



# SARJEANT QUARTERLY

Newsletter of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery ISSN 2624-408X / Summer 2025–2026



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Cover: **Michael Illingworth** *Man and woman with still life and flowers* 1980, oil on canvas, 2025/20/1. Collection of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery. Gift of Sir Robert Jones, 2025

Back cover: **Richard Wotton** *Walls and Fences #1, Cooks Gardens Entrance, St Hill Street, Wanganui* 1982 1982, Cibachrome print, 1983/12/1. Collection of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery. Purchased, 1983

Below: **Richard Wotton** *Former F.J. Denton Photography Studio, 128 Victoria Avenue, Wanganui* 1988 (1988) selenium-toned silver gelatin print, 1999/30/1. Collection of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery. Purchased, 1999



Tēnā koe,

On behalf of the team here at Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery, I offer warm thanks to all of you, our most loyal supporters, for making our first year in our new facilities such an overwhelming success. In the year following our opening on 9 November 2024, we had 131,613 visitors to the gallery, including 4,440 attending school visits. Our ambition in undertaking the redevelopment was to ensure that our facilities, originally gifted to us by Henry Sarjeant in 1912, would continue giving to our community for many generations to come. So it's pleasing to see the next generation of creatives, innovators, leaders, and art enthusiasts enjoying the gallery and all it has to offer.

A key theme of this issue of the Sarjeant Quarterly and the summer exhibition programme that it introduces is the legacy of giving. We are delighted that our new collection exhibition, *Gifted: A Legacy of Generosity*, will showcase the community spirit that has built the gallery's nationally significant art collection. Every single work in the collection is the result of a gift or bequest, starting with Henry's original bequest through to more recent arrivals such as the magnificent Michael Illingworth painting on the cover, gifted to us this year by the late Sir Robert Jones.

We are also fortunate to have a dedicated team of staff and volunteers who were integral to our success over the past year. So it is with a touch of sadness and also best wishes that we farewell gallery photographer, Michael McKeagg, and head of development, Nicki Manthel, who have departed for new adventures, though we know they'll visit often.

Whether you have been a frequent visitor, have made a one-time journey or are still planning that big trip, we look forward to seeing you at the gallery soon. There is always something new to see.

Mā te wā,  
Andrew Clifford  
Director

Richard Wotton

## *A Selective Eye: Photographs 1975–2025*

13 December 2025 – 3 May 2026

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This exhibition celebrates the work of photographer Richard Wotton, whose interest in the medium began in the mid-1970s. Like many of his peers, the 1975/76 exhibition *The Active Eye*, staged by the Manawatu Art Gallery, brought photography to the attention of the public as a legitimate medium within the realm of the visual arts. This exhibition presented what may have been considered mundane or everyday, bringing it into new focus with altered perspectives on the world.

Half a century later, Wotton's own interest in the world around him—and more importantly the city of Whanganui—has resulted in a collection of images that attest to a photographer with a highly selective eye. Traversing a terrain of subject matter from portraiture, interior and exterior architectural views, to studies in colour and form, Wotton's engagement with the medium is something he has fallen in and out of love with over the course of his life. However, each time he has returned after a hiatus of not having the camera to hand, his focus has often changed frequency to another channel.

His interest in architecture over the course of five decades has created a body of images that are refined studies in composition, light, memory and often nostalgia, encompassing both New

Zealand and overseas subjects. Wotton's attention has not been drawn to grand structures but more so vernacular architecture—houses and buildings that would often be overlooked or unseen. His ability to capture these spaces in an uncanny suspended animation, where human presence is implied, is skilled. An empty smoko room, a theatre, a restaurant—you can almost hear the conversations, the small talk, the gossip.

Whanganui has been fortunate to have had a lineage of photographers who have documented the city, its architecture, interiors, and people. These have included William Harding (1826–1899) Frank Denton (1869–1963), and Mark Lampe (1894–1972) of Tesla Studios. Since the inception of the Sarjeant Gallery's artist-in-residence programme at Tylee Cottage, both the inaugural recipient Laurence Aberhart in 1986 and Andrew Ross in 2009 each created a body of work that documented this place, but it has been Wotton whose selective eye has been a constant.

This exhibition contains images that could be found around New Zealand, but the fact that so many of these sites are places that will strike a chord with locals is a special thing, and a wonderful legacy that Wotton has created. From restaurants like the Black Cat and Georges to the soon-to-be demolished architectural



carbuncle that is the much-loved Liffiton Castle, these images act like index cards to another time. In sharp contrast to when Wotton first picked up his camera, today everyone is a photographer, but he reminds us that within the image soup of the world, his selective eye and his rapport with his subjects is unique, and something to be celebrated.

Greg Donson  
Senior Curator & Programmes Manager

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Isiaha Te Rangatira Barlow  
*Fire, Knowledge, and Creation:  
Māui and Prometheus in Conversation*

6 December 2025 – 3 May 2026

6 Summer 2025–2026

Isiaha Te Rangatira Barlow (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Tahu-Ngāti Whaoa, Ngāti Uenuku), a graduate of Massey University with a Master of Māori Visual Arts, is a compelling artist who redeploys Renaissance era painting techniques. He is recognised for his luminous paintings carefully executed in pigment and egg tempera with applications of gold, silver and copper leaf.

During his third year of study at Massey University, Barlow discovered Byzantine and medieval art with its inherent religious iconography. He was captivated by this style of painting; “They exist as a functional object of devotion, used to create a medium between man and the spiritual world. A ritualistic object used in Christian spiritual practice to connect human beings with the divine. It is this spiritual aspect that fascinates me.” The cultural and spiritual shift from God-centric to human-centric is part of the impetus for why the hero figures in this suite of works are depicted in a particular way.

*Fire, Knowledge, and Creation: Māui and Prometheus in Conversation* intersects the worlds of Māui and Prometheus, drawing out similarities, differences, and a shared dialogue between two mythical

figures. Barlow explains his interest in rebellion as a theme for his paintings: “Māui and Prometheus challenged the gods’ authority for the sake of humanity. There’s something deeply human in that kind of courage: the need to test boundaries, to take risks, to act even when the consequences could be devastating.”

Maui and Prometheus stole fire for mankind, a transformative act that humanises their divine achievements. Barlow recasts Maui and Prometheus in a contemporary setting by employing a shift in timelines—a movement away from the typical arc of their stories. Here, classic depictions have been subverted and recontextualised.

Barlow painstakingly constructs his compositions as one-off paintings; derived from the reading of texts and summoned into existence with figures that emerge firstly as imprints of ideas; then meticulously painted layer by layer until finally they are revealed. This technique employs a chance approach; not fully pre-composed, but more like direct applications that are revealed through process. Similar to the fleeting impressions that exist in the state between sleep and waking consciousness, these visuals appear and are quickly recorded through the act of painting. The fair skinned figures with exaggerated limbs and oddly contorted anatomy are a

Opposite: Isiaha Te Rangatira Barlow (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Tahu-Ngāti Whaoa, Ngāti Uenuku) *The Birth of Māui* (2025) tempera, gold leaf & gesso on board. Courtesy of the artist



subconscious implant by Barlow questioning the early depictions of indigenous people. The subtleties such as how hands are posed or where the figures are looking, and other minute details are stylistic imports from Byzantine art. Static figures that have been prominent within Barlow's earlier works are now dynamically posed and a sense of perspective has emerged. Cultural tropes are conveyed with a wry, witty sense of humour.

Barlow continues to be drawn to the aesthetics of the early Medieval to

proto-Renaissance period, finding a calmness within the power and beauty of this era's art and iconography. With this new presentation of radiant work, Barlow brings a renaissance setting into a contemporary Aotearoa context. Unusual in Toi Māori, Barlow's paintings are a direct challenge to the dialogue of Aotearoa art history as it unfolds within a contentious and politically charged landscape.

Cecelia Kumeroa  
Curator Programmes & Engagement

7 Summer 2025–2026



Adrian Jackman *After Image* (2013) vinyl acrylic on board, 2013/3/1. Collection of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery. Tylee residency exchange, 2013

Emily Valentine *Pheasbin* 2010, plastic, pheasant feathers and wellbond glue, 2011/1/2. Collection of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery. Tylee Residency exchange, 2010

The collection of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery spans four and a half centuries of art history from Europe and Aotearoa New Zealand. Within that history there are many works that are curious in their narratives or use of materials. If artworks are lucky, their stories stay with them, documented and recorded for posterity. Unfortunately, sometimes those stories are lost or never known in the first place. But through time and being part of a large collection, new narratives, readings and connections evolve between works.

In this exhibition you will discover a curious range of works in a variety of media and sizes—a ceramic mandrill by Rick Rudd, two hybrid cast glass decanters by the Crystal Chain Gang, a magical feathered dog by Emily ValentineBullock, and a spotty ceramic elbow by Ann Verdcourt. It also seems like we've left the remains of some form of crate in the centre of the gallery, but we assure you this intriguing sculpture by Glen Hayward has a strong connection to the heritage of our building. It is a faithful replica created from the wood of an uninspiring behind-the-scenes and now demolished service duct that once occupied a rarely visited corner of the basement in the heritage building.

A large multipanelled work by Adrian Jackman, who was a Tylee Cottage

artist-in-residence in 2012, has layers of imagery that reference his time in Whanganui. Jackman developed a palette of colours that all have local names. The structure of the block work grid is inspired by the Whanganui War Memorial Centre and the gabled form of the garage at Tylee Cottage is also featured. Perhaps the most striking part of this layering of images is a koruru figure (owl personified). Outlined in white, this form is taken from two carved book ends that arrived at Tylee Cottage in 1992 when they were gifted to the cottage when Dennis Turner was artist-in-residence. In 1998 photographer Peter Peryer captured the bookends in an image titled *Tahi Rua*.

If you haven't already, come and spend time with these works, think about their

symbolism, what's being concealed and revealed and how the works are talking to each other. We have brought together unlikely friends. Disconnected from their original contexts and exhibitions, works become more curious and are connected here as new conversations across time.

Greg Donson & Cecelia Kumeroa  
Curators





# Gifted: A Legacy of Generosity

13 December 2025 – 15 March 2025

10 Summer 2025–2026



Above: **Norm Hurn** *Cottage Window*, circa 1990s, acrylic on canvas board, 2018/5/1. Collection of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery. Gift of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart in memory of Norman Hurn, 2018

Opposite: **Marcus King** *Landscape (Orongorono Valley, Wainuiomata)* circa 1920s, oil on canvas, 2017/16/1. Collection of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery. Gift of the Reverend Elizabeth Body, 2017

From prior to our original opening in 1919, and throughout our history, Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery has been the recipient of splendid gifts from private sources. *Gifted: A Legacy of Generosity* celebrates this with a particular focus on gifts received over the past decade. The works included represent a variety of artworks in a wide range of styles and mediums. Many of these works are on display for the very first time due to them needing restoration, or because they are more recent acquisitions.

The Sarjeant Gallery has long valued and benefited from close relationships with artists, who have consistently and generously supported the gallery through gifting their own works to the collection. Over half of the permanent collection is comprised of gifts and bequests with 32% of these being gifts from artists.

A particular highlight of the exhibition is the ongoing generosity shown by the B & C Hewett Charitable Trust. In 2021 we were approached by this family trust who wished to contribute funds towards conservation treatment of artworks for our reopening programme. Subsequently their generosity has extended much further to other works in the collection and, to date, the trust has enabled 13 paintings to receive conservation treatment with another five paintings currently undergoing treatment at Studio



Izzo in Auckland. Some of these works are on view in this exhibition for the first time since completion of their treatment and reframing.

The generosity of these gifts add a much greater depth to the collection as they extend and broaden the stories we can tell. Now that we have returned to our magnificent redeveloped building we are excited to begin a new chapter of unpacking these wonderful stories for the next generation.

Jennifer Taylor, Curator of Collections  
& Greg Donson, Senior Curator & Programmes Manager



## Education News

Over the school holidays we opened up the akomanga (classroom) to children and their whanau with 'Make a Space' days. Our goal was to allow students to follow their curious and creative brains, to allow art-making in a semi-structured environment. We provided lots of materials and encouraged them to try new things. The results were children working with each other and with their families to create engaging works of art. Some were wearable and some were sculptural. It was great to watch tamariki problem-solving together and trying out new materials to bring their ideas to fruition.

In August we went up to Auckland for the first Art Educators Symposium hosted by Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki and Te Uru. It was a great opportunity to see what our colleagues from around the country have been doing and share our progress thus far.

Term Four saw new exhibitions in our Pātaka gallery, with Chris Ulutupu's *West* providing inspiration for haloes and cowboy hats, whilst Hemi Macgregor's exhibition *Waiora* evoked geometric cosmos explorations and learnings about the spring blooms of Puawananga and Whauwhaupaku. This was a particular highlight for our RTLB's (resource teachers of learning and behaviour) when they visited us as part of their professional development day. Chris Connolly's *What we take with us* resulted in a mystery bag sculpture activity. Students were given the same number of items and materials to work collectively to create a sculpture or installation that talks about what they might take with them if they had to be on the move.

Vanessa Edwards & Sietske Jansma  
Educators

## 2026 Tylee Cottage Artist Residencies

Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery is once again calling for applications for our much-loved Tylee Cottage Artist Residency in Whanganui, one of the longest-running programmes of its kind in Aotearoa. Since 1986, more than 70 artists have lived and worked at the historic cottage, drawing inspiration from Whanganui's creative spirit. Two four-month residencies are on offer for 2026, each supported by Creative New Zealand and including a \$25,000 stipend, accommodation, utilities, and curatorial support from the Sarjeant team.

**Residency 1** (April–July 2026) is for a painter aged 35+ and includes the revived Lilian Ida Smith Award, offering

an additional \$5,000 to support the creation of a bold new body of work.

**Residency 2** (August–November 2026) is for an artist working in photography, moving image, or new media, continuing the gallery's proud legacy of supporting artists in these fields.

Both residencies will culminate in a solo exhibition at the Sarjeant Gallery between 2027 and 2029. Applications close Friday 23 January 2026. For details and application guidelines, visit [sarjeant.org.nz](http://sarjeant.org.nz) or contact [greg.donson@sarjeant.org.nz](mailto:greg.donson@sarjeant.org.nz)





## Friends update

### The Friends of the Sarjeant Spring Day Out to Stratford

We had a fantastic day out in Taranaki in late October. Our goal was to visit Stratford's Percy Thomson Gallery. On the way we paused in Hawera for morning tea at The Gathering, the excellent café in the new Te Ramanui o Ruapūtahanga library, and a personalised tour of the library and new art space. At the Percy Thomson Gallery, director Catherine Rhodes treated us to an exclusive tour of the Watercolour New Zealand exhibition. For attendee Hilary Hazell, this was her favourite event of the day, while Stuart Collins voted for lunch at the Fenton Street Art Collective & Gin Distillery as the day's highlight. Our return journey included a visit to the Eltham Cheese Bar with bargains of aged cheddar, camembert, brie and blue cheese and parmesan plus extras for showstopping cheese boards. The Aotea Utanganui Museum of the South Taranaki in Patea was the day's last stop. This museum is home to significant collections including the earliest dated wooden artefacts found in New Zealand, the Waitore Artefacts (c.1400s). For many, it was another highlight of the day for a fabulous day with the Sarjeant Gallery Friends.

Friends of the Sarjeant Gallery  
Executive Committee



Illustrations by Chris Barry

## Friends AGM

The proposed constitution updates had been circulated previously and were formally accepted at the AGM. The following committee members were confirmed:

### *Continuing members:*

**Andrés Salinas, Anique Jayasinghe, Bronwyn Taylor, James Kirkwood, Kate Smith, Larinae Steward, Margaret Samuels, Rochelle Handley, Tom Turner.**

### *New members:*

**Stacey Howes and Nick Toyne**

### *Departing members acknowledged:*

**Libby Wood and Marion Gibbard**

### *Life and Honorary Memberships:*

**Annette Main**, recognised for her leadership as Mayor and Chair of the Sarjeant Gallery Trust.

### *Life Memberships:*

**Libby Wood**, former President and long-serving committee member.

**Tom Turner**, founding committee member with nearly two decades of service.

### *Guest speaker:*

**Carolina Izzo** of Studio Izzo, gave a fascinating illustrated presentation on art conservation projects undertaken for the gallery reopening and beyond.

Gift a Friend's membership for Christmas.

Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery Friends receive:

- Invitations to exhibition openings
- Subscription to the Sarjeant Quarterly magazine
- 10% discount at the shop
- "What's On" emails keeping you in touch with the gallery
- Notification of Friends events, tours and trips
- Discounted entry to the Whanganui Arts Review



## Announcing our First Dedicated Exhibition Sponsor

16 Summer 2025–2026

Since opening a year ago, Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery has had 12 changes of exhibition. As these exceptional art experiences keep on coming, it would be easy to take this for granted. Our curators would assure you that exhibitions of this calibre draw deeply on gallery resources.

For this reason, we are thrilled and grateful to welcome Craig's Investment Partners, Whanganui to our 'exhibition family' as an Exhibition Sponsor. The company will be the primary supporter of an exciting show next year, helping to deliver an extraordinary art experience for everyone to enjoy. The flow on effect of their sponsorship benefits so many, creating rich resources for our education programme and opportunities for community engagement.

Thank you, Craig's! We are truly grateful for your support and thrilled to have you on board.

Nicki Manthel  
Head of Development



## Exciting Bequest for the Collection

Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery is delighted to be the recipient of a very generous bequest of a striking painting by Michael Illingworth (1932–1987) from the estate of the late Sir Robert Jones, who considered the painting Illingworth's best. He wanted to gift a significant work to the gallery, in part as a response to once being charmed by then gallery director the late Bill Milbank when Sir Robert stopped by en route for a skiing trip. The untitled work, painted in 1980, was featured prominently in the 2001 City Gallery Wellington survey exhibition titled *Michael Illingworth: A Tourist in Paradise Lost*, curated by Damien Skinner and Aaron Lister.

The appeal of this painting was best described by the artist's friend Kevin Ireland in the accompanying 2001 exhibition catalogue, making reference to a comment Anthony Stones made to Ireland: "Mike is a jeweller," said Stones to Ireland. Ireland wrote that "[Illingworth] painted and repainted each work for days and weeks at a time until he brought out its hidden depths, just as a jeweller, by working again and again at a stone's surfaces, manages almost magically to bring out a glowing and intense colour from its core."<sup>1</sup>

Michael Illingworth *Untitled* 1980, oil on canvas, 2025/20/1. Collection of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery. Gift of Sir Robert Jones, 2025.



Currently on display in *Gifted: A Legacy of Generosity* until 15 March 2026, the astounding vibrancy of this painting has to be seen in real life to experience the full significance of this remarkable work.

Jennifer Taylor  
Curator of Collections

<sup>1</sup> Kevin Ireland, Aaron Lister, & Damien Skinner (2001) *A Tourist in Paradise Lost. The Art of Michael Illingworth*, City Gallery Wellington, p11.

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## Time for a Reset

18 Summer 2025–2026

As many of you know, the Thousand Stars was an opportunity for everyone to support Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery's redevelopment. Literally hundreds of you gave the equivalent of a weekly cup of coffee for four years to the Sarjeant Gallery Trust. Not only did this amount to an impactful donation, it also demonstrated your collective support for the Sarjeant Gallery and was acknowledged in the form of significant grants and funding that helped realise the wonderful gallery we have today.

The redevelopment has been the focus of the Sarjeant Gallery Trust for the past ten years. Now it's time for a reset as the Trust turns its attention to supporting the ongoing work of the gallery and building a legacy for future generations through the Endowment Fund. This fund welcomes one-off and regular donations of any amount to provide a solid foundation for ongoing support and secures the gallery's long-term future.

Everyone can join the Trust in this important work by becoming an

**Endowment Star** and making a regular donation of an amount that works for you. You'll receive invitations to openings, the Sarjeant Quarterly delivered to your letterbox and a 10% discount in the gallery shop. We already have a generous group of Stars that have simply kept on giving, and to them we are especially grateful, you truly are stars!

The Trust is also building a group of art philanthropists that donate \$100 or more a month. **Endowment Donors** are a dedicated group of art-lovers who share the Sarjeant Gallery Trust's vision of creating an exceptional regional gallery. Their support enables the continued expansion of the Sarjeant Gallery's nationally significant collection and ensures education programmes and inspiring art experiences are accessible to all.

Endowment Donors will enjoy a close connection to the gallery through access to a calendar of special art and gallery events just for them.

Go to the gallery website to discover how you can be a true Star or Endowment Donor or simply give the gallery a call. All donations are tax deductible. Endowment Donors incur a small events fee.

Nicki Manthel  
Head of Development

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Opposite: Richard Wotton *Waitere Residence*, cnr Kemp Street and Main South Road, Putiki, Wanganui 1979 (1979) silver gelatin print, 1982/37/3. Collection of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery. Purchased, 1982



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# Richard Wotton

A Selective Eye: Photographs 1975 – 2025

13 December 2025 – 3 May 2026

For more info:  
[sarjeant.org.nz](http://sarjeant.org.nz)

Pukemāui  
Queen's Park  
Whanganui

TE WHARE O REHUA  
SARJEANT GALLERY

