chrysalis seed trust

Director's cut

Why does a young, creative and commercially successful filmmaker plan to leave the industry she has extensively trained for and worked in for seventeen years?

'I wanted to see what vengeance, or an "eye for an eye" actually looks like. To tell you the truth, I don't like it. And I will never portray violence in any form or for any reason ever again.'

This is Gaylene Barnes' reaction to her own short film *Mother's Day* (2006). Gaylene is planning to turn away from a profitable career in film and television, returning to her first artistic passion of painting. This interview explores some of the rationale for this change in direction. It looks at her reasons for making the explicitly violent short film *Mother's Day,* and the ideology behind her next major project, an animated black comedy, *The Mobile Meat Processing Unit.*

continued on p 12

CS ARTS

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CS ARTS

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 Arts
This is our main publication, which goes to artists, galleries, libraries and supporters around New Zealand and overseas. Designed for the wider arts community, it engages with contemporary artists, art issues and events. We have a number of groups and collectives. The main collective is for contemporary visual artists.

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Contents

3 EDITORIAL

ARTICLE

8 The Hollywood creed

INTERVIEWS

1 Gaylene Barnes — Director's cut

4 Kathleen Gallagher — A Breath of Peace

14 Gerard Smyth — Untold stories

EXHIBITION REVIEWS

16 Long-term exhibition — *Toi Te Papa, Art of the Nation*, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, 25 October 2006–25 September 2009

21 Group Exhibition — *Out of Erewhon*, Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, Christchurch, 24 November 2006–4 February 2007

22 Jinji Koyama — *New Works by Jinji Koyama*, CoCA Mair Gallery, Christchurch, 29 November–16 December 2006

23 Claire Beynon — *Route Markings*, Peter Rae Gallery, Dunedin, 25 November–14 December 2006

24 Yong-Hyun Kwon — *The Light*, Salamander Gallery, Christchurch, November 2006

POETRY

7 Kathleen Gallagher — Tau Te Mauri / Breath of Peace

7 Kathleen Gallagher — '81 Springbok Tour

FROM OUR LIBRARY

25 Explorations in Theology and Film — Editors Clive Marsh and Gaye Ortiz

FILM REVIEWS

25 Out of the Blue — Directed by Robert Sarkies

26 Batman Begins — Directed by Christopher Nolan

27 Blood Diamond — Directed by Edward Zwick

28 EVENTS AND NOTICES

34 LETTERS

35 MORE OF THE CHRYSALIS SEED TEAM

Cover Photo: Sally-Nina Moore as The Mother in *Mother's Day* (2006) short film, directed by Gaylene Barnes.

Kia ora!

Out of the Blue?
Albatross sail and patrol, sweeping the margins of the Tairoa headland. Seals bask, shags dive; penguins fish and clamber ashore. The denuded sculptured hills rise slowly to overlook the mudflats, windswept beaches, stony jetty, huddled cribs and caravans at Aramoana.

Was David Gray's explosive paranoia out of the blue, or does it touch a deeper seam of social denial in our nations mythology? Robert Sarkies' film asks these questions as it contrasts the isolated madness of Gray with the heroic kindness of a lame grandmother, and caring local police. The focus is on telling the truth about the people affected, rather than a voyeuristic description of mass murder.

Screening violence
The camps are drawn up over the issue of the 'anti smacking' bill. Pita Sharples and the Maori party rallied in support of Sue Bradford's bill. He reminded the nation that children are little treasures, and supported the bill in a desire to stem violence to children. Others protest at the apparent intervention of the State in parents' freedom, as well as bringing up/raising more directly biblical arguments. This bill will criminalise thousands of normal parents, they argue. Does violence have any place in our social structures?

In *Apocalypto,* Mel Gibson's latest instalment of screen violence, we are shown crafted sequences of the inner rot that led to the downfall of the Mayan empire when the Spanish Conquistadors invaded. *Blood Diamond* exposes a slice of the violence, happening daily, in parts of Africa. Some serious questions are embedded in a story that exposes the injustices of the illegal diamond trade and a continental epidemic of child soldiers and civil war. Violence invades our screens and airwaves every day. Is it ever redemptive? Gibson answers the question, in his *The Passion of the Christ*. Philosopher Calvin Seerveld is famous for saying that Christian art should be a 'surd of sin and joy'.[1] The Bible does not shy away from depicting violence in some of its narratives. Jesus says, 'Blessed are the peacemakers for theirs is the kingdom of God'. What is the place of violence in art, for those us who choose to follow Jesus and the way of peace?

War and peace
As we continue to explore the intersection between faith and film, these issues are opened in quite opposite ways. Both Gaylene Barnes and Kathleen Gallagher are peacemakers. One of them tries to put us off by depicting extreme violence by a mother, the other through generating a physical and immediate sense of peace and God's presence through the production and viewing experience of her film. Kotuku, whales and waiata all reinforce this reality. Gerard Smyth opens up a few stories from his vast reservoir of experiences as a documentary filmmaker over several decades.

Toi Te Papa
Damian Skinner concludes the series of writing we have presented on *Toi Te Papa*, and its visionary, Jonathan Mane-Wheoki. He gives a rounded glimpse of the first installation of this five-year repositioning of the nation's art.

Brand new CS website: *www.cs.org.nz*
Check out our just-launched new-look website—discover the latest and back issues of *CS Arts* magazine, news, book reviews, a links directory, staff bios and more!

Peter Crothall

1 Calvin Seerveld, *A Christian Critique of Art and Literature*, Toronto Tuppence Press, 1995, p 59-72.

Nick Harvey (Karl Urban) in a scene from *Out of The Blue* (2006), directed by Robert Sarkies.

A breath of peace

An interview with Kathleen Gallagher

Kathleen Gallagher is well known as a poet, playwright and author of radio dramas, with extensive experience and success in these fields. She has had three collections of poetry published—*Tara* (1987), *Gypsy* (1993) and *Twilight Burns The Sky* (2001). She has been writing plays for theatre since 1984. Kathleen received the New Zealand Playwrights Award in 1993. In 1996 her radio play *Charlie Bloom* was a finalist in the New Zealand Radio Awards and the New Zealand Media Peace Awards. Her first collection of plays *Mothertongue* with Women's Action Theatre (WAT) was published in 1999 by Publishing Giant Press, Christchurch. Her second collection *Peace Plays* was published in 2002—one of these plays *Hautu* was written especially for the Chrysalis Seed arts festival (2002)—and a thirty-three minute documentary *Peaceful Pacific*, in 2004. Her first short film *Jimmy Sullivan* was launched at the Academy Cinema, Christchurch, in 2000.

Kathleen Gallagher, 2006. Photo: Andrew Clarkson

This interview, however, features her work as a filmmaker. It focuses on her film *Tau Te Mauri/Breath of Peace* (2005)[1] and explores the stories behind the film's production. Kathleen shares her personal motivation, inspiration and the people and places that influenced her, both in life and in the making of this dynamic film.

Kathleen's work is often an expression of her life values; being a peace activist herself, *Tau Te Mauri/ Breath of Peace* reflects this inner consistency. Internationally the film has been well received, assisting the healing process of grief from the horror of exploded nuclear weapons in World War II (WWII) and from subsequent testing. Acting as a tribute to the New Zealand peace movement and its heroes, the film works as an educational tool for future generations. It is also a current reminder of the significance and impact of New Zealand's contribution to the World Court's findings for world disarmament of nuclear weapons.

The film begins with a combination of poetry and scenes of nature; the uniquely beautiful kotuku (white heron), dolphins swimming free and the majestic sight of whales in motion. These clips are interspersed throughout *Tau Te Mauri/Breath of Peace,* giving room for digesting the sadness and the triumph of eight New Zealand peace activists telling their personal stories. From a WWII conscientious objector sharing his experience of the war, to a reflection on the outcry over the bombing of the *Rainbow Warrior* [2], the film shows the shift in a country changing its attitudes and alliances and demanding a change in law to a 'Nuclear Free New Zealand'. *Tau Te Mauri/Breath of Peace*'s impact is profound, ending with the World Court agreeing with Kate Dewes and Pauline Tangiora of New Zealand, and calling for international disarmament. After viewing *Tau Te Mauri/Breath of*

Peace I was honoured to meet the film's writer and producer.

Where did the personal motivation come from for *Tau Te Mauri/Breath of Peace*?

'I met with Kate Dewes and Ruth Greenaway. The idea was to start doing interviews with people involved in the peace movement in Christchurch. When I heard them talking, I started to feel this was not just an oral thing; it needed to go further. The stories were extraordinary. They needed to be accessible to the world. A short time later I was on holiday between Takaka and Farewell Spit. I was by a blue-green lake and watching a kotuku. My Dad used to say: "Listen to the birds—listen to what they have to say". I watched this kotuku.'

For a time the kotuku flew, moving beautifully on and off the branch of a tree in front of her. Kathleen observed the bird's grace and ease; she knew the moment held significance. 'So I listened to this kotuku and I felt that the peace story had to be told to the world by film. I also knew that the kotuku was part of the story; and that is why we included kotuku in the film.'

Did you have any distinctive moments or main turning points in making the film?

'When I was talking to Pauline Tangiora [campaigner for peace disarmament]. Looking into her eyes I felt

and sensed I was looking into the eyes of a whale. There was a depth, like a deep pool of dark water. It was then I knew the whales also were to be in the film.

'The Aborigines in South Australia could not call up the whales any more. They called people from New Zealand and North America to a gathering. As Pauline walked with the people down to the water, a *karanga*[3] came to her and she called out over the water; the whales came up playing and throwing their babies in the air—they were back!'

This happening is shown only briefly in the film, yet it illustrates the power of these special individuals. Kathleen describes the eight peace activists featured in the film. 'All of them have a physical presence, a feeling of peace. They live it in their daily lives, an authenticity. They have put their lives on the line, yet they see it as ordinary, not extraordinary—they see it as what they have to do, an ordinary response. They would say "How else would you, could you, respond?"'

Has having four children of your own influenced your desire to take action in 'humanity' projects?

'No, not really—I would do it anyway; but I thought there is a need for them to know. When I made *Tau Te Mauri/Breath of Peace*, it was also for the young people of New Zealand, so that they would know where to start from ... knowing our stories, the peace stories of New Zealand. I was personally involved in some of the actions like the Peace Squadron in Christchurch. So I was aware of some of the stories already.'

Do you think anything in your upbringing or personal life led you to being a peace activist?

'Two things really. My experience of Villa Maria College. The Mercy Sisters taught us there—young New Zealand women. They taught us about prayer, love, and that we could change the world with prayer and love. They all taught it, and they lived it. The head teacher of Villa went on the last anti-Vietnam War march in about 1975. This was an incredibly brave and courageous act for a school principal to do in those days. I was profoundly influenced by these courageous and progressive women.

'I finished my degree in Religious Studies and History when I was twenty and travelled overseas to North and South America. I realised poor people with good strong communities were able to live happy, fulfilled lives, and rich people as in the United States could live broken, bitter and very sad lives—that the accumulation of wealth was inherently unsatisfying and did not bring joy.'

What do you think made for the strong communities?

'Communities in the end, they had prayer and they did manual work. Extended families were a given. Caring and loving, people who were clear about what mattered.'

And what was that for them?

'Love.'

How have you drawn on your own faith in producing your work?

'Having faith is a journey (experienced) over a long time. My faith and understanding of God in the world has evolved throughout my life. Faith is not a static thing; it develops—like a tree growing. The roots get deeper, the fruit becomes more abundant. I don't think Catholics are overtly evangelistic, almost the opposite. It is like: "See those Christians, how they love one another". It is almost a practice of love and prayer. Quietness and stillness are given priority—contemplative.'

Do you feel that it is more important now than ever to be able to clearly hear God's voice in the busyness and noise of modern society?

'Yes. I think it is important to make places of quietness and stillness, sacred places. And to do manual labour—like cooking, washing, sweeping floors, mowing lawns, gardening and walking. Not using machines to do these things, so we are quiet and we can hear.'

"My Dad used to say: "Listen to the birds—listen to what they have to say". I watched this kotuku

Portraits below from left to right:

Jack Rogers: Conscientious objector during WWII, imprisoned 1939–1946.

George Armstrong: Instigated the first New Zealand Peace Squadron protests against the nuclear ship visits.

Mary Woodward: Campaigner for nuclear disarmament in the late 1940s–1960s.

Nicky Hagar: Involved in organising the Wellington Peace Squadron and Nuclear Free Zones. Researched and exposed the extent of the United States spy network in New Zealand.

So you see these things as meditational?

'Yes, but we can corrupt them by doing them with machines and then we don't hear God in the earth, the sky and air around us ... the sea and rivers; the quietness.'

The power of individuals making a mighty difference is inspirational; the film allows contemplation of this through intelligent and elegant editing. As a result of the film being shown within New Zealand and internationally, an ongoing healing and educational effect is occurring. After the film launch (August 2005) at The Arts Centre in Christchurch, viewers filled the Great Hall. With the cast of eight activists on stage the crowd stood and clapped and clapped, and clapped. Included in the cast were Jack Rogers (a WWII conscientious objector imprisoned for the duration of the war, who deeply mourned the death of 220,000 people killed as the result of the atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki) and Mary Woodward (a nuclear protester from the 1950s, who had experienced having things thrown at her as she marched in the streets of Christchurch). Both now stood crying in disbelief and gratitude at witnessing the changed hearts and attitudes of New Zealanders.

After the success at the World Court, finding 'Yes, nuclear weapons are generally illegal, all states have a commitment to disarmament', members of the Japanese delegation expressed appreciation and gratitude at having the extent of their grief over the horror of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki recognised in an international court for the first time. With the showing of the film in Japan, Kathleen was contacted by a Japanese woman saying she understood why the film was made and its appropriateness to Japan, why the New Zealand peace story makes sense. Kathleen was informed that the kotuku—that she had sensed was so important to listen to—was the Japanese symbol for peace.

Tau Te Mauri/Breath of Peace now seems to be continuing to help the work begun by the peace activists. Kathleen explains: 'An elderly woman unknown to me contacted me asking for two copies of the film because she has a regular morning tea session where she screens the film for friends to come and watch. I am aware of others who have been moved to action to buy eight copies and send them all over the world. Copies of the film along with a booklet have also been supplied to all High Schools in New Zealand through the Christchurch Peace Foundation and a national educational group.

'It was not until the film was nearly complete that we could see how the combined actions of the peace activists had created a momentum that connected people in New Zealand.' The process of change in New Zealand has continued to have international influence, through a ripple effect. *Tau Te Mauri/Breath of Peace* is documentary evidence of the collective power of individuals connected by their convictions and through their willingness to take action. 'Initially in New Zealand, prior to 1984, there was a feeling, a questioning, of how can these protesters do anything effective against these mighty powers within the world (particularly France and the United States of America)? But they did.'

Janet Joyce

1 Reviewed more fully in *CS Arts*, July 2006.

2 *Rainbow Warrior* is the name of a series of ships operated by Greenpeace. The first ship was sunk by the French foreign intelligence agency (DGSE) in Auckland harbour, New Zealand, on 10 July 1985. The current ship using the name was launched in 1989.

3 Karanga: (*noun*) the ceremonial call of welcome by women of the Marae.

Tau Te Mauri / Breath of Peace

Old islands young islands
Sea birds, people hearing
The wairua of the land
The rise and fall of sea

Peace people of Aotearoa New Zealand
Walking biking through the night
Hammering on planes of war
Sailing across the Pacific

Stories of walking and waka
Small boats and surfboards
Typewriters, kitchen tables
Hikoi and hammers.

Kathleen Gallagher

Used by permission.

'81 Springbok tour

many many people
running together in twos in fours
together in tens running
chanting chanting running chanting
rolling like thunder
haka chanting
many people
old armies coming coming
old shields crash helmets balaclava
rubbish bin lid shields
coats thick with newspapers
many people coming singing smiling walking
grimly walking chanting singing
arms linked surging
in the mud the winter mud
of the rugby park in hair in fingers
our hands mud
police wild batons clubbing us in mud
coils of barbed wire strung out barbed army wire
cold scarred scared eyes of police
rubbish bins barricading blocking
tight knots of police
thick hands knuckles gripping batons
thin bone of knuckles shining through
"Amandla! Amandla! Amandla Nga Whetu
Amandla Nga Whetu!"
"Amandla! Amandla! Amandla Nga Whetu!
Amandla Nga Whetu!"
feet walking black wet road
feet walking tramping walking tramping
chanting tramping waving banners
singing tramping
rain biting streets winter city square
arms linked marching
in procession
walking silent
walking
mud in your hair
mud on your knees
mud on your hands
in procession
banners flying high
above the fifty-six day faces
above the black coats
above the silent tread of boots
above the silent linking to arms

Kathleen Gallagher

Reproduced from *Twilight Burns The Sky*
by Kathleen Gallagher. Doygal Press, 2001, pp 37–38,
Used by permission.

Dorothy (Judy Garland), The Cowardly Lion (Bert Lahr), The Scarecrow (Ray Bolger), The Tin Man (Jack Haley) in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939).

The Hollywood creed

Based on the book *Eyes Wide Open: Looking for God in Popular Culture* by Dr William (Bill) Romanowski [1]

Lots of religious-subject films of recent years—and latterly the 'bleeding Mary' controversy on *South Park* [2]—have provoked a reassessment of the relationship between the contemporary narrative of the Christian faith and the Hollywood cultural landscape. Like art, movies have a cumulative impact on our culture. Artists draw on the prevailing social mores and contribute to the development of the moral landscape. This article explores some of the divergences between Hollywood and biblical worldviews within the storylines of movies. In his book *Eyes Wide Open*—a play on Stanley Kubrick's film *Eyes Wide Shut* [3]—Bill Romanowski suggests better terms of engagement between the Church and Hollywood.

Regardless of an artist's faith convictions, films and art examine life in a broken world that is at once hostile to, and yet in search of, God. This is a rich avenue for evaluation. The contemporary Church needs to focus on the cultural landscape that is embedded in a narrative film and direct our energies toward a critique of film values and perspectives rather than hiding from this marketplace of ideas that surrounds us. One way to approach modern art is to consider it as a map of reality. Every artist has a life vision which is manifest in his or her creative work; this becomes a model, or a map, of reality.

When we view movies, we suspend our disbelief. We know movies are not real. We've all experienced moments when we've sat there at the end not wanting to leave the world created, the characters we've walked with, or burst the fantastical bubble. We allow the projections to take us to another world. Knowing it's unreal, we still have physiological responses (tears, sweaty palms, fear, terror, exhilaration). Sometimes people actually clap or cheer. We cover our eyes, we laugh, all-the-while knowing it's just a movie, an illusion. Despite their unreality, movies engage our emotions and thoughts. *The Matrix* [4] is about a simulated cerebral 'reality' that people exist in, unaware they are doing so.

The movie or TV screen is a barrier that distances us from the action taking place and the characters involved. We know we're not going to be glanced by a blow from King Kong or attacked by a flying dragon, or hit by flying car debris. Hollywood even plays with the exceptions: *Last Action Hero* [5] where a boy gets caught in the space between the audience and the

> ***"The journey on the yellow brick road only brings Dorothy, the Lion, the Tin Man and the Scarecrow to the destination of self-realisation. Ultimately they have no need of the Wizard, a god-like figure, whose technological facade is exposed to reveal a bumbling old man***

Kathleen Kelly (Meg Ryan) and Joe Fox (Tom Hanks) in *You've Got Mail* (1998).

> ***In the end Rocky does not win the fight, but he goes the distance, holds out for 15 rounds against the world heavyweight champion. This gives him the right to win the girl, get married, start a family, and acquire material wealth (the themes of Rocky II, III, IV and V)***

Rocky Balboa (Sylvester Stallone) in *Rocky* (1976).

movie, or *The Ring* [6] and *Frequency* [7] where reality comes 'through' the movie or radio. We understand we are transported into the minds, bedrooms and lives of the characters we are viewing, and as such, we are involved in conversation that influences us. It's an imaginative 'reality'.

Research shows that it is not a single movie or art work that develops social opinion, but rather the cumulative effect of many movies over time. Christians need to engage with and understand the cultural framework of cinema; they are involved in the same world that artists are. In one sense it is a contest of ideas and ways of being. Every artist has a life vision. Hollywood literally projects vision, but they are visions based on attitudes and values at variance with the scriptural account of truth. Romanowski describes this variance across seven categories: religion, humanism, love and sex, materialism, gender stereotypes, individualism and violence.

Hollywood's vision of humanism, for example, Romanowski calls 'the Wizard of Oz syndrome'. Hollywood art presents a view that everything needed to secure our own destiny and salvation is within ourselves. The journey on the yellow brick road only brings Dorothy, the Lion, the Tin Man and the Scarecrow to the destination of self-realisation. Ultimately they have no need of the Wizard, a god-like figure, whose technological facade is exposed to reveal a bumbling old man. This journey to self-realisation is the backbone of most Hollywood stories. It is founded on the notion that people are basically good and only need to discover their own potential. Ordinary men can become god-like figures controlling their own fates through individual effort while making the world a better place to live. The key to success is believing … in yourself.

Hollywood films tend to deal with social issues by reducing them down to individual matters. Social, political, economic problems are presented as

> ***Eighty percent of Americans incorrectly believe that the Bible says: 'God helps those who help themselves'. That maxim is actually attributed to Benjamin Franklin and it is a theme of countless films***

Bert Monro (Anthony Hopkins) in *The World's Fastest Indian* (2006).

The Simpsons

> ***Homer: 'So I figure I should just try to live right and worship you in my own way'***
>
> ***God: 'Homer, you've got a deal, now excuse me, I have to appear in a tortilla in Mexico…'***

individual problems to be resolved at a personal level. *Mr Smith Goes To Washington*,[8] *A Few Good Men*,[9] *The Pelican Brief*[10] and *Mission Impossible I, II, III*[11] feature heroic individuals who weed out institutional corruption. Happy, resolved endings present romantic love conquering all, while 'the baddy' is led off in handcuffs. This suggests we can find in personal relationships the peace and harmony that escape us in the contradictions of our complex and unjust social world. In *You've Got Mail*[12] Joe Fox (Tom Hanks) intentionally and without care destroys the small family bookstore of Kathleen Kelly (Meg Ryan) with his massive Manhattan super chain. She says part of her has died, but love and romance overcome all. The two characters are able to transcend their differences and find personal satisfaction in love and life. This is the Hollywood doctrine of individualism. God does not call us to be rugged individualists, but to be part of a community. We are to live in relationships with others, accountable to God, and responsible to one another.

Another key variance of the Hollywood creed is religion. In an episode of *The Simpsons* Homer decides he's not going to church any more.

Homer: *'God … I'm not a bad guy, I work hard, I love my kids, so why should I spend half my Sunday hearing about how I'm going to hell?'*

God: *'Hmm, you've got a point there. Y'know, sometimes even I'd rather be watching football. Does St Louis still have a team?'*

Homer: *'Y'know what I really hate about church? Those boring sermons.'*

God: *'I couldn't agree more. That Reverend Lovejoy really displeases me. I think I'll give him a canker sore…'*

Homer: *'So I figure I should just try to live right and worship you in my own way.'*

God: *'Homer, you've got a deal, now excuse me, I have to appear in a tortilla in Mexico…'*

Homer has Western religion down well. Most Westerners see religion as a private matter. Living right and worshipping God in our own way gives priority to Western values of individualism rather than the authority of scripture or church tradition. Humans can serve God as they please and individuals are their own authority for right living and appropriate worship. Eighty percent of Americans incorrectly believe that the Bible says: 'God helps those who help themselves'. That maxim is actually attributed to Benjamin Franklin and it is a theme of countless films. Such a view does not imply that we are 'dead in our sin'[13] but that we are capable of making our own salvation with a little help from God. God is not the source of our redemption but a magical outside assistance. He is an aid to self-reliant individuals on their journey to self-realisation. These films wear away at the consequences of human sin and eliminate the need for Christ while elevating man's role in the process.

Artists draw upon these values to create artistic or symbolic maps of the world in which we live. Art, movies and music are invisible blueprints, templates of reality, that people use to interpret their experience and guide their behaviour. The contours of this map are the ideals, beliefs and values widely shared by people. After a lucky escape, people will often say 'I need to go out and buy a Lotto ticket'. That is a shared cultural myth about the power of luck or a benevolent Fate.

The American narrative goes like this: a rugged masculine individual overcomes obstacles and trials in life, to win a measure of success climbing from rags to riches. The myth exhorts us to shake free of the living past in a struggling ascent to realisation of promise and a gracious future. If you work hard, with a little luck, you can overcome all obstacles and accomplish anything and realise dreams. It is the story of *Rocky*.[14] The opening scene of *Rocky* is a Byzantine Christ; the camera pans down to show us a boxing man. The camera makes an unspoken statement that Rocky is a kind of messianic figure, a saviour. Christ is watching over him. Films are full of these religious signifiers. Rocky's training symbolises his personal struggles and his ascent. In one scene he pounds up the steps of the Philadelphia Art Museum. People still bound up the steps of the museum today, even videotape themselves doing so. It is one of the top tourist attractions in the City of Brotherly Love, like the *Lord of The Rings* locations in New Zealand. People want to cross over the threshold to 'get into' the movie.

In the end Rocky does not win the fight, but he goes the distance, holds out for 15 rounds against the world heavyweight champion. This gives him the right to win the girl, get married, start a family, and acquire material wealth (the themes of *Rocky II, III, IV and V*). Rocky never has to tell us about the dream, it is conveyed through the characterisation and the struggle. Cultural myth IS the story of *Rocky*, of *Erin Brokovitch*,[15] various Bruce Willis characters, of *Billy Elliot*.[16] Each film exalts the individual hero rather than the victims. Individual actions and goals work change. The ideal creates a sense of limitless opportunity and one's own power. Thousands of movies employ the same narrative structure. We can understand these films as our own cultural liturgy, ritualistic stories repeated over and over again, reinforcing a distorted myth of life.

Billy Elliot (Jamie Bell) in *Billy Elliot* (2000).

> ***This journey to self-realisation is the backbone of most Hollywood stories. It is founded on the notion that people are basically good and only need to discover their own potential. Ordinary men can become god-like figures controlling their own fates through individual effort while making the world a better place to live***

The Wizard (Frank Morgan) in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939).

The British film *Billy Elliot* is structured similarly to *Rocky*. An individual overcomes obstacles to achieve something unprecedented. Like *Erin Brokovich* the film is grounded in real events (the1980s labour strikes in Britain). Billy has to break through class barriers in order to achieve his dream of the ballet, an occupation that runs against his society's ideas of masculinity. Billy's success is not measured by material gain, but the extent to which he grows his talent. It is the ideal of liberation, the freedom to be who we want to be. But this film is tempered by British attitudes about change, upward social mobility, and accepting the inevitable which is a distinction from Hollywood optimism. Billy's achievement is not so much an ideal as an exception. As Billy goes off to London to join the Royal Ballet, we see his father and uncle traipse back into the mine, the union broken. Movies give us an insight into the values and ideals of a particular culture.

In 1920 the editor of the Manawatu Daily Times observed that the capture of the film market by Americans meant that New Zealand youth were seeing life through the artificial, spurious glare of Broadway New York. In 1945 a New Zealand film critic said if there was such a thing as New Zealand culture it was to an extent a creation of Hollywood. Only drinking tea was more popular in New Zealand than going to movies, and official statistics seemed to back him up. For many years, New Zealanders were among the most frequent moviegoers in the Western world. Now 'Hollywood' has come to New Zealand (*Willow*; *Xena; Hercules*; *Lord of the Rings; The Lion*, *The Witch and The Wardrobe; The Last Samurai; The World's Fastest Indian,* etc). The Church here needs to acknowledge the visions that come with it, understand them, and critique them against God's vision in the narrative of scripture while we navigate real/reel life.

John Stringer

1 *Eyes Wide Open: Looking for God in Popular Culture*, Brazos Press, 2001, a Gold Medallion winner, for Dr William Romanowski, from the Evangelical Christian Publisher's Association. Professor Romanowski also made a three-part video series based on *Eyes Wide Open* (as above), the 2002 Aegis Award winner. *CS Arts* March 2007 featured an interview with Dr Romanowski.

2 *South Park* episode 'Bloody Mary' screened C4/TV3 10 May 2006. Produced by Comedy Central.

3 *Eyes Wide Shut* (1991), director Stanley Kubrick, (from a book by Arthur Schnitzler) and script by Stanley Kubrick and Frederic Raphael.

4 *The Matrix* (1999), written and directed by the Wachowski Brothers.

5 *Last Action Hero* (1993), director John McTiernan.

6 *The Ring* (2002), Japan/USA, director Gore Verbinski, from a novel by Koji Suzuki, screenplay by Erin Kruger.

7 *Frequency* (2000), director Gregory Hoblit, writer Toby Emmerich.

8 *Mr Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), director Frank Capra, writer L R Foster, screenplay Sidney Buchman.

9 *A Few Good Men* (1992), director Rob Reiner, play and screenplay Aaron Sarkin.

10 *The Pelican Brief* (1993), written and directed Alan J Pakula, from a book by John Grisham.

11 *Mission Impossible I* (1996), director Brian De Palma, writer Bruce Geller; *Mission Impossible II* (2000), director John Woo, writer Ronald D Moore; *Mission Impossible III* (2006), director J J Abrams, writers Alex Kurtzman-Counter, Roberto Orci, J J Abrams.

12 *You've Got Mail* (1998), written & directed by Nora Ephron.

13 The Bible, Ephesians 2:4-5.

14 *Rocky* (1976), director John G Avildsen, writer Sylvester Stallone.

15 *Erin Brokovich* (2000), director Steven Soderbergh, writer Susannah Grant.

16 *Billy Elliot* (2000), UK/France, director Stephen Daldry, writer Lee Hall.

Director's cut —an interview with Gaylene Barnes *(continued from cover)*

Born in Southland, New Zealand, 1970. Fourteen years in the film and television industry in various roles such as director, designer and editor. Nominated twice in the New Zealand Screen Awards—'Best Documentary Editing' for *Out of Sight/Out of Mind* (2005) and 'Best Production Design' for *Scarfies* (1999). Recently involved in the successful TV series *Hunger For the Wild* as editor, as well as designing and creating the titles, graphics and animations for the series. Gaylene Barnes completed a Diploma in Fine Arts in Computer Art from Otago Polytechnic (1991) and a Bachelor of Arts in Art History from University of Otago (1996).

The technology of computer art captured her desire and Gaylene quickly discovered that she was very good at it. With enthusiasm and determination Gaylene added to her skills, learning how to be a graphic artist at Television New Zealand. She clearly leaped to success, making mainstream commercials, rock videos, and, notably at the age of twenty-six, was the production designer for Robert Sarkie's feature film, *Scarfies* (1998). With seventeen busy years in the film and television industry, to say her CV is extensive could only be an understatement.

Gaylene has furthered her studies, is in the process of raising a daughter and yet has always found time and energy for her own work alongside her commercial enterprises, as in *Prison of Infinite Space,* a multi media CD, exhibited at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery (1996). 'I am not driven to be a big, famous director. I like to be doing other things: painting, gardening. When I worked as a production designer and art director it was exhausting, twelve hours a day, six days a week; it is impossible if you have got kids. Although I love directing and the technology

Gaylene Barnes. Photo: Andrew Clarkson.

of filmmaking, I am looking at perhaps phasing out of film over the next three years, getting into my painting.' Such a decision from an obviously talented and successful filmmaker is surprising, though.

'I have little faith in television as a medium. Only one or two people in Auckland decide what programmes are shown on each network channel. This is an incredible amount of power, as they influence over eighty percent of New Zealanders (television watchers).' Gaylene acknowledges there is a place for quality documentaries and stories but still sees mass communication as very dominant. She continues: '...because of that fact it is faceless, not intimate. I want to go back to one-to-one communication. That is why I am studying medieval techniques of painting. My other belief is that in the next five to ten years, when oil depletion kicks in, television and such technologies are going to become redundant. Technology is going to get very expensive, accessible only to the elite and then it will be a waste of time.' Gaylene sees a need for herself to retrain for a time when she believes things will become more locally orientated again, particularly leisure activities and

Sally-Nina Moore as The Mother in *Mother's Day* (2006) short film.

communication processes. With this in mind Gaylene plans to return to her rural roots, intending to become an organic farmer, living with a greater respect for ecology and giving priority to simplicity.

Gaylene describes an ongoing conflict she has had between 'earth, the organic' and a love of technology. 'I have been in conflict for years. A lot of my artistic career has dealt with that, so it is like completing the circle going back to the farm.' She also relates a personal battle with 'the spiritual' and our 'destructive human nature'. 'Where is the faith that Jesus spoke of: "if only you had faith the size of a mustard seed you could move a mountain"?[1] I don't think this kind of faith exists today... I don't read the Bible that often—but the other day I read about Christ getting grumpy when one of his disciples couldn't heal a man's son. Christ said to him "How long am I going to have to be here among these humans with no faith? How long do I have to put up with you?"[2] I laughed and laughed at the thought of Christ being grumpy and frustrated—that "we" could not see or truly believe.' Gaylene further poses the question: 'How much more would God's anger, perhaps rage, have been at these humans killing his perfect son?'

Rage, leading to violent vigilante justice is the theme of Gaylene's short film *Mother's Day* (2002) which, taken to its antithesis of forgiveness, polarises ideas. As viewers we enter a foreign environment, with an unknown person. The camera films only what the character sees. The reason for this is initially unclear, the plot a mystery. We witness the searching for, and murders of, seven individuals. A list is repeatedly checked and crossed as murders are completed. Like it or not, the viewer is along for the ride, watching the character's confidence and seeming need for violence grow. '...and we eventually find out WHY she kills. We learn that her reign of terror was born out of revenge for her (very young) daughter's rape and murder. As a filmmaker, I wanted to ask the question—what do we do with the rage that is born from the violence that is thrust upon us? Where does it go? Will revenge acted out help lessen our rage?' Gaylene continues: 'I also wanted to examine the public desire to know who sex offenders are in our community, and look at one of the possible consequences of such public information being available.'

With *Mother's Day* Gaylene asks some very topical questions of the audience. These questions invite discussion of complicated social, moral and personal issues. While examining her own feelings and stance, she does not provide any set answers, but hopes to continue the debate. I asked if her motivation in making the film was from any personal experience. Gaylene replied: 'I know people that have children ... parents of abused children. It haunts me, our shame, our human "species" ... that other humans do that ... I am a mother and contemplating this (in order to make the film) I had to put myself there. What if that happened to my daughter?' From a Christian perspective: 'The Mother (in the film) is the "Father"—her only child killed'. It reflects '...the rage of God at us, what we did to his son. Rage of a father whose perfect son was killed ... we live in faithless times, rational times and I am a rationalist full of dichotomies...' Gaylene sees the film as more about rage itself than forgiveness and how we are to deal with rage. She expands: 'I did not think it at all possible to forgive the murder of your only child, yet God forgave us... But we can't deal with it; to forgive to that level, we need God to help us. We need mercy, grace. God gives the gift of faith... I need the gift of faith to believe and that's something I am waiting for.'

Gaylene seems to favour filmmaking that examines tough issues, presenting them in new ways. In *The Mobile Meat Processing Unit,* a short animated black comedy, due for completion in June 2008, she bluntly defies values of popular modern materialism. 'The film is a parody on the drive for industry to succeed, sucking up all life (as it does so). One day, on an idyllic farm, the meat processing unit arrives; in an attempt to achieve the target weight of meat and receive a "bonus pack", the mother of the story is willing to sacrifice all animals, husband too and perhaps her own daughter… or is she?'

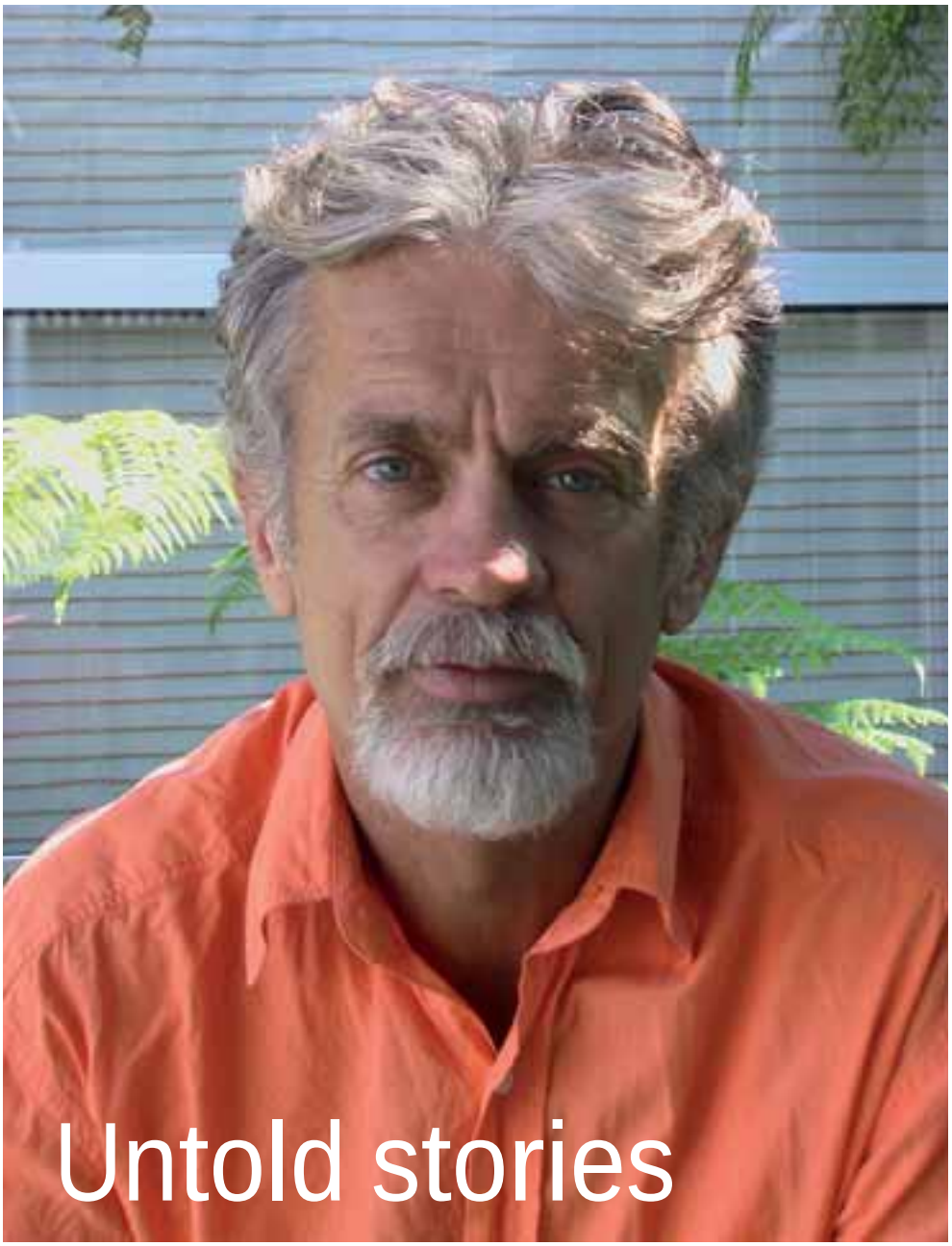
On the surface this seems to be a parody of the New Zealand sheep and cattle industry. What is Gaylene's personal drive or philosophy in making this film? She replies, 'I subscribe to the philosophy of "enough-ness", let's just use enough and not more than we need. With just enough we would be a lot happier. We need to do it; the world is running out of resources. This (the film) is still a statement of: what the hell are we doing here?'

Janet Joyce

1 The Bible, Matthew 17:20.

2 Ibid., Mark 9:19 and Matthew 17:20.

> ***I wanted to find a New Zealander who was working in the field to give viewers a ground level perspective. I knew of only one person—a Red Cross nurse. Trouble was, there were hundreds of possible camps where she might have been working in the Sudan… I knocked on one door of one camp and guess who answered it***



Untold stories

Gerard Smyth. Photo: Andrew Clarkson.

An interview with Gerard Smyth

Gerard Smyth—entrepreneur, visionary, researcher, cameraman, interviewer, director, producer, father of two, advocate of social justice issues, filmmaker. Pick one if you will and you have a story about a story man; an interesting tale, an inspiring journey. Yet in fine Kiwi tradition this man has worn many hats and assimilated knowledge and skills through doing—adding to his repertoire as necessity dictates.

He has walked a complicated path, the tracking of which makes complete sense with hindsight, yet it must have looked very confusing at times from his personal vantage point. Faith, dreaming, leaping and making intelligent decisions combined with entrepreneurial skills and a passionate heart have made for an extremely productive and successful career. 'Making a documentary is a bit like heading off for a tramp in the hills, without a map. There is always a choice about which track to take, which aspect of the tale to follow. With a multitude of choices I ask myself, which is the appropriate path? Hearing God's voice doesn't come easy, but I try to.'

Gerard was born somewhat into television, through his locally-famous father Bernard Smyth, radio broadcaster (with 40 years experience as a political commentator and literary reviewer) and presenter of Television New Zealand's (TVNZ) *Town and Around* in the mid 1960s. Raised in the small town of Rangiora, North Canterbury, Gerard was inspired by his father and strongly influenced by both parents, whom he describes proudly as 'left wing Catholic intellectuals with a heart for social justice issues'. Gerard entered a career in television in 1969, training initially as a camera-man in Christchurch for New Zealand Broadcasting. He then worked his way up to being one of the youngest producers in New Zealand, leaving television in 1980. During this time he developed a wide breadth of experience in television having worked within a diverse range of television production, from rock 'n' roll, ballets and operas to science and children's programmes. 'When I left television I was making kids' programmes. I had produced 400 *Romper Rooms*—not finding it that easy—and that was enough.'

After a short stint working as a market gardener for a complete change of scene, Gerard found himself in Wellington working as a TVNZ news cameraman. The traumatic scenes of the 1981 Springbok tour personally witnessed, captured for repeated viewing and remembered as one of the darker sides of New Zealand's history, affected Gerard at a core level. This prompted him to seek a simpler life, away from the corporate environment. His choice was Lyttelton.

It was 1985 when pictures of the famine in Ethiopia were shown on the news, virtually as it was happening, via the new technology of video. Operation Hope was mounted with New Zealanders filling a ship with supplies destined for Africa. Gerard describes the atmosphere: 'There was a spirit of giving occurring in New Zealand. Hearing there was an emergency government fund if the boat was not filled, I decided to head up to the North Island with my cousin Patrick. Approaching the Government, airlines, the National Film Unit and television we door-knocked asking for funds, equipment and the like for a small film crew to go to Africa and to film Operation Hope.' The resulting one-hour documentary *One Day for Africa* was shown on prime time television. The film is shocking for the horror of the situation, the starvation, the grief, the sickness, the extreme poverty and the despair of people who could do nothing to help themselves. Yet a feeling of hope pervades. The personal story of a nurse and her humility highlights the humanity expressed through individuals giving to help others in need. The simplicity of this motivation is moving. Gerard describes the making of this film as 'an extraordinary experience ... it was the hottest place on earth at the hottest time of year. What I learnt mostly was if only I stopped staring out the window, I realised I could do things I was passionate about.'

I asked Gerard how faith influenced his work. 'I don't know. But it's an odd thing. Perhaps passion for a tale is God-given. Whenever I try and seek the lucrative side of filmmaking—those commercial projects that deliver the "dosh"— I fall flat on my bum. So it seems I need to have a passion to succeed. Perhaps that is faith influencing my work. And then sometimes, very seldom, the extraordinary has happened. I was in Africa filming what is now known as the "Live Aid" famine… I wanted to find a New Zealander who was working in the field to give viewers a ground level perspective. I knew of only one person—a Red Cross nurse. Trouble was, there were hundreds of possible camps where she might have been working in the Sudan… I knocked on one door of one camp and guess who answered it. I was holding in my hand an 8x10 glossy of her. I held it up and said nothing. As it turned out she was an absolute saint and became the most significant voice in the documentary. Dare I say, that was God's hand and I was thankful.'

One Day for Africa was not only an informative and inspiring documentary, but a confirmation of Gerard's ability to successfully manage large projects. With a renewed confidence, Gerard and a friend opened the Volcano restaurant in Lyttelton. His intuition and innovation, combined with his friend's cooking skills, made for a hit. He moved on from this business fairly quickly, aware that his skills were in the creative arena, and preferring short-term projects.

On asking Gerard how he is led to particular topics in his documentary-making, and how he chooses between subject matters, he replied: 'I love trying to tell stories. It's always the potential richness of a tale… Stories about people always, and looking back I notice that they are most often tales about those on the outside (of mainstream society) who are knocking on the door to be allowed in. Championing the underdog has always been a bit of a hobby. Choosing is the hardest thing; except sometimes I turn over a stone and the story jumps out … so obviously they are the tales which I find myself passionate about; often it's a sense of outrage, anger. Social justice was always a biggie in my Catholic childhood.'

It also seems that sometimes the subjects choose him, as in *Sonja Talking.* In 1992 Gerard was asked by the Christian Resource Centre International to make a small video about a bright young Christian woman with cancer, Sonja. Shortly after filming commenced, Sonja became terminally ill and died. Over the next six months Gerard and John Chrisstoffels worked, piecing together the small amount of footage and interviews they had with home videos, stills and sound recordings, creating an intimate and extremely profound film. *Sonja Talking,* made on a mere $3000 budget, won at the World Christian Film Festival in 1993. Her story is as inspiring today as then and her beauty lives on through this well-known personal documentary.

Gerard's career in filmmaking has not only been of the inspirational genre, but has also been prolific and educational. From 1998 to 2005 he made over 65 films for New Zealand on Air. These films show the story and struggle of minority groups within New Zealand; personal accounts of people with physical or mental disabilities and serious illnesses. His documentary on the residents in Templeton Hospital, *Out of Site, Out of Mind* (filmed and researched over one year) was shown in a special sitting of Parliament, and was revealing and informative, giving the residents' perspectives during a changing and controversial time.

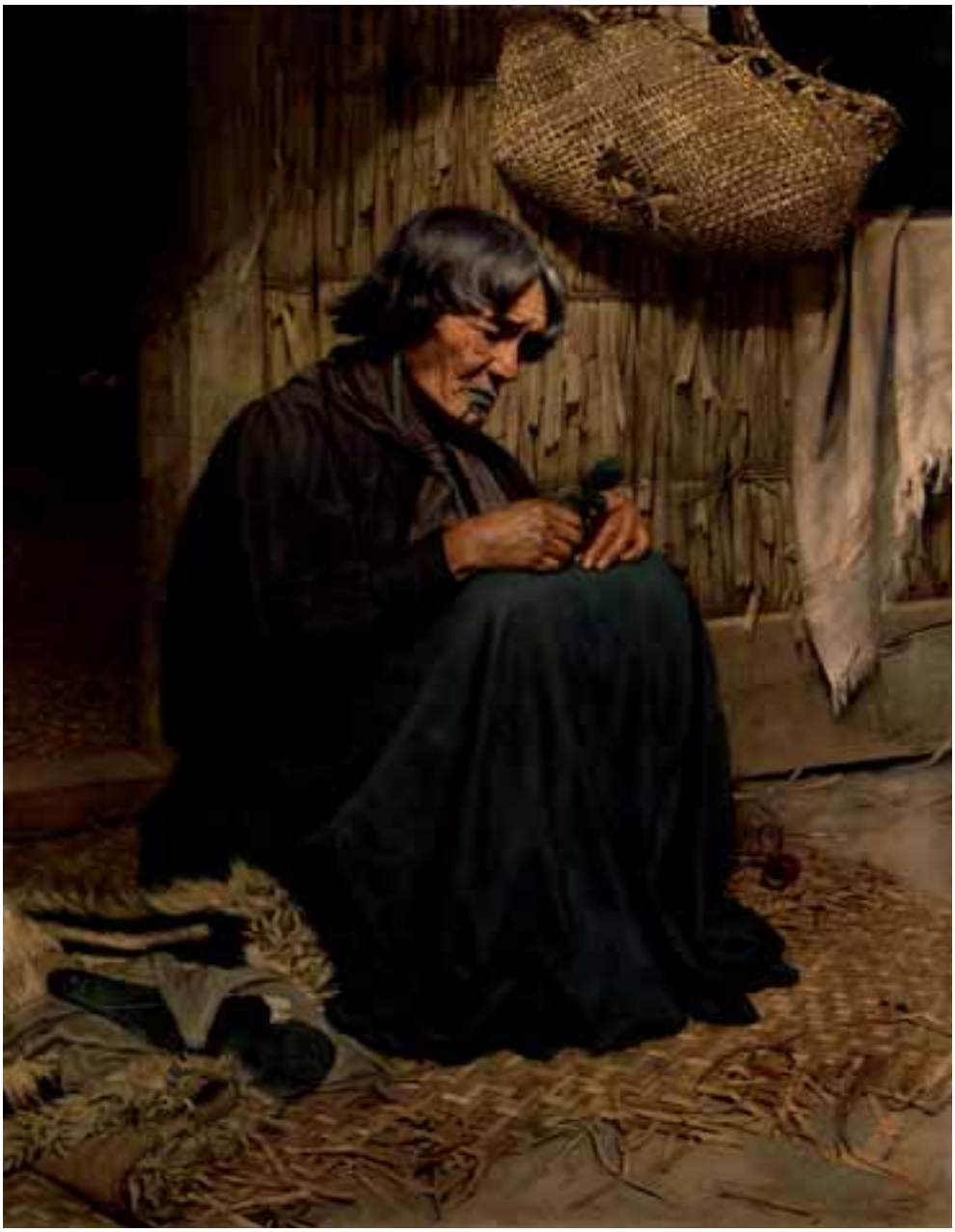
Telling the untold story, speaking for those who would not otherwise have a voice, educating, and motivating would have to be the best way to describe the theme of Gerard's career. Happily we can expect more of the same in the future. His current projects include looking at family issues of the lower socio-economic section in society, over a one-year period and the ongoing problem of the diminishing purity of New Zealand's water. Not bad for, in his words, when starting out—'I was a half-baked hippy who liked to try new things'. And now? 'I try to consider God's will in my work. I don't think I subscribe to a fatalist faith. I try to think issues through and I do find myself trying to sense the right thing to do—I think that is drawing on faith.'

Janet Joyce

"Whenever I try and seek the lucrative side of filmmaking—those commercial projects that deliver the 'dosh'— I fall flat on my bum

Sonja Talking, (1992), directed by Gerard Smyth.

EXHIBITION REVIEWS



Above:
The widow (Harata Rewiri Tarapata, Nga Puhi), 1903, Charles Frederick Goldie, Oil paint on canvas, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

Toi Te Papa: Art of the Nation

Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, 25 October 2006–25 September 2009

Beginnings

Toi Te Papa opens rather grandly. Under the title 'Beginnings', the introductory wall text argues that 'The beginnings of both Maori and European art lie in myth, history and somewhere in between'. We are told that Maori art comes from the gods and is a tradition with 'a Pacific ancestry'. European art starts with rock drawings—'similar to Maori art'—and then flows through Greece and Rome before meeting the 'largely religious images' of the European Renaissance. Finally, we reach Captain Cook, and a moment of mutual fertilisation that kicks off our national art story. 'Artists on James Cook's voyages of exploration recorded Maori people and their art, and Maori artists began to experiment with Western techniques and materials.'

Maori and Pakeha art faces off across 'Beginnings'. Pakeha art is represented by John Webber's *Ship Cove, Queen Charlotte Sound* (about 1788), Colin McCahon's *The Angel of the Annunciation* (1947), and Gordon Walters' *The Poet* (1947). Maori art is represented by a Taurapa (stern post of a waka) from Mahia, circa 1500-1800 Hawkes Bay, whao (chisels) in pounamu, a pare (carving which sits above the door of a whare whakairo, meeting house) from Wairoa, a tahei tohora (reel necklace) from Porangahau, and a rei puta (pendant), whose location is unknown. All of these objects are from the 19th century and earlier. More contemporary practices are represented by Shane Cotton's *Whakapiri Atu te Whenua* (Retain the Land) (1993), which bridges the two sides of the foyer.

> ***The rei puta is a nice touch, since Sydney Parkinson's image, from Cook's first voyage, of a Maori wearing one, is so iconic. And Cotton's painting brings Maori into the contemporary art world, as well as talking about the social, technological and cultural changes that affected taonga in the 19th century***

It is an economical beginning that sets up some complex visual and cultural relations. On the Maori side we get antiquity, tools, links to Pacific art, and carvings, that through their original location within the whare whakairo and waka, make reference to these important cultural forms. The rei puta is a nice touch, since Sydney Parkinson's image, from Cook's first voyage, of a Maori wearing one, is so iconic. And Cotton's painting brings Maori into the contemporary art world, as well as talking about the social, technological and cultural changes that affected taonga in the 19th century, but which can be hard to see. (We are used to reading such objects as 'traditional' and therefore 'timeless'.)

The Pakeha selection is similarly rich. In three works we get the origin of Pakeha art alongside other material from Cook's voyages, Walters' figure with its double rock drawing reference (the rock art which stands at the beginning of European art, and the Maori rock drawings that were important to modern art in the 20th century), and McCahon's *Annunciation* which is another double reference to the 'largely religious art' of the Renaissance, and the ongoing relevance of Christianity to European settlers of Aotearoa.

'Beginnings' clearly sets out the terms of *Toi Te Papa: Art of the Nation*. An ambitious show, this is a presentation of the biculturalism that the museum is founded on, and a gently revisionist account of art in Aotearoa. If you like Te Papa's brand of biculturalism, then *Toi Te Papa* represents some of the promise of the institution regarding thinking about culture in this country. Stripped of the social history emphasis that made earlier surveys like *Made in New Zealand* and *Parade* slightly creaky exhibitions, *Toi Te Papa* brings to bear a bicultural framework within a project that is sympathetic to the unique histories and practices of art in Aotearoa (and art within the national museum).

Such grand themes are hard to sustain, and *Toi Te Papa* comes apart in a couple of places. That, though, is not bad for an exhibition that attempts to survey more than 300 years of cultural production. Whether or not you like the particular theory that *Toi Te Papa* presents, it is exciting to see a permanent hanging that has ambitions to shape how we think about art in Aotearoa, rather than simply presenting highlights from the collection.

Rutu, 1951,
Rita Angus, Oil paint on canvas,
Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

Traditions

'Beginnings' leads into another exhibition space called 'Traditions'. According to the wall text, 'New Zealand's artistic heritage spans over 1000 years, for both Maori and Pakeha (European) traditions. However, the most recognisable expression of that heritage is in artworks made over the last 400 or so years. The works displayed here represent sources of enduring influence from this time.' The text goes on to say that taonga Maori are 'prized as expressions of an essentially Maori world', mostly created before the widespread effects of Western religion and technology. The Pakeha traditions are from the Renaissance onwards, and arrive on these shores of Aotearoa as 'prints by European masters, and paintings (especially family portraits) of the sort exhibited by Britain's Royal Academy'.

A diverse selection of objects represents taonga Maori. There are pou tokomanawa (figures that are carved into the central pillar of the meeting house), poupou (ancestor carvings), a hoe (paddle) collected by Cook with faint traces of kowhaiwhai on the blade, utensils related to a moko, papa hou (treasure boxes), hei tiki, musical instruments, and cloaks. The conceptual background to this selection of taonga is the exhibition *Te Maori* (1984). A wall text titled 'Te Maori, E!', says: 'It took a while for the art world and the New Zealand public to recognise such taonga as art rather than craft. The pivotal change happened in 1984, when the exhibition *Te Maori* took some of the most esteemed examples of Maori art to galleries in the United States. In this international forum, they were acclaimed by the public and critics alike.'

The traditions of Pakeha art are found principally in the art of the Netherlands. The wall text tells us that the wealth which led to Abel Tasman's voyages also led to an extraordinary flourishing of the art market and art practice back home. Various prints demonstrate the 'secular tradition of art' that developed when Calvinist[1] leaders banned art in churches. 'Portraits, landscapes, and scenes of daily life appeared everywhere—in butchers' and bakers' shops and in ordinary houses.' The link is established through genre, too. 'Dutch landscapes became a model for English landscape painters, who in turn brought the tradition to New Zealand.'

After the Dutch prints comes the Royal Academy, here because of its extraordinary impact on art in the English-speaking world. 'Almost every important British artist was an Academy member or exhibitor. William Hodges and John Webber, artists who accompanied James Cook on voyages to New Zealand in the 1770s, were Academy exhibitors.' And the impact continued, with art schools in colonies like Aotearoa emulating the Academy model, and local artists aspiring to be 'hung on the line' at the Royal Academy in London.

The notion of 'traditions', rich and interesting as it is, isn't always carried through in the rest of the exhibition. The connection to Maori art is managed reasonably well. In the section entitled 'New Worlds: The 1800s', for example, a small selection of Maori art from the 19th century represents the 'era of innovation' that resulted from Maori contact with Europeans. As the wall text puts it, Maori 'adapted new technology, explored new ideas about art, and began to make new objects to meet European demand'. Here the way in which 'traditions' of taonga Maori are a product of an engagement with colonisation is subtly elucidated. Tradition, we might say, is on the move.

Nothing so interesting happens with Pakeha art. The wall text for 'New Worlds: The 1800s' argues that 'the land and its people made remarkably little difference to the art of Pakeha (European) artists in New Zealand. Until well into the 1900s, their art was barely distinct from that of their counterparts in Europe. Only the subject matter was different. When changes did occur in Pakeha art, they tended to reflect developments in Europe.'

This is a fairly limited summary of colonial art in Aotearoa, looking as though Te Papa can't be bothered to explain, or doesn't know, what happened during that time. We get an excellent introduction to the way Maori art negotiated a changing world, but colonial Pakeha art is treated as though it just happened, as though the same factors that impacted on Maori art weren't at work in colonial art as well. What of the traditions heralded as so important earlier in the show? What happens to these when artists get here? And what does it mean if imported ways of seeing are placed over local subject matter? There is a kind of missed opportunity here, where Te Papa might have offered us an excellent glimpse into the complexity of colonial art production, rather than a two worlds' model in which one world is alive and the other barely living.

"We get an excellent introduction to the way Maori art negotiated a changing world, but colonial Pakeha art is treated as though it just happened, as though the same factors that impacted on Maori art weren't at work in colonial art as well

. . . Te Papa might have offered us an excellent glimpse into the complexity of colonial art production, rather than a two worlds' model in which one world is alive and the other barely living

Carved chair, 1904, by Tamati Te Hape Hore, Wood and päua shell, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

Modernism

'A World Away: European art 1900–1950' deals with modern art in Europe at the turn of the century. As the wall text says: 'In Europe in the late 1800s, artists began to reject the tradition of realism in painting. The new modernist attitude was that a picture was essentially an arrangement of colours on a flat surface.' This section tells a two-part story: of modern art's development in Europe, principally in Britain, and the rise of the expatriate artist from Aotearoa, who headed to Europe to experience modern art at first hand.

This section of the exhibition is very strong. Expatriate artists from Aotearoa are reunited by the context in which they developed as artists, and we are given a very extensive introduction to modern art in England. Local works, like James M Nairn's *Evans Bay, Wellington Harbour* (1903) are hung alongside their European models, and the juxtaposition unlocks the familiar work, demonstrating the larger movements that local artists were grappling with.

Art works by John Weeks, Gwen Knight, R N Field, Raymond McIntyre, Rhona Hazard, Frederick Porter and Frances McCracken look spectacular in this rich art historical context. It is a wonderful way to reveal aspects of art in Aotearoa, and a great showcase of the strength that Te Papa has in British art. We know that 20th century art in Aotearoa has links to British art, but this display makes this well-known fact into something that 'snaps and crackles' with energy.

While *Toi Te Papa* claims to be a survey of art in Aotearoa, it is clear that the institution has definite strengths, and modernism is one of these. The exhibition is at its best as a survey of modernism in 20th century art. Compare, for example, the excellent display of British, European and expatriate modernism with the poor showing of colonial art, and you begin to see that *Toi Te Papa* is more selective than it should be. Or another way to put it is that these sections are so good that other parts (developed in a fairly rudimentary way) look much weaker by comparison.

The modernism that *Toi Te Papa* presents most successfully is also found in 'A New New Zealand art: 1920s–1960s', another strong section of the exhibition. This is the section of art history we are most familiar with—regional realism (a gentle modernism concerned with signs of a New Zealand identity), primitivism (an interest in indigenous art by European artists), the development of abstract art, and so on. Within the flow of *Toi Te Papa*, this is the moment when all the traditions come together to create something novel and local.

There is much that is good about this part of *Toi Te Papa*. Te Papa owns some excellent artworks, and this hanging is very inclusive. Artists are featured properly, written into the art historical account in a meaningful and central way. It is the kind of hanging which goes some way to demonstrating the diversity of practices in a given moment, rather than just concentrating on the artists that history has judged the winners. It isn't, perhaps, as surprising as the British modern art section because we already know the story, but it is nicely done. Artists are represented with interesting selections. Eric Lee-Johnson, for example, is represented by *End of the Assembly Line* (1945), a painting that is a good example of his particular subject matter, but it is modernist enough in its brushwork to place him in a modern art context. People like William Reed become regional realists, the surrealism toned down so he doesn't sit out on an art-historical limb.

Probably the most disappointing part of this section of the exhibition is the development of Maori art in the 20th century. The exploration of Sir Apirana Ngata's cultural revival of the 1920s and 1930s is a wonderful touch, earlier in the show, demonstrating how the 'traditions' of Maori art continued to have value. But there isn't as much made of the way in which Maori artists engaged with modernism in the middle of the 20th century, renegotiating their relationship with 'traditional' Maori art as promoted by Ngata. This is a powerful and unique story in local modernism, and while Te Papa includes artists such as Arnold Wilson and Para Matchitt, the specifics of their kind of indigenous modern art are not explored as much as Te Papa's bicultural framework suggests that they should be.

Tail Ends

After 'A New New Zealand Art: 1920s–1960s' there is a Colin McCahon focus room, with four works grouped under the heading 'Land and Spirit'. Celebrating a man 'widely recognised as one of New Zealand's greatest artists', this exhibition picks up on some earlier themes in *Toi Te Papa*, demonstrating how McCahon's art grapples with the twin themes of spirituality and landscape.

One then enters into 'A Bigger Picture: 1960–1980'. This section picks up on the growth and professionalism of the art world of the 1960s. This is also a nicely inclusive section, with photography (Peter Peryer [exhibiting internationally in the last decade], Len Wesney and Richard Collins) and a good range of painting, from abstraction to regional realism. The wall text talks about a new kind of confidence in local art, and this section reflects that in its willingness to focus on a range of art practices, without needing to choose or take sides. There is also a selection of ceramics in this part of the show, including Japanese and British ceramicists who had such a huge effect on local potters in the 1950s and 1960s, and local potter James Greig in another case.

This continues a consistent presentation of craft objects alongside the practices of painting and sculpture, and it is one of the strengths of Te Papa's museum status. *Toi Te Papa* has the resources to bring together a range of practices (Maori and Pakeha, fine art and craft) and thus to develop a richer picture than we've previously had. But the intelligence with which these different practices have been assembled might be greater. The ceramics, for example, are badly served here. For a start, the anglo-oriental pots belong back in 'A New New Zealand Art'—none of their concerns fit in this part of the show, which features art quite unsympathetic to the modernism and primitivism on display in the pots. These ceramics are modernist, and contributed to the artistic and cultural climate of 'A New New Zealand Art'.

This display also marks the beginning of an increasing clumsiness in the way craft objects are handled in *Toi Te Papa*, and comes alongside a seeming general

Golden age J, 1978,
Pat Hanly, Acrylic paint on hardboard,
Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

decline in the quality of the curation. From the 1960s onwards, chronology is no longer a very successful way to think about art practice. Putting things together because they were made at a certain time does a kind of violence to the practices on display. There is no subtlety allowed for the way an artist makes work in the 1980s which talks about issues more closely related to another moment, better explored alongside other works.

This is certainly the case with craft, which follows a different timeline to art. In one case there sits a brooch by Warwick Freeman, a necklace by Alan Preston, a breastplate by Paul Annear, and two hei tiki by Rangi Kipa. These works represent four different practices that don't necessarily have that much in common. And these objects are not properly situated in terms of the fine art that would deal with similar issues of identity, representation and ethnicity.

It also means the '1980s to now' section just looks weak. Why are these things together? We are given no curatorial framework other than a date, which just isn't very good art history. The show unravels even more at the end with the postmodernist section, which looks like 'curation by numbers', a few iconic artworks thrown together with apparently little thought as to what they might tell us about that period; about the art practices they represent, about the nature of postmodernism in Aotearoa and how it relates to what came before. Where is the subtlety and wit with which modernism should be treated? Why doesn't this section make more of the narratives that weave through the show at other points?

It is a poor ending to what is otherwise an excellent show. To walk the length of *Toi Te Papa* is to walk some extraordinary highs and some shocking lows. It is, however, a stimulating introduction to the issues of art in Aotearoa, and a definite step up from other displays of art in Te Papa. On the evidence of *Toi Te Papa: Art of the Nation*, we are starting to see something interesting emerging from our national museum in which art is the main subject, and a worthy experience.

Damian Skinner

Damian is a regular contributor to art journals such as *CS Arts* and *Art New Zealand*, as well as curating exhibitions himself. In 2005 he attained a PhD in Art History from Victoria University. His thesis looked at the relationship between tradition and modernism in 20th century Maori art.

1 Calvinism is a theological system and an approach to the Christian life that emphasises God's sovereignty in all things. Due to John Calvin's great influence and role in the confessional and ecclesiastical debates throughout the 17th century, the tradition generally became known as Calvinism. Today, this term also refers to the doctrines and practices of the Reformed churches, of which Calvin was an early leader, and the system is perhaps best known for its doctrines of predestination and total depravity.

"Such grand themes are hard to sustain, and Toi Te Papa comes apart in a couple of places. That, though, is not bad for an exhibition that attempts to survey more than 300 years of cultural production

Out of Erewhon: New Directions in Canterbury Art

Group exhibition by a selection of artists with a connection to Canterbury

Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu, 24 November 2006–4 February 2007

Out of nowhere they may appear to be, but this group of up and coming artists has been working away in and around Canterbury, developing their various art practices. Each of the fourteen artists were asked to construct their own 'invented universe'. They responded in many forms, with an emphasis on sculptural, three-dimensional, interactive and time-based works. It was particularly interesting, from a personal point of view, to follow the work of some outstanding former students of the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts and to see their development from their previous shows.

When I saw Miranda Parkes' exhilarating folded paintings in her solo show at Christchurch gallery 64zero3 last year, I thought then they belonged in a much larger space and it was a joy to see this eventuate. Her work stands the test of display in a public art gallery. All the work in this exhibition looked right in the big galleries, which is an achievement for artists emerging from the world of student shows and artist-run galleries. The large white spaces and generous siting served the works well.

Clare Noonan has journeyed from Canterbury and back again. Her student work of her fourth year investigated movement through, and measurement of, the land. A couple of witty pieces at Christchurch's CoCA a few years ago, showed the delicate wax body-part casting and the use of navigational devices (real and devised) combined with the two-dimensional photographic images, both used with assurance in the *Erewhon* show. Last year Noonan photographed herself on the Greenwich Meridian. Now she has come home, leaving an imprint of her body in a paddock at her family's farm and, presumably, moving on in her search for 'place'.

The highlight of the show for me was *In the Round*, two plaster spheres by Phil Murray, each containing a whole body cast. This is an act of virtuosity in itself, as not just craftmanship to be wondered at but an aesthetically interesting 'interplay between solid and void'. The more I spent time with the work, the more I found it a moving description of humanity. Murray is an artist who is prepared to put in long hours of work in the pursuit of his quarry, but a few years back seemed to be at a loss as to what to do with his skills. For the sculpture students' show in his Masters year (*Out of Bounds*, at the now demolished Sydenham School) he produced an empty cypher, expressing his questioning of existence. Since then I have seen work in several shows, which was technically impressive but non-committal. Now he has combined his technical skills with insight into the human condition. Each sphere is highly-finished in contrast to the rough interior, where the viewer is conscious of the artist's process. Wherever the body intersects with the sphere, you can look down into the space within and see the shadow-shape of the human body, strange and vulnerable.

Slumper, Miranda Parkes, 2006, Acrylic on canvas, 1800 x 4500 mm, Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna O Waiwhetu.

One of the largest and most ambitious works (especially considering the limitations of constructing work specifically for this show) was a socio-political comment by Ri Williamson on the experience of moving though the anonymous architecture of airports. That is certainly a present-day experience of place for many New Zealanders and worth exploring. However I felt that the actual shapes of the structure read more like a crouching beast or a monster's skeleton and that the material—cut polystyrene with feet—worked against the artist's intention. More accurate were the video clips shown inside the structure. The body language of her actors was visually spot on.

This show is a good response to calls for Te Puna o Waiwhetu to show more local artists. Following the retrospectives by Julia Morison, Jason Greig and Kees Bruin, the Gallery is continuing to open up to contemporary Canterbury artists.

Janet Chambers

New works by Jinji Koyama

Mair Gallery, CoCA, Christchurch

29 November–16 December 2006

'Jinji Koyama graduated from the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts, completing an MFA in 2002 with distinction, and from Fordham University in New York in 2005 completing an MA with Honours in Religion and Religious Education. In 2006 he was a finalist in the Norsewear Art Award and the Wallace Art Award. Koyama has exhibited at the Sean Kelly Gallery in New York and at the Centre of Contemporary Art. In 2000 he designed a greeting card for UNICEF New Zealand; in 2001 he created an installation at the Family Court for the Government Department of Courts to express his sorrow for children suffering from family troubles; in 2002 he gave public lectures at various art schools including the University of Sydney, speaking about art and social justice. Although Koyama refuses to explain the meaning behind his new works that are included in this show, the trait of his past experiences gives audiences the clue to what he is trying to convey.'[1]

Entering the Mair Gallery in CoCA and viewing Jinji Koyama's works has a calming, meditative and soothing effect. They give pleasure even if just seen as colour fields of dusty pinks, peaches, acid yellows, greys and barely-there indigo blues—all translucently glowing through layers of wax and the predominance of white in the mix. Closer examination reveals human figures, lots of them, silhouetted against a pale background and arranged in an all-over pattern. Arduously cut-out aluminium shapes had colour rolled on them and were put under pressure to transfer the ink to the specially-stretched, very large sheets of paper. After that layers of wax were applied. This is clear evidence of an experienced, experimental and innovative printmaker, skilfully using mixed media and colours to achieve the desired results.

As viewers, we are witnesses of humanity in all its various aspects. A set of drawings done on approximately A5 sized sheets of paper brings into sharp relief the source material he was drawing from. These works were densely worked and crosshatched to the point where the lead in the pencil gives off a polished sheen. A rock singer, a man on a lead, the Ku Klux Klan, a pregnant woman, a trumpeter and a person with their hands raised were some of the characters I saw. The collaged rainbow on the wall added to the general sense of optimism in the exhibition. Nothing jarred the senses, but any sweetness was off-set by the use of unexpected elements like Jinji's ghostly graffiti marks on two or three of the pieces, which added another spatial dimension, as did the sinister white-hooded figures.

Jessica Crothall

1 Statement on the wall at CoCA.

Untitled installation, Jinji Koyama, 2006, Mixed media.

In Touch with the Wind,
Claire Beynon, 2006, Wall mounted installation—weathered Antarctica flags, wire, wooden clothes pegs, bamboo stakes and cargo straps.

Route Markings
Claire Beynon

25 November–14 December 2006
Peter Rae Gallery, Dunedin

'In this place, silence has a voice
wide-ranging as the continent.
Some say it's on the cusp
of madness, the way it hums
and stutters, mutters to itself
in quietest tones'[1]

Route Markings depicts a journey through the cold, sparse Antarctic where sweeping plains of ice and snow are interrupted by the intermittent profiles of human beings and their constructs. Beynon's exhibition was inspired by a two-month excursion to Explorers Cove, Antarctica, where she had the unique opportunity to live and work with a field research team. Utilising a wide range of mediums, Beynon explores ways in which to articulate this extraordinary experience. The exhibition dances between light and shadow and her flags stand like human sentries listening for voices on the wind.

In the Antarctic, flags are employed as a mode of communication, a signal, and a marker. Beynon utilises the flag as a central motif to explore interwoven relationships between humankind and the environment.

Beynon's elegant *Sentinel Flags*, of pristine silk and etched Perspex, possess a feminine quality. Guardians of her Antarctic journey, the flags map place-names and coordinates, creating a memorial to locations explored, encounters gained and relationships forged.

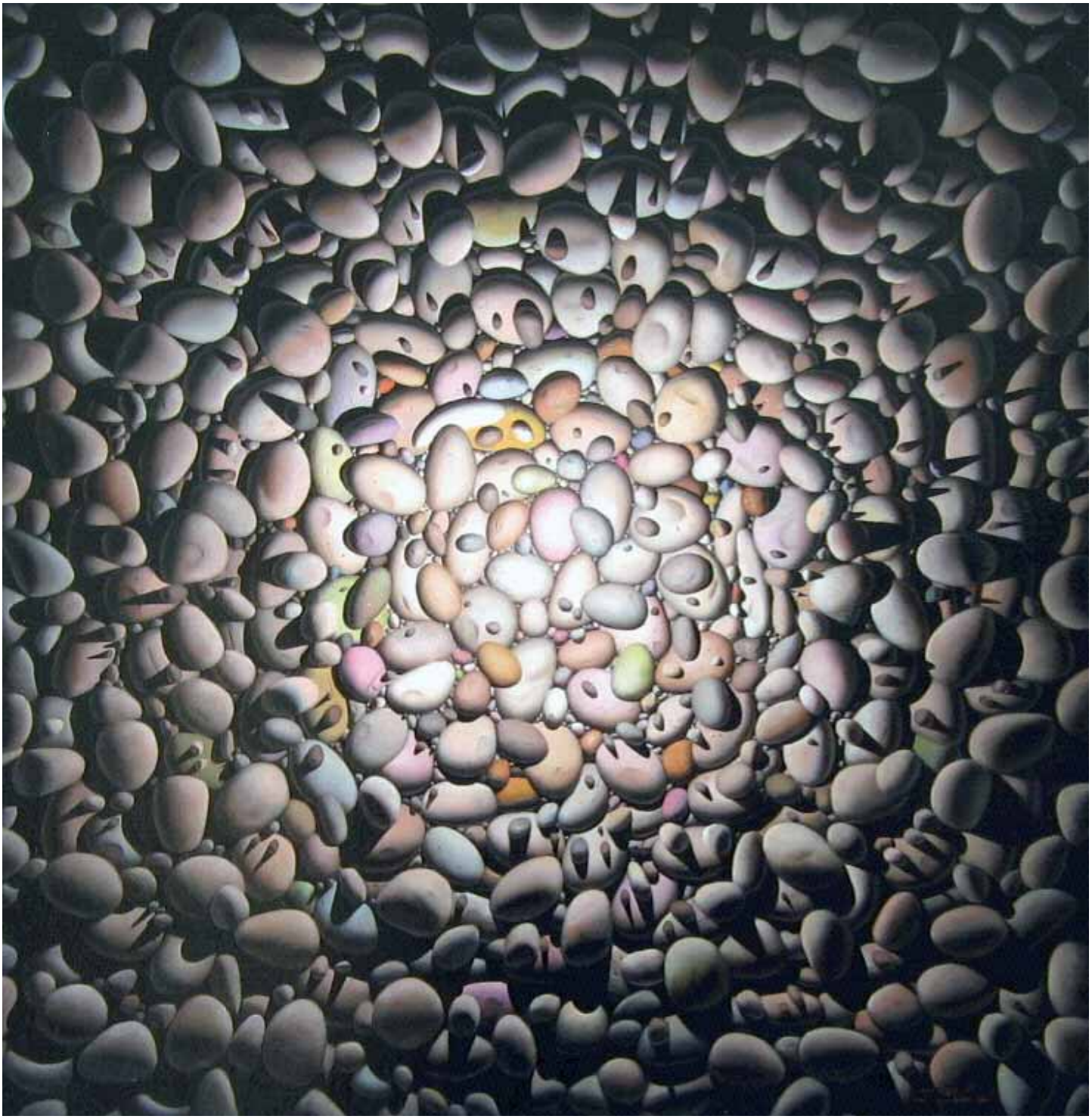
In contrast, *In Touch With The Wind*, an installation of weathered Antarctic flags and bamboo, records a physical encounter. The faded once-colourful pieces of fabric hang limply, their worn and frayed condition documenting a harsh life in the Antarctic. The only point of colour in a monochromatic show, these flags possess an affiliation with the Tibetan prayer flag. Traditionally, each time the flag is brushed by the wind a prayer or offering is distributed by wind to the universe.

The Katabatic wind is a resonant force that carves a path through the Antarctic, shaping an undulating transient landscape of hills and valleys. Beynon's pared-back monochromatic sequence of drawings *Katabatikos* depicts the subtle contours of the region, encapsulating their ephemeral nature.

Although this is a pleasing and well-considered exhibition, walking through the gallery I was struck by the resounding silence. I felt like opening the door in the hope that a gust of wind might snap Beynon's wilting flags to life.

Lydia Baxendell

1 Claire Beynon, 2006.



The Light 4, Yong-Hyun Kwon, 2006, Oil on canvas, 720 x 720mm.

The Light
Yong-Hyun Kwon

November 2006

Salamander Gallery, Christchurch

'The beauty of the world touches upon eternal meaning in which we can all share, despite any religious or cultural differences.' *Yong-Hyun Kwon.*

Light titled all Kwon's oil on board works at the Salamander. Each painting depicted a pile of earthy stones bathed in subtle variations of light—in warm and cool nuances—that radiated out from the centre of each image; perfect circles of light in the centre of squares. The grouping of stones cast sharp shadows that gently lengthened and faded into darkness. Each stone was specified a colour—pale tones of pink, green, orange, yellow and blue pebbles were gathered together in the centre, fading to dull browns outside the circumference of the light. Since colour was hardly noticed from any distance or brief encounter, each painting might have appeared the same plain pile of stones. Subtlety was a significant theme and the painter's meticulous skill became apparent in the way this exhibition explored emotive variations through tones of colour, through a play with the moods and meaning of light. Kwon alluded to an 'eternal meaning' through the luminosity and sense of collectiveness that the painted light created upon the stones, despite varying degrees of colour (cultural difference?). The stones were drawn together by the light, making the whole work appear to shift in and out, alternating concave with convex illusions.

With no sign of water, the works were more like deliberate constructions than any kind of natural river bed or stony beach depiction. Unlike Michael Smither's iconic works or Dawn Mann's river beds—(see *Abacus and Icon* p 24 *CS Arts* January 2006) whose egg-like stones Kwon's resembled—his works were overtly metaphoric and simplistic in composition. This gave an impression that they could be read as 'monuments' that might mark 'eternal meaning'—monuments alight—built up to remind one of particular times, however subtle, of spiritual significance.

Joanna Osborne

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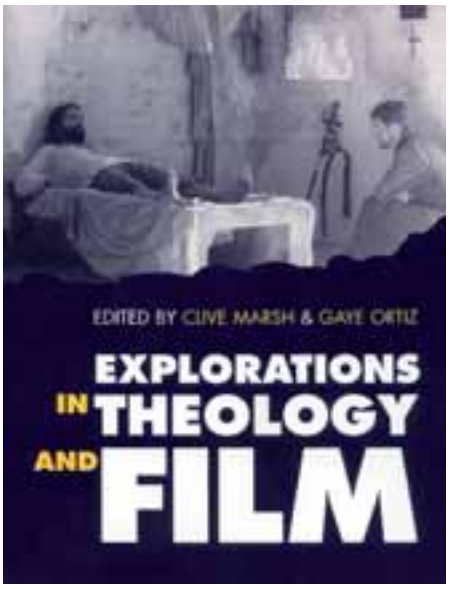


Explorations in Theology and Film

Editors Clive Marsh and Gaye Ortiz
(University College of Ripon and York St John).
Blackwell Publishers. 286 pages, paperback.
Not illustrated.

Sparsely illustrated (a pet hate in books on these topics) yet this is a substantial tome—actually a series of essays by various writers—that rigorously draws together claims that religion and film share informative paths. The book uses juries of theologians, biblical scholars, film and media specialists and language experts to consider the impact film is having on current theological discussion.

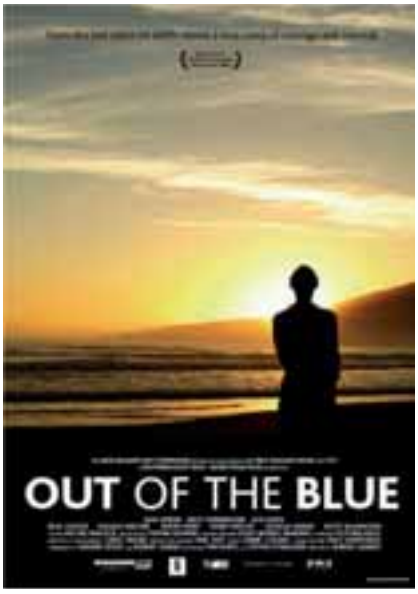
A somewhat academic discussion: methodological and theoretical issues are outlined, the book is well annotated with a substantial bibliography; this is a work for students of the subject rather than casual readers. The book tackles its central themes across a good cross-section of contemporary films without seeking to be an exhaustive survey (*Edward Scissorhands, Shirley Valentine, Terminator II: Judgement Day, The Fisher King, Forest Gump,* etc.).

Essays include: 'Film and Theologies of Culture' by Clive Marsh, 'From Domination to Mutuality in *The Piano* and in the Gospel of Mark' by David Rhoads and Sheila Roberts, 'Moral Ambiguity and Contradiction in *Dead Poets Society*' by Stephen Brie and David Torevell, 'Jesus Christ Movie Star: The Depiction of Jesus in the Cinema' by William Telford—all meaty debates. The book adheres strongly to its theological premise, often examining scriptural truths in the same breath as film scripts. This makes for a robust engagement with the grist of contemporary film in the mill of theological analysis.

One of the better books on the film/faith discourse and a quality text for those studying the topic. Recommended in that context.

John Stringer

FILM REVIEWS



Out of The Blue

Condor Films, 2006
Director Robert Sarkies

Out of the Blue (2006) stars Aramoana, a beautiful but isolated New Zealand beach town. The opening scene superbly captures the movie. We watch footprints being made on a beautiful beach and watch the sweep of a metal detector. Knowing that people carrying metal detectors tend to live on the fringe of society, we ponder a fringe footprint on New Zealand beauty.

Out of the Blue is Dunedin-bred director Robert Sarkie's second full-length movie (his first was *Scarfies* in 1999). This is a Kiwi director telling (with Graeme Tetles as co-writer) a Kiwi story. We see a New Zealand Police force naively ill-prepared for both armed violence and emergency first aid. We hear lines from children's story book *Hairy Maclary* (authored and illustrated by Lynley Dodd). We recognise tunes from classic Kiwi white boy bands—Coconut Rough (Sierra Leone), The Chills (Pink Frost) and Don McGlashan, of From Scratch.

To use a line from a song by Don McGlashan, *Out of the Blue* is a Kiwi film 'well made'. The pace is superbly controlled, with repeated moments of human interaction used to heighten the escalating tension. Visual shots of the road in and out of Aramoana are used to advance the plot, while a white bach wall marks time. Camera focus is employed to portray character. The sound track (supervising sound editor Dave Whitehead) is clever, with silence, splashing water and sustained human breathing, used well to carry emotion. Despite minor blemishes (including inconsistent special effects) and unresolved plot threads (did David Gray die because he was denied medical assistance in police custody?) *Out of the Blue* proclaims that there is more to the New Zealand film industry than special effects at Weta Studios. We have Kiwi filmmakers who can tell our stories with style and maturity.

What the movie leaves unanswered is any ethical and moral reflection upon this Kiwi story.

Why does David Gray shoot thirteen people? We see his isolation, paranoia and anger, artistically mixed with shots of beautiful Aramoana. So perhaps nature is pure and one man paranoid? Yet New Zealand has lots of sleepy, isolated beach communities, with sands that remain unstained by Aramoana's violence. We gasp at New Zealand gun laws that allow one man to stock a fridge-load of weapons and ammunition. But New Zealand gun laws were lax for decades before David Gray took aim at a nation's innocence. So was Aramoana purely and simply 'out of the blue'? If so, pray it never happens to us.

And how do humans recover from random human violence? Should we forgive? Yet the film suggests that rather than forgive, the community of Aramoana gathers to burn down David Gray's house. Should we forget? Yet human bodies remain scarred and thirteen breakfast settings remain empty.

The place of memory and human violence occupies Yale University scholar Miroslav Volf, who reflects on the future of grace and faith after ethnic violence scarred his Croatian homeland. He argues that the Christian cross stands as a permanent marker of human violence, a reminder that humans can neither forgive nor forget. Instead, in Jesus, who faces, feels and absorbs human violence, we seek the courage to forgive, while leaving justice in the hands of an unforgetting God.

Such questions allow the Kiwi story of Aramoana to become a universal story. It allows us to move beyond a well-made docu-drama of courage under fire, to begin to ponder the moral and ethical questions of being human in a society full of metal things 'well made'.

Rev Dr Steve Taylor

Rev Dr Steve Taylor is Senior Pastor at Opawa Baptist Church. He is Lecturer in Gospel and Film at Bible College of New Zealand throughout 2007. He is the author of *The Out of Bounds Church?* (2005, Zondervan) re the Church in the Post-modern world and writes regularly at *www.emergentkiwi.org.nz*

(This review was originally published in Touchstone Magazine, February 2007. Reprinted with permission.)

Batman Begins

Warner Bros. 2005
Director Christopher Nolan

Like so many other films that have come out recently, *Batman Begins* is a 'prequel', telling the story of how Bruce Wayne went from happy, well-adjusted son of one of the richest families in Gotham to the dark figure who is Batman, the caped crusader. With some of the more recent Batman movies being more farce than superhero, one could wonder how director Christopher Nolan could inject new life into the franchise. However, Nolan found a gap in the Batman lore. Those who have seen any of the films will know of the tragic death of Bruce Wayne's parents (when he was aged eight), and how he suddenly returns as an adult as the superhero Batman. But there is a missing period of some years. It is the story of these missing years that Nolan decided to tell.

The story is told in non-linear fashion, jumping backwards and forwards, explaining the history of Bruce Wayne in a very satisfying fashion. The supporting cast is a star chart: Michael Caine, Morgan Freeman, Rutger Hauer, Gary Oldman, Liam Neeson, Katie Holmes and Cillian Murphy. All the actors give great performances, which are smooth and believable. The choice of Christian Bale for the legendary dark figure was done early in the writing process, and it shows. The deep dialogue sequences between Bale and Neeson leave you wanting to grab your remote and skip back to listen again.

This is a film that can be enjoyed on many levels. Yes it has violence, and yes there is some bad language, but this is a superhero movie, and for fans of the genre, the film is great. There are fight scenes, explosions, gadgets and a cool car, along with the light touches of intelligent humour, and romance to keep everyone happy.

However, you'd have to be blind as a ... ahem, *bat*, to miss the themes that run through this film. Grief, justice, fear, and identity are some of the more obvious ones. Looking at justice, you see Wayne, lost in his grief, searching for answers to the evil done to his family, and trying to decide what true justice is.

There are a number of brilliant little scenes, such as when Wayne (Christian Bale) stands between the League of Shadows and Gotham, which sounds like a modern version of Abraham speaking to God in Genesis about Sodom and Gomorrah. Or when Rachel Dawes (Katie Holmes) speaks about good people doing nothing, echoing Dietrich Bonhoeffer's famous quote, from *The Cost of Discipleship* (1959).

In the film, Gotham is threatened by forces who believe that it has become morally corrupt and beyond saving. Gotham has always been allegory for New York City, and not so long ago, a force that wanted to make such a statement struck that city. With September 11 in mind, it's not so strange that *Batman Begins* should regard pacifism as weak. The film came out in 2005 and the country at that time was in the midst of a 'war on terror', seeing war as a just response to evil. But is it?

What is the correct response to injustice and evil? In the Bible, Jesus called for people to turn the other cheek, and to pray for those who persecuted them. But how does that actually work in the real world? There are many Christian victims of violent crime who find Jesus' edict very hard to swallow; their desire for justice takes them away from their faith, but should it? This movie contains a study of the various responses to evil and their consequences in the lives of the characters; it is worth watching and discussing what each character did, and where those actions took them.

Isabelle Sutton

Isabelle Sutton is a student of 'Reel Spirituality' course at Bible College of New Zealand and this review was written as part of her studies.

Blood Diamond

Warner Bros. 2006
Director Edward Zwick

Blood Diamond is a tough movie to watch. Set in Sierra Leone in the 1990s, Solomon Bo (Djimon Hounsou) is separated both from his family, and his son, Dia (Kagiso Kuypers), by civil war. Forced into diamond labour, Solomon finds, and then hides, a blood-red diamond of immense worth. The diamond attracts the interest of many, including smuggler and soldier-of-fortune, Danny Archer (Leonardo DiCaprio). The search, for the diamond, and for Solomon's family, is set against the brutal backdrop of civil war and human lust for power. Rated R16 for its depiction of graphic and realistic war scenes, *Blood Diamond* pulls no visual punches.

Some movie fans will be attracted by the presence of one of Hollywood's golden boys, Leonardo DiCaprio. DiCaprio shows increased maturity as an actor, but is out-starred by Djimon Hounsou, who is superb as the seeking father. (Both DiCaprio and movie trivia fans will be delighted to learn that in one scene, DiCaprio is filmed walking past his real life mother and his real life grandmother.)

The dialogue between African born and raised Danny Archer and war journalist Maddy Bowen (Jennifer Connelly) ensures a dialogue as tough as the R16 visual rating. Together they probe the role of Western journalists and governments in Africa, and the apathy of newspaper consumers, people like you and me.

The movie also conducts a tough and probing exploration of those who believe in God. Surveying the inhumanity and violent carnage of civil war, Danny Archer offers this commentary on the place of God in a world of suffering:

> Sometimes I wonder if God will ever forgive us for what we've done to each other. Then I look around and I realise God left this place a long time ago.

Any Christian should find this a hard scene to watch. I suspect it would also be a hard scene for God to watch. What do you do if you are a Creator God? Do you create humans as string puppets, unable to do bad things and thus never needing to seek forgiveness because God is always jerking the strings?

Or do you create humans with real choice? In doing so, you face the possibility that anyone with real choice has the freedom to exercise their real choice, both for good and for evil.

Yet for me, DiCaprio ends up as a Christ-figure. As the movie advertising posters boldy announce: 'It will cost you everything'. And so the movie ends costing DiCaprio his life. And in the process of dying, his blood staining the soil of the land he loves, he makes choices that usher light into darkness and open the doorway for a more systemic justice for Africa.

Blood Diamond is just a movie. But it brought to mind the words used to describe Jesus in Philippians 2:6–11, choosing to give up equality with God; and in his death, bringing light into dark places and ushering in the possibility of justice. A beautiful, yet bloody, image of Jesus for us to ponder.

Rev Dr Steve Taylor

(This review was originally published in Touchstone Magazine, April 2007. Reprinted with permission.)

EVENTS AND NOTICES

RECENT EXHIBITIONS

AUCKLAND

'96–'06, Don Binney, an exhibition of work produced over the last 10 years at the Artis Gallery, Auckland, 6 Mar–1 Apr 2007. Don writes: 'This selection surveys the ten years following my return to easel painting and its associated drawings. During the mid 1980s to mid '90s my output was mostly graphic: to find resolution in the montage process of my 1995 *Remuera Jug* series, with some later examples. In the next year came my last University sabbatical, to Great Britain, which indeed led to a resumption of oil surfaces—to extend upon my on-site studies of archaic or sacred places. In 1996, too, one church-window motif was begun to prompt my revival of bird imagery. In early 1998 I retired from Elam to find other studio space and the confidence to re-exercise a known personal idiom of land forms with, often, occupant birds. Of late this has centred round the inner and outer islands of the Hauraki Gulf. Self-employment makes little room for sabbaticals (or, indeed, much peer contact) but I do travel around my own country a lot. Hence Canterbury, Rakiura and Marlborough references; even an occasional look back to Te Henga…

'Whatever the location, commitments to conservation or spiritual values of place inform the works. As often as not, islands (like some, earlier, shrine-sites) are indeed sanctuaries. Hauturu is one, Tiritiri Matangi another. Recently my 1983 painting of the latter has been the cover plate for *Landscape Paintings of New Zealand* by Christopher Johnstone. The final painting in this catalogue looks back from the now reafforesting island to Whangaparaoa and so to the 1983 viewpoint.' Source: *www.artisgallery.biz*

Sensuous Sculptures in Wood, **Anna Korver**, Morgan Gallery, Newmarket.

Subjects to Hand, **Joanna Margaret Paul**, Lopdell House Gallery, 16 Feb–8 Apr.

Tusi Folau, **Johnny & Lyle Penisula**, The Lane Gallery, 13 Feb–3 Mar.

NEW PLYMOUTH

Double harmonic: Len Lye & Tony Nicholls, 9 Dec 2006–25 Mar 2007. An emerging kinetic sculptor complemented the work of **Len Lye** in a recent exhibition at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery. Curated by Tyler Cann, *Double harmonic: Len Lye & Tony Nicholls* was the latest in a series of summer exhibitions to draw on the Len Lye Collection housed at the Gallery. It explored the resonance of sound and motion across half a century, placing Lye's pioneering kinetic sculpture in dialogue with work by contemporary New Plymouth-born artist **Tony Nicholls**.

Director Rhana Devenport says: 'It is wonderful to see a contemporary artist expand the possibilities of composing motion pioneered by Len Lye. The exhibition shows the continued relevance of Lye's work in the twenty-first century.'

In works like *Blade* (1976), Lye used electric motors to animate stainless steel elements into thunderous, moving compositions. Nicholls extends the relationship between sound and motion by using audio speakers to activate light materials such as polystyrene, balsa wood, and string.

Curator Tyler Cann says: 'Lye wanted to reveal the sounds made by his sculptural materials when they are put in motion. Nicholls lets sound itself drive the movement.'

WWW.CS.ORG.NZ BRAND SPANKING NEW

Under Moehau II, Don Binney, 2001, Oil and acrylic on canvas, 1100 x 1570mm.

Top to Bottom:

Towers, Tony Nicholls, 2006

Blade, Len Lye, 1976,
Images courtesy Govett-Brewster Art Gallery

While Lye's work is frequently loud, the computer generated and chance-based sound waves that Nicholls uses often fall below the threshold of human hearing; their presence is manifested as motion.

'Nicholls' work allows you to see the sounds you can't hear', Cann says.

Source: press release, Govett–Brewster Art Gallery

WELLINGTON

The Adam Art Gallery Te Pataka Toi presented a major new exhibition, *Darcy Lange: Study of an Artist at Work*, 24 Mar–13 May. Curated by Mercedes Vicente from the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, this exhibition surveyed the ground-breaking video, film, sculpture and photographic work of New Zealand artist **Darcy Lange** (1946-2005), focussing on the artist's seminal documentary studies of people at work.

CHRISTCHURCH

Christmas Journey 2006 Art Installation—
a reflection by **Peter Majendie**

The *Christmas Journey* this year was a series of eight, contemporary, interactive art installations, which were housed in shipping containers wrapped as giant presents. The containers were located near various tram stops along the tram route between Cathedral Square and Victoria Square. This enabled people to come across them unexpectedly; a chance encounter with God. It also meant that people could enter into the Christmas story at any point, as each installation was a stand-alone piece, but together they told a progressive story. We wanted to have a wider impact on the inner city than just in a corner of Cathedral Square, as in 2005. It also introduced the idea of journeying, a half-hour walk to complete it, an aspect that some people really liked.

Scattering the containers around the tram route created greater logistical problems, especially with the number of volunteers needed. The *Christmas Journey* was open 10am– 9pm for the week leading up to Christmas. During that time thousands of people from all over Christchurch and the world visited at least one container, with many completing the whole *Journey*, despite the atrocious weather conditions.

The series depicted aspects of the Christmas story with a distinctive Kiwi flavour, using materials such as corrugated iron, barbed wire, fence posts and grasses. The texts were painted on canvases which were hung on the doors of the containers. They were painted in the style of Colin McCahon by Michial Wood, a young local artist. By having the scripture on the doors instead of inside the container, there was an openness and transparency as to the ethos of the installation.

Jaynie Porter organised a charity group exhibition for the blind at the Bryce Gallery over 16–18 Mar. The art included her own works and also sculpture by local artist **Paul Deans**.

Sam Harrison and **Anne Fountain** held solo exhibitions at CoCA 7–24 Mar. These exhibitions will be reviewed in the October edition of *CS Arts*.

Chrysalis Seed group exhibition *Strange Weather* featuring artists **Mark Lander, Margaret Hudson-Ware, Stefan Roberts** and **Tim Croucher**.
Mair gallery, CoCA, 27 Mar–14 Apr.

Claire Beynon in her studio.

DUNEDIN

Windows of Life, **Mary Horn**, Peter Rae Gallery, 11–30 May. Influenced by the window frames taken out of the Teschemakers Building (near Oamaru), when it was being restored.

Claire Beynon writes: 'I wanted to say how nice it was to meet the Chrysalis Seed production team a little more fully in the last magazine issue—that is, through the photographs and written introduction to you all.

'You asked about the exhibition I am currently involved with in Dunedin—it's in the stunning, newly restored 1850s (I think) Manse in Smith Street. The director Peter Booth is working with artist **Lynn Taylor** to set up a stained glass school, stone masonry exhibition space, a gallery (several actually, in the one huge house), an artist in residence programme, etc. The opening exhibition is work by **Kirsten Lovelock**, and I was fortunate to be invited to be their inaugural Artist in Residence until the beginning of April. I'm thrilled because they've brought a press into the space so that I can make a series of art/science images using solar plates... I don't ordinarily have access to a press, and am currently working collaboratively with my polar scientist friend Sam in New York, and have wanted to make prints, so it was perfect timing.'

EASTER 2007 EXHIBITIONS

Stations of the Cross, contemporary New Zealand Easter Art Installations, 1–6 Apr 2007 at Hamilton Gardens, featured work of **Donn Ratana**, **Amanda Watson**, **Jane Martindale**, **Tyson Downing**, **Sarah Mundy**, **Scott Woolston**, **Ange Keoghan**, **Jackie Francis**, **Jo White**, **Rosemary Pritchard**, **Jonny Davis**, **Toia Diprose**, **Kylie Boswell**, **Liz Downing** & **Shoshana Sachi**.

The Desert Files, A Lenten process of prayer and art making, 5–7 Apr, Mount Eden Road, Newton,

The Desert Files postcard, designed by Lisa Williams.

Auckland. Lent is the period of prayer and reflection that leads up to Easter. It lasts for six weeks. It began on 21 Feb with Ash Wednesday, and finished at sundown on Saturday 7 Apr, the day before Easter Sunday. This exhibition was the culmination of a Lenten process of prayer and art-making by some of those going through the process from within the Cityside community. *www.cityside.org.nz/desertfiles*

The Desert Files postcard was designed by **Lisa Williams**, who writes, '...commissioned by inner-city faith community Cityside, (it) invited participants from around the world to journey through the ancient Christian season of Lent. I created a prayer figure using traditional ink and brush which I incorporated into Islamic-inspired calligraphy.'

Reflections on Easter. The Birkenhead community had another Easter exhibition 4–8 Apr, at the Rawene Centre, 33 Rawene Rd, Birkenhead, Auckland. Information: *www.rawenecentre.org.nz*

Their book *The Art of Easter* showcasing the last few years' Easter exhibitions, can be ordered for $20.00 + $2.50 postage. Enquiries: *info@rawenecentre.org.nz*

CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

Existence: Life according to art, Waikato Museum, Level 5, 14 Jul–14 Oct 2007. The exhibition explores ideas of how life came into being, how we exist and life's ultimate destiny through artworks that represent aspects of life. A group exhibition organised by **Leafa Wilson.**

Two New Zealand artists have had a project accepted for the world's most prestigious art event, the Venice Art Biennale. Sculptor **Brett Graham** and digital artist **Rachael Rakena** have had their collaborative work *Aniwaniwa* accepted for the collateral events section. *source: Bartley and Company Art*

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS

Te Papa to Tokyo. TOKYO National Museum in Japan is hosting 22 items from the Te Papa collection in the exhibition *Mauri Ora: Treasures from the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa*. The exhibition features the largest collection of Maori taonga to travel overseas since *Te Maori* in 1984.

Deborah Scales, *Dawn to Dawn … journeys through pain to freedom*, 1 Jun–1 Jul, Midland Lutheran College, Freemont, Nebraska, USA.

CIVA Biennial Conference, 14–17 Jun 2007, Messiah College, Grantham, Pennsylvania. Keynote speaker is Ken Myers, of Mars Hill Audio, a nonprofit organization devoted to helping Christians think wisely about modern culture.

CIVA Summer Workshops, 15–21 Jul 2007, Gordon College, Wenham, MA.

For details see website *www.civa.org* or contact *office@civa.org*

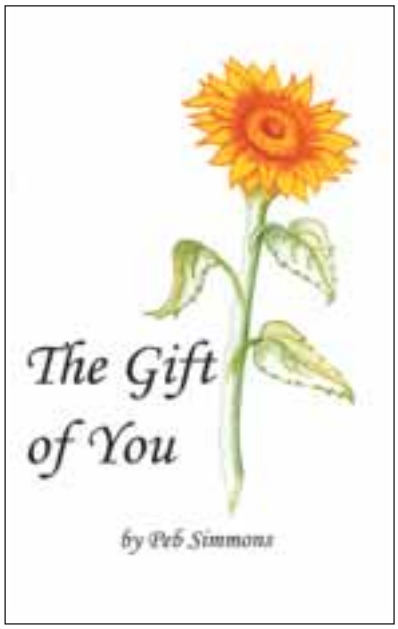
PUBLICATIONS

The Journal of New Zealand Art History volume 27 (2006) is now available. Editors: Mark Stocker, Anna Petersen and Stuart Strachan. Published by The Hocken Collections, Uare Taoka o Hakena, University of Otago.

Featuring: Luke Smythe on the 'Direct Films of Len Lye'; Michael Dunn on 'Theo Schoon's Rock Art Photography'; Courtney Johnston on 'Peter Tomory's Art History'; James Beattie on 'Alfred Sharpe, Ruskin and Nature'; Ruth Harvey on 'The Art of Bill Culbert'; Sarah Hillary on 'The Materials and Techniques of Colin McCahon'; Roger Collins on 'Two Paintings by G. P. Nerli'; Book Reviews on 'Partners in Art: Frances Hodgkins, G. P. Nerli, Ralph Hotere and Leo Bensemann'.

To order email *anna.peterson@library.otago.ac.nz*—$40 plus p&p.

The Gift of You by **Peb Simmons** has been published by The Marist Messenger. This book can be purchased for $10.00 incl. p&p from The Marist Messenger, 88 Hobson Street, Wellington. **Kathleen Gallagher** writes: 'This book is a fine tapestry weaving in and out, and illuminating a way through the great sadness that comes with the death of a child. The words take you gently by the hand, through the poems of growing up, parting and grieving. The stories reveal, with love, how things are when someone very near and very dear, dies.'



NEWS

AUCKLAND

The DVD of **Briar March's** film *Allie Eagle and Me* has been officially launched. For more info or to order a DVD please see: *www.allieeagleandme.com* or *www.takuufilm.blogspot.com*

Lisa Williams writes: 'the Polygon website has been revamped. Polygon builds creative relationships with businesses, organisations and individuals to develop graphic design solutions that are fresh, innovative and exciting.' *www.polygon.net.nz*

CHRISTCHURCH

Kathleen Gallagher is currently working on a film about long-term cancer survivors.

The Belladonna Film Trust offers assistance to short filmmakers by providing resources, seminars and advice to the film community in the Canterbury region. They also hold an annual short film festival showcasing Kiwi short films. They have established a Community Editing Suite to offer the community the opportunity to access desktop video editing. The cost of using the suite is considered on a case-by-case basis starting as low as $15 a day or $60 a week. The suite offers access to such popular programmes as Final Cut Pro, Avid Xpress Pro, DVD Studio Pro and more. View their website for news of upcoming introductory workshops and other events, for bookings or information contact: Room 215, The Music Centre of Christchurch, 140 Barbadoes St, PO Box 1351, Christchurch. Phone: 03 3656151, Email: *info@belladonna.org.nz* or visit *www.belladonna.org.nz*

Janet Joyce was featured in the March *Design & Arts College of New Zealand Alumni* newsletter. An excerpt: 'A vacation mixed with external inspiration, divine intervention (call it what you will) sought Janet to enter art school and undertake a massive life and career change; she hasn't looked back since! To imply this was an easy transition would be misleading; leaving behind a secure career to follow your calling is anything but!'

Allie Eagle and Briar March in the film, *Allie Eagle and Me* (2004), directed by Briar March.

INTERNATIONAL

Willemijn de Groot writes: 'I have started teaching about art at a one-year art and Bible school (*www.hqschool.nl*) and it is wonderful—this is where "the rubber hits the road". It's challenging and satisfying to start putting into practice what I've been thinking and dreaming about for so many years. So my schedule is crazy at the moment: art-academy, university and a new job. Today I received the *CS Arts* issue of March 2007, together with the result of a paper I wrote for uni about film! Isn't that funny? I thought it was, because this issue you have interviews about film and you announce more reflections on film for the next issue. My paper is about what a dialogue between film and theology would look like: when is a movie more than an impulse or a starting point for theological reflection? And vice versa: when is theology more than reflection after viewing a film?'

UNITED STATES

The 8th Annual Christian WYSIWYG Film Festival, 16–20 Oct 2007, VOP Multimedia and Performing Arts Auditorium, San Francisco, California. Email: *wysiwygsf@earthlink.net* Web: *www.wysiwygfilmworks.com*

Flickerings Film Festival and Showcase will be held as part of the Cornerstone Festival, 26–30 Jun 2007 in Bushnell, Illinois. See official festival site for details: *www.cornerstonefestival.com* 'Flickerings is more than just a film festival: it's a community of filmmakers, critics and serious buffs who come together once a year for a week of screenings, seminars, workshops, discussions, networking and vision-building, as a part of the annual Cornerstone Festival. Cornerstone is a large music and arts event held each summer in Central Illinois, drawing 20,000+ of the most energetic and culturally-savvy music and arts lovers from around the world. Cornerstone made its reputation as an edgy celebration of the arts within a faith context. What that means for Flickerings is this: we're interested in honest grappling with the human condition, in narrative form or otherwise. We're interested less in answers than good questions: the same "flickerings" of reality and insight that appear in artworks of all traditions, stabs of recognition that surprise, awaken, inspire, provoke, and move us first of all as human beings. Our goal is to bring together makers and appreciators of film to challenge and learn from one another and grow. Since 2001, we've grappled with the moral vision of artists like Krzysztof Kieslowski, Roberto Rossellini, Michael Haneke, the Dardenne brothers; we've taken vows of stripped-down truth-telling with the Dogma '95 Movement; Iranian Cinema has broken up our expectations and expanded our vision. We've begun to explore the ideas of film theorist André Bazin, with an eye to shaking off falseness of the wider film culture and bringing together theory and praxis. Meanwhile, along with independent and international features, Flickerings is very much interested in short films. Our *Flickerings Film Showcase* presents an annual program of shorts featuring a range of genres, styles and visions, from professionals to students to underground filmmakers.' *www.flickerings.com*

Influencing the culture through film—Sherwood Baptist Church in Albany, Georgia is creating major motion pictures. Their latest film is called Facing the Giants and more than 500 members of the church took part in the making, from directing and acting to serving meals.

Faith In Hollywood: Interview with two Hollywood producers**.** *www.christianitytoday.com/workplace/articles/interviews/hollywood.html*

Reel Spirituality: a creative encounter between the church and Hollywood, featuring ministers and filmmakers in discovery of common ground as storytellers, image shapers, and culture makers. Reel Spirituality brings together leading filmmakers, emerging pastors, and rising scholars around our image-driven culture's primary texts—film and television. *www.brehmcentre.com/ReelSpirituality/reelspirituality.shtml*

6th Annual Damah Film Festival–Spiritual Experiences in Film, 4–6 May 2007, The Culver Studios, Culver City, California. Email: *info@damah.com* Web: *www.damah.com or www.theculverstudios.com*

'Begun in 2001, the festival takes its name from Damah (dù mah´), a Hebrew word meaning "a metaphor that transforms". Damah is a unique festival which helps filmmakers and moviegoers from all traditions and perspectives express and explore the spiritual dimension of life through short films.

'We encourage an emerging generation of filmmakers from diverse perspectives to voice the spiritual aspect of the human experience and we provide a forum for these artists to develop, discuss and display their vision.

'Damah films run the gamut, encompassing all viewpoints, genres, and lengths up to 30 minutes. Films are selected and screened primarily for the power of the story they tell.'

Biola Media Conference, 21 Apr 2007, Biola University (Southern California), *The Gold Rush: Mining for Opportunity in the New Hollywood*. 'The media world has changed... After decades of struggle in Hollywood, we realise we are finally in the "deep end" of the pool with the success of *The Passion of the Christ*. Last year we celebrated coming out of the closet with hits like *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *Exorcism of Emily Rose* and more. But now, with studios actually opening "faith-based" distribution divisions, more spiritually-themed projects and pastors that top the bestseller lists on a regular basis, it's time to define who we are, and why we're here. In our rush to cash in on Hollywood success, have we hit the mother lode or discovered fool's gold? Perhaps more importantly, are we becoming a sub-culture, the counter-culture, or "the" culture?' Web: *www.biolamedia.com*

is necessary to describe our faith, to discuss the way we understand the world, and to encounter persons in all their particularities. As such, we're in search of movies that break the paradigm of "preachy", artless tales, and combine creativity and the art of good story-telling.' Email: *info@revealfest.com* or visit the web site for further info: *www.revealfest.com*

International Arts Movement Annual Conference—*Redemptive Culture: Creating the World that Ought to Be*, was held in mid-Feb at the Tribeca Performing Arts Centre in New York. See *www.iamny.org* for details.

The Grove Centre for the Arts has launched a fantastic new website: *www.thegrovecenter.org/index.php*

CANADA

The Banff World Television Festival (BWTVF), Banff, AB, Canada. *www.bwtvf.com*

UNITED KINGDOM

The Churches' Media Conference 2007, *A Future and A Hope*, Hayes Conference Centre, Derbyshire, 11–13 Jun 2007. What does the future look like? Is there a place for faith in the new media landscape? How will the digital revolution impact the Christian church and the UK's other faith communities?

A unique opportunity to engage in lively debate about the challenge of the digital future. Keynote sessions on society, technology, and the future shape of belief in the UK. Contact Dorothy Mason at Churches' Media Council, PO Box 149, Manchester, M19 2XA, Ph +44 845 652 0027. Email: *info@churchesmediacouncil.org.uk* for further info.

WWW.CS.ORG.NZ BRAND SPANKING NEW

ICVM (International Christian Visual Media) Crown Awards will be presented at the Westin Atlanta Airport Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia, 14 Jul 2007. These awards are designed to recognise excellence in production and content of films and videos that are created to reflect Christian values in a secular world. All the awards are judged on quality of the production values, storytelling and Christian content. Visit the website for further info: *www.icvm.com/crownawards/registration.shtml*

Christian Film Festivals of America
www.christianfilmfestival.org

1st Annual Reveal Film Festival, 2–3 Nov 2007, Southlake, Texas. Film submissions accepted until 1 Aug 2007. 'We want to locate movie-shorts (30 minutes or less) that will enable the viewer to learn more about God, others, and one's place in this world through the telling of a story that will challenge and expand the viewer's imagination and understanding of God in a transformative way. We believe narrative

LETTERS

ROUGH SLOPPY PORN

Both myself and a senior art lecturer at Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology left after looking at *The Model Series* exhibition by Ian Scott[1], (but before hearing the 'justification'!) as we were utterly repulsed by the attempt by the gallery to justify hanging badly-executed, 'soft porn' on the walls.

It's a case of the 'Emperor's new clothes'—are you unaware—surely you cannot be - it's in the news often enough—one in five women in Aotearoa New Zealand die at their partner's hands. Children are abused daily. Child Youth and Family (CYF) cases are the worst in the developed world. One in four women is the victim of rape or incest between the years of 10 and 20 in our 'clean, green country'. Images such as these are not art: they are further examples of 'the male gaze' and an unhealthy one.

I am considering leaving/cancelling my membership of CoCA utterly because of the hanging of this exhibition.

It is poor work, it is also exploitative, degrading, not in any way well-painted; 'rough and sloppy' as his former teacher described his earlier attempts to use paint... have a look at the painting of the eyes, not the same size, the sloppy shadowing of the breasts.

This is a money-making effort by the morally bankrupt person who chose to 'justify' his 'wet dreams' in paint and by relating his problems to the wider canvas of contemporary art.

Juliana Venning

Director, Focus on Art-Otautahi Limited, Christchurch

1 14 February–3 March 2007, Centre of Contemporary Art (CoCA)

HIGH ART PRETENSIONS

'One of the key issues that justifies *The Model Series* show is Scott's desire to ask questions and confront the way in which art really does, or fails to, impact on the public. It's interesting to see him celebrate the great European and American abstract artists alongside the images of women. Some people might argue that these works denigrate women but you could also claim he paints works that denigrate the pretensions of high art. Personally, that is what makes the paintings worthwhile. This is a genuinely rare attitude in the world of "serious" art.'

Warren Feeney, quoted in 'Confronting culture', The Press, 7 February 2007. He adds:

'In regards to the exhibition there was considerable response on the art bash website.[1] They registered more than 100 comments and although it started off with some pretty miserable comments, such as "I do not like his work because he paints so badly," once the debate developed it became reasonably intelligent and certainly more considered than most of the comments that came back to me. I was annoyed that a number of people damned the show without even seeing it.'

Warren Feeney

Director, Centre of Contemporary Art (CoCA), Christchurch.

1 *www.artbash.co.nz/article.asp?id=951&page=1#comments*

EDITOR'S COMMENT

The abuse of children and women in New Zealand is an ongoing cause for concern. We wish in no way to downplay this sobering reality. Justice and protection for the vulnerable in society is one of the threads running throughout the bible. The account in Genesis 1 & 2 describes humans as made in the image of God, male and female. Sexuality is God-given and God-created. A challenge for artists and exhibition-goers is to distinguish between what is pornographic and what is not. There should always be a place for challenging the pretentiousness of some contemporary art and the environment that nurtures it. This leaves us asking: are these works by Ian Scott primarily about a brave challenge to high art pretensions, or simply the public indulgence of an adolescent imagination?

Peter Crothall (editor)

LUTHERAN LICENCE

Thanks for the latest copy of *CS Arts*. I'm really only on the fringe of interest in your work, but you always come out with interesting stuff in these magazines and you obviously go to a lot of trouble over them. I particularly appreciated the interview with Kevin Ward and the issues raised.

You have a review of *Luther* on p 27 (March 2007). In fact it was not 'historically accurate to a T'. Main ideas and positions were coalesced into the characters with the best-known names. This, however, is perfectly acceptable 'artistic licence' and indeed the best way to present all the ideas that they wanted to, in the brief time available (and of course not wanting to clutter the stage and tax the audience's memory with too many characters to follow). So they get the tick from me.

Didn't the film also have some great mini-scenes, such as the young Luther in Rome looking hard at the relics in the little case, then kneeling in devout homage, while the priest sitting at the side narrows his eyes at him and very soon comes to hurry him along. And did you see (especially interesting to me because of my involvement in Bible translation) how Peter Ustinov's fingers twitched as he held out his hands for his copy of Luther's Bible!

Ross McKerras

Wycliffe Bible Translator

OPINION

Views expressed in *Letters* are not necessarily those of the Editor or representative of the values of Chrysalis Seed Trust.

CONTACT US

Email letters to director@cs.org.nz, post them to The Editor, CS Trust PO Box 629 Christchurch, New Zealand. Letters may be edited or rejected for legal, space or other reasons. A postal address and phone number are needed. We do not publish letters with pen names.

More of the Chrysalis Seed team

Those involved in the various aspects of our organisation are building a bridge. Their diverse roles ensure the arts community effectively receives material that is understandable, meaningful and relevant.

ART SCHOOLS

Janet Joyce is working tirelessly in tertiary art schools around the country. She is aiming to get the magazine in the hands of fine arts students as well as staff at these 'seedbeds' of the visual arts in New Zealand.

Janet's background includes hospitality management and public service. Completing her Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2005 she came to the *CS Arts* team assisting with marketing of the magazine and liaising with tertiary art schools with a focus on making the *CS Arts* easily accessible to all tertiary art students and tutors. Janet has also enjoyed reviewing the occasional exhibition.

Having previous experience in interviewing, public relations, and with a passion for art, Janet launches a focus on the lives of filmmakers in this issue. With an understanding of arts practice and discernment she writes boldly from the heart, while being informative.

WEBSITE

Jenna-Lea Philpott

Jenna-Lea has assisted Chrysalis Seed Trust (CST) in a number of marketing tasks such as the distribution of the *CS Arts* magazine, re-development of our website, and magazine advertising. As Managing Director of Tango Creative Consultancy (*www.tangocc.co.nz*) Jenna-Lea is experienced in working with a range of arts organisations, artists and creative business owners. 'I'm delighted to be working with CST and to assist with increasing artists accessibility to a range of excellent resources that can help them in their practice' says Jenna-Lea. The new CST website was launched in March and features a range of resources such as a links directory, book reviews, news, and the *CS Arts* magazine. Visit us at *www.cs.org.nz*

DATABASE

Law student **Anna Renouf** joined our team in November 2006 and is responsible for maintaining our database records. With the growth of our mailing lists, it has become essential to have a member of the team to focus exclusively on database record management. She has settled into this role quickly with the careful attention to detail required.

Anna has been studying towards a Bachelor of Laws and Psychology at the University of Canterbury for the last four years and is taking a year out from her studies. The key aspects of this role involve entering new records and maintaining the integrity of the database by making necessary changes to our many records. Anna works at the CST offices for eight hours per week. We have over 1,000 incomplete addresses and she will be updating these contact details. This means she will be contacting some of you in the near future during this process.

PROOFREADING

Jane Hole and the other proofreaders reduce communication static, cleaning the script, clearing it of extra letters and sentences. Through them the script becomes truly readable.

Jane has been working for CST since 2004, primarily as one of the proofreaders for *CS Arts*, and also helping when needed with gathering information from artists about their work for insertion in the *CS Arts* Notices. Jane says, 'Knowing very little about contemporary New Zealand art when I started, I've been delighted to learn the many ways in which artists are giving eloquent expression to their spirituality, and have enjoyed getting to know some of them (and upgrading my proof reading skills). Although I work from home, I feel fully (and proudly) part of the CST team, which seems to me essentially a practical and spiritual cooperative whose first resource is prayer.'

All photos: Andrew Clarkson

1 ☐ Please **put me on your *CS Arts* mailing list** to receive: ☐ hardcopy ☐ electronic
I am professionally involved in contemporary visual arts, as an: ☐ artist ☐ other

2 ☐ Please **delete** my name from the *CS Arts* mailing list.

3 ☐ Please note my postal/email address has **changed** (write new address details below).

4 ☐ Enclosed is a donation of $ ..... to help cover *CS Arts* running costs.

5 ☐ (For organisations only) Please send me more/less copies of *CS Arts.* A total of: ..... copies.

6 ☐ I am not professionally involved in contemporary art but would like to subscribe to *CS Arts*. Enclosed is my $25 annual subscription. Please make cheques payable to 'Chrysalis Seed Trust'. Please fill in your contact details below.

Name..... Phone/s .....

Email ..... Street / PO Box .....

City ..... Postal Zone ..... Country .....

Thank you for filling out this form. Please post it to:
Freepost # 154 215, CS Arts, PO Box 629, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand.
(You might like to save us money by omitting our Freepost number and using a stamp!)