



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.



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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