out for updates and be sure to come see us at our next exciting event.

I have been particularly touched by the continued generosity of the Sarjeant's Friends, Stars and benefactors for the gallery and these projects. Ultimately it is your vision and support which has made the Sarjeant Gallery redevelopment possible, enabling as it has the very substantial contributions of successive central governments which have built on the commitment of Whanganui District Council.

As seen in Henry Sarjeant's original bequest of £32,000 in 1912, it is Whanganui's powerful tradition of giving and legacy-building that has created this important project. An impressive 77 percent (\$52.7m) of the total cost of the redevelopment has come from central government, grants, trusts, bequests and private donations. Fundraising is ongoing so please get in touch if you would like to help.

We are grateful for your ongoing support at this time.

Mā te wā,

ANDREW CLIFFORD



TOP: NZ Structural & Engineering Ltd tereowners Jared Davis and Matthew Gaudin stand proudly beside the steel plated floor of the new air-bridge

BOTTOM: The sun highlights the steel crossbeams joining Te Pātaka o Sir Te Atawhai Archie John Taiaroa (left) with the heritage gallery (right)

Sarjeant Steelwork Connects the Old and the New

I do a complete walk over of the construction site every week and it's fair to say that over the last few weeks, there have been some highly visible changes as the structural elements for the link building were lifted into place connecting the 104-year-old heritage-listed gallery to Te Pātaka o Sir Te Atawhai Archie John Taiaroa. The link structure will be fully glazed and feature a waka air-bridge connecting the upper floors of both buildings to become the new entryway into the Sarjeant Gallery on the ground floor.

The link elements are being fabricated off-site by local Whanganui contractor NZ Structural & Engineering Ltd who were secured only weeks earlier by the main contractor McMillan & Lockwood Central Limited following the unexpected liquidation of the previous steel supplier in March 2023. The project team has been pleased with the swift resolution by the main contractor and the adaptability demonstrated by both parties. This has been a unique opportunity for a young, local team to step up and shine.

Over the coming weeks the air-bridge balustrades and steel plated floor will be finished and brought to site for installation. This will transform the area and open up the walkway between the buildings, enabling efficiencies of movement for the contractor.

This year the project has come through two significant sub-contractor liquidations, the second being for the heating, ventilation and air conditioning in April 2023 and although both suppliers have been successfully replaced, the programme has been impacted. The construction completion date has been extended by three months to March 2024 with the gallery opening now being planned for mid 2024.

Meanwhile the timber hull which will form the visible exterior for the waka air-bridge is being manufactured by a specialist boat builder. Co-designed by the Kāhui Toi o Tūpoho and the project architect Warren & Mahoney, the hull will be brought to Whanganui where the cultural expression will be applied—this will be the responsibility of Te Rūnanga o Tūpoho as Mana Whenua.

And finally, atop the heritage building, I am delighted to report that the exterior of the iconic dome has been restored and now has a weatherproof coat, as seen on the cover of this issue.

GAYE BATTY, Sarjeant Gallery Redevelopment Project Director

Recent Acquisitions

Since it began in 1986, the Sarjeant Gallery's artist-in-residence programme has been a vital part of growing our holdings of contemporary art in the collection. One of the longstanding aims and benefits of the programme is that the work produced is often in response to threads of local history, sites or how each of the artists has engaged with their new environs. We are delighted that ten large photographic works from Zahra Killeen-Chance and Solomon Mortimer's beautiful exhibition *The Sun Sets Beneath the Ocean* which was one of the final shows at Sarjeant on the Quay have come into the collection.

This generous exchange and gift from the artists is a welcome addition and they are the first works by the duo to enter the collection. The photographs capture the details of the cottage but also portraits of the family and their daily life, making for a coherent suite that sing together as well as beautifully on their own.

In contrast, sometimes it takes much longer to settle on what work might enter the collection as a result of an artist's time in Whanganui. Glen Hayward was in residence at Tylee Cottage in 2015 and the 2016 exhibition *Super Ordinary* surveyed the artist's practice up until that time.

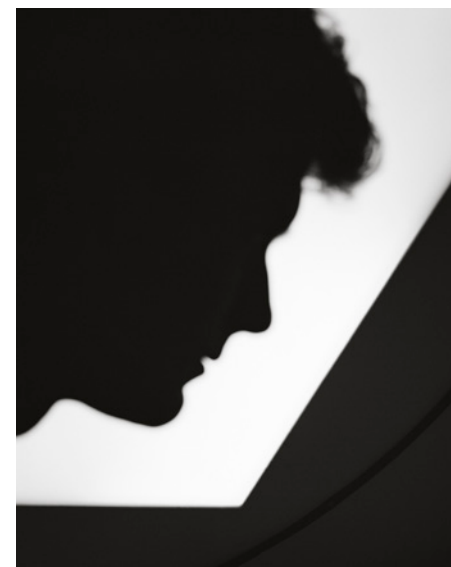
In 2019 the Sarjeant commissioned Hayward to make a new work for the Gallery's centenary exhibition *Turn of a Century*. This was a celebration of over a century of collecting alongside newly commissioned work that was made in response to the Sarjeant Gallery building in Pukenuamu Queen's Park that was just about to be dismantled for the major redevelopment project. His work *Canal / Periscope* (2018–2023) recreated an entire service duct from the Gallery's basement that carried airflow through the building. The process transformed this functional part of the building into a curious periscopic viewing device which was installed in another 'back of house' area, in a cupboard under the stairs of the Gallery's temporary home. In 2022 this work was included in Hayward's survey exhibition *Wish You Were Here* at City Gallery, Wellington. Now it has found its final home back where it began and exists as a free standing work to be looked through, under and walked around.

GREG DONSON, *Curator & Public Programmes Manager*



ABOVE & BELOW: Glen Hayward *Canal / Periscope* 2018–2023, wood and paint. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui, gift of the artist 2023

RIGHT: Zahra Killeen-Chance and Solomon Mortimer, *Skylight Composition #3* 2021, archival inkjet prints on cotton rag. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui, Tylee Residency exchange 2023



Exciting New Library Collection

One of the many tasks the team are currently working on whilst our doors are closed to the public is to complete the cataloguing of a significant new library collection. Recently former Sarjeant Gallery director Gordon H. Brown donated his private collection of art books. This personal library has been collected with dedication and consistency throughout his entire professional career.

Brown is a highly regarded New Zealand art historian, curator, artist and author who was appointed the first professional director at the Sarjeant Gallery in 1974. During his three years in the role Brown laid the foundations for the future direction of the gallery, acquired a number of significant contemporary works for the collection, and among many other things established a relationship with the family of local artist Edith Collier that continues to this day.

With support from librarians at the Whanganui District Library, Sarah Loveluck-Newland and Katherine Claypole have been completing cataloguing of the nearly 6,000 books into the library database. Of particular interest is that Brown gave every book a unique accession number, designed a bespoke bookplate that he placed inside many of the books, and developed a unique classification system for his library which the Gallery will continue to use. Many of the books contain bookmarks and pencilled notes written by Brown or personal notes from the authors who gifted the books to him.

Highlights of Brown's treasured book collection include an exciting section on international and New Zealand photography, early periodicals on New Zealand art and art history, rare exhibition catalogues from arts societies throughout New Zealand (dating from as early as 1876), a substantial section of international artist monographs, as well as books on New Zealand art, many written by Brown himself, and a small collection of artist books.

After cataloguing, the books are being packed ready for relocation to Pukenui Queen's Park where they will be added to the Gallery's existing reference library. They will form part of a new reading room named after Brown and located in the heritage building's former entrance foyer, which will be made available during specific hours each week. Brown's library collection will more than double the Gallery's existing library, making it a unique destination for a wide range of visitors—from those wishing to browse for personal interest through to more specialised researchers, curators and authors.

JENNIFER TAYLOR MOORE, *Curator of Collections*



ABOVE: Half of the library collection packed and ready for relocation

TOP: Katherine Claypole (left) and Sarah Loveluck-Newland cataloguing the library books



An Interview with Christopher Ulutupu

Our Tylee artist-in-residence from July to November this year is Christopher Ulutupu, a multidisciplinary artist of Samoan, Niuean and German descent based in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington. Ulutupu's practice, often autobiographical, references personal experience to offer critiques about colonisation using performance, moving-image and photography. Ulutupu's body of work is rich with pop culture references, celebrating his own unique perspective through a Pacific and queer lens, something he aims to explore further during his residency. Assistant Curator Jessica Kidd interviewed the artist about his residency project.

How are you finding the residency and settling into Whanganui so far, and being able to fully focus on your art practice for a time? It has been just over a month in Whanganui and it has been wonderful meeting new people and also catching up with friends who have moved here recently. This is the first time I have been able to solely focus on my practice and Whanganui feels like a great place to do so. During the last month me and my partner Haz have been learning about the history here and exploring numerous places around the awa. We have set up studio spaces in the cottage and I have been researching for new projects and reflecting on my

previous works. There is still a lot to see and experience here and we are looking forward to having some family and friends visit and show them some of the places we have found and make new work.

One of the aims of your residency proposal was to respond to different tourist hot spots around the region, have any locations jumped out at you yet? So far I have seen quite a few locations that I am very interested in learning more about and potentially using as filming sites. At the moment it has mainly been about trying to see as much as possible. Greg has taken me on two trips, first visiting the areas around the central city

OPPOSITE: Christopher Ulutupu at Tylee Cottage, August 2023

RIGHT: **Christopher Ulutupu** *3 Songs* [still] 2019, digital video 16:50 from *Dreaming of Lulu* image courtesy of the artist



and then out to Bushy Park where I got to see Rātānui. This week Haz and I have visited Paloma Gardens and then up the awa to Hiruharama. A large aspect of my practice is examining the relationships between landscape and identity, through a diasporic and indigenous lens. Tourism plays a key role here. My early works researched postcard imagery of Pacific Island nations marketed to early 1900s European audiences. I continue to be interested in how various artistic movements have depicted both Samoa and New Zealand throughout colonisation and I enjoy disrupting these depictions with the use of performance and my own storytelling.

Could you discuss the use of music in your work? Have you got any particular music in mind for your residency project and what are your thoughts on the local music scene? Throughout my practice music has always guided the work and played an important role. In my videos, I have used music diegetically in

karaoke performance, opera, RSA style halls, by a male model DJ, and also a choir. In some works music has been used to build characters. One example is in the diptych, *What's the worst you could do?* where the singer, performed by my sister Ashley, conveys her relationship with a cover of a *Grease* song. I have also looked more specifically at Samoan music within the diaspora. In *Dreaming of Lulu* I reimagined music videos for 1970s Samoan love songs from groups such as Punialavaa, Penina Tiafau and Tiama'a. There are numerous functions for music in my work, however, I always love the way in which music can bring an audience into the work and how it conveys a story. At this stage, I am still working out how music will be incorporated into the upcoming works, however I have a few exciting new ideas I want to explore. The local music scene is great here! We have made it out to a few shows so far and are looking forward to more. It has also been fun meeting some of the local musicians.

What are you reading at the moment? Are there any texts beginning to inform your project at this point? I am not a big fiction reader, but rather read texts and essays to inform my work. I have been putting the Tylee library card to good use and am currently reading poetry from some New Zealand and Whanganui writers. For my work I often return to writers such as Epeli Hau'ofa. I also recently read a text by Albert Wendt where he describes his relationship to Mount Taranaki during his time at boarding school shortly after arriving in New Zealand, which I found very interesting.

You often collaborate with family and friends in your work, who would you like to involve in this project?

I come from a background in film and theatre and I am very used to working collaboratively and with many people. I enjoy this way of working and having my own practice means that I am able to involve my family and friends, which is fun, and also central to the themes of the work. The process of making and filming helps inform the end result, as we develop performances together and workshop ideas about costuming and set. Most of the works are filmed by partner, Haz, and my friend Kane Laing does the sound design and mixing.

IMAGE: Carnivorous Plants Society at Gonville Town Hall in August, image: Teresa Cimino

Tickets are on sale now at the Whanganui iSite or on iticket.co.nz or via this QR code.



Sarjeant Events Now on iTicket and at i-SITE

Closing the doors to the gallery, the shop and the online shop has definitely made selling tickets to our events trickier. We knew we were going to continue to hold events and talks, the issue came from how best to do this. How to make the tickets still accessible to everyone, those who liked to purchase online and those would prefer to buy them in person.

The i-SITE at 31 Taupō Quay and the online ticketing company iTicket felt like the best solution. We get a great team who can deal with all your questions quickly and efficiently and an easy-to-use online system which means you can shop in the comfort of your own pyjamas. The iTicket system also allows us to scan tickets on entry, which means no more waiting while we try to find your name on a very long list of names.

All our events have links to iticket.co.nz from our events page.

TERESA CIMINO, *Gallery Operations Manager*



Jock Leggott Wool Shed, *Fletchers Bay* 1970, oil on board. Collection of Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua



ABOVE: Robin Hyde, 1936. Image courtesy of Alexander Turnbull Library, 12-043599; F

We have a busy series of events planned so we can stay connected with you, our Friends, Stars, benefactors, stakeholders and community, while our gallery is closed. We have programmed art, music and literary events until the end of 2023 and we're in talks with partners for more events next year. We hope you'll come to see us at these events, and that our Friends of the Sarjeant membership continues to grow as we advance towards the very exciting year we have in store for 2024.

In September, the Sarjeant is very proud to present three events at the Davis Lecture Theatre on Saturday 23 September as part of the lead up to the tenth Whanganui Literary Festival. We are honoured to have the acclaimed New Zealand poet Michele Leggott for a session called 'New Moon in the Old Moons Arms' about unearthing her father Jock Leggott's prize-winning painting in the Sarjeant Collection 50 years after the family holiday that inspired it. In addition, we have two sessions about the novelist, poet and correspondent Robin Hyde who worked at the Whanganui Chronicle in the late 1920s. We are grateful for the support of Murray and Denise Lazelle in presenting these events and appreciate their ongoing support of the Sarjeant.

Our free monthly talks are ongoing at The Backhouse's Nikau Room at 28 Taupō Quay, please see opposite for details of these. On Thursday 5 October the Friends of the Sarjeant AGM will take place at the Pioneer Room in the War Memorial Centre at 7pm. The Gallery's Director Andrew Clifford will give an update on the redevelopment project, all welcome. Look out for our Friends of the Sarjeant event at New Zealand Glassworks on October 14 which is shaping up to be a great evening.

JAKI ARTHUR, *Relationships Officer*

Talks this spring at 'The Backhouse', 28 Taupō Quay

ARTIST TALK

Matthew McIntyre Wilson

THURSDAY 21 SEPTEMBER, 7–8PM

McIntyre Wilson was artist-in-residence at Tylee Cottage in 2020 and during that time he began his ongoing project 'Mahi ki te Awa Whanganui' – the aim of this was to return the art of hīnaki and kupenga making with whānau that reside on the Whanganui River Road. He will discuss this project and how he is working towards an exciting installation as one of the opening exhibitions at Pukenui Queen's Park in mid 2024.

ARTIST TALK

The Crystal Chain Gang:

Jim Dennison and Leanne Williams

THURSDAY 19 OCTOBER, 7–8PM

The Crystal Chain Gang have been making collaborative works in cast glass for over twenty years. During that time they have become known for their innovative chandelier works. The pair will give a talk discussing public and privately commissioned works that have seen the gang work in both domestic and corporate settings. They will discuss their largest commission to date, which is nearing completion in Auckland.

CURATORS TALK

Curator of Screams

Dr Chelsea Nichols and Aaron Lister

THURSDAY 16 NOVEMBER, 7–8PM

Horror films are filled with lots of iconic pairings: the scary twins from *The Shining*, Billy and Stu from *Scream*, Laurie Strode and Michael Myers from *Halloween*. Chelsea Nichols (The Dowse) and Aaron Lister (City Gallery Wellington) will discuss how they bring this creepy twin energy to New Zealand art history through their ongoing collaboration 'Curator of Screams'—including their most recent project, *Eerie Pageantry*, which brings together the work of Don Driver with contemporary Australian artist Julia Robinson to explore the theme of folk horror.

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 & events visit:

sarjeant.org.nz

**Sarjeant on the Quay
closed on 30 June
2023 in advance of
the reopening of the
Sarjeant Gallery at
Pukenuamu 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 Pukenuamu Queen's Park.



Nicholas Twist *The Sarjeant* 2002, sulphide toned photograph. Collection of Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui



**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