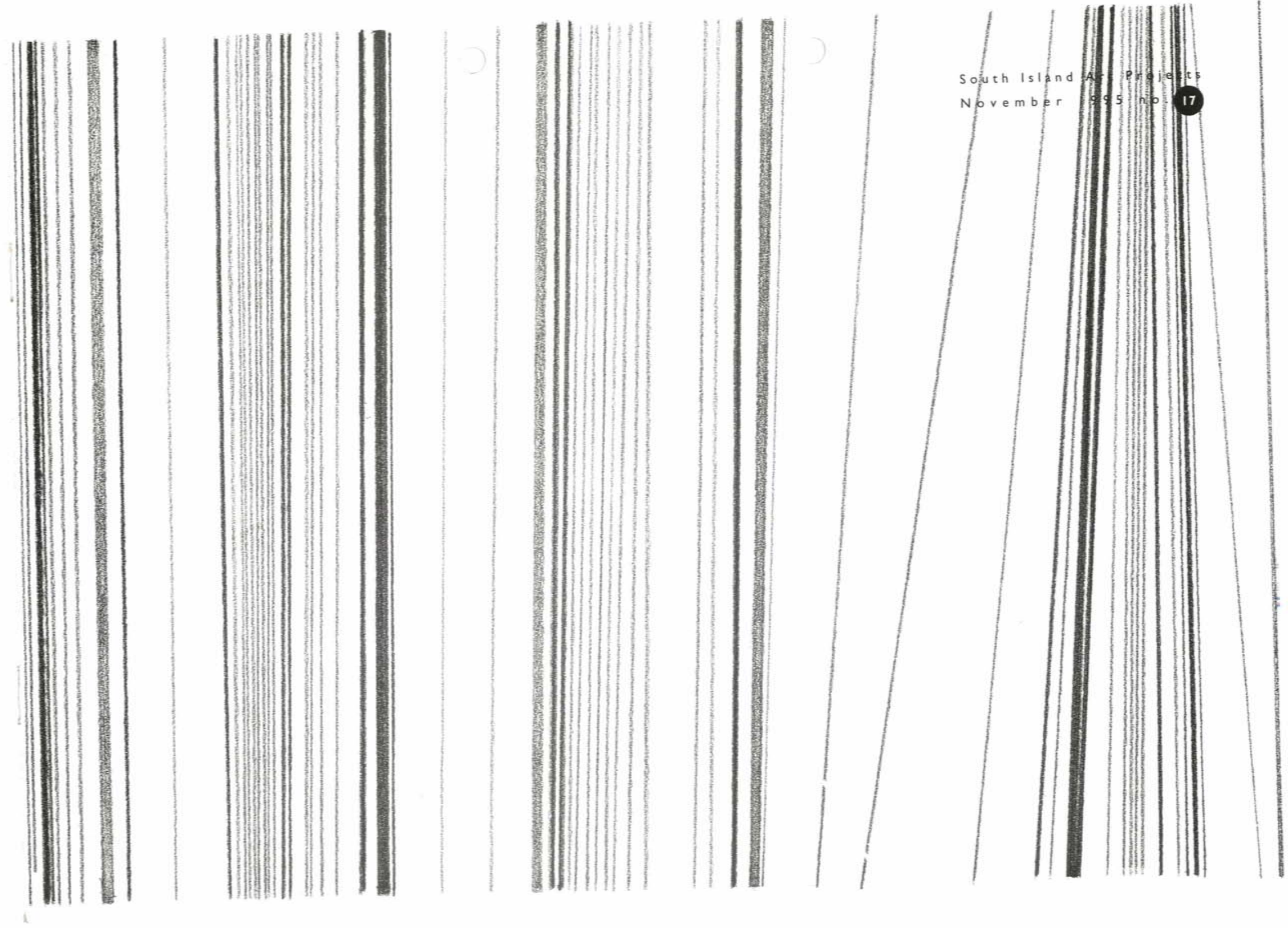

EDITORIAL

With issue number 16 this publication (formerly the South Island Art Projects newsletter) was transformed into a free magazine reviewing contemporary visual art in the South Island. The response to that transitional issue has been very positive and has demonstrated the need for publication of writing in this area and the effectiveness of the free magazine format in reaching a wider audience. Confidence in the publication has been further expressed by our advertisers who are very keen to be part of this initiative.

However the future of the magazine and the organisation is not so secure. It seems we failed to persuade the Arts Board of Creative New Zealand that SIAP is an efficient and effective organisation with an important role to play in sustaining a vigourous contemporary art practice in the South. Consequently SIAP is no longer funded as an organisation. Instead two elements of our 1996 programme were extracted and funded as projects. Other elements, including the magazine publication, were not supported. After considering the options open to us it was decided that we would continue as best we can and attempt to realise further support. If at all possible the magazine will continue but we do need the demonstrated support of our readers. To that end we have devised a readership survey which we will use to better identify our readers, their preferences and thoughts about the magazine. Please make the effort to fill out the form and return it to us so that we can make the strongest possible case for **s u r v i v a l .**

Julian Bowron Director/Editor

SIAP magazine Reader Survey

1. your age group
   a. up to 20
   b. 20 – 35
   c. 35 – 45
   d. 45 +
2. annual income
   a. up to $25,000
   b. $25 – $35,000
   c. $35 – $45,000
   d $45– $55,000
   e $55 +
3. occupation
   a. student
   b. arts worker
   c. artist
   d. unemployed
   e. self employed
   f. other
4. please prioritise magazine contents 1 – 8
   a. exhibition reviews
   b. art related articles
   c. interviews
   d. film & video reviews
   e. news
   f. artists pages
   g. advertisements
5. how did you get this magazine
   a. SIAP mailing list
   b. cafe, gallery, bookshop
   c. friend
   d. library
   e. other /specify:
6. please estimate how many people will read this copy of the SIAP magazine
   a. 1 only
   b. 2 – 5
   c. 5 – 10
   d. 10 +

please photocopy or cut out and return to:
South Island Art Projects reader survey
PO Box 902 Christchurch
many thanks.

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JUDE RAE

Northward drift

SIAP stalwarts Jude Rae (our first Director) and Chris Appleby (foundation trustee) have succumbed to the superficial glamour and shallow glitz of the North. Now resident at a fashionable inner Auckland address they claim to be having a good time. (And we don't miss them either!).

Paua Tiara

The weighty responsibility of representing the new all-singing all-dancing Creative New Zealand in the South has fallen to Nicky Robb (formerly Dunedin Community Arts Officer). Ably assisted by Jacqui Clarke, Nicky will tell you all you need to know about CNZ that was not in the Strategic Plan. tel: 03 366 2072 fax: 03 366 9199.

Theoretical Residency

Resplendent in hot pink twin-set with black furry hat and 'sunnies' the Otago Polytech's Visiting Research Scholar Pamela J Zeplin recently made her arrival in Dunedin. Usually to be found in the Art Theory Department at the University of South Australia's Art School Pam was here to further her studies into trans-Tasman connections. Publication of papers, statements and works related to "Navigating the Ditch" is planned. Lectures by the Visiting Scholar, including the now legendary *More Intense Than Orgasm: Female Flight in Phallocentric Airspace,* proved popular. Your personal anecdotes c/- Rob Garrett Otago Polytechnic, Private Bag 1910, Dunedin.

Also Navigating the Ditch

In addition to the more usual flood of snow seekers the Southern winter seems to have brought with it a steady trickle of curious Australian contemporary curators. David O'Halloran on behalf of the Adelaide Festival organisation came seeking potential participants for an international shipping container project but in spite of all those drinks we bought him chose noone from down this way. The 'A team' to show in Adelaide and Stockholm will be Jacqueline Fraser, Denise Kum and L Budd. More recently Nik Tsoutas, Director of Artspace in Sydney was scouting for "conceptual installation artists" for a trans Tasman exchange programme rather than another exhibition.

Bodies in Question

By now you should have registered for this Auckland University Art History Department symposium which will "address a wide range of historical and contemporary issues relating to the body, it's representations, uses and politics in Aotearoa/New Zealand". Enquires to The Secretary, Department of Art History, Private Bag 92019 Auckland.

Wee Residency

Kirsty Cameron & Sue Hillary were quietly resident at the Sculpture Department of the Canterbury University School of Fine Art for a few weeks during the winter. These Auckland artists were here as part of an on-going scheme to have live, working artists in and about the hallowed halls.

HUman interest

Canterbury sculpture students showed how it is done when they blitzed the local media to publicise their show unLOADING. A colour picture on the front page of the Press (usually reserved for daffodils, lambs, Queens or All Blacks) brought the populace to their glamorous exhibition venue (see review section) in unprecedented numbers for a contemporary show.

For the Collector who has Everything

If you missed expatriate artist Julia Morison's spectacular exhibition *End to Begin*, at the downtown Christchurch gallery of the urbane Johnathan Smart, all is not lost. A superb limited edition book which reproduces images of works, and related texts from the show is available from the same Johnathan Smart at 160 High Street. tel: 03 365 7070.

Short and Sticky

Short Cuts and Sticky Tape is the title of an experimental video symposium organised by the Otago Polytechnic School of Art held recently in Dunedin. It is hoped that some of the wide range of work might travel and be seen elsewhere. (watch this space). Short Cuts and Sticky Tape marks a period of considerable energy and production in Otago which may be difficult to sustain following the closure of the Oamaru Polytechnic campus and the imminent departure of several key players.

Start Spreading the News

Two well known Christchurch contemporary artists were spotted recently at a late-night karaoke venue delivering a heart-felt rendition of *New York New York*. Clearly the magnetism of the Big Apple continues undiminished and the longing for a loft in Soho overwhelms now and then. On the same night another, more senior practitioner and well known acerbic writer was billed to make his Karaoke debut with *Baby Face* but was apparently overtaken by stage fright.

Edgy

SIAP has initiated a series of occasional (erratic) informal meetings over an after-work drink to maintain the illusion of a concerned community of interest in support of contemporary visual arts in Christchurch. The first of these held at the Edge in Hereford Street was a very pleasant diversion. Call Julian on 03 379 5583 for an update.

Put It On the Card

Christchurch painter and person-about-town Tony de Latour recently carried off the lucrative (and prestigious) Visa Gold Art Award in Wellington. Rumours that the artist has said "this won't change me at all" are being fostered.

Advent

Along with the hardware outlets and department stores of our nation, the High Street Project would like to remind you that Xmas is not too far away. Opening at the gallery on Tuesday 28th November and running until Saturday 9th December, we will be hosting a special show for the festive season. More than just a Christmas Show in the dealer gallery sense of stocking-sized works from the stock room, this exhibition will celebrate Christmas (including, then, Christmas Shows) as its theme. In the High Street tradition of open-invitation group shows (Nature Tattoo, Prostrate Canterbury) we will be accepting work from all (paying) comers that comments somehow on or is motivated by some aspect of Christmas; gifts, nativity scenes, best of '95s, Yule logs, ho, ho, hos....

Work may be delivered to the gallery at any time between now and Friday 24th November and must be accompanied by a $10 participation fee (the increase in this amount since previous shows is due to High Street's loss of rent-free status). Work may be offered for sale. High Street offers good security but can accept no liability for the loss or damage of artworks. Any cost involved in the sending or returning of work is the responsibility of the artist, although we are happy to handle/pack and buy postage/courier on your behalf, with proper instructions.

For further information or to arrange delivery of works, please contact Jonathan Bywater: phone 03 374 6347; e-mailphilo30@csc.canterbury.ac.nz; c/- PO Box 3733 Christchurch.

Public art is a problem. As soon as one attempts to outline what public art involves one becomes embroiled in a multiplicity of discourses and a multiplicity of agendas. There is the discourse of the funding agencies, such as Creative NZ, that draws a distinction between public art and community art. There is the discourse of the public which takes a variety of forms such as that of the media, art critic, civic body, community group, institutional and corporate groups, and individuals. When one considers the ongoing debate as to what constitutes public art, it appears that there is no univocal conception. However there does appear to be such a conception of community art. This was expressed clearly by Sandi Morrison (who is on both the council and the arts board of Creative NZ) at a recent public forum about public art, that I attended in Hamilton.

> "...projects that aim to question, defamiliarize, interrogate or are at war with the cultural, social or geographic environment will not receive funding,..."

She distinguished between public art, that had to do with individuals, and abstract notions such as the public and community art,- that is, art that has relevance to a community, that generates a sense of ourselves, and involves and unites all of a community. Communtiy art brings cultural diversity into community identity by focussing on the common aspirations of the members of the community, and provides for ownership of the art. This is the view that is enshrined in the Creative NZ Strategic Plan.

In this article it will be argued that the current funding policy of Creative NZ, which has $24 million available for distribution in 1995/6, has fallen into line with the funding policy of another major funding agency, the Foundation of Research Science and Technology(FoRST) that distributes the $260 million contained in the Public GoodScienceFund.

Both these agencies, supposedly independent of government interference are in fact directly driven by the National government's priorities of adding value to NZ's development. The discourse of both agencies is the same, as are the agendas. Both develop essentialist categories that are then allocated specific proportions of the total fund. This means in the case of art, that potential projects or works that do not fit within one of these categories will not receive funding, or will have to be modified so as to conform to a category.

Aranui Plunket rooms: before the mural project

FoRST has specified 17

categories under which research proposals will be funded, Creative NZ has 14. In both cases the money available in each category is openly contestable by all those applications that meet that categories criteria.

The outcome of this funding policy for art generally would appear to be that public art projects that aim to question, defamiliarize, interrogate or are at war with the cultural, social or geographical environment will not receive funding, whereas community art projects that lead to beneficial arts and/or cultural outcomes will get funded. Similarly with FoRST, the amount of the total PGSF that is allocated to the category Society and Culture is a paltry 2% of $257.8 million.

Consider a paradigm case of each type of art - the Aranui Murals Project (community art), and the Praxis Project (public art).

Aranui Plunket rooms: after the mural project

"The Aranui Murals Project is the largest community project of its kind attempted in New Zealand. It stands as a benchmark for other New Zealand communities to empower their residents and to beautify and revitalise their environment through creative expression and a partnership with the arts". (P.Mahy,1993,p5)

Mural projects such as this one are initiated with a view to dealing with graffiti. Graffiti was always a problem in this depressed and disadvantaged Christchurch suburb. In Aranui, murals were to be put up on 21 buildings that were covered with graffiti, and received a $15,000 grant from the QE II Arts Council.

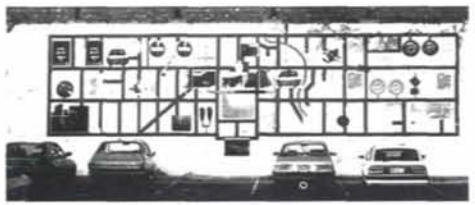
The murals project also involved the bringing together of seven different nationalities, and a considerable amount of time and energy from many members of the community. The project was completed in April 1993. This approach to graffiti has been used extensively throughout New Zealand, and is popular with community art funders.

However as successful as the Aranui, and other mural projects have been in eliminating graffiti, and in bringing a sense of respect, identity and pride to the respective communities, they do not seem to involve the interrogation and problematizing of social, economic and political issues that inter alia give rise to the graffiti in the first place. So one problem with mural projects is that after a short time the graffiti reappears and thus requires the mural project to begin again. For example, this is currently

"The net result of this type of funding is art that tends to be non-controversial, ornamental, bland, uncritical and banal."

happening to the Nawton mural project in Hamilton

One consequence of mural projects in general is that they now come to identify those areas of cities that have social, cultural and economic problems, and are experiencing urban decay.



The *Praxis* project *Mad/Cash* : Michael Hornblow, Sarah Jane Barr, Marc Jackson & eugenie blank

A paradigmatic example of public art is the Praxis Project, which was organised by the South Island Art Projects, and was completed mid 1995. The intention of this project was to problematize the role of art in relation to city communities and to give voice to the problems of Christchurch city.

"Praxis challenges perceptions that art in public should always celebrate the apparently positive and marketable aspects of a place concentrating instead on interrogating the assumptions and values which underpin Christchurch and similar late twenthieth century cities". (SIAP press release,20/6/95)

Through a number of issues, the artists involved utilized techniques developed by earlier Dada, Surrealist and Situationist groups to subvert the constant barage of advertising that confronts people in the city. The intention was to make people start thinking about problems of urban existence through the language of advertising, not the beautification of the cityscape with more immediately absorbable images - what has been called the dictatorship of the bland .It would be hard to see how this project added value to New Zealand society in any market driven sense. However this project received a grant from the Arts Council of New Zealand. It is doubtful whether it would now qualify for funding consideration by Creative NZ.

"In practice it appears that both bodies have been, in a real sense, hijacked by government appointed personnel, and government driven priorities, with policy couched in free market discourse."

This brings us to the issue qf funding for community and public art. There are two types of funding, private and public. Private funding comes via business sponsorship, private benefactors, entertainment and state patronage. Here the art is very much tied to enhancing the public image of the funding body. The net result of this type of funding is art that tends to be non-controversial, ornamental, bland, uncritical and banal. Commissioned works that are inaccessible, or that offend, are cancelled.

Public funding comes via the Arts Council, recently renamed Creative NZ. The general idea was that the funds held by this body should be administered by an independent body some distance from government. This

was to protect the arts from any political agendas. The same idea was behind FoRST, who administer the Public Good Science Fund. Through a process of peer review, and based on a clearly stated set of objectives, funds could be openly contestable. This was the theory.

"It seems that it is, and will continue to become, much more difficult to obtain funding for public art projects that are in any way critical or questioning of the society we live in.",

In practice it appears that both bodies have been in a real sense hijacked by government appointed personnel, and government driven priorities, with policy couched in the free market discourse. For art this means that from Creative NZ down to community arts providers, the policy for the selection of art projects becomes very conservative, concerned with adding value through its outcomes to the economic development of New Zealand. For example at local body level in Auckland the policy is that art grants are only given for projects that are mainstream like Music in the Park. Any project of a radical, experimental, or cultural development type do not get funded. Likewise in Hamilton where the community arts council gives grants for the damage-control type projects, like mural projects to deal with graffiti, but not for any project that might wish to deal in more political or contestatory ways with the issues surrounding social problems. And so the list could go on. Let us look briefly at the discourse of Creative NZ. Applications for funding will be assessed on the degree to which they will lead to beneficial arts and/or cultural outcomes for their communities. Funds will be made available on a contestable basis for local arts projects that address its strategic objectives. The effectiveness of spending will depend not only on the artistic merits of proposals, but also on their financial viability, the ability of the organisation to successfully carry out its proposal, and an assessment of where the benefits are received - the more a project will benefit the community, and enhance participation in the arts, the more likely is it to get funded. Creative NZ will also indicate where certain types of activities are to be given low priority, or even excluded from consideration.

The Praxis project: *Not Me*
Andrew Brown 1995

In parallel with the discourse of FoRST, we find here the move from patron of the arts to investor in the arts, from

artists to stakeholders, with accountability, performance indicators, outputs, outcomes, added value, eligibility, benefits and strategic objectives. Creative NZ has also released its Strategic Plan 1995 - 1998. This details three goals: the People Goal, the Arts Goal and the Management and Administration Goal. Without going into more detail here it becomes quite clear that community art projects fit nicely into the category Arts in the Community, a sub class of the People Goal. However it becomes hard to see where public art projects, such as the Praxis Project, fit in. In fact they don't fit in, and this seems to follow from the policy adopted by Creative NZ, congurent with that of FoRST and with the policy direction of the current National government, to make NZ more economically competitive on the international market.

"Censorship is another name for this difficulty, and it can come from multiple sources."

It seems that it is and will continue to become much more difficult to obtain funding for public art projects that are in any way critical or questioning of the society we live in. Just as research dealing with social problems and such like issues receive precious little funding from FoRST.

Censorship is another name for this difficulty, and it can come from multiple sources. From the requirement for exact detail of a project and its exact funding requirements; from the assessment or evaluation of projects by the funding body or corporate interest; from the requirement that it achieve specific outcomes of a community arts council; from the need to define the art in question in a particular way. And requiring an art project to be non-controversial, permanent and accessible to all, even art critics, also involves censorship.

In conclusion, it has not been the argument of this paper that one type of art is good and another type bad. All art projects can be evaluated on a variety of different criteria. In criticising some aspects of community art projects one can also point to considerable benefits those projects provide for the community itself. What has been argued is that one valuable dimension of art - public art - is being marginalised through a public funding policy that adopts a discourse and practice in common with other major funding agencies, and in line with the policy dictates of central government. Long live public art!

Ted Ninnes

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moving image funding

I have been involved in the making of short films since 1982. During that time I have made my own, and worked on other people's, self-funded films, photographed and edited many self-funded and Arts Council-funded shorts, and edited one Film Commission film. Over the years I have also attended numerous meetings regarding short films, including a meeting of emerging filmmakers and the NZ Film Commission which led to the formation of the Commission's Short Film Fund. It is from this perspective that I offer the following comments on the development of a moving image culture in New Zealand.

The first point to make is that our funding levels aren't that bad. The Creative Film and Video Fund (managed by Creative New Zealand) gets at least fifty to sixty applications per meeting, and in the past has given out around ten grants. With money recently added to the Fund from New Zealand on Air (due to Jan Bieringa's initiative) the number of grants made at the last two meetings has doubled. The Film Commission also provides funding for shorts at a level rarely matched by other countries. So while funding is becoming increasingly competitive as more and more potential practitioners pour out of courses and respond to the PR messages of success put out by the local industry, levels of support are not unreasonable.

My perceptions of the difficulty facing Creative New Zealand's Creative Film and Video Fund in the future is that its decision-making rationale has never been clear. Applicants with a demonstrable commitment to the art form frequently get turned down meeting after meeting, while others with no experience, and who therefore will be reliant on those who do have experience to complete their projects, do get funded. It is also clear that the Creative Film and Video Fund has of late aggressively funded PC and issue-based projects: sexual identity, minority groups, and racial and multi-cultural perspectives. While this is in harmony with its brief to support community perspectives, it is often observed by practitioners that if filmmakers such as Godard, Tarkovsky and Scorcese were living in New Zealand, they wouldn't get funded. With the funding-bodies' aversion to violence and films dealing with male machismo, Quentin Tarrantino wouldn't get a look in either. In this sense NZ moving image funding bodies exist a long way from contemporary audiences and narrative practice.

In this context, it is interesting to note that Peter Jackson was never funded by the Arts Council. Being a young filmmaker interested in exploring genres, neither would he be likely to if he was starting out today. His first feature, Bad Taste, received investment from the NZFC under subterfuge, as they wouldn't have supported such a genre film willingly. Yet having come out of an area of practice which, by the definitions of what the Arts Council and Film Commission support, would never have received funding, Jackson is now our best international export and is bringing huge amounts of investment dollars into the local industry. So there are clearly areas of practice and subject matter which our funding bodies are not addressing. Practitioners working in those areas will not be supported by them.

I am not arguing for supporting more splatter films. Quite the opposite. It is clear that only those with strong visions, as well as the requisite technical and

a personal view

personal skills, make work which will add to our culture. Straight industry and commercial work aimed at particular markets may or may (spectacularly) not make money, but personal films and strong visions have the best strike-rate. So I am arguing for supporting those practitioners with distinctive visions - whether panellists on those funding bodies like the vision or not.

This issue is at the heart of developing a moving image culture in this country. Not only is there is not one development path followed by which the most talented practitioners, and the ones who will contribute most to our culture and to our overseas profile, but it could be argued that any funding system can only be, at best, very hit and miss in the way that it identifies talent. History shows us that appreciation of work by contemporaries, and appreciation by later generations, usually diverge. As the decades pass achievements which weren't recognised at the time they were made come to the fore, while work which was important at the time no longer has anything to say. Len Lye was not revered in NZ until very late in his career. With his development of direct filmmaking, he is the one unquestioned NZ contributor to the development of international film culture. The way a culture will develop, the work which is significant and insignificant, is rarely discernible at the time.

Of course, underlying this discussion is the question of how much a state-funded organisation, which is required to disperse funding and provide support according to an Act of Parliament, while buffeted by the political lobbying of self-interested groups and severely limited in scope by under-funding, is temperamentally and structurally capable of helping the development of particular art-forms, let alone identifying those individuals who, in the long run, are going to contribute the most to those artforms.

This is the dilemma of arts institutions, and the biggest problem facing Creative New Zealand. My own view is that Creative New Zealand needs to keep listening to practitioners, an activity which the Arts Council has never enthusiastically embraced, and then needs to 'scatter' funding without being too agenda-driven. This is where watching Creative New Zealand's new strategic plan will be interesting. If it allows fulfilling its own organisational and self-definition agendas as an organisation to override its sensitivity to artistic as well as cultural changes, it will lose its relevance. For while becoming a more financially accountable organisation, with its goals and expenditure clearly defined on paper, is the major concern of our current political climate, that may easily be at the expense of removing itself from contact with the unpredictable, undefinable, non-boxable, awkward reason it exists - talent.

Keith Hill

"...the curious reflexivity of sensory experience..."

cessation
Fiona Gunn

Canterbury University
School of Fine Art Gallery
17–21 July 1995

The floor of the art school gallery is linoleumed concrete with no give. It is a hard room. Very little natural light makes it past the art history reference library or the doors through to the sculpture department. It is a dead end: There is only one way in, no windows.

Fiona Gunn's installation, "cessation", inhabited this space. In reviewing her work I will mention first what was not there to be viewed: Part of the difference made to the space (and the difference from most visual arts productions) was that there was, largely, nothing to be seen.

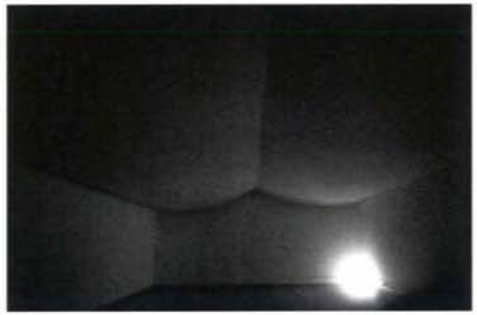
The trapezoid tops of the endwalls, the grid of lighting tracks, the bare concrete block and cast concrete, the grape-purple air conditioning ducts (colour-coded, in a 1970s way, to mark their different function), the dark beams, the dusty, cylindrical, adjustable spots, the dull mauve, dried-noodle asbestos insulation bales, all these things above the upper edge of the display walls were folded away, removed from sight. Forming a new ceiling, a large sheet of latex hung heavily, in symmetrical, shallowly curved planes, tent-wise, clamped against the wall, and into a sharp cleavage down the centre of the room lengthways, between two straight beams.

The room was lit by the daylight that spilled through the door, and a single, low watt bulb on the floor at the other end of the same wall. The light was dim; the view down the room grainy, an artificial dusk. The normally reflective grey floor, scuffed, and here and there bubbling, and the hard, white, board walls dissolved into the half-murk. The surfaces in the room were coloured similarly grey, warmed slightly by the yellow of the light.

Mentioning absences and dissolutions like this, though, to sketch the work, to enable a visualisation of it, misleadingly emphasises the visual: It was the invisible, almost the air itself, that held your attention within the installation.

Simply, but still unusually, we were not being offered something to look at. Our eyes were given nothing in particular to rest on. The room stopped us. We were hushed, waiting for something, wondering what to do, how to act, how to look. It was a place to linger in, not just because of betrayed or displaced expectations of something to see, but because of a certain atmosphere, something perhaps, though, hard to express.

The acoustic conspired with the emptiness to pause you, to still you. Speech and footsteps were dampened, swallowed, but the whirr of the air conditioning flooded the silence. The sickly residues of latex fumes contributed to a synaesthetic warmth, a hum, not at all queasy or overwhelming, but in fact quite comforting, as the dead still and crisp echo of galleries can be uncomfortable.



Fiona Gunn: *cessation* 1995. latex rubber

There were, of course, visual details to be remarked: Brush strokes were visible in the latex in thinner places, crossing like warp and weft. You might, too, have noticed the puckerings and pock marks stretched into the film, reinforcing its fleshy appearance. Spatially, a new symmetry was brought out in the room. Symbolic readings, though, were at least deferred. The treatment of space, the objects involved (two sheets of latex film, a lightbulb), the gallery itself, none of them were representational in any direct way. The work was, somehow, not something to bring words to, something that absorbed them. A more wholly somatic or emotional response was required, rather than a description, a visual making sense.

In a passage near one quoted by the artist on the exhibition program, Clarice Lispector's first person voice in The Stream Of Life stops short of describing a certain intimacy, so that she might not "harm thought-feeling with dry words." (p.56)

A quotation from Merleau-Ponty, also on the handout, a description of the curious reflexivity of sensory experience, whereby we are able to see ourselves seeing, prompted us to reflect on our experience of our body in the space (the invisible, then, in his special sense: the flesh, the I-body), and thus, obliquely, invited us to consider our experience as different from our usual way of perceiving art.

Historically, you might see this work as minimalism replayed, with modesty, with less steelplate machismo, with a respect for the art-experiencing person; acknowledging and leading us to acknowledge ourselves as embodied subjects with the work. Rather than walking in to look, to stand and stare, to file past works pinned up, spreadeagled on the wall before us, we stood, aware of the art but with nothing to gaze on.

Jonathan Bywater

"More than rhetoric..."

Northern Exposure
Five Auckland Artists

McDougall Art Annex
11 August–10 September

After a long run of mainly forgettable exhibitions at the Annex, it was a considerable surprise to see an exceptional show such as this. Exceptional not only in the selection of individual talents, but exemplary also in the way their contributions interacted and resonated collectively.

Though unstated in the catalogue, one assumes that the researcher and essayist was Elizabeth Caldwell, the McDougall's assistant curator. She designed the show to showcase these artists (mainly women) for a Christchurch audience, and in so doing happened to illustrate the curious point that here, as well as in say Britain, the embracing of values from mid-to-late sixties American practice is now thoroughly absorbed, but filtered in the nineties through a sensibility greatly informed by such things as cultural theory and a knowing art world reflexivity.

One can identify two strains from the sixties. First of all the interest in the process of decay, entropy and disintegration shown by Kum and Intra and to some extent Leigh. This can be traced back to Serra, Smithson, Morris and La Va amongst others. Secondly, the use of grids and boxes, as seen in Brookbanks, Tan and Leigh, connected previously to Judd, Andre, Martin and LeWit.

It is common today for artists to move well away from European and North American modernist obsessions, and Tan with her objects bound in (Chinese) red cord, and even Brookbanks with her half-round fence posts (looking sort of like modernist geometry stencilled Tapa cloth style onto Aboriginal log paintings) displayed this.

More European in origin, French in fact, was another noticeable theme, that of the subversion of the gaze. Martin Kay, in his book 'Downcast Eyes' considers the 'denigration of vision' to be a strong theme in twentieth century French thought, and certainly Teststrip artists Kum and Intra displayed what could be called "an exasperation of vision". They lashed out at the ocular with Kum's tackily made craft objects and repulsive blue sludge, and Intra's smashed cameras scattered across the floor.

More than rhetoric was involved here. These particular exhibits were also physically changed by the vibrations caused by the moving viewer. Thus not only the retina but also the gallery space itself came under attack (thwarting any attempts at fixity of image), especially when Kum's tanks and Leigh's boxes seemed to satirise that viewing venue. Both these artists used cone forms (read lines of sight) – Kum's being warped and collapsing (stained blue, perhaps melancholic for a lost innocence), and Leigh's encased and obscured inside the milky opacity of glass boxes (unable to be seen or see out of).

These attacks on the dominance of visual sensation and its accompanying will to order were echoed by Tan's fans depicting shuffled, photo-screened fragments of a female body and Intra's peephole with its sarcastically rotating pelvis, but they were also repudiated by beautifully crafted surfaces of Brookbanks paintings and Leigh's drawings, putting a wonderful tension into the curation.

That, and the careful placement that allowed the exhibits to 'converse', made this show particularly refreshing. Hopefully 'Northern Exposure' is an indication that there will be many more such intelligent exhibitions to be initiated by the Annex.

John Hurrell

Giovanni Intra: *The way doctors see* (1995) aproximately thirty vandalised cameras.

In Train

reLOADING
Canterbury University School of Fine Art sculpture students

The old wool store
5–17 September

A fluttering banner, Re-LOADING, announced the presence of art within this gutted but imposing stone building; it looked remarkably similar to a biennale event though, in an open bay to the right, a flurry of brightly coloured t-shirts beckoned like a tourist trap. Inside, parallel lines bisected the 'gallery' into two raised platforms, a railway line hurtling nowhere in particular but stopped in its tracks by an industrial roller door. A metaphor perhaps for what was to follow.

A tall young man hurried over as I reloaded film, earnestly enquiring as to whether I would be reviewing this exhibition, where it would be published and whether I had acquired sufficient background information. In addition, he sternly suggested that the artists might prefer certain angles when it came to photographically illustrating their work.

Initially, I had been so impressed with the venue, the publicity campaign, the standard and initiative of this project - organised by

sculpture students of the Canterbury University School of Fine Art - that I responded sympathetically and somewhat apologetically. Yes, I had done my research. Mmm, I'll probably write a review. Perhaps for SIAP's newsletter. No, I rarely publish my own snapshots and yes, I'll refrain from taking more photos.

James Wallace: *"peep show"*

Later, I confessed to a colleague my profound regret that I hadn't acted more like a full-on media super-bitch, by challenging the young man's protective scrutiny and providing him with a steeper learning curve in the politics of audience empowerment. The exhibition had after all, been triumphantly placed in the public domain, the artists had deliberately chosen to supply no more information than a cryptic floor plan, nor had they provided any signs prohibiting photography. In short when the work is 'out there' it's up for grabs so it seems a little unreasonable to want it both ways.

Alas the encouraging and supporting mantle of 'teacher' had obscured for a brief moment the responsibilities of anonymous respondent. Given that 60-70 people per day had visited the show, what might have been my response as a hapless tourist or a shopper drifting in from Levene's home decor shop around the corner? How were these works intended to function in "the problematic terrain of public space"[1] where art and its environment is permeated by multiple interactions, and in the abdication of artists control, by the unexpected?

On one level the exhibition's 'polish' could be engaged by it's reference to that chic gallery of grot, the biennale style site, and to some extent, the works exhibited here could slide effortlessly into such prestigious locations - perhaps intentionally so. When this is the case, the choice of venue aspires to little more than a romantic stage setting of Gothic grunge, intensifying the focus upon discrete works of art, which incidentally were displayed along two platform 'stages'. Fortunately overall, the nineteen artists in the show provided a balance between this will to decor and a more subtle exploration of the site.

Somewhat framed by the 'gatekeeper' encounter, my response was to indulge myself, contrarily, with readings beyond the 'notice me' type of works and to privilege the actual site, its texture and physicality; in this way the works might become peripheral. What kinds of stories, I wondered, might account for these traces of human activity - in the varied light sources and window treatments (arched and art deco; smashed, boarded and curtained), in the enigma of disconnected power boxes and cranky industrial machinery, in signs and odours and leakages? How do these contexts determine meaning for me, for the artists, for the building?

The rail pit, which was easily the most dominant feature of the space, had lured a few artists beyond the platforms security. Melissa Macleod's turkey trot/board walk[2] climbed up from the rails to a destabilising gangway and then catapulted unwary participants into an Alice in Wonderland dimension of mirrors and illusions. Pina Bowtie's raw timber structures (could they be stiles?) echoed across that gulf, taking directions from a sinister black hand in the roof above, while hovering on the brink, Anwools Therapeutii's Duchampian crutch machine beckoned to a parasitic wheelchair to career down its own steep rails into the treacherous void.

Melissa Macleod: Untitled. steel and mirror

Spilling up from the basement in 'Post' were battalions of metallic toy soldiers, absurdly swarming in strategic patterns across the floor and up the piers - recalling an insect plague - but ultimately rendered as mere molten puddles beneath a drizzle of oil. The detritus of Gulf Wars, Bosnia, any war, was brought to mind. In direct contrast was the elegance of Marcus Moore's "Empire Strikes Back", twin rotating rods whipping at fifteen minute intervals through his assigned bay.

For me, the most intriguing and eloquent works blurred their environmental surroundings; a forlorn grey woman's suit cringed in a corner, enfolding a stunted store dummy. Was this "No-one"? Regardless of which bay this 'figure' occupied, it spoke poignantly of vulnerability and obsolescence. At the back of the building, and barely noticeable were peepholes in

punched out violated walls (James Wallace's "Peep Show") which allowed my voyeuristic gaze to discover dioramas of carpet and mutilated, sliced teddies. Here was a powerful whiff of domestic violence combined with a refreshingly bent sensibility; Axminster meets the axeman. It wasn't until my third visit that I made another unexpectedly bizarre discovery; when my finger tentatively probed a hole in the floor, an (invisible) spinning fur 'blender' was activated, producing an immediate sensation of visceral clutch. Nearby, a feely box hidden behind a curtain and rotating tube suspended from the ceiling (also by Jemma Upritchard) belied their clever concealment when activated by touch.

In terms of negotiability, "& Co." 's booth succeeded in literally engaging the visitor in dialogue and posed some hard questions about art, commodities and value. This user-friendly piece transacted real exchanges between the dangling, recycled t-shirts (featuring stencilled 'dripping' figures) and whatever the visitor could come up with to swap. Here was a work that was confidently and consciously 'up for grabs'.

Missing from the grunge site, however, was direct reference to the immediate cultural and physical precinct of the building, such as the yuppie consumables available at Levene's. Why do artists revert time and time again to daggy, nostalgic decor narratives that so effectively distances their contemporary audience? Similarly, the real railway line beside this old wool store and their intertwined histories remained under-explored. Come to think of it, there was little work that was 'off the rails' or deeply revealing about personal idiosyncrasy and risk, no matter how glamorous and impressive the total package presented itself in terms of professionalism. However, it must be said that students presenting their work-in-progress - 'in train', even - rather than dressing up for the conventional end-of-year degree show does represent a risk in itself.

The exhibition has been a significant stage in these emerging artist's journeys, but one I hope in future will encourage them to consider not only their destination but the value of the odd siding and derailment, as well as major career stops, along the way. And hopefully, in enterprises of this kind, the days of 'the signalman' at public sites are well and truly numbered.

Pamela Zeplin

1. Barton,C. in "marking out the terrain: an introduction to Art Now", Art Now, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 1994.
2. The turkey trot was a feature of giggle palaces in late 19th and earl 20th century amusement parks.

"...grunge meets Shortland Street..."

What Now?
various artists

a High Street project
1May–16 September

Everyone said the winter of 1995 was the bleakest for years and returning to Christchurch after fifteen years away I could only agree with the sentiment and found myself, at times,
wondering what brought me back. Over that fifteen years the changes have been considerable; the city burgeons with cafés and expensive retail outlets and an impetus towards the indiscriminate re-invention of nineteenth century, Anglophile remnants dominating the city's idea of itself. (trams, town-crier, punts, pseudo wizard etcetera).

Set to become the country's second largest city before the end of the millennium it seems reasonable to expect Christchurch to sustain a vigorous contemporary art culture as well as the more apparent evidence of prosperity and image manufacturing. But the determined tourist in search of such product will have had a lean time of it this winter. However there were fortunately some strongholds of thought-ful and perverse art production lingering in the as-yet-unheritaged south east corner of the central city. Not least of these initiatives was What Now? a six-month programme of two week shows under the aegis of the High Street Project.

The preoccupations and persistent concerns of Generation X are the guiding notions of *What Now?* A reflection as much of the need to package this type of programme for potential funding bodies as any urgent set of shared concerns.(not so different from making '

Melissa Macleod: *Desperately Seeking*

collectable' work for 'the market') The term has sufficient popular culture credibility to make it cool and the *What Now?* title, appropriated from an `eighties television phenomenon, is at the same time playfully ambiguous, open to multiple readings.

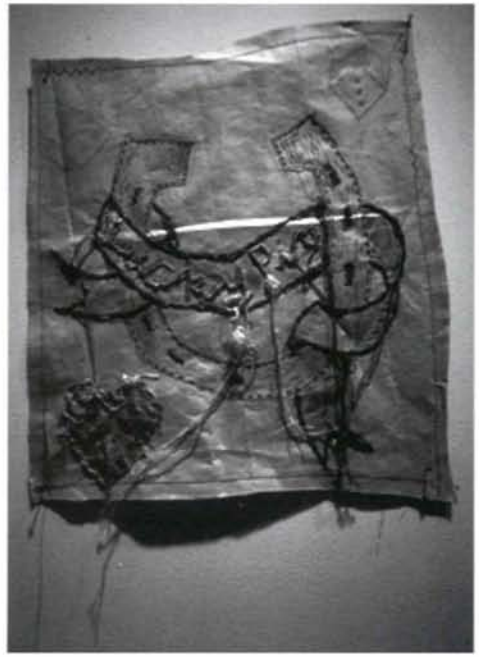
Recollections of growing up in `eighties and `nineties New Zealand were perhaps an inevitable element of What Now? A kind of grunge meets Shortland Street aesthetic. Violet Faigan's *Gurls Don't Surf* and Saskia Leek's *Filthy Claws* tapped a rich vein of girlie teenage angst. The combination of the anecdotal and the voyeuristic is always a winner but I wanted more revelation, something truly sordid to set off the ribbons, brown paper love-hearts and erotically poignant 'pony tails' in *Gurls Don't Surf* and the claggy lino, coy seated figures and selfconscious scenarios of *Filthy Claws*.

What Now? began with Patric Tomkin's *Family Snaps* an almost phallophobic critique of culturally ingrained boy's stuff. Nothing understated or refined here; a battalion of crude, conical sandcastle breasts with jube nipples lumpily confronted the viewer with their crass adolescent clumsiness. The other dominant image a plasticine fist, an entirely unsubtle symbol of misogynist strategies in the playpen. One of those shows where the uneasy feeling in the stomach is not entirely to do with that cask wine which you knew was a mistake before you squirted it into the plastic cup.

Coming from similar territory but with a different spin on it James Wallace and Jason Maling's show frankly just didn't look like boy's art. I liked that about it in my smug p.c. way and then didn't like that they knew I would. The plastic-curtained see-saw centrepiece had a poetic but just slightly deviant edge and the broken toys encapsulated under perspex museum plinths mocked the seriousness of the whole gallery production. Investigation of art-world pretence was another sustained theme in the What Now? series.

Donald Fraser's determinedly dumb and clunky *Notes on the New 'Literalist' Art* didn't get off the ground. Assembling collections of bland 'found' materials, discarded industrial semi-objects whether as a reductive installation practice or as critique of art world introspection still requires a certain cunning and connivance. However that may be the very point and it may simply be that this writer is unable to discard sufficient baggage.

Tom Beauchamp's *Shuffle* literally appropriated the artworld. Faces of his colleagues and teachers morphed into odd combinations with which to wallpaper the gallery. The result was an opening night of hilarity and speculation, a welcome relief from more ponderous occasions. Turning the gaze of the art community back on itself with a device drawn from a child's card game assisted by 'new' imaging technology was



Violet Faigan: *Lucky Pig*

deft and witty.

Alias in Art by Maria Walls also queried art-world rituals and games but using more familiar, large, photo-images combined with text. The strong, seductive cinematographic quality of the work was sufficiently compelling to largely overcome the familiarity of this type of show.

Melissa Macleod's *Desperately Seeking* articulated the High Street space with a rare confidence and toyed with the gallery audience whose progress through the space was strictly choreographed by means of removing various floorboards and fixing them over the windows. A silently spinning life-size mirror deflected and refracted the gaze, locating a mesmerising and threatening spectre at the centre of the three rooms. An installation I will remember when I have forgotten many others.

With *Booze Artist* Kirsty Gregg was possibly the only What Now? artist to venture into commentary on broader social issues. Boutique wine and wine bottle labels, the prosperous, comfortable face of alcoholism. The product packaged into a desirable lifestyle option. Gregg's retro crushed-velvet cushions embroidered with various vernacular expressions describing drunkenness became instantly desirable objects at once fashionable, humorous, and collectable. The sale of all or most of these from the exhibition was perhaps predictable and the true test of audience response in this market driven era.

I have to confess that my overview of *What Now?* was incomplete because I did not see *Voyage of Discovery* by Charlotte Crichton and Belinda Smaill but apart from that lapse the project did more than hold my attention and the generally consistent quality of the work helped considerably in sustaining optimism during a long cold winter.

It seems quite probable that without an art school at the University of Canterbury troublesome, sometimes difficult art, which

extends its audience beyond immediate, aesthetic considerations, would rarely ruffle the surface here. The majority of the What Now? perpetrators were current or recent graduates of the school lingering here (if only briefly) to test their resolve at this business of being professional artists. The 'survivors' amongst them will most likely be found shortly in Auckland, Melbourne and Sydney and one or two perhaps further afield.

However good these artist initiated projects may be it is essential that Christchurch has a permanent facility for consistent presentation of the best of contemporary New Zealand visual art practice and developmental opportunities for younger artists. Until then a distinct local contemporary practice will be elusive and opportunities to build a community of support for such work will be few.

Julian Bowron

Tony Olsen: *The Weeping Doe*. still image

Opening Night

The 4th Canterbury Short Film and Video Festival

Academy Cinema
22 July

Every festival needs its celebratory opening to kick off events. The Canterbury Short Film Festival began with an evening of new films and videos which hadn't previously been seen in public. The works were a mixture of styles, genres and formats.

No Hope No Reason is a video dance work made by Lawrence Wallen in collaboration with Melbourne choreographer, Jude Walton. Structured in five sections, its major strength was the way the dance was re-imagined for the screen, and the purity of composition and image the work as a whole achieved. Two sequences in particular used video's ability to superimpose movement to subtle, but engaging, effect. The soundtrack consisted of an insistent contemporary classical vocal work, which did become somewhat trying towards the end. Shuffling indicated this piece was least liked by the audience. However, I personally found the most beautiful and considered images of the whole evening were displayed here.

Lisa Reihana's *A Maori Dragon Story*, begun while she was the 1992 Trustbank Artist-in-Residence, animated a local Maori legend of the formation of Ohikuparupary/Sumner. Drawing on European folk traditions by using wooden puppets in painted, natural and stage set backdrops, *A Maori Dragon Story* was awkward in its narrative style and uncertain with its imagery, but provided an interesting continuation of Lisa's search for an interface between traditional Maori art and Western narrative animation.

Philip Skelton's *Iosua* is a very short film about a young boy's fantasy life. Totally without sound, the piece worked because the simple but well-considered images effortlessly drew the audience into the boy's imagery world. Fascinatingly, I found myself inventing a soundtrack for the images as I watched them play.

Pulse, a short drama by Michael Kelly, came and went very quickly. It lacked titles, so most of the audience was still trying to figure out what they were looking at when it finished. Writing about it now, I can't remember it well enough to comment further on it.

The major part of the programme was taken up by four narrative films by local filmmakers. Serita Siegal's *Destroying Angel* had a medieval setting and told the story of a young woman whose father agrees to marry her off to an older man. Unhappy, she discovers a

John Christoffels: *Grill*. still image

supernatural power who shows her poisonous mushrooms, which she feeds to her father and suitor

to kill them. Melissa Miles *Mythrite* was also about the supernatural. It told a story in which "the Poppylopper", an English nasty power, is overcome by a Maori Taniwha spirit. In Tony Olsen's *The Weeping Doe*, subsequently voted audience favourite of the festival, a hunter shoots two deer, then to his surprise discovers they have been transformed into naked Maori nature spirits. The last film, John Christoffel's *Grill*, had a contemporary setting, being the story of a couple and their friend who go on a drive into the country, divert to a run-down take-away grill for a feed during a storm, and get fried by lightning while inside. The low-budget special effects in the final sequence, combined with convincing model shots, were some of the best I've seen in New Zealand short films.

As an outsider spending just this year in

Christchurch, I was surprised to notice a conjunction of themes in these films. The most obvious theme is the uneasy relationship each story showed towards civilisation and nature: in each civilisation is a negative force and nature is an agent of destruction and/or revenge. Christchurch is the most English of New Zealand's cities, and one of the least culturally diverse. As these four films screened I started wondering if the filmmakers were responding to some city zeitgeist in an attempting to shake off a mono-cultural history. This idea was paticularly enlarged in two of the films. *Mythrite* and *The Weeping Doe* both came out of an attitude in which pakeha/English attitudes to the environment are destructive and wrong, while Maori have a natural elemental connection with the land. However, both films romanticised this connection into a pastoral mysticism which revealed an awkwardness about just what the relationship between Maori and Pakeha cultures should be. In contrast, *Iosua* and *A Maori Dragon Story*, by Auckland filmmakers living in a multi-cultural city, revealed none of this same awkwardness. However, contrary to my own argument, *Grill*, more urban and contemporary than the others, had a much more tongue-in-cheek attitude towards both its Pakeha characters driving into the backblocks, and their eventual demise.

I'll be watching future Christchurch work with interest, to see whether this conjunction of themes is just chance, or if a distinctive Canterbury approach to narrative and cultural concepts in the process of evolving.

LETTERS

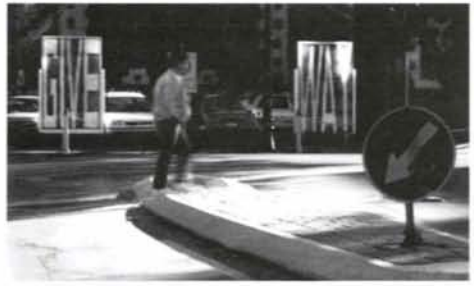
Keith Hill

Dear Editors

Your recent newsletter of August 1995 included an article by Jane Gregg on the Praxis project. I would like to take this opportunity to comment on the article in the hope that it might develop the dialogue a little further.

Firstly, I would like to point out that the term 'praxis' refers to the practice of a field of study as opposed to the theory. In fact the Collins dictionary I have mentions that praxis is simply a practical exercise and that it is concerned with accepted practices or customs. With this in mind I can only assume that the reviewer, mentioned above, was more concerned with the language of the project than with the actual artworks.

As a practicing artist, I would like to offer a different experience of the project. My understanding has been that as a practice, within an expanded field of definition, public art offers both the artists involved and the audience a different context from the so-called neutral white spaces of the gallery in which to encounter art. In this sense public art can be a method of critiquing the established and accepted practices of art, because there is no



Daniel Barratt:One to One

question that this is art - to reinvent that wheel would be meaningless.

To critique the project as Jane Gregg does via the language of the title and accompanying lecture is, in my view, to categorise the project before any attempt is made to consider the methodology involved in this kind of practice. To assume that the twenty or so artists and art students who made work for the project should all practice in a similar manner is to deny the possibility of different points of view within the project's intentions.

It seems too that Patric Tomkin's posters not only advertised his exhibition at the High Street gallery but were also a subversive attempt to reveal the mechanisms within the art world itself. Practices within the art world that contribute to an atmosphere of pressure to keep up, which has been coupled with equally pervasive attitudes within a patriarchal culture that aligns sexuality with power and, of course success. Hence the pun 'keeping it up' which pervades this poster-run by Patric Tomkins.

Also worth noting is the authority of the offset printing medium that was chosen by the artist as the most appropriate method to examine these issues. This puzzled many people it seems, including Jane Gregg, making them think that the posters were merely advertisements for up and coming exhibition. For many it seems this work was a distasteful and self reverential joke. I wonder whether the joke is really on those who read this work just a little too literally and who take themselves a wee bit too seriously.

A rather curious concern that Jane Gregg reveals in her article is for the relationship between aesthetics and praxis (where praxis is seen to align with political action of some kind). It seems that these concepts are incompatible according to the reviewer. And yet for me the work of Daniel Barrett was especially successful in the way that it negotiated that space between art and the street context in which the work was encountered.

Daniel Barrett's larger than life 'Give' and 'Way' signs not only reverberate within the site as signs but also as art, being reminiscent of the

proclamatory paintings of Colin McCahon. When I first came upon this work at the intersection of Worcester and Colombo Streets (at the rear of the cathedral) ambiguously asking me to Give and to Way, or to Give Way, I asked why? and to what? and who was asking this of me in any case? The work sits in site in an open textured way referencing the pedagogical structures within the church, as well as our society. Rather than ramming some ideology down our throats, this work poses more questions than it can answer, and problematises the context for us,

Patric Tomkins: *Cuming Soon*

showing complexity rather than some dogma.

I am reminded of a lecture that Jacques Derrida gave called 'Restitutions' which examined the claims of Heidegger in 'The Origin of the Work of Art'. In this lecture he examines Van Gogh's painting of a pair of shoes. Throughout the lecture Derrida is interrupted by an hysterical voice questioning "What pair?" "Who said they were a pair of shoes?" The voice, which is falsetto is actually Derrida's own voice.

Daniel Barrett's work cannot be dismissed so easily as ignoring 'the ground principles of Praxis' simply because it does not fit into this reviewer's definition.

Likewise the work of Andrew Brown hits another nerve for me, but perhaps goes unnoticed by Jane Gregg who, it seems, expects some kind of remedy for the world's problems within the often discrete work that the Praxis project presented. It seems to me that to expect art to affect people on the scale that, say the media industry might is no reason to dismiss it. The concerns that these artists have engaged with are genuine and it is the art practices with which they have chosen to analyse these contexts that should really be examined here, not whether the world will be saved by them. I wonder sometimes whether we expect too much of public art and whether it isn't possible to defer our own expectations for a minute while we spend some time **engaging** with the work itself.

Wellington Wins

Literary Grants and the Provinces

'There's no point my applying for a grant. I live in Ashburton and to get a grant you have to be close to the corridors of power.'

'North Islanders get the pick. They piss in one another's pocket.'

'I don't think its corruption or conspiracy, not exactly. It's just that if you live in Wellington, which is where the decisions about grants are made, then naturally you catch the eye of the people who make those decisions. You come across them at dinner parties and so forth, and they don't want to hurt your feelings. Or they hear other people at other dinner parties say how clever you are. So they give you a grant.'

Southern writers have said all of this - and lots more - about the system of literary grants, under which the Arts Council of New Zealand Toi Aotearoa during the first half of the 1990s has often seemed to privilege those writers who have been lucky or unlucky enough to live in the North Island. While gender and race are constantly considered when we think about equity of funding, region and province are not often considered to be factors. South Islanders who protest about missing the boat find their unhappiness trivialised as 'parochialism' or 'paranoia.'

Can a case be made for their complaints ? The result of my own research seems to show that the grants made during the first half of this decade have been spectacularly skewed to the writers of Wellington.

My research plan was simple. First, a list was drawn up of all those who from 1990 to 1994 were given Arts Council grants for fiction, non-fiction, children's writing and poetry. Second, the place of residence of grantees was noted. Third, the places of residence were totted up. Pretty primitive statistics - but the results are so striking that we all need to know them - and think about how to do something about it!

Was it not so much a national as a Wellington Arts Council? Of a total of 200 literary grants for which I have been able to trace the place of residence of grantees, no fewer than ninety five went to the province of Wellington. Canterbury, by contrast - with much the same population as Wellington - was awarded only twenty four grants. Writers in Wellington in other words got almost four times as many grants as writers in Canterbury.

Wellington was so disproportionately well rewarded that no other province came anywhere near it in the total swag. Auckland, wit a population three times the capital, won only forty nine grants.

The imbalance in fact was not so much a matter of the North Island winning so much more than the South Island, but the city of Wellington winning so much more than its fair share that it effectively has stripped away opportunities for grants to be won by writers who live anywhere else.

This is an imbalance far more striking than any imbalance of gender or race, A disparity, if it concerned gender or race, that would have caused a riot. Why has it happened?

Perhaps the writers of Wellington are more likely to apply for grants than those elsewhere? If so, then we need to ask why. Is it because writers elsewhere have become disheartened by the fact that Wellington produces winners

while Christchurch or Auckland seem doomed to more than their fair share of losers?

Perhaps the writers of Wellington are more numerous and more talented than those elsewhere? Perhaps. But are they so absolutely thick on the ground and so startlingly talented that they are entitled to almost half of all grants?

Wellington wins not because of any plot, of course, and certainly and not because anybody North or South would want to privilege one region over another. It just happens as a result of a lot of informal factors and, because when we think about equity we've tended to focus on gender and race, nobody makes it their business to check out that the funding is being spread fairly by region. We now need to make sure that all writers of talent have the same chance of gaining a grant, whatever town or province they call home.

Stevan Eldred Grigg

3 x 3

3x3 is an internationally touring residential exhibition.
Following its successful Australian showing it has been brought to New Zealand before travelling to Berlin, Beijing and finally Canberra..
13 visual artists from Australia, China, and New Zealand make up the members of 3x3.
With an age range from 22 to 65 coming from a wide range of disciplines, the show as a whole embraces diversity in the widest possible sense. Exhibiting work from established practitioners alongside emerging artists, the show gives a broad overview of developments in current art practice in the Pacific region.
Remaining autonomous of funding bodies and state museums it seeks to give an uncensored view of contemporary art practice in our region.
The work travels from residential site to residential site adapting to it's host's environment. The works remain individually authored but as the show travels it is the collective that is critical to the conceptual success of the exhibition.
The three New Zealand works use video installation as their medium and deal thematically with ways of knowing our natural environment
(land / sea / sky).

Sydney (Sept 95), Christchurch, Berlin (Jan 96),
Beijing (April 96), Canberra (Sept 96)

November 17/18/19
172A High Street

10am - 6pm
drinks from 4pm daily

more information: 3794548

Friday 17th
Ah Xian (China/Australia)
Binghui Huangfu (China/Australia)
Guo Jian (China/Australia)
Guan Wei (China/Australia)
Zhi Yuan Wang (China/Australia)

Saturday 18th
Eve Sullivan (Sydney)
Matthew Johnson (Sydney)
Noni Nixon (Canberra)
Shane Breynard (Canberra)
Stephen Little (Sydney)

Sunday 19th
Em Scholz (Berlin/New Zealand)
eugenie blank (ChCh)
Lawrence Wallen (ChCh/Melbourne/Berlin)

credits

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