B. 189

Christchurch Art Gallery
Te Puna o Waiwhetu
Bulletin Issue no.189
Spring 2017

B.189

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Design and Production
Our thanks to the Graphic Design class at the Ilam School of Fine Arts for designing *Bulletin*, and to PMP Print for their generous sponsorship of the production.

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ISSN 1176-0540 (print)
ISSN 1179-6715 (online)

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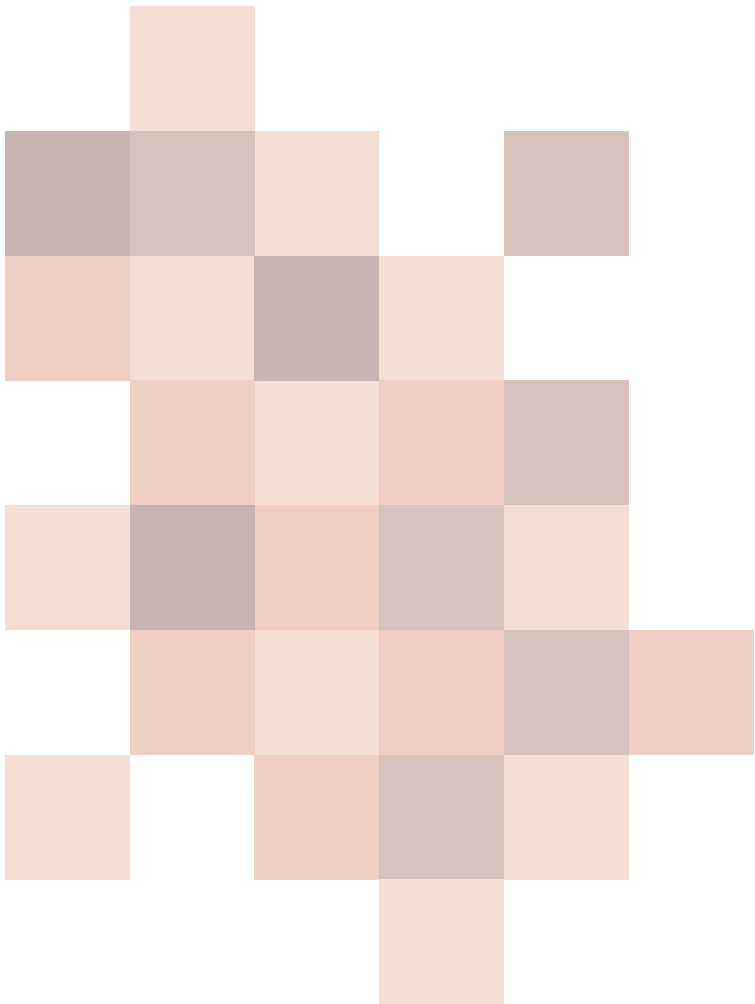

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Cover: Laurence Aberhart *Ramones, Christchurch, 24 July 1980* (detail). Photograph. Collection of the artist

Previous spread: Ron Mueck *Drift* 2009. Silicone, synthetic hair, polyester resin, fibreglass, polyurethane, aluminium, plastic, fabric, ed. 1/1. Anthony d'Offay. © Ron Mueck courtesy Anthony d'Offay, London. Photo: John Collie

Director's Foreword

JENNY HARPER
August 2017

However cold or wet it is as I write this (and certainly it's raining at present), our September *Bulletin* heralds the coming of spring, and with it, the promise of growth, renewal and hope.

Thinking of beginnings, though, who would have guessed a boy born on the corner of Christchurch's Manchester and Peterborough streets in 1901 might become one of the twentieth century's most original and internationally renowned artists? He left New Zealand in 1924, but that's exactly what happened to Len Lye. In our exhibition *Len Lye: Stopped Short by Wonder* we present a group of Lye's extraordinarily experimental films and eleven sculptures—some built by Lye and some dreamed of and designed by the artist years before they were realised by the Len Lye Foundation and Engineering Department at the University of Canterbury. Our senior curator Lara Strongman has enjoyed working with exhibition partners the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery and Len Lye Centre in New Plymouth, the Len Lye Foundation and Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision to present Lye's work in his home town. In this edition of *Bulletin* Roger Horrocks—writer, film-maker and former assistant to Len Lye—looks at Lye's wonderful sketchbooks, which we're also delighted to exhibit in this show.

We also present a portfolio made at the end of the life of another extraordinarily productive artist of his time, Henri Matisse. The images in *Jazz*, that most joyful of artist's books, offer a fantastic insight into the final chapter of Matisse's amazing career, when the 74-year old artist was bedridden but still committed to imaginative creativity. We're delighted to be able to borrow this from the Art Gallery of New South Wales; and our thanks to Justin Paton, who purchased it recently on their behalf. The title of *Jazz*, with its implied connection to musical improvisation, pleased Matisse, who felt that with these cut-outs he had gained a new level of artistic expression; but it also resonates beautifully with *Bebop*, our wonderful Bill Culbert sculpture above the main staircase, which recalls the fast tempo of mid-1940s American jazz. 'Think Dizzy Gillespie and Miles Davis', Bill said when we asked about his work at the 2013 Venice Biennale where it first showed.

Back then our Gallery's Foundation had yet to form its plan to buy five great works of art to mark our time of closure. However, buoyed in the second half of that year by our success in fundraising for the purchase of Michael Parekowhai's *Chapman's Homer*, an ambitious plan took shape. Why stop at one? Our city's collection needs all the help it can, from the public purse—which helps to maintain a professional sense of independence—as well as from a broad community that understands the benefit of a collection formed on behalf of its citizens. A collection here for the long-term, but constantly reinterpreted to remind us who we are and where we might go.

After amazing city- and country-wide support for the acquisition of Christchurch's favourite (and certainly most-photographed) bull, we took heart and raised the stakes. We knew then that the Gallery's closure would be five long years. So why not work with our Foundation and supporters to build an endowment fund of $5 million *and* buy five great works to mark this period

with a plus? We're almost there—after three time-consuming, alternately exhausting and exhilarating years, we've secured $3 million of pledges for the endowment and—with Martin Creed's *Work #2314* and Bridget Riley's *Cosmos* joining the two earlier Venice Biennale commissions—four of this series are now on display in Christchurch.

Now to our fifth!

As many of you know, Australian-born, UK-based artist Ron Mueck has been asked to make a sculpture for Christchurch. He's an obvious choice in some respects—his 2010–11 Christchurch exhibition was an important highlight in a difficult time. The humanity and the vulnerability of Mueck's figurative sculptures, whether large or small, reminded us of birth and death and somehow seemed to speak to all. *Woman in Bed* looked anxious; *Wild Man* was palpably withdrawn; and who can forget the self-absorbed puzzlement of *Boy* as he realised he'd been stabbed? Mueck conveys individual human emotion as few others can.

Mueck came to Christchurch both before and for the opening of his show here; and last year he returned to walk around the city and gain a sense of what has happened and how long our recovery might take. Despite the gaps and the inevitably slow progress, we suggested to him that our mood was 'cautiously optimistic'. And that's a term he's pondering as he plans something for here and for us. We don't know what it will be; he's still working that out, but as often in our world, we hope and we trust.

We are thrilled with those who've already signed on to help with the final of these five great works; we still need to raise more, but with a gala dinner on 30 September and a crowdfunding campaign to beat all others we hope to manage this on our collective behalf. This will be the first Ron Mueck work in New Zealand, and who better to love and look after it than us?

Back to *Bulletin* and its contents: in this issue, we have a wonderful new essay from Richard Shiff, Effie Marie Cain Regents Chair in Art at the University of Texas at Austin. 'Our Instinct Enhanced' moves discussions of Riley's work to another level—and, of course, I'm thrilled that our *Cosmos* has prompted this shift. Laurence Simmons, professor of film studies at the University of Auckland, looks at the journey in the context of our new exhibition *The Weight of Sunlight*, which opens in mid-September. Simmons, who is the author of *Freud's Italian Journey*, examines the motivations behind the artistic Grand Tour and the vicarious pleasure we derive from paintings of travel. And Rodney Swan, an adjunct academic at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, explores the idea of Matisse's *Jazz* as a strategic instrument of cultural resistance in occupied France.

We're pleased to have a contribution from Petrena Fishburn, formerly a visitor host here at the Gallery and now collection curator at the Aigantighe Art Gallery, who profiles the remarkable Barbara Brooke. Brooke was co-founder of Christchurch's Brooke Gifford Gallery and editor of the Caxton Press's short-lived but influential *Ascent* magazine. And, in support of our *Your Hotel Brain* exhibition, we examine the nineties arts scene in New Zealand through the eyes of the people who were working at the time. My Favourite is supplied by Rachael King, who finds a family connection in a work by Joanna Margaret Paul. And our Postcard comes from Josephine Rout in London. Pagework is by 2016 Frances Hodgkins Fellow Miranda Parkes.

As well as looking forward, in the Year in Review we look back on a range of measures of our success, from books published and attendance at public programmes and events to selected highlights from our new Design Store's first year of trading.

See Italy and Die

'A man who has not been to Italy is always conscious of an inferiority, from his not having seen what it is expected a man should see.'

Samuel Johnson, 1776

As every traveller knows, there is something obsessive about setting out on a journey: the preparatory work of consulting guides, the organisation of itineraries, the accommodation pre-booked, bags packed with essentials, provisions for the journey assembled. This essay explores the metaphor of a journey, with the particular Italian twist that informs the work of the artists gathered together in the exhibition *The Weight of Sunlight*.

A conventional way of thinking about a journey is to somehow imagine it already completed: we start from somewhere because we are going to arrive somewhere else. We have destinations in mind. However, we all know from experience that journeys are never as simple and straightforward as we might first project them. The most interesting artists who journeyed through Italy have managed to combine explorations of place with self-exploration. They submitted themselves to the challenge of travel and in the process managed to know themselves differently. For most forms of travel at least cater to desire; they seem to promise, or allow us to fantasise, the satisfaction of drives that for one reason or another are denied us at home.

The narrator of Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (1768) categorises the travellers known to his age by focusing satirically on the humours and manias they display during their travels rather than on any declared mission. On the road, he writes, we may encounter

Idle Travellers,
Inquisitive Travellers,
Lying Travellers,
Proud Travellers,
Vain Travellers,
Splenetic Travellers.
Then follow:
The Travellers of Necessity,
The Delinquent and Felonious Traveller,
The Unfortunate and Innocent Traveller,
The Simple Traveller,
And last of all (if you please) The Sentimental Traveller ...[1]

Thus the public motive for travel (education) does not preclude in a traveller the desires and personal investments that Sterne refers to. This display of travel and the pleasure taken in it was undoubtedly familiar to the sons, and very occasionally daughters, of the British aristocracy as they departed on their continental Grand Tours in the eighteenth century. A journey to Italy to view the remains of antiquity was considered an essential element of an upper-class education, and an extended visit to Rome was the Grand Tourist's primary objective. Accompanied by a *cicerone* (scholarly guide), young men embarked on their educational rite of passage through the suave allures of Paris and on south across the Alps to Italy, where the liquid softness of the light worked on them in an emancipatory fashion.

The Grand Tour had its origins in religious pilgrimage but love of antiquity, the desire for a milder climate, the Italian sunshine and the beauty of the Italian landscape, coupled with the opportunities for discovery of the self and the release from social and sexual constraints, were

Opposite: Jacopo Amigoni *Bacchus and Ariadne* 1730–9. Oil on canvas. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, presented to the Canterbury Society of Arts by the Neave family in memory of their brother Kenelm, 1931; given to the Robert McDougall Art Gallery 1932

all motivations for its undertaking. Sex, gambling and drinking were part of the Grand Tour experience; there was, of course, the risk of what the experience might turn into for young men on the loose, as Alexander Pope's *Dunciad* reminds us:

Led by my hand, he saunter'd Europe round,
And gather'd ev'ry vice on Christian ground.[2]

In his *Bacchus and Ariadne* (1730–9), Jacopo Amigoni, a Venetian-born painter who lived and worked in London for almost ten years, provides a cautionary warning (or encouragement depending on your point of view) against the dangers (or benefits) of the Italian tour. Bacchus was the god of wine and his wife Ariadne was leader of the Maenads—women revellers who danced and sang at the feasts in his name. Here, against the redolent background of classical columns and urns, the Bacchanalia appears to be over; the wine urn is overturned and the cup is slipping from Bacchus's hand as he leans in drunken sleep against Ariadne's body, his arm flung suggestively over her leg.

Not only is travel typically fuelled by desire, it also embodies powerful transgressive images like this. Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, was infatuated with Italy and took twenty-four extended vacations there during his lifetime.[3] Given the amount of travel he undertook, it is hardly surprising that the metaphor of the journey was often chosen by Freud himself as a figure for the process of analysis. Psychoanalysis may also help us understand the strength of Freud's investment in Italy through his own theory of transference. The embracing of a particular place or country derives from identifications and is dependent less on objective factors than on a process of projection. In his 1919 essay *The Uncanny*, Freud connects love of place with the search for origins. There is, he maintains, an important sense in which the desire to identify with another country or another home is at the same time the desire to recover an original lost home—the lost world of prenatality. Time and time again, in the letters he writes back to family and colleagues he is in rapture over Italian art, architecture, food, light, sunsets and sights. However, in another sense, Freud's Italy presented a set of intriguing problems for the psychoanalyst, including the phenomenon of the uncanny, the process of forgetting and the playing out of the death drive. 'I am running away from myself', Freud confessed in a letter to his colleague Wilhelm Fliess.[4] Freud, in his journey to the unconscious, transformed all journeys.

Throughout the eighteenth century, small but expansive compositions known as *vedute* (views) were much in demand as souvenirs of travel and symbols of their owners' sophistication. Many travellers collected engravings of the capitals they visited, or sought paintings of famous sites for their art collections; others even included artists in their retinue to paint the detailed 'views' of cityscapes or landscape vistas. The glories of ancient Rome—and particularly the largest of its imperial monuments, the Colosseum—were desirable subjects for those who had participated in an educational Grand Tour of Europe. The setting of the Colosseum was then still relatively uncompromised by the modern city that would later surround it, and so *The Colosseum Seen from the Southeast* (c.1700) presents the great stadium as the dramatic feature of a bucolic landscape, in which a tourist might well have encountered a shepherd and his flock. The artist has carefully rendered the ruins washed in a soft afternoon 'Roman' light with long shadows and, by lowering the viewpoint so we look up, implicitly placed the viewer in the scene. This perspective also helps give a sense of the building's scale. I propose that this hitherto unattributed work is a version of a scene by the distinguished Dutch painter, Gaspar van Wittel (1653–1736) who had settled in Rome and become so 'Italified' he was known as Vanvitelli. One of two known related versions is found today in the Harvard Art Museums.

Most travellers on the Grand Tour avoided mixing with the local population. On the one hand, they admired these 'heirs of Antiquity', these 'children of nature' whose lives were seemingly untouched by civilisation; on the other, they adopted a condescending attitude towards those

Frederic, Lord Leighton *Teresina* c.1874. Oil on canvas board.
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, presented by the Canterbury Society of Arts 1932

Frederick Vincent Ellis *Night Fall On The Sabine Hills, Rome* 1921. Oil on board.
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu

they regarded as rough and unpredictable peasants. This ambivalence was reflected in many travellers' accounts, including those by Maximilien Misson, who proposed that Italy evoked 'A Paradise peopled with Devils and Madonnas'.[5] Of course, a smaller number of travellers were fascinated by and attracted to the locals. One of those so drawn was Frederic, Lord Leighton who spent more time than most in Italy, which he regarded as his second home, and who filled his notebooks with lists of resident models. Leighton completed a series of portraits of young women dressed in peasant clothing of which *Teresina* (c.1874) is one. In a traditional billowy white peasant blouse, Teresina stares out directly and confidently to meet our gaze with an emotional intensity. This is a sitter who offers herself as an equal, with a simple but clearly intelligent demeanour. It is important to acknowledge the mastery of this painting—the quiet confidence in the modelling of figure, the spatial quality, the subtle tonal shading and, above all, the sensitivity both suggested and achieved.

Of great interest to the painters who travelled to Italy was the light; the way that, diffused over a landscape, it creates a unity of all the objects it falls upon. Light in this sense is used in Italian painting to imply space; it isn't just a moment, it reflects a continuity. As John Berger writes:

> *The typical Italian light by which one sees a landscape, a house, a town, seems to emphasize the age, the comparative durability, the almost unchanging construction of the scene. The heat forms a slight haze which takes the edge off temporary, superficial details, but at the same time the constant clarity of the light exaggerates the apparently permanent identity of every object.*[6]

The marvel of William Breakspeare's *The Fountain* (1883) lies in his depiction of 'comparative durability' and 'unchanging construction' through the diffusion of light and the tonal modulation of strong colour: luscious green and terracotta, the shadowed hues of a darkened doorway, the smouldering red curtain that protrudes on the right-hand side. The intonations of ochre and washed walls are brought together sublimely in the woman's dress as she leans forward to pull her bucket from the depths of the well. Venice lacks a natural source of freshwater but has 231 wells which were built to collect, filter and store rainwater. A Venetian well is a clay storage basin with a brick well head and shaft to retrieve the water. Alluding to 'permanent identity', the well heads were often decorated with classical reliefs or motifs, the remnants of which we can discern here.

It is no wonder that for travellers and artists the English climate was something to escape from. Living in Cumbria, the rainiest county in England, Wordsworth wrote of the 'black drizzling days that blot out the face of things,' and envied what he described as 'the cerulean vacancy of Italy'.[7] Twentieth-century Italian poet and Nobel Prize winner, Eugenio Montale, in one of his most well-known poems uses language that was not available to Wordsworth. The poem's title, *Meriggiare*, is a verb that literally means 'to pass the hottest hours of the day in a shady outdoor place'. Of course, we have no verb that expresses the entire phrase like this in English, and translations of Montale's poem try hard, but unsuccessfully, to convey this aspect of the 'weight' of the Italian sun.[8]

In *Making Ligurian Lace* (c.1905), painted just ten years before Montale wrote his poem, Henry La Thangue's lacemakers are engaged in producing *merletto a tombolo* (pillow lace), working barefooted on a crazed stone path in the shade under an avenue of leafy trees. The harsh sunlight that bounces off the villa wall in the distance is reflected through the leaves in a tracery much like that of the lace coming into being on its *tombolo* (pillow).

In the early 1800s the French writer Chateaubriand observed:

> *There is nothing comparable in beauty to the lines of the Roman horizon, to the gentle slope of its planes, to the soft, receding contours of the mountains by which it is bound… An extraordinary haze envelopes the distance, softening objects and concealing anything*

that is harsh or discordant in their forms. Shadows are never heavy and black; no mass of rock or foliage is so obscure that a little light does not always penetrate.[9]

One hundred years later these features would seem to have hardly changed. Frederick Ellis, a painter from Halifax, Yorkshire, who ended up in New Zealand employed on the La Trobe Scheme and taught, among others, Gordon Walters, painted *Night Fall on the Sabine Hills* in 1921 while on a travelling scholarship to Italy. The Sabine Hills, an area just north of Rome in the province of Lazio, are depicted by Ellis at the moment of early twilight, giving a particular blue tinge to the landscape and its shadows. If one looks into this landscape—the haze that Berger references, the two hills middle ground, one with a medieval village nestled on its side, the cloudless sky—one begins to see that it couples very precise and sharp observation with respect for a particular environment.

The encounter with Italy profoundly shaped and informed the work of the artists who travelled there, and these journeys were crucial for each artist's development, not only of their technique but also their self-analysis. Italy was where they could be who they were, though they knew, of course, that the 'belonging' was invented. Most journeys end where they begin, coming home; when you travel imaginatively, returns are frequent. In a curious way with Frederick Ellis we have come home. His early attempt at capturing the subtleties of Roman light may have led to his ensuing New Zealand passion for designing stained glass windows. His *veduta* is of Roman hills but it resonates with and in his paintings of New Zealand: Evans Bay Parade, Worser Bay, Waiwera, East Takaka and more. Like them, it is both strange and familiar. Freud's theory of the uncanny helps us understand the obscure forces that draw these artists together in their relations with Italy. The déjà vu of travel, feeling comfortable in a foreign place, is in part experience of the *heimlich* or 'homely' but, as Freud discovered when he came to examine the etymology of the word, it exhibited identically opposite qualities—*unheimlich*, the strangely familiar *uncanny*. The strangeness that recalls to you a familiarity you cannot reach. Curiously now, Italy is the nearest thing to our home.

***Laurence Simmons** is professor of film studies at the University of Auckland. In 2006 he published a book on Freud's papers on art and aesthetics and his relationship with Italy entitled* Freud's Italian Journey. *He has also published extensively on New Zealand art.* The Weight of Sunlight *is on display from 16 September 2017.*

Notes

1 Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, London: The Scholartis Press, 1929, pp.11–12.

2 Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad: in four books*, New York: Longman, 1999, l.311–12.

3 See for example my *Freud's Italian Journey*, Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006.

4 Jeffrey M. Masson (ed. and trans.), *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887-1904*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985, p.325.

5 Misson (c.1650–1722) was a French writer and traveller whose *Nouveau voyage d'Italie* (1691) became the standard travel guide to Italy for the next fifty years.

6 John Berger, 'Morandi the Metaphysician of Bologna,' *ARTnews*, February 1955: http://www.artnews.com/2015/11/06/the-metaphysician-of-bologna-john-berger-on-giorgio-morandi-in-1955/

7 Alexandra Harris, *Weatherland: Writers and Artists under English Skies*, London: Thames and Hudson, 2015, p.232.

8 *Meriggiare pallido e assorto presso un rovente muro d'orto,* Montale's poem has been translated variously as:

To rest in the shade, pale and thoughtful,
By a sun-hot garden wall—Tony Kline

To laze at noon, pale and thoughtful,
by a blazing orchard wall—William Arrowsmith

To rest at noon, pale and absorbed
Close to a scorching garden wall—Luciano Rebay

To pass the noon, intent and pale,
beside a scorching orchard wall—Jonathan Galassi.

9 Quoted in Rodolfo Lanciani, *Ancient Rome in the Light of Recent Discoveries*, 1898, http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Gazetteer/Places/Europe/Italy/Lazio/Roma/Rome/_Texts/Lanciani/LANARD/home.htm

William A. Breakspeare *The Fountain* 1883. Oil on wood panel.
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, presented by the family of James Jamieson 1932

Gaspar van Wittel *The Colosseum Seen from the Southeast* c.1700. Oil on canvas.
Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased with assistance from the Ballantyne Bequest 1971

OUR INSTINCT ENHANCED

What does Bridget Riley's art *mean*? We might imagine that a wall painting titled *Cosmos* (2016–17) referred to life within a cosmos, an order than encompasses us, whether natural or divine. The designation connotes a degree of philosophical speculation, unlike the direct descriptions that Riley occasionally employs as titles, such as *Composition with Circles*. But whatever meaning we derive from viewing *Cosmos* will be no more intrinsic to it than its name. Attribution of meaning comes after the fact and requires our participation in a social discourse. Every object or event to which a culture attends acquires meaning; and Riley's art will have the meanings we give it, which may change as our projection of history changes. Meaning, in this social and cultural sense, is hardly her concern.

At an early stage of her career, Riley wilfully stepped outside history: 'While one has to accept that the role of art and its subjects do change, the practical problems do not. … True modern painting, I believe, should always be a beginning—its own re-invention, if you like.'[1] She has been exceptionally strict about avoiding aesthetic trends. During the 1960s, works such as *Black to White Discs* (1962) may have initiated a fashion for bold optical effects; but this historical consequence was inadvertent, and Riley shunned its significance. Part of, and yet apart from, her era, she aims to function as an artist, not an

agent of history. To understand her attitude, we need to accept that art and history run separate courses, though the notion will seem paradoxical, especially to those convinced that a social practice (art) cannot remain independent of historical forces (economics, politics, ideological contestation).

Riley grants that the 'role of art' changes. Yet this social and historical *role* is merely an aspect of the *art* that an artist creates. Riley is at the extreme end of the scale that differentiates those who self-consciously intervene in history (play a role) from those who would supersede history by the force of human feeling. Her aesthetic target is perception, which opens individuals to feeling beyond the limits of their identity as the subject of a culture and a history: 'Perception constitutes our awareness of what it is to be *human*, indeed what it is to be alive.'[2] What Riley says about art and life is more than metaphorical; people do experience art as sensory and emotional liberation. Academics debate competing theories of the human subject—its theological, anthropological and ideological origins, and even its end in a post-human condition of fluid identities.[3] These cultural constructs exist only within a historical, conceptual frame. To the contrary, Riley's 'human' is an organic life form endowed with bodily senses and psychosomatic feeling. The human is us. And it includes all others.

Riley's art engages what escapes the *notice* of history. I know of no other examples of abstract art that quite match hers in independence from a lineage of developing aesthetic practice, its cultural allegiances, and its strategic swerves. Yes, Riley now belongs to our official histories of art, but historical discourse cannot explain or retroactively position her actions and their results. Critics are reduced—or perhaps elevated—to describing her art in simple admiration. If *Cosmos* is a cosmos and therefore an order, Riley's art calls on us not to discuss the place of order in contemporary culture, but the nature of the order we are actively observing—how it feels. In viewing her compositions, a regular array of stripes, waves, circles or ellipses may verge on non-order, because her distribution of elements results from her intuitive grasp of emergent phenomena of interest. She takes sensation where it leads her: from study to study and, finally, to a completed work in which she commits her trust in that initial sensation.

Many late twentieth-century artists have made stripe paintings, but none reaches the degree of chromatic intensity and visual surprise that characterises *Late Morning I* (1967), *Serenissima* (1982), or *Aria* (2012), all of which generate phantom colours that we perceive along with the colours materially placed on the canvas. Riley's art induces phenomena as her paint collaborates with light and the physics of nature. The reds, greens, and blues of *Late Morning I* give rise to an aura of yellow that appears, disappears and appears again as the field of the painting vibrates with internal energy. Other works, somewhat more complicated, also involve colours we see yet cannot locate. Along with its predecessor *Vapour* (1970), *Vapour 2* (2009) twists three chromatic greys round each other to form vertical bands, each an amalgam of off-green, off-violet and off-orange.[4] Riley notes that much of the perceived colour 'is not actually painted. It emerges solely through visual fusion.'[5]

The interactions of colour do not render Riley's stripes of greater cultural value than those of other artists, but hers differ *qualitatively*. She often reduces a formal composition to utter simplicity—parallel bands, a grid of discs, a systematic rotation of ellipses (*Nineteen Greys*, 1968). The regularity leaves her movement of colour and value free to attain unforeseen complexities of nuance. So questions addressed to *Late Morning I* or *Cosmos* or any other Riley painting should not return to the cultural meaning of the genre: stripe painting, circle painting, abstract art, late modernism or whichever category might seem to apply. Nor should we direct interpretation to the literary allusions or concepts a title might suggest. Riley's metaphors—'aria', 'vapour', 'cosmos'—often

relate to music or atmospheric conditions, along with movement, space and light. The metaphoric designations are evocative, but they only approximate what is to be perceived in viewing the paintings. A title should never short-circuit sensation. Simply put, Riley's issue is human experience. And the central interpretive question becomes: What does her art *do*?

Courbevoie to Cosmos

At a relatively early stage in her self-directed aesthetic education, Riley posed the question of 'doing' to the art of Georges Seurat (1859–1891). She had no interest in placing herself in a historical lineage or taking up unanswered questions left by this early modernist master. She merely sought a suitable candidate to provide her with advanced instruction. In 1959, with the encouragement of her friend Maurice de Sausmarez (1915–1969), Riley set about to copy Seurat's *Bridge at Courbevoie* (1886–7). Her experience was indirect, but intense nevertheless. Although Seurat's painting was available for viewing in London, she chose to study a reproduction from a book as her working model.[6] She refers to her result as a 'transcription' of Seurat, 'intuitive with the clues provided by him'.[7] If we resort to a precise technical vocabulary, her transcription was not a 'copy' but an 'imitation'. The purpose of copying is to make as precise a replica as possible, whereas imitation pertains to an action or process, not its product. For the purposes of imitation, a reproduction works as well as an original as the source. Alone in her studio, concentrating on the information contained in a low-resolution printed illustration, Riley acted out Seurat's method, his use of discrete strokes or points of relatively saturated hues. Her aim was to comprehend his mental attitude, to think and see as he did. 'I followed his mind—not his method', she says.[8] From mark to mark, colour to colour, she was interpolating the perceptual process of another, looking to what was happening *between* the marks where the colours interacted: 'Imitating a work is simply one of the best ways of internalising its artistic logic.'[9] Her sensitivity to the aura of yellow that arises in *Late Morning I* may have had its initial awakening in her probing of Seurat's sensory mind.

The original *Bridge at Courbevoie* has modest dimensions of 46 x 55 centimetres; its diminutive reproduction, Riley's source, measures 18 x 22 centimetres. As the support for her copy, she chose a canvas beyond both, measuring 76 x 96 centimetres (very close to the proportions of the reproduction, slightly elongated in relation to Seurat's painting). Because she was using a format of greater scale, we might expect Riley to have enlarged proportionately the divisionist marks of her model. Instead, her marks are fewer and disproportionately scaled up (though still decidedly divisionist in character). She effectively magnified the traces of Seurat's visual thinking, the better to inspect them as elements independent of his subject matter. To establish a foundation, she began with a palette of her own choosing, based on the primaries, but heightened in tonal value: pale blues, which she applied first, followed by pale pinks, followed by pale yellows.[10] Concentrating on expanding the range of colour, she added several brilliant points of red in the left foreground area of green grass, even though such colours were not visible in the printed source. Riley knew that spots of red existed elsewhere in Seurat's actual painting, so they were a fair topic of enquiry. The crudeness of the book illustration may have afforded an advantage—leeway for the play of her aesthetic imagination and explorative intuition. Her reds dance rhythmically across the surface, as Seurat's do in places, but this effect is more pronounced in Riley's version, especially in the area of the distant shoreline and foliage. She was anticipating her abstract-art self, counteracting Seurat even as she gathered information from him, extracting bits of colour-play from his painting, reworking them as intensified optical experience. She recognised that every red, every green, every other hue lives its

Bridget Riley *Cosmos* 2016–17. Graphite and acrylic on plaster. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, acquired through the Christchurch Art Gallery Foundation with the generous help of Heather Boock; Ros Burdon; Kate Burtt; Dame Jenny Gibbs; Ann de Lambert and daughters, Sarah, Elizabeth, Diana, and Rachel; Barbara, Lady Stewart; Gabrielle Tasman; Jenny Todd; Nicky Wagner; and the Wellington Women's Group (est. 1984).

transitory life within human perception. With regard to 'pictorial elements' of all kinds, from Seurat's points to her own expansive discs, she later said: 'I have to find out what they can and cannot do.'[11] Not long after making the *Courbevoie* copy, she painted a divisionist invention that she titled *Pink Landscape* (1960). The experience led her to realise that *her* method ought to generate 'the thing seen' rather than 'the thing painted'—the inverse of Seurat's procedure.[12] By manipulating a set of pictorial elements in a certain way (the method), a configuration worth painting would be discovered.

Perhaps my analysis of Riley's early work takes this turn from representational naturalism to inventive human perception because I am aware of her appreciation of Seurat as she expressed it after years of investigating abstract forms. The wonder of Seurat's art, she has said, is its capacity to reveal what 'we cannot *quite* see'. Her succinct statement implies that we perceive only tenuously what an artist fully committed to perception puts directly before our attention and feeling—'an experience just beyond our visual grasp … the *im-perceptible*.'[13] As if to extend Seurat's project, she examines situations in which customary exercises of sensation fail. She deals with features of experience that leave no cultural record, enter no history, and assume no 'meaning'. For an artist, Riley says, 'those fleeting sensations which pass unrecognised by the intellect are just as important as those which become

conscious.'[14] We must increase our perceptual capacity in order to encounter aspects of existence—of the cosmos—that await our acknowledgement. Riley has defined the elusive talent of painting as opening 'a small gap of pure perception … before conceptualisation takes over.'[15] Concepts put a lid on perception and contain it. Exceptional artists are not those who create alternative worlds, but those who awaken a dormant potential within: '[Seurat] arouses the somnambulist element in perception.'[16] At Courbevoie and elsewhere, he took the lid off. By her imitation, Riley did the same.

Seurat remains in Riley's current work: '[A] connection … seems to lie in the touches of colour used in both the Seurat copy and *Cosmos*. It is the separate, discrete nature of these touches that generates spatial movement and depth.'[17] The 'touches' are the circular discs. Their geometric order is predictable since it remains true to its diagonal grid. Their greyed colour, however—off-green, off-violet, off-orange—is extremely interactive and therefore unpredictable, all the more so because of the irregular distribution of the three elements. Chromatic greys (also seen in *Vapour 2)* are inherently unstable, hypersensitive to each other and to the visual environment. Riley sequences the colours intuitively, generating diverse areas of chromatic concentration, contrast, and *détente* (release, relaxation). 'I do not start my work with a destination in mind', she says.[18] The horizontal expanse of *Cosmos*, 460 centimetres wide, necessitates visual scanning in time—cinematically, anamorphically. Even for a single viewer, *Cosmos*, like a multitude of stars and planets viewed through the atmosphere, will never offer precisely the same appearance. Its horizontality inhibits a simple reading of the diagonals as unbroken parallel 'lines' or rows of discs. Nevertheless, analysis reveals a single diagonal sequence that extends monochromatically to sixteen discs of greyed violet and two others of fifteen violets. My senses resist this type of analytical accounting; when I did it, it felt perverse and unnatural. My eye would prefer to jump across the diagonals to left or right or follow this or that diagonal on a whim.[19] Such intuitive viewing is the natural response. However the eye is impelled, it will find its proper rhythm. Riley leads us realise that we learn to see… by seeing.

In a recent conversation with curator Paul Moorhouse, Riley noted that the passages of colour generate 'tensions … pulls between [the elements] which seem to be almost gravitational. The title of the work alludes to this: a sense of enormous space and depth.'[20] The 'pulls' within the gravitational field that Riley has created do not result from a calculation of known forces; these are tensions discovered only in the process of working with the circular elements of colour, distributing and arranging them. The relative uniformity of value on the grey scale of Riley's variants of green, violet and orange intensifies their interaction since no hue dominates the other two (though violet discs seem to outnumber the green and orange). The green hue appears somewhat more chromatic (closer to saturation) than the orange and the violet, because a saturated green has a middle value to begin with, whereas a saturated violet is relatively dark and a saturated orange is relatively light. This is speculation on my part, but I believe that the violet and orange needed to be muted to a greater extent than the green in order to reach a common value in the middle range. Analogous in value, the greyed hues contrast chromatically. These two essential qualities, value and chroma, act divergently within *Cosmos*, which causes the whole to seem simultaneously sonorous and assonant. To describe the effect alternatively, as both harmonious and discordant, would introduce too much of a polarity, given how nuanced the coloristic effect appears. In their positioning, the greyed colours create the tensions and pulls to which Riley refers. With the 'gravitational' field energised, her 'cosmos' acquires phantom depth along with its actual breadth—a passive grid comprised of active irregularities, a cosmic order of idiosyncratic elements.

Installation view of *Bridget Riley*: *Cosmos*, 3 June – 12 November 2017. Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu.

Intuition to Instinct

I have already quoted Riley's remarkable statement: 'Perception constitutes our awareness of what it is to be human.'[21] At its core, art, which addresses perception, is human. We have an instinct for what we call beauty, which we might just as well call 'that which is' or 'all that exists,' because humans are capable of perceiving beauty in the entirety of natural creation and the entirety of human creation. This is so as long as the cultural politics of history do not interfere. I can imagine that our prehistoric ancestors perceived beauty in the beasts that threatened them. They created effigies that we now regard as signs of aesthetic expression, despite their equal status as totems, fetishes, and conveyors of animistic energy.

A few months ago at Riley's London studio, I was viewing a full-scale paper study of *Cosmos*. During our conversation, Riley suggested that I might be interested in the archaeologist Jill Cook's account of Ice Age art—the art that humans created long before they created history. Riley was not asserting a link between shaping stone or incising ivory and arranging coloured discs on a gallery wall; yet she knows, as I know, that there ought to be a link, however obscure the chain. Human expression is human expression, then and now. Viewing Ice Age carving and cave painting, we discern a sensory vocabulary of straight lines and curves, convexities and concavities, darks and lights. We wonder at the work, yet without mystery. The 'practical problems' do not change, Riley has said, though she was referring to the modern Western tradition.[22]

At the time of my visit, Riley's project for Christchurch had not yet received its title, or perhaps I simply failed to ask, instinctively attending to the compelling sensations rather than the possibility of definitive meaning that a title might suggest. Thoughts of the 'cosmos' seem to me to project into the future because, as beneficiaries of modern science, our current sense of the universe is ever expanding, even to the conceptual paradox of multiple universes. But Ice Age beings may well have had a more static sense of cosmic order than we do. Ours becomes destabilised as the progress of science displaces reassuring mythologies (granted, scientific progress constitutes *our* mythology). The title of Cook's study is *Ice Age Art: The Arrival of the Modern Mind*—'modern' in the sense that we recognise the mentality as sufficiently analogous to ours for us to imagine, even to *feel*, its thoughts and motivations. The clearest indication of Ice Age modernity is our genetic ancestors' capacity to create visual representations in material form: 'History does not relate the intended messages [of the forms] but we can nonetheless appreciate the intensity of feeling generated by the act of symbolising aspects of personal, social and religious belief.'[23]

The symbolism to which the publication of the British Museum refers remains a matter of conjecture. How could a 'personal' belief come into being in prehistory? We can only apply concepts and categories of our own to a culture devoid of the kind of cultural history we take for granted. The meaning of Ice Age forms may be a question forever unanswerable. But to 'appreciate the intensity of feeling' is another matter. Something deeper than our pervasive romance with the 'primitive' establishes this emotional connection. We feel secure in referring to linear gesture, animation, proportion, spacing and even rhythm when viewing the images produced by the prehistoric 'modern mind'. Comparing prehistoric forms to modern ones, Cook refers to a structural device of 'disaggregating and abstracting,' in use then as now.[24] Riley's art does not address the validity of such a relationship but speaks obliquely to the possibility of its origin in intuition, even instinct.

'Perception constitutes our awareness of what it is to be human.' A number of art historians—Aloïs Riegl was one, E.H. Gombrich another—have provided perception with a history, for better or worse. They are the exceptions. Our canonical history of world art is hardly one of human vision, sensation, and feeling. The conventional narrative reflects division by religion,

ethnicity, nationality, political orientation, race, gender and social class, all enlisted to explain the character of particular forms of aesthetic expression—the story behind the image. While organising data by cultural division, such a history justifies and even furthers social divisiveness. Riley has never paid much heed to categories, nor to explanations based on them; she chose to learn from Seurat, a representational painter, yet became an abstractionist. Perception was the common bond. 'My work has grown out of my own experiences of looking,' she told Gombrich in 1992, 'and also out of the work that I have seen in the museums and galleries, so I have seen other artists seeing.'[25]

No wonder that prehistoric forms of art recently piqued Riley's interest; they are eminently, undividedly *human*. They embody perception, just as our art does, but as if it were the instinct of the human animal. Riley never suppresses her aesthetic instinct; she enhances it, sharpens it by exercising it in her painting. Her choices—place greyed green here, move greyed violet there, place greyed orange next—are acts of self-educated intuition. Her human instinct—devoid of history—confirms that each choice is right.

Richard Shiff *is Effie Marie Cain Regents Chair in Art at the University of Texas at Austin.* *The exhibition* Bridget Riley: Cosmos *is on display until 12 November 2017.*

Notes

1 Bridget Riley, 'The Spirit of Enquiry: in conversation with Jenny Harper', 2004, in Robert Kudielka (ed.), *The Eye's Mind: Bridget Riley, Collected Writings 1965–2009*, London: Ridinghouse, 2009, p.173.

2 Riley, 'In the Studio: Bridget Riley in conversation with Paul Moorhouse', *B.188*, winter 2017, p.33 (emphasis added).

3 During Riley's career, central figures in the debate were French theorists such as Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault. The question of the human subject continues its long, unsettled history.

4 Before devising the greyed variant of the triad green/violet/orange, Riley had used this grouping in a saturated state in *Gamelan* (1969) and *Orient 1* (1970).

5 Riley, 'Into Colour: in conversation with Robert Kudielka', 1978, *The Eye's Mind*, p.117.

6 R.H. Wilenski, *Seurat*, London: Faber and Faber, 1949, p.15, plate 6.

7 Riley, in conversation with the author, London, 17 March 2017.

8 Riley, 'In the Studio: Bridget Riley in conversation with Paul Moorhouse', p.33.

9 Riley, 'The Spirit of Enquiry: in conversation with Jenny Harper,' *The Eye's Mind*, p.174.

10 Riley, in conversation with the author, London, 17 March 2017.

11 Riley, 'Encountering Seurat: Bridget Riley in conversation with Éric de Chassey, July 2015,' in Karen Serres and Barnaby Wright, Bridget Riley: Learning from Seurat, London: Ridinghouse, 2015, p.31.

12 Riley, 'Seurat as Mentor', *The Eye's Mind*, p.66.

13 Riley, 'The Artist's Eye: Seurat,' *The Eye's Mind*, p.267 (original emphasis).

14 Ibid., p.272–3 (original emphasis).

15 Riley, in conversation with the author, London, 3 March 2004.

16 Riley, 'The Artist's Eye: Seurat,' *The Eye's Mind*, p.273.

17 Riley, 'In the Studio: Bridget Riley in conversation with Paul Moorhouse', p.33.

18 Ibid.

19 Similar tensions between diagonal and horizontal movement arise at a much smaller scale in Riley's *Bagatelle* prints (2015).

20 Riley, 'In the Studio: Bridget Riley in conversation with Paul Moorhouse', p.29.

21 Ibid., p.33.

22 Riley, 'The Spirit of Enquiry: in conversation with Jenny Harper', *The Eye's Mind*, p.173.

23 Neil MacGregor, 'Director's Foreword', in Jill Cook, *Ice Age Art: The Arrival of the Modern Mind*, London: British Museum Press, 2013, p.7.

24 Cook, *Ice Age Art*, p.73.

25 Bridget Riley, 'Perception and the Use of Colour: Talking to E.H. Gombrich,' in Robert Kudielka (ed.), *Dialogues on Art*, London: Zwemmer, 1995, p.33.

MATISSE'S JAZZ
A TURNING POINT

Henri Matisse's *Jazz* is a book that has captivated art lovers and bibliophiles around the world. But it is unlike any other artist's book that Matisse produced. Designed as an album of colourful prints using his emerging découpage cut-out technique, he fashioned his images on the colour and movement of the circus and created them long before he authored the accompanying text. Abandoning the printed font, he wrote out every word of his typescript by hand. Created during World War 2, *Jazz* had a phenomenal impact when Greek born publisher Stratis Eleftheriades, professionally known as Tériade, launched it in 1947. When analysed through the prism of the artist's books he produced during the war, Matisse emerges as a silent activist against the German Occupation of France.[1]

The origins of *Jazz*, however, date back long before World War 2. In August 1939, using multicoloured paper cut-outs, Matisse created *Symphonie Chromatique* as a cover for the wartime issue of Tériade's art magazine, *Verve: La Nature de la France*. He fled Paris from the invading Germans soon after and had hardly settled into his residence in Nice when Tériade approached him for a special project. The publisher recognised the importance of *Symphonie Chromatique* and wanted to devote a special edition of *Verve* to the colour cut-out technique.[2]

Matisse was doubtful. He did not believe his colour images could be accurately reproduced, and resisted the proposal for over two years. Adding to his doubts was his increasing frailty; he was slowly recovering after two life-and-death operations for cancer and did not think he had the energy for such a challenging task.[3] But the publisher's gentle persistence and reassurance eventually won through.

It was a historic meeting when on 1 June 1943, Matisse showed Tériade his first cut-out designs for *Verve*. There were four in all—one pair of images named *The Clown*, and another pair named *The Toboggan*. Excited by this development, Tériade proposed that they use one of the *Clown* images as the front cover of *Verve* and the other in a new project—an album, originally called *Cirque*, that later became the book *Jazz*. Likewise, the *Toboggan* images became the back cover in *Verve* and the final image in *Jazz*. Tériade later stated 'The *Jazz* cycle was born.'[4]

Yet Matisse achieved this aesthetic leap by starting his journey in little steps, all the while embracing images that he knew. *The Clown* and *The Toboggan* have their origins in a mural called *Dance* that the Barnes Foundation commissioned in 1931–3. Using the central panel of *Dance* as a motif, Matisse designed a curtain, called *Le Danseur*, for the ballet *L'Étrange Farandole*. From *Le Danseur* came *The Clown* and *The Toboggan*.

Matisse commenced *Jazz* during a period of turmoil. He was still suffering the effects of his illness; his estranged wife Amélie, along with his daughter Marguerite and son Jean, had joined the French Resistance; and his new home town was bombed on 30 June 1943 while he was working on *Jazz*, causing him to flee once again, this time to Vence. Consequently, *Jazz* has a political dimension and its colourful and violent images are replete with subtle patriotic codes that signify aggression, danger and the oppression of the French people.

Using scissors, Matisse cut his shapes from hand-coloured paper, while his assistant Lydia Delectorskaya would pin the cut-outs on the wall, repositioning them until the desired balance of form and colour was achieved. The finished composition was used to create the stencil for hand-printing using a technique called *pochoir*.[5] Matisse had full control of *Jazz*: he conceptualised the pictorial themes, created the visual structure, designed the typographical layout. He sequenced the text and images not on the date of creation or on aesthetic themes, but on his own judgement of visual balance. His images spill across the whole page and omit the pictorial borders many artists prefer for their images.

Perhaps the best-known image in *Jazz* is that of *Icarus*. In the fable of Icarus, he escapes from captivity with waxed wings, but flies too close to the sun—the wings melt causing him to fall through the stars to his death. In *Jazz*, *Icarus* is disguised as a trapeze artist, flying through the air with circus spotlights in the background. But Matisse's coded transmutation of *Icarus* is the Nazi execution of the resistance parachutist, guns flashing as bullets pierce the heart of the falling limp body.[6] It is also possible that *Icarus* represents Matisse's fears for his daughter.

The Swimmer in the Tank is another Icarus-like image—supposedly a circus diver in a tank, it can be interpreted as a similar wartime protest, a representation of a body floating in the river. Matisse presents the ringmaster, *Monsieur Loyal*, as an acknowledgement of the exiled leader of Free France, General Charles de Gaulle, wearing his signature cap and with his gold uniform buttons arranged along either side of the image.[7] In contrast, the *Sword Swallower*, a picture of an unattractive individual with three swords almost completely immersed in his mouth causing the neck to bulge, is a reference to the Nazi occupiers. Matisse claimed that he made


un moment
de libres.
Ne devrait-on
pas faire ac-
complir un
grand voyage
en avion aux
jeunes gens
ayant terminé
leurs études.
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the head small, 'because a sword swallower is not generally a refined person.'[8]

Another image of protest asserted in this paper is *The Knife Thrower*. The knife thrower on the left, who represents the German occupiers, has a knife in hand aiming at the woman on the right. The woman, Marianne, a historic symbol of France, raises her arms up high with her heart shown as the target. *The Wolf*, a most unlikely circus animal, is a menacing-looking creature with a red eye and references the Gestapo.[9]

After he completed the series, Matisse found the glare from his bright images too overpowering and wanted to give his eyes a rest as he viewed them. He hit on the idea of inserting pages of his own large black handwriting between the colourful pictures as a visual pause.[10] He insisted that his writing was not to explain or interpret the images but formed a visual accompaniment. Tériade published *Jazz* with twenty cut-out images to almost universal praise. But Matisse did not think that the reproduced images showed the dynamism of his original cut-outs.[11]

After *Jazz*, Matisse never again used cut-outs in another artist's book, preferring instead to return to his line drawings. However, it was while he worked on *Jazz* that he realised that his découpage works could develop as a different art form. *Jazz* represented a turning point for Matisse and, inspired by its potential, he went on to create the monumental découpage images that were to win him so much acclaim throughout the world.

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Notes

1 This paper is based on chapter five of the author's PhD thesis, 'Resistance and Resurgence: The Cultural and Political Dynamic of the Livre D'artiste and the German Occupation of France', University of New South Wales, 2016.

2 Hanne Finsen, *Matisse: A Second Life*, Paris: Hazan, 2005, p.198.

3 Tériade to Matisse, 31 August 1940, in Rebecca A. Rabinow, 'The Legacy of La Rue Férou: 'Livres D'artiste' Created for Tériade by Rouault, Bonnard, Matisse, Léger, Le Corbusier, Chagall, Giacometti, and Miró', PhD diss., New York University, 1995, p.86.

4 Casimiro Di Crescenzo, *Matisse and Tériade: Collaborative Works by the Artist and Art Publisher from Verve (1937–1960); Lettres Portugaises, 1946*, New York: Yoshii Gallery, 1997, p.58.

5 Karl D. Buchberg, Marcus Gross and Stephan Lohrengel, 'Materials and Techniques', in Karl D Buchberg (ed.) et al., *Henri Matisse: The Cut-Outs*, London: Tate Publishing, 2014, p.259–63.

6 Aragon, *Henri Matisse: A Novel; Volume 2*, trans. Jean Stewart, London: Collins, 1972, p.35.

7 Jack D. Flam, 'Jazz', in Jack Cowart (ed.), *Henri Matisse; Paper Cut-Outs*, St. Louis: St. Louis Art Museum 1977, pp.44 and 105. The original Monsieur Loyal was inspired by Joseph-Léopold Loyal, the owner and ringmaster of the Cirque de l'Impératrice and Cirque Napoléon during the Second Empire and the patriarch of a circus dynasty.

8 Rabinow, p.111.

9 Ibid.

10 Finsen, p.200.

11 'Matisse to Rouveyre, December 1947', in Claude Duthuit, *Henri Matisse: Catalogue Raisonné Des Ouvrages Illustrés*, Paris: Duthuit, 1988, p.446.

Opposite above: Henri Matisse *The knife thrower, from the illustrated book Jazz* 1947. Colour stencil. Art Gallery of New South Wales, Margaret Hannah Olley Art Trust 2014. Photo: AGNSW. © Succession H. Matisse. Licensed by Viscopy, Sydney 151.2014.15
Opposite below: Henri Matisse *Icarus, from the illustrated book Jazz* 1947. Colour stencil. Art Gallery of New South Wales, Margaret Hannah Olley Art Trust 2014. Photo: AGNSW. © Succession H. Matisse. Licensed by Viscopy, Sydney 151.2014.15

BARBARA BROOKE
THE WOMAN BEHIND ASCENT

The 1960s brought television, youth culture, jet aircraft and The Beatles to New Zealand. It also saw the emergence of the professional contemporary artist. Dealer galleries were on the rise across the country, devoted to the promotion and sale of contemporary artists' work, particularly through solo shows, and with them came the possibility of an acknowledged career with the objective of full-time practice. Artists were producing work with a general sense of confidence and this lively art community needed to be documented.

In 1965 Christchurch's Caxton Press was approached by the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council (now Creative New Zealand), who asserted that New Zealand needed an arts journal.[1] A quarterly publication was deemed ideal—the kind of document found on coffee-tables in private lounges and offices. The periodical that would eventually become *Ascent: A Journal of the Visual Arts in New Zealand* was part of a comprehensive plan by central government to nurture contemporary art practice in New Zealand. The goal was to increase the awareness of, and demand for, New Zealand art both here and overseas.[2]

Enter Barbara Brooke—a woman deserving of our attention when it comes to recalling those who anticipated and worked for the needs of New Zealand artists. Barbara was born in 1925 and grew up in the Christchurch suburb of Belfast, where her parents Alexander and Mary Anne Brown owned a grocery store. In 1945 she married André Brooke, a modernist artist and self-taught architect from Hungary. Together Barbara and André opened the first contemporary art dealer gallery in Christchurch in 1959—Gallery 91. Barbara's passionate support for contemporary New Zealand art never left her, and she went on to sustain a twenty-year career as an arts advocate.

In 1966 Brooke was employed part-time at Caxton as editor of the *New Zealand Local Government Magazine*, but her role became full-time when she and Leo Bensemann launched *Ascent* in 1967. They provided subscribers with knowledgeable, informative and, importantly, critical art writing; high-quality reproductions of artworks were coupled with stylish typography and design. *Ascent* ran for just five issues, being published between 1967 and 1969 only.

There were other arts periodicals, such as the Auckland City Art Gallery's *The Gallery Quarterly* and *Arts and Community*, published by Harland Baker Publishing; in the late 1960s *The Gallery Quarterly* had a plain format, generally with one informative article, and *Arts and Community* covered the arts broadly with a community focus—it was more of a national 'newsletter' for the arts.[3] *Ascent* also differed from Caxton's literary magazine, *Landfall*: it was a larger publication, with a new layout, new typeface, and the added aesthetic enhancement of images on high-quality paper—some of which were in colour.

Ascent was an early attempt to record a functioning national art community, providing context so that artists no longer practised in a vacuum. As Peter Tomory, former director of the Auckland City Art Gallery, noted in 1969, in New Zealand 'everyone interested in the arts knows everyone interested in the arts'.[4] This interconnected nature of the New Zealand art community was cleverly utilised and then reported on by Brooke and Bensemann.

The absence of professional arts criticism and commentary in the country had been described by Tomory as obstructing the development of artists' practice. In 1958 he wrote: 'Serious art can flourish only if there is strong, informed criticism to sweep away the dross and explore what is good.'[5] *Ascent* was

Left: *Ascent: A Journal of the Arts in New Zealand*, vol.1, no.1, November 1967, The Caxton Press, Christchurch
Right: *Ascent: A Journal of the Arts in New Zealand*, vol.1, no.3, April 1969, The Caxton Press, Christchurch

an attempt to rectify this. It was an elitist academic magazine of its time and Brooke and Bensemann carefully selected their contributors. Before the first issue was published Bensemann confided in his overseer Charles Brasch: 'I may be foolish in imagining it's possible to make the issue *visually* sound—but at the same time I must restrict it in view of costs involved … God only knows what sort of response I'd get for articles—it makes me tremble.'[6] The writers chosen to fill the columns of *Ascent* included academics, current and former public gallery directors, artists, poets and playwrights.

Brooke's determination to support contemporary New Zealand artists is made all the more remarkable when seen in context of the decade in which Ascent was published. The year Brooke was employed at Caxton, just thirteen per cent of New Zealand women held positions that were then considered 'new for females'.[7] As the first female editor at Caxton[8] she broke new ground in a working environment that was male dominated and likely to be chauvinistic.[9]

Ascent was propelled by Brooke's leadership and expertise. She was the perfect person to edit a New Zealand art magazine: she was already travelling for Caxton with the local government magazine, and her previous roles meant she had connections with artists throughout New Zealand, and knowledge of contemporary art and its practice. *Ascent's* editorial was

Patrick Hanly's *Pacific Icons*

GORDON H. BROWN

PATRICK HANLY'S most recently completed series of paintings have the unifying title *Pacific Icons*. If a starting point can be designated then the series originated from the exhibition of Sengai scroll paintings on view in the Auckland City Art Gallery during May and June, 1966. While Hanly was immediately impressed with Sengai's qualities as an artist, the after-image established in his thoughts took some time to assert itself before suggesting ideas that could possibly be relevent to his own painting and environment. Almost a month passed from the time the exhibition left Auckland until Hanly was prompted to record in his journal (kept to jot down his own progress and ideas on painting) that 'Sengai is quite superbly normal'.

To Hanly each scroll by Sengai was a painting complete within itself where Sengai had discovered for himself a philosophical and artistic certainty which lay at the calm centre of a roaring cyclone: a cyclone seething with discontent and doubt. Although Hanly admired the humanity distilled in Sengai's outlook on the world, the aspect that interested him more was the artistic means whereby this was achieved. In particular came the realization that paintings of real consequence could be produced through using very simple imagery, and where any ambiguity could be avoided by stripping the images of all but their barest essentials.

Looking back on the Sengai exhibition with the *Pacific Icons* in mind, the scrolls that seem to have asserted a direct influence on Hanly, irrespective of whether or not he was conscious of this, were *The Moon*, *Mount Fiji*, *The Spoon* and most of all *The Universe*, a picture created out of a circle, a triangle and a square, whose very simplicity went a long way towards supplying Hanly with his initial theme. In connection with the title of the series Hanly was aware that Sengai had also been an artist living in a country bordering the Pacific; but to enlarge upon this simple fact by attaching to it a greater regional significance would be misleading.

If Sengai supplied the way into the *Pacific Icons*, it would be incorrect, however, to give the impression that these works were painted in isolation from his previous work. While Hanly had tried to break away from the recognizable human element found in his

16

NEW ORDER 29, PART 2, PACIFIC 1963. Oil, 63½ x 41½ins.

17

Ascent: A Journal of the Arts in New Zealand, vol.1, no.3, April 1969, The Caxton Press, Christchurch

primarily Brooke's responsibility and her contributions were complemented by Bensemann's own knowledge of New Zealand art, typography and design.

Brooke's devotion to contemporary artists was fundamental for their exposure in *Ascent*. She included artists that Bensemann was reluctant to profile—he was not a supporter of New Zealand modernism. His disdain is captured in a letter to Brooke in the late 1970s: 'the McDougall [Art Gallery] is stuffed full of … Hotere, who must be showing at least 500 large [paintings] of crosses … covered with crudely stencilled messages … They are boringly repetitive.' [10] Equally, Bensemann was known for having little time for Tomory.[11] So it is an illustration of the esteem in which Brooke was held by her colleagues that Tomory still wrote for *Ascent* and Ralph Hotere's work featured on the cover of *Ascent* no.3—which also included a review of his recent exhibition. Indeed, alongside the work of Hotere, *Ascent* contained non-figurative artworks by Shay Docking, John Drawbridge, Roy Good, Patrick Hanly, Colin McCahon, Milan Mrkusich and Gordon Walters.

Sales, however, were slow, and promises for funding from the Arts Council unfulfilled. Publishing *Ascent* was a struggle. Brooke helped meet costs with a creative idea that ensured the journal could afford coloured images. She wrote to public art galleries throughout the country asking for sponsorship of colour blocks in return for printing 200 gift cards of the image for the sponsor's own use.

Indeed, Brooke's innovation sparked support from the Robert McDougall's early director, William Baverstock—and while his support was not surprising, the reproduction he agreed to sponsor was. In the late 1940s Baverstock had been a key figure in the Canterbury Society of Arts' decision not to purchase Frances Hodgkins's *Pleasure Garden* (1933). It was a conservative rejection of modernism that was only overruled in 1951 when the watercolour was finally accepted into the McDougall's collection. Astonishingly, in a letter dated days after his farewell as director, Baverstock consented to sponsor a reproduction of the same painting and have the colour cards produced.[12] This decision possibly marked a change of heart on his retirement, perhaps prompted by the last exhibition he oversaw as director—*The Origins of Frances Hodgkins* in 1969.[13]

Pleasure Garden featured in the fifth and final issue of *Ascent*, which was a tribute to the centennial of Hodgkins's birth, published in 1969. Brooke's former colleague Robin Alborn recalled: 'the Queen Elizabeth Arts Council ... had their feathers clipped on spending ... *Ascent* and *New Zealand Local Government* ... we pulled the rug on it all about the same time.' [14] The loss of such an art magazine left a void, but led the way for magazines such as the *Bulletin of New Zealand Art History* (later the *Journal of New Zealand Art History*) which began in 1972, and *Art New Zealand*, which was launched in 1976.

Brooke devoted her life to supporting New Zealand's contemporary artists. When it was still early for women to hold managerial positions, Brooke had already managed a dealer gallery and an Arts Society. She was tireless in her efforts. In addition to opening Gallery 91 and her work with the Canterbury Society of Arts and the Caxton Press, she started the first craft market in Christchurch—the Mollett Street Market—with three friends in the early 1970s,[15] then she opened the Brooke Gifford Gallery with Judith Gifford in 1975. Brooke lost her life to cancer only five years later. Bensemann wrote to her mother: 'I only hope that the respect and high regard in which she was held by the art community throughout New Zealand may be of some comfort to you. ... [P]eople of her ability and brilliant personality are rare indeed.'[16]

Petrena Fishburn *is collection curator at the Aigantighe Art Gallery. She has an MA in Art History and has worked cataloguing the collections of the A.A. Deans Trust and Philip and Lee Trusttum.*

Notes

1 Noel Waite, 'Adventure and Art: Literature Publishing in Christchurch, 1934–95', unpublished PhD thesis, Christchurch: University of Canterbury, 1996, p.111.

2 Hamish Keith, *Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand Policy Discussion Paper*, Wellington: Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council, 1978, pp.7–9.

3 *Ascent* was not the first New Zealand art magazine. Approximately twenty years earlier Harry H. Tombs had published *Arts in New Zealand* or *The Arts in New Zealand* and the *Arts Year Book*. Also, it needs to be noted that the Robert McDougall Art Gallery did not publish *Survey* until Brian Muir was director in 1971.

4 Peter Tomory, 'New Zealand Art', *Landfall* 23, no.2, June 1969, p.187.

5 Peter Tomory, 'Looking at Art in New Zealand', *Landfall* 12, no.2, June 1958, p.165.

6 Letter to Charles Brasch from Bensemann, 22 February 1967, cited in Peter Simpson, *Fantastica: The World of Leo Bensemann*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2011, p.121.

7 Statistics from the 1966 Census, cited in L. Kennedy, 'Women in Paid Employment,' *The Changing Role of Women*, Hamilton: Waikato Branch of Society of Research on Women in NZ, 1969, pp.23–4.

8 Jenny Gunby was editor of *Learning. Educating Children: A Journal for Parents*, published by Caxton from 1969.

9 Peter Simpson, interview with the author, 10 June 2013.

10 Letter to Brooke from Bensemann, 6 July 1979. Reproduced with the kind permission of Cathy Harrington for the Bensemann Estate.

11 Simpson, interview, 2013.

12 Letter to the editors of *Ascent* from William Baverstock, 24 August 1969. MB198, Barbara Brooke Papers, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury, box 6, ref. no.0160.

13 Anna Crighton, *English, Colonial, Modern and Maori: The Changing Faces of the Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch, New Zealand, 1932–2002*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014, pp.89 and 101.

14 Robin Alborn, interview with the author, 23 April 2013.

15 Brooke established the Mollett Street Market with Judith Gifford, Mary Beaven and Lavinia Cruickshank.

16 Letter to Mary Anne Brown from Bensemann, 24 March 1980. Reproduced with the kind permission of Cathy Harrington for the Bensemann Estate.

Len Lye's Learning Curve

One of the most dramatic aspects of the career of Len Lye (who was born in Christchurch in 1901 and died in Warwick, New York, in 1980) was his youthful search for information about the modernist revolution in art. This occurred throughout the early 1920s, when New Zealand was still (in Peter Tomory's words) 'a cultural wasteland' and (in Eric McCormick's) a 'backwater of nineteenth-century civilisation.'[1]

Lye came from a less than privileged background and had left school at thirteen because his family needed him to get a job. Outside of work hours, he had shown an amazing artistic talent and flair for self-education, learning to make maximum use of public libraries and museums in Wellington, Auckland and Christchurch. Once rumours of Parisian modernism reached him, he proceeded to make himself better informed than any other New Zealander, extracting all the fragments of information he could squeeze from libraries—even the mocking reviews being published in English art magazines. Two of Lye's notebooks and a few works of art have survived from the early 1920s, and they are extremely valuable as evidence that he, alone in New Zealand at the time, was developing an avant-garde aesthetic. He was studying a range of contemporary European artists, together with Māori, Aboriginal and African traditions of indigenous art. The notebooks in particular provide us with a detailed inside look at Lye's process of discovery.

New Zealand had already produced two important modernists, the writer Katherine Mansfield and the painter Frances Hodgkins, but both had left for England—Mansfield in 1908 and Hodgkins in 1913. Lye was to become more radical than either of them. Modernism was still so new that many artists overseas were engaged in a similar quest for knowledge. To quote from an American account of the period: 'If somebody had a French magazine with a picture of Picasso's in it, *that* was news. It was big stuff. … There was … a sense of curiosity, of wonder and excitement. … [Artists] were aware of a more mysterious world out there.'[2] In New Zealand, that sense of mystery persisted; certainly the art and literature taught at my school stopped well short of the twentieth century and as late as 1956 I remember making the same excited discoveries. That was the year the first Henry Moore exhibition reached Auckland, and the Mayor, J.H. Luxford, told the *Herald*: 'I have never seen the art gallery desecrated by such a disgusting sight. … These figures, offending against all known anatomy, to me were repulsive.'[3] (Incidentally, Moore had exhibited with Lye in London between 1928 and 1935.)

Lye's first breakthrough, made while living in Wellington around 1920, had been the idea that art had yet to fully explore movement. The intensity of his search to develop original forms of art is hard to explain, except that his early years had made him highly independent, with a maverick attitude to convention. Added to this, his labouring jobs had trained him physically, which was unusual for an intellectual artist; Lye came to see movement in exceptionally kinaesthetic terms.

Now he had his idea, what imagery could 'carry the motion'? He experimented with 'choreographic marks' and 'spaghetti-looking sketches', but viewers of his drawings were baffled.[4] Then around 1922 he discovered modernism. Ezra Pound's 1916 book

ensure the religious need, the preservation of the unsatisfied longing for the father. The father appears twice in early sacrifical scene, once as god & then as the totem animal. In further development the animal loses sacredness, & the sacrifice loses its relation to the celebration of the totem; the rite becomes a simple rite to the deity. God himself is now so exalted above man, that he can only be communicated to ~~by~~ through an intermediary. At the same time the social order produces godlike kings who transfer the patriarchal system to the state, the first phases in the dominations of the two new substitutive formations for the father, those of gods and kings, plainly show the most energetic expression of that ambivalence which is characteristic of religion. In the further development of religions these two inciting factors, (the sons sense of guilt and his defiance) were never extinguished. The ceremony of human sacrifice later substituted by an inanimate representation (usually a doll.) ...

~~The~~ endeavour of the son to put himself in place of the father god, appeared with greater and greater distinctiveness. with the introduction of agriculture the importance of the son in the patriarchal family increased. He was emboldened to give new expression to his incestuous libido

which found symbolic representation in laboring over mother earth. There came into existence figures of Gods, Attis, Adonis, Tammuz, & others, spirits of vegetables as well as youthful divinities who enjoyed the favors of maternal deities and committed incest with the mother in defiance of the father. But the sense of guilt which was not allayed in these creations was expressed in myths, wherein the youthful lovers of the maternal goddesses were visited with short life or punishment by castration, & ~~The lamentation~~ through the wrath of the father god appearing in animal form. Adonis was killed by the boar, the sacred animal of Aphrodite; Attis, the lover of Kybele, died of castration: the lamentation for these gods & the joy at their ressurection was destined to survive long in the ritual of a divine son.

When christianity began to make itself felt in the ancient world it competed with the religion of the Mithras (the Persian God) (who relieved his ~~sons~~ brothers from any sense of complicity by slaying the steers, (his father)) Christ took another way of allaying this sense of guilt. He sacrificied his own life, and thereby relieved the brothers of primal sin. The theory of primal sin is of Orphic origin; it was preserved in

Len Lye *Totem and Taboo* sketchbook c.1924. Ink and watercolour on paper.
Len Lye Foundation Collection and Archive, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery/Len Lye Centre

Gaudier-Brzeska, about the French sculptor killed in World War I, provided a compendium of information about 'Cubism, Expressionism, everything that was going on'.[5] Futurism was dismissed by Pound as merely a superficial, impressionist version of movement. Despite its small print-run, this book had a huge influence on young artists of the time, including Moore. Lye was energised by the belief that somewhere in modernism he'd find what he needed—a new approach to representation. In this pre-Xerox era, he copied Gaudier-Brzeska's manifesto by hand into his notebook.

The French sculptor's artistic dialogue with 'primitive' work, which we now call tribal or indigenous art, reinforced Lye's already growing interest in this area. In his first encounter with such art, he immediately felt excited: 'I knew I was not a chip off the Western art block, I knew it in my bones.'[6] The modernists saw the 'primitive' in positive terms, contrasted with Victorian art which they saw as an exhausted dead-end. Lye studied indigenous art in museums and on occasional visits to Māori communities. During an earlier trip to Christchurch in 1922, he had explored the Canterbury Museum. He had not yet begun his notebook, but this was a particularly important year in the shaping of his ideas.[7] Later he spent time in the Auckland Museum, the Museum of New Zealand in Wellington and—during two periods in Sydney in 1923 and 1925—the Australian Museum. When he started his notebooks, he filled them with drawings of the Māori, Aboriginal, Pacific and African work on display. Although he constantly juxtaposed and compared tribal styles, he also studied their particular contexts and ritual meanings. When I showed Lye's notebooks to Dr Roger Neich, an expert on Māori and Pacific art, he was greatly impressed by how precisely Lye had depicted the carvings. Ironically, this exactness showed how thoroughly Lye had mastered the traditional drawing methods he was about to abandon in becoming a modernist.[8] He wanted first to pay his dues, seeking to gain a deep 'aesthetic feeling' for tribal traditions. As far as I know, he was the first Pākehā artist to treat Māori carving in such a serious, intrinsic way. Earlier painters, including Hodgkins, had been drawn to Māori subjects but had represented them in a European manner. During several years in Australia, Lye had also sought to immerse himself in the sign systems of Aboriginal art and he appears to have been equally ahead of his time as a non-Aboriginal artist in taking that tradition seriously.[9]

The main works of art Lye produced during the 1920s—*Tiki* (1922), *Unit* (1925), *Polynesian Connection* (1928–9) and *Tusalava* (1929)—are not merely imitations of Māori or Aboriginal art because they are also in dialogue with the modernist tradition, with Gaudier-Brzeska in the case of *Tiki*, Brâncuși in the case of *Unit* and German abstract films in the case of *Tusalava*.[10] Art historians today would describe Lye's works as examples of 'modernist primitivism' and certainly they share aspects of the genre, but his approach was different from that of European artists. The Cubists and Surrealists were seldom interested in the country of origin or context of indigenous art; Lye was a thorough researcher. For example, he spent eight months living in a village in Samoa, until he was deported by the racist colonial administration.[11] Politically aware, he eschewed the ugly, Gauguin-esque behaviour that also sometimes went with European primitivism.

Lye's notebooks celebrated contemporary art such as Mikhail Larionov's costumes for Ballets Russes and Fernand Léger's primitivist costumes for the 1923 Ballets Suédois production of *La Création du Monde* (already by 1924 Lye knew all about them). His art and notebooks are unique in offering evidence that a New Zealand artist was seriously engaged with modernism at this time. Critics have also seen them as a re-discovered chapter in Australian art history.[12] The range of sources contained in the notebooks reminds us that turn-of-the-century modernism was a complex cluster of interests. Sigmund Freud and psychoanalysis were part of the package, and Lye was one of the first local readers of the 1918 translation of *Totem and Taboo*, which applied Freud's theory of the

unconscious to Māori, Aboriginal and other cultures. Lye was sceptical but copied many pages into his first notebook. Now he had discovered three alternative sources of imagery—modern art, indigenous art and the unconscious mind.

The drawing style in the second notebook (1925?) is noticeably freer, and halfway through there is an amazing switch of subject to machine shapes, which Lye continues to compare with modernist and indigenous forms.[13] Machinery was a strong modernist interest, and around 1924 Lye had become wildly excited by a picture of Lyubov Popova's kinetic machine, a stage set for a 1922 Meyerhold Theatre production in Moscow. Lye had also become fascinated by the photograph of a 'perpetual motion machine' in Edwin J. Kempf's 1921 book *Psychotherapy*.[14] Kempf saw this construction as a 'copulation fetish', but to Lye it was a model for kinetic sculpture. Later, his contributions to the 1928 Seven and Five Society exhibition in London would be examples of 'mechanised art', and the Auckland newspaper *The Sun* would publish a photo of this shocking work, describing Lye as a 'Futurist New Zealander'.[15] As yet, however, his mechanical sculptures did not literally move.

For Lye, the elements in his notebooks—modernism, machines, indigenous art, the unconscious (or 'Old Brain') and movement—were inter-related and would remain lifelong interests.

Roger Horrocks *is a poet and film-maker. He worked as Len Lye's assistant during the last year of his life, and has written extensively on Lye, including* Len Lye: A Biography *(2001). He is a professor emeritus of the University of Auckland and a trustee of the Len Lye Foundation.* Len Lye: Stopped Short By Wonder *is on display from 5 August until 26 November 2017.*

Notes

1 Quoted in Hamish Keith, *The Big Picture: A History of New Zealand Art from 1642*, Auckland: Godwit, 2007, p.134.

2 Quoted in Bernard Rosenberg and Norris Fliegel, *The Vanguard Artist: Portrait and Self-Portrait*, Chicago: Quadrangle, 1965, p.60.

3 *New Zealand Herald*, 19 September 1956. Also see Jim and Mary Barr, *When Art Hits the Headlines*, Wellington: National Art Gallery, 1987, p.21, and Mark Stocker, '"The best thing ever seen in New Zealand": The Henry Moore Exhibition of 1956–57', in *Sculpture Journal*, vol.16, no.1, 2007, pp.74–89.

4 See Roger Horrocks (ed.), *Zizz! The Life and Art of Len Lye in his Own Words*, Wellington: Awa Press/Govett-Brewster Art Gallery/Len Lye Centre, 2015, pp.20–2; or Roger Horrocks, *Len Lye: A Biography*, Auckland: AUP, 2001, pp.27–9.

5 Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska*, London, Faber and Faber, 1916. Lye's comment is quoted in Anne Kirker, 'The Early Years in London', *Art New Zealand* 17, 1980, p.50.

6 'Note: For *S[omewhat] A[utobiographically]*, re: my old brain imagery,' unpublished ms., Lye Foundation Collection.

7 See *Len Lye: A Biography,* chapter 6.

8 Thanks to his traditional drawing skills, in 1922 Lye won first prize in two categories of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts annual competition. Also in that year, he worked as an illustrator for the *Christchurch Sun* newspaper. Making illustrations continued to be his bread-and-butter job for several more years.

9 Margaret Preston has sometimes been described as the first non-Indigenous Australian artist to use Aboriginal motifs in her work. She began doing so in the 1920s.

10 The date of *Tiki* is usually given as 1922, but I believe a case can be made for 1924.

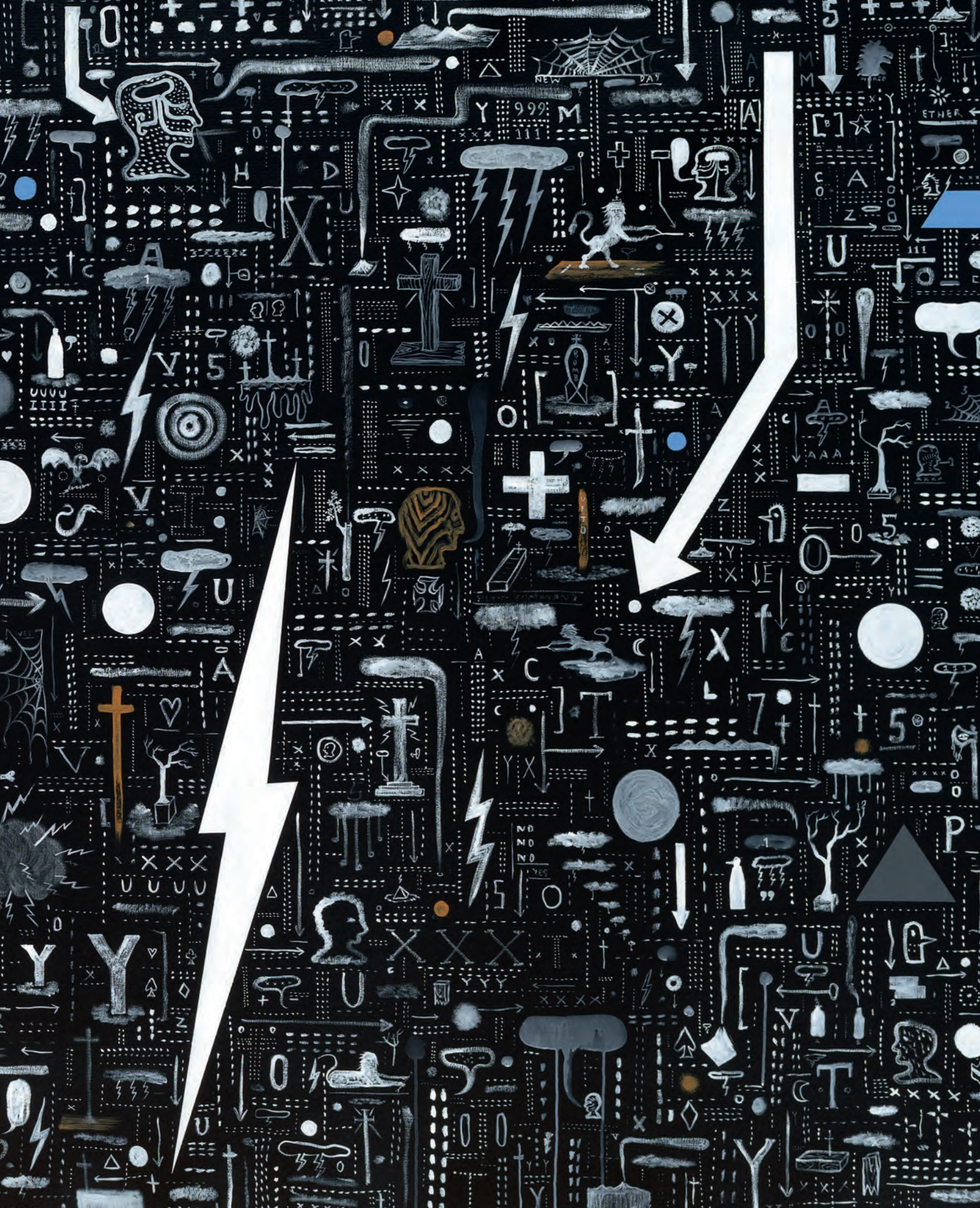
11 *Agiaagiā*, a 2013 exhibition at the Mangere Art Centre, offered some thoughtful Samoan and Māori perspectives on Lye's work.

12 See, for example, Ann Stephen's essay 'The Oceanic Primitivism of Len Lye's Animation *Tusalava* (1929)', *Art History,* vol.40, no.3, June 2017, pp.612–33.

13 There exist later notebooks from Lye's London years. There may also have been earlier notebooks which were lost during Lye's moves from New Zealand to Australia, Samoa, England and finally the USA. His first kinetic sculpture, made in Australia around 1925, is missing. I tracked down *Unit* and some early drawings in Kincumber, Australia, where they were being stored (under a bed) by Lye's old friend Jack Ellitt, who kindly agreed to donate them to the Foundation collection.

14 Edwin J. Kempf, *Psychotherapy*, St Louis: C.V. Mosby, 1921, pages 423–31. The machine is illustrated on p.428. Kempf is mentioned in Lye's notebook in a different context.

15 'Futurist New Zealander,' *The Sun,* Auckland, 19 May 1928.


NEW DAY
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YOUR HOTEL BRAIN

We recently opened a new collection-based exhibition, *Your Hotel Brain*. Curated by Lara Strongman, it focuses on the cohort of New Zealand artists who came to national—and in some cases international—prominence in the 1990s. The title of the exhibition is a phrase drawn from Don DeLillo's epic novel, *Underworld*, published in 1997. It gestures towards the way that pieces of information float through your mind, checking in and out, everything demanding attention, everything happening all at once—a metaphor for postmodernism in the 1990s and for the increasing slippage of context in the digital era. The 1990s were a time of great social and cultural change in Aotearoa New Zealand, set against a broader backdrop of globalisation and the rise of digital technologies. Artists, as ever, registered these cultural shifts early. We asked a number of people who were working in the arts at the time to recall their experiences of the 1990s.

Tony de Lautour *Underworld 2* (detail) 2006. Acrylic on unstretched canvas. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased by the Friends of Christchurch Art Gallery 2007

Tessa Laird

Lecturer in critical and theoretical studies at the Victorian College of the Arts

Over the past few years I've been asked to comment on the nineties numerous times, and it always unnerves me. I hear 'the nineties' glibly cited by art students who were barely out of nappies by Y2K, as though that decade's mere utterance conjured a specific aesthetic. I understand this desire for casual connaissance of eras; I spent the entire eighties trying to relive the sixties and seventies, even though I wasn't around for the former and was a rather green observer of the latter. But the nineties? How could that varied decade become fodder for ironic categorisation or arch summation?

What I remember most about the nineties artworld in Auckland was a long overdue efflorescence of diversity. A new generation of Māori artists were making work that was political and intellectual, from Lisa Reihana's energetic animated films, to Peter Robinson's clever play with racist ideology, to Michael Parekowhai's beautifully conceived sculptures sporting his sister Cushla's witticisms for titles. John Pule combined Niuean hiapo designs with his own poetry on canvas, Ani O'Neill met high modernism with Cook Islands traditions, and Jim Vivieaere and Albert Refiti emerged as important thinkers in the Pacific art world. New Zealand artists of Asian descent, including Denise Kum and Yuk King Tan, started making work from their own unique cultural perspectives. And feminism and sexuality outside of hetero-normativity was huge, witness the controversial *One Hundred and Fifty Ways of Loving* show at Artspace in 1994.

Two other tendencies stand out to me, perhaps somewhat oppositional to each other: the *Hangover* scene, which I name after the show curated by Lara Strongman and Robert Leonard, and the techno-utopians, nurtured by *Sound/Watch* and other events at Artspace under Lara Bowen. Lara's partner Mike Hodgson was pivotal in this world, and it featured the maverick sexual CD-ROM romps of Terrence Handscomb, along with the goofier interactivity of Sean Kerr. Sound art legend Phil Dadson was this world's patron saint, and the newly minted internet was its holy grail. The *Hangover* crowd, on the other hand, was into kitsch and grunge, the handmade and the half-assed. Judy Darragh, with her leopard prints, fake vomit patches and gold dildos, was the social glue, while Ronnie van Hout's self-deprecating self-portraiture, Saskia Leek's bewitchingly childish paintings, and Gwyn Porter's untamable art writing all played a part.

Like the *Hangover* crowd I believed in the DIY aesthetic of the zine, which grew into the publication of a real grownup magazine (*Monica*) and then an un-grownup one (*LOG Illustrated*). Giovanni Intra and others like the eternal trickster Daniel Malone turned DIY into the legendary Teststrip Gallery. Giovanni will always be synonymous with the nineties, as he lived only a few years into the new millennium. What I wouldn't give to read his summation of the decade he helped make so interesting.

Blair French

Director curatorial and digital, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia

My 1990s were spent working in a variety of locations in New Zealand, the UK and Australia. These were places with very different art scenes and immediate pressing societal urgencies and cultural legacies. Nevertheless a commonality stood out in the willing confrontations with history, particularly the colonial project of modernity and its legacies of oppression and disenfranchisement taking place in much of the keenest art and theory of the time. What I gleaned through my early 1990 and ’91 engagements with the work of then emerging artists and peers negotiating this territory—some Māori, many not—of my generation provided some tentative markers for all my subsequent curatorial work.

Returning after a few years working in the eviscerated heart of the industrial revolution and former colonial engine room that was the North of England, spending much time with work emerging from diasporic communities taking on the impact of Empire in new ways, the newly sharpened finish and intellectual acuity of work in New Zealand immediately struck me. This work of the mid nineties appeared custom made for curatorial provocations yet could easily pull the rug out from under our sloppy propositions. Artists were honing our curatorial practice, not just with regard to their work but also to that forming the immediate art histories it emerged from.

Then over the water it was the artists—many but not all of them Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander—working with lens technologies whose work most struck me on arrival in ’95. These were artists dragging elided and often violent histories into the present through the appropriation of a tool of colonial investigation and oppression. Curatorial practice had to become one of acknowledgment and of opening spaces one had nominal control over to these critical artistic acts. And I’d argue that the matters of culture, language, historical recognition and sovereignty that sat central to the art scenes I worked in through the nineties remain crystal clear and urgent in our contemporary now.

Philip Matthews

Journalist and movie critic

I remember the second or third time I saw *Reservoir Dogs* was at the Paramount in Wellington when they put on a media screening and someone who was more of a published movie critic than I was then, a guy about the same age who I had known at university, walked in quoting the dialogue. It's hard now to get our heads around how much of a big deal that movie was. You could say, a little pompously, that for our generation it mattered like *Bonnie and Clyde* or *A Bout de Souffle* did for earlier ones. It said that old rules don't apply. You could include things that other people said you could not include. Everything was up for discussion. Who decided that the types of guys you would normally see in movies like *GoodFellas* or *Thief* wouldn't sit around talking about Madonna songs? There was a freedom to the post-modernism that Quentin Tarantino embodied and put on screen that was squandered pretty fast, by imitators and maybe himself. I don't know if the same thing happened the same way in the artworld, but works by Peter Robinson, Saskia Leek and Tony de Lautour in *Your Hotel Brain* take me back to that exhilarating moment.

Delaney Davidson

Musician and writer

It was the goddamn cocksuckin motherfuckin nineties and the nighttime walking took over. Terrified of wasted time. The world was disappearing. The shadows gave things substance. Extra depth. Consolidated form and distance into something immediate. Acid ate into the plates. Creating shadows. Ferric chloride and nitric acid. 2 parts $FeCl_3$ to 2 parts water and 1 part nitric to 3 parts water. The results were rich deep and heavy. Foul bite. Expressive wipe. The best was under the trees. Looking though the parks. That was until I went out to learn how to mix paint with Richard Clemens. The train ride was about three hours, Melbourne to Colac. We spent the days mixing up combos of Burnt Umber, Ultramarine, Zinc White and Naples Yellow. You could get almost darker than black. The depth and weight was infinitely adjustable. I spent the train ride home staring out the window with the curtain wrapped round my head, trying to see into the night and how minimal light spelled out the lay of the land. The old techniques. Fuck video installation. Fuck sneaking to get some forbidden landscape fix. This was the end of the century. Everything and anything goes. Fin de siècle motherfuckers. Fin de siècle.

Christina Barton

Writer, curator, art historian and director of Adam Art Gallery
Te Pātaka Toi, Victoria University of Wellington

Why aren't the nineties clearer to me? Book-ended by my transition from Auckland to Wellington at the beginning of 1992 and the opening of Victoria University's Adam Art Gallery at the end of 1999, they were crucial years in my development as a curator and art historian. But perhaps the births of my daughters in 1994 and 1999 are good reason for faulty memory: it was a busy time. What I do recall of the decade were the ambitious, curatorially driven exhibitions designed to speak back to Wystan Curnow's and John McCormack's teasing proposition of art as a 'European idea'. By packaging together and touring regional, bicultural and counter-national groupings of artists, *Headlands*, *Cultural Safety*, *Toi Toi Toi*, *The World Over*, and the trans-Tasman project *Close Quarters* (with which I was involved), all set out to take New Zealand art offshore, proving we were less intimidated by our location at the 'bottom' of the world.

This was a process of global positioning, when the idea of 'New Zealand art' still had some purchase. Comparing then and now, what strikes me is the archaic nature of the technology we worked with: letters, landlines and fax machines; this was an unimaginable time before the internet. Yes, the 'digital revolution' had begun, and I remember all the fuss and then the fizz around what would happen if the machines couldn't deal with the new millennium. But I recall writing faxes to Joseph Kosuth in New York and Rome in 1999, after he agreed to undertake the Adam Art Gallery's first international project; I travelled to visit him in his studio in Rome in October of that year with a cardboard model of the gallery in my hand-luggage. I also have a visual memory of the art history department's fax machine spouting paper that had printed overnight with the latest missive from Boyd Webb in London when Jenny Harper was doing her big project with him (1998). Perhaps I was a slow adopter, but the transition was not instantaneous, even though Victoria University was at the cutting edge of the new technology and by the end of the decade email was beginning to make communication quicker and easier. I didn't get a cell phone until 2003 nor a smartphone until the early 2010s. When did we start googling everything? It certainly wasn't in the 1990s.

Gwyn Porter

Writer, editor and educator

This is difficult to write about because the nineties cleanly bracket my twenties.

I was a curator then, a new entity in a particular sense, and writing—corresponding to the form of the work—was part of my adopted duty of care.

Life is a matter of constant adoption and re-adoption.

Then, we called each other on the phone and arranged to meet.

The only people with mobile phones were in advertising, film, or drug dealers.

Email attachments did not come in until late in the decade.

People did not customarily hug each other upon meeting or leaving.

Much of my time was spent not-quite-consciously trying to work out a language for existing in an intensely neoliberalising system.

It was clear we were in a low-rent patriarchal and post-colonial place, but it was hard to talk about.

An aesthetics of precarity was summoned by a way of life.

Our criticality felt very immature, but vital. Representation was suspect. Indeterminancy, complexity were not.

The image became political. Some read theory and radical literature long and hard and joyously. Film was electric.

All our decisions were based on what was interesting at the expense of a stability we did not value.

A great many para-chemical risks were taken with bodies, minds and spirits. With selves, relationships, subjectivity, movement, language—real and para-chemistry.

Emotions came off badly but no one wanted to know about it.

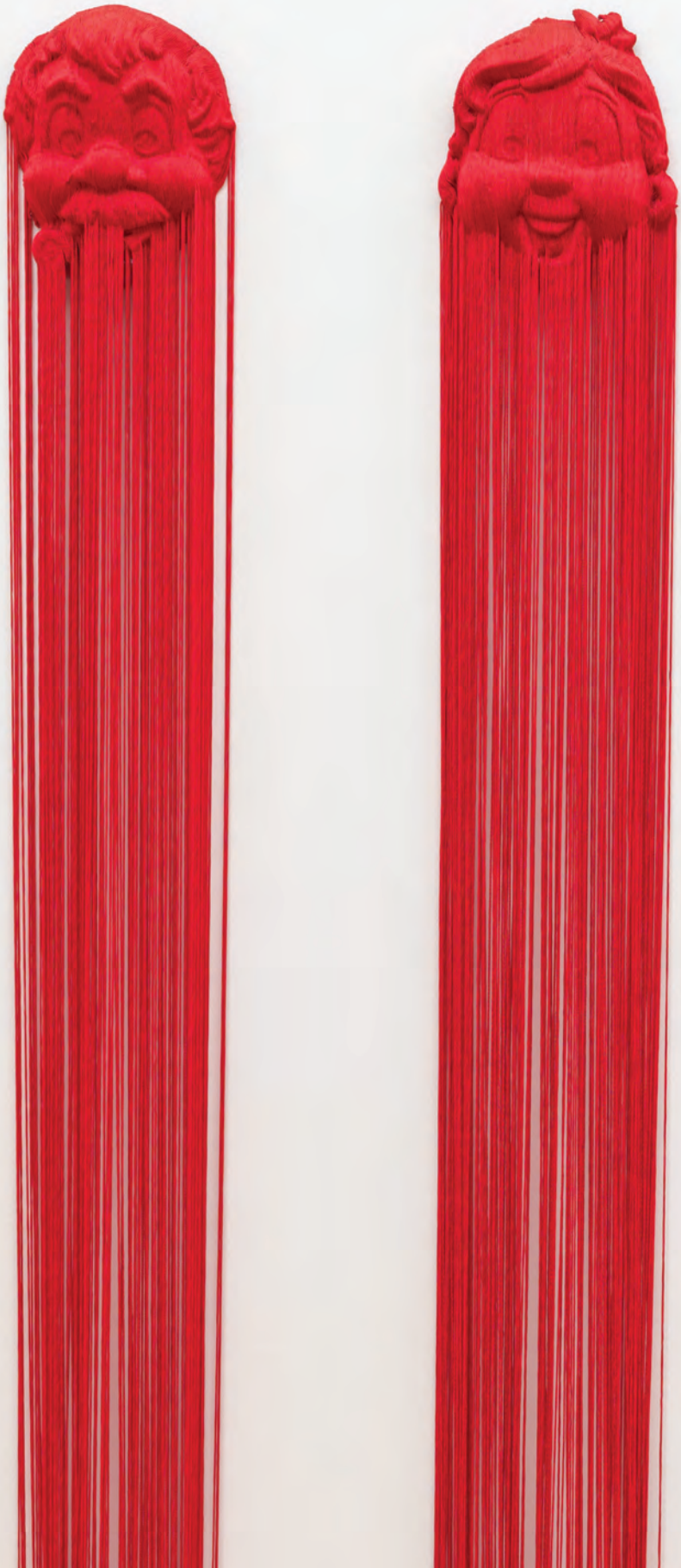
Dissonance, derangement, dilating sense. Dissensuality needs teeth.

'Do you like your teeth?' I was asked at the end of the decade.

Being present at the point when things emerge requires constant movement.

It was not a nice time. But I still admire the enthusiasms that flared between us. Not that many would know what they are now.

Yuk King Tan *Untitled (Red Masks)* 1999. Mixed media—red cotton tassels over plastic masks. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 1999



LAURENCE ABERHART
THE MUSIC YEARS

New Zealand artist Laurence Aberhart is internationally regarded for his photographs of unpeopled landscapes and interiors. He photographs places redolent with the weight of time, which he captures with his century-old large-format camera and careful framing. But he's always taken more spontaneous photographs of people too, particularly in the years he lived in Christchurch and Lyttelton (1975–83) when he photographed his young family, his friends and occasionally groups of strangers. 'If I lived in a city again,' he says, 'I would photograph people. One of the issues is that I even find it difficult to ask people whether I can photograph a building, so to ask to photograph them—I'm very reticent. I also know that after a number of minutes of waiting for me to set cameras up and take exposure readings and so on, people can get rather annoyed. So it's not a conscious thing, it's more just an accident of the way I photograph.'

In the late 1970s, Aberhart took on a number of commissions to photograph rock musicians playing in Christchurch for Auckland-based music magazines *Rip It Up* and *Extra*. He'd met their editor Murray Cammick a few years earlier at Snaps Gallery in Auckland. Cammick had studied photography at Elam under Tom Hutchins and John B. Turner, and was encouraged by them to take social documentary photos for the student magazine *Craccum*. He began a series of gritty photographs of music gigs in Auckland and documented the V8 car culture of Queen Street. When he launched *Rip It Up* with his friend Alastair Dougal in 1977, Cammick intended that the magazine would also provide a forum for contemporary photography, including his own. But the need to sell advertising meant that it didn't quite work out like that: 'We never had much space, and the photos often ended up at postage stamp size. The first issue had a double-page spread of the Commodores, and that was my original vision for the magazine.'

With *Rip It Up,* says Cammick, he and Dougal wanted a 'back-to-basics approach to music. No art rock or country music!' They were particularly interested in soul, but covered the emerging punk and new wave scenes. 'When you start a magazine you think you're going to be telling people what they should like, but you end up reflecting their taste.' He first used Aberhart in late November 1978 for a photograph of David Bowie in his Christchurch hotel room. 'We were thrilled to have Laurence taking photos for us … It was pretty obvious he was a great photographer, full stop.'

Cammick launched *Extra* in 1980 in an attempt to give more space to photographers. It ran for two issues, and featured Aberhart's images of XTC and the Ramones, taken in the car park at the back of Noah's Hotel, Christchurch, in July and September of that year. While the homegrown music scene was expanding rapidly, New Zealand was also becoming established as a destination for international concert tours. 'At that point', says Aberhart, 'rock acts would often fly in to Christchurch and out from Auckland, and it was easier to do the media stuff in Christchurch. Murray couldn't afford to fly down, so he'd ring me up. Free tickets weren't involved.'

Aberhart photographed the Ramones and Bowie using his 35mm Leica camera, 'for expedience'. For XTC, however, he used the vintage 8x10 camera that he'd bought from American photographer Larence Shustak. The images he produced belong, I think, in the pantheon of great music photographs, in which the emotional vulnerability of the performers is exposed along with their showmanship. And though the faces are in some cases household names, the photographs are first and foremost *Aberharts*, full of the same dense, melancholy time as his landscape photographs. Cammick comments: 'He pulled it off with XTC and the Ramones. XTC were a band who didn't like their photos being taken, and the Ramones were sick of it. And somehow he managed to take photos of Bowie without Bowie controlling the image. I don't know how he did that.'

Lara Strongman
Senior curator

Aberhart Starts Here *is on display from 15 September 2017 until 6 February 2018 and will be accompanied by a new publication on the artist.*

Image captions in order of apperance:
Laurence Aberhart *Ramones, Christchurch, 24 July 1980*. Photograph. Collection of the artist
Laurence Aberhart *David Bowie, 'Heroes Tour', Christchurch, 28 November 1978*. Photograph. Collection of the artist
Laurence Aberhart *XTC, Christchurch, 12 September 1980*. Photograph. Collection of the artist

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Get closer to art with the Friends

Shane Cotton at Nadene Milne Gallery

25 November 2017, 9.30am

Nadene Milne Gallery / $15 / Bookings essential

Hear Shane Cotton, one of New Zealand's foremost contemporary artists, talk about his latest exhibition and his life in art at this exclusive Friends only event.

christchurchartgallery.org.nz/shanecottontalk

To join the Friends and access more great events, head to **christchurchartgallery.org.nz/friends**. Check out the event listings on pages 60–3 for everything else we have coming up.

Friends
CHRISTCHURCH ART GALLERY
TE PUNA O WAIWHETU

Pagework no.34

Each quarter the Gallery commissions an artist to create a new work of art especially for **Bulletin.** ***It's about actively supporting the generation of new work.***

For Miranda Parkes, colour is an active and activating force. She uses it to create works that push back at the viewer, jolting our gaze in, out and around with a stretchy, muscular energy. With its gentle nod to the tradition of trompe l'oeil, her contribution to this issue was designed to sit within *Bulletin*'s pages, but it's an 'in-between' work in another sense, too. It extends ideas she developed over her year in Dunedin as the 2016 recipient of the Frances Hodgkins Fellowship and also sends out a speculative tendril towards her potential future practice. Parkes chose to work with paper for much of her residency, treating it as an object as well as a material, just as she rumpled, twisted and puckered the canvases in the 'scrunched' paintings for which she is best known.

In her pagework, Parkes combines two experimental compositions, spray painted to 'pimp' their colours and emphasise their three-dimensionality. She tipped paint that was almost dry from the bottom of near-empty tins on to sheets of paper; sometimes, as in the work on the left, the paper curled up in response. Pairing the images prompts us to imagine and investigate their relationship to each other, and also echoes and disrupts the familiar geometry of the open spread, split by the binding line: 'the two sides, refusing to flatten, create a playful curve.' Though here we see them from one direction only, Parkes's shards and arcs of colour occupy both sides of the paper, rebuffing the idea of a single perspective, and her double-barrelled title further underlines this sense of duality. 'It's about maximisation rather than minimisation', she has said. 'The idea that adding, adding and adding doesn't necessarily make confusion; it makes things more interesting.'

Felicity Milburn
Curator

Pagework has been generously supported by an anonymous donor.

Miranda Parkes *some words are therapy, some words damage* 2017.
Acrylic and oil paint on calligraphy and watercolour paper

My Favourite

Rachael King is the programme director of *WORD Christchurch*. She is the author of three novels: *The Sound of Butterflies, Magpie Hall* and *Red Rocks*.

I never met Joanna Paul, but I believe that she and my father, Michael King, were good friends. After Dad died in 2004, I found a large diptych frame with a photo of Joanna on one side and Irihapeti Ramsden on the other; both black and white and young and charismatic—two women he had admired greatly who had both died in the preceding year.

While background googling for this piece, I came across a journal Joanna had written, in which she and Dad sit on a jetty in Queen Charlotte Sound with James K. Baxter and say the rosary. Later, Dad platonically embraces her by a fire—he was a great hugger—and she mentions that he was married at the time to one of her best friends from primary school. So I called my mother and asked her about it. She was surprised, but said it was true; she remembers Joanna as awkward and shy. Mum was a tough tomboy, very physically capable, while Joanna usually got picked last for the sports teams.

The same journal talks about living at Barrys Bay on Banks Peninsula, and describes the house and garden depicted in this painting: '…a graceful & domestic wooden house with verandah all round facing onto a great wide plum tree, a tangle of apples, gooseberries currants peonies & roses.' The accompanying description reminds me that it's not possible to separate the domestic and the creative, and nor should we try. It's a comforting thought for someone struggling with both right now.

She writes ambivalently of her time at Barrys Bay. She works, roaming outside photographing and writing, or inside painting, with toys on the floor, while her daughter sleeps. She writes of deliberately tearing a favourite dress 'from hem to breast' in despair; of the birth and then death of her baby and the funeral in Akaroa. In context, the painting, so brightly coloured, becomes almost unbearable to look at.

After Dad died, I inherited a painting by Joanna Paul called *Last Year in the Government Gardens* (1993). I love the simple upright figure in white and the rough brushstrokes that depict a game of lawn bowls, with the unmistakable lines of the mock Tudor Rotorua Museum behind. There's something eerie about the painting, set so near the scene of her death ten years later, when she was found unconscious in a pool at the Polynesian Spa. Dad didn't talk about her death much, but I wonder now if he was more devastated than he let on, at least to me.

A few years ago my husband and I took the kids to spend Christmas in Dunedin. A friend of Peter's hooked us up with her mother's bach on the Otago Peninsula, and I instantly felt at home. A number of Joanna Paul and Janet Paul paintings hung on the wall. Spotting a copy of the *Penguin History of New Zealand* in the bookcase, I opened it. It was inscribed: 'To Charlotte, with love, Michael.' Charlotte, it turned out, was Joanna's sister.

The stay in the cottage was both nourishing and melancholy. There were bright cushions and crochet blankets, veggies and wildflowers in the garden. The children played in the rain. We stayed in and lit the fire in December. We looked out the front window to a little gate in the hedge, and towards the quiet sea; a view I see reflected in this painting at Barrys Bay, with its colour and texture, the front gate and its indistinct landscape beyond.

Joanna Margaret Paul *Barrys Bay: Interior With Bed And Doll* 1974. Oil and watercolour on paper and hardboard. Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 1974

SoHo+Co *Pop-up Saké Bar* 2016. Installation in the Raphael Gallery, Neo Nipponica Friday Late, 27 May 2016, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Postcard From...

JOSEPHINE ROUT
London, England

Kia ora Ōtautahi
Earthquakes, tsunamis, fires and floods—Christchurch certainly knows how to remind the world it exists. I moved to London just after the September earthquake in 2010 and since then my life here has been punctuated by worry for my hometown. It is strange to be on such sturdy land. But it is here in this conflicted and complicated city that I have managed to find a state of equilibrium—living in a Hackney warehouse and working as an assistant curator in the Asian Department at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

I still have trouble telling people what I do—often lapsing into awkward laughter as I can't quite believe it myself. The V&A has an imperial grandeur that is difficult to reconcile with my own uneasy ex-pat Pākehā identity. However, after I've walked through the galleries that lead to our offices, filled with Rodin sculptures and the glittering snuff boxes of Frederick the Great, my insecurity dissipates. The people I work with are funny, generous and encouraging. There is a true sense of whānau in our department that I am fortunate to have found so far from home.

Every day is different. I can go from handling Ming vases to answering enquiries regarding Hello Kitty or meeting with a visiting Japanese designated Living National Treasure. My main responsibility is looking after the Toshiba Gallery of Japanese Art, the refurbishment of which was my first major project. Last year I organised a Friday Late event to celebrate this, entitled Neo Nipponica. We invited artists, designers and performers to take over the museum for an evening. Highlights included a pop-up saké bar by SoHo+Co, Frank Chickens and a glowing kimono made from genetically modified silk by Sputniko! I was also able to collaborate with Kentaro Yamada, a fellow 'Japantipodean' based in London. I was thrilled to see his work, *Vertical No. 1* (2008), on display at the reopening of Christchurch Art Gallery.

New Zealanders have always told me that the best thing about living in London was getting out of it, either to the countryside or the continent. Not for me. I get a great sense of relief when returning to London. Back to a place where the vast wealth of opportunity is dulled by a healthy dose of apathy. When I do leave, it's mostly to see the sea. My colleagues are bemused by my trips to the coastal towns of the South East. But places such as Margate remind me of New Zealand, as both have a similar sense of global isolation. Despite being described as 'Shoreditch by the Sea', there is a tension between the locals and the down-from-Londoners seeking cheaper rents and bigger studios. This is the Brexit heartland after all.

Recently I realised that I've only ever lived on islands. New Zealand, Japan and Britain are all defined by their coastlines, a geographic feature widely blamed for narrow mindedness and notions of national superiority. I think that's unfair, and it ignores the ambiguity of the sea. Rather appropriately then, my most recent project is a display based on the multiple adaptations of Hokusai's iconic print *Under the Wave off Kanagawa* (1831), better known as *The Great Wave*.

***Josephine Rout** is an assistant curator in the Asian Department at the Victoria and Albert Museum. She lives and works in London.*

1 July 2016 – 30 June 2017

The Year in Review...

A summary of the year in business at the Gallery

298,433
NUMBER OF VISITORS

22,035
NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED 246 PUBLIC PROGRAMME EVENTS

Including lectures and talks by Gallery staff and invited experts.

12,299
NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO ATTENDED EDUCATION EVENTS

10,429
NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHO TOOK PART IN 278 GALLERY-LED LESSONS

3,105
NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER HOURS OF VALUED SERVICE

Given to the Gallery by our volunteer guides, who helped and informed approximately 14,000 visitors.

2,757
NUMBER OF HOURS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

1
BRIDGET RILEY WORK FOR CHRISTCHURCH

Purchased by 11 donations from women.

Gallery Publications

In addition to a range of guides, fliers posters and newsletters, Gallery staff contributed to twelve publications:

Ken Hall, Nathan Pohio, *B.185*, spring 2016

James Hope, Felicity Milburn, Simon Palenski, Lara Strongman, *B.186*, summer 2016/17

Jenny Harper, Ken Hall, Felicity Milburn, Nathan Pohio, Peter Vangioni, *B.187*, autumn 2017

Peter Vangioni, *B.188*, winter 2017

Felicity Milburn, *Great Britten! A Work by Billy Apple*, 2016, 4 pages

Felicity Milburn, *Lisa Walker: 0+0=0*, co-published with Dent-De-Leone, London, 2016, 350 pages

Peter Vangioni, *Sydow: Tomorrow Never Knows*, 2017, 32 pages

Bad Hair Day, 2016, 116 pages

Four *Little Books of Art*, 2017, 84–96 pages

Other Writing

Janet Abbott

'Seeing the Light: The Impressionist Spirit in New Zealand', *Art New Zealand*, no.161, autumn 2017, pp.104–9

At the Bay, BECA Heritage Week October 2016, Christchurch, 28 pages

Jenny Harper

'Melvin Norman Day 1923–2016', *The Courtauld News*, issue 39, London, 2016, p.63 (with Tony Mackle)

'Allure and Discomfort: Bruce Connew's *Body of Work* 2015', *Art Monthly Australasia*, no.296, March 2017, pp.58–9

Felicity Milburn

'Sharnaé Beardsley: The Secret Life of Plants', *Takahe 87*, August 2016, www.takahe.org.nz/t87/sharnae-beardsley-the-secret-life-of-plants/

Peter Vangioni

'A most charming and dangerous diversion: John Holmes and the Frayed Frisket Press', *Verso 3*, July 2016, pp.14–16

In addition, 12 columns on items in the Gallery collection were written for *The Press* by Galley staff.

Invited Public Lectures and Industry Workshops

Ken Hall

'Picturing Canada: Valentine & Sons' Canadian Postcards from the Golden Age of Postcards', Commonwealth Association of Museums' Heritage and Nation Building Symposium, Glenbow Museum and Archives, Calgary, 22 June 2017

'He Waka Eke Noa', talk to Te Hono Movement, Christchurch Art Gallery, 4 April 2017

Jenny Harper

'Art unlocked', panel discussion, CoCA, 6 September 2016

'Protection of Public Art', workshop, Massey University, 10 April 2017

Gina Irish

'Where to Start: Priority Lists as a Framework for First Response', Canterbury Disaster Salvage Team Planning for the Worst—Best Practice in Disaster Management Symposium, Christchurch Art Gallery, 9 June 2017

Lara Strongman
Chair, 'Scene and Heard: writing about art for a general audience', panel discussion, The Physics Room, Christchurch, 29 October 2016

Chair, 'The Great Divide' writers', panel discussion, WORD Christchurch Writers and Readers Festival, 28 August 2016

'Pressure to be useful: Public art practices in post-disaster Christchurch', Lecture in a Lunchbox, Canterbury Museum, 15 August 2016

'The Jury Speaks', panel discussion, Walters Prize 2016, Auckland Art Gallery, 16 July 2016

Nathan Pohio
'Tai Ahiahi///Tai Awatea: Curating Contemporary Māori Art' symposium, City Gallery Wellington, 8 December 2016

Peter Vangioni
'Artists and Horomaka', Banks Peninsula Trinity Church Hall, Akaroa, 18 October 2016

In addition, 7 U3A and Probus talks were given by Gallery staff throughout the year.

Exhibitions

22 + 2 artist projects

Professional Advice

Ken Hall
Board member, Commonwealth Association of Museums

Jenny Harper
Editorial committee, *Art Monthly Australia*

Editorial committee, *Journal of Australian and New Zealand Art History*

Trustee, Ohinetahi Trust

Trustee, Christchurch Art Gallery Foundation

Public Art Advisory Group, CCC

Gina Irish
Chair, Australasian Registrars Committee

Blair Jackson
Trustee, W.A. Sutton Trust

Felicity Milburn
Creative Industries Support Fund, CCC

Judge, Molly Morpeth Canaday Award, Whakatāne Museum and Arts 2017

Lara Strongman
Public Art Advisory Group, CCC

Juror, Walters Prize, Auckland Art Gallery

Collection

Acquisitions: 79 (including 53 gifts)

Outward loans: 22

Inward loans: 543

Library

The collection of the Robert and Barbara Stewart Library and Archives now comprises 12,321 items.

Awards

101 Works of Art: winner, HarperCollins Publishers Award for Best Cover, and finalist, Penguin Random House New Zealand Award for Best Illustrated Book, PANZ Book Design Awards 2016; shortlisted, Ockham New Zealand Book Awards 2017

Bad Hair Day: finalist, Exhibition Catalogue (Major), and finalist, Exhibition Branding Package, MAPDA 2017; finalist, Penguin Random House New Zealand Award for Best Illustrated Book, PANZ Book Design Awards 2017

Everything is Going to be Alright: finalist, Editorial and Books, Best Design Awards 2016

'Good Vibrations': finalist, Most Innovative Public Programme, Service IQ New Zealand Museum Awards 2017

Venue Hire

14,020 people attended 146 events

Design Store

A Year of Firsts since opening on 26 October 2016

First artist designed skateboard deck: Wayne Youle's Look Mum No Hands

First Instagram post to crack 100 likes: inspired by Frida Kahlo, 19 March 2017

First international sale from new online shop: *Everything Is Going To Be Alright* handbook, delivered to Fort Collins, Colorado

Exhibition Programme

Opening this Quarter

Aberhart Starts Here
15 September 2017 –
6 February 2018
Iconic and unseen early photographs of Christchurch by Laurence Aberhart.

The Weight of Sunlight
From 16 September 2017
Sunlight, warmth and the lure of escape and travel.

Yellow Moon: He Marama Kōwhai
From 28 October 2017
Yellow is a colour with impact — it's time to encounter its brilliance.

Jacqueline Fahey: Say Something!
22 November 2017 –
11 March 2018
Psychologically charged paintings from the 1970s bristling with the intensity of domestic life.

Rachael Rakena: Rerekiho
22 November 2017 – 11 March 2018
Ngāi Tahu artist Rachael Rakena's sublime and immersive video installation.

Untitled #1050
Opens 25 November 2017
Expand your mind with this selection from the collection.

Closing this Quarter

Don Peebles: Relief Constructions
Until 3 September 2017
Calm, enigmatic and elegant works of art by Don Peebles.

Wayne Youle: Look Mum No Hands
Until 3 September 2017
Full to the brim with high energy, sharp-witted artmaking.

Kushana Bush: The Burning Hours
Until 15 October 2017
Dazzling paintings that are rich in colour, culture and art history.

Bridget Riley: Cosmos
Until 12 November 2017
Celebrating a new wall work for Christchurch.

Henri Matisse: Jazz
Until 12 November 2017
One of the most loved artworks of the twentieth century.

Len Lye: Stopped Short by Wonder
Until 26 November 2017
An exhibition inspired by a flash of light and a thunderclap.

Ongoing

Your Hotel Brain
Energies and anxieties from the threshold of the new millennium.

He Rau Maharataka Whenua: A Memory of Land
Canterbury modernist landscape painting poignantly revised from within a Kāi Tahu perspective.

Martin Creed: Everything is Going to be Alright
A completely unequivocal, but also pretty darn ambiguous, work for Christchurch.

Tony de Lautour: Silent Patterns
An outdoor painting inspired by wartime Dazzle camouflage.

Reuben Paterson: The End
A sparkling elevator installation offering an unexpected space for contemplation and connection.

Laurence Aberhart: Kamala, Astral and Charlotte, Lyttelton, March 1983
Aberhart's photograph of Lyttelton children is displayed on our Gloucester Street billboard.

Ronnie Van Hout: Quasi
A giant sculpture on the Gallery roof.

Séraphine Pick:
Untitled (Bathers)
Pick's lush watercolour offers a utopian vision in the carpark elevator.

Marie Shannon:
The Aachen Faxes
Marie Shannon's sound work contemplates love, loss and longing across distance.

He Waka Eke Noa
Colonial-era portraits represent a legacy that illuminates the present.

Beneath the Ranges
Mid twentieth-century artists focus on people working in the land.

Te Tihi o Kahukura:
The Citadel of Kahukura
A series of works produced by Bill Sutton under the mantle of Te Tihi o Kahukura.

Tomorrow Still Comes:
Natalia Saegusa
A fragmented, poetic temporary wall painting by Natalia Saegusa.

Coming Soon

Closer
Opens 16 December 2017
Old favourites, new stories

Ann Shelton: Dark Matter
Light from the far reaches of society.

Events

Talks

Matisse's *Jazz*: Hidden in Full View
6 September / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Dr Rodney T. Swan describes how French artist Henri Matisse used his revolutionary cut-out technique to create *Jazz*, one of the best-known illustrated books of the twentieth century. Rodney will reveal the coded messages that Matisse embedded in his colourful and vibrant images to avoid the Nazi censors and to protest the German occupation of France.

Friends Speaker of the Month
Nathan Pohio
13 September / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium
Friends $5, non-members $8, students with ID free
Christchurch-based artist Nathan Pohio offers insights into exhibiting on the world-stage earlier this year in *Documenta 14*, and his experiences in Athens in Greece and in Kassel, Germany.

Artist Talk: Laurence Aberhart
16 September / 11am / meet at the front desk / free
Laurence Aberhart has been at the forefront of New Zealand photography since the late 1970s. Join Laurence and senior curator Lara Strongman for insights into his early years in Christchurch, including little-known and never previously exhibited work.

Quilting: The Artist in You
1 October / 2pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Susan Brubaker Knapp (international fibre artist, lecturer, host of 'Quilting Arts TV' in the US, author and graphic designer) talks about her personal journey from traditional quilter to artist. Susan is visiting Christchurch as part of the *National Quilt Symposium*, 5–10 October.

The Life of Len
4 October / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Building on our exhibition *Len Lye: Stopped Short by Wonder*, Roger Horrocks—writer, film-maker and former assistant to Len Lye—presents an illustrated view of Lye's life and work and his connection to Christchurch.

Friends Speaker of the Month
Margaux Warne
18 October / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium
Friends $5, non-members $8, students with ID free
Margaux Warne examines the residences of notable English artists and architects including Frederic Leighton, William Morris, George Frederic Watts and Sir John Soane. Join Margaux to catch a glimpse of the unusual homes in which they lived and worked, displayed their art collections and exhibited their own work.

BECA Heritage Week 2017: Godley For Sale
22 October / 3pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
The memorial statue of John Robert Godley, founder of Canterbury Province, was unveiled 150 years ago in Christchurch Cathedral Square. In 2009, the Gallery learned of a smaller scale bronze casting being offered for sale. Join curator Ken Hall to uncover a story linking the bronze statuette to a lamentable UK museum scandal.

Len and the Pacific
1 November / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Building on our exhibition *Len Lye: Stopped Short by Wonder,* director of ARTPROJECTS James Pinker explores the Pacific influences found in Len Lye's work.

Engineering Art
8 November / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Dr Shayne Gooch from the University of Canterbury discusses the unseen forces behind Len Lye's kinetic sculptures, the special relationship between the university's engineering department and the Len Lye Foundation, and the challenges of bringing some of Len's larger sculptures to life.

Friends Speaker of the Month
Priscilla Cowie
15 November / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium
Friends $5, non-members $8, students with ID free
Artist Priscilla Cowie (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāpuhi and Ngāti Kahu) will discuss the theme of tuna (eel) flowing through her own works and the interconnected nature of our waters and tuna within Māori culture. Cowie has been involved in several projects in post-earthquake Christchurch, bringing Ngāi Tahu narratives to life visually and acknowledging connections with land, people and cultures.

Gregory O'Brien Discusses Laurence Aberhart
22 November / 6.30pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
'Aberhart's images are bathed in the light of photographic history, as well as that of the world around. In his exquisite prints, photography reclaims a magic often lost in the digital age.' Poet, painter, curator and writer Gregory O'Brien joins us to discuss the work of New Zealand's most eminent photographer.

Special Events

Friends Event
Papanui High School Collection Visit
16 September / 10.30am / Papanui High School
$15 per person
Papanui High School is unique in its art collection, with a principal focus on acquiring student works. These are displayed alongside a small but important group of works acquired by John Coley during his tenure as head of art at the school. Hear from Mark Soltero, the current head of department as he discusses the works that inspired his new book on the collection.

The Mix: (Un)Familiar Forms
27 September / 5pm / NZI Foyer / free
Rediscover the Gallery after dark with the Mix—a vibrant, changing calendar of special events combining people and art with music, great food, beer and wine, pop-up talks and demonstrations, debates, films and live performances. This edition sees us explore all things design and architecture.

BECA Heritage Week 2017: 3 for 30
19, 21 and 23 October / 1pm / meet at the front desk / free
Join a free 30-minute guided tour exploring Christchurch's hills, plains and peninsula through three of the Gallery's favourite collection works.

Friends Event
Coffee + Art
29 September, 27 October, 24 November / 11.45am / free
Join the Friends for a caffeine fix and great conversation in the new Gallery café on the last Friday of the month. Then enjoy the Art Bites talk—these thirty-minute presentations are a great way to re-unite with old favourites, learn more about our artworks. See the Gallery website for Art Bites listings.

Immerse III: Paintings in Context
1, 8, 15 November / 10.30am / Philip Carter Family Auditorium
$5 per session
Learn about a selection of works from our historical collection with art historian Julie King. Explore the meaning of particular works in a variety of contexts: the reception of a work in its own time; its significance within the artist's career; the story of its acquisition by the Gallery; and how it is understood by viewers today. Bookings through the Gallery website.

Friends Event
Nadene Milne Gallery Visit
25 November / 9.30am / Nadene Milne Gallery
$20 per person
Shane Cotton is one of the country's best-known contemporary artists. With history, politics and bicultural identity as his subjects, he's achieved international recognition and a New Zealand Arts Laureate Award. View his latest exhibition and hear Shane talk about his life in art.Bookings essential. See the Gallery website for listings.

The Mix: Razzle Dazzle
29 November / 5pm / NZI Foyer / free
Rediscover the Gallery after dark with the Mix—a vibrant, changing calendar of special events combining people and art with music, great food, beer and wine, pop-up talks and demonstrations, debates, films and live performances. The last Mix of 2017 sees us getting a bit glam and going out with a bang. Get your glad rags on!

Films

German Film Festival 2017
23–4 September / 12 and 3pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium
free
This mini-festival, courtesy of the Goethe-Institut, showcases a fine selection of ten internationally acclaimed films from Germany, Switzerland and Austria in German with English subtitles. Just make sure you turn up early to secure your seats. See the Gallery website for listings.

Japanese Film Festival 2017
10–12 October / 6pm / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
A celebration of contemporary Japanese film brought to you in association with the Consular Office of Japan, South Island JET-Alumni Association, Monbukagakusho Scholarship-Alumni Association and The Japan Foundation. All films shown in Japanese with English subtitles. See the Gallery website for listings.

LASFF: Latin America and Spain Film Festival 2017
25, 28 and 29 October / Philip Carter Family Auditorium / free
Celebrate the opening of the Latin America and Spain Film Festival on 25 October, and then join us for more film screenings over the weekend. All films shown with English subtitles. See the Gallery website for listings.

Family Activities

Cutting Shapes: Matisse for Kids
3 September / 11am / Education Centre / $5 per child
After taking a look at our Matisse exhibition, we'll head back to the education centre and create bright paper cut-outs like the artist himself. Bookings through the Gallery website.
Ages 5–10

Art Safari
5 September, 3 October, 7 November / 10am
Education Centre / free
Come on an art adventure! Make and look at art with your pre-schooler in this specially designed programme for under 5s.
Ages 2–5

Let's Get Loud
2–13 October, weekdays / 11am / Education Centre / $8 per child
Taking inspiration from Len Lye, we're spending the school holidays making art that packs a punch with noise and movement. Get messy painting, tying and gluing together your own colourful mobile.
Ages 6–12

Going Batty
29 October / 11am / Education Centre / $5 per child
We're celebrating Halloween by going batty! Come along, get creative and make your own bat-tastic creature to take home. Bookings through the Gallery website.
Ages 5–10

Spring Fling
5 November / 11am / Education Centre / $5 per child
The colours of spring have inspired us to get creative! Join us and make something bright and beautiful. Bookings through the Gallery website.
Ages 4–8

Muka Youth Prints 2017
17–19 November / 10–5pm / Education Centre / free
The annual exhibition of Muka Studio lithographs by international artists especially for kids. More than 60,000 Muka Youth Prints have found their way to young people from Kaitaia to Invercargill. The prints are offered exclusively to young people aged 5–18, who will have an opportunity to buy up to three works. Unframed works $70, framed $155.

UC ILAM SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS

www.fina.canterbury.ac.nz

Christchurch Art Gallery Foundation

The Christchurch Art Gallery Foundation is committed to building a collection of opportunities. We have the chance to shape the culture of Christchurch by developing a significant collection which honours the past, reveals the present and helps us imagine the future.

We began the TOGETHER programme in 2014 and are continuing to offer opportunities for business and individuals to help us realise our mission.

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Grumps
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Please see christchurchartgallery.org.nz/support/foundation for a full list.

Foundation Partner

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http://www.christchurchartgallery.org.nz/support

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