

BACK⁴ STORY

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JOURNAL OF NEW ZEALAND ART,
MEDIA & DESIGN HISTORY

A detailed marbled paper pattern in shades of beige, tan, and black, featuring swirling, organic shapes and veins. It occupies the left half of the page.

BACK⁴ STORY

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Editorial

As we stated in our first issue of *BackStory* in December 2016, the editorial team has sought to produce a journal with an appeal beyond the academy to those working in the broad field of New Zealand art, media and design history. We have reached out to those working in the country's libraries, galleries and museums for contributions and we have also provided space for commentaries and personal reflections on particular aspects of our cultural history.

In this issue there are two articles which focus on two aspects of what we might label 'kiwiana'. Lesley Kaiser and John Barnett have over many years had an interest in the work of New Zealand painter Henry Thomas Garratt who from 1895 to around 1940, painted under a number of pseudonyms such as – 'de Ritz', Paul Wren, Maxwell and Edwards. They provide a commentary to accompany examples of his mainly landscape work produced on what might be described as an almost industrial scale. Sold around New Zealand by salesmen they were very popular and they state that Garratt was probably the most remunerated painter of his time. It could be argued that Garratt's paintings were part of our awakening as a nation as settler New Zealand started to replace pictures like English thatched cottages by the village green with a whare beside a bush clad river.

Crown Lynn pottery is the most collected example of 'kiwiana' with collectors now paying high prices for ceramics once produced as utilitarian table ware. Growing up in New Lynn where the Crown Lynn potteries were situated, I have memories of accompanying my mother when she went to buy 'seconds' at the factory shop. Not often appreciated at the time when it was compared to European and particularly British china, it is now highly valued not necessarily for the quality of its products but for the fact it was 'ours' – practical and occasionally uniquely designed ceramics which disappeared in a wave of cheap and undistinguished global product. Juliet Hawkins joined Crown Lynn as a designer in 1979 and some of the designs of that time are accompanied by her reflections as the design team sought to create appealing ceramics in the face of multiple challenges.

The development of the potteries out west was one of Auckland's early industries when Rice Owen Clark began in 1854 to make his own drainage pipes by wrapping logs with clay and firing

them. Shaun Higgins in his article looks at what may be the earliest urban landscape view of Auckland and believes that it probably dates to about 1857. The discovery of the photograph marks an important step in the development of local photography as professional and amateur photographers alike began to take their cameras outdoors to capture the development of New Zealand.

Moving film images also provide insight into the development of our identity and can illuminate contemporary problems using historical stories. Jani Wilson draws on the New Zealand film *White Lies* in which a woman seeks to hide what she sees as a shameful secret, to discuss the nature of 'whakama' – a term generally understood as shame, inadequacy or embarrassment. However, the author outlines that it differs from typical embarrassment or shame in that it is a 'mate Maori', a Maori sickness that can blight the body and decision-making and is a factor in contemporary issues such as suicide among Maori.

Public art is another way by which artists can engage audiences with works speaking to social and political concerns. Robin Woodward looks at the work of Nic Moon, an artist whose public art uses a wide variety of forms while addressing issues of human ecology. Contemporary concerns which Woodward believes she shares with a new group of public artists who are prepared to break with traditional historical notions of public art to engage with their audiences.

Marcus Moore seeks to draw our attention to a local artist whose early work has not received much attention. He looks at the work of Paul Cullen, in particular his exhibition in November and December 1979 entitled 'Building Structures' at the Barry Lett Galleries in Auckland. Moore argues that this radical exhibition was "a definitive statement in the context of 'post-object' and conceptual art" in this country.

Undervalued art, re-valued ceramics, re-assessing notions of public art, exploring the development of local photography and using our own movies to address contemporary issues about identity are some of the issues in this edition. We trust you find this diverse content illustrates the value in looking back at stories of our art, media and design history.

Alan Cocker

An Early Photographic View of Auckland

Shaun Higgins

Keywords: #ambrotype #photographic view of Auckland #Hartley Webster #John Nicol Crombie # urban landscape # dating photographs

An ambrotype photographic view of Auckland presents one of the earliest extant photographs of the urban landscape in the city. As a rare example of a landscape presented as a cased image it marks an early scenic view that would be repeated in later technology. Identification and supporting evidence dates the cased photograph to circa 1857. Of the photographers working in Auckland at that time two primary candidates for the creation of this work are discussed, Hartley Webster and John Nicol Crombie with the argument that the former is the most likely. Several other photographic views from 1858 to 1859 are shown as examples of known early landscape photographs of Auckland. One in particular shows a wider view taken from a similar point on Constitution Hill looking across to Mechanics Bay and Parnell.

Early photographic views of Auckland are rare. Most of the early record comes from wet plate photography in the form of albumen silver prints made from collodion glass plate negatives. Though photography was practiced in Auckland as early as 1848, most outdoor scenes were taken in the 1860s with only a few known earlier examples from 1858 and 1859.

Auckland War Memorial Museum recently acquired an ambrotype that predates other known Auckland landscape photographs. This early view offers a glimpse into the period before photographs on paper became commonplace. It is exceedingly rare to find such outdoor views presented in morocco cases (leather on wood with a brass mat over glass inside) as these were commonly reserved for portraiture. Such a picture could be an experiment, perhaps testing new technology, or for a particular client request given landscape photography was not common. Such a picture could be sent back to the United Kingdom to show Auckland.

Photographers made use of a range of technologies and formats, adapting to new media as they became available. Daguerreotypes began to fall out of favour by the mid-1850s due to the emergence of collodion positives known as ambrotypes. An underexposed collodion negative appears in positive when viewed against a black background. This enabled the creation of a visible image on glass without the hassle associated with creating a daguerreotype. Like daguerreotypes, ambrotypes yielded only one photograph. But ambrotypes were cheaper than daguerreotypes with the added advantage of fitting the existing mounts and cases. A third early option which was contemporaneous with the daguerreotype was the salt print from calotype (or Talbotype) paper negatives. Unfortunately thus far only late 1850s examples such as 1858/59 salt prints appear to have survived, though there is mention of calotype views of scenes in the Wellington region a little earlier¹ and some suggestion of use of the process in Auckland in association with an early daguerreotypist², likely to be Hartley Webster. John Nicol Crombie also produced albumenized salt prints (salt prints varnished with a thin coating of albumen) in the early 1860s.³

The recently acquired ambrotype features a view of Mechanics Bay seen from the vantage point of Constitution Hill. Parnell buildings are visible on the hill above and a waka can be seen near the shore. In the centre is an enclosed area for shipbuilding.



Figure 1, Attributed to Hartley Webster. View of Parnell and Mechanics Bay, Auckland. Quarter-plate ambrotype, ca. 1857. Case size 95mm x 122mm. PH-2017-13, Auckland War Memorial Museum - Tāmaki Paenga Hira.

DATING THE MECHANICS BAY AMBROTYPE

In 1862 John Nicol Crombie stated with regard to photography in New Zealand, “we commenced with the daguerreotype early in 1847, and adhered to it pertinaciously up to 1857, when we got to glass positives.”⁴ This provides a useful starting date range which should be expanded to include 1856 as Montague Scott had brought the “improved collodion process” with him to Auckland in October 1855 and briefly advertised up until 6 February 1856 citing supply problems before he moved on.⁵ Ambrotypes were produced into the early 1860s and overlap with collodion wet plate negative use in general.

Like many ambrotype examples, this one is cased. Although incomplete, the case is useful in attempting to date the item as certain components fall within periods of known use. Analysis of periods of use can be applied to most aspects of the case following patterns observed in the United States. By 1853 the United States was producing over three million daguerreotypes a year.⁶ Britain was regularly using the United States as a source of cases, importing them from the vast market on the east coast.⁷ Many of the cases used in New Zealand at this time would also have been of American make, even if acquired in England. Shipping would have created a time delay so any dates based on the United States chronology should be understood with this in mind.

The Mechanics Bay ambrotype is housed in a smooth double elliptic mat that dates from 1848 to 1858.⁸ Other features such as the floral pattern preserver can be found in use from 1851 to 1859⁹ and the case gilding pattern falls within the 1850 to 1862 range.¹⁰ The geometric case cover pattern dates to 1852.¹¹ It is important to note that a plate could be removed from one case and placed in another, making it difficult to find a specific date correlation between them. However, such examples can still be identified by comparison of dates of the mat, preserver and case. It is unlikely that these three dates will agree if they are not original to the image.¹²

The combined evidence from the case presents a date range of 1852 to 1858. The case was probably a stock item intended for mounting daguerreotypes and simply applied to the new medium. This date range accommodates Crombie's comments on photographers' adoption of glass positives in 1857. It is likely the ambrotype was made from 1856 to 1858 (circa 1857).

Ambrotypes are typically laterally reversed which is one of the reasons they were predominantly used in portraiture where the reversal was less apparent. This Auckland scene does not appear in mirror reverse suggesting the plate is mounted backwards with the emulsion to the back which would place it against the black backing.

THE BAY AND SHIPYARD

Mechanics Bay was named as the residential district for labourers, artisans and mechanics.¹³ William Swainson described the bay in 1853 as, "yet but little built upon; a large rope-walk, a ship-builders' yard, a native hostelry, and a few small shops, are the only buildings."¹⁴ He goes on to explain that the bay was the principal place of encampment for Māori visiting Auckland by waka, landing produce. This was a major source of fruit and vegetables for the Auckland population. For example, he states that, "during the present summer 1200 kits (of peaches) were brought into Auckland by canoes alone."¹⁵ Principal traders have been noted as Ngāti Pāoa and Ngāti Maru from the Hauraki.¹⁶ The produce was often sold on the main wharf¹⁷ in Commercial Bay where foot traffic was more frequent.

The ship-builders' yard Swainson refers to is H. Nicol's shipyard. It is enclosed by a fence in this image with perhaps one vessel under construction and two covered piles of wood. An 1858 view of this site

(Figure 2) shows an expanded shipyard with multiple vessels under construction and the fence to the left removed. The progress visible in the 1858 print suggests the ambrotype is of an earlier date as a ship is now shown out to the left beyond where the fence was.

PROVENANCE

Provenance is the final part of the story of the Mechanics Bay ambrotype. The cased photograph was found in an English county sale. The owner had no notion of what it was or where it was from. As the 1858 series of photographic views of Auckland by Hartley Webster were intended to be sent home (to the U.K.),¹⁸ it is possible the earlier ambrotype travelled to England in a similar manner. Mr and Mrs Webster left Auckland for England in December 1860,¹⁹ arriving in London in 1861. It is conceivable that some items such as the small ambrotype were taken to England as gifts for family or perhaps even for sale. Giles notes Webster's advertised intention to do business in London, albeit in procuring goods for his return to New Zealand.²⁰ In particular an 1860 reference to "take charge of Pictures to London free of expense, and forward them to any part of the world"²¹ certainly implies awareness of the interest for pictures from New Zealand back in England.

John Nicol Crombie also spoke of his views of Auckland being, "well adapted to give friends at home a correct impression of the Metropolis of New Zealand" in his earlier 1856 advertisement.²² Crombie himself also eventually returned to England.

If the ambrotype was not retained when taken but instead sold as an early Auckland landscape, the new owner could have similarly taken or sent it to England. To immigrants such pictures would have been a way of showing families their new home. Unfortunately the provenance stops with the county sale and it is doubtful any further evidence exists.

ATTRIBUTION: HARTLEY WEBSTER

In October 1858 the newspaper *New Zealander* featured a piece on "Photographic Views of Auckland".²³ These scenes were taken by the

Auckland photographer Hartley Webster who had established himself as a daguerreotypist in 1852. Of the twelve plates representing the city and suburbs, two are from Parnell, “from the Point right up to Mr. Kinder’s house near the Grammar School”.²⁴ It was said that many of these would soon be sent to “old friends at home,” as evidence of “what sort of place Auckland is.”

Unsurprisingly, few of these works survive in New Zealand as most were indeed likely sent back to the United Kingdom. Hartley Webster’s feature mentions Mr Kinder’s house and it is in one of the Reverend John Kinder’s albums that a photograph matching one of these descriptions can be found today. The two men could have easily been acquainted with one another. Kinder was painting landscapes at this time so it is quite likely that he would have taken an interest in Webster’s outdoor work. It is possible that Kinder may have later purchased albumenized paper from Webster’s stock for his own photography.²⁵



Figure 2, Hartley Webster. Mechanics Bay and Parnell. from Constitution Hill. Salt print in album, 1858. Print size 153 mm x 719 mm. PH-ALB-88p36-37, Auckland War Memorial Museum - Tāmaki Paenga Hira.

The caption in Kinder’s album, written in Kinder’s hand reads, “Mechanics Bay and Parnell. from Constitution Hill.²⁶ Photo by Webster.” In 1977 Main noted that, “the first landscape we can positively identify with Webster is a panorama of Mechanics Bay and Parnell taken from Constitution Hill.” The date given by Main is October 1858, the date of the New Zealander article.

Webster’s panoramic view consists of prints from four plates placed side by side to form a panorama. The prints are not varnished and present no sheen suggesting either an early style of diluted albumen that produced a matte surface similar in appearance to salt prints or that they are actual salt prints.²⁷ With the adoption of collodion negatives there was initially a backlash against shiny albumenized paper as many people were used to the matte finish of salt prints.²⁸ By the 1860s this finish had fallen out of fashion in favour of the albumen silver semi-gloss sheen.

The two central frames of the Mechanics Bay panorama are very similar to the ambrotype view of Mechanics Bay suggesting the photographs were taken from a similar position on Constitution Hill. As the image is comprised of multiple plates there is significantly more room in which to capture the landscape to either side of Parnell Rise.

Looking at the subject of landscape, in Kinder’s watercolours one can certainly see aspects of composition that follow a similar style to early photographic views. The use of a strong building or feature in a realistic rendition of a landscape has been tied to influences in Victorian art and writing such as the work of John Ruskin.²⁹ Brownson wrote that John Kinder’s photographs are some of the first images to seize the experience of living in New Zealand, showing what is unique about this place.³⁰ In this light we can see why Kinder was interested in Webster’s photograph. The Webster panorama seems caught in an eerie silence as it shows a scene filled with the detailed evidence of a growing city, suburb and shipyard yet depicts only a few figures seated in the hostelry to the right. It is also a place which accommodates some of the recognisable features found in Kinder’s works such as St Stephen’s Church on open grassland to the left, found in his watercolour painted in the same year, 1858.³¹

JOHN NICOL CROMBIE

Another prominent photographer was also working in Auckland at the time the new collodion process in ambrotypes and negatives became available. John Nicol Crombie photographed a series of Auckland views, also presented as prints joined together to create a panorama. Some of these photographs were taken to London as part of the 1862 International Exhibition.³² Alongside watercolours by Charles Heaphy and furniture by Anton Seuffert, John Nicol Crombie exhibited several views of Auckland and won an honourable mention for one of his panoramic views.³³ An earlier mention of two excellent views of Auckland photographed by him in 1859 may refer to the same two panoramic views he took to London in 1862.³⁴ One of the views, that of Commercial Bay from Point Britomart, appeared in the Illustrated London News as an engraving in 1860.³⁵ Kinder also put the Commercial Bay albumen silver print into his album but credited Webster, showing that even he found it difficult to tell their works apart. Though very similar in format, Mechanics Bay is not listed among the works by Crombie shown at the 1862 International Exhibition.

In September 1856 Crombie left Auckland to tour the districts south of Auckland. The preceding month he had advertised his imminent departure for the southern provinces.³⁶ He is mentioned as being in Auckland again in 1859.³⁷ Main suggests his return date was October 1858,³⁸ having visited Melbourne where he acquired new photographic skills. This takes him out of Auckland for two years and suggests he switched from daguerreotypes to collodion positives and negatives when he returned. If Crombie made the ambrotype, he either made it within the 15 months prior to September 1856, since he first arrived in New Zealand in 1855, or after October 1858. Main's reference to Crombie's statement that they "got to glass positives" in 1857 would suggest the earlier date is unlikely.³⁹

Regarding Crombie's work prior to his 1856 departure from Auckland it is worth noting an interesting advertisement from July 1856. In addition to portraits he mentions "views of Auckland, embracing Shortland, and West Queen-streets, Chapel Hill, &c."⁴⁰ This leaves a small window of time for such works but also suggests the possibility of further works that could be a different format altogether, perhaps even calotypes.

Crombie's absence from Auckland for most of the date range suggests the Mechanics Bay ambrotype is not his work. The short period in 1856 remains the only possibility in Crombie's case before the changes visible in Webster's 1858 panorama (Figure 2).

OTHER EARLY VIEWS OF AUCKLAND

When Crombie returned from the provinces south of Auckland he moved his studio from Shortland Street to Queen Street. The former studio was taken over by Bruno L. Hamel in 1859⁴¹ and he also had an interest in taking pictures of outdoor scenes. By this time both photographers were producing prints from collodion wet plate negatives.

Two salt print views of Auckland can be found in an album of photographic views taken by Hamel in 1859 (Auckland Museum PH-ALB-84). Hamel accompanied Dr. Ferdinand Hochstetter on his Geological Survey of the Auckland Province. The album features several early scenes of Auckland's waterfront and surrounding areas.

Hamel took two scenes from Point Britomart looking across to Commercial Bay. This area would later be reclaimed and the point itself



Figure 3, John Nicol Crombie. Commercial Bay from Point Britomart. Albumen silver print in album, 1859. Print size 137 mm x 564 mm. PH-ALB-88p40-41, Auckland War Memorial Museum - Tāmaki Paenga Hira.



Figure 4, Bruno Hamel. Auckland. Salt print in album. 1859. Print size 116 mm x 159 mm. PH-ALB-84-p2-1, Auckland War Memorial Museum - Tāmaki Paenga Hira.

would disappear altogether as it was cleared and used as infill. The photographer's studio was located close by. This would have simplified the task of shooting wet plate collodion as he could finish work on the plate without a portable dark room.⁴² The first such image consists of two prints put together to form a panorama in a similar style to Crombie. The view shows a busy waterfront seen from a grassy hillside.

The second view of Auckland in Hamel's album shows a group of Māori sitting on the point with Commercial Bay behind them and a road across the foreground. The group would not be far from the fort referred to by Swainson as "The Britomart."⁴³ The building is possibly represented by the steep earthen slope to the right in the image which could be the earthen parapet as described by Vigors in 1850.⁴⁴

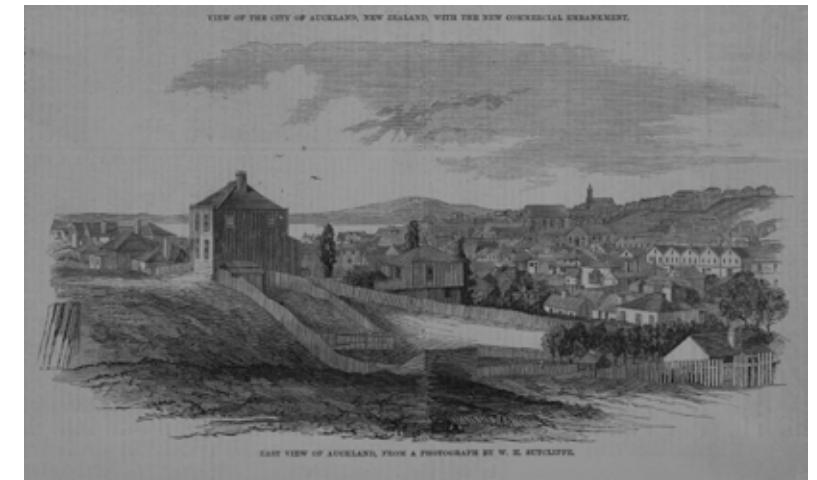
It is possible that more 1850s photographs of Auckland are still yet to surface and as with the Mechanics Bay ambrotype, they may be abroad. Along with Crombie, W. H. Sutcliffe submitted a photograph to the Illustrated London News⁴⁵ showing an east view of Auckland that was likely was taken around the same time Crombie took his panoramic views. Sutcliffe is noted as active from July 1859 to 1860.⁴⁶

The Mechanics Bay ambrotype offers an exciting step further back in time to the introduction of ambrotypes to Auckland. It is hard to imagine that it stands alone in this category of landscape photography, especially as it was easier to produce than a daguerreotype. Perhaps this work was the inspiration for landscape panoramas such as the award-winning panoramic photography that Crombie took to London in 1862. Or perhaps it was merely a test shot for Webster's own panorama of 1858, since it was an easier format to work with being both smaller and faster as it did not require printing. The two photographers could have competed with each other or perhaps even exchanged ideas. The available evidence leans towards Webster as the likely photographer. Further works may yet emerge such as those mentioned in the 1856 Crombie advertisement. Either way, this work represents the local emergence of a style of photography that would dramatically increase in the 1860s as the professional and the amateur alike would take their cameras outdoors. As the only extant ambrotype view of early Auckland this work marks an important step in the development of local photography. Perhaps more examples of early urban landscape photography will emerge in the future taking us back even further to the daguerreotype and calotype period. For the moment, this work is as far back as we can see.



Figure 5, Bruno Hamel. Auckland. Salt print in album. 1859. Print size 112 mm x 259 mm. PH-ALB-84-p3-1, Auckland War Memorial Museum - Tāmaki Paenga Hira.

Figure 6, Illustrated London News. East view of Auckland, from a photograph by W. H. Sutcliffe. Engraving. 10 May 1860. Auckland War Memorial Museum - Tāmaki Paenga Hira.



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- 2 New Zealander, "Photography," November 25, 1864, p. 4.
- 3 Michael Graham-Stewart, *Crombie to Burton: early New Zealand photography* (Auckland: John Leech Gallery, 2010), pp.12-15. Several of Crombie's albumenised salt prints are shown in this catalogue.
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- 34 New Zealander, "Photography", November 25, 1864, p.4.
- 35 Illustrated London News, "View of the City of Auckland, New Zealand, with the new commercial embankment", 19 May, 1860, p. 473.
- 36 Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle, "Opinions of the Metropolitan Press", August 11, 1856, p. 4.
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- 38 William Main, *Auckland through a Victorian Lens* (Wellington: Millwood Press, 1977), p.7.
- 39 Ibid, p.9.
- 40 Daily Southern Cross, "Ex "Sybil", July 4, 1856, p. 1.
- 41 Michael Graham-Stewart, *Crombie to Burton: early New Zealand photography* (Auckland: John Leech Gallery, 2010), p.8.
- 42 Oliver Stead (ed.), *150 Treasures* (Auckland: Auckland War Memorial Museum and David Bateman, 2001), p.23.
- 43 William Swainson, *Auckland, the capital of New Zealand, and the country adjacent: Including some account of the gold discovery in New Zealand, with a map of the district from recent surveys* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1853), p.31.
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People, Place, Public: The Public Art of Nic Moon

Robin Woodward

Keywords #Nic Moon #art #human ecology #installation #new genre
#New Zealand #public art #sculpture

In the realm of public art, New Zealand artist Nic Moon's practice extends from permanent outdoor sculpture to ephemeral, site-responsive installations and staged public events. Such a range spans the trajectory of contemporary public art, a genre which theorists struggle to define categorically: historical precedents for public art offer no template for the present or for the future. Working in conjunction with mana whenua iwi, local government agencies, art institutions, museums, architects and the community, Moon creates large-scale object art as well as temporary and relocatable works, circumstantial installations, public artworks as utilities, and ephemeral art with a short life span. Her public art encompasses a broad spectrum of forms while speaking constantly of human ecology - the interdisciplinary study of relationships between people, our social systems and our environments. It is these relationships that underpin the work of Moon who, in common with new genre public artists internationally, is prepared to work outside the historical framework of public art to engage her audience in socially conscious, political art.

New Zealand artist, Nic Moon, is the consummate public artist. In addition to her intimate, immersive gallery art, Moon's practice extends from large-scale outdoor sculpture to ephemeral, site-responsive installations. Such a range spans the trajectory of contemporary public art, a genre which theorists struggle to define. In *New Land Marks* Penny Bach generalises that public art is "art placed in public places and spaces" which are 'open to everyone to use and enjoy'.¹ Public art theorist Cher Krause Knight retorts in response: "If only it were that easy!" and backs it up with Hilde Hein's memorable statement: "The sheer presence of art out-of-doors or in a bus terminal or a hotel reception area does not automatically make that art public, no more than placing a tiger in a barnyard would make it a domestic animal".² In her turn, Patricia Phillips asserts that "art is public because of the kinds of questions it chooses to ask or address, and not because of its accessibility or volume of viewers".³

Although there is no exact definition of public art, its most basic precept must be that it is "conceived for larger audiences, and placed to garner their attention; meant to provide an edifying, commemorative, or entertaining experience; and convey messages through generally comprehensible content".⁴ More specifically Seitu Jones contends that: "Public art documents our place in time by visually rendering issues, ideas, traditions, and history . . . it identifies and comments on the challenges that affect us".⁵ Such a definition fits snugly with Nic Moon's philosophy: Moon's work is characterised by a sensitivity to the life of a place and its people.

However, this raises issues around permanence versus the short lived, impermanent installation. As Phillips explains, "There is a desire for a steadfast art that expresses permanence through its own perpetualness. Simultaneously society has a conflicting predilection for an art that is contemporary and timely, that responds to and reflects its temporal and circumstantial context".⁶ Nic Moon works across the entire spectrum. Within her oeuvre there is a body of work which is permanent large-scale object art. This can be an art programme developed in conjunction with architecture; Moon's collaboration with Jasmx architect Lars von Minden on Auckland's Ranui Public Library exemplifies this approach. Alternatively, it can be a utility situated in landscaped nature as is Raukura O Te Koroto (Te Koroto's Precious Feather) at Wenderholm Regional Park, just north of Auckland. While some works, such as *The Cocoon*, can be temporary because they are relocatable, at the other extreme, those made of less durable, even ephemeral materials, are intended for a short life span. One such work

is *Out of the Ashes* (2007) (Figure 1), part of the biennial temporary installation programme at Connells Bay Sculpture Park on Auckland's Waiheke Island.

Set amidst a landscape of native bush in a coastal setting, Connells Bay is a 2.5 hectare permanent sculpture park populated with 35 large-scale works that showcase New Zealand's premier sculptors.⁷ The temporary programme was instigated to increase the range of works in the park and to offer something new each year for the repeat visitor. Each installation would remain in situ for just one summer season, from October to April. For the 2007 / 2008 season Moon's *Out of the Ashes* was a planting of native tree seedlings set inside the constructed remnants of campfires, and beneath a canopy of tall kanuka. To protect them and thus facilitate the regeneration of the native bush, Moon created shelters to protect and nurture the young trees. These shelters were inspired by woven Maori fishing nets and early colonial European dresses with hooped skirts. Each one was formed by fishing net shaped to fit a steel framework – rather like a one-person tent – and they were adorned with natural and manufactured items, small objects and locally scavenged materials that reflect the history of human settlement at Connells Bay. Fishing lures, seashells, sheep-



Figure 1. Nic Moon, *Out of the Ashes*, 2007, Waiheke Island, Auckland.

shearing combs, sheep-dog whistles, tufts of fleece, baling twine and bullets were threaded onto the shelters. Such items are relics of Maori and European settler history and offer a visual narrative of human intervention in the land.

Out of the Ashes was a nursery, a small village of woven shelters providing the forest of the future with protection from grazing sheep. It could also be read as a contemporary archaeological site, one which reveals the processes of burning and reforestation initiated both by nature and by humankind. Moon does not impose a single meaning on some imagined homogenous audience, but keeps meaning “free-flowing, without privileging one level of understanding over another”.⁸ However, the work speaks of the environmental history of Waiheke Island and contributes to the theme of human ecology which is a constant in the artist’s oeuvre. Human ecology is the interdisciplinary study of relationships between people, our social systems and our environments. It is these relationships that underpin the work of Moon whose interest lies in aspects of physical and psychological survival, from both a micro (personal) and a macro (universal) perspective.⁹

Throughout colonial history, the indigenous vegetation of Aotearoa New Zealand has been systematically cleared to develop farmland. Here at Connells Bay, via the sculpture park’s temporary installation programme, Moon replenishes the native flora at the same time as providing an artwork; her seedlings supplement the extensive programme of planting that has been carried out by John and Jo Gow. Simultaneously, by creating a ‘village’ of simple shelters, Moon critiques activity around the building of extravagant mansions and huge holiday homes on Waiheke Island and in many coastal regions. Thus the art object itself “is an ‘expressive gesture’ or quasi-voice, one that can interrupt the voices that thought they could easily enclose it within their discourses”.¹⁰ In the context of the sometimes fraught artist / patron relationship, is this ‘biting the hand that feeds you’? Maybe – but as David Salle reminds us ‘Art Is Not a Popularity Contest’.¹¹

Out of the Ashes is an artwork in an arena of contesting voices. Moreover, it is an act of stealth. One could say that Out of the Ashes was still a work in progress when it was dismantled. While the structural part of this sculpture was removed, the trees planted by the artist remain, and are flourishing. A work that started as a temporary intervention in the landscape became quite ‘at home’ and integrated into the environment. It became permanent. And through its form the artwork circumvents what is a recurrent problem for permanent, site-specific art, that is, the difficulty in maintaining ‘appropriateness

to its site’: a site may be drastically transformed after an artist first addresses it.¹²

In contrast to Out of the Ashes, artworks constructed out of natural materials can be ephemeral, and frequently ‘return to nature’. This is exemplified by the work Moon created during her six week artist residency at Wenderholm Regional Park in 2008, when she used natural materials she found in the park to reference its bi-cultural social history.¹³ On part of the land Moon mapped out a housing subdivision and used materials traditional to Maori to build the frame of a shelter or whare. Another work was inspired by the colonial Victorian / Edwardian Couldrey House in the park. Then, in the face of such human intervention in the land, Moon provided protection for the natural environment in the form of woollen wrappings for the fallen branches of young, native pohutukawa trees at Wenderholm. All of these works were left in situ at the end of the residency and, as they were made principally of natural materials endemic to the site, all eventually went back to the land.

A Royal Carpet (Figure 2) is subtly bicultural in its focus. On the carefully manicured, European-inspired lawn of Couldrey House Moon created a carpet of leaf skeletons from the native mahoe tree. The artwork is inspired by the lace curtains in this early colonial cottage which has been restored and is now used as an information and cultural centre, and includes a museum that focuses principally on the European history of the site. As the title implies, the vision for A Royal Carpet came also from stories about the visit to Wenderholm made by Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh during their coronation tour in 1953. Leading up to the entrance of the house Moon created a walkway for royalty (Maori or English), carpeted by skeleton leaves she collected from the park.¹⁴ The lace-like patterns and colours of the leaves mirrored the lace curtains in the windows of Couldrey House. At this intersection of indigenous ecology and the colonial garden environment of Wenderholm Regional Park the ‘indigenous lace’ created out of the leaf skeletons of Aotearoa meets the ‘introduced lace’, brought to New Zealand by early European settlers. This is a temporary artwork inspired by the idea of building relationships in a nation that is founded on a bicultural Treaty.

For Pohutukawa Bones (Figure 3) at Wenderholm Moon used pohutukawa branches and twigs which had been dropped in a storm, wrapping them in red wool to create a ring of ‘protection’ for the roots of a sprawling pohutukawa tree. The colour of the protective wrapping makes reference to the ‘bloodlines’ or the genealogy of this young tree.



Figure 2. Nic Moon,
Royal Carpet,
2008, Wenderholm,
Auckland.

Figure 3. Nic Moon,
Pohutukawa Bones,
2008, Wenderholm,
Auckland.



The oldest of these trees may have existed before the first humans arrived between 800 and 1000 years ago. In the early days of European colonisation, during the mid-nineteenth century, timber from the trees was in high demand for ship building, however, an early settler, Robert Graham, who arrived at Wenderholm in 1842, is said to have protected the old trees.¹⁵ Moon's installation is inspired by the work of the many people who, over the years, have followed in Graham's footsteps, safeguarding and caring for the grove of pohutukawa trees on the Wenderholm Peninsula.¹⁶ In another take on this work, Pohutukawa Bones is also inspired by the protection that the pohutukawa trees provide the public as they picnic and shelter here.

Moon's work at Wenderholm can be seen in the tradition of new genre public art which is populated by artists prepared to work outside the historical framework of public art. Their work is "a contemporary form of socially conscious, activist political art".¹⁷ This was the nature of the public art event staged by Moon and Whitespace Contemporary Art for Auckland's Artweek in 2012. Cow Dung Forest (Figure 4) was intended as a subversive act, sullyng the glass entrance of a commercial urban art gallery with the excrement of New Zealand's most economically successful and environmentally contentious industry, dairy farming. Using a stencil process, Moon applied the pattern of a forest to the expansive, windowed exterior of Whitespace Contemporary Art gallery in Auckland's trendy, inner-city cafe district of Ponsonby. Then, over the course of a weekend, the public was invited to plunge their hands (gloves provided for the townies) into buckets of fresh cow dung and plaster the windows with a richly textured mass of human handprints. When the stencil was peeled off the windows it left the ghostly impression of an ancient forest which cast shadows into the gallery interior.

In Cow Dung Forest Moon explores new possibilities for the use of our nation's most abundant and under-utilized resource, cow dung, and involves the public in the creative process. Moon and Whitespace chose to treat the commercial art gallery not as a space of constricting tradition, but to "shift(s) the focus from artist to audience, from object to process".¹⁸ Through shared authorship of the artwork, Moon's intention was to raise awareness of the contamination of our drinking water supplies, and our recreational spaces (rivers) with nitrogen-rich cow effluent, "a by-product of our latte-drinking, dairy-product-consuming urban lifestyles".¹⁹ Cow Dung Forest was a response to a conversation Moon had in a small rural museum in Southland during her time as artist in residence for the William Hodges Fellowship in 2010.



Figure 4. Nic Moon,
Cow Dung Forest, 2012,
Whitespace, Auckland.

Her hosts revealed that they would not let their grandchildren swim in the local rivers because they were so polluted with cow effluent from local, industrial-scale dairy farms. Equally, they would not speak out against this appalling environmental management “because their small community depended on dairy farming for their economic survival.” In Cow Dung Forest, the artist has become their ‘voice’.

Moon’s focus on environmental issues made her a natural contender for the commission to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Auckland’s Regional Park network in 2016. The brief specified that this large-scale permanent artwork at Wenderholm should be functional: it should provide an amenity for the public. Such a precept has long been recognised as part of the twentieth century revival of public art in which art’s functionality has “gained renewed emphasis with street furniture becoming standard public art fare”.²⁰ However, Moon’s commitment to the tenets of public art runs deeper than this. She adheres to the belief that public art “identifies and comments on the challenges that affect us”²¹ and that it can “serve to mark the specifically local”.²²

Raukura O Te Koroto (2016) at Wenderholm served to mark the ‘specifically local’ and was also a protection or shelter for people visiting the park. It is a kererū (native wood pigeon) feather, a response to the long history of interdependence between bird-life and humankind in the sparse remnants New Zealand’s coastal-forest. Auckland’s regional parks provide a place of refuge and health for the local community while contributing to the global need to protect our atmospheric

balance. The kererū is a crucial part of that ecological balance as it is the only remaining bird species that can swallow and distribute the seeds of the large coastal canopy trees. Yet the numbers of kererū have long been dwindling, a result of predation and the loss of habitat. Long-standing monitoring projects at Wenderholm are a crucial part of our national attempt to halt this decline and subsequently to save our coastal forests. The kererū needs us, and we need the kererū. Hence, Moon’s kererū feather is a symbol of symbiosis, it represents the interdependence of nature and our communities in the precious remainders of our coastal forests. In concept, the feather of a kererū has floated gently down to earth from the trees above. In practice, the curve of its form becomes a roof under which a small group of people can find shelter from the sun and rain. The perspective Moon maintains is that of an observer of human processes. She sees herself as a conduit: her work is a commentary on human ecology, drawing out the things that might be lurking unseen or unacknowledged.

The process informing Raukura O Te Koroto was at the opposite extreme to the more intimate and immediate site-responsive, ephemeral counterparts that Moon made at Wenderholm in 2008. The brief for this permanent public sculpture called for a ‘functional’ artwork that satisfied the health and safety requirements for a structure in a public park, met the tight timeframe for financial-year-end budget allocations, and a project that could be mandated by lengthy, civic consent processes. The resulting 9 metre long, 3.6 metre wide, 3 ton feather-inspired shelter was created in consultation and collaboration with mana whenua, on-site conservation rangers, Auckland Council officers and administrators, arts advisers, local volunteers, structural engineers, fabricators, shipping companies and a crew of crane drivers involved in the installation. This type of commission does not leave much scope for the artist to respond to the process, or to make changes and adjustments once the drawings are submitted for consent purposes early in the design phase.

In theory, and in an academic reading, Raukura O Te Koroto ticks a list of pre-requisites for good public art:²³ It is a robust, well-engineered work of art completed within budget, the process was consultative from the outset, and the work references its site, is an aesthetic enhancement, and also a public utility. Every public art project is, to some degree, an interactive process involving artists, architects, design professionals, community residents, civic leaders, politicians, approval agencies, funding agencies, and construction teams. The challenge of this communal process is to enhance rather

than limit the artist's scope. Although time pressure related to the consent process meant this may not have been Moon's experience with Raukura O Te Koroto, working on the Auckland Council commission for the Ranui Public Library in 2014 was a lesson in a process embracing and fulfilling ideology.

Since the 1970s, libraries just like "airports and playgrounds, locations once likely to be disregarded or downgraded within traditional art historical parameters, . . . take on great importance in a reconfigured 'canon'".²⁴ This was part of the evolution of sites for public art. At the same time, the definition of 'the public' in public art has come under attention. The general public is now recognised as increasingly diverse, in fact "diverse, variable, volatile and controversial".²⁵ Moreover, "art is most fully public when it sincerely extends emotional and intellectual access to its viewers".²⁶ However "accessibility is not the parent of mediocrity; one does not have to 'dumb down' art or avoid challenging content to be accessible".²⁷

The emergence of large-scale sculpture in conjunction with modern architecture can be "an attempt at ornament after the fact",²⁸ but with Auckland's Ranui Public Library nothing could be further from the case; from the outset the artist worked in conjunction with Jasmax architect Lars von Minden, and in consultation with local community groups. The brief for the artist and the architect was to create a building that provided the Ranui community with a heart or community epi-centre. Inspired by this, a forest-living room-campsite theme emerged. In the Living Room, at the centre of the new library building, Moon proposed a sculptural installation, *The Great Forest* (Figure 5). Drawing inspiration from environmental and human stories related to Ranui and the wider Waitakere area, she focused on bringing together aspects of ancient history, contemporary life and visions for the future. As a result, the main wall of the Living Room was transformed into an immense mythological forest inspired by the original kauri forest on the site. At the centre of the forest is a cascading shaft of light, which is 'peopled' with floating forest 'spirits', and at the foot of this towering forest is the fireplace around which the community gathers to draw warmth.

The use of a forest as the motif at the heart of the library is inspired by the wealth of resources that the ancient forests of the area offered to the earliest people who inhabited the region. An ancient forest can inspire stillness, contemplation, connection and imagination; these are also qualities that Moon associates with a library. Similarly, a forest provides shelter, refuge and health for the local community



Figure 5. Nic Moon and Jasmax, *The Great Forest*, 2014, Ranui Library, Auckland.

while contributing to the global need for environmental balance. The central focus of *The Great Forest* at Ranui is a series of old shovels incised with native plant, leaf-skeleton patterns.²⁹ These shovels make reference to the farms, orchards and vineyards of the area's history and the contemporary community planting projects that are restoring local ecosystems. Lighting from above creates subtle shadows that radiate down the wall towards the fireplace. The walls either side of the shovels are adorned with a collaborative 'earth-forest painting'. This wall painting is inspired by the history of clay-based industries in the area. It acknowledges the many people, beginning with mana whenua iwi Te Kawerau a Maki, for whom the local earth has provided sustenance.

According to Moon, it was clear from the outset that the diverse and multi-cultural Ranui community wanted to be involved in this project: such enthusiasm provided both inspiration and challenges for the artist and the building project managers.³⁰ The community was invited to participate in creating the artwork, giving them the unique opportunity of early access to the building-site. To facilitate this, and to create the artwork, a towering nine-metre high scaffold complete with safety barriers suitable to accommodate the public, was erected inside the partially completed building. The scaffolding was placed in front of the two-storey central wall to which had been applied a stencil of immense tree silhouettes whose roots entwine to create an intricate web. Over the course of a weekend about four hundred members

of the community became involved: they climbed the scaffolding, dipped their hands into pots of clay paint, and randomly placed their handprints on the stencilled wall, leaving their own personal imprint on the new building.³¹ By the end of the weekend the wall was covered with thousands of handprints, and when the stencils were removed, they left an image of a soft-focus, fossil-like clay forest that brings warmth and an earthy glow to the Living Room space.

On the 'forest' floor, in front of a gas-fire hearth is a large semi-circular woollen rug artwork, *Volcano*.³² This rug glows with the red and orange intensity of a campfire or a volcanic crater, and the pattern is inspired by the strong radiating root-system of a pohutukawa tree. It also makes reference to the huge Waitakere volcano that erupted in the sea to the west of the present Waitakere Ranges which are composed of the uplifted and eroded eastern slopes of that ancient volcano.³³ Couches around the fireplace are an invitation to the community to gather round the 'campfire' to relax, to read, to share stories and to soak up the inspiration offered in the library. The forest theme continues on the exterior of the library where it has been integrated into a huge corten steel canopy that surrounds the upper section of the building: this aspect of the project was designed in collaboration with the architect. Sections of the steel are cut with forest canopy imagery taken from the artist's drawings, which creates a dappled light inside the building. The steel references the tools used to cut the original forest and transform the land into farms, orchards and gardens.

Through a process of consultation and community participation, at Ranui Library a space was created in which the community feels connected, empowered and inspired; the public has a sense of ownership of its new library and the public art project at its heart. The community and its values and concerns are seen as the context, and the art serves to enrich the lives of those who participated. This is community-specific art.³⁴

Erika Doss, however, reminds us that the form and content of public art are "dependent on a variety of cultural and social relationships and subject to the volatile intangibles of multiple publics and their fluctuating interests and feelings".³⁵ "What is thought to be an appropriate aesthetic expression of a society's values during one period of history can appear dated in the next. What one group cherishes, another can find offensive".³⁶ Moon accommodates such variables in *The Cocoon* (2015) (Figure 6), which, as a temporary and relocatable public artwork, circumvents the fact that permanent works



Figure 6. Nic Moon and Lyn Russell, *The Cocoon*, 2015, Canterbury Museum, Christchurch.

are “likely to have difficulty gaining support, and must renegotiate their relationships with changing publics over time”.³⁷ The Cocoon is a prototype for a ten square-metre backyard studio which can be readily dismantled and rebuilt, responding to the need for adaptability in our increasingly changeable environments. It is made entirely from materials salvaged in the wake of the Christchurch earthquakes and is the result of collaboration between Moon and architectural designer Lyn Russell. Together they designed this space of transformation, inspired by the resilient life cycle of a butterfly: by opening up, The Cocoon expands to become a studio or workshop, then by re-cocooning inwards it becomes a place of stillness and retreat.

The Cocoon was created as part of the Whole House Reuse project which attempted to carefully deconstruct and catalogue every part of a single home, the house at 19 Admirals Way, Christchurch. The materials were then made available to artists and designers to create ‘useful’ objects. This project was a response to the trauma and loss experienced in the 2011 Christchurch earthquakes, and was designed to draw attention to the variety of material in a house as well as the waste that is being generated by the Christchurch clean up. It was initiated as a counterpoint to the 10,000 homes, churches and commercial buildings that were smashed to pieces by bulldozers in the aftermath of the city’s earthquakes. The Cocoon is one of approximately 400 useful objects, made from the materials retrieved from just this one condemned ‘red zoned’ building. The Whole House Reuse exhibition at the Canterbury Museum in 2015 involved over 250 people and included archival footage of the deconstruction of the house at 19 Admirals Way as well as interviews with the Buxton family, the last owners and residents of the house.

At the outset, Moon and Russell were motivated by a series of photographs of the mountain of building waste at the Burwood Resource Recovery landfill site in Christchurch: the scale of this agglomeration reduced a towering digger to the scale of an ant. In the rush to clear land in Christchurch for a speedy rebuild, entire homes, complete with furniture and personal effects, were demolished. A wealth of timber from our ancient forests was trashed, as were other valuable building materials that were not considered economically viable to salvage. The details of children’s toys, books, and mattresses crushed amongst timber and roofing iron was disturbing to witness.³⁸ The Whole House Reuse project acknowledged the journey of trauma recovery experienced by many, and it wanted also to inspire a different approach to salvage and encourage the reuse of our precious

resources. In the contemporary Western world the abundance of used building materials in our neighbourhoods is often overlooked as not economically viable, and is destined for landfill sites. Yet, in their marks and scars, these materials hold the tissue memory of our rich and vibrant human and environmental stories.

Akin to The Cocoon, public art projects internationally have been realised through recycling of materials. From 2010 to 2015 Jun Kitazawa repurposed a vacant retail store in suburban Tokyo to create Living Room. This was organized into a ‘living room’ open to all, where local residents were invited to deposit unwanted furniture. The space also became a site of exchange serving the community as a place of social gathering.³⁹ In 2009, Chicago, artist Theaster Gates purchased the home adjacent to his own: he restored it using recycled and salvaged materials, and deposited 14,000 art and architecture books from a recently closed local bookstore, and 60,000 slides donated by the University of Chicago’s art history department. This project had a specific, local, social agenda - to counter an exodus from a South Side neighbourhood.⁴⁰ Evaluations of these projects have considered, among other things, “the danger of equating urban sculpture with urban renewal”.⁴¹ One of the most well-known projects open to this criticism was the interdisciplinary public art programme at MacArthur Park in downtown Los Angeles during the 1980s. Over a four year period art forms by contemporary artists were placed in that rundown urban space with the express intention of engaging with the disenfranchised, and invoking social change.⁴² Some public art theorists warn against such a move. Phillips states “Public art has been too often applied as a modest antidote or a grand solution, rather than perceived as a forum for investigation, articulation, and constructive reappraisal”.⁴³

These international examples are site-specific artworks intended for a designated community. In contrast, Moon’s work, being dismantlable and relocatable has a broader audience. In the past three years it was built in Nelson, exhibited in Christchurch, and Nelson, and now it is being used as a design studio. For each outing The Cocoon was built, and then after each showing, was carefully deconstructed, packed and prepared for its next location. In this it is distinctive from other public artworks that employ recycled materials, and also from other relocatable, temporary artworks which are effectively franchises that travel the international circuit, hired out for set lengths of time, often in conjunction with institutional bi- or triennials. Many, such as Ujino Munituru’s Dragon Head in Auckland’s Aotea Square in 2011, rely on spectacle for effect.⁴⁴ However Fred Evans cautions against such

public art, warning that “the work’s aesthetic must not be a ‘spectacle’ that mutes or trivializes the incitement the work might give to new thought, action or collective formation”.⁴⁵

Definitions of public art and what is recognised as ‘the public’ are constantly evolving. Historical precedents for public art offer no template for the present or for the future, but it is now well recognised that public art does not have to last forever. “It does not have to cast its message to some unmistakable but platitudinous theme that absolutely everyone will get; it does not have to mark or make a common ground. . . . It must rely on its flexibility, its adaptability to be both responsive and timely, to be both specific and temporary”.⁴⁶ Yet for many artists and arts administrators, the success of public art initiatives is calculated by the ability to place works permanently. “Permanency confers status, indicating that a work is so good it deserves to be seen and preserved for generations”.⁴⁷ Countering this, ephemeral artworks “prompt no concern that an undesirable neighbor is being foisted upon the public for all time; rather, their work offers a temporary interjection into a given environment, makes its statement, and then moves on and out”.⁴⁸

As public art theorists continue to see-saw through their definitions of the genre, one thing is clear: “For any meaningful understanding of public art, it must be viewed in the complex matrix in which it is conceived, commissioned, built, and, finally, received”.⁴⁹ Public art is a reflection of how we see the world – the artist’s response to our time and place combined with our own sense of who we are. Through a broad spectrum of art forms Nic Moon speaks constantly of the relationships between people, social systems and the environment. Through her socially conscious, political statements she ventures beyond the historical framework of public art in her critique of us, our time, our place.

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- 1 Penny Balkin Bach, *New Land Marks* (Washington DC: Editions Ariel, 2001), p.153.
- 2 Cher Krause Knight, *Public Art Theory, Practice and Populism* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), p.viii.
- 3 Patricia Phillips, "Temporality and Public Art" in Harriet Senie and Sally Webster (eds.), *Critical Issues in Public Art Content, Context and Controversy* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), p.298.
- 4 Knight, p.1.
- 5 Seitu Jones, "Public Art That Inspires Public Art That Informs" in Harriet Senie and Sally Webster (eds.), *Critical Issues in Public Art Content, Context and Controversy* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), p.282.
- 6 Phillips, p.295.
- 7 Connells Bay Sculpture Park, the vision of John and Jo Gow, was established in 1998. Moon's Out of the Ashes was the third in a series of five commissions for the temporary installation programme which was initiated in 2005 and ran until 2010. For Connells Bay Sculpture Park see www.connellsbay.co.nz.
- 8 Knight, p.25.
- 9 Unless otherwise stated, all references to Nic Moon's opinions derive from conversations between the author and the artist between December 2017 and March 2018. For further information see www.nicmoon.co.nz and www.whitespace.co.nz/artists/nic-moon.aspx.
- 10 Fred Evans, "The Dilemma of Public Art's Permanence," *Public Art Dialogue* 6, no. 1 (2016): 68.
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- 13 Moon was the inaugural artist in residence in this Auckland Regional Council initiative.
- 14 Visitors to the park respected this work, and did not walk on it. Eventually nature took its course, and the wind and the rain dismantled A Royal Carpet.
- 15 regionalparks.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/Wenderholm [accessed February 12, 2018].
- 16 Over the years, seedling pohutukawa trees have been planted at Wenderholm to ensure the continuation of this protected grove. New seedlings are now being grown and planted from the seed of the ancient pohutukawa trees on this peninsula.
- 17 Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another. Site Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2002), p.106.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Nic Moon, interview by the author, Auckland, March 26, 2018.
- 20 Knight, p.28.
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- 23 Albert Elsen provides just such a list in Albert Elsen, "What We Have Learned about Modern Public Sculpture: Ten Propositions," *Art Journal* 48, no. 4 (Winter, 1989): 291-297.
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- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Harriet Senie and Sally Webster (eds.), *Critical Issues in Public Art Content, Context and Controversy* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), p.xiii.
- 29 The leaves were sourced from trees in local forests.
- 30 Nic Moon, interview by the author, Auckland, March 26, 2018.
- 31 Made from locally gathered earth pigments, the clay paint was prepared in collaboration with residents from the neighbouring Earthsong Permaculture Community.
- 32 The rug is hand-tufted, 100% wool. It was designed by Moon and made in collaboration with Dilana Rugs. For Dilana Rugs see <http://dilana.co.nz>.
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- 36 Ibid.
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- 39 Jun Kitazawa Office Yokumo 04 Living Room <http://www.junkitazawa.com/04-livingroom.html> [accessed January 14, 2018].
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The painter de Ritz

Commentary by John Barnett and Lesley Kaiser

The myth of de Ritz, when first we heard of him, was that of an itinerant late-nineteenth century painter (a view echoed in Una Platts' 1980 Nineteenth Century New Zealand artists: a guide & handbook). Seeing the paintings, one imagined a Romantic wanderer at makeshift easel, smoke rising lazily from a fire whereupon a billy boiled, a river before, a tent beyond: a remittance man, perhaps, a shamed scion escaping old Europe for Antipodean bush, fleeing heartache or financial scandal or the outcome of a duel.

The de Ritz paintings, with one exception, are all signed 'G' or 'by' de Ritz. To avoid repetition, we have simplified the attribution to 'de Ritz'. The paintings are from a private collection, Auckland. The photographs were taken by King Tong Ho



Maori Whare, de Ritz

An enquiry to the Alexander Turnbull Library established that paintings signed de Ritz are of a variety of New Zealand locations, often include whare, and are all of them painted in oil on cardboard, the title and signature being scraped into paint at the picture's lower edge. The Library's reply also informed that there was, in fact, no de Ritz: that de Ritz and De Ritz, G. de Ritz, A. de Ritz, Anthony A de Ritz and de Ritz junior, Paul Wren, Maxwell and Edwards were all names under which Henry Thomas Garratt painted (also, likely, Mayclair and J. A. Bond). Garratt, born in 1875, was a sign writer who lived in Auckland. He had a fondness for the paintings of Charles Blomfield.

A man by the name of Rifkin ran a business in Customs St (a 'picture shop'), and had salesmen travelling around New Zealand selling landscape paintings. Garratt produced paintings for Rifkin 'by the gross', according to Garratt's daughter, of which those paintings signed de Ritz, at between five shillings and seven shillings and sixpence, were the cheapest.

Garratt's output was prodigious, estimated to be in excess of 3000 paintings. These include paintings in oil on board and canvas under his own name. He retired to Waiheke Island, dying there in 1953.

According to Garratt's daughter, there was a lack of preparation with the paintings and, indeed, many of them have warped over time and paint has loosened and dropped off. Garratt's daughter thought the paintings were probably based on photographs,



"Moonlight" – Rangitoto, de Ritz

and thought her father was, perhaps, the most well-remunerated New Zealand painter of his time.

We can add that the Mayclair attribution is now contested. Mayclair, in fact, seems to be a painter in his own right (indeed, there may be two, an R. and a J. R.). We can also add that we have come across the signatures F and F. Maxwell.

The signature on the majority of paintings produced by Garratt that we are aware of is either 'G de Ritz' or 'by de Ritz'. It's difficult to be certain whether it is a 'G' or a 'by' that precedes 'de Ritz' and further research is required. Neither variant is mentioned in the Library's reply.

In terms of frequency, the 'G' or 'by' de Ritz signatures are followed, very distantly, by the signatures 'Paul Wren' and 'F (or F.) Maxwell'.

Of other de Ritz signatures noted we have come across only 'de Ritz', but we have also encountered, though this is not mentioned in the reply, a (capital B) 'By de Ritz'. Both of these signatures are rare.

Three thousand paintings are a lot of paintings, never mind the excess. And though the painting of them may have constituted part of Garratt's work as a sign writer, presumably he also undertook a proportion of sign-writing work, for which materials would have to be bought, accounts would have to be kept and so on. Also, Garratt had a family. The painting had to fit into a life, therefore, with a not



Wanganui River, de Ritz



Moonlight Rangitoto, F. Maxwell



Evening Rangitoto, Paul Wren



Maori Whare, de Ritz

insignificant amount of potentially available time already accounted for, which gives an indication of the speed at which Garratt, to produce those many paintings, must have worked.

The overwhelming majority of de Ritz paintings (and paintings under other pseudonyms) that we have seen, taking the original frames into account, have an aspect ratio around 2:1: they are approximately twice as high as they are long, that is, or twice as long as they are high, depending on whether they are portrait or landscape in format.

The paintings tend to be portrait overall, with landscape being especially used for certain views of Rangitoto and of certain lakes and rivers. They are mostly painted on boards of a similar size (around 250 x 630 mm).

This standardisation is reflected in the framing. The frames of all the de Ritz paintings (and those of paintings under other pseudonyms) where these are original, show remarkable uniformity. The frames are of dark wood, wide, with mitred corners, and slope inward from the outer edges. There is often a metal (silver or gold in colour) inner frame between the outer frame and painting. Some few paintings are vignettted in oval mats.

It's reasonable to assume, we think, speculating on the facts to hand, that the paintings Garratt supplied to Rifkin were framed at Rifkin's 'picture shop'. In this model, the paintings would have been commissioned by Rifkin, who then packaged them in standard frames and supplied them to his salesmen.

The industrialisation apparent in all this presumably also applied to the way Garratt worked. That he produced three thousand plus paintings becomes then a touch more comprehensible. For instance, in terms of time management, Garratt may well have worked on several paintings at a time, grouping these by format. He may have worked on several de Ritzes at a time or several Paul Wrens, say, maybe with similar subjects, or he may have worked on several paintings of the same subject at a time, each by a different 'name'. There are, particularly, some quite similar paintings of Rangitoto signed by each of de Ritz, Paul Wren and F. Maxwell that raise this possibility.

The paintings themselves point to this industrial turn. They are, overwhelmingly, formulaic in construction: a riverbank view and a whare, a Wanganui River view and a whare, Rangitoto and the moon. The application of formulae to format would have drastically reduced the time Garratt would have required for composition and would thus have speeded things considerably.

Some de Ritzes are more formulaic than others; some are more

detailed in their rendering. They range (and this may tell of varying time spent in their production) from this side of folk art to genre paintings of sophistication.

We have seen several works Garratt produced under his own name. These are more 'painterly', with more attention paid to detail, and they utilise a wider colour range than paintings signed de Ritz. They are highly evocative. We have the feeling, though (and considering also those works under other pseudonyms), that painting as de Ritz was where Garratt was most at home: the de Ritzes have an ease that seems born of long practice, and, in fact, they constitute the bulk of his production.

As a body, paintings by de Ritz (painted between 1895–1940, for argument's sake) are firmly located, in terms of their subject matter, their treatment and in the vision that they present, in the era spanning 1875, say, up until the First World War. They look 'late colonial', to put a label to it. Paintings signed de Ritz and produced after 1914, then, are consciously 'harking back'. (There is a rare exception: a genre of Waitemata-sailboat-Rangitoto paintings that bear traces of the 1920s.)

The paintings have gravitas, and a rewarding, meditative stillness. They engage the imagination and emotions in a dreamscape both timeless and just beyond reach. They have about them what we may call nostalgic yearning. And they have a high degree of charm.

The de Ritzes appear, in general, as the products of a single sensibility, one subtly different, for example, from that of Paul Wren or Maxwell, judging from the paintings, and subtly different, but more so, from that of Garratt. Garratt, let us say, assumed a persona (an 'unconscious stance') when painting as de Ritz (or as Paul Wren, Maxwell, etc.).

Not a lot is known of Garratt. We know he had three brothers, that he married Pearl Mary Agnes Christmas in Auckland in 1902, that he was President of the Balmoral Lawn Tennis Club for some years in the 1930s, that he was at one time a superintendent of St John Ambulance, and that he served as secretary of the Ostend Ratepayers' and Residents' Progressive Association and chairman of the Ostend Road Board. (We know also that his father, Henry Thomas Garratt senior, 1844–1903, was born in England and came to New Zealand in 1866, and that he served on the Auckland City Council for some years, likewise the Hospital Board, and was for twenty years secretary of the Ancient Order of Foresters, Auckland District. He was, as well, a Mason.)

Of de Ritz, though, we know more than we do of Garratt. And that is because we have the paintings: the end point of both persona

Sunset – Rangitoto, de Ritz



and the projection of that persona and all that that involves. And when we look at the paintings, bearing the name 'de Ritz' in mind (and wondering what 'de Ritz' conjured up for Garratt), as they exert their pull we get to glimpse the painter.

He stands near to a river bank in hazy dusk. His clothes are worn, the elbows of his jacket roughly patched. His beard is long and streaked with white. He wears a hat.

A tui calls. He turns.

The river runs.

The setting sun . . .

Garratt (not to forget Rifkin) discovered a gap in the national imaginary. De Ritz worked extensively to fill it.



Untitled, Henry Thomas Garratt



Evening - Rangitoto, de Ritz



Untitled, de Ritz

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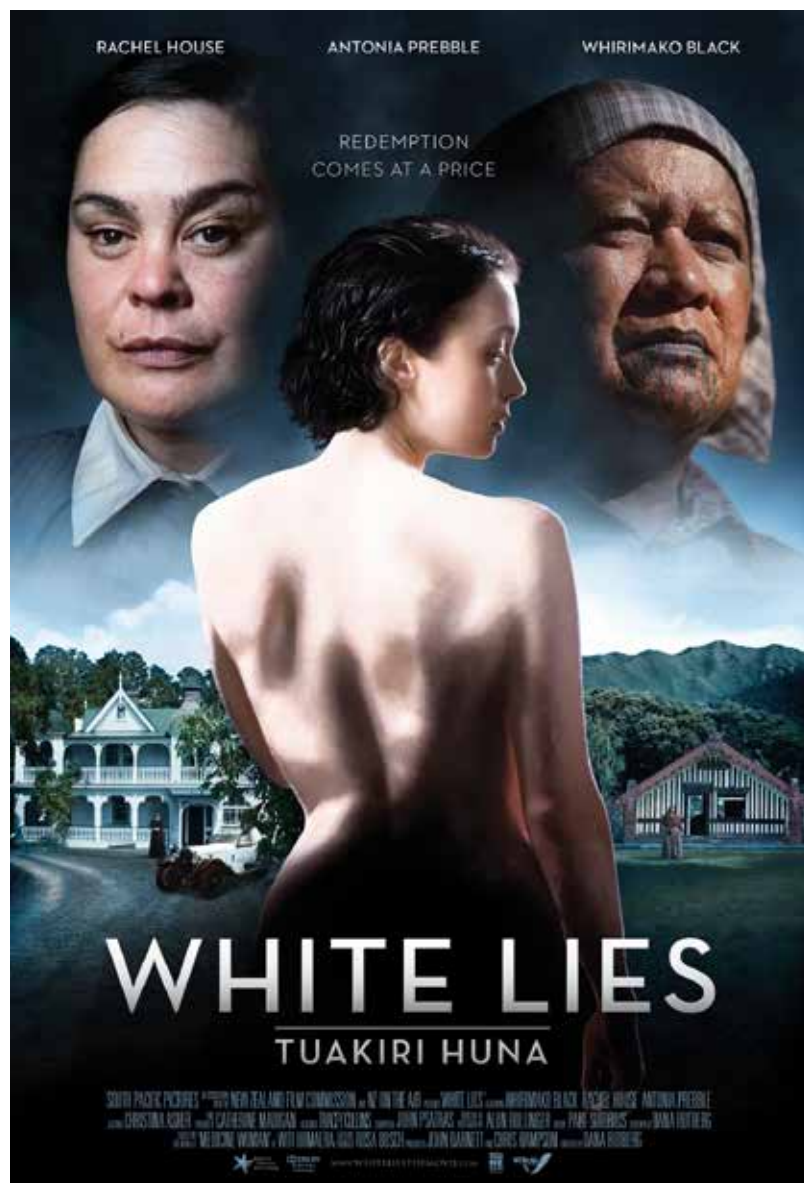
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Whakamā: The Truth in White Lies

Jani Katarina Taituha WILSON

This article explores the deeper meanings of the term whakamā so it is understood as a fundamental inhibitor of Māori potential, particularly in relation to rangatahi (Māori youth). The kupu (word) whakamā has a number of distinct meanings; firstly, whakamā comprises 'white' and 'clean',¹ and together literally mean to be whitened clean. Secondly, to reflect the process of the blood draining from the face, whakamā is also to be 'embarrassed' or 'ashamed'. As I will show through one of my tribal pūrākau (stories) and a close-reading/analysis of characters in recent feature White Lies (2013, dir. Dana Rotberg), whakamā is far from a straightforward concept. The analysis of White Lies in particular demonstrates and underlines some of the subliminal elements of whakamā in the characterisations of Marāea (Rachel House) and Rebecca (Antonia Prebble), particularly in terms of landlessness. As a Māori film scholar who is generally focused on what cinematic representations of Māori in film history get wrong, I was taken by White Lies for what it gets right in terms of whakamā, particularly in terms of the contribution of whakamā to the clarity – or lack thereof – in decision-making. For the most part, whakamā is a feeling that cannot be easily expressed, and this essay contemplates some of the difficult qualities necessary to explain the effects of whakamā



Poster for *White Lies*

White Lies (2013) is an adaptation of Witi Ihimaera's novella *Medicine Woman*, set in early settlement New Zealand. It centres around Paraiti (Whirimako Black), an orphan who was groomed in Māori medicine by her koroua (grandfather) and grew into a *tohunga rongoa* (traditional/expert healer). She is called upon by Marāea, the domestic servant to her mistress, Mrs Rebecca Vickers, a cold, callous Pākehā woman who recently moved to the area with her extremely wealthy businessman/entrepreneur husband. Marāea's request is that Paraiti, using her gift as a *tohunga*, discreetly abort the child Rebecca carries before her husband's return from overseas. Paraiti refuses, assuming Mrs Vickers is removing evidence of an affair. A pregnant teenage girl Paraiti treated for labour anxiety struggles while giving birth at the hospital. When she arrives to help, a despicable Pākehā charge nurse shuns Paraiti before she can present the teenager with the *rongoa* Māori (traditional treatment) to contain profuse bleeding. When the girl and the baby die, Paraiti feels responsible and the guilt forces her to reconsider Rebecca's request to expel her baby by the time Mr Vickers returns from overseas business. The pregnancy and the environment are far more complex than the affair Paraiti suspected; Marāea is Rebecca's mother, and since a small child, she has routinely whitened her daughter's skin using a lemon-paste concoction in the hopes of distancing her from Māori impoverishment and landlessness, by attracting a rich and powerful Pākehā husband. Mr Vickers 'does not like savages,' thus the baby threatens to expose Rebecca's *whakapapa* and end the extravagant life to which she and Marāea have become accustomed. As promised, Paraiti induces the labour, and following days of excruciating toil, the baby is born. Rebecca slowly falls in love with her new daughter. News of her husband's return expels her from her momentary joy. She changes into her husband's favourite yellow dress, and commits suicide in the bathtub, ending the insurmountable choice between the love of her child and financial stability. Paraiti raises the baby as her *rongoa* Māori protégé.

TE TAHINGA-O-TE-RĀ

Primarily because of the stories I heard as I grew up, I have always considered *whakamā* something that is passed down generationally, like a *makutu* (curse). One story in particular shaped this thinking. To contextualize my understanding of *whakamā*, I begin with a brief

version of the story that strongly influenced me. The story is about a tohunga, a person who reads signs with the senses. His name was Te Tahinga-o-te-rā (Te Tahi), from the Ngāti Awa, the iwi in the Whakatāne region in the Eastern Bay of Plenty from where I hail and grew up. Te Tahi was renowned and feared for his supernatural powers, and his direct relationship with the gods. With that came unfathomable spiritual knowledge. Because of this, Te Tahi was extremely tapu, and consequently excluded from the rest of the hapū, all of whom had desperate anxieties about him. Their fears were so dire that on several occasions, members of the hapū devised ways to get rid of him. But every time, they were too petrified by potential repercussions to follow through with any of their plans. One day, the men invited Te Tahi out to Whakaari (White Island) for a fishing trip, telling him that because he had favour with Tangaroa (god of the sea) he could help them find the best fishing spots around the island. Te Tahi had never been invited out before, so was quietly excited by this sign of acceptance. As Te Tahi was unaccustomed to travel, when they reached Whakaari he was extremely tired, and decided to take a nap while the others hauled in the grand catch. When he arose sometime later, Te Tahi searched the island for the fishermen, but they were nowhere to be seen. Far in the distance he saw the men ferociously paddling their waka, halfway back to the shores of Kākāhōroa.² They had abandoned Te Tahi on a volcanic island in the middle of the ocean! Te Tahi was twisted with fury. He turned to Tangaroa, and used his supernatural powers to call upon Tūtarakauika, an enormous whale, from the ocean's depths. The whale bowed so Te Tahi could embark on his back. Soon, Te Tahi rode past the men in their waka on the back of Tūtarakauika.³ On seeing Te Tahi eyeballing them from on high, the men froze in horror, certain to feel his wrath. When they alighted their waka on shore, Te Tahi simply turned his back on the men and returned to his whare (house). Later, someone asked him why, despite then men's treachery, he chose not to put a makutu on them. Te Tahi replied, "waiho mā te whakamā e patu," which means 'shame will be their punishment'.

I chose to open this essay with the story of my tīpuna (ancestor) Te Tahi, firstly because it contextualises myself as the author from the Ngāti Awa. Secondly – and more importantly – by framing this essay in a pūrākau, a story passed down to our generation, I want to explore whakamā as a generational makutu, and take the learnings at the centre of the story as guidance, particularly for those who deal with rangatahi in classrooms, sports teams and other groups they may frequent. Unlocking keys to whakamā is fundamental to understanding



Paraiti inside the wharehau where she treats the local community with rongoa Māori

Māori, and ensuring they reach their potential rather than squandering their many skills and talents. Looking closely at Te Tahi, what might the learnings about whakamā be? Hearing different versions of these stories from childhood to now, I have always believed that spoken words are exponentially powerful, perhaps a hangover from our oral histories and tradition-centric culture. Te Tahi may not have used his supernatural powers to curse the men on that day per se, but the words "waiho mā te whakamā e patu" did torment the iwi for their ancestors' treachery for some time. Severe historical events indeed took place in the Ngāti Awa, which could be construed as punishment by whakamā. A most cruel punishment was the Raupatu Whenua, where at least 100,000 hectares of land and resources were confiscated for the slaying of Ngāti Awa Crown representative James Fulloon. Despite warnings by chiefs not to divert from tikanga (correct procedures) during a hui,⁴ Fulloon bared his buttocks (whakapohane) in the presence of the chiefs, women and children. Later, Chief Te Hura of Te Rangihouhiri followed him back to his ship and killed him. Ngāti Awa kept silent about Te Hura's whereabouts, 36 men – including my great-great grandfather – were prosecuted, literally for saying nothing, and sent to Mount Eden prison. Meanwhile, the entire iwi was labelled rebels of the Crown.⁵ Very soon after, Ngāti Awa were landless.

Hirini Moko Mead's extensive archival research presented to the Waitangi Tribunal in The Ngāti Awa Raupatu Whenua Report⁶ conveys whakamā clearly. Kaumatua Hudson confessed his grandfather experienced deep-seated "shame and worthlessness" as a consequence of not being able to fulfil his duties as the tribe's rangatira.⁷ iwi or hapū cannot practice their mana whenua; no whenua means no mana. Hudson continued that Ngāti Awa languished in a sea of hopelessness for over 120 years (ibid) illustrating the endurance of whakamā, through many, many generations following Te Tahi. Kairau claimed Ngāti Awa descendants would deny their whakapapa,⁸ a most extreme demonstration of individual collective whakamā. In the early 2000s, the Crown eventually apologized to the iwi for labelling Ngāti Awa as 'tangata hara', sinners or rebels. For me as a Ngāti Awa person – bought up with pūrākau such as Te Tahi, and a descendant of a man illegitimately imprisoned for rebellion – I am acclimatized to believe that we are products of our ancestors, and that Te Tahi's words were indeed powerful, affecting those who abandoned him on Whakaari and generations after.

WHAKAMĀ

According to mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge), the first known whakamā was when Hinetiāma hid herself in Rarohenga (the underworld) on discovering that her husband was also her father. Whakamā is generally understood as 'shame', inadequacy' or 'embarrassment'. More specifically, it is considered an inferiority induced shyness, excessive modesty and self-doubt.⁹ Whakamā is increasingly investigated at the level of reo Māori acquisition.¹⁰ There is a particularly high level of anxiety for many Māori to know their native language or to quickly progress to fluency because of their whakapapa. A good proportion of whakamā associated with limited reo capacity is a feeling of guilt.¹¹ Increasing the proficiency in te reo increases the individual's wellbeing and cultural efficacy¹² and is therefore an intrinsic and fundamental element to navigating away from whakamā. Whakamā differs from typical



Rebecca (Antonia Prebble) is introduced to the narrative as a wealthy, cold, callous Pākehā woman

embarrassment or shame in that whakamā is a mate Māori, a Māori sickness, known to blight the body and decision-making. It can lead to whakamomori, the all-encompassing depression prior to suicide.¹³ Increasingly, whakamā is seen as a contribution to comparatively high rates of Maori suicide.

WHITE LIES CHARACTERS

Several whakamā components discussed in the literature are demonstrated in *White Lies* and I will loosely unpack some of them here. The mistress of the house character, Rebecca, is a recluse. When Rebecca appears, she is either in the parlour, her bedroom, in the bath, or in the basement. At no stage is she shown outside the house admiring the beautiful property she owns or engaging with people in the community. This is dissimilar from Marāea who regularly runs errands in town and is shown cleaning the house's exterior, and from Paraiti who literally lives in the bush and seems restricted by the walls in the hallway where she (and her dog) is stationed for the duration of her stay at the Vickers' house. As Rebecca has incredibly pale, porcelain skin, at this early part of the narrative, it could have been due to a lack of exposure to sunlight, despite the décor in the house indicating that

overseas travel is part of the Vickers' lifestyle. It is soon realized that in spite of the ability to travel, Rebecca prefers to stay home particularly since moving to the new locale. She openly criticizes their new settlement and indicates she would have preferred not to have moved to such a "hideous" location. Opting to hide herself away might be seen to reflect Hinetītama hiding herself in Rarohenga. There, she transformed from Hinetītama (Dawn Maiden) to Hinenuitepō (woman of the dark), hiding herself in the perpetual night from the intense whakamā that everybody – except her – knew her husband was also her father. As a businessman, who viewers only see in a wedding photo, Mr. Vickers would have to possess people skills, distancing Rebecca from the need to connect with people. Marāea's role as a domestic worker also detached Rebecca from having to consider, or be considerate of, people. Mid-way through the narrative, it is revealed that Rebecca is not concealing her own secret but Marāea's. Marāea's whakamā effectively detains Rebecca inside the house.

The Vickers' house too, is a character. Immediately prior to Rebecca's introduction, the exterior of the immaculate house characterizes the potential inhabitants as wealthy through the immense driveway, fence, exceptionally groomed gardens, and (Māori) grounds-men. The front door is wide and pristine. Once inside, the décor is well-curated; embellishments are knick-knacks from overseas, intimating



Marāea (Rachel House) enters the film as a suppressed housemaid.

that the inhabitants are well-travelled and have experienced other cultural terrains. Paraiti assesses the curios as Marāea leads her into the parlour to wait for 'her mistress'. Notably, despite walking to the house with her horse and supplies, Paraiti is not extended any manaakitanga or refreshments by Marāea. Not tendering manaakitanga is the height of rudeness for Māori, as is Marāea's continual lack of eye contact with Paraiti which I will unpack further on. Moments later, Paraiti is interrupted by Rebecca's cold, stern voice, instructing Paraiti to put the objects she may have put in her pockets "back where they belong", an accusation of theft. Clearly, Rebecca's understanding of Māori is a need to steal due to impoverishment. Initially, the house is Rebecca's priority as a representation of her choice to continue Marāea's façade. However, it is noticeable throughout the narrative that as Rebecca's priorities change, she declines down the levels of the house, from the upper floors where the bath (and bleaching space) is situated, down to the dark, dinginess, and dirt floored basement. This again ties into the whakamā that lead to the flight of Hinetītama from the arms of Tānemahuta – her lover and father – away from the shame of being the only one not to know of their dual relationship, and into the depths of Rarohenga.

Through Marāea's lived experience of the Raupatu Whenua, Rebecca understands being Māori as something that is inferior, a fundamental element of whakamā. In a discussion with Paraiti, Marāea connects this with Māori landlessness. Looking at Paraiti's face for the first time in the film, Marāea says:

All I did was provide a better life for my daughter...
[I'm] not good enough for some, not pure enough for others [...] But at least my daughter has a life. A house; she has land. That is more than I ever had... It's more than you have.

Here, Marāea justifies the two decades of actions leading them to now preparing to abort her mokopuna (grand-child), demonstrating that her whakamā fuelled the drive to stop at nothing to ensure Rebecca's whakapapa is suppressed. However, a key element in this passage of kōrero is that

Rebecca has title to a mansion and land, unlike herself who lives in the servant quarters, and Paraiti who lives primitively in a forest with a dog and a horse. Where the land is, which iwi or hapū belong to it, and who holds the mana whenua are irrelevant. Rather, owning the land autonomously, and having the ability to say one owns it, carries more significance, which has passed into contemporary New Zealand society. Presently, land, and house ownership remains a challenge to many Māori. The concept of individual ownership of land instead of collectively belonging to it removed the ancient model of mana whenua. Ultimately, chiefs could not fulfil their rangatiratanga (chieftainship). Again, losing the whenua reflects the loss of mana.

Implicit in Marāea's short dialogue is the loss of her unnamed tribe's whenua and the mana attached to it as an important component of her decision-making; bleaching Rebecca's skin, absconding from her people, and constructing a performance denying Rebecca's whakapapa for over two decades. Having one's mana – a supernatural force in a person – taken away is a source of whakamā.¹⁴ To have the tribe's mana whenua, the prestige and authority afforded by belonging to the land, is an all-encompassing relationship to the land. Importantly, from mana whenua emanates the ability to feed and sustain the hapū from their own food sources. Manaakitanga is an exceptionally important facet of te ao Māori as it pivots on the tangata whenua (people of the land) urging the mana of the manuhiri (visitors) forward. Fundamentally, by impelling the manuhiri, the tangata whenua also intensify the mana of their own hapū. This element is generally omitted from definitions of manaakitanga, but it is a most important aspect to understanding what it is, and why Māori must exercise manaakitanga. When hapū do not have mana whenua, they are divorced from exercising customary manaakitanga on and from their own whenua. Neither being able to exercise the rangatiratanga nor provide manaakitanga from their own gardens, seabeds and forests, adds other layers to whakamā, and why the rangatira spoke from a place of mamae (hurt) in Mead's¹⁵ report to the Waitangi Tribunal.

Marāea's primary role was to keep Rebecca's whakapapa concealed. The lemon-paste concoction Marāea used to bleach Rebecca's skin goes beyond simply ridding her

of the exterior traces of Māori lineage. By regularly whitening – e whakamā ana (the act of whitening) – of Rebecca's skin, Marāea continues in the conspiracy to suppress her own transgressions and estrangement from her people. Here in lies the double-edgedness of whakamā: Marāea essentially uses whakamā – whitening – to cover her whakamā, shame. Although she claims the skin whitening process was for Rebecca's benefit to have land and a house, it also obscures the whakapapa connection between them, and essentially releases Marāea into her performance as the instruction-taking housemaid. Midway through the narrative, Paraiti hears murmuring somewhere upstairs. Knowing there are only three people in the house, she investigates, ascending the stairs, despite Marāea's earlier instruction for Paraiti to stay in the kitchen, and blanket-banning her from the rest of the house. A low voice echoes through the hallway and Paraiti realizes the voice accompanies a soft cry coming from the bathroom. Paraiti peeps through a slight ajar in the door and witnesses the extreme role reversal between Marāea and Rebecca; Marāea sternly instructs a whimpering Rebecca – usually a powerful, cold and controlling woman – to stop crying or she will need to “start all over again”. Rebecca, wet and trembling, sits in the bathtub with her back to the door, covered in a thick white paste. She turns her face to Marāea who paints more paste over the tracks of Rebecca's tears, clearly fearful of repeating the bleach painting process again. What is disruptive about Marāea's characterisation in this scene is the closeness at which her face is from Rebecca's coupled with the intensity of Marāea's stare into Rebecca's eyes. Until this scene, Marāea has avoided making eye contact with any other character, which could initially have been perceived as the inferiority element of whakamā. But in this bath scene, the first of three, Marāea's glare shows her control of the wider performance that implicates Rebecca, Mr. Vickers – who although absent likes Rebecca's skin to be ‘white and smooth’ – and now Paraiti. This extends beyond the ‘simple’ bleaching the skin of the mistress which is still withheld for several more scenes. The extent to which Marāea was prepared to mask the depth of her role is more pronounced in the second bath scene.

It takes place during the middle stages of Rebecca's labour, where amid the contractions, she begins lambasting



Still of Paraiti, Rebecca and Marāea (from right to left) in the second of three bath scenes, where the tohunga is exposed to the whakapapa relationship between the women.

Marāea for bleaching her ever since she could remember. With this dialogue the history between Marāea and Rebecca is exposed, although the whakapapa connection still remains a mystery. After Rebecca delivers the hurtful taunt Marāea appears injured. Pity for the abused caregiver however, is fleeting. Rebecca's next dialogue delivers a blow to Marāea's façade where she addresses her as "Mother", a far cry from Rebecca's earlier reference to her as "Mariah". At the moment Marāea is identified as Rebecca's mother, Paraiti and viewers are forced to retrace the preceding story detecting elements in the mother/daughter relationship they have missed. Paraiti and viewers experience a paradigmatic shift between feelings of sympathy for the housemaid Marāea to loathing her, and a disdain for the bossy, controlling Rebecca to compassion for a child, damaged by her mother's whakamā. Paraiti tries to leave the bathroom, but Marāea steps in to the doorway to physically obstruct her exit from the abortion, emphasising the whakapapa connection, and Marāea's function as the ring-master. While she blocks Paraiti, Marāea says "No, you can't leave... you're part of this now" implicating the tohunga as the third contributor in the cover up of her whakamā.

Although disconnection from mana whenua is identified as an important component of Marāea's whakamā, another is that Marāea chooses never to engage in te reo Māori. The only reo she uses is Paraiti's name. It is clear at their first

engagement at the cinema house that Marāea comprehends te reo because she replies to Paraiti's questions and engages in a conversation. However, in all of their exchanges, Paraiti speaks te reo and Marāea speaks English. The exception is one passage where Paraiti chooses to be clear about her intentions of saving the baby and is not concerned with Rebecca's welfare, so there is no potential loss in translation. Early on, Paraiti prompts a conversation with Marāea about why her mistress does not allow her to speak Māori. Marāea admits here that it is in fact her own conscious decision not to speak te reo. She replies, "it isn't forbidden. I just don't want to speak it". The dialogue exemplifies the tragic reality of te reo not being transferred from generation to generation, coupling with the denial of one's whakapapa. Forbidding te reo, as Paraiti assumed, from being spoken and the refusal to speak it were major causes for the near death of te reo.¹⁶ Clearly, colonisation's impact on te reo Māori has been, and continues to be, exponential. But here, Marāea's brazen admission that it was her choice not to speak te reo – not her Pākehā mistress' instruction – is another key to understanding her level of whakamā when she chose to give her culture away. Marāea had consciously estranged herself and Rebecca from their people as a means of disconnecting from the hapū, ashamed of their landlessness. However, refusing to use the language, a most important cultural manifestation, is an act of resistance illustrating Marāea no longer wished to belong to her people, reflecting the moment in history where descendants of Ngāti Awa would deny their iwi as a symptom of whakamā.

As indicated earlier, up until the first bath scene, Marāea avoids eye contact which could be perceived either as inferiority or to show humility to Paraiti from whom she needs help. When Marāea makes her initial approach to Paraiti, she is in the cinema waiting for a call for tickets. She sits on the couch next to Paraiti and begs her audience. Although their heads are in a position where their eyes could meet, Marāea's eyes are kept very low, and any gaze at Paraiti's face is averted. A known physical response to feeling whakamā is the drop in the eye-line. The action to look elsewhere is typical of whakamā, connecting with Sachdev's¹⁷ feeling of disadvantage or inferiority. In this case, to show humility is likely, but if one retraces the scenes once the whakapapa relationship between

Marāea and Rebecca is exposed, it could well be to avoid being 'read' by the tohunga, many of whom are matakite (seers, visionaries) in addition to other areas of expertise, such as healing/medicine in Paraiti's case. When engaging in banter, Māori do connect using eye contact to show respect and acknowledgement to the speaker. However, this is not the case for direct eye contact for extended periods of time particularly with those who are not known to them.¹⁸ In fact, holding the gaze for too long can be considered a form of intimidation across Polynesian cultures. For Marāea to appear whakamā in these establishment scenes is important because it is necessary for her to be perceived as a humble, downtrodden house servant to contrast with the mastermind character she is revealed to be further into the narrative. Averting eye-contact then, is a two-edged mechanism; to show humility, and to avoid potential conflict. When Marāea is introduced, not making eye-contact could be interpreted as either of these in the context of her characterisation. However, the latter is strongly symbolic of whakamā.

The final aspect I will briefly address is whakamomori, the deep sadness immediately preceding suicide, the worst potential outcome of whakamā, conveyed in Rebecca's final scene. Public Health research has made a strong connection between indigenous suicide and cultural alienation, hopelessness, despair and social disintegration as a consequence of the swiftness of colonisation.¹⁹ Here, losing mana whenua reappears as a key component of the deep feelings of depression amongst Māori. In terms of Rebecca's final scenes in *White Lies*, after an extremely traumatic labour to bear her premature daughter in the dust and dirt of the basement, she initially rejects the baby. In doing so, she chooses to uphold the pretence of a happy marriage to continue Marāea's secret, to simply forget the baby, and erase evidence of their whakapapa. However, as the days continued, Rebecca becomes unexpectedly besotted with the baby and enjoys the small delight of watching her. On the news of Mr Vickers' return, Rebecca makes the decision to end her life, so as not to choose between her mother, husband and baby. Instead Rebecca chooses to empower herself and end the insanity that Marāea's whakamā bought to three generations. Rebecca ends the whakamā, in this case a generational

makutu, to give her daughter the opportunity to live a free life with Paraiti, not restricted by a house, freedom to speak her language, and without the punishment of whakamā.

When Rebecca receives the news that Mr. Vickers will return, she is admiring the baby below the bay window in her bedroom. Soon after, Rebecca kisses the baby and hands her to Paraiti, and asks Marāea to iron out every wrinkle from her/her husband's favourite yellow dress. However, choosing between the mask of a happy Pākehā marriage with a Māori housemaid who is – in actuality – her mother, over a child is enough to force Rebecca to kill herself and Marāea's lie with her. For the first time, the possessions, house, and land-ownership are insignificant. Instead, the fundamental factor is that the child belongs somewhere, unlike Rebecca and Marāea. The child will not be punished for her grandmother's whakamā like her mother was.

CONCLUSION

Te Tahinga cursed the men who abandoned him on Whakaari, and their descendants lived with shame as their punishment as he prophesied. After this makutu, many generations of Ngāti Awa lived in a state of whakamā, as a result of landlessness, and as descendants of an iwi with no mana whenua, and no mana. Since the Raupatu Whenua Report, and over the last decade in particular, Ngāti Awa have begun rebuilding our reputation, lifting ourselves with activities for the unity of the iwi via strengthening our hapū. Ngāti Awa Te Toki, a tribal festival and vision, focuses on what we want Ngāti Awa to look like in 2025. After several generations following Te Tahi, the whakamā is over, and Ngāti Awa's future looks bright.

In this essay, I explored some of the unexplainable aspects of whakamā utilizing the film *White Lies*. The surreptitious Marāea character conveys a number of whakamā indicators which I investigated in a very preliminary analysis of *White Lies*. The film shows that whakamā is deeply embedded in the Marāea character and passed onto Rebecca, who in the end ceased the whakamā seeping into her daughter's generation, and potentially beyond. If we concentrate on New

Zealand films where Māori have featured roles, we see there are a number of characters throughout history who display elements of whakamā, and if explored, may be identified as a screenplay norm. Future New Zealand film history analysis might identify whether whakamā has been a conventional attribute in Māori cinematic characterisations or not. If such analysis was undertaken, perhaps non-Māori could identify when whakamā was being experienced by Māori, and maybe understand Māori in the classroom, in sports teams, or at work better. There is much room for future research on whakamā in New Zealand feature film history and indeed beyond. This essay is only the beginning.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 Importantly, whaka- is a prefix, and whatever particle it suffixes is converted into a verb or in state of motion. Mā is both the colour white and to be clean.
- 2 Kākāhōroa is the original name of Whakatāne.
- 3 Ngāti Awa believe that soon after the ordeal between Te Tahi and his hapū, Tūtarakauika swam out in the bay as a kaitiaki. Eventually he turned into an island, now known as Mou-tohōrā, Whale Island.
- 4 Fulloon was of the Chief Te Mautaranui line in the Ngāti Awa on his mother's side, and Pākehā on his father's. A promising academic as a child, Fulloon was sent to a private college, and was soon recruited as a translator and cultural advisor to the Crown. Prior to this meeting, he had been warned to observe the au kāti, a borderline that indicates a tribe's mana whenua. The warning was for Fulloon to keep the Crown out of the region following a disagreement. He ignored the au kāti and made his way to Whakatāne. The chiefs decided to give Fulloon audience to respect his direct link to Te Mautaranui. Fulloon did not return the respect extended to him and was killed for it.
- 5 Mead, Hirini Moko. "The Ngati Awa Raupatu Report." Wellington: Waitangi Tribunal. (1999), pp. 6, 8, 17 and 58.
- 6 Ibid.

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- 7 Ibid, p.111.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Metge, Joan. "In and Out of Touch: Whakamaa in Cross Cultural Perspective," Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1986; Sachdev, Perminder S. "Whakama: Culturally Determined Behaviour in the New Zealand Māori." *Psychological Medicine*, 20, no. 2. (1990): 433-444; Tantam, D. "The Developmental Psychopathology of Emotional Disorders." *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 86, no. 6. (1993): 336. Deane, Frank P., Philip Skogstad, and Mei Wah Williams. "Impact of attitudes, ethnicity and quality of prior therapy on New Zealand male prisoners' intentions to seek professional psychological help." *International Journal for the Advancement of Counseling* 21, no. 1. (1999): 55-67.
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- 11 Te Huia, (2013): 176.
- 12 Maniapoto, Maria. "Maori Expressions of Healing in 'Just Therapy'." *Discursive Perspectives in Therapeutic Practice*. (2012): 212.
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- 15 Mead, (1999): 111 and 161.
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Paul Cullen—Of Building Structures

Marcus Moore

Keywords: #Paul Cullen #Building Structures #post-object art
#conceptual art #minumental #anthropocene

This article provides an account of the 1970's practice of Paul Cullen (1949-2017) including a focused discussion on his exhibition 'Building Structures' at the Barry Lett Galleries, Auckland (November/December 1979). While Cullen received attention in the last two decades of his life, little is known of the origins of his work in the 1970s, and how the foundation for key facets of his career's work is located there. Although his quite radical 1979 solo exhibition 'Building Structures' was a definitive statement in the context of 'post-object' and conceptual art in Auckland, with art critic Wystan Curnow noting at the time the work's significance, the exhibition has been overlooked in historical accounts of the period. The article concludes by bringing 'Building Structures' up to date in regard to Anthropocene thinking and with reference to its reconstruction for a 2018 exhibition.



Paul Cullen, *Building Structures* (installation view), 1979, balsa wood, various dimensions. Barry Lett Galleries, Auckland, N.Z. Digital scan from 35mm transparency. Foxcircle Archive, Auckland.

These man-made structures, by being alienated from their makers and uses, by being this unaccommodating, are designed to push us to re-ground our making in a re-discovered sense of our human being.¹

—Wystan Curnow, November 1979

In November 1979 Paul Cullen (1949-2017) installed some 30 balsa-wood forms throughout the Barry Lett Galleries in Auckland, New Zealand, in a show titled 'Building Structures'. Here, works were positioned in relation to floors, walls, ceilings, recesses and corners. These miniature forms heightened the visitor's awareness of scale. The exhibition seemed to ask, 'in being human, how do we inhabit?'

The 30 structures were all of different sizes and configurations. Model trusses and ladders of various lengths leant against or extended from walls, or were tucked into recesses. Some were even attached to the ceiling, requiring visitors to look up, or were embedded in the

fabric of a wall or positioned underneath lintels, beams and other architectural supports. Nine structures were laid out on the floor of the main gallery. All were made out of balsa wood, a material then commonly used in architectural model making. This material heightened the connection to building forms such as foundations, floor joists and platforms. Some supported small pieces of green tinted glass, others had mesh attached to their surfaces. In two of Cullen's structures, this mesh functioned as an interface between the work and the building fabric.

Though referencing model making and hobby kits, the works were more than models. These tiny structures might be defined instead as 'minumental', that is, the very opposite of monuments. Yet, if the viewer shifted their perspective to accommodate the idea of the space serving as a kind of 'world', then they still retained a sense of scale. The 'minumental' still has a relation to architectural precedents as built forms in space. Cullen employed the term 'structure' with specific intent. His installation in part referenced his interest in the structural anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss, which was widely influential in the late 1960s and 1970s.

In its experimental nature, Cullen's exhibition is a good example of 'post-object' art. This new expanded mode of sculptural practice was a feature of the Auckland scene in the 1970s. Cullen has never quite found his place in the history of this particular and significant moment. This essay redresses this omission by considering Cullen's output between 1975 and 1979.

The unfolding of 'Post-object art' is an unparalleled moment in New Zealand art history. Though Auckland was the main centre of activity between 1969 and 1980, artists located in Wellington and Christchurch also contributed to its history.² Paul Cullen studied at the Ilam School of Fine Art at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch between 1972 and 1975. There he was stimulated by the teaching of Tom Taylor, who led the sculpture programme between 1960 and 1991. As with Jim Allen in the sculpture department at Elam School of Fine Arts at the University of Auckland, Taylor encouraged students to utilise ideas from other disciplines. His architectural background also filtered through to students, who he exposed to a range of new art practices including Conceptual and Process art of the 1970s. In particular, Taylor introduced students to art writer, Jack Burnham's radical structural analysis in his *The Structure of Art* (George Braziller, 1970). Burnham's analysis of work through the lens of a structural matrix became an influential teaching text in the sculpture department.³ In addition to

Taylor, Cullen became well acquainted with the New York / New Jersey based photographer Lawrence Shustak and with Martin Mendelsberg, a U.S. based neo-Dada artist. They were invited by Taylor to take up visiting lecturer's positions at Ilam in 1973 and 1974 respectively. Cullen was also influenced by the New York based artist Billy Apple, who undertook an important series of site-specific installations throughout New Zealand on his extended tour of his homeland in 1975. Also, Cullen travelled to Auckland in his student years to see first-hand examples of 'post-object art' practice unfolding there. After he completed his studies in 1975 he moved permanently to Auckland. 'Building Structures' was the second of the two exhibitions he presented at Barry Lett Galleries, the first being in 1977



Paul Cullen at Birdlings Flat, Banks Peninsula, Horomaka/Te Pātaka-a-Rākaihautū, 1975. Image credit: p.mule in association with Minerva Betts, black & white photograph.

1975 – 1978 OF POSSIBILITIES AND PROBABILITIES - REGIONAL MYTHOLOGIES

It seems to me there is running through everything a structure and meaning, a balance of energy intuitively graspable yet outside objective definition. One senses this ordering in human's physical and social structures, in plants and animals; in all beings and through art attempts are made to reconstitute it in a form mediated by personal experience.⁴

—Paul Cullen, 1975

Cullen's influences extend beyond his art school years. Indeed, growing up on a farm in Te Awamutu; his BSc in Ecology (University of Auckland) and a year studying at Lincoln University are all important elements of his artistic formation. These led him to engage with nature and the found forms and structures of both rural and urban landscapes. Cullen brought these interests to his structural understanding of the world in his final year of his studies. He developed a way of working that sought the underlying basis for the way things are organised, experimenting with and against physical laws so as to tap the 'hidden logic' operative in the natural world. One project in his graduating year was a book that included black and white photographs documenting various everyday subjects from farmland, rural dwellings, outbuildings, and fencing materials, to playground equipment and railcars lined up at the central rail interchange in Moorhouse Avenue. With these photographs Cullen sought to imply that these disparate items were somehow connected in a continuum that bridged distances and differing contexts. A deeper influence was his interest in molecular structures that function at microscopic levels. Appearing between the photographs, on every alternate page, were short quotations, such as: "The link. Synapsis, conciliation" and "The existence side by side of any two forms of organisation creates an interface, a frontier. Where adjacent forms manifest differing social orders, interfacial tension is created."⁵ 'Synapsis' is a scientific term referring to cell division. Its etymological root is in the Greek word for 'junction' or 'connection'. Cullen shifts the scale from cell division to larger material things in the real world, pointing to the larger societal concerns of humans and their social organisation. The 'interfacial' relates to the formation of a common



Paul Cullen, black and white photograph of sculptural ideas, 1975. Foxcircle Archive, Auckland.



Paul Cullen, *Of Possibilities and Probabilities*, 1975, Centre Art Gallery, Christchurch. Found sticks, found stones, string, various dimensions. Digital scan from 35mm transparency. Foxcircle Archive, Auckland.

boundary, a fraught undertaking where tensions can arise in the demarcation of built environs.

If Cullen demonstrated his concerns in this photographic essay, in his studio he directly experimented with natural objects to test their unseen properties. The results of these tests were presented in a 1975 installation titled *Of Possibilities and Probabilities* at the Centre Gallery in the Christchurch Arts Centre [Figure X]. Reviewing the exhibition, T.L. Rodney Wilson described Cullen's work as '...an absorbing collection of constructions exploiting balance and the equilibrium of energies.'⁶ He went on to state:

Cullen's pieces trace their intricate linear forms through a series of major and minor direction changes, shifts of energy transmission, and a major and minor ploys of balance. He is a poet of irony but produces a poetry firmly located in a structural logic. Stones form weights employed in his balance-schemes . . . [S]ticks are at times fulcrums, at times means of creating changes into and out of which the cord appears, disappears and reappears.⁷

The documentation of this 1975 exhibition bears out Wilson's analysis. Although the raw materials were crude: stones, branches, sticks, and string, Cullen's earliest sculptures were nonetheless ingenious constructions. River stones and branches, collected from the exposed terrain of Birdling's Flat, were drilled and slots chiseled to fit taunt string lines that held each of the structures in balanced equilibrium. Using crude engineering technologies, Cullen suspended his natural materials at acute gravitational fulcrum points, to articulate hidden 'energies' embodied in the balanced play of opposing forces. Photographs show how this potential energy in the individual works becomes an interrelated network in the installation as a whole, as each construction played off the architectural details of the Centre Gallery to extend the works into their immediate architectural surrounds. In Cullen's words, this embodied the idea that "[t]here are no gaps in the physical world, it may be perceived as a continuum. A continuum analysable as a series of connected energy states."⁸

Cullen's works also operated to ensnare the human visitor—quite physically—as they navigated their way through the space. Wystan Curnow cautioned visitors three years later in 1978, when two of these works were installed at the Mildura Arts Festival in Australia, "watch the string," lest they trip.⁹ Here, terms such as 'tension, balance,



Paul Cullen, *Of Possibilities and Probabilities*, 1975, Centre Art Gallery, Christchurch. Found sticks, found stones, string, various dimensions. Digital scan from 35mm transparency. Foxcircle Archive, Auckland.

equilibrium, energy' can be understood in a different manner to the formal poetics by which Wilson celebrated Cullen's work.¹⁰

In 1978 Cullen was selected to participate in the Seventh Sculpture Triennial at Mildura, Australia together with other New Zealand 'post-object' artists Phil Dadson, Don Driver, Andrew Drummond, Jacqueline Fraser, Gray Nichol, David Mealing and Nicholas Spill. Here he showed two of his 1975 works together with a small untitled installation. One of Cullen's works, *Movement, A Transition and Extension* (1975), was purchased by the Mildura Arts Centre and it received high praise from the Australian critic Elwyn Lynn, who described its "anti-volumetric movement" as an instance of the achievements of the New Zealand artists who he thought "... seem[ed] much (more) creatively intellectual in such modes than their Australian counterparts."¹¹ Cullen's work was then included in the National Art Gallery's touring exhibition of the Mildura project, *New Zealand Sculptors at Mildura*, that travelled to eight centres throughout New Zealand between October 1978 and November 1979. In reviewing this show, Neil Rowe singled out Cullen's works describing them as "eloquent gravitational essays."¹² Such responses suggest that Cullen's explorations of organic forms and natural forces had found their place in the first attempts to survey the new sculptural practices that have now been historicized as 'post-object'.

While his work was touring the country, however, Cullen was moving away from using stones and sticks and experimenting

with tensions and balances, instead turning to the construction of explicitly 'man-made' structures in balsa-wood. Perhaps this shift was conditioned by his circumstances in Auckland, which led him to experiment with manufactured materials that were more discrete constructions which could potentially find a market. On his arrival in Auckland in 1976, and now with a young family, Cullen established a cane furniture-making enterprise as a home business to make ends meet. He became very proficient in this craft, and this skill set was readily transferred to the 'fiddly' task of making structures with the balsa-wood that was the basis for his second exhibition at Barry Lett Galleries. In 1977 the family managed to buy their first home, a wooden villa in Devonport. Maintaining this was another stimulus, in particular, observing the house's foundations which connected it to the ground, Cullen saw how the dwelling was connected to the earth at the same time its structural layout conditioned how the family organized itself within this built frame.¹³

Cullen's interest in architecture preceded the purchase of his own home. He had researched the relationship of architecture to art, whilst studying landscape architecture at Lincoln University. This fostered his broader interest in how humans plan and build for living. At Lincoln, and later at Ilam, he had become familiar with many prominent examples of 1970s' environmental and land art, exploring the work of Richard Harris and Mary Miss, who undertook projects to alter people's perceptions by building towers above ground and excavating sites as square hollows. He was also drawn to the model sculptures of architect Siah Armanji, such as his 1974 series *House Beneath Bridge* and *House Above Bridge*; Alice Aycock's 1975 land art project *Projects in Nature*, which entailed excavated underground wells and tunnels with ladders leading into them; and Neil Dawson's 1978 series of 'House Alterations' were a local reference point.¹⁴

'Building Structures' 1979 was the outcome of these shifts. The exhibition functioned as a turning point in Cullen's career. An experimental exhibition staged at the twilight of post-object art in Auckland, it led to a string of projects through which Cullen developed his signature style, with shows at RKS Art (the dealer gallery that emerged after Barry Lett resigned as director in 1979/1980), a one-time exhibition with Brooke Gifford Gallery, Christchurch; as well as a significant representation in *Aspects of Recent Sculpture*, at the Robert McDougall Art Gallery also in Christchurch. Cullen's subsequent career largely unfolds outside the frame of post-object art, with new terminologies defining his interests in the 1990s and after.

1979

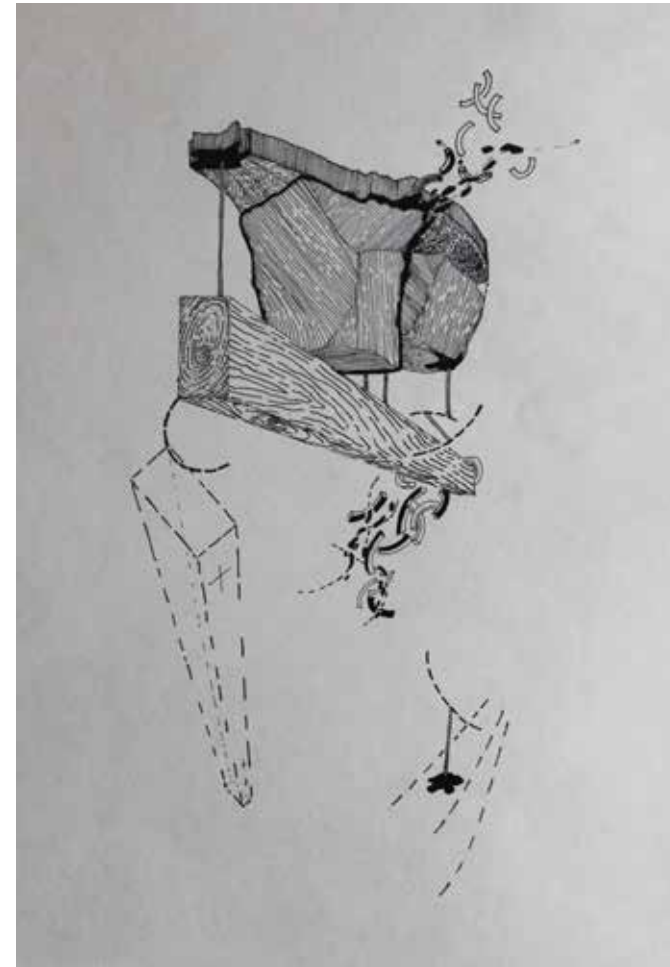
BUILDING STRUCTURES—A STRUCTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Cullen was drawn to anthropological theories of social organisation. He was interested in the changes that occur through time, and in what is physically manifested in a society.¹⁵
-Rhonda Bosworth, 1980

Cullen first developed his interests in Claude Lévi-Strauss and structuralism when reading Jack Burnham's *Beyond Modern Sculpture* (1968) and *The Structure of Art* (Revised edition, 1973). The latter book's first chapter is an introduction to the structural anthropology of Lévi-Strauss. The contents of the book's second half impart a real wealth of material on Conceptual and Process Art of the 1960s and early 1970s and was a critical source for contemporary artists. Burnham, using the lessons of structural anthropology, demonstrated the relationships between nature and culture and included studies of the work of several artists including: Joseph Kosuth, Marcel Duchamp, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Donald Judd, Dan Flavin, Carl Andre, Richard Serra, Hans Haacke, Dennis Oppenheim and Les Levine, amongst many others. Cullen studied this book closely during his years at Ilam. He was drawn to Burnham's proposition that an art object is in itself empty of meaning, relying instead on its referentiality within a history and in relation to other structural referents in the world. At the outset, Burnham debunks humanist assumptions, which he lists as:

- (a) Anthropocentrism, or the belief that the Earth is at the complete disposal of its dominant inhabitant, man;
- (b) Functional rationality, the belief that modern societies operate according to logical principles determined by man;
- (c) Messianic technology, the faith that all problems of mankind can be eradicated through further scientific discoveries; and
- (d) The illusion of historical progress, which presupposes that man is moving toward some predestined or structurally determined plateau of perfection.¹⁶

This is prototypical of the deconstructive logic of postmodernism, proving the durability of Burnham's thinking to this day. Cullen was drawn to such thinking. Looking at Cullen's drawing



Paul Cullen, *Untitled*, 1976 (from a series 1975-77). Pen and ink on paper, 310 x 330mm. Foxcircle Archive, Auckland.

practice of the mid- to late 1970s we can better understand his thinking about the relationships between nature and culture.

In the two years between 1975 and 1977, Cullen drew prolifically. His drawings might be described as 'ecological' in the sense that they draw attention to 'things' in relation to each other and to their surrounds. They seem to demonstrate a concern for how scientific laws, especially physical laws, govern the material world. In many ways they are diagrams that underpin the genesis of Cullen's later practice in which he employed 'pata-physics' as an imagined science that did not necessarily have any logical basis. As Cullen's repertoire and volume of drawings and notations grew, they became a knowing prompt for subsequent work.

Elements of these drawings were referents for the construction of Cullen's balsa-wood structures. Beams and supports already fully rendered in the round in the drawings were almost 'ready' to become three-dimensional structures in real space (though both retained their conceptual status as speculative models).¹⁷ Via discussions with Cullen in 1980, Rhondda Bosworth put it this way:

His small balsa constructions are 'articulations of matter within space'. [. . .] Paul is working back to the concept or ideas that gave rise to the structure; and the transition from the idea (or natural thing), to the completed form, where the idea becomes culturalised and physically realised is important.¹⁸

This corresponds with Lévi-Strauss's concept of bricolage and the artist as a bricoleur. The bricoleur uses existing forms in new combinations. It is "between the subtle interfaces of culture and nature that bricolage works are born" as being a "morphogenetic power of the intellect."¹⁹ The methods of Cullen's drawings and their output sit well here. Of the cultural transformations of the bricoleur, Lévi-Strauss writes:

The combinations do not come from 'nowhere', nor are they conjured up on the spot: they are drawn from already existing linguistic structures. Objects can thus be arranged in a variety of combinations, but are derived from language structures that already exist. The bricoleur thus deploys particular practio-theoretical logics to enable systems of transformations, meaning objects can have fluid meanings within systems of classification and exchange. The bricoleur therefore does not merely speak with things, but speaks through the medium of things."²⁰

On the verso of some of his drawings and in notebooks of the period are various handwritten lines or stanzas. Rather than functioning as conventional titles, they use language to relate to other 'things' in the world. They present the oppositional binary of a structural linguistics typical of this era. One example reads:

The tilting of the sun into the moon (and laughter), Green light/
Product of Fall (Falling), Velocity (Becoming a consequence)
of action, line, a demarcation (direction/link/continuum),

between focus, A Conjugation. Love/hate, light/dark, soul/
body, nature/culture, raw/cooked.²¹

Structural anthropology sought to 'discover' underlying unifying human concepts across all cultures. For Lévi-Strauss,

poetic language aspires to recapture the cosmic connections that language originally possessed. Similarly restoring the natural relationship that has been lost between nature and most of humankind, totemism fosters the kind of intellect that intuitively and holistically perceives humankind's posture in the universe.²²

Lévi-Strauss' concept of totemism requires further consideration in relation to Cullen's thinking in the 1970s. As Ian Woodward explains, the concept is fundamental to a study of how humans "construct and assign meaning within their cultural universe" providing the foundation from which to tackle the assumed universalisms of empirical science.

Totemism is a cultural attempt to understand the world and its systemic organisation. [. . .] This means that plants and animals must be treated as elements of a type of cultural message system, the signs and signatures of which (the 'logics') are not only discovered, but ordered, by human activity. The ends these objects are put to are not merely technical or utilitarian in any simple way, but are part of the cultural grammar. It is not that plants are good to eat, but that they are good to think.²³

Cullen's 'Building Structures' are the outcome of his reading and his process drawings. They are built manifestations sited within an art gallery. Cullen's terminology suggests two senses of his title. On the one hand it suggests a process of giving organization to something, and on another, it offers a version of built form that questions how we can use art to perceive things around us. The title 'building structures' may well have been used by Cullen to infer a discourse. Lévi-Strauss writes:

I think we are on the borders of a confusion that would be extremely dangerous. It is not each object in itself that is a work of art, it is particular arrangements, dispositions of

objects, particular relationships among objects that result in a work of art. Just like the words of a language, for example. Taken alone, words are weak in themselves, almost void of meaning. They only really take on a meaning in context.²⁴

While Cullen's installation operates in line with Levi-Strauss's argument, there is a further constituent—the 'structure of experience'—that must be addressed to fully appreciate the logic of the artist's practice at this time. A phenomenological perception is necessary to complete interpretations.

INTO AND THROUGH: A PHENOMENOLOGY OF BUILDING STRUCTURES

We look down on what is ordinarily over one's heads. We are inhabitants of sky-space.

—Wystan Curnow, 1979

Cullen did not simply place the structures 'anywhere' in the Barry Lett Galleries. Notes in his workbooks of 1978-79 show an appreciation for 'mapping' works and locating the balsa-wood structures specifically in relation not only to the interior space of the gallery but to its location in a building in Auckland's central business district. Structures were constructed precisely to fit within or have some relationship to existing recesses and surface features. Cullen identified and studied the gallery's every nook and cranny when researching for his show. Recall that Cullen was interested in "systemic organisation and ordering by human activity," which led him to search for those potential 'synaptic interfaces' between his structures and the space as an 'ecological' whole. The balsa-wood forms were installed not only in relation to the building's visible features, but they were aligned with lintels and joists hidden beneath wall cladding and floor surfaces. By logical extension, they could connect through the building to the earth beneath or the sky above. Cullen's works succeeded in going beyond their object status into the 'energy' of other things. "There are no gaps in the physical world, it is a series of connected energy states"(Cullen, 1975).

In his notes on the exhibition, Wystan Curnow pondered where shafts and tunnels might lead, and he understood how reading the



Paul Cullen, *Untitled Building Structure* (installation view), 1979, balsa wood, various dimensions. Barry Lett Galleries, Auckland, N.Z. Digital scan from 35mm transparency. Foxcircle Archive, Auckland.

works was necessarily undertaken through accumulative investigation.²⁵ He proves that the spectator became implicated in a process of reading the works. They performed as an interface to speak/think through form to the substrates beyond. Here Cullen enables the viewer's direct bodily perception. Curnow's notes provide a further, specific interpretation of the 'Building Structures' that privileges phenomenology as a way of understanding the world through the primacy of our body's senses. Phenomenology concerns the study of the structures of experience. Maurice Merleau-Ponty's writings in particular were an important stimulus to artists in the 1960s and 1970s. His ideas concerning an embodied phenomenology were important because he emphasized the body as the primary site of knowing the world. The body and what it directly perceived could not be separated. He termed this "the ontology of the flesh of the world".²⁶ Curnow saw the show and wrote about it. His notes therefore are a direct source for the experience of the work; they offer an immediacy of response that is worth repeating:

Ordinarily ways of looking into and out from architecture:
Sky-lights let light in, here they let light out.
We look down on what is ordinarily over one's heads.
We are inhabitants of sky-space.

'Sky-space' is elemental. It orients the viewer and reader to the work while simultaneously connecting us to another magnitude in the world: it opens possibilities. In his final chapter, "The Intertwining—The

Chiasm", of *The Visible and Invisible* (1964), Merleau-Ponty writes:

The flesh is not matter, it is not mind, it is not substance. To designate it, we should need the old term "element," in the sense it was used to speak of water, air, earth, and fire, that is, in the sense of a general thing, midway between spatio-temporal individual and the idea, a sort of incarnate principle that brings a style of being whenever there is a fragment of being. The flesh is in this sense an element of being.²⁷

Phenomenology was used to explain the viewer's sense of embodiment in relation to the experience of works of art. For Curnow this was about locating an approach to Cullen's structures.

One action, these sculptures elicit, make habitual indeed before you leave the show, is that of finding an angle of vision by which you look into a structure as though into a tunnel.

[W]hile the artist encourages us to find these points of view he not only makes us assume odd positions in order to find some of them, some are rendered inaccessible.

The strategy of encouraging and discouraging our ability to rationalize the structures sets up two of the poles of reference to the viewer's body, of having him establish for himself the limits within which he works because of his height and upright position, etc.

In his conclusions to the project, Curnow's experience of both the relative size and scale and accessibility of the structures leads him to contemplate what is their simultaneous effect: these would-be structures perform functions in the real world and yet they are open-ended creations. He writes:

The fact these are not abstract objects is important. They have reference to human shelter. It seems patently perverse to reduce the scale of objects whose function necessitates they are scaled according to human need. One way or another these buildings are in real life made by us for us. They are the right size for man, were they not they'd have no *raison d'être*.

So in a sense the sculptor is opening up questions which have already been solved. Why is that? It can only be concluded, he doesn't think them closed.

We inhabit a man-made world. These man-made structures, by being alienated from their makers and uses, by being this unaccommodating, are designed to push us to re-ground our making in a re-discovered sense of our human being.

The last line is as telling today as it was in 1979. It is no coincidence that Cullen's long career began with resources from nature. Much of his career was spent addressing questions of humankind's relationships with nature, energy, physics, and the molecular synapses between all things. Balsa wood is a natural material; prior to the arrival of digital technologies it was put to use for the design and prototyping of future structures for humans to inhabit. These are structures that connect humans to their world through one of their core needs: shelter. At the heart of Cullen's project lies an ecological motive that resonates in our current moment of precarious living.

FOR FUTURE STRUCTURES

In 1979 Wystan Curnow believed that Cullen's work "push[ed] us to re-ground our making in a re-discovered sense of our human being." The comment is prescient nearly forty years later, as it tallies with various eco-political voices who are seeking today to locate a new moral compass for the world we live in, given the perils of our own and other species' extinction. If Cullen were reconstructing the structures today he would be certain to employ the implications of the Anthropocene, the geological epoch we have entered which sees the full extent of the impact of human existence on Planet Earth.²⁸ The fragility of Cullen's balsa-wood structures, scattered over the floor without protection or leaning and hanging precariously throughout the Barry Lett Galleries reads now in new ways. Not only can his structures, in their material form, be understood as architectural prototypes of their time, but they now seem to offer an idea about how we might live ecologically today.

Humans are only now at a reckoning point with the urgency of climate change which industrial 'man' has caused. Cullen's building structures can be read in 2018 as adaptive structures for a future

needful of change. His early interests in ecology, anthropology and social organisation can be redeployed as we become more conscious of the detrimental effects of human behaviour. His works now unfold in a context of anxiety regarding habitats, habitations, and the imposition of imperious habits that have characterised almost all building and urbanisation in the Western world since the origins of modernity. Cullen's work and project uses humour to good effect to invite speculation on the relationship of built forms to their human inhabitants. This lends a certain honesty and poignancy to Cullen's project, and provides a compelling rationale for its reconstruction and representation.

Concerning The Anthropocene Style, the Swizz architect Philippe Rahm employs the body's physiology. He writes:

Climate change is forcing us to rethink architecture radically, to shift our focus away from a purely visual and functional approach towards one that is more sensitive, more attentive to the invisible, climate-related aspects of space. [. . .] Between the infinitely small scale of the physiological and the infinitely vast scale of the meteorological, architecture must build sensual exchanges between body and space to invent new approaches capable of making long-term changes to the form and the way we will inhabit buildings tomorrow.²⁹

The decision to reconstruct Cullen's work in 2018³⁰ enables a new opportunity to physically engage with his work. Through the processes of carefully remaking the small balsa-wood constructions, then placing them in space something is imparted, between them and (my) bodily experience. The effect/affect of being with the 'minumental' reconstructions arouses a sense of vulnerability. They compellingly reacquaint us with the question of how we build to inhabit.

Cullen's structures make us consider the environments in which we live. Their impact and effect go beyond our anthropocentric terms of reference. That is why they have been re-made. In 1979 fragile constructions were sited. They formed an ecology of adaptive systemic structures. In some ways they were ahead of their time.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 Wystan Curnow, unpublished notes on Paul Cullen's 'Building Structures', Barry Lett Galleries, November 1979, used with permission.
- 2 'Post-object' artists engaged a range of extra-artistic theories that saw art become increasingly resistant to categorical definition and convention. For an overview see Christina Barton's 'Post-object and conceptual art in New Zealand.' <https://teara.govt.nz/en/post-object-and-conceptual-art/>.
- 3 Thanks to p. mule for these insights. E-mail message to the author, April 25, 2018.
- 4 Cullen, Paul, 'A Documentation of Possibilities and Probabilities' (Diploma in Fine Arts (Hons), University of Canterbury, 1975), unpaginated.
- 5 Cullen, untitled documentation book, 1975. School of Fine Arts, Canterbury University.
- 6 T.L. Rodney Wilson, 'Paper for Strength', Christchurch Press, Aug 1975. Te Aka Matua Reference Library, Paul Cullen Artist Files.
- 7 T. L. Rodney Wilson 'Tensions and balance', *The New Zealand Listener*, 1 November 1975, pp. 5–6.
- 8 Cullen, untitled documentation book, 1975. School of Fine Arts, Canterbury University.
- 9 Curnow, Wystan. N.Z. Sculptors at Mildura, QEII Arts Council, 1978, p. 5.
- 10 As 'traps' they remind me of the primitive structures for hunting that social anthropologist Alfred Gell would later invoke when he drew comparisons between these and the features of contemporary installation art, including the example of Rebecca Horn and Damien Hirst, in his essay 'Vogel's Net: Traps as Artworks and Artworks as Traps'. See Alfred Gell, 'Vogel's Net: Traps as Artworks and Artworks as Traps', *Journal of Material Culture*. London: Sage, 1996.
- 11 Elwyn Lynn as quoted by Tom McCulloch in his 'N.Z. Sculptors in Mildura'. N.Z. Sculptors At Mildura, (Wellington: QEII Arts Council, 1978), p.4.

- 12 Neil Rowe, Evening Post, Sat 30 June 1979. Te Aka Matua Reference Library, Paul Cullen Artist Files.
- 13 Cited in Bosworth, 'Paul Cullen', Art New Zealand, Number 20, p. 59.
- 14 Cullen became closely acquainted with Neil Dawson in the mid-1970s. Dawson's 1978 work at Mildura—included in the touring New Zealand show—would have made an impression on Cullen. He was also well aware of Dawson's work in Christchurch during his time studying at Canterbury University, including Dawson's 1974 Environmental Structure. Dawson wrote of these works that he sought an "illusory possibility in material combinations." He was concerned to make work with "physical and perceptual tensions . . . the whole only being conceived through accumulative investigation [. . .] dependent on the spectator's distance from the work." Neil Dawson Artist's Statement, N.Z. Sculptors at Mildura, QEII Arts Council, 1978, p. 19.
- 15 Bosworth, op. cit.
- 16 Jack Burnham, *The Structure of Art*. (New York: George Braziller (revised edition), 1973), pp. 5-6.
- 17 This idea was later developed in his Construction series (1980-83). For these Cullen explored how the projection of a 3-dimensional structure is already held in the 2-dimensional plan.
- 18 Bosworth, op. cit.
- 19 Nakazawa, Shin'ichi, 'What is the 'structure' of Levis-Strauss.' In *Feature: Encounter with Claude Levis-Strauss*. Coucou no tchi, Winter 1999, Japan Association for the World Exposition, Tokyo p. 93.
- 20 Lévi-Strauss cited in Woodward, *Understanding Material Culture*, (London: Sage, 2007), p. 67.
- 21 Cited in Bosworth, op. cit.
- 22 Nakazawa, Shin'ichi, op. cit., p. 91-93.
- 23 Woodward, op. cit., p. 67.
- 24 From a dialogue between Lévi-Strauss and Georges Charbonnier, cited in Burnham, op. cit., p. 160.
- 25 Of import: the month prior to Cullen's show the artist Billy Apple requested the removal of a gallery wall as alteration to The Barry Lett Galleries (October 16 - 26, 1979). It was one project in a series titled Alterations: The Given as an Art-Political Statement (a full record is made by Wystan Curnow in Art New Zealand 15). Cullen made good use of the 'channel' in the gallery floor left by the wall's removal. Cullen sited a structure in relation to a conceptual project that had come just before, in many respects it was still in play. By placing one of his structures there it occupies the cerebral space of another building structure taken away.
- 26 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Intertwining—The Chiasm" in *The Visible and Invisible* (Northwestern University Press, 1964), p. 139.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 In more recent years, Cullen's work has utilised various philosophical ideas of a speculative realism. These are matters Allan Smith eloquently registered in 2017. See Allan Smith's tribute 'Paul Cullen (1949-2017)' in *Art New Zealand* Number 163, 2017: 42-44.
- 29 Phillipe Rahm, *The Anthropocene Style*, San Francisco Art Institute, March 29 – May 19, 2018. <http://www.sfai.edu/exhibitions-public-events/detail/philippe-rahm-the-anthropocene-style>.
- 30 Paul Cullen Building Structures 1979, curated by the author for The Engine Room, Massey University, 23 May - 13 June, 2018.

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A Personal Recollection Of Four Years Work In The Crown Lynn Design Studio From 1978 To 1982

Juliet Hawkins

In the last two or three decades many New Zealanders have collected and treasured consumer goods manufactured and often designed in this country in the post-war period. These items are valued not necessarily for their quality but because they were local and symbolic of emergent understandings of national autonomy and distinctiveness. In a time when global corporations flood national markets with low-cost generic goods produced where there is low-cost labour, there is an international movement by 'baby boomer' collectors to conserve items produced in their nations when they were young.

In New Zealand the ceramics produced by Crown Lynn from just before the Second World War until the company closed its factories in 1989, epitomise this desire to collect items we now identify as 'Kiwiana'. Sociologist Claudia Bell identifies these collectors as regarding themselves as custodians "of national treasures; the items are revered as repositories of strands of the national story".¹ For Bell their collecting of often technologically obsolescent or even crude items of mid-century style is also "a considered act of resistance to globalisation".²

Stimulated by wartime shortages and post-war government restrictions on imported goods, Crown Lynn grew to produce a wide range of domestic and industrial ceramics. There is, therefore, diverse choice for the collector of Crown Lynn

which may account for why the company's products are the most prominent items of Kiwiana collecting.

In 1960 the West Auckland factories were producing around ten million items a year and at its peak in the mid-1970s, more than 500 people were employed at Crown Lynn.³ However, by the late 1970s the company's position in the local market was being impacted by the removal of import controls. Juliet Hawkins joined the company's design department in 1979. In this personal reminiscence she recounts her experience with this now iconic producer of local ceramics.



(From L. to R.) Mark Cleverley, Ian McNee, Juliet Hawkins, Jan Scoones & Tom Arnold in Crown Lynn's Design Studio. Image from the Crown Lynn in-house magazine Ceramics held by the Crown Lynn Museum-Te Toi Uku, Ambrico Place, New Lynn.

I graduated from the Auckland Technical Institute (ATI) in 1978 with a diploma in Graphic Design. The three year course provided hands-on techniques from 3D models, clay work, screenprinting and photography to illustration, typography and design. This was all prior to the computer age. At the end of year exhibition, companies, looking for junior employees, were invited to view the work and offered positions to potential candidates. I was fortunate enough to be selected by Dave Jenkin and Mark Cleverley to join the Crown Lynn design team starting immediately. No time for Holidays! This was extremely daunting but exciting at the same time, being my first 'real' job at the age of 19. Dave Jenkin was Chief Designer and Manager of the studio, Mark Cleverley was Development Designer, Jan Scoones and Ian McNee were the very talented Design Artists. I had four weeks to learn the processes and to settle in before the factory closed for two weeks over the Christmas break.

Dave and Mark had been working on the 'Earthstone' range since 1977. It was a new 'Resist' (in-glaze) technique using bold earthy patterns – 'Autumn', 'Camille', 'Polynesia', 'Sandown' and 'Landscape'. The colours and glazes were trialled in liaison with Ray Coragen and Reg Taylor in the Colour Lab. Jan and Ian produced each colour separation for these new patterns by hand on drafting film, a very time consuming and exacting process. They also continued on with other mug ideas for light relief.



'Cordon Kitchenware', a one-off design by Ian McNee.



'Katrina', a floral mug design for Mother's Day by Juliet Hawkins.

My first task was to produce floral mugs for Mother's Day. The mug shape was 'Apollo' and the 3 colour design would be produced in four colour-ways. I worked closely with Reg and Ray to find the right colours and chose a wraparound design of small flowers on long stems in pinks, browns, blues and yellows. I had free-reign with this project and called it 'Katrina'. Many of the mugs were decorated with onglaze transfers applied by the Decorating Department. Brighter colours could be achieved at a lower firing. The screenprinting department 'Deco Services' was across the road by the railway tracks and we had a good working relationship with the team, John, Judy and Bryn, visiting them on a regular basis.

Mark had also been working on numerous silhouette type 'Flora' designs, using photographic applications in deep blue. This colour was a big change from the browns and was becoming very popular with the buying public. These particular designs were in-glaze



'Vista' on the 'Forma' shape. Design by Mark Cleverley.

firings, where they were fired at a higher temperature so the colour diffused into the glaze.

On a typical day we would work on new patterns and display them as 'Mockups' for the Sales Team for consideration. I was in my element being able to use my drawing abilities and the ideas flooded in. During our half hour lunch break, Jan and I would sometimes run across the road and over the railway tracks – there weren't many trains then – to grab a bargain at the Farmers' sales in Lynn Mall. The bulk of our work was the colour separations and liaising with 'Rennies Illustrations' for the final film work. Backstamps were designed using the traditional Letraset and occasionally we could add a flourish, if it was applied by transfer, to compliment the pattern on the front. Badges were also produced in abundance for clubs, groups and companies, usually applied to the bisque ware with a rubber stamp, then glazed and fired.

In May 1979 Dave Jenkin retired after 34 years service with



Tunnel Kiln being demolished in July 1979.

Crown Lynn. He was a terrific boss and very supportive of all the staff. We were sad to see him go. Tom Arnold replaced Dave in June as the Studio Manager. He had worked in England at Ridgeway Potteries, part of the Doulton Group. He brought new ideas to the company and his brief was to change the image of Crown Lynn. The products needed to be more competitive on the world market and his first task was to develop a product more durable than Earthenware. For practicality Stoneware was chosen as an extension to the Earthenware and Tom set to work on designing a modern shape to give a whole new fresh look. In July the remaining old kilns, which sat in the centre of the Crown Lynn site, were demolished. It seemed like the end of an era and luckily Tom had the foresight to ask me to take some photographs before they disappeared. The Stoneware was to be the start of a new era.

In my first year I contributed 9 designs which went into production including two for 'Devaz' Greek range – 'Outline' and 'Woodglen'. This was a party-plan idea much like Tupperware. In 1980 the Design Team's brief was to produce patterns befitting of the new shape. Mine were 'Magnolia Moon', 'Blue Lagoon', 'Grey Brocade' and 'Winter Wheat' – the latter chosen for Bellamy's exclusive new banquet setting for Parliament House (the previous Fish Hook design by Mark in 1977 would continue to be used for general catering). Tom produced 'Peking' in striking orange and Jan produced 'Country Lanes' – another one of her delicate florals. 'Chinatown', another one of mine, described as "bold and voguish", was not so popular. Occasionally we didn't get it right.

Percy Golding had been employed in October 1979 as Chief

Designer. His high standard of finished art was much needed for some of the more intricate borders. Mark resigned in February 1980 after about 13 years with Crown Lynn and moved to Wellington leaving a huge gap in the Design Studio. His innovative ideas and technical expertise were sorely missed. Tam Mitchell and Bruce Yallop were the modellers for all the new Stoneware shapes, making moulds for the final slip castings and turning machines. However, by June 1980, after numerous glaze and pattern trials, the Stoneware had become a major disaster – especially for the double spray edge rims. It was impossible for the factory to produce consistency in the colour and density which was extremely distressing after all the hard work, money invested and high expectations.

By this time I had been working on a Japanese inspired tsunami wave design after being given a brief to come up with new patterns in pinks and greys for the Greek range. As I didn't like pink much I chose greys and black to create a stylised version of Katsushika Hokusai's colour woodblock 'The Great Wave Off Kanagawa'. It was finally accepted in October, applied to the Stoneware shape and hand-banded by Maude Bowles. Also, in October, 20% of the factory staff were made redundant which included Jan. Working at Crown Lynn had become tedious with all the uncertainty. Fortunately a few of our stoneware designs were able to be adapted to other shapes. This included my wave design which was most successfully produced on the Forma shape



Stoneware plate with 'Magnolia Moon' design by Juliet Hawkins.

and named 'Last Wave'. It was well-received on the Australian market, particularly in Surfer's Paradise and sold out in March 1981.

Meanwhile the factory went on strike again! I had started working on shape designs for Penfolds – a toothpick holder and water jug. Also Sesame Street characters for a 4 piece children's set which included the packaging. We were all working on the nursery ware stacking sets and Ian on the 'Cordon Kitchenware' range. Jan was helping out on a freelance basis and produced 'Sally Anne' for the stacking sets, I did 'Tootle Train' and Ian did 'Pirate Pete'. Ian was particularly clever with his own brand of caricatures and even did a parody of the 'Cordon Kitchenware' before he left in April 1981.

By July I was tentatively looking for another job and Tom had basically given up. Jan was let go again in September and I missed her terribly. Martin Joyce replaced Ian and Reg Taylor finally retired in the December (We remained friends until his death in 1998). As you can imagine there were many farewells to attend and a change of dynamics in the Design Studio.

In 1982 I was working on shape designs for Hereford and the 'Silver Birds', Arabic' and 'Arctic Animals' mug series. The latter using the Dubuit technique of direct screen print on bisque ware. There was another factory strike in April. Percy was working on the 'Blue Willow' design, each size and shape painstakingly redrawn to fit perfectly taking many months of hard work. At the same time there was an influx of overseas lithographs brought in by the Sales Team to boost production, but these weren't necessarily helping Crown Lynn's image.

In September Tom was 'let go' and I was made redundant leaving Percy & Martin to endure the downward decline of Crown Lynn over the next 7 years. During my 4 years of employment there I had 68 designs go into production, worked with some amazing people and made long-lasting friendships with a few of them. In recent years I have revisited some of my designs through contract work with the Portage Ceramics Trust. It has brought back many memories, some very enjoyable ones. I feel sad at Crown Lynn's demise but to have been a part of its history is something I'll treasure.



Stoneware Salt Shaker with 'Peking' design by Tom Arnold.



Stoneware Gravy Boat & Saucer with 'Last Wave' design by Juliet Hawkins.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Claudia Bell, "Not really beautiful, but iconic: New Zealand's Crown Lynn Ceramics," *Journal of Design History* 25, No.4 (2012): 415.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 See Bell and Fiona Ralph, "Preserving the Legacy of Crown Lynn", 26 August, 2015. www.viva.co.nz/article/at-home/crown-lynn/ Accessed 15 June, 2018.

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(Books and academic articles, newspaper and magazine sources)

R (references): Phillips, Jock, and Terry Hearn. *Settlers: New Zealand Immigrants from England, Ireland and Scotland 1800-1945*. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2008.

N (Notes/Endnotes): Jock Phillips and Terry Hearn, *Settlers: New Zealand Immigrants from England, Ireland and Scotland 1800-1945* (Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University Press, 2008), p.41.

R: Porter, Bernard. "Further Thoughts on Imperial Absent-Mindedness." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36, no. 1 (2008): 101-17.

N: Bernard Porter, "Further Thoughts on Imperial Absent-Mindedness," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36, no. 1 (2008): 102.

New Zealand Farmer Stock and Station Journal (Auckland), "Speed Mania," November 1903, Home and Household Supplement: iv.

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[n.b. This newspaper referencing format has been adapted from Chicago to suit 'Papers Past' references.]

INTERVIEWS AND PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

(normally only cited in endnotes).

John Key, interview by author, Wellington, April 1, 2015.

Andrew Little, e-mail message to the author, April 1, 2015.

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IMAGE REFERENCES

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Burton Brothers, *North Shore, Auckland*, 1870s, Museum of New Zealand.

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