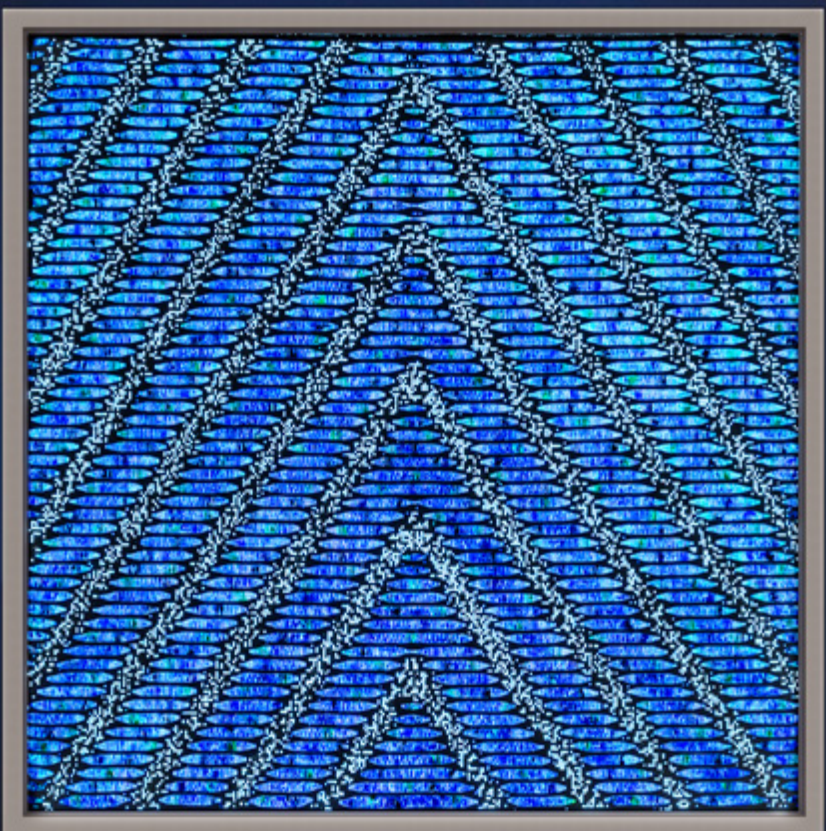




SARJEANT QUARTERLY

Newsletter of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery ISSN 1177-3275 / Spring 2026



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Cover: **Peata Larkin** *Hinemoa* 2026, pure pigments and transparent medium on mesh & flexiface membrane on LED lightbox unit. Courtesy of Paul Nache Gallery

Above: We welcomed close to 100,000 visitors through our doors between July 2025–June 2026

Nau mai, haere mai,

Welcome to the 100th issue of the *Sarjeant Quarterly*. Reaching 100 issues is a testament to the extraordinary commitment of staff, supporters and readers over more than 25 years.

Looking back through our archives, I see the current format was launched with the Spring 2017 issue (#65), followed by a modest redesign for our reopening in 2024. Before then, the publication evolved through several formats, beginning as Art @ Sarjeant in Autumn 2000. Just two years later, in issue #10, then-director Bill Milbank announced the formal launch of public fundraising for the gallery redevelopment. If you'd like to explore some of this history, digital copies dating back to 2012 are available on our website. Even a quick browse of the covers offers a vivid impression of the gallery's dynamic life over the years.

This issue also marks the completion of our first full financial year since reopening, covering July 2025 to June 2026. During that period, we welcomed close to 100,000 visitors through our doors, including 3600 attending talks and events, and 4085 participating in education programmes. With a significant proportion of visitors coming from outside the area, we're proud to note that independent estimates indicate that the gallery generates more than \$32 million in economic activity for Whanganui.

We also generated over \$1 million in direct commercial revenue for the gallery, through donations, events, tours, venue hire, retail and our ever-popular café. A vibrant café is an important part of the visitor experience at any major gallery, while also supporting the range of activities that help keep the gallery free and accessible to all. Equally important are the efforts of our supporters, whose fundraising activities contributed over \$300,000 this year.

As the weather warms, we have many exciting events ahead, including the return of the NZTrio on 1 November—tickets are on sale at the gallery now. I'm also delighted to announce that this year's Bill Milbank Memorial Lecture will be presented by Karen Walker, proudly supported by Murray and Denise Lazelle, on 4 November.

I would like to thank you, our loyal supporters and readers of the *Sarjeant Quarterly*, especially those who remember its early issues, for your continued contribution to the gallery's success. We look forward to welcoming you to Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery on your next visit.

Mā te wā,
Andrew Clifford, Director

He Ao Āpōpō, He Ao Tea: Māori Futures

11 July – 25 October 2026

5 Spring 2026



The 15 artists featured in our Puanga exhibition *He Ao Āpōpō, He Ao Tea: Māori Futures* are a dynamic array from the Toi Māori world. Across the exhibition, familiar forms are reworked through contemporary materials and visual languages, connecting our past, present and future. Ideas of cosmology, whakapapa, taiao and navigation underpin the works, showing how Māori knowledge continues to evolve.

What caught my eye immediately in Kauri Hawkins' work was the graphic nature of his pieces. In semiotics, the signifiers (signs or tohu) of his work are kowhaiwhai forms, which are constructed from the material of road signage. Hawkins transforms the terminal of the koru into an arrow for wayfinding, connecting to star compass navigation. In the works *Tautoru* and *Puanga*, the kowhaiwhai signifiers represent the stars that reside in Orion's Nebula. The central kowhaiwhai form, indicated in blue, references Puanga. In *Tautoru*, the stars are referenced by three blue repetitions. What is signified are our creation narratives and our ingenious Māori navigation systems.

Eugene Kara's *Puna* represents a porotaka (spinning top). *Puna* has a massive 19-metre-tall counterpart, installed on the side of a motorway in the Tainui region. Puna brings to the surface a depth of narrative and relational cosmology (*Puna-whakatupu-tangata*, meaning the spring of life). Surface designs add a dimensionality that extends beyond the corporeal beauty of the metal, connecting to whakairo (carving) and the continuum of Toi Māori.

Maioha Kara's works are reflections of ira atua (the celestial realm) and ira tangata (the human world) and are deeply connected to Māori philosophy. The forms and patterns speak about our cosmic origins. We are the universe animated and reflecting back on itself, and through art our own cosmologies emerge. In *Whakatā* (to rest), Kara references Dr. Rose Pere's Te Wheke model for holistic wellbeing. Her work acknowledges her father Eugene Kara's art practice, connecting through shared visual language forms and technical excellence.

John Walsh's painting *Act 2, Scene 2: There Are Visitors at the Head and They Don't Look Friendly, Let Your Demon Go, You Can Get Him Later*

is a monumental work full of ethereal figures suspended in an otherworldly landscape. Illuminated alcoves and interiors draw viewers deeper into the shadowy drama, veiled in native bush teeming with life. Walsh, renowned for his unique depictions of anthropomorphic creatures and personifications of Māori carvings, joins titan Bill Hammond in the “tradition of shape-changing and [the creation of] spatial unease.” In the western painting canon that conjures Walter Buller and his role in native bird extinction, Walsh inserts an unapologetically Māori voice. With his paintings, there is no sidestepping the settler colonial position in the decimation of native forests and birds or the prevailing impact on Te Ao Māori.

Peata Larkin’s luminous work *Hinemoana* (ocean goddess) enacts the shimmering light on the sea – veiling the mysterious depths through a framing of kaokao pattern. Her painting process employs a technique where pigments are cast in transparent medium and illuminated, poignantly described by Larkin as “holding the last light of the day.” Larkin’s unique aesthetic intersects the formal language of design and fine art.

Kereama Taepa’s *Whakaahuakino* transforms customary carving forms into contemporary relief sculptures, latent with symbols and meaning. The carved pakati (patterned ridge) from whakairo (carving) tradition is reinterpreted using modern materials. Elements from popular culture are placed in repetition to emulate the rhythm of the carver’s whakarei (surface embellishment). Similar to Kauri Hawkin’s use of semiotics, this collision of languages and ideas is what the exhibition brings to the public conversation about what a living Māori culture looks like – its fluid ability to move across time, transfiguring a cultural plethora of ideas.

Our exhibition *He Ao Āpōpō, He Ao Tea: Māori Futures* affirms the idea that “...art is the oldest, most powerful way we carry mātauranga Māori from one generation to the next.”

Cecelia Kumeroa, Curator Programmes and Engagement

“*He ao āpōpō, he ao tea*” translates to “*Tomorrow holds a brighter future*” (Dr. Rangitakuku Metekingi).

Artists: 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, Paeheretia Collective (Billy van Uitregt, Shea Rogan, Tim Booth), John Walsh, Siobhan Wooding.



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

Bottom: John Walsh (Aitanga a Hauiti) *Act 2, Scene 2: There Are Visitors at the Head and They Don't Look Friendly, Let Your Demon Go, You Can Get Him Later* 2010 oil on unstretched canvas. Courtesy of Page Galleries



Kirsty Lillico

Heavy Falls

4 July – 25 October 2026

Wellington-based sculptor Kirsty Lillico has, over the past decade, built a reputation for work that sits deliberately in the hinterland of craft, sculpture and drawing. Her works using carpet, a material that has characterised her practice, drew inspiration from the cut-out floorplans of modernist buildings. These works hung, draped and folded against walls, catching the attention of Aotearoa's art community and winning her the Parkin Drawing Prize in 2017. They were a kind of provocation—serious sculptural thinking conducted entirely through a material most people walk over.

Heavy Falls is the exhibition that follows Lillico's residency at Tylee Cottage in 2024, and it marks a shift, though not a dramatic one. The floorplans are gone. What remains and has deepened, is her abiding interest in structure, weight, support, and the behaviour of materials when placed in relationship with one another. At Tylee she spent time with a loom, not out of any ambition to become a weaver, but because it offered something she was already drawn to—a simple tensioned framework within which complex relationships could develop. Alongside the loom she worked with rope, sisal, carpet and recycled PET acoustic felt found heavily discounted at Murray's

Emporium here in Whanganui. Each material resists or sags, holds tension or absorbs light differently. Each one teaches you something if you slow down enough to pay attention.

That slowing down was, in many ways, what the residency made possible. Lillico normally works around a four-day job, making art in whatever time is left. Her time at Tylee gave her the luxury of following materials rather than directing them, arriving at ideas through the act of making itself rather than imposing them in advance. The titles in *Heavy Falls* reflect this quality of attention—found, funny, occasionally gritty, arriving late and often sideways. They don't explain the work so much as introduce another register, one that leaves room for humour, stubbornness and character.

Lillico holds a Bachelor of Design from Victoria University of Wellington, and a Master of Fine Art from RMIT University, Melbourne. She has shown widely across Aotearoa, including in *Demented Architecture* and *Unravelled* at City Gallery Wellington. *Heavy Falls* is her first solo exhibition in a public gallery.

Greg Donson

Senior Curator & Programmes Manager

Kirsty Lillico *I didn't want beer because of the bubbles* 2025, commercial carpet, hand-tufted carpet, tapestry weaving (wool, sisal, jute).
Courtesy of the artist

creativenz
ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND / TOI AOTEAROA

Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery's artist-in-residence programme is generously supported by Creative NZ



Above: Michael Smither *Untitled* 1974, oil on board, 1998/9/8. Collection of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery. Gift of Jenny Gibbs, 1998

Opposite: Liyen Chong *Body without Organs* 2010, artist's hair embroidered on cotton, 2015/10/1. Collection of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery. Purchased, 2015

The joy of a collection as diverse as Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery's is that it offers endless possibilities for bringing works together under thematic strands that allow us to cross-pollinate themes, media and artists. This edition of *Nō Konei | From Here* is part of an evolving suite of exhibitions (beginning with our re-opening in November 2024) investigating the gallery's collection and allowing us to build connections between works that are uniquely of this place and 'from here'. The DNA of the gallery's collecting and programming is ever-changing and organic. For over a century, works have been gifted and acquired, and new meanings and readings unfold and have become amplified over time.

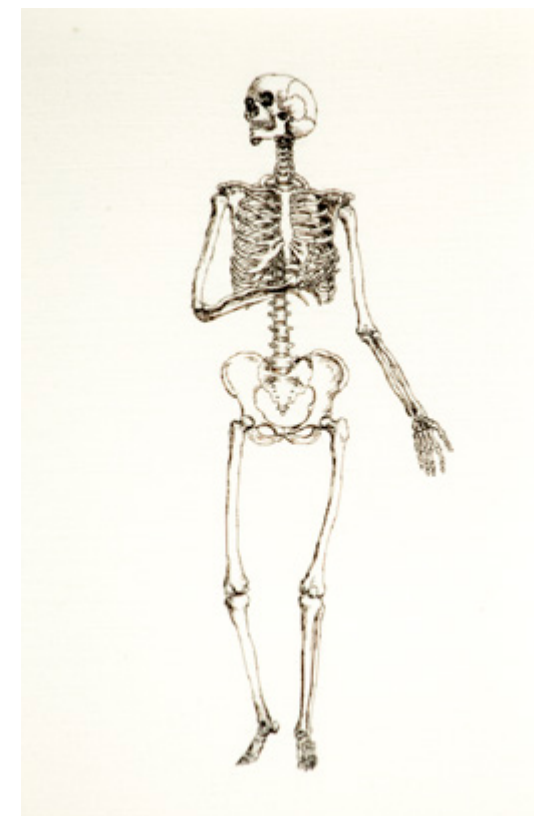
This exhibition brings together works under three groupings: *Methods of Construction*, *Body of Works* and *Tylee Dreaming*. Included are works across a variety of media and a strong thread that links them is that many are by artists who have been part of our artist-in-residence programme, which was established in 1986 at nearby Tylee Cottage. The presence of their works throughout this exhibition reflects the importance of the residency in our programming and collecting.

In 2026 we proudly celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the residency that has given more than 80 artists the opportunity to spend an extended period of time in Whanganui. This has often

resulted in changes to their practice and the creation of works that are infused with the spirit of Whanganui, its stories or landscapes. In the section of the exhibition titled *Tylee Dreaming* you will experience works that have an enigmatic dream-like quality, residing between the real and imagined.

Methods of Construction includes the works of two former Tylee Residents, Peter Trevelyan and Alexis Neal. For Trevelyan (in residence in 2017) his chosen material at the time was graphite mechanical pencil leads, measuring 0.5mm in diameter. From these he constructed fragile three-dimensional sculptures, including a work titled *Hyperboloid*, 2011, a delicate tapering tower. Alexis Neal (in residence 2012) is represented by two of her woven whariki—*Mumu II* and *Waharua III*. While whariki are normally constructed from natural materials, these works combine printmaking and weaving. They are beautifully constructed from paper that has been printed by Neal and painstakingly cut into strips to form woven work.

Body of Works brings together a group of works by artists who have used the body as their subject matter. At first glance Liyen Chong's (in residence 2010) *Body without organs*, 2010 looks like a delicate pencil drawing but the extraordinary surprise of this work is that it is actually an embroidery, crafted



from the artist's own hair. For Mark Braunias (in residence 2007) his 2008 painting *Londontown* features a line-up of characters inspired by newspaper advertisements from the former Whanganui department store of the same name.

With such a diverse range of stories to tell we hope that our visitors will enjoy this eclectic selection of works from the gallery's rich and varied collection.

Greg Donson
Senior Curator & Programmes Manager

New Sculptures for the Collection

12 Spring 2026

Paul Cullen (1949–2017) was a sculptor and installation artist who, over his 40-year career, exhibited both nationally and internationally. Cullen also taught at the Manukau Institute of Technology and Auckland University of Technology where he became the Associate Professor and Head of Department of Visual Arts in 2014. The Paul Cullen Archive was established in 2017 to continue an archival process that was begun by the artist in 2016.

Much of Cullen's sculptural work is inspired by architectural forms and from the 1990s onwards he began to incorporate altered and dismantled everyday objects in his work. The Paul Cullen Archive recently gifted a selection of artworks by Cullen to the Sarjeant Gallery, strengthening the artist's holdings within the collection. Included in this significant gift are two large sculptures of gravity-defying pencils incorporated with a table and a chair, along with a series of twenty compelling small pieces that rework found pencils, wooden rulers and books. Selected works from this gift are on display in *Nō Konei | From Here* until May 2027.

Paul Cullen *After Tatlin (Yellow)* 2015, found pencils with folding canvas chair. Collection of Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery. Gift of the Paul Cullen Archive, 2026. Image courtesy of the Paul Cullen Archive and Two Rooms Gallery



Pictured is *After Tatlin (Yellow)* (2015) which refers to Vladimir Tatlin (1885–1953) a pioneering Russian artist and designer who, with Alexander Rodchenko, founded the Constructivism movement which rejected decorative and traditional techniques in favour of abstract forms and sculptural structures assembled from industrial materials.

Jennifer Taylor, Curator of Collections

Sarjeant Gallery Café

13 Spring 2026

The Sarjeant Gallery Café has become one of Whanganui's favourite places to meet, relax, and enjoy great food. Blessed with stunning views across Pukemaru and the awa towards Ruapehu, the café is drenched in sunlight throughout the year.

We are proud of café operator Dawn and the team. Their warm manaakitanga creates a welcoming atmosphere for the gallery, while their creative approach to fresh, high-quality café fare has become an important part of the gallery experience. The menu also celebrates local suppliers, showcasing the exceptional seasonal food and produce our region has to offer.

The café serves a tempting range of healthy cabinet food, toasted sandwiches, soups, scones and cakes, alongside beverages from Clearview Wines, Brews on Dregs, Kaputi Studio and Allpress coffee. Check out the latest menu on the café page of our website.

The Sarjeant Gallery Café has recently launched two special offers to enjoy on your next visit: 'Tea for two and cake to share' (\$18, from 3-4pm daily) and 'Fabulous Fridays' (\$7 glasses of Clearview Wine or Brews on Dregs beer with any food purchase).

The Sarjeant Gallery Café is all about locally sourced, fresh, seasonal, healthy cabinet food and drinks served in beautiful surroundings.

Drop in, catch up with friends, and make the most of all the gallery has to offer.



Education at the Sarjeant

14 Spring 2026

Highlights for term two were Rangatahi Techweek, which saw us welcome numerous kura kaupapa students into our space, some for the first time. A few weeks later we joined the Puanga celebration day, an annual event for all regional schools across all spaces of Pukenui Queen's Park. As we come to the end of a busy Puanga season, we reflect and take stock of what we have achieved and what is coming next.

One of our main achievements this year is our After School Art Club. We congratulate our colleague, Nicola, for developing and maintaining a creative and safe space for students each Monday and Tuesday. The classes are developing well and producing beautiful art, while building skills and confidence. Nicola expanded her offerings last school holidays by running a painting workshop focusing on landscapes by Edith Collier. If you are interested in our art club or any extras Nicola may offer, please get in touch at sarjeanteducation@gmail.com

Coming up, we're excited to be co-hosting the second National Art Educators Symposium in late August. We are partnering with Te Manawa Museum of Arts, Heritage and Science to bring art educators from across the motu together. Focusing on 'Inclusivity—Accessing Space and Knowledge', we are looking to facilitate presentations that support and empower our educators within our unique art and museum institutions. This is also an opportunity to showcase Whanganui and the Manawatu, while strengthening national connections.

Vanessa Edwards & Sietske Jansma, Educators



Keith St School learning about structural forms in our Puanga exhibition



Top: Harry Culy, image by Molly Tompkins
Bottom: *Harry Culy Untitled* (Bruce Avenue) 2024, courtesy of the artist



The residency programme is generously supported by Creative NZ

Tylee News

15 Spring 2026

We are delighted to welcome Harry Culy to Whanganui as our second artist-in-residence at Tylee Cottage for 2026. Culy was awarded the residency for a photography or new media artist, and he joins an impressive alumni of photographers who have called Tylee Cottage home. This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the programme, so it's fitting that Culy will spend time in Whanganui, given that the inaugural resident was the celebrated photographer, Laurence Aberhart. Photographic artists at Tylee over the last 40 years have made a unique contribution to enriching our collection with works that document their time here. These offer their personal perspectives, but are also an important archive of Whanganui, its built environment, people and histories.

Culy's enigmatic photographs explore contemporary life in Aotearoa, depicting vacant interiors, urban and rural landscapes, as well as thoughtful portraits that astutely capture the essence of his subjects. Working in the terrain of the everyday with roots embedded in a lineage of documentary photography, Culy is hoping the residency will allow him to continue this approach with an aim to situate his work into "more lyrical ends, blurring the line between fiction and non-fiction." Culy is represented by Jhana Millers Gallery, Wellington and in 2025 was included in the group exhibition *The Brood* at the Dowse Art Museum in Lower Hutt.

Friends of the Sarjeant Gallery Executive Committee Update



The Friends Executive Committee has enjoyed a productive winter, with recent meetings focused on planning, member engagement, and supporting the gallery in practical and meaningful ways. As we move toward spring, there is plenty happening across Friends activities.

A highlight of recent months was the successful Autumn Day Out to Wellington, which received excellent feedback from participants. Planning is already underway for our next art excursion to the Wairarapa this spring. Market stalls also continue to provide valuable opportunities to connect with members and maintain our visibility in the wider community.

Volunteer engagement remains strong, with around 35 Friends actively contributing to gallery operations and events. We look forward to thanking these dedicated volunteers at our Volunteer

Appreciation Gathering on 17 September.

The Committee has also begun connecting with Friends groups across New Zealand. Friends of Te Papa recently approached us to discuss reciprocal access to Friends events nationwide. While still in the early stages, this initiative could create exciting opportunities for members travelling elsewhere in the country.

Looking ahead, the Friends AGM will be held on 14 October 2026. We are delighted that curator of collections, Jennifer Taylor, will join us as guest speaker, sharing insights into the recently completed transition of the gallery's collections into the new purpose-built basement storage. This behind-the-scenes update promises to be of great interest.

Spring activities continue with the

Wairarapa Art Day Out on 25 September, market stalls on 17 October and 12 December, and the annual Friends & Stars evening on 10 December.

We also pause to acknowledge the passing of Life Member Prue Carver, a longstanding supporter of both the Friends and the Sarjeant Gallery. Her contribution to the arts community in Whanganui is warmly remembered.

Finally, we are seeking new Committee members to help organise future art excursions. If you would like to contribute your skills and enthusiasm, please contact us at friends@sarjeant.org.nz

Bronwyn Taylor
Secretary, Friends of the Sarjeant
Gallery Executive Committee



Philanthropy and Support

A few months into my role as Head of Development, I continue to be inspired by the many ways people connect with Te Whare o Rehua Sarjeant Gallery. From exhibition openings and artist events to donor gatherings and creative workshops, every week brings new opportunities to witness the connections that art can create.

I've enjoyed hosting supporters at Tylee Cottage for an in-studio event with then artist-in-residence Claudia Jowitt, meeting gallery devotees and art aficionados who were effusive in their praise of the building and what's presented here, and joining a roomful of "royals" of all ages for a crown making workshop with the effervescent Ron Te Kawa.

Looking ahead, I'm delighted our spring season will feature *Ināianeī / Current*, a new biennial exhibition series launching in November and generously sponsored by Craigs Investment Partners. *Ināianeī / Current* will strengthen the region's creative ecology and highlight the exceptional depth of talent that exists here. Thank you, Craigs!

One recent story particularly captures the power of connection.

Following the director's e-newsletter, which highlighted both the gallery's significant economic impact since reopening, and the many benefits art brings to our lives, we received a generous donation to the Sarjeant Gallery

Trust Endowment Fund from a woman whose family roots in the Whanganui region extend back more than 100 years.

Growing up on a farm, family visits to Whanganui were a highlight of her childhood. Those fond memories remained with her throughout her life, as did a link to the gallery through her late partner who knew former gallery director Bill Milbank.

While her Auckland apartment building underwent earthquake strengthening, she chose to spend an extended period in Whanganui, drawn in part by the reopening of the restored and strengthened Sarjeant Gallery. During her stay, she volunteered, attended events, became a regular at The Makery, helped with a *Sarjeant Quarterly* mailout and formed many friendships within the gallery community.

Having taken the full measure of the gallery and all it offered during her time here, she generously reflected back to us what it had meant to her through a significant gift. Her story is a powerful reminder that philanthropy begins with connection, belonging and gratitude. It also reminds us that art is good for us, enriching our lives, strengthening communities and inspiring us to invest in the future.

Christine Brabender
Head of Development



Top: Craigs Investment Partners team with Sarjeant Gallery Director and Head of Development

Bottom: Gallery supporters at Tylee Cottage in-studio with Claudia Jowitt



Kirsty Lillico: *Heavy Falls*

4 July – 25 October 2026



For more info:
sarjeant.org.nz

Pukerimu
Queen's Park
Whangarei

TE WHARE O REHUA
SARJEANT GALLERY

Kirsty Lillico *Shadowlicker* 2025,
sisal, jute, wool, cotton, synthetic
felt. Courtesy of the artist