

AUTUMN CATALOGUE 2005



Margaret Stoddart, Bach on the Cliffs of Sumner Beach, Watercolour, 34.5 x 25 cm



OPENING 5.30 TUESDAY 5TH OF APRIL UNTIL 24TH APRIL 2005.

WARWICK HENDERSON GALLERY

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Sir Toss Will Woollaston, Collingwood Wharf, Golden Bay, Nelson, Oil on board, 58 x 39 cm, 1945

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We are pleased to present an Autumn Catalogue for 2005, following an overwhelming response from collectors and artists who have requested we sell several collections and fine New Zealand artworks on their behalf. Paintings in this catalogue include works by leading New Zealand artists such as Allen Maddox, Sir Toss Woollaston, Ralph Hotere, Michael Smither, Robert Ellis and many other prominent artists. As there are forty paintings included in this catalogue (*see list enclosed*), we were unable to reproduce the majority of the works within the space requirements of the catalogue. We encourage you to visit the gallery to view the works or view them on our website.

Margaret Olrog Stoddart (1865 – 1934) is principally acclaimed for her outstanding flower studies, but along with many New Zealand woman artists from the Early 20th Century, Stoddart was also a noted landscape painter. This outstanding example of Stoddarts work (*illustrated front cover*) depicts baches nestled into the cliffs overlooking Sumner Beach. In typical Stoddart fashion a magnificent flower garden dominates the foreground. Margaret Stoddart was a leading figure in New Zealand art circles for over fifty years, exhibiting with the Canterbury Society of Arts from 1883. Stoddart exhibited in every major Art Exhibition in New Zealand during her lifetime, from the New Zealand and South Seas exhibition in Dunedin in 1890, to the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition in Wellington in 1940. In the catalogue for this 1940 show Stoddart was described as an artist "who for half a century gave a guiding hand to the art life of the community... studied at some of the important art centres in Europe ... (and) ... exhibited at the Royal Academy... (and) the Paris Salon"¹

Oliver Spencer Bower (1905 – 1982) was a later contemporary of Stoddarts who not only studied in Canterbury but also at the Slade School and Grosvenor School of Modern Art in London. Also a leading watercolorist, Spencer Bowers subject matter was diverse, producing outstanding works in oil, including portraits. Following her time spent at Elam in the late 1940's Spencer Bower painted more figurative works. The '*Spinners*' paintings completed in Christchurch are a significant series of works, which included drawings, watercolours and oils.



Olivia Spencer Bower, Spinners (Three figures), Acrylic on card, 37x45cm



Sir Toss Woollaston, Lake Brunner, Watercolour, 37x26.5cm



Robert Ellis, Motorway Journey, Oil on board, 59.5x59.5cm, 1970



Ralph Hotere, Woman #111, Mixed Media on board, 26 x 36 cm, c.1962

The main threads of New Zealand modernism appeared in the 1930's and two of the most revolutionary artists from this period were Toss Woollaston (1910 – 1998) and Colin McCahon (1919 – 1987). Woollaston was probably fortunate to be included in the National Centennial exhibition of art in 1940 with the portrait 'Harmonium Player'. It is certain this work would have been subject to much derision, particularly alongside representational paintings by JC Hoyte, James Richmond, Frank Wright and John Gully. In a catalogue in 1956 Peter Tomory described artist John

Gully as "The unwitting Father of a school which still has its overwilling pupils."² Tomory maintained the "lemming – like rush to Europe" was prevented for six years during the Second World War and this became a fertile period for the development of New Zealand modern art "It seems ... that where artists had to stay home they came to terms with the characteristics of New Zealand"³. During this time these radical contemporary New Zealand artists chartered a rocky course towards a new direction in contemporary New Zealand art. The three paintings



Robyn Kahukiwa, Earth Formed Women & Child, linocut (artist's proof), 30x30cm, 1983



Robyn Kahukiwa, Tangata Whenua, Oil on linen, 251x218cm, 2003



Nigel Brown, *The Scarred Couch (After Clairmont)*, Oil on board, 240 x 120 cm, 2001 - 03

in this catalogue are fine examples of Woollaston work. The oil is from an important decade in Woollastons career, 1940 – 1950 during which time he held his first one man shows in Wellington and Nelson. This period culminated in a two man exhibition with Colin McCahon in Wellington in 1949. *Wharf at Golden Bay Nelson (Collingwood Wharf)* is a precursor to Woollastons wharf paintings. Woollastons' output was limited during the war years "...I don't want a big output, but to paint better".⁴ Woollaston was also struggling with his battles as a conscientious objector, dealing with the death of his mother, raising four children during this period and gaining acceptance of his work. "Nelson Art Society has given up its exhibition and I don't send to others because they don't like my work and it's an expense"⁵

Woollaston is an artist who found acceptance of his work

difficult throughout his career although he was rewarded with a Knighthood in 1979. He is now recognised as a major contemporary New Zealand landscape painter.

An important contemporary artist who arrived in New Zealand in the 1950's was [Robert Ellis \(b 1929\)](#) who took up a teaching position at Elam Art School in 1956. Ellis had studied under Francis Bacon and with a wide artistic and architectural background he began an important series of work in the early 1960's which were concerned with the effects of roads and motorways within the urban landscape. The *Motorway* series paintings were recognised for their artistic originality and quality when they were included in an important exhibition of 15 contemporary artists curated by Peter Tomory and the QE II Arts Council in 1965. Ellis had also prophetically hinted at the negative effects of these intrusions on



Allen Maddox, Abstract, Oil on canvas, 91 x 51 cm, 1977

both coastal and urban landscape. Motorway construction today is an even more controversial and polarising topic and these paintings, now over 40 years old, seem to embody an even greater significance. One painting in this catalogue is a precursor to this series which started as "ink and gouache drawings based on Spanish Hill Towns... Ellis's towns and cities, which were universal rather than specific. Dots, dashes, nested grids and jigsaw block's were all held together by taut and sinewy line work".⁶ Illustrated on page 3 is a rare oil painting from the *Motorway* series entitled *Motorway Journey*.

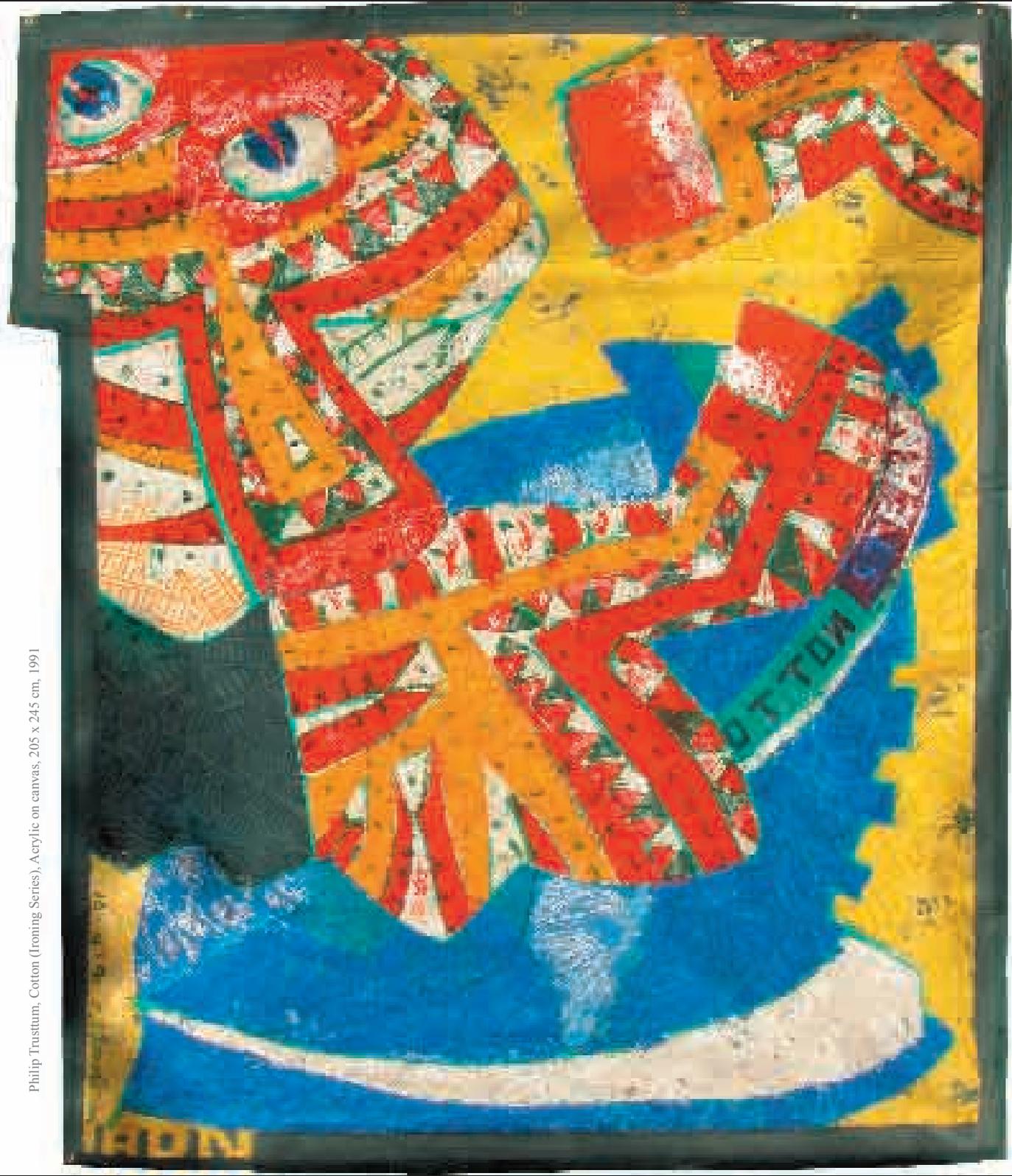
Ralph Hotere (b. 1931) needs no introduction as a major New Zealand artist of the 20th Century and this rare painting *Nude Woman* is an unusual exploration in paint of this subject matter. Hotere completed many nude studies during his career, mainly sketches, drawings and works on paper. These lyrical and expressive nude studies have perhaps lost impetus due to Hotere's monumental rise in stature as an abstract landscape painter. There is however a commendable body of work which has been produced by this artist in the area of figure study.

Three works by another prominent Maori artist Robyn Kahukiwa (b 1940) are included in this exhibition. Kahukiwa is a leading figurative artist who works on a large scale but also produces exquisite works on paper such as *Earth formed Woman and Child* illustrated on page 4. The vibrant large scale canvas *Tangata Whenua* in this catalogue, is typical of Kahukiwa's aggrandisement of the figure – larger than life size and all powerful.

Nigel Brown (b 1949) pays homage to one of his early contemporaries and friend Philip Clairmont (1949 - 1984) in his large work *The Scarred Couch*. Brown lists many prominent figures as being influential to his career including poets, writers and painters. In *The Scarred Couch*, "I Am" and "We Are" text decorate the arms of the couch suggestive of a tattoo, instilling a vibrant animation to the scene. A leaping cat, a dog, the Maddox cross and other iconic Nigel Brown symbols including the wood pigeon, axe hammer, sheep and goal posts are juxtaposed into the work

Other contemporaries of both these artists including Philippa Blair (b 1945), Philip Truistum (b 1940) and Allen Maddox (1948 - 2000) have significant works featured in this catalogue. *Stepping Out*, 1993 is a fine

Philip Trustrum, Cotton (Ironing Series), Acrylic on canvas, 205 x 245 cm, 1991





Philippa Blair, Stepping Out (Pacific Rim), Acrylic on canvas, 124x104cm, 1993

example of Blair's multiple fold-out work, which captures the bold exuberant style of this currently American based New Zealand artist. A recent retrospective at the gallery confirmed Blair's status as leader in the nuance of paint application and texture. These bustling and vibrant works encourage the participation of a captive viewer with their loosely hanging painted pages.

Allen Maddox's work has also gained a new perspective since his early passing with several major works recently appearing on the market. The work in this catalogue is an excellent example of the artists X series and has been shipped from a collection in New York especially for this exhibition..

Arguably the leading artist from this elite group of contemporary expressionist painters is Philip Trusttum. Significantly, these artists studied in Christchurch where the Expressionist teaching and style of Rudi Gopas exerted considerable influence. Gopas introduced this group of artists to the German expressionists Ludwig Kirchner and Max Beckmann. Trusttum's unconventional style was encouraged by Gopas and his large scale canvases allow him the freedom to express his unique ideas and narratives.



Eion Stevens, Speed Record, Oil on prepared board, 49x32cm, 2002



Trevor Moffitt, Loading the Washing Machines, Oil on board, 58x58cm, 1984

It is only Trevor Moffitt, the figurative painter from Christchurch whose work takes a different direction. A rare *Solo Father* series painting *Loading the Washing Machine* is included in the catalogue based on Trevor's experience as a Solo Father, following the untimely death of his wife Alison. This painting originates from one of Moffitt's several narratives which record the pathos and stark reality of the human condition.

Another leading artist whose style is the antithesis to these artists is the minimalist colour field artist Mervyn Williams (b 1940). Based in Auckland, Williams has developed his work to an enviable degree of sophistication. The illusionist qualities of his work, now perfected, have become an integral component of his latest works where a circle or concentric rings dominate the image (see back cover). The cool simplicity and beauty of these paintings is emphasised by the subtle balance, placement and variegation of the rings.

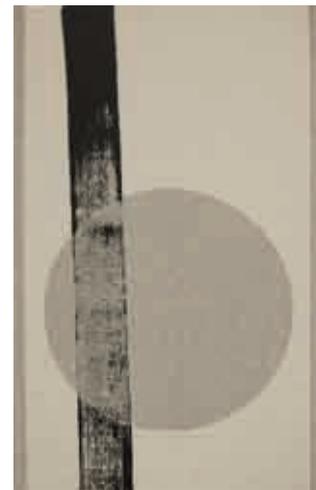
Barry Lett (b 1940) is a senior New Zealand artist specialising in quirky sculpture specifically depicting our four-legged friends. Most of these



Justin Summerton, *Stairway to Heaven*, Oil on canvas, 122 x 100 cm, 2004



Jonny Rendall, *Tamatatea I (Banks Peninsula)*, 75 x 153 cm, Acrylic on canvas, 2005



N&K Wall, *Early in the Wind*, Synthetic polymer acrylic, gesso on linen, 51 x 83.5 cm, 2004



Josephine Cachemalle, *Lost and Found*, Mixed media on canvas, 93.5 x 25 cm, 2004



Paul Deans, Real Woman, Bronze 2/9, 31 cm high, 2001

recent dogs cast in bronze are styled in various watchdog poses. While the dogs appear non threatening, Lett states "these dogs look after the house, the people and the things of the spirit"⁷. There is an aura of guardianship inherent in these finely patinaed bronze sculptures.

Fatu Feu'u (b 1946) has submitted a large and impressive canvas '*Tatalo*' for this catalogue. This painting while still based on the traditional "siapo" or tapa cloth is a departure from recent work where the traditional sailing stick chart has now become the dominant feature. The featured motifs in '*Tatalo*' are the four petalled frangipani, the Taniwha creature, and the traditional navigational aids the sun, the moon, and the stars.

Text by Warwick Henderson 2005

1 NZ Art, A Centennial Exhibition, Whitcombe & Tombs 1940, W+T, 1940

2 NZ painting ACA, ASA P Tomory, Pelorus Press

3 Ibid

4 Letter to Roderick Finlayson 30.8.43, Woollaston "A Life in Letters", Te Papa Press, 2004

5 Letter to Charles Brash 1.1.1945. Woollaston "A Life in Letters", Te Papa Press, 2004

6 "The Guide" Auckland City Art Gallery, p. 124

7 Barry Lett, Conversation with the Warwick Henderson Gallery, 2/3/05



Barry Lett, Log Dog, Bronze edition of 10, 20cm (H) x 40cm (L) x 20cm (W) (approx)



Fatu Feu'u, Tatalo, Acrylic on canvas, 150 x 185 cm, 2005

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Mervyn Williams, Grey Orbit, Acrylic on canvas, -- 67 x 80 cm, 2003



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