



SARGEANT QUARTERLY

Newsletter of Te Whare o Rehua Sargeant Gallery | ISSN 1174-3275 / Winter 2026



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Cover: **Isabella Loudon** *Everything might spill.* 2026, mixed media installation at Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery, 11 April – 4 October 2026

Above: Our current Tylee Cottage artist in residence Claudia Jowitt is here April–July this year

From the Director

Tēnā koutou,

I'm pleased to introduce this winter edition of the *Sarjeant Quarterly*. As I write, mists are settling over the awa and the surrounding valleys we look out to from the gallery's vantage point in Pukenua Queen's Park. Recent trips for cultural events in Auckland (Aotearoa Art Fair) and Wellington (Split Enz and Marlon Williams) have been especially enjoyable, with the golden hues of autumnal treescapes glowing in the low light. As we approach Puanga-Matariki and complete our first full cycle of the Māori calendar in our redeveloped facilities, it feels an important time to pause, reflect and consider the future.

One of our recently opened exhibitions celebrates our local landscapes through the distinctive eye of pioneering modernist painter Edith Collier. It brings together many seldom-seen works, including several from the personal collections of the artist's family, and we're grateful for their contribution to the new research this project has enabled. At the same time, our touring survey exhibition, *Edith Collier: Early New Zealand Modernist* is now on the road and currently showing at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū until 30 August.

We're also delighted to welcome our new Tylee Cottage artist-in-residence, Claudia Jowitt, and look forward to seeing how her time in our rohe will shape the works to come. Joining us from Auckland as well is our new Head of Development, Christine Brabender, who will oversee fundraising programmes for the gallery and build on the significant legacy of all who've supported us so far.

A recent independent economic impact assessment highlights the importance of that legacy and the positive contribution the gallery is making to our community. It notes that the construction phase of the redevelopment generated \$52–59 million in economic activity and 194 FTE jobs, while ongoing operations are estimated to be generating \$32 million and 236 jobs through visitor activity in the region.

One more wonderful sight today was a lively primary school group emerging from our large goods lift, each child holding a work they'd created in our classroom. Ensuring a bright future for the next generations sit at the heart of what we do, and it remains the most important investment we can make. We thank you all for supporting this vision.

Hei konā mai,
Andrew Clifford
Director

Isabella Loudon

Everything might spill.

11 April – 4 October 2026

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Isabella Loudon's ambitious dome installation and infiltration of one of the wings of the Sarjeant Gallery's heritage building is the culmination of five months spent as artist in residence at Tylee Cottage in 2025. Here she chats to Senior Curator and Programmes Manager, Greg Donson about the project.

GD: *Isabella, can you tell us a little about the development of this new installation for the dome of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery? How did the architecture and atmosphere of the dome shape your thinking as the work evolved?*

IL: It is a very tricky space to work with as the architecture is very present, it's vast but also there are lots of details. I didn't want to compete with or dominate the architecture, I wanted to meet it. I spent many hours in the dome thinking, sketching and observing people, watching how they engaged with the space. I found they tended to use it as a transit space through to the other galleries. I wanted to disrupt that flow. Now when you enter the dome you are forced to either choose to go left or right and then when you find yourself within the central dome the fabric curtain of the curved wall structure becomes a kind of stage underneath the halo of the dome.

Above: Artist Isabella Loudon in her installation *Everything might spill.* at Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery

GD: *Your practice often moves between installation, material experimentation, and an engagement with space as something emotional and bodily. What interested you about working at this scale and within such a distinctive architectural setting?*

IL: I was excited to be able to work at a much larger scale and I knew that I wanted to create something that required me to work with trades people outside of the gallery team, in this case a structural engineer and builder. I am very used to the physical limits of my body being the limitations of the scale of the work, how far can I reach or get to from my ladder. Here I have had the opportunity to engage in a whole other level of art installation, and I am very grateful for the Sarjeant's support to do this. For a long period, I felt very frustrated by the architecture as I felt I couldn't do anything—it was too precious! To develop this idea, I had to almost pretend I could do anything and then work backwards as to how to make it happen by encountering each limitation as it came up.

GD: *Much of your practice seems interested in transformation—of materials, spaces, and perception itself. Do you see this installation as creating a kind of temporary world within the gallery? What did you hope audiences might feel or become aware of when entering the space?*

IL: Yes and no. I don't know if world is quite the right word that I am looking for. I think intervention might be closer to what I am trying to do. I think of it as a kind of happening within the gallery where there is the potential for something to take form, maybe even something to spill...

I wanted to give people the opportunity to open themselves up to an entirely new experience within the heritage building, one that perhaps left you a bit uneasy or uncertain of what you were looking at. It requires people to be aware of themselves as a body engaging with the work and they also need to think about how to navigate the space rather than walking around on auto pilot. I guess I wanted to provide a bit of a challenge and people can choose whether they want to embrace or ignore it.

GD: *Site-responsive works often exist only for a finite period of time and can never quite be recreated elsewhere in the same way. How do you feel about the temporary nature of installation practice, particularly with a project so connected to this specific space?*

IL: There is always a bit of sadness when installations no longer exist physically, but they always live on in some form. It's been almost seven years since I installed a work at City Gallery Wellington and

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people still come up to me and tell me how much they loved that show and how it felt to be in it. I like that not everything is preserved forever, held in a collection maybe to be not seen for 50 years. I feel like my installation works really live.

GD: *Looking back on the process now that the work is installed, do you feel this project has shifted anything in the way you think about installation, scale, or the relationship between artwork and architecture?*

IL: I like to work impulsively and when you do a project of this scale that's near impossible because everything has to be planned. By the end you don't even want to look at it. I always find myself wishing I [had] done everything differently even when I know it was successful.



Richard Wotton

A Selective Eye:

Photographs 1975–2025

Extended until 9 August 2026

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Since opening on 13 December 2025, *A selective eye: Photographs 1975–2025* by Richard Wotton has been extremely well received. With 114 images included, there's a lot for visitors to see, so we're delighted that the exhibition will now remain open until 9 August. The exhibition brings Wotton's work together in five strands—Whanganui, interiors, colour and abstraction, overseas and close to home, and portraiture. Although Wotton's camera has been a constant companion on his travels in New Zealand and overseas, it has been Whanganui that has been the constant source of inspiration and subject matter when surveying his oeuvre. One of the first images in the exhibition and that Wotton shot was a church at Turakina in 1975. He remembers capturing it after visiting the Manawatu Art Gallery's touring exhibition *The Active Eye* at the Sarjeant Gallery and thinking to himself 'I could do that'. From 1975, Wotton spent twelve years as a compositor at Wanganui Newspapers, and from 1987–2018 was the Sarjeant Gallery's in-house photographer. It was at Wanganui Newspapers that he developed an interest in what was going on behind the scenes: in the back office—the smoko room. Through the 1980s, interiors were a focus for Wotton and he captured

smoko rooms but also private homes, empty motel rooms, offices, changing rooms and businesses. Although it was never his intention to become an archivist of behind-the-scenes Whanganui, he has. As the exhibition demonstrates, we're also taken on a walk through social history—from the questionable pictures adorning smoko rooms, to fashion. Reviewing these images makes us consider what constitutes heritage and what has been filed into the blurry hinterland of the past and memory.

Fifty years is a long time for anyone to remember where a photograph was taken, and in the case of Wotton there are thousands of images in his memory bank, both his own and others that he has experienced through seeing exhibitions and his life-long love of photographic books. Remarkably Wotton's recollection of the images in the exhibition is sharp. Such is the case for his *Tape* series from 1984 which was one of his first forays into colour, occurring by chance on a Sunday afternoon in 1984 as he drove past Firestone Tyres located on Wilson Street in Whanganui. It was here he noticed products wrapped in plastics and tarpaulins, strapped together with brightly coloured tapes. Although the inspiration for these works was close to home, they represented a shift in his practice and still look as sharp as when they were created and developed forty-two years ago.

Images: The exhibition installed at the Sarjeant Gallery

The exhibition features a number of early portraits including Rangī Pokiha from 1977, a long-time resident of Koroniti on the Whanganui River. This image is testament to the amazing capacity of a portrait to travel through time. A recent chance encounter between Wotton and Pokiha's grandson has been a revelation to his whanau and now an edition of the photograph has been gifted to the family.

Greg Donson
Senior Curator & Programmes Manager



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Edith Collier

Local Landscapes

16 May 2026 — ongoing

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Following on from the Sarjeant Gallery's 2024–2025 exhibition *Edith Collier: Early New Zealand Modernist*, which is currently touring New Zealand, we are delighted to bring to light this group of works focusing on landscapes Edith Collier produced while staying with her siblings at four of the family properties; Uplands, Maungaraupi, Wakarua and Mataitira after her return home from Europe in 1922. Providing a glimpse beyond her most iconic and well-known works, and drawn from the Edith Collier Trust, Sarjeant Gallery, Massey University and family collections, this show includes rarely seen examples of her continued artistic experimentation.

After studying at the Wanganui Technical School of Art and Design, Whanganui born artist Edith Marion Collier (1885–1964) headed to London, England in 1913 to further her art studies. She produced her most avant-garde modernist works there, influenced and inspired by contemporary European art, her teachers Margaret Preston and Frances Hodgkins, and her group of like-minded artist friends.

Opposite top: **Edith Collier** *Farm Buildings, Field's Track*, 1942, oil on hardboard. Collection of Quentin and Lynette Collier

Opposite bottom: **Edith Collier** *Landscape with Sheep* circa 1930, oil on hardboard. Collection of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery. Gift of Patricia Lonsdale, Queensland, Australia, 1985

In 1922 Collier returned home to Whanganui and continued to paint and exhibit. Unfortunately the conservatism of New Zealand, so remote from exposure to the latest European art developments, combined with her fresh modernist aesthetic, meant her work was met with incomprehension. While Collier's father Henry has been popularly vilified after he burned some of her paintings when his high hopes of her celebrated return were dashed, he was in fact a generous and successful businessman who financially supported his eldest daughter for an astonishing period of nearly nine years in Europe.

Henry Collier emigrated from Manchester, England in 1860. Henry and his brother Herbert were musicians and music teachers and established a music importing business, H. Collier & Co, with premises in Whanganui, Hawera, Stratford, New Plymouth, and Feilding. Henry married his pupil Eliza Catherine Parkes and they had ten children of which Edith Collier was the eldest. Henry's focus shifted to farming and he became a substantial landowner with properties within the Taranaki, Whanganui, and Rangitikei regions. Unusually for the time, after his death in 1935, Henry Collier's estate was divided among his daughters as well as his sons, and much of the land remains in family hands today. The works on display, including some unfinished studies, depict four of these family properties.

Shortlisted for the Ockham New Zealand Book Awards in 2025 and published by Massey University Press, the Edith Collier Trust and the Sarjeant Gallery, *Edith Collier: Early New Zealand Modernist* is available to purchase at the Sarjeant Gallery shop.

Jennifer Taylor, Curator of Collections



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He Ao Āpōpō, He Ao Tea: Māori Futures

11 July – 25 October 2026

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He Ao Āpōpō, He Ao Tea: Māori Futures is the theme for our 2026 Puanga exhibition. *He ao āpōpō, he ao tea* is a proverb that was written by Dr. Rangitakuku Metekingi of Whanganui and translates to ‘tomorrow is a new day, and the new day will bring clarity’. There are 15 artists responding to this kaupapa.

A local artist in this exhibition, Tia Ranginui (*Ngāti Hine Oneone*), explores our Whanganui River Iwi stories for which we are notoriously secretive, and has yielded enigmatic imagery, capturing something very elusive. Ranginui can converse on a level that connects to old histories and belief systems from an ancient place in a very contemporary way. This is part of the power of her image-making. Fire is a recurring theme that not only connects Tia’s works with her own whanau experiences but also symbolises rebirth and reanimation while referencing the *kōrero kua ka kē te ahi kā roa*—a reminder that the great explorer Kupe arrived in Whanganui and witnessed that the home fires were already burning on the land. In the way that water is used to wash away remnants, Ranginui’s poignant work *Future, 2020* signals the burning of the old to cull the past. However, in the reimagining of a new world, the image feels loaded with melancholy and is somewhat apocalyptic, particularly considering the colonial past, the siege of Whanganui and the recent land settlement process.

A newcomer with their eye on the future is artist Tyrone Te Waa (Ngāti Tūwharetoa). His abstract works are not anchored in any particular aesthetic but are deeply rooted in ancestral histories and connections that summon a contemporary spiritual approach that feels familiar yet completely new and fresh. With a pop/punk style, the sculptural pieces are a complex range of felting, sewing, threading and other versatile processes that are completely alluring. The binding is something that invites memories of ancient rituals—just as a *tōhunga* (priest) would recite old words to activate *mauri* in the objects such as god-sticks, the process of physically wrapping forms using cord could be an act of embedding essence and power. Te Waa’s works are highly intuitive and there’s a conscious approach to reusing discarded, found materials. He celebrates ‘awkwardness’ in people and social situations and his research is informed by queer and *takatāpui* histories in Aotearoa. An emergent language is igniting the *toi* Māori world and the next generation of young artists such as Tyrone Te Waa are finding form and syntax in complex and interesting new dialogues.

The 2026 Puanga exhibition *He Ao Āpōpō, He Ao Tea: Māori Futures* features works by: Kauri Hawkins, Eugene Kara, Maioha Kara, Peata Larkin, Tiopira McDowell (Mokotron), James Ormsby,



Tia Ranginui, Tyrone Te Waa, Kereama Taepa, Ron Te Kawa, Saffronn Te Ratana, Nephi Tupaea, Whai Tāruru Collective, John Walsh and Siobhan Wooding. These artists will carry the kaupapa *he ao āpōpō, he ao tea* - where things can be future, past and present; or always and ‘forever tomorrow’.

Cecelia Kumeroa
Curator – Programmes & Engagement



Top: Tia Ranginui *Future, 2020*, pigment inks on Hahnemühle Photo Rag 308gsm. Image courtesy of Season Aotearoa

Above: Tyrone Te Waa *Upoko Pikopiko, 2025*, felted wool, stretcher, japanese cotton, found fringe. Image courtesy of Anna Miles Gallery

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A Lasting Legacy of Support: Artists Enriching the Collection

The contributions of artists have long shaped the story of Whanganui and Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery. Few relationships embody this more powerfully than the gallery's enduring connection with Gretchen Albrecht and James Ross. The Sarjeant Gallery holds one of the country's strongest collections of work by Albrecht, a leading figure in Aotearoa's history of abstract painting. That collection has grown again with a significant new gift from Albrecht and her partner, fellow artist James Ross. Their generosity continues a relationship that spans decades and has been significant to both artists' careers.

Former gallery director Bill Milbank played a pivotal role in championing Albrecht's work, supporting key exhibitions and acquisitions at formative moments. Albrecht's ties to the Sarjeant Gallery are deeply personal: her maternal great great grandparents, Margaret and Charles Small, arrived from Scotland into the District of Whanganui in the early 1840's. Her first survey exhibition *AFTERnature* was held at the Sarjeant Gallery, which later toured nationally. Ross has also been exhibited and collected by the gallery, and both artists were included in the gallery's influential touring exhibition, *Seven Painters/The Eighties*, and *Distance Looks Our Way / 10 Artists from New Zealand*, facilitated by the Sarjeant Gallery, which toured to Spain

and the Netherlands. Albrecht's gifts to the collection date back to 1978. Since 2021, she has committed to gifting an example of every print she produces—along with earlier prints not already held—ensuring the Sarjeant Gallery now has the most comprehensive public collection of her printmaking.

Last year, the gallery received an extraordinary new gift of 62 items from the couple's private collection, which has recently been formalised. The scope is remarkable. Alongside Albrecht's two latest prints are works by other artists that reflect the artists' friendships, and influences. Among these is a rare early piece by Warren Viscoe (1965) that strengthens the gallery's already substantial holdings of his work. One of the most transformative aspects of the gift is the inclusion of textile works by Vita Cochran—previously unrepresented in the Sarjeant's collection—and an exceptional group of contemporary jewellery by leading New Zealand makers such as Ruth Baird, Alan Preston, Warwick Freeman, Ann Visser Cox, and Sofia Tekala Smith. These additions broaden the gallery's ability to tell a fuller story of Aotearoa's material and craft-based practices. Their provenance is enriched by the fact that many pieces were worn by Albrecht herself.

This new gift also includes a major painting of historical significance: *Now is the Hour* (1988), an expansive sevenmetre



unstretched canvas originally commissioned as a backdrop for Douglas Wright's controversial 1988 contemporary dance production. With this acquisition, the gallery now holds all three of Albrecht's theatrical collaborations, including her designs for Gillian Whitehead's operas *Tristan & Iseult* (1978) and *Hotspur* (1980). Working drawings and archival materials for all three projects accompany the gift, offering a rich resource that illuminates a lesserknown dimension of her practice.

The gallery now holds 110 works by Albrecht—90 of them gifted by the artist—and five works by Ross, including two gifts.

Together, these gifts form a legacy of extraordinary generosity and depth. They honour the past while expanding the future of the Sarjeant Gallery, strengthening its collection, and deepening the cultural story it continues to tell, including its cherished relationships with leading artists.

Andrew Clifford, Gallery Director



Top: Gretchen Albrecht *Spanish Smoke* 2023 ed.3/25, polymer photogravure etching with chine collé. Gift of Gretchen Albrecht and James Ross, 2024

Above: Vita Cochran *Button Bag* 2003, wool base, viscose lining, with new & vintage buttons. Gift of Gretchen Albrecht and James Ross, 2025



Education News

We are pleased to have successfully completed our second Big Art Day Out, a one-day senior art conference for 2026. Interest has grown as registration numbers increased from last year, which was great to see. We thank our chosen presenters for sharing their time, knowledge and expertise with our students. Artists Andrea Gardner, Jade Townsend, Maihi Potaka-Butler and Tia Ranginui all presented on ‘what it is to be a creative in today’s world’, sharing insights and de-mystifying the creative pathway. In the afternoon students engaged in a hands-on workshop with the artist of their choice gaining first hand guidance and understanding.

Student, Payton Time was inspired by the ways different artists express themselves. She said, “It enables me to

broaden my perspective on what to do with my workbook and what to bring into my artwork in class. I see how in depth they are, they’re letting us go hands on to experience it ourselves.”

We also acknowledge our ongoing relationships with our teachers and the passion they have for their students and the creative industry.

As we shift into Puanga, the Māori new year, we are looking forward to engaging our schools in all manner of art-making including drawing, sculpture, poetry and painting. For example, in response to the work of Jade Townsend, we either share the story of *Charlotte and the Lion*, where students learn about this place, or, by exploring moon phase art with cosmic painted layers, we prepare for upcoming Puanga celebrations. It’s going to be another busy quarter.

Vanessa Edwards-Buerger
Educator

Above: Big Art Day Out group of students and presenters

Friends of the gallery

It has been a lively and productive time for the Sarjeant Gallery Friends, with plenty happening both around the committee table and out in the community. We were pleased to welcome Christine Brabender to the gallery team as she recently began her involvement with Friends operations—we’re looking forward to her insight and guidance.

Our Arts Day Out series is ticking along nicely. If you missed the Wellington trip, don’t worry—a Spring outing is already in the works, and we’ll share details once everything is confirmed. River Market stall dates are also locked in for the year, giving us lots of chances to chat with members, meet new people, and keep the Friends visible in the wider Whanganui arts scene. The committee has recently thrown its support behind two practical projects:

Outdoor furniture for the forecourt terrace: we’re exploring options for durable, weather resistant tables and seating that will feel at home with the gallery’s architecture. Local designers are on the radar, and a staged fundraising approach is being considered.

A refresh of the Tylee Cottage Garden: the plan is to retire the overgrown vegetable beds and replace them with lowmaintenance natives, plus raised planters for residents who enjoy

gardening. A small subcommittee will now take a closer look at the site and shape a workable plan.

Another highlight has been the committee’s approval of a Friends contribution toward the proposed acquisition of a Dr Kathryn Wightman glasswork. It’s a beautiful continuation of our long tradition of supporting significant pieces for the collection.

We recently participated in the council’s annual plan process, strongly supporting the retention of free admission. Free entry keeps the gallery welcoming and accessible, boosts community engagement, supports local businesses, and helps grow both membership and volunteer involvement—all of which strengthen the gallery’s role as a cultural anchor for Whanganui.

Volunteer interest has been on the rise; we’ve made eligibility clearer by listing it as a membership benefit on the website. If you are a member and would like to lend your skills to any of the projects above—or to the committee more generally—we’d love to hear from you at friends@sarjeant.org.nz.

With events underway, projects moving forward, and advocacy in full swing, it’s shaping up to be a vibrant year for the Friends. Note: the AGM is set for 14 October, so pop that in your calendar now.



Above: Head of Development Christine Brabender

Opposite: Supporters of the Sarjeant Gallery who travelled to Auckland for the Aotearoa Art Fair enjoyed an exclusive private tour of the Arotahi Photography Collection led by curator Hamish Coney

I'm delighted to introduce myself as the new Head of Development at Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery. After many years working across the arts, education and philanthropy sectors in both the United States and Aotearoa New Zealand, it feels incredibly special to join such an inspiring institution at this exciting moment in its history.

My career has taken me from Chicago, Southern California and the San Francisco Bay Area to Auckland, Hamilton and the Bay of Plenty, with work focused on fundraising, communications, stakeholder engagement and transformational campaigns for museums, universities, hospitals and schools. Along the way, I've had the privilege of helping organisations raise more than \$500 million in philanthropic support, including projects connected to the Art Institute of Chicago and the Gene Siskel Film Center.

What drew me to the Sarjeant Gallery is its remarkable sense of place and vision. The redeveloped gallery beautifully unites the iconic heritage building with a striking new architectural design that honours Whanganui hapu and iwi, and reflects the region's profound connection to the natural world. It feels like a celebration of both the old and the new—bookends of the cultural influences that continue to shape creative arts practice and conversation in New Zealand. The historical,



geographical, natural and cultural landscapes are all present here in a deeply authentic way.

My first weeks in the role have already immersed me in the energy and generosity of the arts community surrounding the Sarjeant Gallery. I recently joined supporters of the gallery at the Aotearoa Art Fair in Auckland, where we experienced an inspiring programme of exhibitions, collection visits and conversations with artists, curators and patrons. Highlights included a private tour of Christine Fernyhough's collection in Parnell, exhibitions by Brett Graham and Rufus Knight, and celebrations of artists including Fiona Pardington and Pat and Gil Hanly.

I've also loved connecting with Friends of the Sarjeant Gallery during our recent Autumn Day Out to Toi MAHARA, Pātaka Art + Museum and The Dowse Art

Museum, ending with a memorable visit to the former home and kilns of ceramicist Mirek Smíšek in Te Horo. These experiences have underscored how relationships and shared cultural experiences shape the life of a gallery.

I'm thrilled to be working alongside such a superb and passionate team and to connect with the artists, supporters and advocates who care so deeply about this institution. Having lived in large international cities for much of my career, I've found myself genuinely welcomed and inspired by the grounded pace and warmth of Whanganui. As New Zealand's only UNESCO City of Design, it is an extraordinary place to now call home.

I look forward to meeting you.

Christine Brabender
Head of Development



*He Ao Āpōpō, He Ao Tea:
Māori Futures*

11 July – 25 October 2026



For more info:
sarjeant.org.nz

Pukemānu
Queen's Park
Whanganui

TE WHARE O REHUA
SARJEANT GALLERY

Kereama Taepa *Whakaahuakino*, 2025 3D printed photopolymer resin & lacquer. Image courtesy of Jhana Millers Gallery