



Walking past each other

*A turn in the garden, your grace?
Walking past each other,
on location with the Bishop.*

10 September – 17 October 2004
The Suter Te Aratoi o Whakatu

In this exhibition artists respond to - the passion, the place, and the people of Nelson.

Passion. The following drama set in Nelson, New Zealand is about passion. In this drama there are two main groups of players: The Suter Te Aratoi o Whakatu (public art museum for the Nelson region), and the opponents of The Suter building redevelopment. Although set in regional Nelson, the issues raised, those of land, memory, space and place, occupancy, identity and culture vs nature, are issues that are being played out nationally and globally in postcolonial nations. The interpreters of the saga are the artists responding to the issues raised by the proposed redevelopment.

The Suter (named after Bishop Suter) was founded in the nineteenth century and in 1899 opened its doors facing into what would become the Victorian Queens Gardens on its boundary. In 2001, The Suter launched a development to extend and refurbish the gallery with the aims of achieving better linkage to, and visibility of, The Queens Gardens in order to enhance the amenity value of both. Nelson has a very active arts community that along with the natural environment attracts many visitors to the region. The Suter's plans include a new first floor level for galleries, one of which will overlook

The Gardens. The Suter is also planning replanting on its land to reference pre-European history and unlock Maori stories of the site through indigenous wetland planting that was there before the site was drained.

An extensive consultation process commenced in 1997, but it was not until October 2003 that the opponents of the design were revealed through the Resource Consent application process. Although Resource Consent was granted it was subject to an Appeal to the Environmental Court. The Appeal was withdrawn in April 2004. Opponents are now preparing an alternative design plan.

In response to this The Suter has invited managing artist Allie Eagle and other participating artists to engage with The Suter's history, location and current issues, employing works from The Suter's collection and providing their own work on the issues raised.

The Suter describes itself and its vision on its web site (www.thesuter.org.nz):

The Suter Te Aratoi o Whakatu, Nelson Region's Art Museum. An interpretation of the Maori name is Art is the Pathway for Whakatu - Nelson.

Our vision is...

To inspire and enrich: keeping safe the past and celebrating the present.

To insure and inform: arousing interest in art and stimulating knowledge.

To reflect and renew: evolving with the community and its aspirations.¹

CS NEWS

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. The main collective is for contemporary visual artists. See *CS News Notices* for details.

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Poets in this edition

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Brian Turner
Kathleen Gallagher
Eileen Duggan

Reviews in this edition

John Stringer
Kevin Ward
Anne Marie Verbeek
Rick Lucas

Trust Board

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pastor)
Jessica Crothall (artist)
Peter Crothall (poet)

Note: The views contained here, including the poems are not necessarily the personal views of the editor.

Kia ora!



There is more than the Wearable Art Awards at Nelson this year! This edition of *CS News* is designed to open the door of The Suter, and of some issues dear to its heart and the history it sits on.

We will be exploring this through the thoughts, art and lives of three fascinating and influential players in the contemporary arts community in New Zealand as well as through poetry, images and other reviews.

Enter Helen Telford, director of one of our most renowned regional galleries, at the centre of a community dispute which reflects many aspects of *Walking past each other*.

Enter Allie Eagle, passionate activist, and renowned artist and educator.

The subject of a recently released film she revisits the art of her radical feminist creed of the '70's through the lens of her faith today.

Enter Jonathan Mane-Wheoki, one of the elder statesmen in New Zealand art, now curator of visual arts at Te Papa, and catalyst in the emergence of a movement in contemporary Maori art.

All three are passionate about contemporary art, and spiritual issues in our past and present, both Maori and Pakeha, and how they relate to issues of land, ownership and care of the environment.

In the exhibition at The Suter these concerns will be mediated and referenced through a cross section of art by some leading practitioners, chosen by managing artist, Allie Eagle. Chrysalis Seed counts it a privilege to be a partner with The Suter in this project.

Enter Wendy Grace Allen, former tertiary art lecturer in Nelson and Australia, currently developing her own installation art practice in Palmerston North, as the writer and interviewer of this edition. While in Nelson she worked in closely with the gallery in her teaching.

Also included in this issue are reviews of *Whale rider* by Kevin Ward and Dawn Mann's recent exhibition at the Aigantighe in Timaru and of Briar March's film *Allie Eagle and Me* reviewed by John Stringer.

Coming up: Our next issue will be timed to coincide with our first group exhibition in Dunedin at the Peter Rae Gallery in October. It will include interviews with a cross section of artists, theorists and activists in Otago. The conversation with Allie Eagle will continue in the next two issues. Maori and environmental issues in contemporary art will be explored further. Canterbury artists Kees Bruin and Helm Ruifrok will feature in January. Mike Palmers will be writing an article looking at the interface between art, the environment and God, to coincide with our exhibition *Night and Day* planned for CoCA in March 2005.

Peter Crothall

Watcher in the Drain, Derek March, 2003, Ink on paper, 900 x 900mm.





Artist's rendering of proposed Suter Art Gallery building redevelopment.
Image www.stantialstudio.com

// Whose land is it anyway?



Wendy Grace Allen



Mike Palmers

Walking past each other (continued from p. 1)

Helen Telford, the Director of The Suter, passionately describes the importance of the role that she believes art, and in particular The Suter collection, plays in the community:

Through the care and display of a valuable collection that has grown over the last 100 years, The Suter provides access to Nelson and New Zealand's rich visual arts heritage. The gallery communicates the ideas and experiences art offers through its exhibitions, events and education services provided for the widest possible audiences. We want our visitors to learn and discover and leave with a different perspective and an enlarged world view. We want to make a difference in people's lives ².

The Suter is limited in fulfilling this vision and the role that it plays in the community because of the constraints imposed by the current building. The redevelopment aims to provide a much more comprehensive facility for artists and audience alike, whilst replanting with landscaping to reference pre-colonial times.

Challenging this agenda are the opponents of the redevelopment who wish to retain the existing plantings on The Suter's land. They are concerned to retain their sense of place and thereby their history. Their memories, identity and sense of place are linked to their current experience of place of The Queens Garden - the redevelopment will change their experience of place and the amenities that the gardens offer. The Queens Gardens are currently a pleasant space - for sitting and reflecting, family gatherings, summer performances, for the people who work in the area and eat their lunch in the gardens. The history they wish to retain is their own experience and the history of the last one hundred years - a colonial history. The Suter's motives are to retain an ecological imperative such as referencing the indigenous pre-colonial wetlands.

Whose land is it anyway? The closest Western understanding to the Maori world view of land ownership and use, described by the term usufruct rights³ is the situation in which there is no aspect of direct personal ownership.⁴ How can

you own what belongs to the gods? The concept of usufruct rights also has some similarity to the First Nations of the American continent; the spiritual dimension of all reality, that is there is no clear Greek dualism that separates the physical and spiritual. That is, how we know and, how our being or existence⁵ are intrinsically linked. This enables a very close and direct connection to place (Turangawaewae in Maori). Maori and Western world views appear a long way apart, but despite significant differences traditional Maori and Christian worlds can connect at several levels. They both affirm the environment, with a strong sense of a caretaker role, and see the whole of the cosmos as being tightly interconnected. Traditional Maori and Christian world views have a clear sense of divine activity in the physical environment moreover, and both see the physical world is not owned by humans but by the divine. A Christian point of view grounded in Genesis 1 and 2 of the Bible affirms a high value of the entire physical world made to reflect God Himself. The philosophical differences are seen in the reasons they have for these similar views of the environment. God is in the process of renewing all things, including the physical environment and calls us to be part of this process.

The restoration of wetlands at The Suter site is a participation with God in his world to reconcile all to himself (Col 1.15-20). Therefore, with The Suter development there may be an adverse effect on the Western cultural amenity values, but this does not mean a loss of amenity values, in fact it could be considered that the regaining of ecological values will enhance the amenity and aesthetic values of the site. That is, the uniqueness of the site is celebrated, its own creation story is honoured and thereby we are reconciled to this place.

Ultimately, how and why this drama is being played out depends on who the players believe created and own the land, who should occupy the land, and who, therefore, has right to decide on the purpose of the land. The artists' role is to explore, debate, interpret, engage and present the issues to the audience watching this drama. The contribution of the artists and the audience may, in fact, add to finding a way forward for culturally and ecologically sensitive issues that The Suter redevelopment highlights.

Wendy Grace Allen is a visual, performance artist and freelance arts writer. Wendy has just established Remarque Studio in Palmerston North - www.remarque.co.nz. She has a Master of Visual Arts degree from the University of South Australia, a Diploma of Fine Arts from Otago Polytechnic and a Graduate Diploma in Teaching Secondary from Massey University. Previously, she has lectured and tutored at tertiary level in the history and theory of art, architecture and design in Australia and New Zealand.

Mike Palmers (NDH, PG dip, M Appl Sci.- Resource Management) 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. He has recently been appointed as a Bio Gro director.

Appendix

Mike Palmers explains from the perspective of a theology for Christian environmental responsibility that: humanity has the God given role to look after and care for the rest of creation and to live in harmony with all creatures. We are made in God's image, His concerns need to be ours (Gen.1.26-27). One recent theology is, of God in all things reconciling everything to Himself⁶.

The difference between Maori world view and Christian world view is between Maori animism⁷, and one current Christian position defined as pantheism, that is God through creation, His nearness as spirit⁸ as the sustainer of all life and that he is always everywhere at the same time⁹. The traditional Maori view sees little separation in identity between say a tree and gods/spirits. It sees a pantheon of gods¹⁰ in contrast to the belief in one Creator God who is intimately involved in his creation.

Footnotes

- 1 <http://www.thesuter.org.nz>, June 2004)
- 2 From an interview with Helen Telford
- 3 The right to use, like customary rights, sometimes compared to common rights, or the "commons" - village green.
- 4 Research for concepts relating to ecology and theology were sourced from Mike Palmers and Peter Crothall.
- 5 To put it philosophically; our epistemology [how we know] and ontology [our being, existence].
- 6 Expressed either as the cruciform incarnation, that is somehow God suffers with His creation as He reconciles it to Himself, or pantheism.
- 7 That is gods/atua created the world and put a life force/spirit/mauri into all things and there is a direct genealogical link through the ancestors, who are represented by the mountain, rivers, to the gods or ancestors in the rocks, trees. Which is not the same as pantheism (e.g. Buddhist, everything is god).
- 8 Immanence, a God who is near to us, and not only that is apart from and above creation. The key distinction is that although God is independent of creation he has chosen to be intimately acquainted with creation.
- 9 Omnipresence, in the discussion between theology and science there are several models proposed to explore how God might be personally involved in His creation.
- 10 Existing in some inner priestly circles in Maoridom was the belief in a high God, Io.

The Womb

Your fires burnt my forests
leaving only the charred bones
of totara rimu and kahikatea

Your ploughs like the fingernails
of a woman scarred my face
It seems I became a domestic giant

But in death
you settlers and farmers
return to me
and I suck on your bodies
as if they are lollipops

I am the land
the womb of life and death
Ruamoko the unborn God
rumbles within me
and the fires of Ruapehu still live

Apirana Taylor

reproduced with permission from *Spirit in a Strange Land A Selection of New Zealand Spiritual Verse* (ed) P. Morris, H. Ricketts, M. Grimshaw (Random House, Auckland 2002) p.130

Swamp-Land

A vanquished flax droops pennon by the pool
That shares the sorrow of a tattered tree,
And still is heard along the dreary cool
An old tired bittern booming timorously.

The marsh plant slowly drips its sombre seeds,
The very blackbird is a bird of rue;
A barren wind rustles the raupo reeds
Breaking the silver bucklers of the dew.

God made this place for fallow twisted roots
And winds that limp the highroads of the air
For songless birds and broken-hearted fruits
And men who never learned a prayer.

Eileen Duggan

reproduced from *Spirit in a Strange Land, A Selection of New Zealand Spiritual Verse* (ed) P. Morris, H. Ricketts, M. Grimshaw (Random House, Auckland 2002) p.140



Interview: Helen Telford

The Suter, Nelson

Helen Telford (MA Hons Social Anthropology) is the Director of The Suter Te Arato o Whakatu. She has 24 years art museum experience. She came to The Suter in 1995 from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery where she was the exhibitions programme manager.

Can you tell me about the highlights of your career to date?

I have enjoyed past involvement with photography exhibitions and publications. In 1986/7, I was a member of the national design and installation team for *Te Maori* exhibition. On its return from the USA it toured four NZ venues - it was an amazing privilege and experience to be a part of it. Another highlight was the celebration of The Suter's centennial year in 1999/2000 including the publication of the history book *The Suter: One Hundred Years in Nelson* by Susan Butterworth and the exhibition and publication *The Promised Land: Art in Nelson from Tasman to Today* with curator William McAloon. I was part of achieving Maori representation on the Trust Board.

What do you like about working in arts management, or what draws you to work in the arts arena?

I have an old fashioned sense of community and public service. I want to communicate that art can make a difference in our lives. I really enjoy working with artists - engaging with and enabling the presentation of their ideas.

The Suter aims to provide exhibition

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I am seeing the issues around concerns over The Suter's development plans in terms of the larger issues of our colonial past and reconciling that with a bicultural future.



Waitakere River Valley Wetland. Bethells/Te Henga, Waitakere City. Location for much of the film, *Allie Eagle and Me*.

opportunities for established and emerging artists in the region. The Suter's role is summed up in the vision. Its mission is summarised on page 3.

What is your personal vision for The Suter?

To realise the project to extend and revitalise The Suter so that the community, art and artists and cultural tourists are better served by a facility that meets museum standards and enables more exhibition, education and collection care activities.

What are the strengths of The Suter collection?

The Suter's collection is best known for its collection of over forty watercolours by John Gully 1819 -1888 and for the Austin Davies, Woollaston collection of over 100 works on paper by Sir Toss Woollaston.

What are some of the ways that you encourage audience participation with The Suter collection?

The Suter celebrated the Performing Arts in 2002, and featured a number of exhibitions and events based on community, visual artists and performing artists - dance, poetry, music, story telling etc - all responding to works from the permanent collection. The history book mentioned above has 25 short essays by art museum or academic colleagues talking about important works of art in the collection, and stage one of a project to enable public access by computer to collection data base with digital images is almost complete. The aim is to have that database available through our website.

What impact will the Wearable Arts moving to Wellington have on the Nelson arts community?

The Nelson region has many creative visual and performing artists. Something will emerge and this is already under debate in the arts community. There are many opportunities for new and exciting events.

What would you most like to see as outcomes of the exhibition?

I would like to see informed debate and community engagement with ideas of colonisation and current matters of being a New Zealander in the 21st century. That means an appreciation of biculturalism and the role of institutions to reflect that. These bigger ideas of occupation, ownership and identity are very topical nationally.

What audiences do you think this exhibition will attract?

From traditional water colour painters, to Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology students where Managing Artist Allie Eagle will be artist in residence during the period during and leading up to the exhibition. It will be of interest to artists in the region. It is also a period [when the Wearable Art Awards are held] that sees a large number of domestic travellers from elsewhere in New Zealand.

How important do you think it is that artists engage in, and respond to the issues surrounding The Suter redevelopment, and do you view this exhibition as a 'spearhead' to lead a more informed debate about The Suter's role and place within the arts community?

It is the artists in Nelson who want to see The Suter redeveloped. They want shows to stimulate them and they want more of them and nurturing emerging artists is of importance to

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Interview: Helen Telford
(continued from p 5)

The Suter and the artists. A recent series of artists in residency did exactly that and we like to work alongside our artists incorporating their ideas. Artists are the stake holder group who contributed the most excitement about and to the development of the design concept. The key conceptual elements are a gift from the Maori community and their artists. Allie is a skilled and experienced artist/community facilitator. There is an opportunity for the exhibition to better inform the community about The Suter's redevelopment project, its bicultural aspirations and that The Suter will be replanting on its boundary to the neighbouring Victorian Queens Gardens and eel pond, to reflect the fact that the site actually has important indigenous and pre-European stories to tell.

I think it will be seen as an exploratory and innovative model of the institution working with artists and within a community to explore and engage with these national issues.

Wendy Grace Allen



Forest rangers, Michael Parekowhai, 2000.
A triptych of dura-tran prints in powder coated aluminium light boxes, 3620 wide x 2610 high x 300 mm deep.

What do you perceive the benefits to be of using national artists rather than local Nelson artists to debate a local issue?

I am expecting Allie to work locally building relationships with members of the community and with artists to encourage participation and engagement with the exhibition. I am seeing the issues around concerns over The Suter's development plans in terms of the larger issues of our colonial past and reconciling that with a bicultural future. These are national issues and these artists and writers are engaging with those issues.

What impact or contribution could this exhibition have nationally as part of the discourse about issues of land, occupation, ecology and identity?



Jonathan Mane-Wheoki



**New Zealanders
seem to continue
to need approval of
older and more
populous nations -
to find out what
others think of them,
to see if what
they're doing is ok**

Te Hono Ki Hawaiki, 1997, Cliff Whiting, carved customwood, mixed media, acrylic paint, 8530 x 9960 x 8000 mm, collection of Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

Interview: Jonathan Mane-Wheoki

Jonathan Mane-Wheoki, of Nga Puhi and English descent, was educated in Auckland and the University of Canterbury and the Courtauld Institute of Art in London. He graduated in Fine Arts, English Language and Literature and Art History. He is also an Associate of the Trinity College of Music, London. In February he started as the Director Art and Visual Culture at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. He is responsible for the art and visual culture collections: painting, sculpture, works on paper, photography.

From 1993 to 2004 he was Kaitiaki Maori (Honorary Curator of Maori Art) at the Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetu. In this role Mr Mane-Wheoki was active in initiating and curating exhibitions. He also presented lectures, seminars and floor-talks on art, museum, heritage and cultural topics nationally and internationally.

He has served on many national and international committees. Mr Mane-Wheoki was most recently Dean of Music and Fine Arts at the University of Canterbury and a member of the University's Senior Management Team. As an academic art historian, he specialises in nineteenth and early twentieth century European art and architecture, British colonial and imperial architecture, modern and contemporary New Zealand painting, and more recently the contemporary Maori Art movement.

Provided is a summary rather than a word for word account of a telephone interview between Jonathan Mane-Wheoki and interviewer Wendy Grace Allen.

What are the unique challenges for you in your new role at Te Papa, and how do you feel about your responsibility to the New Zealand public in your role as an advocate for describing/informing past, present and future perceptions of New Zealand?



Most people come to Te Papa for a museum experience, and are well satisfied with that, not an art experience but if I am to succeed in raising the profile of art at Te Papa so that Te Papa is seen as an art destination as well as a museum destination by visitors, then art must be respected as art and presented as art so it can be experienced as art.

A negative aspect about the current exhibitions at Te Papa, is that people often ask what happened to the National Art Collection that was displayed at the National Art Gallery before the inception of Te Papa.

What is the impression you would like to give to overseas visitors to Te Papa about New Zealand's art and culture?

Te Papa is a tourist destination for Wellington. Over one and a quarter million people visited Te Papa during the last financial year and 40% of those are overseas visitors. I want to give the impression of a diverse, rich, deep and generous art culture. Across Europe there is a perceived continuity of culture and art and culture having a much longer narrative than New Zealand. I would like to portray New Zealand as a thriving contemporary culture, a culture of excellence and innovation.

What perceptions about the way New Zealanders view themselves do you want to foster and what perceptions do you want to discourage?

New Zealanders seem to continue to need approval of older and more populous nations - to find out what others think of them, to see if what they're doing is ok. It's a kind of cultural insecurity, that is one of the unique challenges to my job, to challenge that inferiority, and deal with the cultural and colonial cringe prevalent in the way New Zealanders perceive themselves.

What is your intention for the art collection?

I want to highlight the collections strengths in an exhibition titled *Toi Te Papa Art of the Nation*. Phase one spans the period '1940 - Today'. Phase 2 opens in 2006. The exhibition highlights modern and contemporary art from Te Papa's collections, old favourites, taonga and new acquisitions. Many people will be surprised by the recent acquisitions. The next phase is *Cave to Temple*.

What are the strengths of the current collection?

Hirini Mead described the *Meeting House Te Hau-ki-Turanga* as our greatest national treasure. It is a pivotal item in the collection. It is the oldest complete Maori meeting house in existence. It bridges the ancient world and the time of European settlement (1840-43).

How do you perceive your contribution to the movement of contemporary Maori art?

I have written and curated a lot. I've provided a critical but positive point of view grounded in the knowledge of contemporary Maori art. I hope I

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Interview: Jonathan Mane-Wheoki
(continued from p 7)

have been a support and encouragement to Maori.

I knew (artist) Shane Cotton (when he studied) in Canterbury, and I encouraged Shane to explore his identity as Maori (something he was unfamiliar with). Artist Peter Robinson is more ambivalent about being identified as a Maori artist. What I say, is that my ancestors can't be taken away from me.

In your opinion, what are the major points of difference between the Canterbury and Wellington art scenes?

In Canterbury there is a strong commitment to showcasing work of Canterbury artists. The Canterbury art scene is very supportive of local artists. To compare, there are more opportunities for exhibiting in Wellington - there are a greater number of local art galleries and a lively market for art. The Wellington art scene

has to live up to the image of being the cultural capital of New Zealand. It is very vibrant.

What do you miss most about living in Canterbury?

I miss Canterbury immensely. I miss the Canterbury landscape, the space, the quality of light, the smell of Canterbury. I miss my friends and colleagues, and in particular my church community of St Michael and All Angels. I enjoy the aesthetic formal style of worship that St Michael's has to offer. My time studying church architectural history overseas really affected my appreciation of architecture. St Michael's is unique in New Zealand and suited me when I came back to Christchurch. I was also Church Warden at St Michael's for eight years. I am currently worshipping at The Anglican City Mission chapel at Newtown.

Wendy Grace Allen

The Scarlet Cord (from *The Sudden Imperative* series), Allie Eagle, 2004, watercolour on gesso panel with pigment impregnated encaustic wax, 1200 x 1900 cm.

This is an image of Rahab and speaks of kindness, courage and contrition. Allie Eagle photographed in foreground (portrait by Mark Adams).



Interview: Allie Eagle

Allie Eagle has been a practising artist and arts educator since the nineteen seventies. She is a familiar face at galleries, art schools and secondary schools around the country. Her lengthy curriculum vitae is testament to her life and her contribution to New Zealand art. This year a film titled *Allie Eagle and Me* has been part of film festivals around the country. The film reflects her participation in the Women's Art Movement and 30 years later, the significant changes that are now reflected in her life and through her art. She is the Managing Artist for the exhibition *Walking Past Each Other* held at The Suter in Nelson from 14 September, 2004 and Artist in Residence at Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology around the time of the exhibition.

How have you selected the artists included in this exhibition?

The selection process, both for the artists and writers, included getting people who speak to various concerns which I think are integral with the theme of the show. I wanted to ask at least one artist who has a love for primordial landscape - in fact there were two artists in this category for my first 'hit list': Don Binney and Derek March. Don's not available due to the pressures from having just completed a mammoth effort of showing his work around the country. I am sorry he can't be in the show. I wanted to ask at least one artist who has a love for the natural landscape, and its own healing processes. Derek March has an abiding interest in re-vegetation projects in the Waitakere River Valley where over the last 27 years he has lived as my neighbour and friend in Te Henga/Bethells. I thought having a sincere advocate for the natural lands we inhabit and live near is always a good start when we begin to talk about land issues. The selection of the other artists has been on a basis of bringing different points of view to the central ideas of the exhibition.

There is Jonathan [Mane-Wheoki] whose understanding of things Victorian, architectural and Anglican is by no means skimpy. He has also got a good handle on the contemporary art world.

Cushla Parekowhai and I have worked together on a number of projects and I am always very indebted for her perceptions in the way we regard one another's stories and experiences of Aotearoa. Especially important for me has been the way she and brother Michael Parekowhai's parents have inculcated in both of them a wonderful sense of community. They have a sensitivity and humour about our differences and a generosity of sharing their own Maori sensibility with this very elegant and at the same time inclusive kaupapa.

The Parekowhais' work engages the artist with real communities and helps to set up conversations that include the 'little' people who are often seen as unimportant, and, when this becomes art it's very lovely.

What has motivated you to engage with the issues of land, ecology and identity that surround The Suter redevelopment?

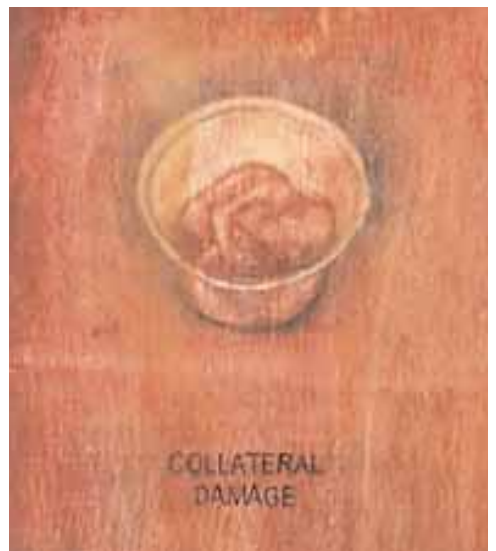
I am a 'coastal bush dweller' from Te Henga / Bethells Beach, and I also spent a part of my life at Otaki Beach with my mother. I came to The Suter with an idea that I wanted to have an exhibition here, that it would speak to the Nelson people and environment about things that matter here, that may have some parallels with the rural environments that I live in. When I found out the problems of The Suter needing housing for their collection and the Queens Gardens' advocates wanting to see the Gardens conserved and not encroached on by The Suter, I thought that seemed a good starting point for an exhibition. I understand the needs The Suter has for extensions, and [that the opposing parties want] conservation of the Gardens. I could empathise

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Tough Call (from *The Sudden Imperative* series), Allie Eagle, 2003, watercolour on gesso wooden panel with pigment impregnated encaustic wax, 550 x 600cm. (photograph by Elizabeth March)



Tough Call (detail). Collateral Damage alludes to Eagle's 1970's now iconic watercolour painting, *This Woman Died I Care*, of a woman who died from an illegal back street abortion.





I just have this
number one
mission statement
to 'paint the
purposes of God
into peoples
hearts'.



Interview: Allie Eagle
(continued from p 9)

with both positions very easily. Its not too different from stuff that happens in other places around Enzed. Certainly these conflicts have been part and parcel of my life at Te Henga where there are variations of concerns to do with the natural and man-made environments. Derek March and I have been involved in a very holistic way in the development of a park at Te Henga (there's another conversation there), but at its heart its quite similar and then there's all the questions I ask myself when I come to a new environment like: what's gone on here before and who are the guardians now? Is this place (Nelson) like the Waitakeres where there is a map full of place names that allude to Pakeha occupation and another layer under it or over it like an overhead projector sheet that speaks of Maori names and memories that seldom get a look in and then? And then, who are the Iwi in Nelson? How do they see this place? Are there street people who live around these precincts? How do they live? Who was Bishop Suter and his colleagues, the artists, and the people who set up the gardens? What were they establishing? How did the old chiefs and people walk over this patch while the plans were being made? Then finally looking down on this little patch in time what was God's heart yearning for in all this?

What outcomes would you most like to see come out of the exhibition?

A pattern has been emerging about my need to work with artists as we speak to and with families, and friends and communities with our art. Our growing conversations (my Maori colleagues lead the way here for me) and it's a very exciting dialogue. An outcome is that I may be helping to model a very respectful, if not sometimes feisty and challenging way of doing art in the community and speaking with a desire to hear back, include, reflect and get people to be involved.

How is your faith expressed through your art practice?

Oh, its really in-yer-face my faith, the way I do my art! I just have this number one mission statement - that's to 'paint the purposes of God into peoples hearts'. This is, I s'pose in concrete terms, doing stuff where I work with others in mentoring and networking. I'm thinking about areas where I have worked ... like art teaching, working in the environment and building community through art making practices. [I'm] actually waiting to hear what God has in mind for the next step of what I'm going to do. After that, I think I am stepping out in faith, trusting Him to meet all my needs.

Describe how your faith has changed the way that you make your art.

My faith in God works a little differently to natural faith in oneself. When I painted *Tough Call* recently (the red painting that's in Briar March's film of me - *Allie Eagle and Me*) I wanted to make an image in 2003 that was just as tough and

grunty as my 70's picture of a woman who'd died having a backstreet abortion ... so I prayed and said something like this. What should I have that is an even more powerful image, Lord? And then a few moments later, as I waited for an answer, came the thought of a dead lamb hanging - like the sheep that is in the national coat of arms of Enzed. So, I go on, Dear Lord, that's a bit much isn't it? I'm not big on bleeding Jesus's on crosses. I want to think of the risen Christ.. but I do know how important that sacrifice is in all of this. So I said: ok then Lord, well if that's really you please confirm it today, 'cos the painting needs to be done. That night when I get home the phone rings and it's a friend who is about to drive out to see me from her farmlet. She says I've just buried a couple of sheep. I'll wash up and come on out! I say, springing to attention, don't wash yet - dig one up and bring it to me!

How are you re-addressing earlier feminist concerns in your current art practice?

I am doing it by taking a hard look at what I made then and looking at the images and saying what do I think about this now? What does the interim wisdom of my years tell me about the way that I formed ideas and art then, and do I have new stuff to say about all this now? So the work gets to be different of course, not just because my practice has developed hugely over the years but 'cos the woman has thought about a lot of things differently over this time too. In some cases, I needed to do that because I was ever being inundated by requests from art students studying the Feminist 70's art practice. It occurred to me that while it's not unflattering to have people want to learn about you, I would rather sit in a current seat of teaching than one I left a quarter of a century ago. So, I needed to do the mistress works that replaced, in a sense, the old ones, and thought it was a reasonably good idea to re-contextualise them. I read recently that Witi Ihimaera has needed to do a similar exercise with some of his earlier works because his polemics and thinking changed so much also. Ever the art teacher, these things I enjoy playing with comparisons and introducing new clues - I could bring in other elements that don't allude to the big Feminist concerns of that time. There's quite a series of works I have done in this recast manner - The Suter owns one of the first of these pieces [titled] *We Still Are, We Still Are*.

Wendy Grace Allen

Opposite page: *This Woman Died I Care* (details), Allie Eagle, 1978, watercolour, graphic, glass and sticking plaster, 72 x 52 inches, Collection: The Auckland Art Gallery.

Film Review

Allie Eagle and Me, Briar March

2004, 53 min. Shot on mini DV.

This documentary snuck up on me and gave me a warm hug.

The journey of well known painter and activist Allie Eagle preparing for a retrospective exhibition (*Allie Eagle: The Sudden Imperative*) through the observation of Fine Arts student Briar March.

The documentary is well-crafted and paced with great cinematography by Richard Harling. There is good use of stringed instruments throughout (cello, guitar, mandolin, etc) and creative use of stills, blends, pans and lens effects to tell a strong visual story.

March uses a Te Henga swamp as a connecting metaphor for Allie Eagle's life in sexual politics and art. We are lead, Gollum-like, through the

in-your-face feminist political poster and Broadsheet campaign. Another linchpin is the discussion of how the pro-abortion feminism of Eagle's generation has affected the contemporary generation. There is a powerful and poignant contrast between a tearful scene with Eagle and March's ideological ambivalence at the end (which I would have edited to show them together).

Eagle was a staunch tough separatist, banning men from her property (including an old rooster) as well as 'men's music' and 'men's books.' Her epiphany is therefore deeply interesting and March captures the spiritual sincerity of this great New Zealander.

The Sudden Imperative is Eagle's passion to communicate a change of heart, an altered perspective. She paints powerful political paintings that now question abortion (*Collateral Damage*, a foetus in a bowl). "I was about blood, I'm still about blood." In this process she seeks to reinterpret her work and activism of the '70's.



Allie Eagle and Briar March

'Dead Marshes' of Eagle's politically-motivated stropky boot-girl pathway to a more tender, enlightened, passionate - yet equally political - Christian.

Not a strong narrator, Briar remains objective despite the collaboration and obvious friendship, "my generation is more ambivalent about such black and white positions...extreme ideology has its limitations".

There is a lovely interplay between artist-mentor and student, interlaced with a colourful smorgasbord of other characters: historian Sandra Coney, artist Juliet Batten, curator Ron Brownson, artist Jane Zusters and others. Doris Lusk, Olivia Spencer Bower, Joanna Paul, and Rita Angus fall into conversation and their work is considered.

A number of linchpins anchor the story. One is Eagle's controversial feminist painting *This Woman Died I Care* (reinterpreted for *Sudden Imperative*). It was a work taken from an American police crime scene photo. The same image was used by Sandra Coney as an equally

She is unapologetic about her Christian faith. However she seeks to build bridges with her past radicalism as well as suggesting a different basis for gender justice and ecological responsibility.

"The feminist movement she was involved in has helped to make other kinds of thinking possible, and although there has been a time for black and white positions, there is now an opportunity to look at the grey areas."

A colourful and engaging watch and a huge encouragement that New Zealand film making is not altogether angst-ridden, culturally brain dead or intellectually impotent.

Directed, produced and edited by Briar March. Associate Produced by Allie Eagle, and supported by Creative NZ, the Arjay Trust and the Screen Innovation Fund.

Showing alongside *Sheilas: 28 Years On* at the Auckland Film Festival and in other main centres July - August, 2004.

John Stringer



Song of the Ngai Tahu woman, 1843

I saw six ships in the harbour
loaded with flotsam and jetsam
of halfstarving people

pallid white faces
hurt beyond hurting
as if they had seen too much death

spring rain thick in the air so I can breath it
wind blowing the trees ragged trying
to remember the way back to where I came from

water on black bark of kowhai
birds on branches of rata falling
holes in the soles of my remembering

rocks mud and sea
snow thundering sky clouds
the spring in every blossom seeing

mamaku
are the edible parts of treefern
kauru
is the sweet food made from ti-kauka
kumara
is not unlike your potato but sweeter
inanga
the whitefish all tails
kereru
the big big blue birds
tuna the long snakes that live in rivers
with sharp inward biting teeth

take this great rock
it is Tuawera
you name it Cave Rock
see this steep cliff rock where the shags come
near the mouth of the estuary
it is Rapanui
you name it Shag Rock

if you take my words
you take my understanding
if you take my words
and use other words
to describe my home
you take this place from me

there is a place
where twilight burns the sky
I come here
to the burning of the sky

Kathleen Gallagher

Reproduced with permission from K. Gallagher
Twilight Burns the Sky, 2001, p. 33, 34.

Listening to the River (for Dave)

Last night the moon rose early
orange and round. This morning
winter's first frost on a bristly lawn,
the red iron walls of the barn
like pin-stripes in the slanting sun.
I would like to be able to say
No one I know has lost out
or failed to find whatever it is
they are looking for. Not so easy,
I think of so and so, a person
of many parts, who is drawn to water
and finds rivers speak to him
in languages he lives to translate
over and over. Their syllables
roll like stones, consonants catch
and tip like slivers of rock
flickering in the deeps. They hold
what life and light is theirs but cannot
stop the whittling and the wearing.
There is nothing unusual in this
and when they lie still we know
they are not asleep or dormant
but huddle awaiting what will be
rather than storing memories of things past.
A river is never silent. Even its
deepest pools thrive with dark
or dreamy utterance. They shelter
more than we can say we know.

Brian Turner

part of the *Artists against Aqua* exhibition at the Forrester
gallery Oct. 2003. Reproduced with permission of the poet.

Review

My New Horizons, Dawn Mann
Aigantighe Gallery, Timaru May 2004

Greetings, readers. This review is long overdue and its lateness should not overshadow the enjoyment I experienced while meeting Dawn Mann in her Waimate studio. Dawn's recent exhibition at the Aigantighe Gallery, Timaru, aptly entitled *My New Horizons*, was inspired by the rivers and waterways of the southern Canterbury/northern Otago regions. Additional inspiration, as I was later to learn, came from Dawn's own relocation (both physical and spiritual) to the small township of Waimate, from the West Coast.

While the opening night, and month long run of her exhibition was highly successful, it was when I had the chance to visit Dawn in her studio that I gained a more meaningful insight about the work and about the artist. With titles like *Liquid Light*, *River Dance*, *Blue Crush* and *Aqua* (more on this piece later) you begin to formulate images defined with hues of blue and green and shades of silvery grey. And, indeed, while each work is unique in its own right, the recurring colour palette and river-stone shapes tie the show together into a strong thematic expression.

Dawn pays homage to the river lands of the South Island by exploring colour, light and smooth shapes. It was the exploration of light and the evolution of the colours, from piece to piece, that most impressed me. With each sequential painting Dawn simplifies the detail and lightens the pigment, bringing the final pieces toward pure, almost abstract design.

Over two or three cups of coffee Dawn also shared with me her thoughts and feelings about the land and places that have, for her, a spiritual connection. It is an element that Dawn pursues in all of her works, sometimes with effortless subtlety and sometimes more overtly. Having had the wonderful opportunity to view Dawn's portfolio of paintings over the years (thank you, Dawn!), I discovered that she is at her best when she gives in to the natural beauty of her subjects. In those works the element of spirituality, while subtle, achieves its greatest clarity.

In closing it is worth noting that a piece from the exhibition entitled *Aqua* (yes, inspired by the Waitaki River power generation plans) was actually purchased by Meridian Energy. Art, it would seem, bridges many fords.

Rick Lucas



First (detail), Dawn Mann, 2004,
oil painting, 605 x 910 mm.

Hine Titama becomes Hine Nui Te Po,
John Walsh, 2002,
Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.



Review

Signs and Wonders/He Tohu He Ohore at Te Papa, supernatural encounters through art and taonga.

17 December 2003 – September 2004

On entering this exhibition one encounters Bill Cuthbert's *Lightfall*, an elegant tumble of fluorescent tubes, demonstrating his fascination with the physical phenomenon of light. *Signs and Wonders* consists of over 160 pieces from Te Papa's collection. The arrangement of exhibits makes for a rich and varied narrative. Categories take us from Creation and Journeys to Death and Afterlife, with Rituals, Vestments, Music, Dwellings, Aesthetics and more in between.

Each section is accompanied by a quotation: "In the middle of the journeys of our life I find myself in a dark wood where the straight way was lost" – Dante, *The Inferno*. "There are more enigmas in the shadow of a man who walks in the sun than in all the religions of the past, present and future." – Giorgio de Chirico; *Seeing the Light*. The art, taonga and written pieces make for a journey through many lands, people groups and belief systems. New Zealand artists both living

and dead are well represented, and there are several pieces by notable figures in world art such as Rouault, Durer, Matisse.

I found the exhibition thought provoking and beautiful, and in some instances disturbing; for instance Don Driver's *Ritual Procession*. This is a group of large plastic dolls with goat's skull heads. The figures hold up antique agricultural implements while standing on a cart, slow gong booms and subdued red light adding to a tableau of calculated menace.

I enjoyed the inclusion of works evocative of the supernatural without direct religious or spiritual reference. To me this speaks of our cathedral of creation, or universal 'God consciousness' referred to in the Christian Bible as in Romans 1:20 "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen...from what has been made".

Adjacent to *Signs and Wonders* on Te Papa's Boulevard is Judy Darragh's *So... You Made It?* exhibition. On display are some of Darragh's shrine assemblages from her *Queen of Kitsch* era. This is probably coincidental as an extension of *Signs and Wonders*. Or is it another Sign that what may be sacred and Wondrous in one belief system in another context could be ironic, amusing or simply collectable? And so goes the debate on when does art become sacred, or the sacred become art? In this instance, you decide.

Anne Marie Verbeek

Comet over Mt Taranaki and Parihaka,
Ralph Hotere, about 1972,
Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.



Review

Necessary Protection, Tim Brown
Campbell Grant Gallery, 13 April - 1 May 2004.

Browns it seems, are inspired by McCahon. Nigel Brown's concluding exhibition of *I AM* paintings (since 1999) at CoCA / *Am IV* (17 March - 4 April, 2004) is his fourth annual show referencing McCahon's various workings of Jesus' quote in John 8:58 quoting God's identification to Moses in Exodus 3:6 (*Victory over death* 2, 1978; *A question of faith*, 1970). Tutored by McCahon, Nigel Brown directly references McCahon's *Muriwai* and *Necessary Protection* works. "After two years of *Antarctica* paintings I felt a need to return to the more familiar...and reference points...I was drawn to McCahon's *Necessary Protection* series, *Muriwai* and the Gannet colony." Artist Matthew Browne suggested he move on to something else, but as Nigel responds, "[McCahon] himself said that the only way past Mondrian was more involvement with the human situation".

Tim Brown has done exactly that, progressing his own development of McCahon's *Muriwai Necessary Protection* 1972 in his most recent exhibition *Necessary Protection* at Campbell Grant (13 April - 1 May). Tim Brown's current oeuvre, first developed as a triptych response to the *12: dialogues with time* exhibition-brief in 2003, draws heavily on his perception of the human condition. In a recent interview he said, "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." While not as politically overt as Rudolf Boelee (Green Party politics), Ralph Hotere (*Project Aqua*) or Nigel Brown (the Springbok Tour, nuclear politics) his *Necessary Protection* works are an obvious reference to peace, war and the invasion of Iraq. The Press described his ceramics as "sombre reflection, bitter irony and possible hope". This reworking of his *Ballistas* in blood red and black, as X and T crosses, free-standing and wall-mounted artworks, beautifully

Necessary Protection - Black Cross (detail),
Tim Brown, 2003, Ceramic and Wood,
1.35m high x 1.5m long x 0.25m wide

offset by well-crafted packing case surrounds, mounts and platforms, is a mature development on his two recent exhibitions (*12: dialogues with time*, 2003, CoCA; *Fallen: Necessary Protection*, 2004, Christchurch Polytechnic).

Matthew Browne might be right that artists can sometimes overwork hallmark images (Finn Fair's repetition of religious forms, Ewan McDougall's whimsy stick men). However, evolving consistency can often build towards artistic iconography (Hammond's bird-humans, Binney's native birds on empty blue scape) and resonate over time with arts patrons ('we like what we see and like to see what we like'). It remains to be seen if T. Brown continues to enthrall us with his current dynamic or moves on to other ideas. Either way the long shadow of McCahon needs no protection.

John Stringer



Rob D'Auvergne installs his kinetic sculpture, *Ornithopter*, at Christchurch Arts Centre, June 2004.

Central character, Pai and her family
in a scene from *Whale rider*.



Film Review

Whale rider, Niki Caro

Whale rider begins with the words "In the old days the land felt a great emptiness waiting to be filled up". It instantly casts the contemporary tale of culture clash in mythical terms. Niki Caro's film adaptation of Witi Ihimaera's book transcends its location in a small New Zealand Maori community, drawn in part from a Ngati Kohohi legend of their ancestor Paikea, with a message which is both universal and powerful.

The mythic / religious dimension of the film has been well recognised by significant overseas critics. Roger Ebert (Chicago Sun-Times), noting that the film side-steps all of the obvious clichés of the underlying stories and makes itself fresh, observant, tough and genuinely moving, calls the ending "a transcendent one, inspired and inspiring". Kenneth Turn (LA Times) calls it a "substantial film of unexpected emotional force and when at a certain point it seems to slip the bonds of this world and take a leap of faith into an almost mythological dimension, it breathlessly takes us along for that memorable ride".

James Berardinelli notes that the story follows the familiar path of the Prophesied Hero coming to lead the people. "The other aspect of *Whale rider* that makes its contemporary myth ultimately compelling is the way it immerses us in present day Maori culture." He also notes it is the second movie in a decade to address the subject of Maori survival in modern culture. The other film, *Once Were Warriors*... presented a bleak perspective of how progress and assimilation have emasculated the Maori spirit. *Whale rider* has a "more optimistic point-of view, indicating that while change is necessary, it need not destroy culture and tradition. Pai's role is to not tear down a custom that has held true for more than 1000 years, but to reshape and continue it." This is a very important perspective in analysing how the film functions religiously.

On this note Don Tamihere, a Maori reviewer

writes that "In a country where the indigenous language is blatantly mispronounced every night on the six o'clock news, and where the public perception of Maori seems governed more by *Crimewatch* and *Once Were Warriors* than anything else, a positive and inspiring movie like *Whale rider* is long overdue.... *Whale rider* makes no apologies for its 'Maoriness'; in fact it wears it with pride. In fact pride was the overwhelming emotion that I was left with after seeing this movie."

The film is carried magnificently by its main actors, Keisha Castle Hughes, whose incredible acting has been well commented on and recognised, but also by Rawiri Patene and Vicky Haughton as the grandparents. The relationship between Koro, an individual of strong beliefs and values seemingly unable to escape the rigidity of his upbringing, and Pai, always challenging the tradition as she seeks to follow her calling and fulfil her gifting, is the centre of the film. The film is as much a story of Koro's growth as it is Pai's and in the end it is the love they have for each other, which means neither can let go, that drives the story. In many ways Pai is a classic Christ figure: the outsider who is rejected as a saviour/leader because she doesn't fit the model but in the end through death and resurrection demonstrates who she is and is accepted.

There are many themes to work with in the film's meaning: female versus patriarchy; modernity/post modernity versus tradition; love versus rigidity and rejection. It is a film of female empowerment as well as a coming of age movie which is powerfully significant for those of us involved in religion because the issues of patriarchy and females is a significant issue for many traditional religions, including Christianity, not just Maori. Not only is this a wonderfully enjoyable film, but one that provokes deep and significant reflection for us about the challenges of adapting our inherited modes of living, community and leadership to a rapidly changing world.

Kevin Ward



On 26 June 2004 well-established Canterbury textile artist **Vivienne Mountfort** died after a short illness. Vivienne was 86. She was well known for her circular and large textile works - such as *Wool tapestry* 1978, collection of the Christchurch Art gallery, and *Earthworks* 2004 (pictured) mandalas and latterly works combining carved pieces by Riki Manuel. Much of her work explored environmental themes and a concern for the depletion of the natural environment.

She was born in Christchurch and educated at Avonside Girls High School and trained at the Canterbury College School of Art as well as Teachers' Training College. She is considered to be one of New Zealand's most innovative fibre artists denoted by an off-loom weaving technique and the incorporation of naturally coloured wools, natural objects and carvings.



Her parting comment was, "Don't be sad - rejoice. I have had a good life with loving family and wonderful friends and passionate interests."