



chrysalis seed trust

Ascend, Stefan Roberts, 2000, Giclee photographic print (1 of 5), 700 x 1430 mm, Beyond exhibition, Campbell Grant Galleries, February 2004.



## Fantasy, film and faith

If you want gravitas and depth, go biblical it seems. Sci fi or fantasy films feature biblical elements as pretty much stock and trade of their genre. Characters often utter biblicalisms, 'From those to whom much is given, much is expected' (Spiderman). "Hallelujah. You're my saviour, man. My own personal Jesus Christ" (Choi to Neo, *Matrix I*). There is almost always a curse, an ancient prophesy or an oracle, quite often about a child or One who will come to redeem. Someone usually has to die to save everyone else. A humble anti-hero is mostly the Chosen One to undo evil (a gangly teenager in *Spiderman*, insignificant halflings in *Lord of The Rings*, a teenage girl and a baby in *Labyrinth*, a turtle like alien in *ET*, a bored office worker called Thomas Anderson (Neo) in *The Matrix*, English school children in *Narnia*, a dwarf in *Willow*, the bespectacled geeks Harry Potter and Clark Kent.

Biblical allusions abound: the *Matrix* trilogy (launched Easter 1999) features "Zion" (King David and God's city) the last refuge of humanity; the main character's love interest is "Trinity;" crew member Cypher is a Judas betrayer of the saviour; Morpheus' ship is called the "Nebuchadnezzar" (an allusion to the madness of that king in *Daniel*); all the male babies in *Willow* are killed, mirroring Moses' and Christ's generations (being an abandoned orphan is a common theme - *Willow*, Peter Parker, Harry Potter and Frodo Baggins are all orphans); resurrection is a feature of Gandalf the Grey and White in *LoTR (Lord of The Rings)*, of Aslan in the *Narnia Chronicles*, of Neo in *Matrix*, and the Beast in *Beauty and the Beast*; there is defeat of resident evil and redemption of the land by a returning king in Aragorn of *LoTR* and Simba in *Lion King*. The *Matrix*'s "the One" is Neo, which means "new" and is an anagram of Eon (one). Jesus is also called "the One," heralds the New Testament and says, 'Behold I make all things new.' Morpheus believes in and searches for the One and tells everyone he is coming, a kind of John the Baptist herald, but at one point has doubts, like John the Baptist did, sending his disciples to ask Jesus, "Are you the One?" Neo is resurrected by the love of Trinity. The last scene of the *Matrix* trilogy is Neo

ascending superman-like to the heavens in power. His persona inside the matrix is Thomas (as in *Doubling?* Neo constantly doubts himself) Anderson (son of Andros "man"). Thomas Anderson can be extrapolated "New Son of Man." It is not too long a bow to draw as the Wachowski brothers (creators of *The Matrix*) confirm all the religious symbolism and biblical doctrine of their film was intentional.

Alongside the allusion is the straight biblical: NBC's *Mary, Mother of Jesus*, the BBC's *Jesus and His Times*, ABC's claymation Easter feature *The Miracle Maker* and *Peter Jennings: In Search of Jesus*, the CBS mini series *Jesus*. There was Andrew Lloyd Webber's rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar*, the musical *Godspell*, and a host of historical film interpretations, *David*, *The Ten Commandments* (which made Charlton Heston's career along with *Ben Hur*, in which Jesus also features), *The King of Kings* (1964), *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (1964), *Jesus of Nazareth* (1977) to name a few. It seems each decade needs to remake the story of Jesus and pick over the historicity of that exceptional life, death and resurrection. A timeless life.

The interpretations may be historical or fictitious but they sprawl across an epic moral canvas wrapping us in their magic celluloid. While some church carparks might be empty on a Sunday night, the picture theatres are full as we seek our moralising sermons from other sources, mainly Hollywood. Where once medieval men and women gazed awe struck at glistening icons and frescoes, we sit transfixed at flickering coloured frames of the same subject matter.

When the movie industry began over a century ago, there was a tense relationship between two diametrically opposed themes: hedonism and biblical retelling, particularly the life of Jesus. Perhaps this was an attempt to balance the moral corruption of the new 'demon' film with the sanctification of making movies about Christ, a kind of redemption by association.

The irony is, that the latest Jesus serve up (the second largest opening-night-grossing movie of all time,

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**CS NEWS**  
**ARTS**  
**QUARTERLY**

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## Who we are

Founded in 1998 the Chrysalis Seed charitable trust serves a growing number of contemporary artists. We aim to 'help resource the arts community from a Christian perspective.' We meet regularly to encourage each other and participate in a range of activities designed to support artists and their profession. We operate a resource centre in the heart of the Arts Centre, where all are welcome.

### CS News

Our main publication, which goes to artists, galleries, poets and supporters around New Zealand and overseas. Designed for the wider arts community, it engages with current art issues, events and artists.

We have a number of groups and collectives with regular events. The two main artists collectives are for visual artists (Seven Plus) and contemporary poets (CS Poets). See *CS News Notices* insert for details.

### Room with a view

Creative therapy studio  
Glenda Deed Dip Hrt Dip Couns Cert I.D.T.  
ph+64 3 377 0232  
deeds@free.net.nz

### Chrysalis Seed Trust

2nd Floor, above Southern Ballet,  
The Arts Centre  
PO Box 629, Christchurch 8015,  
New Zealand  
ph +64 3 374 5721  
fax +64 3 379 3762  
cstrust@xtra.co.nz  
www.crseed.com

### Hours

Monday-Friday 12:30-5:30pm

### After hours

+64 3 366 2848

### Founding Directors

Peter and Jessica Crothall

### CS News Editor

Peter Crothall  
cstrust@xtra.co.nz

### Contributing Writer

John Stringer  
Ph/fax +64 3 354 5514

### Design

Snow, ph +64 3 332 2092  
www.snowsite.co.nz

### Photography this edition

Stefan Roberts  
John Stringer  
Andrew Clarkson

### Poets in this edition

John Weir  
James K. Baxter  
Michael Harlow  
Tony Beyer  
Claire Beynon

### Reviews in this edition

Murray Hedwig

### Proof Reader

Jane Hole

### Trust Board

Peter Phillips (Anthony Harper lawyers)  
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Jessica Crothall (artist)  
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## Kia ora!



Only a hermit, a hobbit or a Philistine would have missed *Lord of the Rings* by now, most of you would have been exposed to *The Passion of the Christ* by either debate or direct exposure. In this edition

John Stringer considers the significance and impact of these two films and the *Matrix*. In different ways they offer suggestions of what Easter is all about, and neither rabbits nor chocolate are anywhere to be seen.

In a general sense, both films capture something of the drama of what it means to be human and the outworking of history on a grand scale, enhanced with skilfully woven redemptive threads. Whether by fantasy and metaphor, or through gritty realism and historical detail in focus, they address enduring questions.

Over the centuries in western art, there have been movements which focus on *chiaroscuro*, that is strong contrasts of light and dark, which have often been used as a vehicle to suggest the spiritual, from Caravaggio and Rembrandt to Mel Gibson with *The Passion*. Tim Brown, Stefan Roberts and Claire Beynon explore these in different ways, challenging traditional understandings of the use of their various media in their recent exhibitions. Claire Beynon; in transforming drawings (mainly charcoal and pastels) from first stage of conception to end product and artistic statement on a grand scale. Stefan Roberts blurs the boundaries between photography, painting and computer technology through a natural and disarming approach.

Neither artist intentionally references the religious but both touch subliminally on a sense of the supernatural and new life. Tim Brown in his 'ceramic terrorism' transcends the usual boundaries of clay and responds sculpturally to McCahon's passion.

Claire and Stefan's shows (above) have been powerfully presented in prime gallery settings in Dunedin and Christchurch. These galleries have provided a vital forum for these dramatic works to be positioned and presented. It's most unlikely that the press coverage including an article in the *Listener* would have happened if the works were shown privately or in less known settings.

The role of galleries may be changing in contemporary art communities, but they are still a vital ingredient. We would welcome letters to the editor in response to this debate or on other matters.

Also in this edition we have a focus on the Campbell Grant Galleries through an interview with director Grant Banbury, Stefan Roberts and Tim Brown. Murray Hedwig, Stefan's former mentor and senior lecturer at CPIT reviews his recent exhibition. Claire Beynon's exhibition is referenced through images and poetry. James K. Baxter's musings are included from *Autumn Testament* along with some more contemporary reflections on the challenge of Easter.

The core of our vision is in the development of small groups of artists supporting one another. These are continuing monthly in Wellington, and weekly in Christchurch. Paula Novak is looking for a group in Auckland. In Dunedin a new Trust, on its own initiative has been formed by Anna - Kate Loughman and friends to facilitate this process. It is focussed around the emergence of a new gallery/cafe in the heart of the city, Azucena at 233 Stuart Street. CS Notices has details of all these opportunities.

Our next issue will focus on artists and issues in a special show planned in Nelson at the Suter Gallery in September, exploring aspects of reconciliation.

Hope to see you all in Nelson!!

Peter Crothall



Scene from Gibson's film, *The Passion of The Christ*; 'Whoever is without sin, let them judge this woman' (paraphrased).



*Elizabeth and Goldfinch*, Kees Bruin, oil on canvas, 550 x 650 mm. Reproduced with permission of the artist. Collection of the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu.

The subject of this poignant work is Bruin's fiancée Elizabeth, who died of cancer. Bruin shows her accompanied by a small goldfinch, a traditional symbol of the Passion (the physical sufferings of Messiah). eg. Raphael's *Madonna and Child with goldfinch*. The goldfinch prefigures 12 months of Elizabeth's, and 12 hours of Jesus' suffering and death.

Legend has it that the goldfinch acquired its red spot at the moment when it flew down over the head of Jesus on the road to his crucifixion and, as it drew a thorn from his brow, was splashed with a drop of the Saviour's blood.



Where once medieval men and women gazed awe struck at glistening icons and frescoes, we sit transfixed at flickering coloured frames of the same subject matter

### **Fantasy, film and faith continued**

behind *Matrix II*) is quite 'un-Hollywood'. Megastar Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* was privately funded, is in foreign (ancient) languages and is subtitled, and feels more like an art movie meets dramatised history doco. Heavily criticised, 'The Passion' (appropriately produced by Icon films) fits into a growing genre of history re-visits (*Gladiator*, *The Odyssey*, *Master & Commander* and *Troy* coming May 2004 with Brad Pitt as Achilles). None of these films suffered the passionate myopic nit picking over historical accuracy that Mel Gibson has attracted.

Our fascination with Christ and the biblical transcends fiction and non-fiction. It also infuses art, particularly that of the West: Michelangelo, van Rijn, Rembrandt, Durer, Rubens, Caravaggio, Da Vinci, Bach, Handel, Bunyan, Milton, Tolkien, Lewis, Blake, Hopkins, Eliot, ad infinitum. We can't seem to leave Jesus alone, perhaps because he won't let us go. After all, his life is *The Greatest Story Ever Told*.

#### **Some personal reflections on LOTR and 'Passion.'**

I thought the LoTR trilogy deserved its haul of Oscars. The final film (RoTR) was a brilliant artistic interpretation of Tolkien's epic literature

(and I'm a fan from way back). The films that resulted were wondrous artworks in their own right that stand proudly beside Tolkien's text (remember that truly awful movie version of the 1970s that blended film and cartoon?). I thought *The Two Towers* was the best, a near perfect film. The epic battle scenes of RoTR, faithful visual renditions of Tolkien's word pictures, were the stars of the third installment. My favourite scene in the entire trilogy is Boromir's death in FoTR (played by Sean Bean). Over all I was a little disappointed with the acting of RoTR (Andy Serkis and Gollum aside, who 'both' deserved a best actor nomination). Viggo Mortensen as Aragorn failed to rise to the commanding heroic status of Tolkien's climax and I felt he, and some of the other characters, were a little wooden in places. His 'boost the troops' speech on the Pelennor Fields before the Black Gate lacked the conviction or intensity of Gibson's efforts in *Braveheart* before the overwhelming English army of Edward Longshanks (Patrick McGoohan).

*The Passion of the Christ* is a quality movie which achieves what it sets out to do, to tell the story of Jesus' suffering over a 12 hour episode. I disagree with the anti-Semitic accusations. The Sanhedrin are no more vilified than Germans in WWII movies, colonial British in Empire movies, or evil CIA operatives and corrupt politicians in American conspiracy films. I didn't find the violence in any way gratuitous, but contextual and sensitively portrayed within the objectives of the film. The relationship between Judas and Christ, Simon of Cyrene as he carries the cross with Jesus, and Mary eyeballing the Devil down the Via Dolorosa, is well explored. There were some cheesy bits: Lucifer's victory shout is a little undercooked and stylistically jolts with the rest of the film; his snake in the Gethsemane scene should have hit the editor's floor, although I enjoyed Christ's stomping of the serpent's head (an allusion to Genesis 3: 15 as a metaphor of Christ's determination to obey God). The sunrise scene of the Saturday shows a jet vapour trail above the sun orb and in some scenes, Christ's right eye is open when in others it is swollen shut. The supposed glorious Jewish Temple's Holy of Holies during the earthquake scene is a two-bit studio piece out of *Dr Who* and unworthy of the rest of the film. It also borrows the oil lamp stands from the Roman barracks, hardly likely in the holiest Jewish place on earth. Gibson says he wanted to "affect people on a very profound level". The film does that, but *Jesus of Nazareth* (1977) was a more powerful movie to me. Still, 'The Passion' is a valuable artwork encapsulating a poignant moment of human history and Gibson has 'kept the faith' in a notoriously difficult artistic medium.

#### **John Stringer**



BA art history and classical studies, MA classics (Victoria), Graduate of the NY Film Academy.



## Interview: Grant Banbury Campbell Grant Galleries, Christchurch

### **JS: What is the history of the Campbell Grant Galleries?**

*Campbell is actually my first name, the majority of dealer galleries use the owner's name to convey a clear identity. It's a direct and sensible thing to do. The gallery first opened in February 1997 on the corner of Lichfield and Madras Streets and moved to this current site (191 Tuam St) in March 2002. The move was necessitated by a need for a larger facility (we can now run two shows concurrently), to increase storage and be slightly more central.*

*University to do a post-graduate diploma in art curation. It was something for myself and helped lead me into other things. When I returned to Christchurch in 1995 I was involved in co-curating a major exhibition on Doris Lusk at the Robert McDougall Gallery. Campbell Grant Galleries emerged after that.*

### **What impact has the emergence of dealer galleries had on the Christchurch and NZ arts scenes?**

*The first dealer gallery in Christchurch was Gallery 91 which opened in the 1950s and sadly lasted only a brief while. The Brooke Gifford opened in 1975. The emergence of dealer galleries was a reaction to the constraints of arts societies with narrowly-focussed selection panels. It's important to the overall infrastructure of any art scene to have a variety of galleries and the consequent emergence of solo shows has been a welcome development. With an art school here we have clusters of arts students needing outlets to exhibit in. Dealer galleries are another step toward professionalism. Obviously art comes first but display and distribution are crucial to developing artists' reputations. As a dealer with a background as an arts practitioner (some see that as a plus others as a minus) I'm generous with my time because I understand the process from an artist's perspective, having presented my own portfolio to various dealers.*

### **Do you perceive a distinctive Canterbury arts practice?**

*Thinking beyond landscape and Bill Sutton, Canterbury has not generated a lot of landscape painters. A sense of place is a more subconscious thing. Painting landscape at the School of Fine Art, Ilam, was considered a strange thing to do in the seventies because so much had been done; how were we going to say something new? Other perspectives emerged in the seventies, for example Abstract Expressionism was one of the big influences of my generation.*

### **How do you think Canterbury compares with other regions in terms of the vitality of its arts practice, output and industry?**

*Christchurch is quite small but having Ilam highlights the visual arts which is very important. Good things are happening in Christchurch for its size, but it's frustrating that a broader education of the public about art has not occurred despite having an art school here for over 120 years. There are also not many dealer galleries because of the scale of our city and it being such a tough business.*

### **What do you think is the social role and responsibility of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu in the context of the dealer gallery community, the artists, the arts patrons?**

*It's fantastic to finally have the Christchurch Art Gallery, but why it took so long to arrive is a major social essay in itself. It fosters a huge*



*From an early age, even before I went to art school, I was interested in art. In my late teens I bought my first art work, a Ralph Hotere. At the School of Fine Art, Ilam, I was taught by artists like Don Peebles, Bill Sutton, Doris Lusk and I was always aware and inspired by what artists were doing. After graduating with a Diploma in Fine Arts (Hons in Painting) I exhibited between 1979-1991 and held 16 solo shows nationally. I exhibited at the Brooke Gifford and my last solo show was at the Louise Beale Gallery in Wellington. I stopped practising art for a number of reasons and in 1994 went to Melbourne*

amount of awareness about the gallery's permanent collection as well as the possibility of international shows coming here for us to see. The relationship between dealer and public galleries is important. Artists have all sorts of perceptions about public art galleries and it's not easy to please everyone. Reputations are often greatly assisted because of what happens in public institutions and it is difficult to balance the variety of voices all expressing different needs about what is displayed. Individual artists often have strong opinions about what does or does not happen. Galleries have to think about broader considerations and that is a complex task involving a lot of skill and awareness about acquisitions.

**If you had a free hand, what singular thing, or group of things, would you do in Christchurch to enhance the visual arts here?**

*More public sculpture! It's a real way of breaking down arts boundaries and building a connection with an audience outside a facility like a gallery. People accept public sculptures. There are always different factions, such as elitist groups, and we need a range of things. Why, for example, did it take so long for Neil Dawson to have a major public sculpture in his own city while gracing various other capitals?*

**John Stringer**

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**I want to reveal what is hidden, what is unseen by the human eye**



## Things that go "click" in the night

**Interview : photographer, Stefan Roberts**

**stefan roberts beyond, 10-28 February 2004, Campbell Grant Galleries**

**Bible College and Anthony Harper collections 2003, Kauri Trust**

The beguiling thing about Stefan Roberts' work is , people think his photographs are computer graphics, such is his talent with the camera. Overhearing several conversations at the opening of his most recent show, it became apparent several people simply did not believe it was straight photographs they were seeing, such is the surreal and 'other world' quality of his talent for capturing the extraordinary from the ordinary (fence posts at night, an abandoned grain silo, a rotting swamp log).

Roberts' recent work exhibits a continued dedication to traipsing around New Zealand landscapes in the dead of night and freezing in all weathers while his camera takes extremely

long night exposures (the curved lines you see in some of his night skies are actually the track of fixed stars as the earth revolves). During the exposure, the artist moves into frame and 'paints' his main subject with torches and light sticks, and it is this that gives the final product the eerie, surreal signature. The artist describes his work as, "not snapshots in time, rather the folding of time into a visual space. I want to reveal what is hidden, what is unseen by the human eye. The long exposure can often reveal what is not normally apparent." He successfully captures environmental imagery and scenes in a way not conventionally recorded by photography (a ploughed field in *Forgotten Harvest*, 2002, a moonlit track, *Journeys Beyond*, 2003). His works evoke loneliness and isolation; *Untitled 2001* (490 x 320 mm BCNZ) recalls a windswept Antarctic wilderness, *Untitled 2001* (320 x 490 mm BCNZ) resembles rocks or alien life forms on a lunar plain. The choice of subject, framing, and capture of colour in unusual light (moonlight, overcast night light, street lamps, vehicle light) further isolates his material from the everyday.

*"For several years I have been exploring the darkness of night; discovering and revealing a world beyond the shadows, a world that*



*In Rememberance*, Stefan Roberts, 2002, giclee photographic print (1 of 5), 1056 x 703 mm, *Beyond* exhibition, Campbell Grant Galleries, February 2004.



## At night you lose your sense of place in time ... it could be any year

*normally lies hidden. Folding time into one space, freeing our visual perception which is normally trapped in the 'here and now'."*

Stefan Roberts was born in Christchurch in 1974. His passion for recording light developed at an early age after being mesmerised by the slide show 'culture' of the 1970s. After years of self-directed experimentation, he gained his formal training in photography at the Christchurch Polytechnic School of Art and Design (1998). Since then he has exhibited in a number of group shows (CoCA, Salamander, Grantham). His first solo show was at the Dobson Bashford Gallery, 2001 and he participated in *Assignment Aotearoa - Your Vision of New Zealand*, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. He currently teaches photography at the Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology. His work has gained recognition from Agfa, the Ronald Woolf Memorial Trust and NZIPP.

**JS. What is it that first captures your imagination for a picture, that draws you to a subject?**

*I'm drawn to the abandoned elements that litter our environment. The elements that make me wonder... who made this? Why has it been left here to crumble? They are like the footsteps of history, the remains of a time gone by. Of the multitude of objects that cover our landscape, the ones that attract my attention are those loaded with mystery, the ones that have beauty in their form. Usually they have special qualities that once photographed allow an interpretation on many levels.*

**Is there something about the night that attracts you, that you are seeking to explore and communicate?**

*Night attracts me on many levels. Firstly it is a*

*quiet time where time feels different. At night you lose your sense of place in time (it feels like it could be any year). This sense is heightened by only viewing objects looming out of the dark. Nothing is clear, you lose your reference points. Photographing at night allows me to explore the passage of time (due to the nature of the very long exposures required to produce the images). These elements combine to reveal a world not so much a 'place in time' but a 'journey through time'.*

**Can you explain the giclee process of photographic reproduction?**

*My original film is drum scanned by computer that converts the photograph into digital information. This is then sent to a special large roll feed printer loaded with canvas. The printer then applies archival inks according to the information retrieved from the film. The first print (proof print) is examined and adjustments are made to make sure the colours and density are true to my interpretation of the film. Once I am happy, the final image is printed, dried, coated in water proofing lacquer and later stretched over a frame.*

**What can we expect next from your lens?**

*Already I have pictures forming in my head, of places I've seen and heard of. I feel a distant quiet night calling me.*

**To what extent does faith infuse your creative work?**

*I do not set about to make religious art works, but there is a strong spiritual feel to the works. I do not ask the viewer to respond in any particular manner, each response is personal. How my own beliefs affect my work on a subconscious level is hard to determine.*

**John Stringer**

*Necessary Protection: Red Cross* (detail),  
Tim Brown, 2004, ceramic and wood,  
650 mm (wide) x 1400 mm (high) x 135 mm (deep).  
*Necessary Protection* exhibition,  
Campbell Grant Galleries, Christchurch,  
13 April – 1 May, 2004.







TIM BROWN was born in Dunedin in 1971 and graduated with a Diploma in Craft Design, Christchurch Polytechnic, in 1996.

He works as a potter and is currently on a Kauri Trust scholarship, based at the Polytechnic where he works alongside Bing Dawe and other artists. Tim has exhibited six times since 1996, in group and solo exhibitions, as well as designed theatre sets for the Court Theatre and church productions. In 1999 his work *Broken* (a tall Etruscan-style urn) was the winning entry in a contest *Art for God's Sake*. He resides in Christchurch with Nina and their three children.



I discovered my work lacked total honesty and was not a full expression of who I am

# Ceramic Terrorist

## An interview with Tim Brown

Kauri Trust Scholarship artist-in-residence, Christchurch Polytechnic 2003

I was immediately struck by Tim Brown's talent. The three black ceramic sentinel-like ballistas (*Pressure Points, Necessary Protection I-III, 2003*) that commanded the North Gallery space at CoCA last April, rigid and alert like a trinity of Black Nagsul on the lookout for the One, was the stand out visual image of the *12: dialogues with time* exhibition. Not surprisingly the work sold almost immediately. Tim Brown has reworked the theme in his latest exhibition in the foyer of the Polytechnic (*Fallen: Necessary Protection, 2003*) with a scaled down version of 'Pressure Points' mounted on upright cargo crates and an X cross construction on a large coffin style crate. Surveying the variations of this armaments thematic (loosely inspired by McCahon's *Muriwai. Necessary Protection, 1972* and a response to the Iraq conflict) one is immediately struck by the visual drama of his work; simplistic in form, never over worked, strong in design, they are striking in their dramatic effect and emotional resonance. A comparison with Ralph Hotere is perhaps drawn. Tim Brown is an artist to watch.

### JS: What has been your experience as artist-in-residence at the Polytech?

Polytech is a creative environment to work in surrounded by raw energy and passion with the benefit of input from tutors such as Bing Dawe and Michael Reed.

Using Polytech equipment freed my work from material limitations. The students were a constant source of amusement and amazement. One of my highlights was an opportunity to teach a ceramics class with ceramic artist Cheryl Lucas. It was just awesome to share the skills that I had with others and be a part of their learning process.

My studio got nicknamed the bunker, fueled by jokes from tutor Henry Sunderland. It began to be filled with missile-like stock piles [the 'Necessary Protection' series]. It has been a bit sad to pack up my stuff and leave and I will miss my bunker, but I made some great friends along the way.

### Tell us about your future floortalk, and exhibition at the Campbell Grant Galleries.

In 2004 I will give a public floor talk at the Polytech coinciding with the release of a publication of my year's work. I will document my artistic journey using photographs, and discuss the technical challenges and methodology, influences, and conceptual thoughts and ideas explored in 2003.

The *Necessary Protection* show at the Campbell Grant Galleries, (13 April – 1 May 2004) my first serious solo exhibition, will extend ideas from my residency.

### What is your approach to arts practice in general and how does it connect with faith?

Ceramics demand a huge emphasis on technical excellence. That has driven my work and perhaps hidden a lot of my personal feelings. While I enjoy some of the tradition and culture of ceramics I have undergone a shift in my thinking over the last few years and want my work to speak more about what I really feel. Putting personal work in a public forum comes with certain risks, particularly as a Christian artist whose beliefs can collide against popular thinking.

Suppressing my spirituality, which is a deep aspect of my life where I find my meaning and purpose, I discovered my work lacked total honesty and was not a full expression of who I am. The challenge with faith through art is to communicate in a mature way, that is real, honest, has integrity and most of all is free from religious mumbo jumbo.

My art has to emerge from my soul and not get caught up in the technical knowledge and all the puffed up art jargon.

### What are your artistic plans for the future?

To successfully make a living through my art career. After the show at Campbell Grant Galleries I will review my direction. I would like to exhibit work in other cities around NZ as well as exhibit overseas. Other than that my wife and I are having our fourth child, our house is falling down around us and needs heaps of work. Life is never boring. As I move out of the ceramic area into a more sculptural field I will experiment more. I could be described by purists in the future as something of a ceramic terrorist. 'Ceramic terrorist' maybe, but I have discovered a great way to work that keeps my art fresh and raw.

My life and art are interconnected, filtered through a deep personal faith that brings hope amongst the chaos.

John Stringer

## TIM BROWN EXHIBITIONS

- 2004 *Necessary Protection*  
Campbell Grant Galleries
- 2003 *Fallen: Necessary Protection*  
Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology
- 2003 *12: dialogues with time*  
Chrysalis Seed Trust group show  
CoCA
- 1999 *Back to the Garden*  
Chrysalis Seed Trust group show  
CoCA
- 1998 *Out of the Blue*  
Salamander Gallery, Christchurch
- 1997 *Under the Sun*,  
Salamander Gallery, Christchurch
- 1996 *Point of Departure*  
CoCA

# Review

## *Stefan Roberts - Beyond*

**Campbell Grant Galleries, February 2004**

The title of this show is very apt. Stefan's long exposures with moonlight give the landscape in his works a background of shadowless calm that is beyond the capacity of our normal perception to hold as a memory image. His various approaches to coloured hand painting, found relics and abandoned structures in these landscapes heightens this sense of another world. Old wharf piles become hauntingly iconic like Easter Island heads, a tree stump rises from a lake and is transformed by light into a golden form like an ancient sword. The work *Recollection* has a moody 'painterly' blue background with painted highlights that become a 'jewel-like' gold and form a central circle and vertical line into a mark of ancient or spiritual significance. The same circle of metal pins is used in a more aggressive way when painted red in the work *Silent Council*. Like a cult sect gathering in a circle of power, the red glow from this circle is on a field of dense black and is counter balanced by the red-orange lines from the shipping light trails above.

The more panoramic format of *Ascent*, and the mix of a moonrise that has the warmth and strength of colour we would normally associate with a sunrise, has a black bunker-like form with white painted in the normally dark corners. The memory recall for me was the film *2001 A Space*

*Odyssey* and the iconic power of the monolith. This was a technical challenge in terms of viewpoint and the moonrise exposure, but the resulting work and the emotional power of the painterly tones of the shadow scale show that the risk was well worth taking.

*Linger* has a painted fireplace that glows like a gold altar in an empty cold landscape. In another work a humble rusted metal vent has been 'painted' with orange light and creates a focal point that shines out in a cool blue-green landscape. The work hanging next to it has the same chilling, cool background colour of a bleak, flat landscape and only the the car tracks on a gravel road have the added painted light. In extreme close-up these works have the enhanced 'stand up and look at me' grain structure that this Giclee process of transferring the photographic image to canvas is giving.

The increase of scale and use of the Giclee process are two of the more obvious developments from his *Nightscaapes* show in 2001, but the most encouraging sign is the confidence in the way he has used the medium to create a world beyond the visible. This is a landmark show with lots of high points that is asking the viewer to 'be still', to reflect, and to journey beyond.

### **Murray Hedwig**

Senior lecturer in photography at Christchurch Polytechnic Department of Visual Arts and Media. (Former teacher and mentor to Stefan and now a colleague at CPIT).

*Vigil*, Stefan Roberts, 2002,  
Giclee photographic print (1 of 5),  
1048 x 1056 mm, *Beyond* exhibition, Campbell  
Grant Galleries, Christchurch, February 2004.





*Fire at Teschemakers 1*, Mary Horn,  
oil on canvas, 760 x 980 mm,  
collection of the artist.



## Fire at Teschemakers

**Mary Horn exhibition**

**Forrester gallery, Oamaru, March 2004**

These works record the loss by fire of the historic 1860's homestead, and 1920's convent at Teschemakers on the night of 17 June 2003.

**Oamaru artist and Teschemakers' neighbour**

**Sr. Mary Horn writes:**

*"This painting and others in the series depict both fire and windows and were initially in response to studying and viewing Ralph Hotere's "Black Window" paintings. The first three were to be through a white window. However with the event of the fire, they took on new meaning. The horror of watching years of history being destroyed in such a short time and the powerlessness it gave just having to stand there was revealed more deeply in the works themselves.*

*In "Fire at Teschemakers #1" there is the destructive and disturbing element of fire. This was all the more powerful as it had been painted the day before the actual event!*

*Some people today use the word 'spooky' but for me it is not really so. We all have premonitions about things, some more vivid than others. In my West of Ireland heritage it is called 'having the knowledge' and considered a gift.*

*Fire and windows are very symbolic of our maturing journey in life. The windows in the limestone at the height of the conflagration frame the fire, which had such intensity that it was no longer red but white. Windows give us a view into the 'other' which can be either from the inside or the outside, looking out or looking in. Perhaps we see places we know, perhaps new visions of what can be. Thus suggesting we make a new journey either in or out.*

*I had watched the stripping of the old structures and the rebuilding of the new during 2002 and 2003.*

*In July 2002 I wrote,*

*Strip us  
expose us  
let our beams and bones be seen  
show us the foundations and we will rebuild  
in ecstasy of fire  
from the ashes of the bonds we discarded.*

*Like gold tested in the fire, or the phoenix rising from the ashes, we'll rise from our own particular experience of inner or outer fire to find new maturity and strength and so will Teschemakers!*

*The confidence of the new owner Dr Orchi in rebuilding shows this."*

**Mary Horn** is a local artist living in Teschemakers. She has exhibited regularly in Oamaru and Dunedin and in 2000 exhibited in Rome. In 1998 she was recipient of the *Hope and Sons Award*.

## Letters to the Editor

**Song of Songs**

*Your News is generally interesting to me and smacks of a vital faith attempting to be obedient. The January 2003 issue featuring nudity in art caught my eye because of its reference to the Song of Songs. Your thesis is on the right track, I think, but misses how deep God's word is there and current. So my donation is the enclosed book which shows, I judge, that the quote you use on p. 6 of the issue, is a lustful speech by the Solomon figure of 1 Kings 9 - 11, and is corrected here by the trust of the book in its concluding paragraph of 8: 11 -12.*

*Greetings from Canada - December 2003*

**Calvin Seerveld**

[www.seerveld.com/tuppence.html](http://www.seerveld.com/tuppence.html)

## Autumn Testament *stanza 21 and 22*

21

King Jesus, after a day or a week of bitching  
I come back always to your bread and salt,

Because no other man, no other God,  
Suffered our pains with us minute by minute

And asked us to die with him. Not even guilty,  
This morning I say the *Salve Regina*

While the fog is shifting slowly out of the trees,  
Fry four slices of bread and eat them,

Then sit down under the image that stood once  
In a Dutch farmhouse, then in a room in Putaruru,

Now in this place. It is perhaps the nimbus  
Of Theodore's thick body and solar heart

That clings to the bronze, bringing to mind  
Abundant loaves and multiplying fishes.

22

To pray for an easy heart is no prayer at all  
Because the heart itself is the creaking bridge

On which we cross these Himalayan gorges  
From bluff to bluff. To sweat out the soul's blood

Midnight after midnight is the ministry of Jacob,  
And Jacob will be healed. This body that shivers

In the foggy cold, tasting the sour fat,  
Was made to hang like a sack on its thief's cross,

Counting it better than bread to say the words of Christ,  
'Eli! Eli!' The Church will be shaken like a

Blanket in the wind, and we are the fleas that fall  
To the ground for the dirt to cover. Brother thief,

You who are lodged in my ribcage, do not rail at  
The only gate we have to paradise.

### James K. Baxter

*Collected Poems, James K. Baxter*  
edited by John Weir (Oxford University Press 1979)

## The Argument

What was the argument about?  
It was probably about things -  
like money, or cars, or the weather -  
or about God, or about God's uneven  
way of handing out things.

Anyway, it collapsed inwardly  
into its own dead centre, partly  
because no argument lasts long,  
but mainly because God looked out  
at me through your eyes, saying,  
'I am poor. I have nothing  
to give but myself.'

Later,  
after you'd cooked the evening meal  
and we'd eaten a simple meal  
of bread and vegetables and fish  
the vision sustained me  
as I washed up the dinner things  
which you'd miraculously multiplied  
into a thousand pots and pans.

### John Weir

*With Our Eyes Open*, p 80, Gallagher / Simmons, ed  
Chrysalis Seed Trust 2002

You warmed my blood  
for years I kept an eye  
on you. Now I tell myself  
Death at least is  
an honest continent,  
a simple compost  
of history and bones.

### Claire Beynon 2003

Chisel an altar  
out of mourning:

when stones thaw  
and herons dream,

unbind your feet  
and sign yourself.

### Claire Beynon 2003



*Tuning IV*, Claire Beynon, 2003/4, pastel on paper, 495 x 870 mm, *TURN* exhibition, Peter Rae Gallery, Dunedin, 5 March – 1 April 2004.



*Holding a Note*, Claire Beynon, 2004, pastel on paper, 350 x 1175 mm, *TURN* exhibition, Peter Rae Gallery, Dunedin, 5 March – 1 April 2004.



*Tone Poems I, IV and VII*, Claire Beynon, 2004, Charcoal & Pastel on gesso-ed canvas, 650 x 600 mm, *TURN* exhibition, Peter Rae Gallery, Dunedin, 5 March – 1 April 2004.



*Pacific Frigate Bird III*, Don Binney, 1968, acrylic on canvas, 1830 x 1520 mm. Fletcher Trust Collection, Auckland. Reproduced with permission of the artist.



## Don Binney Retrospective: *a personal response*

I was excited that a recent trip to Auckland coincided with Don Binney's 40 year retrospective exhibition at the Auckland City Art Gallery (the Gallery waives all entry fees on Mondays. Don explains seven of his paintings in a 30 minute video.)

How can you sum up an artist's life work in one exhibition? Don explores powerful themes in his paintings, making the personal political. His personal connection to, and passion for, places is both boldly and sensitively portrayed in the paintings, also being aware of cultural boundaries and histories. Binney shows a profound respect for our indigenous culture, ecosystems and heritage. His distinctive style gives him an articulate voice in the history of

*Aotearoa* art, a voice that ought to be heard and heeded. Here is a little of what I heard through some of Don's paintings.

For me, Don speaks to the geography of *Aotearoa* spirituality. Through bird and land forms there is a clear connection between being and place, to know the place is to know its inhabitants, and so know our own being. A frigate bird suspended, in space and time, an enigmatic compass. No clues to place or orientation, adrift. Where am I centred? The *Kokako* falls, "like Icarus", an imminent extinction. Binney's image is as powerful and dramatic as a nuclear explosion, the "developers" are unaware/ignorant of their fate. The *Matata* (fern bird), a local ghost of past reality as its home is destroyed. These paintings remind me of Bill Sutton's army of *Pinus Radiata* marching over the land, a monoculture of conquest - death. Yet there is a sense of hope in these paintings, the frigate bird (*Pacific Frigate Bird III*, 1968) is a wanderer, the *kokako* is not yet extinct, and the *Matata* while pushed to the slums of its habitat range, survives. If I have no connection with the local ecosystems and habitats and their inhabitants then my spirituality is a vagrant. The sophisticated simplicity of Don's paintings make them more than quotation marks delineating a message, the technique, colour and forms are delightful; joy. Thank you Don for reminding me.

### Mike Palmers

Mike Palmers is currently on the national council of the Soil and Health Association NZ. He is also doing graduate studies in theology in contemporary society and the environment at BCNZ. As a landscape designer he has assisted Peter Majendie with *A Load of Rubbish*, 2003; and *The Eyes Have It*, 2004, installations.



## From the resource centre

### Poetry

All the poems selected in this edition are from books in the Resource Centre which has a good selection of contemporary poetry from Canterbury as well as further afield. We still have copies of *With Our Eyes Open* for sale.

We subscribe to *Takahe*, *Landfall*, *Kokako*, *Spin*, *the Studio*, *Jaam*, *Poetry NZ*, *NZ Poetry Society*.

*The Savage Gathering* (2002) includes the winning poem by Claire Beynon for 2002 in the open poetry section and the winning Haiku by Eric Mould.

### Visual arts

recent articles include reviews of two recent books on NZ sculpture:

M. Dunn, *New Zealand Sculpture: A History*; Priscilla Pitts: *Contemporary New Zealand Sculpture: Themes and Issues*.

Peter Simpson reviews Maria Bloem and Martin Browne: *Colin McCahon: A Question of Faith*

[all in *The Journal of NZ Art History* Vol 24]

In the latest *Art NZ* Damian Skinner reviews the exhibition of 'Outsider Art' shown recently at the Sergeant Gallery in Wanganui.

*Takahe* 50: p. 27 includes an indepth interview. *The lens and focus of Murray Hedwig*, senior lecturer in photography at Christchurch Polytechnic. Article by Ken Hall on *The Celebrated Mr. Valentine*, in *The Bulletin* 136, p 13 - 17 of *Te Puna o Waiwhetu*, as an introduction to the photographer, the subject of the recent book by the same author under the title of *George Valentine: a 19th Century Photographer in New Zealand* (published by Craig Potton).