

# Graham Bennett

New Zealander, b. 1947

## 41°12.2'S/173°19.7'E

1989, lithograph, 76x51 cm  
Purchased 1990



### About the work

Like much of Graham Bennett's work, this lithograph explores space, time and geography. It is part of a series of works he made as an artistic exploration on the Nelson Boulder Bank. The Bank is a long ridge of stones and boulders that runs from a hillside into the sea, then parallel with the coast down to the city of Nelson.

Bennett made these works while he held a three-month term as artist in residence at the Nelson Polytechnic in 1988. His themes involved an exploration of nature, particularly the interplay between the natural forms and human actions and perception, leading to the reintegration of human forms into nature.

A natural formation, the Bank has been dramatically cut off at the Nelson end to form a harbour entrance, providing an example of human interference with the natural environment. 41°12.2'S/173°19.7'E are the latitudinal and longitudinal markings of a particular point - the place and moment where the land and the artist intersected. By specifying a particular area, Bennett 'frames' the landscape, allowing us to consider it in a new way.

41°12.2'S/173°19.7'E gives an aerial view of the Bank that, gradually eroded by the forces of wind and sea, has developed a distinctive spine-like form. A series of rib-like elements, curving away from the viewer, lend the composition the quality of a human body. The metaphor of the human backbone can be extended to suggest the need the environment has for support against nature and human interference.

With a light, dynamic drawing style, Bennett powerfully evokes a sense of the vulnerability, yet vitality, of his Pacific landscape. The landforms are partially abstracted to allow

them to become generic rather than specific, and completely abstracted elements - squares and triangles - are introduced, contrasting the organic with the man-made, the natural with the cultural.

The main elements of the composition are rendered in black and white, emphasising the idea of an underlying structure to which delicate and muted earthy/stone-like tones are added.

Bennett's drawing has a sculptural quality, relating directly to his three-dimensional work in which he explores the qualities of his natural surroundings through vertical and horizontal forms. "Horizontal, vertical lines and squares are the classic human-made imposition on landscapes." (Artist's statement, McDougall Contemporary Art Annex, 1989.)

Bennett has used traditional lithographic processes for this work. (See explanation over) However, where there is a change in the paper colour on this print, Bennett has also used chino (or chine) colle, a 19th century French/Chinese method for collage in which thin papers, such as Japanese Kozo or Mulberry, are collaged onto the lithograph using the printing press. The thin collage papers are moistened, powdered with dry wheat or rice paste, then laid on the plate, adhesive side up. The moistened paper for the print is then lowered over the collage elements, allowing the adhesive surface to stick to the paper as it is printed in the press. This way the printed and the collaged elements are strongly bound together.

In the small, diagonally-bisected black and white square near the top of 41°12.2'S/173°19.7'E there is a small reference to Bennett's 1990/1991 sculpture *Sea Sky-Stone*, which also explored the Boulder Bank.

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## About the artist

Born in Nelson in 1947, Graham Bennett graduated from the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts in 1970. He then travelled extensively in Europe, working in Barcelona during 1978/79 and in Sydney in 1980. Since then he has lived in Christchurch. Bennett is currently a Principal Academic Staff Member at the Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology's School of Art and Design.

Since 1980 Bennett has participated in many solo exhibitions within New Zealand and internationally, including the 1997 and 1999 NICA International Contemporary Arts Festivals in Tokyo. He has also contributed to over 50 group exhibitions in New Zealand and overseas, including '100 International Artists', Meguro Museum, Tokyo, in 2001; 'International Drawing', Joan Miró Foundation, Spain; and 'Contemporary Metals Exhibition', Memphis, USA.

A significant feature of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu is Bennett's major sculpture *Reasons for Voyaging*. Designed in collaboration with the building's architect, David Cole, it is made up of 9 stainless steel poles up to 18 metres in height. These are topped with curved pieces of stainless steel that suggest Māori and Polynesian canoes.

Bennett has completed several other collaborative projects with New Zealand and international craftspeople, including a number of prints with a Japanese printmaker and rug designs for Christchurch-based Dilana Rugs.

## Other works by the artist in the Collection

There are 11 works by the artist in the Collection, including:

### *Horizontal Rectangle IV*

1982, pencil  
Purchased 1982

### *Glazed Recess X*

1985, mixed media  
Purchased 1985

### *41°15.4'S/173°15.9'E*

1990, lithograph  
Presented to the Gallery by the Limeworks Studio 1991

### *Study for 'Time0*

1997, mixed media on paper  
Gifted by Salamander Gallery 1998

### *Times Table*

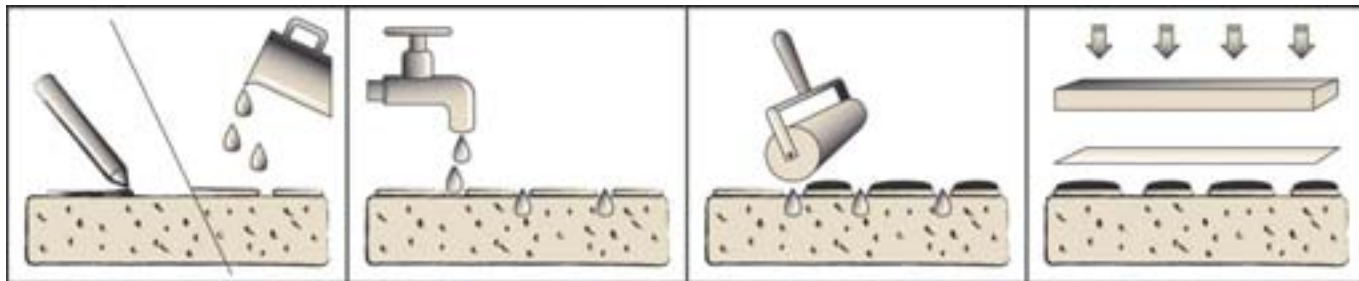
1998, wood, oxidised steel and printed canvas  
Purchased 1998

## Further reading

'The Artist's Construction of Nature: Recent Works by Graham Bennett', John Freeman-Moir, *Art New Zealand*, No. 51, 1989, pp. 68-70.

## Lithography

A printing process first developed in the 19th century. It uses a flat surface and depends on the fact that water and grease do not mix.



The design is drawn on a porous stone with greasy litho crayons or tusche washes. The stone is then treated with chemicals that leave greasy marks in place of the drawing.

The stone is dampened, so water soaks into the areas that have not been drawn on.

Lithographic inks are rolled onto the greasy marks and are repelled by the wet zones (because water and grease do not mix).

Paper is laid on top of the stone and the ink is pressed onto its surface by the printing press.