AGMANZ JOURNAL 19.4

MUSEUMS AND THE PUBLIC: NEW PARTNERSHIPS 1988

QUARTERLY OF THE ART GALLERIES & MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND

SHIFTING GROUND

SIX WELLINGTON ARTISTS

Chris Cane

Derek Cowie

Barnard McIntyre

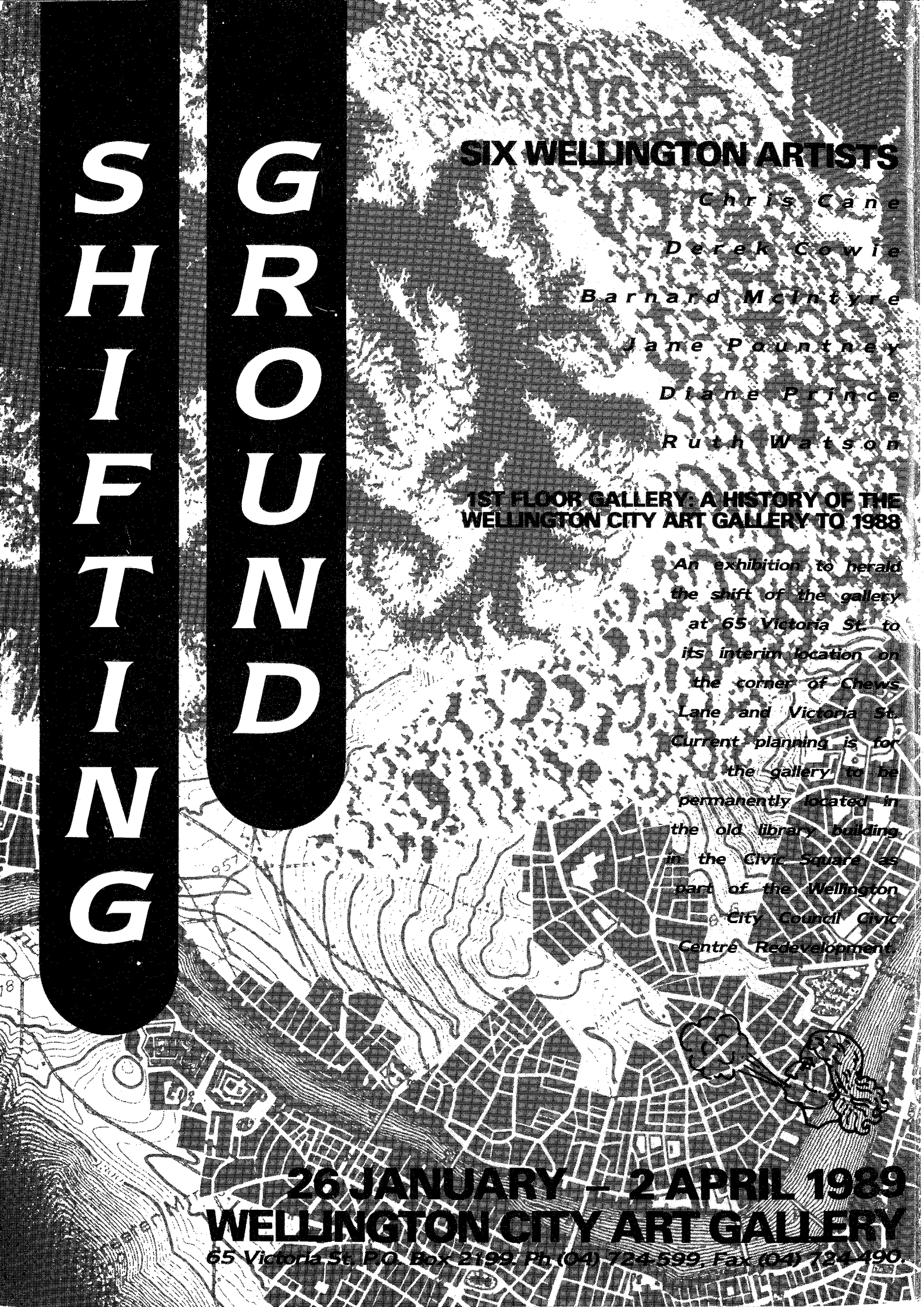
Jane Pountney

Diane Prince

Ruth Watson

1ST FLOOR GALLERY: A HISTORY OF THE WELLINGTON CITY ART GALLERY TO 1988

An exhibition to herald the shift of the gallery at 65 Victoria St to its interim location on the corner of Chews Lane and Victoria St. Current planning is for the gallery to be permanently located in the old library building in the Civic Square as part of the Wellington City Council Civic Centre Redevelopment.



26 JANUARY – 2 APRIL 1989

WELLINGTON CITY ART GALLERY

65 Victoria St, P.O. Box 2199, Ph (04) 724-599, Fax (04) 724-490.

AGMANZ
Journal 19.4
1988

CONTENTS

AGMANZ Journal is the quarterly magazine of the Art Galleries and Museums Association of New Zealand. Correspondence concerning editorial matters should be addressed to the Editor, AGMANZ, PO Box 467, Wellington.
Copy deadlines are 20th February, May, August and November.

Printing: Kerslake, Billens & Humphreys Ltd, Levin.
This issue was typeset and designed on a Desktop Publishing System by the Dunmore Press Ltd., Palmerston North.

Cover: Guests at the opening of the 'Taki Toru' exhibition at the National Art Gallery's Shed 11. Photo by Les Maiden.

P. 14: photo by Mark Strange.

Notes from the AGMANZ Office

Minister of Arts and Culture, Dr Michael Bassett, very generously provided $7086 to AGMANZ to assist with the visit of Dr Michael Ames to New Zealand in October 1988.

The Canadian Government and the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada assisted us by paying for Dr Ames' fare to New Zealand, and Hertz Rent-A-Car provided a discount for car hireage.

The visit was extremely valuable, and during his two-week stay Dr Ames covered a fair amount of the country and spent time with several groups of people. I particularly enjoyed his comments: "Museums can't solve but they can help resolve," and "Museums can be the neutral negotiating ground". Museums, he says, must be pro-active; they must initiate and educate. The visit was a good way for museum workers who may not have a chance to travel to hear and discuss the concerns of our profession with an internationally respected museologist. It was stimulating to have a chance to discuss so many issues and I know that those who had the opportunity to speak personally with Dr Ames valued the opportunity to share ideas.

During August through October, Dr William Tramposch, Director of Interpretive Education at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in Virginia, was in the country giving workshops and lectures. I didn't see much of Dr Tramposch but heard extremely positive comments from the people who attended the various workshops. Dr Tramposch visited New Zealand for six months in 1986 on a Fulbright Scholarship to survey and make recommendations on museum education in New Zealand, and his report affected decisions made in that area and in the area of museum training. Thanks are due to Bronwyn Simes and Sherry Reynolds for organising the stimulating workshops this year. Dr Tramposch's visit was organised and paid for by the New Zealand-United States Educational Foundation and I'd like to publicly thank Laurie Cox for his enthusiastic assistance to AGMANZ.

One of the events of interest around Wellington for me was the Photoforum Seminar at Labour Weekend held in the newly opened New Zealand Centre for Photography. The workshop/seminar coincided with the last days of the Photoforum exhibition 'Rear Vision' at Wellington City Art Gallery. Concerns that there was insufficient visual material in the Diploma of Museum Studies were expressed, as well as the difficulty of accessing museum photography collections for researchers.

I was also invited to attend a workshop on the Treaty of Waitangi run for the Board of the New Zealand Film Archive. I found this extremely useful for my own awareness since I had not looked in detail at the Treaty before. It was also gratifying to hear of the pertinent and important changes taking place in one of our member institutions.

AGMANZ Council members were invited to the opening of the Colin McCahon exhibition, 'Gates and Journeys', at the Auckland City Art Gallery. It was a real pleasure for me to see the exhibition and I hope that over the summer everyone will have a chance to see it.

AGMANZ Council met on 11 November and Working Party reports were presented to that meeting. A draft copy of the Code of Ethics will be distributed soon. The Education Working Party will be meeting soon to discuss, among other things, the AGMANZ Education Plan for 1989. The Membership Working Party has plans underway to produce an AGMANZ membership card and we are collecting a list of museums, museum shops and other businesses which will offer a discount to AGMANZ members. Anyone who feels they would like to offer discounts to AGMANZ members but have not been contracted, please let me know as soon as possible. I hope to have the "new" membership package out in the new year.

It's been a heavy year for AGMANZ. The Corporate Plan has been a useful and demanding document which has meant much extra work for Councillors. There have been many issues to deal with and on the home front, I know many people have been involved in changes under local government reforms.

The achievement of the year has been the setting up of the Diploma in Museum Studies at Massey University. The Diploma is a post-graduate one and is essentially for those people who have already graduated in a chosen area of study. Information on the Diploma in Museum Studies can be obtained by writing to The Registrar, Massey University, Private Bag, Palmerston North.

AGMANZ will still be advertising workshops and other courses and details will be given in next year's issues of the *Journal.*

AGMANZ office has received a copy of *Te Maori: He Tukunga Korero,* the report on the 'Te Maori' exhibition. Those wishing to obtain a copy should contact the Government Print Office or your nearest museum shop. The report retails at $14.95.

It remains only to wish you all, on behalf of AGMANZ Council, a restful Christmas and a stimulating, challenging and exciting New Year. Best wishes.

Cheryl Brown
Executive Officer

Editorial

Museums, art galleries and cultural institutions everywhere share a common agenda these days: coming to terms with the past and the present by re-evaluating their mission, goals and policies, and making their collections and resources more accessible to a wider public. Credibility, accountability and access are the key terms as museums seek to broaden their base of support, both philosophically and financially, not only to survive, but to be relevant now and in the future. Looking outward rather than inward, museums are rethinking their relations with the public, defining and servicing audiences and creating new and realistic partnerships.

In Britain recently, the Thatcher government has urged greater self-reliance for museums. Although budgets for building and maintenance have been increased, the emphasis is on new incentive funding with matching grant schemes that are intended to expand the scope for private enterprise and foster greater public support.

In the United States, where governmental funding has traditionally been minimal - even meagre during the Reagan administration - there has been a longer history of community involvement and private sector initiatives. In a country where museums and mass media culture have grown up together, the public has high expectations of arts institutions and the range of services they are increasingly required to provide.

The worldwide surge in museum building that has taken place in recent years has placed museum professionals in complex and diverse collaborations with architects, designers, artists and the communities which support them. Marketing strategies and vigorous public relations efforts have expanded and created audiences for museums and galleries, while at the same time requiring institutions to become more accessible and responsible to the demands of contemporary society.

The "new" Louvre, for example, has an underground shopping mall with museum and other retail shops, a post office, a bank and several bars and restaurants. By 1990, Germany will have 30 new museums with visitor numbers equalling those attending soccer events, a great national pastime.

The increasing popularity of museums as "places to go" has rekindled the debate surrounding professionalism and democratization: how to balance education with entertainment, while increasing public access and participation in cultural matters.

Museums in each country approach their collections and their publics from a particular context in order to contribute and be useful to the society and communities of which they are a part. In New Zealand, a relatively young museum profession is beginning to define itself amid rapid economic and social change. The unique challenge in this country is biculturalism - equal partnership with the Maori.

The articles included in this issue of the *Journal* focus on New Zealand museums and art galleries and their relationships with the public. The authors have been asked to respond to such themes as defining and caring for audiences, methods of interpretation and information, and museums in the marketplace. The recent visit of Dr Michael Ames, Director of the Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver, also pervades this issue and has further stimulated discussions already taking place within New Zealand museums regarding the recognition of the Maori as a living culture with a contemporary presence.

Mina McKenzie outlines the bicultural debate that has blossomed since 'Te Maori', while Richard Cassels and Warner Haldane discuss the sessions with Dr Ames in Otago and other Southland organisations and the potential for mutual empowerment between museums and the Maori. Rangi Panoho, reporting on the hui at Owae Marae, suggests that a still greater commitment to bicultural issues is needed from museum and gallery leadership. Greg McManus critically looks at museums and the prevalence of outdated, ethnological and anthropological approaches to the interpretation of culture.

While the nature of museums and galleries and their manner of operations are undergoing close scrutiny, healthy institutions require sound management principles and financial stability to function effectively and promote their services to the public.

In an interview, Michael Volkerling discusses the process of institutional definition that is taking place at the National Museum and Art Gallery, and the inevitable changes he forsees when the new Museum of New Zealand becomes a reality. Discussing marketing strategies more specifically, Cheryl Brown sees museum shops providing yet another important access to collections and resources and as an integral part of public relations activities. Cheryll Sotheran raises some of the issues and difficulties encountered in marketing cultural institutions and catering to diverse audiences, while Christopher Johnstone points out that "museums are first and foremost for people", and then provides a number of considerations for improving the quality of the visitor's experience.

Successful and healthy adjustment to change depends upon the perspective one chooses to meet and deal with issues constructively. The exhuberant optimism of 'Resurfacing in Gondwanaland' by James Mack, challenges those working in New Zealand museums and galleries to expand their horizons and increase the possibilities of meaningful communication with their audiences.

I would probably go further and say that in order to be relevant in contemporary society, museums need to become user-friendly, entertainingly educational, culturally alive "places to be".

Geri Thomas
Guest Editor

Towards Bicultural Museums in New Zealand

Mina McKenzie, FMANZ
President, AGMANZ and Director, Manawatu Museum

There is a new climate abroad in Aotearoa. On all sides - as that supposed magic year, 1990, approaches - we hear discussion on the implications of the implementation of the Treaty of Waitangi. The question or problem of biculturalism is hotly debated everywhere.

The seeds of the bicultural debate were sown in the museum community with the 'Te Maori' exhibition. The involvement of Maori in every phase of the exhibition during its tour of both the United States and New Zealand prompted us to ask each other: "Is there life after 'Te Maori'?" We did not seem to be sure of the answer!

Our museums have been said to be eurocentric, monocultural institutions. Research has been based on Western disciplines of Anthropology, Archaeology, Ethnology, Art History, Aesthetics, History, Science and Technology. Objects other than those originating within a Western framework have been classified as "primitive", "tribal", or "natural". The spiritual, religious, cultural and artistic significance of the material to its Maori makers has often been misunderstood, misinterpreted, ignored, or irrelevant. This may be an extreme viewpoint, but young Maoris are not numerous in our institutions. For them, the museum is not a place where a career can be pursued.

Following 'Te Maori', which many of us see as providing the impetus for change, the museum community is actively promoting debate on Maori/Pakeha relationships in the presentation of Maori material. The Maori have signalled that they wish to play a greater part in the interpretation of Maori material in our museums. The report 'Nga Taonga O Te Motu - Treasures Of The Nation' published by the Department of Internal Affairs in 1985, presents a concept for the redevelopment of the National Museum and Art Gallery of New Zealand. It recommends that a bicultural, Maori/Pakeha partnership be the cornerstone of the new development.

Many of us have long been struggling with the desirability and ethics of the interpretation of one people by another. How grateful we are that Professor Michael Ames, Director of the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia in Canada, has been addressing the fate of indigenous, colonised people and their cultural expression through his work with the indigenous peoples of Northwest Canada. His writings have been both a comfort and an inspiration to many of us. On a visit to The Museum of Anthropology, I was impressed by the sensitivity of the interpretation and the excellence of the exhibitions.

Dr Ames' visit to us in New Zealand in September this year was made possible by the generosity of the Government of Canada. Through the meetings and workshops which were held with Dr Ames throughout New Zealand, we have been able to continue the debate about the inevitable changes which must occur in the organisation of our museums. Hopefully, we are one step closer to opening the doors and making biculturalism a reality. It is an absolute necessity if we are to be relevant in New Zealand society into the 21st century.

In spite of the vast distance which separates Canada and New Zealand, we have discovered a community of interest between us. Our continuing contact with Dr Ames will ensure that his work will still be a factor in our development. May the debate continue!

Dr Michael Ames in Dunedin

Richard Cassels, Director
and Warner Haldane, Liaison Officer, Otago Museum

In the three days from 29 September to 1 October, it was demonstrated just how valuable a fresh view can be on local concerns, when Dr Michael Ames visited Dunedin at the invitation of the Otago Museum, where his expertise was shared with a number of other Otago and Southland organizations.

Dr Ames' first visit was to the Otago Museum, where he held two discussion sessions, which were attended by staff from the Otago Museum, the Otago Early Settlers Museum, the North Otago Museum and the Southland Museum and Art Gallery, as well as members of the Department of Anthropology, University of Otago.

The first of the two sessions was on the general topic of museums, anthropology and indigenous cultures. Some of the topics covered were: the issues raised and opportunities created by repatriation claims; the setting aside of 'sacred' areas for particularly sensitive material; tribal museums; and the use of comments cards to get feedback from the public.

The second session was on 'visible' (or display) storage, which was of particular interest to the Otago Museum in view of its redevelopment of the Maori gallery. This was an extremely useful examination of the advantages and pitfalls of this method of presenting material to the public. Key requirements for success appeared to be: clarifying to the public the aim of the exercise; a practical catalogue system which could be used easily by the public; commitment to the concept by the curatorial staff, as the system would generate a great deal more public contact. Dr Ames stressed that the system did pose some conservational and security problems, which ruled out the presentation of some types of materials (e.g. textiles) by this means. He also pointed out that the greater visual accessibility of the objects had its drawbacks, as there was a risk of overwhelming the visitor with the sheer quantity of material.

On the evening of the first day, Dr Ames gave a public lecture on the future of museums to a nearly full house. He illustrated it with examples from his own Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia. Among other things he demonstrated the value of promoting, where possible, the living culture of the descendants of those whose cultures are represented in museums.

The second day of Dr Ames' visit started at the Otago Early Settlers Museum, where wide-ranging discussions included the training of staff and volunteers. Also covered were various aspects of the museum treatment of sub-groups within the dominant culture, as well as their treatment of minority cultures in the community. It seemed that some of the problems associated with the presentation of minority indigenous cultures also arose in these situations.

From there, Dr Ames went to the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, where the discussions centred around the role of the Gallery in relation to the Maori community and the definition of Maori art in an art gallery context. Dr Ames finished the day at the Hocken Library, where he was given an indication of the scope of their collections.

On the last day, Dr Ames was welcomed at the Otakou Marae on the Otago Peninsula. Marae members were interested in his Canadian experiences and the parallels with their own situations. The presence of Dr Ames as an 'outsider' also acted as a catalyst for the discussion of important local issues, such as the future display of taonga in the Otago Museum and the Ngati Awa claim of ownership and the 'return' of the meeting house Mataatua. No local person could have served as such a catalyst. The informal discussions held in the warm sun outside the front of the house Tamatea, overlooking the harbour entrance and Aramoana, almost deafened by bird song, were an unforgettable end to a stimulating visit.

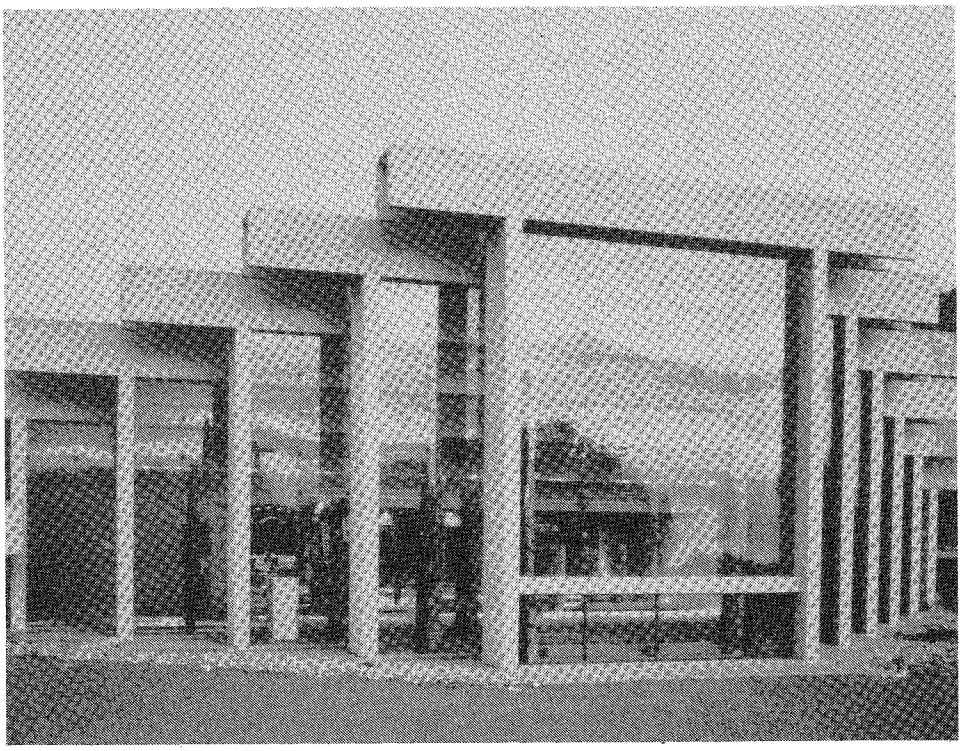
Apart from the benefits Dr Ames brought with his special knowledge, his visit to Dunedin promoted valuable opportunities for thought and discussion, which would probably not have otherwise occurred in the day-to-day 'hurly-burly' of running museums. His visit was also valuable for bringing together the principal museum institutions of Otago and Southland and promoting contact between their respective staffs.

In developing the study storage, Dr Ames' museum had clearly gone much further than any New Zealand museum, and his practical experience was invaluable for us. In other areas his experiences seemed very similar to those of New Zealand and his promotion of contemporary art as a springboard for the community and political development of museums resembles a number of this country's museum programmes. It was Dr Ames' thoughtfulness and ability to articulate issues, evident both in conversation and in his published articles, that was refreshing, and which lifted museum staff above the mundaneness of budgets, leaking roofs and the drafting of labels!

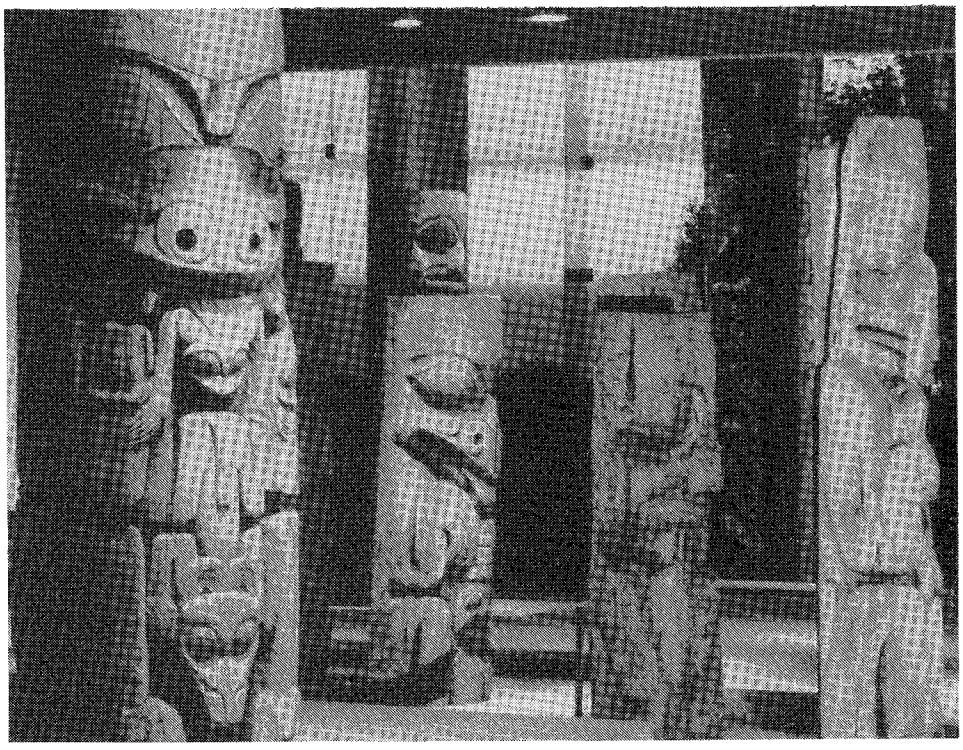
Dr Ames talked of Canadian museums 'empowering' indigenous people. If what he meant by this 'empowering' is placing the professional skills of museum staff, and the potential they offer, at the service of individuals or groups who wish to identify and discover themselves, we would heartily endorse this idea; but we also point out that the groups or individuals concerned must also 'empower' the museums with their confidence, as we have seen the tangata whenua doing on a number of occasions in this country.

It was good to talk to another professional, even if the discovery that we were on the same 'wavelength' carried with it some unease that while the museums of two very different countries step timidly into the swirling waters of the cultural resurgence of their indigenous peoples, the running of these museums is indeed still European dominated.

Views of the UBC Museum of Anthropology



View of Great Hall from Seaward Side



Red cedar totem poles in Great Hall

Dr Ames at Owae Marae

Rangi Panoho

Extensions Officer, Sargeant Art Gallery

As a new arrival to the gallery profession, this hui was both a novelty and a disappointment. Organised by the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery and the Taranaki Museum in conjunction with the Owae Marae, this meeting was a unique opportunity for discussion between the Maori community and the profession as to the future of Maori taonga in our institutions. As director of the Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia with an established involvement with the Indian tribes of Canada, their art and culture, Dr Ames was an ideal person to involve.

Unfortunately for everyone, Maori people and museum gallery directors interested in talking with Dr Ames and taking part in what should have been a forum of national importance, simply failed to turn up. Are Maoris more interested in discussing fishing and land rights? If so, where does focus on taonga - their conservation, their availability and their exhibition - come into it? And what of the directors from the museum-gallery profession with long-standing experience and involvement with Maori people in their institutions. Where was James Mack who initiated the hui, Mina McKenzie and Bill Milbank? Dialogue would certainly have been enriched with their involvement.

How frustrating and bizarre to be sitting in a wharewhakairo with carved, woven and painted taonga all around us and such a very small audience of Maoris and key gallery people to address issues regarding the future of similar pieces in our museums and galleries.

This is not to say the hui was a failure. Discussion was fairly lively and what Dr Ames had to say was particularly relevant to our local situation. Through his slide talk, our Canadian visitor illustrated the cultural parallels between the Indian tribes of Canada and the Maori people. Ames spoke of similarly strong traditions of boat and house building, weaving and carving and community-based tribal systems with deep physical and spiritual ties to land, sea and natural resources. His development of a close working relationship with the Haida Indians by collecting and sponsoring their work is also applicable to museums and galleries in this country and their efforts at interaction with Maori people over taonga.

There is no doubt that the wealth of experience transmitted to those in the museum profession at Ames' workshops has been invaluable. The Taranaki Museum and the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery were good hosts, and the Owae Marae fed and treated us very well. The only disappointment was this low profile Maori involvement and gallery leadership participation which seemed to loom over the whole Waitara hui.

Treaty of Waitangi and AGMANZ

Bill Milbank

Vice President, AGMANZ and Director, Sargeant Gallery

Discussion of the Treaty of Waitangi is the single most important issue in New Zealand today. For the museums and art galleries of New Zealand it is vital that the implications of this document be clearly understood.

A workshop on the Treaty of Waitangi and biculturalism has been scheduled for 6 and 7 June 1989 for AGMANZ Council. Council believes that by attending such a workshop we may better understand our responsibilities under the Treaty of Waitangi. It is intended that other workshops will be scheduled throughout New Zealand on a regional, senior management and junior level during 1989 and 1990.

If anyone requires further information on the workshop, which is called 'Double Take' and is organised under the auspices of Annie Collins, please contact the Executive Officer, Cheryl Brown.

The Question of Significance and the Interpretation of Maori Culture in New Zealand Museums

Greg McManus

Curator, Manawatu Museum

Although "interpretation" is considered to be one of the primary functions of "museums" (in the broadest sense incorporating art galleries, etc.), it is one of the functions that, in my opinion, New Zealand museums are least good at and pay least attention to, especially when dealing with Maori culture. I would even go as far as to suggest that many museums and art galleries in New Zealand do not interpret at all.

Before I can attempt to justify this statement, it is necessary to define exactly what interpretation in the museum situation is and what the goals of such interpretation might be. In its simplest form, interpretation is the process of describing and explaining something, an object or concept, for example, to someone else. This is the dictionary definition and is relatively straightforward. But what about interpretation in the museum situation?

Roger Neich (1985:5) provides a useful definition of the goal of a museum's interpretation of an object as "achieving an awareness and understanding of the meaning and *significance* of an object *for its makers and users*" (my emphasis). Yes, this *is* what museum interpretation is all about, explaining the *significance* of objects and concepts within the system of knowledge of the people who make and use them. It seems a simple and obvious definition, yet I would argue that many museums, especially when "interpreting" the objects and concepts of another culture, do not even come near to achieving this goal.

It is this idea of *significance* in museum interpretation that I wish to concentrate on here, particularly as it relates to the question of how museums interpret cultures other than those of the people doing the interpreting.

After defining the goal of museum interpretation, Neich goes on to conclude that much of the interpretation of Maori culture in New Zealand museums is more concerned with establishing the significance of Maori cultural items within the Pakeha system of significance rather than within Maori culture itself. He is, of course, absolutely right.

For more than a century Maori culture has been the subject of much scrutiny by European scholars - archaeologists, ethnologists, linguists - and very often under the auspices of museums. It was during the nineteenth-century Darwinian revolution that the disciplines of "ethnology" and "ethnography" were developed as methods of looking at and recording non-western society, the cultures of which were labelled "primitive" and were considered to be part of the natural history, the flora and fauna of a country. The key word in nineteenth-century natural history, including ethnology, was *classification.*

Classification schemes were developed to describe and understand everything from bugs, beetles and birds, to races of people and their material cultures. Ethnology displays in museums reflected this classifying approach, but more importantly they reflected the distinction between "primitive" and "high" cultures, a distinction which museums helped to create and to perpetuate. Objects from "primitive" cultures were frequently displayed in clusters of type with the same "anonymity as mindless, repetitive geological fossils or butterflies" (Mulvaney, 1980); while objects from "high" cultures, especially European, were usually displayed as works of individual creation, often in art galleries.

This distinction still exists today. The Musée de l'Homme in Paris, a famous storehouse of ethnology, has a collecting policy which includes objects of "primitive cultures", but excludes "all fine art or folk art of Western civilization later than Neolithic times" (Mulvaney, 1980). These exclusions are housed in an even more famous storehouse of "high" art and culture, the Louvre.

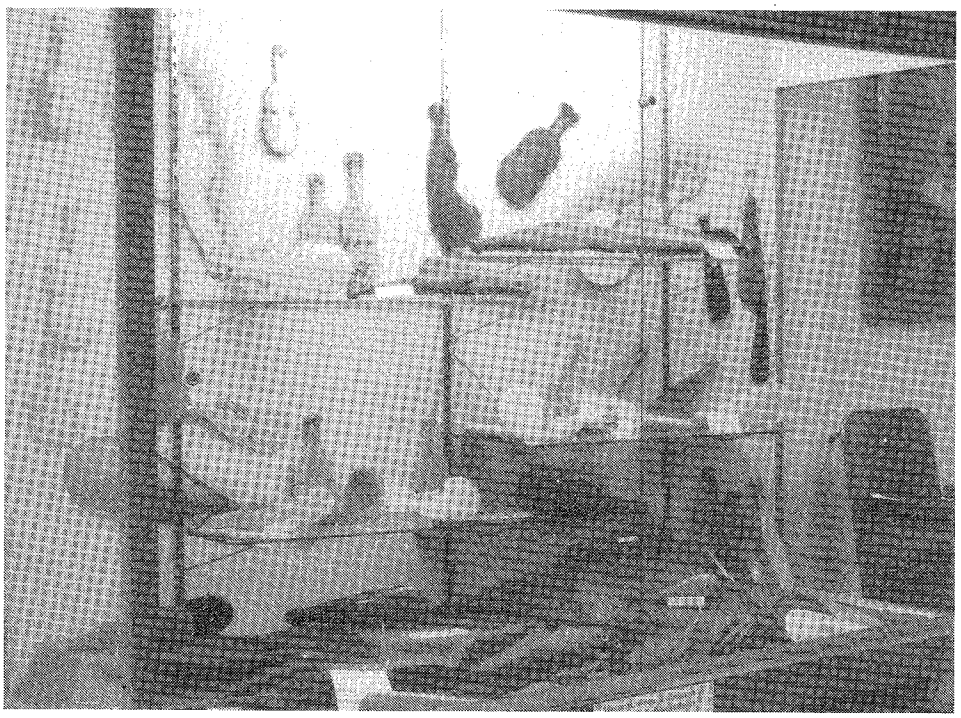
We do not have to look very far to realise that this distinction is alive and well in New Zealand. Consider the promotional poster for the 'People of the Cedar' exhibition currently touring New Zealand under the auspices of the Art Gallery Directors Council. The exhibition is of *contemporary* tribal art (1970s-80s) from the Northwest Coast of Canada. But the poster, produced in New Zealand, invites us to take the "unique opportunity to see rare and unusual *primitive* material from the Indians of the Northwest Coast of Canada" (my emphasis). Coming barely a week after Michael Ames' visit, this poster led me to despair!

Consider also a recent description of the staffing of the National Museum of New Zealand (again my emphasis):

> The present staff includes 14 scientific officers and six scientific technicians, and active research is in progress on whales and dolphins, birds, fishes, molluscs, crustacea, echinoderms, beetles and feather lice, ferns, marine algae and the *material culture of the Maori and of neighbouring Pacific Island areas.* (Thomson, 1981:71).

An unfortunate juxtaposition or an indication that ethnology still rates as part of natural history in New Zealand museums?

At the risk of sounding overly cynical, one must also question the theoretical origins of the 'Te Maori' exhibition in relation to this discussion. It is ironic that 'Te Maori' was heralded by many writers, both Maori and Pakeha, as the great event that would remove Maori art from its ethnographic context and "primitive" status in dark, dusty museums, when in fact it was being shown in the section of New York's



"With the same anonymity as mindless, repetitive geological fossils or butterflies": the traditional approach to the display of Maori culture.

Metropolitan Museum called "Primitive Art" and at the Chicago Field Museum of "Natural History". Apart from greatly more lavish display budgets this would not appear to be much of a move. Furthermore, the final selection of the objects to be included in 'Te Maori' was made by an ethnologist from that same Primitive Art department at the Metropolitan according to his own preconceived ideas about Maori cultural history based on ethnographic and archaeological models. Douglas Newton (1986:15) states that he based his ideas for the exhibition on the "classic" and "pre-classic" phases of Maori art and culture. These divisions are now generally recognised to be outdated and arbitrary, a product of the "classifiers" work so to speak, and they epitomise the traditional museum approach to Maori culture. Newton also placed a high degree of importance on artistic excellence as a criteria for selecting objects for the exhibition, but made virtually no reference to the significance of the objects to the tribes themselves. (The questionable philosophical basis for 'Te Maori' has been briefly explored by Kernot (1987: 3-7) and his comments are well worth serious contemplation).

So, what has all this to do with significance and interpretation? Well, everything really. I am going to stay with Neich's definition of the goal of interpretation because it stresses the fundamental importance of the significance of an object *for its makers and users*, and the concept of significance within the system of knowledge of the "interpretee" rather than that of the "interpreter". This is a distinction which museum workers must understand and address when they undertake to interpret aspects of another culture.

An interesting paper by Cummins (1977) on the concept of ethnic significance of cultural resources has been used as a framework for examining the relationship between archaeology and the Maori community by Ian Lawlor (1983). Cummins' ideas are also useful in the present discussion of how different types of significance are placed upon Maori cultural resources by Maori people themselves, by scholars and by museums, especially in light of Neich's criticism of the way museums interpret these resources.

Cummins describes four hypothetical situations involving a minority ethnic group within a larger dominant society, and the cultural resources of the minority group:

1. the minority group ascribes significance to a cultural resource, having perceived symbolic ethnic value within it. The ethnic group has successfully communicated its perception of value to the larger society which in turn has recognised this perception. This recognition, which might extend to legal protection of the resource, is granted by the society even though it may not share the ethnic group's ethos or world view. Cummins considers this to be an ideal situation to aim for. Such a society values diversity and respects and recognises a minority group's perception of its cultural resources.
2. the opposite of (1). An ethnic group ascribes significance to a particular resource but society refuses to acknowledge this significance and subsequently places no value on the resource. Cummins suggests such a lack of recognition may be due to the structure or social philosophy of the society, the status of the ethnic group within the society, or a lack of effective communication between the ethnic group and representatives of the dominant society.
3. the cultural resources of a particular ethnic group are ascribed significance by the dominant society but this is either not recognised or is rejected by the ethnic group itself.
4. an ethnic group exists within a society but lacks cultural resources which contain the symbolic value needed to reinforce group identity, such as in the case of recent immigrants or groups which have undergone dislocation or acculturation.

Undoubtedly aspects of Cummins' situations apply directly to the way New Zealand museums approach the interpretation of Maori culture. For example, his third situation portrays the dominant society as ascribing significance to the cultural resources of an ethnic minority,

whereas the minority itself ascribes no such, or a different, significance to the same resources. Is this not exactly what Douglas Newton, an invited representative of the dominant European society, did when he chose the objects for 'Te Maori' based on criteria of artistic excellence and European models of "classic" and "pre-classic" Maori art and culture? Remembering that tribal leaders had the right to veto selections of particular objects, but did not appear to have had any say in the selection of what was to be included in the first place (Kernot, 1987:4), it must be questioned whether Newton's criteria for significance would also have been those of the Maori people themselves.

At a broader level, it appears to me that this is what museums do when they approach Maori culture from an ethnological or archaeological standpoint. Traditionally, the significance perceived by museums in an object, or group of objects, is significance within the *European* system of knowledge. For example, to interpret a carving as significant because it "exhibits aspects typical of an early carving style using stone tools" is interpretation from a purely Pakeha point of view. Such an interpretation does not recognise the significance Maori people themselves might perceive in the carving, which is much more likely to be related to the ancestors or events depicted, their own relationships with those ancestors, and with the person or people who made the carving. In this respect, artistic excellence in the Pakeha system of knowledge might not necessarily ensure significance in the Maori system of knowledge. It is possible, although I am not suggesting it must have been, that some of the taonga in 'Te Maori' were *not* significant in the Maori system at all. They may have been excellent artistically or representative of a particular style or period, that is, they may have been significant in the *Pakeha* system, but this does not guarantee significance in the *Maori* system. The converse is also true of course - it may well have been the case that taonga of great significance in Maori terms were not significant within Newton's criteria and therefore were not chosen.

What I am leading to here is a demonstration that the factors of *significance* and *relevance* are not mutually exclusive of one another in the museum situation. The great demand of, and in, the museum world in the 1980s has been for a *democratization* of the museum experience - "museums for the people". The bottom line is that to achieve this, museums must become *relevant* to a greater proportion of the community in which they operate, and which more often than not funds them. To do this they must recognise the fact that different people place different significance on the same aspects of culture.

This was brought home to me by many of the local Maori people who visited the exhibition 'Nga Parehau o te Wa' at Manawatu Museum who said that, for them, it was "better than 'Te Maori'." They felt this not because of lavish or expensive exhibition techniques (anybody who knows this museum would agree this could not have been the case!), but because most of the objects in the exhibition were locally and accurately provenanced, and many could be related directly to particular ancestors. The objects had significance to these people regardless of any importance they might have had within the Pakeha ethnological or archaeological systems of significance. A fine taiaha was of great interest to Rangitane visitors not because it was well-carved or a good example of its kind, but because it was once the possession of the great nineteenth-century Rangitane chief, Te Peeti Te Awe Awe.

We have now come full circle to Roger Neich's definition of the goals of "interpretation" and can perhaps now decide how it relates to what our museums do, particularly in regards to cultures other than our own which, in the New Zealand museum scene, is overwhelmingly Pakeha.

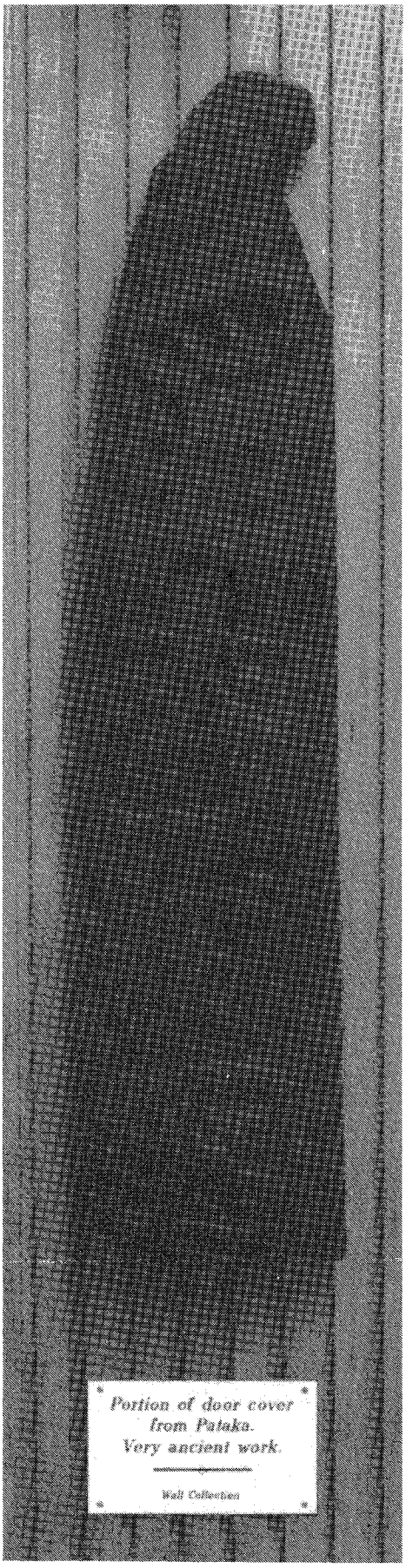
In Neich's terms, most New Zealand museums fail to achieve an awareness and understanding of the meaning and significance of aspects of Maori culture in the Maori system of significance itself. Most permanent exhibitions of Maori culture I have seen in New Zealand museums, including some quite recent installations in major institutions, have been concerned with showing "the Maori as they were" based upon archaeological and anthropological approaches to the study of culture. One obvious reason for this is the tendency for museums to appoint archaeologists and anthropologists as curators of ethnology and of Maori collections in particular.

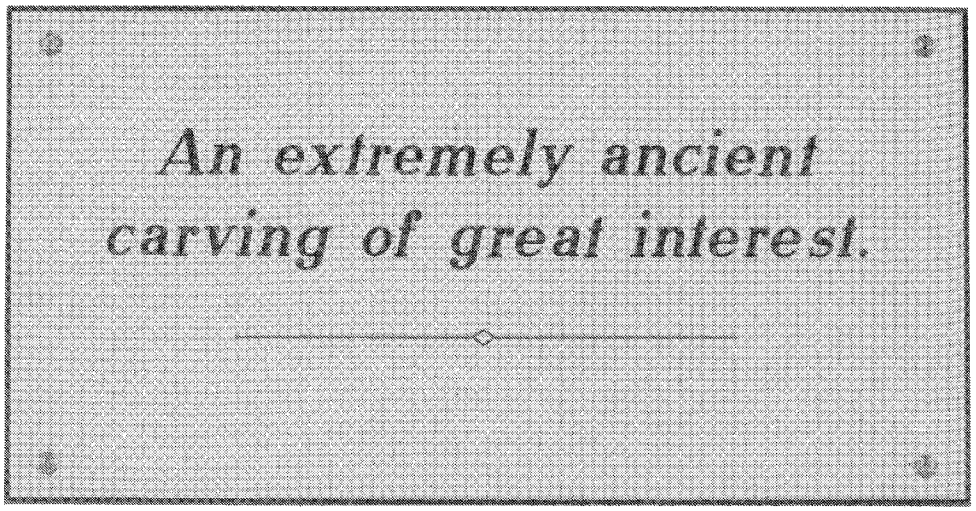
Exhibitions of Maori culture produced under these circumstances almost always attempt to convey the significance of the "artifacts" in archaeological and anthropological terms, but ignore or understate the significance they may have in Maori terms - particularly to the descendants of the people who made them. Often this is simply because such significance is not known by the museum due to unknown or doubtful provenance or, more importantly, tribal affiliation. In other cases it is more likely that curators are not well versed in, nor have easy access to, knowledge about significance in Maori terms.

Other attempts at interpretation of Maori culture fail to even establish significance within the Pakeha system of knowledge let alone the Maori one. Consider two labels attached to carvings, one of which was still on display at the time of writing (October 1988): "An extremely ancient carving of much interest," and "Portion of door cover from pataka. Very ancient work".

Although we might laugh at these examples, the fact is they exist, and along with many other labels in many New Zealand museums, they serve as an indictment of the traditional and dubious approach to the interpretation of Maori culture, and as an insult to that culture itself.

Based on what I've seen (and admittedly I have not visited all the museums in the country), it seems to me that my initial statement that many museums *don't* interpret Maori culture adequately or at all, is quite reasonable when Roger Neich's very sensible definition of the goal of such interpretation is employed. Although there has been a great deal of talk for some years about the need for museums to become "bicultural" and more *relevant* to the Maori community, there seems to have been a general lack of action on the ground, especially as far as permanent





Examples of lables with rather dubious interpretive value.

exhibitions of Maori culture are concerned. This, I believe, is a symptom of the fact that, despite what AGMANZ is trying to do in this direction, the acceptance of the need to recognise Maori aspirations and needs is far from universal within the New Zealand museum profession. Two years of listening and talking to museum people on this subject, both publicly and privately, has done nothing to diminish this belief.

So, what to do then? In case it isn't already obvious, I *really* like Neich's definition of the goals of "interpretation" and would suggest that museums evaluate their exhibitions of Maori culture in light of it. The key phrase is "significance ... for its makers and users", *not* significance archaeologically, artistically nor stylistically, but significance *for its makers and users* and their descendants. Such an evaluation might well lead to a rejection of the traditional museum approach to Maori culture and would go a long way towards helping Maori culture escape from its "ethnological fate" in the museum situation - to borrow Michael Ames' apt phrase (1987: 16).

The bottom line is that the traditional museum approach to the interpretation of Maori culture, which establishes the significance of aspects of that culture in exclusively Pakeha terms, has largely failed to combat the stereotypes and prejudices of Pakeha people towards Maori culture in the first place, and has failed to convey the significance of items of Maori culture within the Maori system of knowledge. Whether there is sufficient will and commitment within the entire museum profession of New Zealand to address these issues and to initiate change remains to be seen. While there has been much talk of the need for change, it has not yet been reflected in the exhibitions of Maori culture in many museums, and it is likely that until this action occurs, many museums' relations with the Maori community will remain strained.

How the situation can be improved is an entirely separate issue. However, Cummins' (1977:16) conclusion that "the only source of information concerning the ethnic significance of various cultural resources... are the ethnic groups themselves" may provide a direction. What I am stressing in this discussion is the need for a re-evaluation of the traditional museum approach to the display of Maori culture, a rejection of this approach as largely inappropriate and irrelevant in an increasingly bicultural society, and a realisation that for museums to approach biculturalism with any degree of success in the future, there must be a complete re-evaluation of the perceived role of museums and curators as "interpreters" of Maori culture. Museums which fail to address these issues may well find themselves flying in the face of challenges from the Maori community itself - challenges which should be heeded as warnings, as expressed by

Sid Mead (in Gifford, 1987):

> Maori people are taking charge of their heritage. No longer will they tolerate other people speaking for them and about their taonga.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to everyone who has discussed the issues raised, either in public or private, especially John Takarangi, Margaret Davy, and Mina McKenzie who read the draft and convinced me to finish it in the week or so I had to do it! Also, many thanks to Harvey Taylor at Manawatu Museum for processing the photos at such short notice.

References

Ames, M.M. (1987) "Free Indians from their Ethnological Fate: The Emergence of the Indian Point of View in Exhibitions of Indians". *MUSE*, Summer 1987 (14-25).

Gifford, A. (1987) "Maoris Demand Treasure Bank". *Sunday Star*, 5 May 1987.

Kernot, B. (1987) "Te Maori Te Hokinga Mai: Some Reflections". *AGMANZ Journal* 18:2 (3-7) Winter 1987.

Newton, D. (1986) "Douglas Newton". *AGMANZ Journal* 17:3 (14-15) Spring 1986.

Neich, R. (1985) "Interpretation and Presentation of Maori Culture". *AGMANZ Journal* 16:4 (5-7) December 1985.

Lawlor, I. (1983) "The Role of the Maori Community in Archaeological Research and Management". Paper presented to Pacific Science Congress, Dunedin, February 1983.

Thomson, K.W. (1981) *Art Galleries and Museums in New Zealand.* A.H. & A.W. Reed Ltd., Wellington.

Mulvaney, D.J. (1980) "The Proposed Gallery of Aboriginal Australia". In R. Edwards & J Stewart (eds.) *Preserving Indigenous Cultures: A New Role of Museums.* Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

Cummins, G.T. (1977) *Ethnic Group, Site and Society: The Concept of Ethnic Significance of Cultural Resources.* M.S. on file in Arizona State Museum Library.

AGMANZ Conference 1989

Invitation to Members

AGMANZ Conference 1989 will be held in Wanganui during the week of 18-23 April 1989. The theme will be "Management for Change".
AGMANZ Conference Working Party invites members to submit paper or ideas for this conference to the Executive Officer, P.O. BOX 467, Wellington.

Resurfacing in Gondwanaland

James Mack, FMANZ

Assistant Director of Public Services, National Museum

No matter how many words are written, no matter how many stances are designed, no matter how many postures are struck when interpreting cultural, natural or scientific phenomenon, they will always fail in one important instance. The view that is explored will always be after the fact. The moment that is interpreted will always be historical.

The phenomenology of the creative act, the momentous scientific breakthrough and the natural process - as sublime as amoebic fission or as catastrophic as the Edgecumbe earthquake - are bound into a finite time frame. We can never totally recapture that initial burst of creative or natural energy.

It is that very elusive moment, however, if energetically pursued and dramatically presented that is the basic life force, the mauri, of the successful museum.

Objects consciously-fashioned by the human hand or through natural occurrences contain the immutable energy of time. Wondrously, the time-space frozen energy particles are capable of affecting the alert human mind. The intricate eye allows multi-level communication to happen across space, across time and cultures.

While pursuing all its traditional roles as researcher, interpreter and conservator, the modern museum must make a greater effort to be part of its own history and to be aware of the moments that fashion that history. As it exhalts the masterpiece or great event, museums must expose some lesser moments as well. The measure should be the endeavour, not the scale. Museums need to expand their vision, not lower their sights - exhibit adzes as well as hei tiki.

Given that massaging minds is the ideal, the incentive to stimulate should be such that the receptor/perceptor is receptive and perceptive. Objects by themselves are not enough. Careful rendering of the ambient space surrounding the object is also of prime importance.

Museum visitors have made a determined effort to be there. They've been wooed or they are already converts to the very special pleasures of original objects. Access to the building should be easy. Visitors should not have to fight the door to get in; they should be assured that the building is not about to consume them, or maim their diligently attending children. They are expecting magic, and approach with an "open Sesame" on their lips. The magic cave should open before them and fill their senses with awe as they move around the exhibits.

If they survive the door and foyer, the visitor should be launched on a voyage so they can discover who they are, where they are, and the moments that have made them what they are. There should be an abundance of experiences, all of which need not be understood on the first viewing or first visit.

Museums are some of the very few neutral spaces that exist in the public domain and are, therefore, places in which societal concerns can be investigated meaningfully. Museums in New Zealand have the ultimate responsibility to the Maori. The poetry of Te Reo Maori must be revealed for the enlightenment of the Pakeha and the joy of the Maori. The wonders of both historical and contemporary Maori art must be displayed for the enlightenment of everyone. The rich fabric of Maori culture must be constantly revealed so that everyone can bask in its wonder. This is the only land in which great Maori art has been and continues to be created. That uniqueness should be our joy and the measure by which we gauge all our other activities.

Museologists will remember the exhuberance of 'Te Maori' as well as its attendant joy and sorrow. This was the best advertised and promoted exhibition we have ever done and it showed. We may not always be able to achieve such standards, but we should always aspire to do so.

Great and terrible moments and individuals who have helped shape us as a nation should also be explored. Contemporary issues - from unemployment to AIDS - should also be given some careful and meaningful attention in our public halls.

The geographic and geophysical phenomenon in the environment should also receive some in-depth observation. Visitors want to know more about earthquakes and fault lines, tectonic plates and the rim of fire. They need to know about Gondwanaland and Aotearoa/New Zealand; about kiwis, tuataras and moas; about kauri and totara, giant weta and katipo; about pakohe and pounamu. They also need to know how the human mind envisages and experiences the presence of these wonders.

Some of these primal forces cannot be transferred intact to the museum environment. If they are to be interpreted through audio-visual assistance, we shouldn't allow passive acceptance of the flickering screen. This will blunt visitors' reactions and make them poor receptors for experience.

There must be constant reminders of our here and now. An ongoing remembrance of our Pacific place and our place in the Pacific. Museums must be places of change and places of chance. Vital environments for the living, not the dead. Places that foster a belief in the future and make visitors feel they have been where they have never been before, venturing into the unknown with knowing feet. They must come, enjoy and leave with sufficient questions to make them want to return again.

Dr Michael Volkerling, Executive Director of the Board of Trustees, National Art Gallery, Museum and War Memorial

Interviewed by Geri Thomas, Art Consultant

After speaking with a few people both within and outside these institutions regarding your current position, I've received a variety of responses. Perhaps we can begin by discussing your role as Executive Director of the Board of Trustees, and what you are trying to achieve.

The most accurate generalisation I might produce is to say that my role is to develop some integrated management systems for the National Museum and Art Gallery and to prepare for their transition to the new Museum of New Zealand. Being a bit more specific, you'll know that the Gallery and Museum are run by separate Councils and these Councils are sub-committees of the Board of Trustees, which is a common board, taking responsibility for both institutions. A number of management functions have been carried out on behalf of the Board of Trustees by the Department of Internal Affairs, so there is a need to bring back some of these functions within the boundaries of these institutions. That in particular means financial administration, personnel administration, and to provide a series of common languages, if you like, which will enable the organisation to identify across the present institutional boundaries what it's doing, who's actually here, what its corporate purposes are and where it's going.

Do you see your own role as being a very public one at this stage?

My initial role involves institutional definition. The public role is there in terms of my job description. I'm able to speak on behalf of the Trustees on selected policy issues, but I don't imagine that it's going to be a very prominent part of my activities for the next few months. The internal work has to be done first and for this I operate as part of a senior management team which includes the directors of the Museum and Art Gallery who are obviously responsible for institutions that have their own identities and who will continue to assert themselves publicly according to their own communication strategies.

If we can define the role of a Board of Trustees as being the body that makes policy and monitors it, and who are legally and financially responsible for an institution, what strategies are you implementing to assess the existing structure, and what major structural changes do you anticipate?

The first task is just to describe the existing organisations. The Gallery and Museum have set their own courses and they have described their objectives in rather different ways. Initially, what I'm seeking to do is provide a common policy framework so that they can describe what they do in terms of goals and objectives which span the institutions. So the initial task is to infer from the present range of activities, a mission statement and goals that describe the present situation. There is then a need to look at how people work together - not in hierarchical terms because most organisations don't work in terms of hierarchies, they operate in terms of people working cooperatively together.

How will this structure function while the Museum of New Zealand is being planned and a Ministry of Culture developed, and how will it be accountable to the public?

In terms of governance, generally, there will be two developments. One relates to the present Board for this organisation. My understanding is that the present Trustees who have just been reappointed will serve a three-year term, and that at the conclusion of that term there will be some action to bring these institutions and the Museum of New Zealand project team under a common board structure. That's perhaps three years off. The Museum of New Zealand has begun thinking that those formal links need to be established earlier, but certainly within three years there will be a common board of

management for this organisation and the MONZ project team.

As far as the Ministry of Culture is concerned, we're a little in the dark there. We don't know what shape the Ministry will assume or what role it will have. Broadly speaking, I would expect the Ministry to have principally a policy and a funding role which would see it supporting a whole range of statutory authorities charged with different cultural functions. This might well include a statutory body charged with the management of the new Museum of New Zealand, incorporating these institutions.

As to public accountability, the new Board will be accountable through that Ministry to Parliament, much as this Board is accountable through the Department of Internal Affairs to the Minister of Arts and Culture. But it would be removed from the Ministry sufficiently so that it wasn't government controlled, so that there was a Board which represented a range of community interests.

To become more publicly-based, a board should be able to bring a certain amount of financial interest to an institution from the wider community. What would your ideal funding situation be now and when the Museum of New Zealand becomes a reality?

There are two aspects to that. One really lies outside my area and that concerns raising money for capital purposes. The money that's needed to build the new museum complex might well be raised by the Project Board from government and from other sources. I'm not aware of any significant public building that has been built in New Zealand for cultural purposes recently which hasn't had financial contributions from the community and the private sector, and I don't imagine that the Museum of New Zealand will be any different. But that whole capital fund raising is a little bit on the horizon. I don't imagine that anything would occur in relation to that fund raising until at least 1990, after an architect's brief is finalised and initial plans developed. Maybe it might also involve special purpose lotteries.

As far as the Board's own income for operating purposes is concerned, it does seem to me that there are areas which remain relatively unexplored. There have been attempts by both the Gallery and Museum to associate private sponsors with some of their activities - for instance, the exhibition programme - with varying success. Sometimes they manage to find the right sponsors, sometimes they haven't. I think there is potential for doing that in a slightly more integrated way, so that we could seek a sponsor for not just one exhibition but a whole exhibition programme, and maybe an exhibition programme that occurs both within the Gallery and the Museum. There is an opportunity to consider that type of strategy for 1990 when for the first time there will be an exhibition programme which spans both the Museum and Gallery when the treasures of the national collections will be on display. That whole 1990 presentation is being planned as an integrated exercise. So I would hope that the whole marketing aspect of the Gallery and Museum's operations would be rationalised between now and 1990, and the presentation of these institutions and their collections as a promotional resource for the private sector would be more professionally and consistently handled.

Another area of possible contribution to income which the Board needs to investigate lies in various trading and merchandising operations. The shop, exhibitions you have to actually pay for, the possibility of producing reproductions of Museum and Art Gallery objects - all that side. Obviously these areas are under-developed too. That's partly due, I think, to the very poor facilities there are here for that type of trading operation. The Museum Shop operates in very cramped conditions, and I don't think one can expand that area without having a better physical resource to operate from. It is an area that will be more important in the new museum complex once it is built, or if substantial renovations were to be done here.

And the final area, again, which is not well-developed here but is reasonably developed in Auckland, is the whole membership area - individuals and corporations giving regularly to support the activities of the Museum and Gallery. In Auckland they have something called the Patrons Circle, which produces a lot of revenue annually for that institution. That's not something I'm aware of having been tried here, although the Friends of the National Art Gallery are very active and very effective. There is no equivalent for the National Museum, and again I wonder whether there is some potential, with the new project coming on stream, of perhaps broadening the scope of the Friends of the Gallery's activities to take in the institution as a whole as a focus for fund raising.

Are these areas that you would be handling directly?

It's early days yet, but what I've done so far is to get the endorsement of the Board of Trustees for an Organisational Development Plan which contains a variety of goals and objectives. Some of these concern the need to improve our management system and prepare for a situation in which we can autonomously manage these two institutions. Some of them have to do with our relationship to the Museum of New Zealand and how that is managed; some of them concern the whole marketing area. As a result, the Board has now asked me to bring back to its meeting in December of this year proposals for improving the current marketing strategies of the Gallery and Museum. I would therefore hope to make some progress on that whole marketing side in the early part of 1989.

Obviously, significant changes are taking place in New Zealand in terms of biculturalism and economics. Formally, these two areas are expressed in the Treaty of Waitangi and the Royal Commission on Social Policy. Are these documents being discussed with the Board and staff members and how is the partnership principle and the concept of accessibility affecting what you are doing?

The Museum of New Zealand team has sought a number of opinions about the implications of the Treaty of Waitangi for the new museum and, by implication, for us. Those documents point out the need to adopt a different approach to the way in which the collections are regarded and also the way in which some of the displays are conceived and mounted in terms of those principles of biculturalism. One in particular points

out quite clearly the concept of ownership of the objects in these collections - particularly Maori objects - is conceived in our present legislation from a totally monocultural viewpoint. There is a provision somewhere in the statute that states that any object whose ownership cannot be identified automatically becomes the property of the Board of Trustees. In terms of Maori concepts of guardianship, that's anathema, and there is little within this organisation to suggest that we've moved very far away from that position. Obviously, this will have to be done.

There has been discussion within the Board as to how that might best be effected. The general conclusion has been that we should assemble a group of elders who might act as authorities in relation to the development of a programme of biculturalism within the organisation. Maui Pomare the Chairman of the Museum Council is also on the Board of the Museum of New Zealand and, in effect, what happened is that with his assistance MONZ have now assembled that group of elders. What we are raising for discussion is the possibility that these elders might also become a resource of these organisations and guide us in the planning process in establishing a proper bicultural structure in the present institutions as a preliminary to the establishment of the Museum of Maori Art and Culture, which is to be part of the MONZ complex.

The whole other issue is accessibility - the community having access to the collections. I think we will see quite rapid change as far as that's concerned. Let me talk about the future first and say that the Museum of New Zealand acknowledges accessibility as a vital principle. Any new institution that is planned will enshrine that principle of accessibility. We are also making some moves here. Within the Museum, James Mack who is the Assistant Director of Public Services, hopes to make a start in this area by involving the Pacific Island community in the re-design of the Pacific Hall and the presentation of its collections. It would be nice to think that it was possible to have open storage, and that many backstage activities could be brought closer to the front-of-house. But the physical limitations of the building make it difficult at the present time. Certainly that consciousness is here within the organisation and within the next twelve months, as a test case, work on the present Pacific Hall will be used to establish principles.

And what about the Art Gallery?

I'm not personally familiar with any art gallery which follows the same principles of community access to the collections. There may well be organisations which are based on these principles, but I'm certainly not aware of them. I think the changes which are more likely to occur in the National Art Gallery will have to do with the balance of its activities, the thrust of its exhibition programme and certainly further down the track, when we come to the Museum of New Zealand, with the attitude towards the national collections - what objects might be included within the curatorial perspective of the National Art Gallery. I think that the exclusive concentration on paintings, sculpture and works on paper is going to change dramatically. Through handling and coming to terms with other objects in the national collections, it will probably create a different relationship between the Gallery itself and the community it serves. I think that's where the change is going to come from. I don't see any evidence at present that the Gallery will follow the Museum in deciding that curatorial control or exhibition policy should be radically altered.

But according to the plans being discussed for the Museum of New Zealand project, the National Art Gallery in the new complex may well be incorporated into a museum which concentrates on what might be called "second-wave" New Zealand cultures - all those cultures which have come here since Maori settlement. Issues which that museum will deal with may include not just the fine arts, but a whole range of historical collections as well. There is therefore the potential for some considerable modification to the present function of the National Art Gallery in dealing solely with curated exhibitions of prints, sculpture and paintings. In the process of adjusting to that new role, the curators and staff of the Gallery may need to start exploring new relationships with the community.

Could you define that structure more specifically at this point?

The MONZ project team have just released a report on their 1988 consultation programme which deals with the possible structure of the new institution. It suggests that there should be a common Board of Trustees which will be bicultural in its constitution. Then there will be at least three museums: one focussing on Maori art and culture; one focussing on the natural environment; and the third incorporating the art and cultural history collections in some combination. It also suggests that the new institution should be constructed so that these three elements have a continuing presence but that there is a continuing interaction between the curatorial and exhibition staff in those areas. The principle work of the museum will involve the re-contextualisation of objects drawn from the collections and presented for interpretive purposes, possibly with a degree of significant community input into the planning of exhibitions, and so on. So it's quite a different concept from what we have now and it's a refinement of what was originally thought the Museum of New Zealand should be.

So exhibitions, for instance, would be staged from any of these components?

Yes, that's right, though it is also suggested that the Museum of New Zealand should have a national service function, which will include an exhibition function - both in terms of packaging exhibitions of New Zealand art for export, and being one of the conduits of exhibitions that might tour nationally. The national service function would also include responsibility for professional training programmes.

How do you think the structure which you have described might be received within these two institutions?

The project director and some of the Museum of the New Zealand staff have presented these proposals to the Director of the Museum and the Acting Director of the Gallery, and the proposals were enthusiastically received. So that's a positive sign.

You mentioned a national resource of all the works in the country and a training function for the new museum. How

do you see these institutions, and when the Museum of New Zealand is a reality, working together with other institutions, organisations and businesses in Wellington?

It's a bit far off. But if you're talking about other galleries, as you know there is a museum liaison officer whose primary function is to provide services to organisations in this region. I imagine that this type of programme will be expanded on a national basis in terms of the Museum of New Zealand's function. As far as defining what role we have in relation to the Wellington City Gallery and the Dowse Art Museum, I think that should be clarified by the marketing exercise I'm talking about. A necessary preliminary to drawing up any marketing plan is to look at your immediate environment and decide what your role is in relation to the other institutions. That whole exercise has been done on an informal basis in the past and I think it needs to be formalised.

What do you think "the public" wants?

It's unclear to me what the public wants. I've been trying to find some statistics to suggest what they do respond to and what they ignore. The statistics which are available are very difficult to interpret. Leaving aside 'Te Maori' when attendances here doubled, average monthly visitors to this building - no matter what exhibition is on - seem to be pretty constant at about 250,000 per year. That is made up of about 6,000 per month for the National Art Gallery and 12,500 per month for the National Museum, although the Gallery visitors may also go to the Museum. This seems to be a long-term pattern. There doesn't seem to be much difference whether there's a contemporary painting show on in the Gallery, or the Moa exhibition in the Museum. That suggests to me that the whole marketing thrust of the organisation needs to be looked at. You would expect some variation if people knew what was on. It suggests that people are coming out of habit, rather than a message has gotten through to them that something really exciting is going on at the moment.

Maybe the exception to that is Shed 11, where the attendances can be tracked and people do turn up in different numbers for different events. In effect, Shed 11 has added another 26,000 to the Gallery's annual attendances - those were the totals for 1987. But without collecting better data concerning these visitors, it is difficult to assess what the public wants and this is again something that underlines the need to do a proper marketing plan, just to see who we are and who we are not satisfying.

Perhaps breaking down that mass of public into a variety of audiences - known and unknown - rather than just pulling them in may be the strategy.

The whole business of targeting audiences is an interesting one, but we still are disadvantaged by a lack of data. One can make assumptions which are pretty common right throughout the country. Museums tend to attract a broader cross-section of the public and the average age is much lower. Here I've been told that the average age of people attending the Museum is 12 years. For the Art Gallery I imagine it would be three or four times that, and that their audiences are drawn from a very much narrower range of people.

Obviously you will need to define and address audiences from whom you will be increasingly looking for support. What changes are taking place now and what future plans do you have?

I believe we need to look more systematically at ways of increasing the range and level of public support both in terms of visitors to the institutions and in terms of financial support from corporations and individuals. I've drawn no particular conclusions about how that might be done. But I am certainly struck by the fact that museums overseas such as those in Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas for example have senior management structures where almost exactly half of the key positions are outwardly focussed towards the community rather than inwardly as they are here. So possibly, one could look towards some action over the next few years which would strengthen the senior management structure in ways which oblige the institutions to engage with the community more comprehensively than they do at the present. Certainly there is a need for a marketing manager, perhaps for a development manager, and I would think a need to bring together the public services, the education services, under some common management.

After all this change and amalgamation, where do you think you might be placed in this new structure?

That's hard to say. I have a five-year contract, which is a contract with this Board, the life of which is likely to be less than five years. I know that according to the Museum of New Zealand implementation schedule, they wish to engage by the middle of 1990, the people who will occupy senior positions in the new organisation. I guess that allows time to see whether or not I have the qualities that are necessary for the new organisation. At the moment, I'm focussed on the present not the future. Obviously the concept of the new museum is an exciting one for me, and I would be interested in contributing in some way, some positive way, towards its development.

Museum Shops: Another Access

Cheryl Brown
Executive Officer, AGMANZ

One of the important ways for the public to gain access to the collections of museums is through museum shops. Often found at the entrance to the institution, they serve as information centres and represent the concerns of the organisation in the stock they carry, be it books bone carvings or postcards.

It is important that the people who work in these shops are well-trained, have sufficient information to answer various questions from the public and know where to direct people who require more detailed answers. It is these people along with the attendants and other front-of-house personnel who spend the most time with the public and they are extremely important.

The increase and expansion of museum shops within New Zealand indicates that we are recognising the value (both financial and philosophical) of having front-of-house merchandising and that museum shop workers are being seen as people who can make a valuable contribution to our museums. It is the challenge of museum shop personnel to increase profits, retain integrity and give access in printed form to images from the collections. By satisfying the demand for information, they are vital to museum public relations.

Since presenting a paper 'Merchandising in the Museum' (*AGMANZ Journal* 16:3, 1985) at AGMANZ Conference in 1985, I have had the opportunity to visit museum shops in Canada and the United States and attend a course for museum shop managers at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. It is important to look at what is happening in the museum shop movement overseas and to compare developments here to those in other places. We have much to learn from museums which have continued to appraise their public roles by developing means of increasing access.

One of the most interesting and exciting museum shops I visited was at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. The shop stocked a wide range of important publications which fitted in well with its exhibitions programme and was a valuable and integrated part of the museum. Within a small space, the merchandise reflected collecting policies and yet added a touch of fun. Among the holdings of approximately $100,000 I found one of the best collections of contemporary criticism and books on sculpture, in particular, *A Quiet Revolution: British Sculpture Since 1965* (New Zealand rights: Thames and Hudson). I also found "designer" items and a staff who were dedicated and informed.

The manager sits in on curatorial meetings and is included in museum decision-making. This makes her aware of what is going on and knowledgeable about exhibitions. It enables good communication and an overall integration of the shop within the museum. The shop is financed directly by the museum thus taking away some of the pressure to make huge profits.

Just outside the shop is an information desk where the visitor can find out about art events in Chicago and general information about the city. The attendants are practicing artists and visitors are able to chat with them about exhibitions. After seeing an exhibition I enjoyed, I walked away from the Museum of Contemporary Art with some great books, a crazy tie, some valuable information and the sense that I had had some people contact. (The scones in the coffee shop however were a little odd!) The shop and staff contributed to the general ambience and were an important part of the museum's public relations.

On a smaller scale, museum shops in New Zealand are becoming as diverse as those in the United States. The staff, to varying degrees, have many of the same concerns.

Overseas visitors in the Auckland Museum Shop. (photo: Anne Carpenter, 1988)

The largest museum shop in the country is in the Auckland Museum. The shop was first set up in December 1970 and stocks a wide range of products including jade, jewellery and bone carvings. There are 2 full-time and 11 part-time staff who are trained by the shop manager; some guidance in the special nature of the shop and museum is given by curatorial staff. All stock is vetted by staff members and poor-quality merchandise is rejected. The shop policy states that the museum shop "will exist for the dual purpose of providing a supplementary source of income for the museum and of providing a service to museum visitors, and shop customers".

Isobel O'Connor, manager of the Auckland Museum Shop attended the Australian Museums Shops Conference in October this year. "I came away from the conference considerably encouraged to find that our shop and operation stands very high amongst those represented at the Conference. Yet at the same time I was still able to learn a great deal from the other participants on how we can make the conduct and performance of our shop even better."

EXPRESSIONS at the Waikato Museum of Art and History opened in 1987 and is leased from the Hamilton City Council. The manager, Iris Spittle, says her aim is to encourage the public to appreciate and own New Zealand craft/art, and to ensure "that at least some of our international visitors take home quality souvenirs made by our innovative and creative craftspeople instead of badly-designed plastic momentos".

Iris works closely with the museum enabling her to purchase relevant supporting merchandise for temporary shows and to improve her own knowledge of artists and exhibitions. Like all shop people, the urge to find new and improved stock never ceases.

In Wellington, the Museum Shop services the National Art Gallery and the National Museum. The established policy states that "the Museum Shop should be a service for the public and other museums reflecting the interest of the Board of Trustees and its primary institutions".

Browsing in the shop at the Otago Museum. (photo: Otago Museum)

Manager Tony Carr, sees the shop as having primarily an educational role. "Our function is to provide a retail outlet whose stock reflects the mission of the parent institutions. The Museum Shop's major responsibility is to initiate and maintain a consultative process so that any objects which represent our natural or cultural heritage do so in a way that reflects the wishes of the museum and gallery staff. This is particularly important when selling material influenced by or derived from the cultural heritage of the tangata whenua. Consideration must be given to the special partnership entered into in the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi."

At the Otago Museum in Dunedin, Denise Hesson manages the shop as well as carrying out other administrative tasks. Key points of the shop's policy are: to reflect and promote the policies of the Otago Museum; to help provide a more meaningful experience for the visitor to the museum; to commission museum related objects for sale in the shop; to sell and promote the work of local craftspeople; to establish a reputation for authenticity; to sell relevant material produced by other museums; and, to exploit the resources available at the museum to the best advantage.

Jenny Campbell, who runs the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Shop and is responsible for other administration areas, says that the initial reason for opening the shop was to help the gallery financially but says, "I hope today it is seen in a different light". Her main concern is the lack of recognition the shop gets from management, those who hold the purse strings and some staff.

"Often the first or only contact the public has with the Gallery is with me, so it is vital I am kept informed of activities within the Gallery and related institutions to be able to relay information correctly."

At the Gisborne Museum and Arts Centre, shop manager Barbara Barwick also supervises security and manages the membership of the museum. The museum shop, she says doesn't have a clear policy but is "adaptable". The emphasis is on local products and work by local artists. Like most museums they produce cards of the collections and, money providing, they hope to produce more.

Many museums shops within New

Zealand would fit into this latter category where one person is responsible for many aspects of front-of-house operations. Many shop personnel may also have the same sense of frustration that Jenny Campbell feels of being "kept in the dark".

While service and general integration within the museum are vital, the other important function of a shop is to sell and display published material. Most museum shops produce cards or posters and art museums, in particular, produce exhibition posters for resale. It is difficult for shops to produce items that are in demand and yet maintain the profit margin, and it is in these instances that the shop policy becomes important. If the museum doesn't have a publications budget and the shop people are being inundated with requests for images, whose responsibility is it to produce that image?

Because of the large population base within the United States it is easier for shops to specialise in certain areas. Museums are able to produce their own publications and expect to sell them widely. Most museums co-publish their catalogues with a large publishing company. The Smithsonian Institution produces images from its collections in association with Dover Press. These books are a variety of cut-out, pop-up, push-out and just plain ordinary "read-it" books. The New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York publishes with M.I.T. Press in Massachusetts, and many museums co-publish with large publishing houses such as Abbeville or Abrams. In general, firms publish hard cover books for the mass market, leaving the museum to sell paperback versions of catalogues for exhibitions. Thus, museums gives access to their collections and philosophies to a wider public, filling the gap in the art education market and defraying costs. It is exciting for someone from New Zealand to find such a vast diversity of museum shops and such great books in ready supply.

Here in New Zealand some museums have entered into agreements with local publishing firms. In Wellington, the National Art Gallery uses Allen and Unwin to distribute its largely self-produced catalogues. *Whaiora* (The Pursuit of Life), 1985 was a joint publishing venture between the Gallery and this company. Allen and Unwins' most successful museum venture to date, however, has been the catalogue of the Evelyn Page exhibition, co-published with the Robert McDougall Art Gallery in Christchurch.

Bridget Williams, Director of Allen and Unwin New Zealand Limited, says that co-publishing is a good deal for both the publishing company and the museum. The museum takes a certain number of books for sale, while publishers are free to distribute widely. She says that it is the relatively small market which discourages companies from publishing catalogues, and the fact that in New Zealand co-publishing is a relatively new idea. For Allen and Unwin, art books fit in well with their range of books but, says Bridget, there is an element of service in publishing them because they are important records of New Zealand artists whose work might otherwise not be published.

There are other examples of co-production but, in general, museums produce their own publications with some sort of sponsorship, assistance or grant. The Auckland Museum co-published *Te Aho Tapu: The Sacred Thread* by Mick Pendergrast in 1987 in association with Reed Methuen and NZ Steel. Porirua Museum has produced a series of small local interest publications with local sponsorship. The Sargeant Gallery has published several major catalogues with assistance from various quarters notably, Queen Elizabeth Second Arts Council and the NZ Art Gallery Directors Council.

Government Print has been publishing the Elsdon Best books since the 1920s. Now due to pressure on warehouse space and the need to be more competitive, they are having to off-load copies. Editor Gavin McLean says that there has always been an element of service in the publication of these books but like the rest of New Zealand, an eye must be kept on market forces. The usual shelf life of a book is two years before it is remaindered.

Will the National Museums have to decide when the 14,000 odd copies run out, to produce the books themselves and will they be able to? Are these books too ethnocentric for the 1980s? Are these books worth keeping? Who reads them? What else is considered important to publish? Will the important photographic collections in our museums be published sometime? Other publications such as the books on the tribal confederations of Te Arawa, Taiunui or Tuwharetoa are in great demand but have been out of print for years. Who will re-publish these?

Books and catalogues produced by museums are invaluable. Catalogues from art museums have an important place in schools and art history classes, and the demand for information about our artists is (for this ex-bookshop manager) astounding. Museums shops often stock a wide range of specialist books. They are often the only retail outlet prepared to put up with the long shelf life that some nevertheless important books have and the low discounts offered by museums. In the current economic climate, we will have to find the funds to give the public access to our collections in this way.

At a recent Photoforum seminar in Wellington, it was disturbing to hear Gael Newton of the Australian National Gallery say that in Australia the costs of accessing photographic collections (reproduction costs, user-pays, etc.), are so high that only highly-paid academics can afford to research and publish books. Is the research alone required to produce a book using museum collections going to become prohibitive? Is the cost of producing a book going to cut into budgets already set aside for conservation or exhibitions?

In this brief survey, I've tried to touch on the philosophical aspect of a shop - access to the collections. Museum shop policy needs to acknowledge both the public relations access role of a shop and the financial function. A shop must be an asset; a way of adding to the bare coffers and boosting the acquisitions budget.

A museum shop is also one of the best ways of advertising a museum. Given that we all like to shop and need to find gifts for various friends and relations, we will find ourselves at some

stage browsing in a museum's shop. All the wonderful museum shops I saw in the United States of America and Canada I remember with pleasure. One, however, had such rude staff and such tacky displays that my memory of that museum will be forever tainted.

A museum shop is a window. Friendly staff, good displays, quality merchandise, the feeling that the stock mix is unique - all these aspects are important. If a visitor has contact with only a few people in the museum, it is up to museums and their staff to ensure that those few people the visitor sees are well-informed and a good advertisement for that museum.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank everyone who so willingly assisted me in writing this article, especially those people who work in museum shops.

Museum Shops Association

Shop and other front-of-house staff interested in forming an association to discuss a code of ethics, bulk importing, production of collection-based items and other areas of concern, please contact:

Tony Carr
Museum Shop
P.O. BOX 467
Wellington

or Denise Hesson
Museum Shop
Otago Museum
Great King Street
Dunedin

Cultural Institutions in the Marketplace

Cheryll Sotheran
Director, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery

The marketplace has become not only the arena but also the philosophical base for much of the debate concerning community facilities and needs in recent times. Those community needs and organisations which relate to the collecting and interpreting of material cultural property are no longer able to claim immunity from the debate, as they may have been able to do in the past.

The response by museums to date has, understandably, largely been a reactive one; the ethical and moral imperatives which have accompanied the historical growth of the museum profession can at least be seen as challenged and at most threatened by the patently fickle and transient pressures of the marketplace. It is a primary need for the profession to take the initiative in debate concerning cultural property, rejecting the pressure for knee-jerk reactions and compromise but using the new market philosophy as a positive stimulus for productive decisions about our role and relevance.

The museum professional in the 1980s needs considerable imagination and courage to enter the debate, seeing it as an avenue to productive self-appraisal rather than a series of concessions to a populist taste which museums in their traditional role, and particularly art museums, have resisted. Historically they were able to resist those pressures with ease, with the support and compliance of their funders and patrons. Since at least as far back as the 1940s, however, administrators and financial controllers of museums have been aware of the needs of the community in formulating their own demands on the professionals who work in the institutions. Theodore Low remarked in 1942:

> Certainly museums have advanced, but it is clearly apparent, that they have advanced only as far as to meet the minimum requirements of public demand and that they have still to accept the full responsibility which rests upon them by nature of their contents... the old guard still clings to its sheltered concepts but others have realised that museums need a transfusion of blood and thought if they are to take their rightful place in society today... the only real justification for the existence of a museum today lies in its degree of usefulness to society as a whole and (that) museums today are failing miserably to attain the standards necessary for continued life.[1]

The philosophical shift which we in the museum profession are witnessing, if not actively participating in, in the 1980s is not that the public (whatever that might be) has a role to play in influencing the programmes and policies of the museum, but that there is an increasing pressure towards making that role pro-active rather than reactive.

The acknowledgement of the public role by Theodore Low, while advanced and laudable for its time, was still based on the premise that the museum is the repository of significant objects of material culture which are deemed to be significant because of the informed choices and decision of museum professionals. There is a quantum imaginative leap, if not a radical change of direction, between that premise, and the philosophy of Dr Michael Ames, formulated half a century later:

> The relevance of museums in contemporary society... is likely to be determined by the degree to which they are democratized; that is to say, the extent to which there is increasing and more widespread participation in decision-making regarding administration, educational programming and collection management in museums and increased opportunities for independent thought and action in cultural matters.[2]

Ames makes it clear that not only those who work in, as against manage,

museums should be given "a greater say in the organisation and conditions of their work but that "democratization" extends also to the participation of the public in the activities of the museum: "The democratization of collection management means making collections more accessible to the users". By using the terms "users" rather than "public", Ames focusses on a change of attitude towards the community which surrounds the museum, and refers specifically to the lack of access to the collections as a primary example of incomplete and inadequate democratization. He stops short however of commenting on the nature of museum display, on the philosophical bases on which collections are built and maintained, and on the way in which educational services are presented to the community by the museum.

It seems clear that such democratic techniques as open storage, and market-prompted strategies such as identifying the target audience and promoting the museum to that audience are merely cosmetic, if the philosophical base for the museum and its collections remain untouched by the debate, and firmly in the hands of museum administrators who do not see a change in the demands being made on the museum by the community, or a need to modify policy as a result of that change.

A recent issue of *Museum*, with the theme New Directions, includes an account of a new museum in the Ukraine:

> The visit to the Museum comes to a close in the Hall of Glory. Visitors mount a white marble staircase to enter this solemn hall where the pillars sparkle in gold with the names and initials of 11,613 Heroes of the Soviet Union and 201 Heroes of Socialist Labour who were awarded these titles for their feats of arms and labour in the years of the Great Patriotic Wars... The memorial complex has become one of the cultural centres of the capital of the Ukraine. It is very popular with the citizens of Kiev and guests of the city. The museum is visited by 2 million people every year... particularly important educational and cultural work is carried out by the staff of the museum among the younger generation... Its main purpose is to educate the young in the spirit of patriotism and internationalism... It is particularly important for young people to learn to respect the cultural heritage of their own people and that of others, and to respect the value of these monuments of history and culture.[3]

While the article itself is clearly circumscribed by the political agenda of the institution and the system which controls it, the claim of "popularity" is indisputable. A credible conclusion must be that that community, or a significant proportion of it, is supportive of what might from another perspective appear to be a manipulative and politically-based programme.

In case our western prejudices may allow us to dismiss this particular case with ease, let us examine an example of the tension between "popular" and politicised museum programmes a little nearer to home.

The new Musée d'Orsay in Paris, built to house the national collection of modern art previously held in the Louvre, is a structure which in theory offers real opportunity for "democratization": a reconciling of "populist" and "museological" concerns. It was a major public railway station; a social structure of considerable resonance in terms of community use and the breaking down of class barriers. In fact it has become the latest Temple of Art, with a post-modern architectural programme which enshrines a revisionist philosophy. Patricia Mainardi comments:

> Now that we begin to see art in more complex terms, we perceive the need to understand the full historical context, which includes the whole range of artistic production. The Musée d'Orsay has gone halfway in this endeavour by placing on view... a variety of works no doubt more generally representative of the period. But by presenting them simply as variations of style for our delectation, it has suppressed any meanings these works might possess or have once possessed. In doing so the museum has, however surreptitiously, imposed its own reading of history... The issues, stresses, contradictions of the nineteenth century have been rendered invisible through compartmentalization and the distractions of the theme-park spectacle... Throughout the museum the works of dissident artists are marginalised; the lesson appears to be that history is made by official power, that art once rewarded will always retain its primacy, that to occupy a dissident position is to be - forever - marginalized.[4]

The message here is inescapable: the museum can no longer argue neutrality in the methods and display techniques it chooses to use. A more sinister implication which can be drawn from d'Orsay, as well as from Kiev, is that the claim of "popularity" in the current market-oriented climate may well be a smoke screen for the propagation of more complex political agendas.

Yet "popularity" has become a significant factor in the whole market debate, and is the bottom line in the whole structure of corporate sponsorship, regardless of how that sponsorship may be dressed-up or sanitised with reference to community responsibility. To bring the discussion even closer to home, let us consider briefly some "popular" successes in New Zealand museums.

The field leader would have to be, in overall impact if not in actual numbers, the Monet exhibition at Auckland City Art Gallery in 1985. The exhibition was the first appearance of blockbuster culture in our museums, and proved extremely popular. The people of Auckland queued to see it; art lovers (a distinct public) bussed, flew and drove from all over New Zealand. Yet one can speculate about the quality of the experience. The exhibition was invariably crowded; the works, often rendered inaccessible by the crowds were, contrary to their original context of avant-garde challenge, enshrined within New Zealand's most prestigious, established art museum. The public who thronged to see the exhibition were exposed to a visual experience in less than optimum conditions, an experience which conveyed nothing of the radical nature of the works in their historical context which, in fact, the whole nature and ambience of the exhibition, neutralised and denied. This was, however, an extremely

"popular" show, and gained a high and unprecedented amount of corporate support.

And finally, into my own back yard, the most "popular" exhibition which has been staged at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery in recent years, was 'Stuffed Stuff'. (This exhibition and its successor has recently made it possible for the Robert McDougall Gallery to establish its Art Annex which is to house contemporary work, often of an exploratory and therefore "unpopular" nature - the irony is pointed in the context of this discussion). 'Stuffed Stuff' consisted of large fabric and fibre pieces with an element of caricature and parody, but deriving from life situations experienced by the group of women who made them.

Their appeal was immediate and populist, and can be analysed in similar terms to the Monet exhibition at Auckland. The emphasis on craft or skill was high; the actual context from which the work derived (a perception of the post-liberation/Women's Movement role of women whose existences were largely domestic) was neutralised by humour or parody to a point where the audience was not offended or turned off by overt feminist politics. The Gallery, while apparently conceding to or catering for popular taste, was from another perspective, party to a neutralising of significant political issues to do with women's roles in our culture.

All the exhibitions or installations referred to above have to some extent been subjected to analysis as to their target audience, and have been selected or modified accordingly. This tends to make them different from exhibitions or displays which rely on a fixed professional perception of the nature of the audience, which does not make significant distinctions between the range of interests, expectations and perceptions which exist in any community. While Musée d'Orsay and the Kiev Museum have the security of a huge population base to maintain their quantitative popularity levels, they have clearly made considerable efforts to build exhibits which actively promote philosophical or political agendas to target audiences, whether or not those audiences perceive the agendas from a converted or subliminal level of perception.

Even the comments I have just made reveal the true nature of the problem. The popular exhibitions we stage are based on potentially flawed premises - they are exhibitions *we* assess as "popular", and they are perceived as less significant than the much less popular hard-core policy exhibitions. As the Clairmont exhibition revealed, setting up communication structures and promoting the educational context for the exhibition does not markedly improve the situation. We have no conclusive answers yet, but like many of our colleagues here and overseas, we are thinking hard.

The parameters of the debate must include a widening of our perceptions of our audience to include those disenfranchised by our traditional approach. This causes few philosophical problems when it comes to contemporary Maori art, or art by other marginalised groups within the wider context of contemporary art. These groups are adequately catered for by our policy, although we must be alert to the possibility that by appropriating them for our programme, we also potentially neutralise them. But it is far from easy to accommodate other community art initiatives even though we know that in quantitative terms of numbers through the door, and even in qualitative terms of enjoyable and memorable experiences, these initiatives will be "popular". I believe this is a critical debate of great urgency for the profession.

At the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery we recognise that, in the present climate, promotion and marketing of our programme are necessary for our continuing existence. This may sound an extreme position for those who believe that museums have community roles which cannot and should not be affected by politically motivated and controlled changes in the economic climate. We agree with that premise too, and we are concerned at the implication of having a "quantitative" rather than "qualitative" value system imposed upon us. However we are becoming increasingly aware that the attention we must pay to our market/public/community under the dual pressures of a national market-based economic system and local government reform with its new buzz-words "accountability", "efficiency" and "transparency", must not simply be cosmetic.

The pressures on art museums, and particularly those like the Govett-Brewster with its exclusively contemporary collection and exhibition policy, focus and highlight certain traps along the market track that we are being asked to follow. We see that we must re-assess our perception of "the public", accepting as a fundamental premise that a global concept of "the public" is, in our case, likely only to produce an undifferentiated and indifferent mass from which a few disaffected individuals arouse themselves sporadically in the pages of the local press to become critical of our operation. Such a public is, despite arguments about all publicity being good publicity and controversy breeding audiences, inappropriate and counter-productive to our development.

However, in confronting the historical existence in New Plymouth of such a public, we must acknowledge that the product we offer to this particular community has played a large part in creating it. The Gallery's historical documents tell a story of confrontation and abuse, of hostility and lack of comprehension which reflects the essentially modernist bias of the policy document, and the management philosophy of those who established the institution. The notion that contemporary art is produced by and can only be understood by an elite underlies the early philosophy and development of the Govett-Brewster, and in a very real sense is enshrined in its existing policy document. This is of course true of many modern and contemporary art institutions both here and in the wider international arena, but finding an effective method of confronting it in New Plymouth (or New Zealand) in the late 1980s is a very real problem.

In a recent marketing and promotion exercise, the staff of Govett-Brewster identified some 25 different audiences/publics all with their own expectations or perceptions of the Gallery. This is an exercise which has been carried out by a number of other institutions in this country. Its results, here and elsewhere,

make nonsense of an often-heard claim that the museum audience is simply "people".

A cosmetic approach to such a diversity of audience is to tailor the programme to the multiple needs of those multiple audiences. Hence we have

- a very "popular" children's art exhibition attracting families, schools and teachers, but hardly anyone from the 18-25 age group, the professional/business audience or the unemployed - to name but a few other identifiable publics.

- a single artist survey exhibition (Philip Clairmont) which has had some critical acceptance, and fulfils our policy role of showing and contextualising significant developments in contemporary New Zealand art. This exhibition, given the same level of promotion and marketing as the children's show, and accompanied by an extensive programme of lectures, audio-visual presentations, tours and seminars on related topics, attracted one of the smallest audiences in my time at the Gallery.

  an exhibition of the work of Evelyn Page, an artist who has been marginalised and generally overlooked until very recently, aesthetically uneven and given a mixed critical reception, attracted a large audience of older people, with a strong female Pakeha presence.

It is clear that at present our programme offers a kind of cultural subsidy situation: the "popular" exhibitions (which, predictably, tend to be those less favoured by the professional staff) keep the numbers up for Council reports, and "subsidise" the more difficult products we offer - the regular emerging artists exhibitions in the 'Govett-Brewster Presents...' programme; the thematic issue - based exhibitions; the single artist installations; the experimental work in film and video. Yet the situation presents us with a dilemma and a philosophical crises which I believe many institutions share.

The general discussion with which I began this article provides a wider international context for this crisis, but in New Zealand we most confront it in our own terms, and with reference to the needs of our own communities. The expressed preferences of the provincial community which I have referred to in discussing the Govett-Brewster, are magnified in this community by the size of our population; if a community of 50,000 decides to stay away in droves, the impact is not the same as if a population of 1 million does the same thing. However, the proliferation of the audience, and the competing demands made on its available leisure time are universal factors we must all contend with.

Michael Ames, on his recent trip through New Zealand, commented to me as we gazed in elitist horror on a vast new shopping complex in New Plymouth, that the museums of the future (and not too distant at that) are the malls and shopping centres of our culture. A recent article in *Metro* magazine referred to the hybridisation of the theme park and the shopping mall: the provision of entertainment, a complete environment, a context and theme in which happy family shoppers can enact fantasies of desire and appropriation.

It must be recognised as both true, and relevant to us in the museum profession, that such new temples in our culture offer much that we do not often satisfy within our existing philosophical and political structures. They offer visual delight and entertainment, fantasy and immediacy of experience, an appeal to the senses, an escape from real-world pressure. Most significantly of all perhaps, for us the historic guardians and "owners" of the nation's treasures, they offer the public the opportunity to acquire and own. In our efforts to balance professional and community needs according to received beliefs and practices, we may have overlooked the possibility that what the community wants to own and cherish as its heritage may not at all be what we have in our art galleries and museums.

Notes

1. Theodore L. Low, *The Museum as a Social Instrument: A Study undertaken for the Committee on Education of the American Association of Museums* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1942), p. 13.
2. Dr Michael Ames, "Deschooling the Museum: A proposal to increase public access to museums and their resources", *Museum*, vol. 37 (1985), pp. 25-31.
3. Yuriy Andreyevich Omelchenko, "The Kiev Memorial Complex in the International Year of Peace", *Museum*, vol. 153 (1987), pp. 15-17.
4. Patricia Mainardi, "Postmodern History at the Musee d'Orsay", *October*, no. 41 (Summer 1987), pp. 28-52.

Are You Being Served... Yet?

Christopher Johnstone
Director, Auckland City Art Gallery

A service industry without a profit motive?

Like most public services, a public museum is a service industry without a profit motive. Certainly there are operations where revenue can be earned, such as merchandise and transparency hire, but on the whole we have to judge the success of our service by means other than "profit" in financial terms.

In business the main indicator of success is profit and providing a good service for clients contributes to the profit factor. However, museums can only justify their success by *self*-evaluation to ensure that the services they provide achieve acceptable levels of visitor satisfaction. Visitor numbers are only part of this assessment process. Hence the growing emphasis placed on defining goals and objectives and regular review processes to assess achievements. Our primary motivation comes from a desire to continually improve the quality and range of our services to the public and demonstrate that we are doing so.

Finding time to innovate for public service

After organising a symposium, 'Art museums in the communications age' in 1980 in Edinburgh, I supposed (rather naively or idealistically, and probably both) that in a few years everyone would be thinking the way we (museum interpreters) had been thinking. I expected that it was simply a matter of time before all art museums reached the same conclusions, developed the same or similar tried, trusted and true interpretive systems based on the research, development and production of the market leaders. (If it works, plagiarise). Obviously things don't happen that way, and many art and other museums are still developing approaches that suit their needs and budgets and coming to terms with their responsibilities towards their publics.

The theory and philosophy that was being discussed, say a decade ago, is still valid today and I haven't stopped thinking about them and wondering why we are still talking about the same problems. It is partly to do with the different rates of professional development in different countries. Quantum leaps rarely happen. However much we read and study examples of museological practice elsewhere, we invariably have to experience the process for ourselves. To introduce new programmes when you already have enough on your plate is not easy. One needs time or resources and preferably both.

One of my gurus talks about the "opportunity cost". You create opportunities, that is provide a fertile environment for new ideas and developments, by dropping old, tired and less essential practices off the end of your list of priorities. Otherwise you just keep going in the same way with existing resources, in the hope that the occasional slight innovation will creep in.

Another option is that you find additional one-off resources (eg. grants and sponsorship) to fund your innovations which you impose on top of the existing programmes and hope that they will be successful enough to attract funding to maintain them.

Ongoing corporate management assists innovation because it identifies areas for development and balances this new production by abandoning something else or refining procedures to increase efficiency to free up time and resources. Another realisation is that we have to continually remind ourselves of the importance of basics - planning, research, surveys, testing, evaluation and assessment and modification. This process takes time and must be scheduled into the project. But if omitted, how are we going to evaluate results and ensure that future projects benefit from the experience and that our service to the public improves?

Each time we undertake a new project we should introduce one or two testing or evaluation stages however small or informal. For example, take reading age. You are writing an introductory text to an exhibition or display. Decide on the reading age you want to aim for and test it. Do the same for a sequence of exhibitions. At the end of your project you should have an idea how effective you have been in reaching your audience and whether you have pitched your information at the right level for maximum impact. (I would be interested to hear from any New Zealand museum that has defined in some way the level of understanding of its audience for non-specialist interpretive material).

The constant lament...

On a couple of occasions I was so angry and frustrated that I could barely control myself. It was like a record stuck in a groove. It happened again quite recently when an interested, educated and experienced observer of international art museums asked: "But why isn't there more information provided for ordinary visitors to so many museum collections and exhibitions?".

Why indeed?! I have been constantly asked the same question ever since I became a curator.

There are plenty of art museums where informative labelling and other accessible interpretive material is provided for collection and other displays. (Their quality varies greatly, of course). But I think the main reasons why it is still the exception rather than the rule in many of the world's museums are that good art museum interpretation is difficult and takes a lot of time. To do it well takes planning, attention to detail, teamwork, and skill, not to mention dedica-

tion, intelligence and knowledge.

Why should we put a priority on it or, indeed, anything else designed for the general visitor? Because museums are first and foremost for people and we all have a responsibility to serve those people. If we want to know how to serve them best we have to learn and understand their needs (surveys, research), provide solutions that work (experimentation, tests and evaluation) and ensure that they continue to work (review, modify, test). If we do not follow these or similar processes, we cannot know that we are succeeding in providing the best for the majority of our visitors.

(The day I was putting the finishing touches to this piece I was visited by two MBA students who had chosen to do a presentation on the art museum. Their key question was "How do you ascertain the needs of your clients and how do you evaluate whether you are addressing them successfully with your programmes?")

There are plenty of other reasons why we do not or cannot provide more information about works of art on display: it costs a lot, collections move around too much and too often, we don't know where to start, not enough specialist staff and so on.

In the end, however, it comes down to priorities and priorities are in themselves extremely difficult to define and list. At a guess I would say that those museums that have developed professional corporate plans will find that provision of accessible (free and freely-available) interpretive material for the majority of visitors rates pretty high among the priorities. Once that happens the resources and time can then be found to implement the process.

It is possible that the majority of our visitors are happy with the way things are, so pleased that the art is there that they would be loath to complain and say that they want anything more. Many of them, however, are not aware that more is possible and probably beneficial. But this is all conjecture, mere contention. We will only know when we have surveyed or studied the results of existing surveys.

So build some evaluation techniques into your next project, whether a comments book or a simple questionnaire left in a visible place for visitors to fill in if they wish. (This simple and cheap survey technique was used at exhibitions at the Grand Palais to assist in the planning of the Musée d'Orsay.) If you are not sure whether to use extended labels, room sheets, introductory room and section texts or an audio-visual, try them all in one exhibition or display and evaluate visitor preference.

The video disc comes of age

We have come a long way with audio-visual technology since, for example, Alexander Dorner's developments at the Rhode Island School of Design Art Museum in the late 1930s. One of his innovations was the installation of earphones, stored in the armrest of a bench, by which a visitor could listen to recorded ancient classical music in the Classical Room.

One of the slide-tape forerunners of visitor-selected introductory programmes was at the Cleveland Museum of Art. Over 50 slide-tape programmes could be selected by visitors and groups to be shown in small viewing rooms as well as being shown in regular advertised programmes.

Philadelphia Art Museum introduced its innovative 'Video Juke Box' set of visitor-select introductory programmes to the Arensberg Collection in the mid-1970s. This utilised a cassette programme locator (CPL-1000) which quite quickly found the beginning of the programme selected by the visitor from the 11 recorded on a single tape. Ever since then I have impatiently awaited the introduction of video disc to allow instant location of the programme.

On my recent visit to Japan (my first), I saw the state of the art in video-disc technology for visitor orientation and information at its most sophisticated and expensive. The Tokugawa Art Museum, Nagoya, which opened its new building last year, has installed computer-controlled video for three different purposes: a single programme, 3-screen introduction to the collection; a multiple-choice, visitor-selected set of programmes on the *Tale of Genji* scroll; and a multiple-choice, visitor-selected set of programmes on a variety of collection subjects. All of these were controlled from one control room from the moment the visitor called up the selection by pressing a number on the touch pad. None of these programmes were in English but the image quality appeared excellent.

This kind of expense is considerably easier to justify when you have a virtually finite collection and only the occasional modifications to its display.

But it's still the software that counts...

A major audio innovation in the 1970s was the Telesonic audio guide which I first experienced at the then new Minneapolis Institute of Art. The museum was wired to broadcast in defined areas throughout the galleries and the visitor could pick up the short commentary on a particular exhibit through a hired receiver.

The texts were beautifully written and fitted into a museum-wide interpretation structure which included introductory texts, room sheets and extended captions so that most of the objects had some interpretation, but not necessarily in the same form. It was state-of-the-art technology in its time, but later I discovered that the Institute had virtually abandoned the system because it took so much time and so many resources to keep up-to-date.

As happens so often (eg., The Power House Museum) a great number of staff are employed to set up a new institution and little expense is spared. But once up and running, the staff reductions take their toll. Set-up expertise moves on to other consultancies. The remaining staff lose touch with the processes because of the pressures of the new fully-functioning museum open to the public.

However, what impressed me most about the Minneapolis Institute of Arts interpretive system is absolutely valid today. It is not the technology but the careful planning and testing that was used, possibly for the first time in an art museum, to ensure that the interpretive material worked for visitors and suited not only the medium being used but the kind of information being presented.

A manual was prepared which explained the principles behind the interpretive structure and how to write for

each medium. The roles of curator, interpreter and editor were clearly defined and the interpretive teams created. The approximate comprehension level of the average visitor was defined.

So just like the introduction of computers for collection documentation, for example, these systems don't run themselves. They require good management and long-term commitment of staff, time and money to keep going and develop.

In the end, whether high or low-tech, simple or complex, you get out what you put in and what you put in - from planning the approach to the last full stop - takes time and dedication and has to be maintained for its useful life. It has to be modified and updated, appreciated and nurtured, and only abandoned when something better or more important has been developed to take its place. Our collections, programmes and our visitors deserve it. It is not the technology that is paramount - it is the quality of the visitor's experience.

What about the heritage?

Most art museums combine the two functions of heritage institution and "Kunsthalle" or art exhibiting gallery.

I began my career as a collection curator and then spent several years in exhibition management. As a manager, and now a director, I have experienced the pressures of a continual programme of back-to-back loan exhibitions which rarely give staff a moment to take a breather, recharge batteries and review progress and plan for the long term. Curators never seem to have enough time to display, publicise, catalogue and publish their collections, including new acquisitions, in a planned and structured way.

Temporary loan exhibitions are an essential feature of our programmes, but I have always believed that they must be balanced against the heritage collections side of our work. We hold our collections in trust for our publics today and in the *future*. For example, future generations will surely blame us for acquiring works of art while artists and their friends and associates were alive, and yet not documenting what they knew about these works that seemed important enough at the time to spend public funds to acquire.

Temporary loan exhibitions greatly contribute to our knowledge and understanding of art which then assists us in the processes of adding to and documenting our permanent collections. They provide a new and stimulating body of knowledge and experience for our visitors so that they can increasingly appreciate their culture and why we are preserving old and new art for the future.

Exhibitions from our permanent collections can be designed like any other exhibition. For example, the recent 'Paper Treasures' at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery was a sponsored display and therefore well-publicised. Most visitors, I suggest, do not distinguish between the different sources or kinds of exhibition. It's a pleasant surprise for local visitors when they suddenly discover new aspects of "their" collection.

The benefits for the museum itself are manifold: increased catalogue information about the works that can be made available in the future, and the ability to review for all the good housekeeping purposes you want - conservation, photography, registration, mounting and framing, insurance valuations, stock-checking and so forth.

Good planning of collection displays more than justifies itself in the long term and can be seen as integrating the fundamental collection work into the public arena. Planned collection displays have lasting value and can be made as attractive and popular as many a loan exhibition.

They are also attractive to sponsors, getting them interested in long-term involvement with the museum. Room-sheets or leaflets on the collection have longer lives and build up over the years to something quite substantial which can culminate in picture books, postcard and slide sets, audio-visual introductions and so on. Programmes for schools, colleges and universities can also be built into collection displays that are planned well in advance.

There is, therefore, an obvious and highly-significant synergy that should exist between the "Kunsthalle" and heritage sides of our activities, but in recent years many art museums have found that their collection work has been reduced because of the resources that are being devoted to temporary loan exhibitions.

This in itself is a very interesting phenomenon. If you were to take a cross-section of large and small art museums, I suspect you would find that from the beginning of the century up until the 1960s, most produced regularly updated collection catalogues, bulletins which documented aspects of the collections in detail, and even quite substantial educational material for schools.

In the main, the art museums that have continued to produce in this way are those that have either planned their collection-based work into their overall programmes, or have divided up their curatorial and other staff expertise into collection-orientated and exhibition-producing sections.

The growth and development of both art museums and art history in the last few decades has also contributed to the increase in number, scope and scale of our exhibition making, as has the vast increase in the number of artists coming out of art school whose "demands" for public display opportunities have outstripped the growth of spaces able to meet these demands.

These are phenomena - not "bad" or unwanted - but facts of modern art museum life and change. Our main concern is to recognise and identify them and understand their dynamics and how they affect us now and in the years to come.

Footnote on an early hero

I treasure more than almost any other book in my collection Samuel Cauman's, *The living museum, experiences of an art historian and museum director, Alexander Dorner* (1958) with an introduction by Walter Gropius. Known mostly, I think, for his book *The way beyond 'art'* (1947), Dorner revolutionised art museology and introduced the avant-garde into the art museum, first at the Hanover Landesmuseum in Germany. He transformed this stuffy 19th-century institution into a progressive, even futuristic art museum.

In 1925 he created 'The Abstract Cabinet' in which works by Picasso,

Léger, Archipenko, Mondrian, El Lissitsky, Gabo, Moholy-Nagy, and others, were shown on sliding panels which allowed the room to be transformed. It was designed by El Lissitsky in 1925, Theo van Doesburg having not come up with a satisfactory solution. (If I remember correctly, one of the lithographs in El Lissitsky's *Kestnermappe* suite is a plan for the Abstract Cabinet).

It was to be followed by the 'Room of our Own Time', but it was only shown in an unfinished condition in the early 1930s before "the mounting forces of reaction were making their hostility towards modernism" felt on Dorner's committee. The description of the room, designed by Moholy-Nagy and Dorner, still makes exciting reading now and it could be recreated.

Photography and film, stage design (Gropius, Piscator, Schlemmer), industrial design and machinery were to be incorporated. Films would have been either documentary ("in the Eisenstein manner") or pioneering abstract films by Viking Eggeling and Hans Richter from the 1920s. Moholy-Nagy's own *Light machine* (now in the Busch-Reisinger Museum, Harvard University) stood in the centre of the room. Cauman writes: "Thus, more than in the Abstract Cabinet, the visitor was invited to participate actively in the display. Projection equipment and actuating (sic) buttons were installed, but proved technically unsatisfactory, and the room was opened before it was possible to show films. Even robbed of this portion of its impact, the room constituted an unforgettable presentation."

The list of visitors to see Dorner's work in Hannover reads like a Pantheon of our profession's other pioneers: Catherine Dreier, Albert Barnes, William Milliken, Alfred Barr and Philip Johnson. It was no surprise that Dorner emigrated to the United States when the pressure of National Socialism became too great.

Before he left, he managed to mail Malevich's *White on White* (among other paintings) to the Netherlands, en route to the Museum of Modern Art in New York, to save it from destruction. (Barr had already carried a couple out of the museum under his arm to New York for the same reason).

Book Reviews

The Treaty of Waitangi
by Dr Claudia Orange
(Allen and Unwin, N.Z. Ltd. in association with Port Nicholson Press, Wellington, 1988)
Reviewed by Areta Kahu, Security, National Museum and Art Gallery

Dr Claudia Orange spent 10 dedicated years completing her most fascinating and informative book, *The Treaty of Waitangi*. She is currently the Assistant Editor at the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography and owes much of her extensive research to colleagues, historians, specialists, family and many others.

When buying the book I was faced with this small and rather insignificant looking paperback which was about to tell me all about my history. However, I was immediately stimulated and found that the prefaces, appendices, references and bibliographies which she has used to back up her comments, clearly show her concern to provide a very accurate account of what really happened.

Dr Orange retraces events from about 1830 through to 1987 and gives us a picture of the relationship between the British Crown and the Maori people detailing the effects before, during and after the signing of the Treaty. The book begins by describing the British colonial settlers. By the 1830s, Christian missionaries were scattered around the country and a great trust grew between them and the Maori. Due to outbreaks of war with other foreign groups, the Maori people sought a protectorate treaty from the Crown. In 1835 the Declaration of Independence was signed but it did not allow for complete sovereignty.

The increasing insurgence of foreign regalia made the British take more substantial steps to finalise complete sovereignty over New Zealand and it's people, and it was Hobson's task to carry this out. The Crown claimed this right based on Cook's discovery in 1769, despite the fact that the Maori people had lived in New Zealand over 1000 years before his arrival.

The reproduction and distribution of copies of the Treaty of Waitangi were carried out in a seemingly unorthodox manner. Not all the Tribes had signed the Treaty. This saw the beginning of activities of the earliest Maori activists such as Heke, then considered a troublemaker, but now a hero. There were also discrepancies in the conduct of how the Treaty was presented and literally "sold" to the Maori people. Blankets and tobacco were to be given only as gifts, not as exchange for land or signatures.

Although the Treaty was signed on 6 February 1840, it took a further 9 months to complete. It wasn't long after that the Maori people felt the pinch of the consequences. The confiscation of unused lands, and the loss of fishing rights, seemed to contradict the Second Article of the Treaty.

When the Government was formed, the Crown allowed New Zealanders to look after their own internal affairs, as it had in India, South Africa and Australia. However, New Zealand was the first country where the "aborigines" were offered a Treaty that promised peace and equality. We have therefore been led to believe that New Zealand is one of the luckiest countries to come under the hammer of the British Crown.

When the King movement was formed in 1853, its main purpose was to form a council for a "separate and independent Maori government" (Te Mana Motuhake) but the interim Government had rejected this. When in 1861 the Native Department, later the Maori Affairs Department, was formed it was very much Pakeha-dominated. Slowly but surely Pakeha-educated and accepted Maori were given seats. More Maori people are finally seeing the injustices done to them and are standing for their rights.

Controversies have and will always arise concerning these rights. Dr Orange has made me much more aware of the issues concerning the Treaty of Waitangi. This awareness seems to be lacking in New Zealand society as there is always turmoil and conflict. We see the injustices that have occurred, a

people's fight for independence and a people's loss of mana.

Unlike a good novel with a happy or sad ending, we are left with a feeling of emptiness. I find it very difficult to wonder where it will all end. Dr Claudia Orange has set out to give us a true and accurate account of the events concerning the Treaty of Waitangi. In doing so she leaves me with many questions. Why does society tend to block out the Treaty? Is it because of lack of knowledge? Why does it seem a threat to some institutions? Is it a fear of loss? Why is the bulk of society so unaware of the Treaty? Is it the ignorance of our education system? Why aren't copies of the Treaty in Maori and English being well publicised?

The Treaty of Waitangi is what made our society what it is today; one wonders if there is a "residue of guilt".

Collections Management for Museums: Proceedings of an International Conference held in Cambridge, England, 26-29 September 1987.
The First Annual Conference of The Museum Documentation Association, edited by D. Andrew Roberts (Cambridge: The Museum Documentation Association, 1988).
Reviewed by David Woodings, Registrar, Waikato Museum of Art and History.

The Collections Management for Museums Conference attracted 150 delegates from 15 countries in 5 continents. The publishing of the revised texts from some of the key discussions within this book, provided timely reminders about collections management for registrars attending the Registrars Conference for New Zealand, held at Waikato Museum 17-19 November 1988.

To be perfectly honest this is not the type of manuscript one would consider to be stimulating to a broad audience, but for registrars and people charged with responsibilities in collections management areas it is the most comprehensive and up to date series of texts available for museum/art gallery staff. The texts are papers from organised conference sessions, with brief introductions contributed by the sessions' chairmen and an introduction entitled, "Collections Management for Museums", written by D. Andrew Roberts.

Under "Surveys of Collections Management Systems and Practice", is an interesting review of collections management systems and practice for Australasia by Jennifer Game, the first registrar appointed to the Australian War Memorial and Museum in 1982. Andrew Roberts looks at practices from an historic viewpoint for the United Kingdom; Jane Sledge reviews systems and practice in North America; and Carsten Larsen reviews for Nordic countries.

Two features were extremely relevant for the New Zealand Registrars Conference. The chapter on "System Design", introduced by Peter Homulos included a general outline of a collections management system by Richard Light, an extensive checklist of automated collections management systems features from Willoughby Associates Jane Sutherland and Lenore Sarason, and planning techniques for collection information systems, drawn from Stephen Toneys experience of the Smithsonian Collections Information Systems. The chapter on the "Role of Professional Groups" outlines where the professional registrars groups are heading in the United States - Karol Schmiegel; Canada - Sonja Tannor-Kaplash; and in the United Kingdom - Fredericka Smith, Margaret Stewart and Jonathan Mason.

The remaining three chapters identify collections management systems and responsibilities as well as management of personnel resources, which pose interesting questions for the museum profession in New Zealand. There are 8 contributors to "Procedural Policy Developments in Individual Museums". Two worth special mention are collections management policy and procedure initiatives at the National Museum of American History, by Katherine Spiess, and Collections Management at the Australian National Gallery, by Maxine Esau.

"Training and Advisory Developments" has seven papers, one by Geoffrey Lewis on training for collections management in the United Kingdom. "Consultancy Support for Museums", three papers, all indicate a change of emphasis in manpower requirements for collection management. They indicate that with automated systems becoming available that are more powerful and flexible, the limiting factor will be increasingly the training and management of personnel.

The volume ends with a brief note about the systems presented for scrutiny at the Conference (including Vernon systems of New Zealand), although no information is available from the forum.

This is a book which could clarify and update attitudes towards collections management in New Zealand and is a must for registrars, but it should be read in wider circles to have a significant effect museologically.

General Information

Appointments

Bob Maysmor
Director, Dowse Art Museum

Bob has worked at the Porirua Museum for the last 8 1/2 years and has been director for the last four. His background is in display and exhibition and his special areas of interest are presentation and interpretation. Bob is an AGMANZ Councillor.

Sharyn Black
Curator, New Zealand Centre of Photography

Sharyn is a graduate of the Diploma in Museum Studies (Brisbane) and has worked in various galleries in Victoria and New South Wales.

The New Zealand Centre for Photography Trust was established in 1985 and moved from the Crafts Council building in Wellington to its present site in Newtown in July 1988.

AGMANZ Diploma

Tony Martin, Curator at Manawatu Art Gallery, has been awarded the AGMANZ Diploma. AGMANZ Council congratulates Tony on his hard work and is pleased to add his name to the number of people who have already attained the Diploma.

Museum of New Zealand/Te Marae Taonga o Aotearoa Update

AGMANZ nominated Bill Milbank, Cheryll Sotheran, Elizabeth Hinds, Stuart Park and John Takarangi for the Professional Liaison Committee and this group has already met twice. It is their task to liaise with the profession and report back to the Museum of New Zealand/ Te Marae Taonga o Aotearoa. The committee will be meeting with the profession when the institutional concept has been approved by the Project Development Board.

ICOM News

Please note that the ICOM 89 15th General Conference is to be held in The Hague, The Netherlands. Theme: "Museums: Generators of Culture". People who are planning to attend this conference should contact the Executive Officer. I have been approached by a travel firm on contract to Wagons Lits, the official travel agents for the conference, who may be able to put together a package for the New Zealand delegates.

Received in the AGMANZ Office

Wanganui Community College School of Art Craft and Design: Information brochures on the Certificate of Fine Arts and Certificate of Computer Graphics.

Clio Press: Information about a new publication, *The Index of Paintings Sold in the British Isles During the Nineteenth Century,* Volume 1, 1801-1805. The index will consist of 20 Volumes.

Nga Puna Waihanga Newsletter: The National Hui 1989 Queen's Birthday weekend is to be held at Ratana Pa.

Photofile: The spring issue is a double one and concentrates on the South Pacific. Articles by Bill Cooper, Robert Leonard and Neil Pardington, City Group, Lawrence McDonald.

Group for Scientific and Technological Collections (Australia): Several issues of the newsletter. The letter is produced by Julian Holland and covers topics of interest to museums and archives with collections in the natural and physical sciences. Subscription information from Julian Holland, 10 Goodwin Avenue, Ashfield, NSW 2131, Australia.

Letters

I read your recent issue of AGMANZ on conservation with interest. There was no mention of the Conservation Information Network, although the Network was demonstrated this winter at the Auckland City Gallery to a group of New Zealand conservators, some of whom are AGMANZ members. The Network currently has 3 or 4 users in NZ, and several in Australia.

I've enclosed a brochure on the Network, and additional information can be obtained by request from the Getty Conservation Institute.

Barbara Snyder
Microsystems Coordinator
The Getty Conservation Institute

The Society for Cultural Conservation (Wellington) Inc. intends to hold a course for non-conservators from any part of New Zealand. It would take place in mid-October next year 1989 at the National Museum in Wellington. The duration would probably be two or three week-days. Topics would include introductory sessions on passive conservation embracing the ideal environment for archives and artefacts; shelving, boxing and other storage methods; cleaning, protection against mould, insects and vermin; lighting conditions, etc. Special topics could include 'hands-on' experience in the care and repair of: maps and plans; architectural/engineering drawings and artefacts (such as models); books and journals; textiles; ceramics; wood; iron; bone; art works, etc.

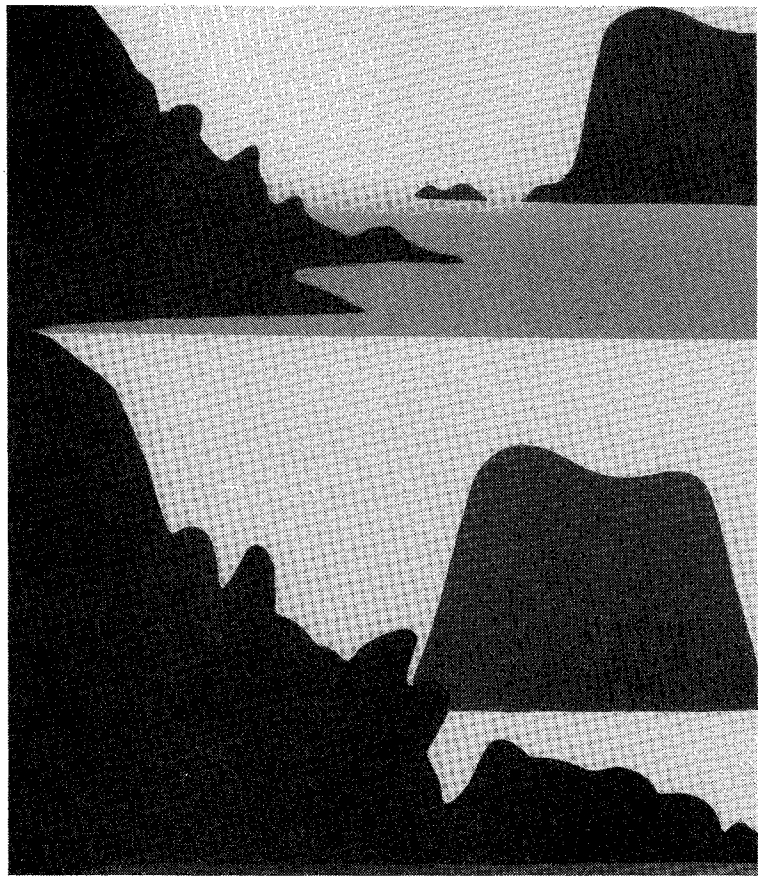
To gauge interest and need, a questionnaire has been prepared, copies of which may be obtained from the undersigned.

Thank you.

Robin Griffin
S.C.C. Conference Convenor
C/- BNZ Archives
P.O. BOX 2392
Wellington

AIDS NOW

FROM DECEMBER 17 1988, THE DOWSE ART MUSEUM, LAINGS ROAD, LOWER HUTT.



For Sale.
This stunning original print by Michael Smithers has been generously donated to AGMANZ.
Proceeds from the sale will go towards the Maori Curators Fund. Funds are already lodged with the Maori Educaiton Foundation for use by a selected Maori to further extend their museological study.
The print, from Smithers' "Back Beach Series" is being offered for sale to the museum community. The reserve price is $500. Those interested should apply to the Executive Officer of AGMANZ.

SARJEANT GALLERY

Queens Park, Box 637 Wanganui NZ Phone 58529.

Gifted to the people of Wanganui by Henry Sarjeant in 1912 this magnificently proportioned building with its unique naturally lit galleries continues to be one of New Zealand's finest exhibiting galleries. It has a broad-based collection with many important features of 19th and 20th Century art, that is actively being further developed, especially in the area of contemporary New Zealand art. A vigorous and stimulating programme of exhibitions and related activities is maintained for the enlightenment and pleasure of the public.

BOOKSHOP

CATALOGUES:

Philip Clairmont
Gretchen Albrecht: After Nature
Matt Pine
Anne Noble: The Wanganui

VIDEOS:

Philip Clairmont
Gretchen Albrecht: After Nature

EXHIBITION DATES

Culture/Response: November 14 to February 6
Siegfried Koglmeier: *Dome Installation No.12*, November 26 to March 12, 1989
Fiona Clark: *He Taura Tangata:* December 11 to February 6
Photographers' Update: December 11 to February 6
Summer School Fabric Show: December 11 to January 22, 1989
Pre-Raphaelite Photographs: January 25 to February 15
Richard Hamilton: *Prints* February 12 to March 19
Philip Trusttum: *Horses* February 20 to March 19
Whatu Aho Rua: March 25 to April 30
Te Ao Maori: March 25 to April 30

ISSN 0112-6210