

Sarjeant Quarterly 91

Autumn 2024

Newsletter of the
Sarjeant Gallery
Te Whare o Rehua
Whanganui
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COVER IMAGE: **Warren Viscoe** *The Taxidermist* (circa 1990) carved and painted wood. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. Purchased with funding from Patron Members, 2003



From the Director

Tēnā koe, greetings,

Welcome to our first issue of the Sarjeant Quarterly for 2024. The weather may be starting to cool a little but things are really heating up here at the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. It's exciting to think that we're now in the year that the Sarjeant will reopen and there is a lot to do before that happens!

At the start of a new season, it's always important to reflect on those we have lost. I acknowledge the recent passing of pioneering Māori artist, Selwyn Muru. And in this issue, Jennifer Taylor Moore pays tribute to Warren Viscoe, whose practice has had a strong presence here at the Sarjeant Gallery. Planning is also underway for a public memorial event after we reopen for our former director, Bill Milbank. We look forward to acknowledging Milbank's contribution in the very gallery where he worked for over 30 years.

As we go to press, we are working closely with the redevelopment team to review their timelines as we draw closer to the completion of the construction phase of the project and move into the handover and fitout stage. How we dovetail this transition will determine with more certainty when the reopening will take place later this year, and we look forward to sharing a date with you in due course. Our Project Director's redevelopment update outlines the important milestones that have been achieved in recent months.

Meanwhile, we have also been working with designers Extended Whānau to update the Gallery's identity to suit our new address and facilities. Keep an eye out for an update in our next Quarterly where we will share the outcomes with you.

Also in this issue, we farewell Tylee Cottage artist in residence, Alexis Neal, and welcome Jade Townsend; and the Friends of the Sarjeant rose committee release news of The Sarjeant Rose, which has been specially developed for the Gallery by award-winning Whanganui rose breeders Matthews Roses.

Another thing we're delighted to share with you is the news that National Geographic has named the Sarjeant Gallery, a cornerstone of Whanganui's status as a UNESCO City of Design, as one 20 new international cultural hotspots to visit in 2024. The secret is out and the whole world knows—it's going to be a big year for Whanganui.

Ngā mihi,

ANDREW CLIFFORD, *Director*



Tylee News



TOP: Alexis Neal (part one) *Paemanu*; woven necklace (2024) black macramé, knitting silk & wax threads whatu aho rua, woven like a cloak with carved huia beak (deer antler), orange silk; (part two) Victorian bib (2024) linen with embroidery

BOTTOM: Alexis Neal

Since our last Quarterly, Christopher Ulutupu has left Tylee Cottage after a productive time in Whanganui where he made the most of his new environs by filming in many locations to gather footage to create new works. We're looking forward to developing his post residency exhibition which will be one of the first artist-in-residence projects to be on view at our newly reopened facility. So watch this space.

Ulutupu has also developed new work specifically for our opening exhibition as has artist Alexis Neal, who returned to Tylee Cottage as one of our alumni residents over the December / January period. This short residency is an opportunity for an artist to return to Whanganui to develop or revisit work they made during their initial time in Whanganui. For Neal, that meant picking up on the body of work that she created after



We farewelled our summer Tylee resident Alexis Neal (opposite) in early February and welcomed Jade Townsend, our Tylee resident until July

her 2012 residency in response to the taonga of Pura Te Manihera McGregor (1855–1920) featured in her 2015 exhibition *Whenua ki te whenua*. At the beginning of 2022 she started a new body of work called *Holding Space* that explores the techniques of whatu tātiko and raranga whakairo, woven pieces that all relate to the body. She says “It considers our relationship to taonga and how we hold space together. One of the strongest influences in my work is the duality of artefacts, the stories they tell, how they act as a portal to the past, made by incredible technicians, and what we can learn from them.” During her time at Tylee, Neal completed this body of work and we're looking forward to sharing this with you when we reopen at Pukenamu.

In residence for the next five months is Jade Townsend (Te Ātihaunui-a-Pāpārangi, Ngāti

Kahungunu), normally based in Tāmaki Makaurau she is a multi-disciplinary artist working at the intersection of her Māori and British heritage. Born and raised in Whanganui, she moved to Liverpool as a teenager. Exposure to a wide range of accents, dialects, regional slang, folktales, and pūrākau made her aware of the impossibility of translation and cultural hybridity as a wholly transparent process. Through paint and a range of hand-made strategies, she explores the “untranslatable” where belonging, history, place and memory are all chambers from which new cultural realities are revealed. As part of her residency Townsend is also the recipient of the Lilian Ida Smith Award for 2024 which is awarded to a painter aged 35+ years.

GREG DONSON, Curator & Public Programmes Manager

From the Sarjeant Gallery Trust



In 2014 the Sarjeant Gallery Trust embarked on a mission to convey the facts and inherent benefits of the Sarjeant Gallery Redevelopment Project to the people of our region. At one of our forums we pitched this big idea to a group of local business leaders and professionals. This resulted in a number of donations, one being a significant donation of \$1.2 million from the Estate of William MacAlpine Duncan.

WM Duncan was a successful farmer and philanthropist who gave

to many worthwhile community projects. His land holdings included farming interests in Erewhon Station and Oruamatua Kaimanawa at Moawhango, as well as at Fordell (he even had a racecourse there). It might be said he was a classic 'gentleman farmer'. He passed away in 1950 without children, and is buried at Fordell.

Mr Duncan's trustees at the time of the Sarjeant Gallery redevelopment initiative were Gordon Swan and Richard Austin

from the law firm Treadwell Gordon (which had been charged with the responsibility of trusteeship through Mr Duncan's will). The Sarjeant Gallery project immediately impressed them as a way that Mr Duncan's lasting wishes could benefit Whanganui for all time. The trustees were conscious that Whanganui needed to demonstrate to central government that the local community backed this project and would make the initial 'seed capital commitment'. Hence the fund, along with two other

similar charitable trust funds held by the firm, were committed to the project, essentially in their entirety.

We will celebrate Mr Duncan's life and his wonderful generosity to the people of Whanganui, and indeed to the arts community of New Zealand, by acknowledging him in the dome gallery of the redeveloped Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui.

NICOLA J WILLIAMS MNZM,
Sarjeant Gallery Trust Board Chairman

Redevelopment Update

It is wonderful to see construction completed on the contemplative gallery which extends from the north-facing side of Te Pātaka o Sir Te Atawhai Archie John Tairaroa. It is a key design feature of the new wing which makes possible an unbroken line from the mountain to the sea. Now fully glazed it is a stunning place to stand, with a view totally unique to Whanganui as it is positioned higher than any other accessible view point on Pukenamu, allowing the eyes to skim over the top of the region's high landmarks and trees all the way to Ruapehu.

The design of this gallery has made it necessary to overcome some complex challenges, such as temperature control and the fact that it is cantilevered out over the rest of the building, so it protrudes over the patio beneath. It will add real structural interest to the rear of the wing which will otherwise be totally flat and cloaked in black granite. The whole design team has come together with the main contractor McMillan and Lockwood to ensure we get the best possible outcome for this important feature of the new wing.

Outside, a service lift is now on the rear west corner of the new wing. This is being used by the cladding sub-contractor to transport the many hundreds of

pieces of trapezoidal-shaped granite upwards for connecting to the vertical railings. The cladding pieces, some buffed and shaded and some shiny, will ultimately display the Aramoana pattern, which is special to Whanganui.

Inside the heritage gallery, construction of the northern stairwell is now complete and the original wooden balustrade re-statement works are on-going under the guidance of the heritage architect. Compliance with safety regulations is essential, and it is notable how much these regulations have shifted in the

100+ years since the gallery's initial construction in 1917–1919. We believe we have found the perfect balance—and are respecting the beautiful heritage architecture whilst ensuring modern day safety regulations are met.

Interior framing for the gallery walls is continuing, and painting and decorative plaster repairs are progressing. Some of the plaster work is occurring on site including many metres of moulded concrete skirting. The extent of reparation work is far greater than planned which has expected to delay the construction

completion programme.

The project team is working closely with gallery operational staff on the programme of works taking place at the conclusion of the construction project. This includes setting the technical and environmental systems, final fit outs, installation of the inaugural exhibitions and the reopening events schedule.

GAYE BATTY, Sarjeant Gallery Redevelopment Project Director

BELOW: The glazed gallery on the upper floor is now fully enclosed, a lift for transporting the many pieces of granite cladding is visible to the right



Education at the Sarjeant



We are excited to welcome Vanessa Buerger (Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Whakatōhea, Ngāti Kahu) to the Sarjeant team for the next six months to job share the position of Educator with Sietske Jansma.

Vanessa comes to us with a wealth of teaching experience, most recently as the Head of Fine Arts and TIC Visual Arts at Rangitikei College from 2013–2022 and prior to that an art teacher at Whanganui High School and drawing tutor at the Quay School of the Arts, from where she graduated with Distinction in 2002. Since then she has completed a number of diplomas including, in 2019, a post graduate diploma in Māori Visual Arts. Toioho ki Āpiti—Massey University in Palmerston North. Vanessa is an accomplished and



respected artist with a strong focus in print-making, and last year was the driving force behind one of our final exhibitions at Sarjeant on the Quay—*He tohu tēnā pea—It is perhaps a sign*. This was a group exhibition of work by Whanganui artists to celebrate Matariki / Puanga 2023 and a joint initiative by Awa Rere Roa Whanganui Māori Visual Arts Collective, curated by Vanessa with Greg Donson—Curator and Public Programmes Manager at the Sarjeant.

When asked about being a teacher, she replied “When I say I am a teacher what I mean is I am a ‘creator of opportunities’. Every day I create opportunities for rangatahi to explore and develop themselves in a multitude of contexts within the mainstream. I see the role of

education as daily opportunities to connect to others, to develop skills and knowledge and to critically reflect on ourselves and the world around us”.

Even though the gallery is currently closed, Sietske and Vanessa will be working closely with schools, kohanga reo, kura and other community groups to develop programmes and activities that will feed into our reopening at Pukenuamu later on this year. We can’t wait to see what this dynamic team come up with.

GREG DONSON, Curator & Public Programmes Manager

ABOVE: Vanessa Buerger (right) will job share the position of Educator with Sietske Jansma (left) for the next six months



Warren Viscoe (1935–2024)

It is with a heavy heart that we acknowledge the recent passing of much-loved New Zealand sculptor Warren Viscoe. Born in Auckland in 1935, Viscoe studied in New Zealand, London and Toronto where he met his wife Pierrette. Following teacher training, Viscoe taught art part-time at Penrose High School, Elam School of Fine Arts, and Unitec Institute of Technology.

Known for his substantial wooden sculptures and installations, Viscoe first exhibited at the Sarjeant Gallery in 1978 in *Five New Zealand Sculptors*. In 1986 we acquired our first Viscoe work for the collection; *Quarryman's Dream* (1985)—a detail of this work can be seen on the cover of this issue. Since that time Viscoe regularly engaged with the Sarjeant Gallery and, as a result, the Gallery has built up a significant collection of his work. Major exhibitions at the Sarjeant Gallery include *Out of the Woods* in 1990 in conjunction with the Wanganui Wood Symposium as well as the 1996 retrospective, accompanied by his dome installation *Interpolation of an Icon*.

Warren Viscoe: Life and Limb, written by Justin Paton, was published in 2000 to record works exhibited in the Sarjeant's survey exhibition held in 1996. This publication also complemented a 2000 exhibition of his works at Lopdell House Gallery, Auckland. As well as the Sarjeant Gallery and a number of private collections his work is in the collections of Te Manawa, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, and Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki. Peter McLeavey represented Viscoe throughout most of his career and he is currently represented by Miranda Gallery at Pōkeno. Viscoe passed away on 20th January, 2024.

JENNIFER TAYLOR MOORE, CURATOR OF COLLECTIONS



OPPOSITE: Warren Viscoe photographed by Haru Sameshima in 2000.

LEFT: *Warren Viscoe: Survey 1980–1996* retrospective staged at the Sarjeant Gallery in 1996

The Sarjeant Rose Exclusive to the Sarjeant

For over a year now the Friends of the Sarjeant's Executive Committee has been working with Bob, Cath and Samantha Matthews of Matthews Roses in Whanganui, on a very special project for the Gallery.

We are delighted to present the Sarjeant Rose, a pink scented floribunda, which is being marketed exclusively by The Friends of the Sarjeant Gallery this year. Bred in Whanganui by multi award-winning rose breeder Bob Matthews, it is a brand new rose, bred and named specifically for the Sarjeant Gallery in its reopening year. The Sarjeant Rose combines contemporary with classical and bears vintage cupped shaped blooms on an easy-care, healthy modern plant which will grow up to about 1.5 meters. The shifting palette of soft peachy pink to antique blush petals carries the most delicious perfume and repeat flowers in clusters are wonderful for picking. Our Sarjeant Rose is a bush rose rather than a standard rose and is a vigorous grower!

Matthews Nurseries Ltd is a family business established 77 years ago in Whanganui. Matthews Roses have won awards across New Zealand and overseas, including the coveted Gold Star of the South Pacific award and a prestigious Silver Certificate at The Hague International Rose Trials in The Netherlands.

We are delighted with this exquisite rose, bred and nurtured for us by the Matthews team. With its changing tones of petal colours the Sarjeant Rose is just like an artist's palette.

Excitingly the Whanganui District Council have confirmed they will plant two beds of The Sarjeant Rose along Victoria Avenue and the Friends will make a display at Tylee Cottage. Where will you plant yours?

Growing roses is not complicated and a huge (and fragrant!) pleasure. Matthews supply a 'how to' guide with every rose and have a fantastic website which includes a step by step guide to planting roses in June and lots of other information. See matthewsroses.co.nz

The Sarjeant Rose root stock will be ready for collection from a venue in Whanganui (tbc), or can be couriered anywhere in New Zealand in late June 2024. Profits raised will support the Gallery.

Plants are \$60 for Friends of the Sarjeant or \$65.00 for non-Friends, freight charges are additional. The Sarjeant Rose is exclusive to the Sarjeant, and is a limited edition release, so to be fair, there is a limit of 5 plants per customer—so get in quick! Orders can be made via the gallery website Sarjeant.org.nz/SarjeantRose

BY THE FRIENDS OF THE SARJEANT ROSE COMMITTEE





ABOVE: **Glenn Burrell** *Kitchen Sink* (2010), acrylic paint. Collection of the Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui. Tylee Residency exchange, 2013/2/1

Behind the Scenes

A question we often get asked as we prepare for the move back up to Pukenui is “what are you doing now Sarjeant on the Quay is closed?” One of the ongoing tasks we work on behind the scenes is the intricate packing of artworks in custom-made crates and containers, to ensure their safe transit back up the hill and storage in the long term. This process is beautifully demonstrated in the recently completed storage of Glenn Burrell’s *Kitchen Sink*, which entered the collection in 2013 as the artist’s Tylee Residency exchange.

The process for fitting out the custom-made crate for this artwork involved creating cardboard boxes to the unique dimensions of *Kitchen Sink*, which were then lined with specialist conservation materials carved to cushion each of the 74 parts that make up the artwork including pots, cups, plates, utensils, tapwear and even minute ants, all made entirely from acrylic paint. This project means that it will be protected throughout our transition period, and stored in ideal conditions in our new collection store once relocated. The full details of *Kitchen Sink* can be viewed online at collection.sarjeant.org.nz

National Geographic recognises the Sarjeant:

One of the 20 Best Cultural Spots in the world in its reopening year

In February the prestigious international magazine *National Geographic* announced their annual 'Best of the World 2024' list of the most exciting, meaningful, and one-of-a-kind travel experiences on offer.

We are so happy to announce that we are one of just 20 cultural institutions in the world to share this honour alongside the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the Guangzhou Museum of Art, the Manor in Johannesburg, the Istanbul Modern, the Battersea Power Station in London and others.

So when the Gallery opens later this year it will do so on the radar of *National Geographic* and its millions of readers all over the world. Thank you to all involved—near and far—for securing this fabulous accolade for the gallery.

Mayor Andrew Tripe said "Our reputation as an arts and design destination was cemented in 2021 when we were awarded UNESCO City of Design status and this accolade from *National Geographic* for our iconic art gallery now puts us even more firmly on the map for international visitors."

Read the article free online at: nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/best-of-the-world-2024-cultural-spots



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

A Special Visitor to the Gallery

Sarjeant Gallery staff met Sue Scott of Dunedin recently. Sue's great grandmother was Jane Stewart, a younger sister of Ellen Stewart who married the gallery's benefactor Henry Sarjeant in 1893. After Henry passed away in 1912, Ellen married John Armstrong Neame who was a tutor at Whanganui Collegiate School and together John and Ellen travelled Europe purchasing a number of artworks (including *The Wrestlers*) for the Sarjeant collection. Whilst we have known quite a lot about Henry Sarjeant, Ellen was a slightly more mysterious figure and we are grateful to Sue for bringing a number of Ellen, John, and Jane's photographs, postcards, letters, diaries and paintings into the gallery and enabling us to learn more about these important characters in the Sarjeant story.

RIGHT: John and Ellen Neame in the late 1920s or early 1930s in the Italian Alps where John did watercolours of scenery and flowers for a book he wrote and illustrated that was published in 1937 titled *Meadow and Alpine Flowers of Northern Italy*.

BELOW: Descendant Sue Scott with items from her family archive



Sarjeant on the Quay is closed in advance of the reopening of the Sarjeant Gallery at Pukenua Queen's Park in late 2024

We regularly publish news and updates on Facebook, in the Whanganui Chronicle and in our Quarterly.



ABOVE: Plaster detailing ready to be reinstated in the heritage wing of the redeveloped Sarjeant Gallery Te Whare o Rehua Whanganui



**Sarjeant Gallery
Te Whare o Rehua
Whanganui**

38 Taupō Quay
Whanganui 4500
New Zealand

Phone 06 349 0506
www.sarjeant.org.nz

Sarjeant Gallery is a cultural facility of the Whanganui District Council