

BILL CULBERT

[1935-2019 Aotearoa New Zealand]

Tug, Barges, Thames 1961

Oil on board

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Purchased 2023 with funds from the Dunedin City Council.

Top row, left to right:

Bike wheel with wire 2002

Bike wheel, wood, wire, cross 2002

Bike wheel, wired solid rubber 2002

Bottom row, left to right:

Iron bike wheel 2002

Wood wheel with cross 2002

Iron car wheel 2002

Gelatin silver prints

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Purchased 2004 with funds from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Society.

While Bill Culbert is best known and celebrated nationally and internationally for his sculpture and installation, his early career works were primarily paintings. Irrespective of his chosen medium, Culbert had a constant fascination with perspective, movement, and light. From 1948–1952, while attending Hutt Valley High School, his drawings ‘captured the motion of birds or models walking rapidly across the art room’. After graduating from Canterbury University School of Fine Arts (1953-56), Culbert was awarded a National Art Gallery Travelling Scholarship in 1957 and spent three years studying painting at the Royal College of Art, London (graduating with a First and silver medal in painting in 1960). During this time in London, Culbert often watched and documented steam trains, as well as tugboats on the river Thames. He made several paintings in the late 1950s and early 1960s that captured abstracted views of the boats and the river, including *Tug, Barges, Thames* (1961).

While maintaining his painting practice, photography became a focus for Culbert while at the Royal College of Art – a medium closely aligned with the Pop, conceptual, and performance artists in the late-1950s and 1960s. In *Bill Culbert: Making Light Work*, Ian Wedde notes that ‘In the darkroom Culbert had set up at Kensington Gore in 1957, it was the processing of photographs, ‘the scale of blowing things up’, as well as an engagement with ‘the box’ of the camera as an aid to thinking about observation, analysis, and composition, that interested him’. As an artist interested in light, shadow, and the perpetual motion objects, photography provided Culbert with the ability to work in serial form – capturing often fleeting encounters between light and objects. Frequently printed in black and white, bottles, light bulbs, wine glasses and wheels were some of the ordinary ‘found’ objects recorded in his photographs. By 1968 Culbert was experimenting with light as a physical and sculptural material, bringing fluorescent tubes together with found and recycled materials. While making trips back to Aotearoa, Culbert spent the rest of his life living between London and France.

RALPH HOTERE

[1931-2013 Aotearoa New Zealand Te Aupōuri]

Red Square Four 1965

Acrylic on paper

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Purchased 2020 with funds from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Society.

Untitled 1965

Acrylic on paper

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Purchased 2020 with funds from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Society.

Black Painting: Human Rights Series 1964

Acrylic on wood

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Purchased 1983 with funds from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Society.

Funded through the Association of New Zealand Art Societies Fellowship, Ralph Hotere (Te Aupōuri) travelled to London in 1961 to study painting and graphic design at the Central School of Arts and Crafts. This was Hotere's first time in an international context and in a city that would, by the mid-1960s, be the global epicentre for contemporary art. Hotere lived and travelled around London and Europe for several years, before returning to Aotearoa in 1965. During this time abroad, Hotere was exposed to new and experimental ways of working, viewing works by artists such as Ad Reinhardt, Henri Matisse, Antoni Tàpies, Rembrandt van Rijn, as well as the work of his teachers Cecil Collins and William Turnbull.

By 1964 Hotere was experimenting with a new visual language that explored line, colour and abstracted geometric forms. He produced a large number of works on paper as well as large-scale paintings with shaped canvases. *Black Painting: Human Rights Series* (1964) is part of a group of works that employed hard-edged geometric abstraction to reflect upon social crisis, injustice and prejudice, concerns that continue to present throughout his career. This work is constructed out of reused wooden television packing crates (3 panels), which Hotere found outside a factory in London. We see Hotere's first experimentations with black within these shaped canvases – a colour that would come to define his work.

In a letter Hotere wrote to James Mack on 21 May 1964, he described the difficulty of being able to understand and navigate London's art world, and questioned his ability to find a space within it. Despite this personal struggle, Hotere had several exhibitions in London including *The London Group* at RBA Galleries (1963), the solo exhibition *Ralph Hotere: Recent Work* at Middlesbrough City Art Gallery and *Young Commonwealth Artists* at the Whitechapel Gallery, both in 1964.

BILLY APPLE®

[1935-2021 Aotearoa New Zealand]

From the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Collection 2014

Pigment ink on canvas

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Given 2014 by the artist.

In September 1959, supported by the National Art Gallery management committee, Billy Apple (born Barrie George Bates) started a three-year course in graphic design at the Royal College of Art, London. Graduating with a Diploma in Graphic Design in 1962, Apple was exhibiting regularly in the annual *Young Commonwealth Artists* and *Young Contemporaries* exhibitions throughout his degree, at times alongside Bill Culbert. As described in *Billy Apple: A Life in Parts*, Christina Barton notes that ‘his timing is fortuitous as he is in the same year as David Hockney, Derek Boshier, Peter Phillips, R J Kitaj, Allen Jones, and others, who quickly make a name for themselves as a new and precocious generation of ‘Pop’ artists linked by their irreverent preference for motifs and subjects drawn from everyday life and the superficial worlds of mass entertainment and consumer culture.’

Apple spent time in New York in 1962, before making the decision to move there more permanently in 1964 (he remained until 1990). It was on 22 November 1962, Thanksgiving Day in America, that Barrie Bates became Billy Apple. The was conceived as ‘an extended work which was part of an effort to break down the separation between “art activity” and “life activity”’. Billy Apple® became a registered trademark in 2008 and went on to create branded products through various projects, including a new breed of apple (the Billy Apple), Billy Tea, Billy Apple Cider, and the coffee brand Apple’s Blend.

Apple held a strong belief in the power and importance of the idea – it was a notion that sat at the heart of his practice. His works were often underpinned by critiques of consumer culture and the mechanics of the art world – as a business with its own economic and institutional systems. In 1988, Apple produced the painting *From the BNZ Art Collection*, it was one of the first in an on-going series of text-based works specific to a particular collection or owner. For these works, Apple designed the typography which was then painted by signwriter Terry Maitland. *From the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Collection* was produced in 2014. Apple has described this series as ‘a true product’, developed out of his ‘transactions’ – deals and connections made through various projects, sites, commissions, and exchanges.

JOHN DRAWBRIDGE

[1930-2005 Aotearoa New Zealand]

Barmaid, 41 Rue Lepic, Paris 1961

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Purchased 1966 with funds from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Society.

The Edge of Earth 1986

Mezzotint and drypoint etching

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Given 1986 by the New Zealand Insurance Company Ltd.

With a practice spanning six decades, John Drawbridge MBE was a painter, printmaker, muralist, textile designer, stained glass artist and educator. He was awarded a National Art Gallery Travelling Scholarship in 1957, which allowed him to study at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London (later renamed Central School of Art and Design). While he started with a focus on textile design, Drawbridge soon moved to the printmaking department. The Central School was based on the German Bauhaus School philosophy, which focused on 'educating' their students rather than 'training' them, with a focus on politics, religion, and philosophy. The practical hands-on elements of art making were taught primarily by workshop technicians. However, it was Drawbridge's teacher, Merlyn Evans, who introduced him to mezzotint – an engraving technique that Drawbridge employed for decades, known for its rich blacks and graduated tones. Made with two distinct plates, *The Edge of Earth* (1986) brings a dense black together with a vibrant red – a dual colour palette employed at various times by the artist. Drawbridge revisited with composition in *Tigris and Euphrates* (2004), a work that commented on the Gulf War.

Drawbridge graduated with a Diploma with Distinction from the Central School in 1960. Following graduation, Drawbridge was given a one-year extension to his Travelling Scholarship and spent the year in Paris, with his wife and fellow artist Tanya Ashken. During this year, Drawbridge studied with leading printmakers Stanley William (S.W) Hayter and Johnny Friedlander. *John Drawbridge: Wide Open Interior* (2001) describes his artistic concerns at this time as 'the balancing of figurative and abstract concerns, and of narrative and formal resolution'. *Barmaid, Rue Lepic* (1961) is an example of the many figurative paintings he made this year.

SUSAN SKERMAN

[b.1928 Aotearoa New Zealand]

Night Composition c.1965-70

Serigraph

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Purchased 1967 with funds from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Society.

Susan Skerman received a Diploma of Fine Art in painting from Canterbury University School of Fine Arts in 1951. She then travelled to London, to study at the Central School of Arts and Crafts from 1953-1955. The time spent in London expanded and cemented Skerman's positioning of the landscape in her work, as something born out of a profoundly personal space. She credited her tutors in London with guiding this way of thinking and working, who included Gordon Cook, Keith Vaughan and Victor Pasmore. In 1971 Skerman wrote: '...I don't see landscape in the European sense, as an accessory to human life or as a background to human events: it is more the identification of the life of man with the life of nature. And this is what I mean when I talk about the inner perception of nature. It has a soul.'

Following her return to Aotearoa, Skerman held her first solo exhibition in Hamilton in 1955, exhibiting paintings and drawings. At the end of the 1960s, Skerman returned to London to study etching at the Central School of Arts and Crafts and at Birgit Skiöld's print workshop. Following this, her printmaking, often depicting tree trunks and foliage, presented a range of shifting perspectives and play with light – aiming to present an 'impression of the bush rather than a representation of it'.

Skerman was part of a community of printmakers active in Aotearoa in the 1960s and 1970s, alongside artists including John Drawbridge, Barry Cleavin and Marilyn Webb. The Print Council of New Zealand was established in 1967, aiming 'to encourage and stimulate printmaking in New Zealand and to make prints accessible to the wider public'. They held annual exhibitions that toured the country and Skerman's work was included in the *Print Council of New Zealand's Fifth National Touring Exhibition 1974-1975*, together with Kate Coolahan, Pat Hanly, Gary Tricker, Marilyn Webb, and Robin White, among others. Skerman's serigraphs (or silkscreen/screen prints) were produced by pressing ink through a stencilled silk screen onto the paper beneath.

RONA DYER

[1923-2021 Aotearoa New Zealand]

Pussy in the Garden 1957

Linocut

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Purchased 1957 through the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Society with the McLeod Fund.

Girl Leaning on Fence 1957

Linocut

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Given 1965 by the artist.

Rona Dyer was born in Ōtepoti Dunedin in 1923. After her years at Otago Girls' High School, Dyer began studying at the Dunedin School of Art at King Edward Technical College in 1942. Her teachers included Robert Nettleton Field, J. D. Charlton Edgar, and Frederick G. Shewell, and other students at this time include Colin McCahon, Toss Woollaston and Doris Lusk. In 1944, Dyer then went to the Dunedin Training College (later renamed Dunedin College of Education). While Dyer worked in a variety of media, including painting and photography, she is best known for her wood engravings – as standalone prints and as book illustrations. In the mid-1940s, Dyer was commissioned by Modern Books to create a three-panel mural based on 'the history of reading', which was followed by a commission from Hyndman's bookshop to produce a large work inspired by *Alice in Wonderland*. Following the success of these large public works, Dyer won a competition for a public mural on a building in Ōtautahi Christchurch in 1947, although it never came to fruition.

In July 1948, Dyer sailed to England on the Rimutaka. In London she studied wood engraving and book production at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, and mural painting at Goldsmiths' College. At the Central School, Dyer was taught engraving under Gertrude Hermes, a celebrated British wood engraver and sculptor. Speaking of this time Dyer said, 'Engraving under the guidance of Gertrude Hermes has increased my assurance that wood-engraving can be one of the most creative media'. While in London, Dyer exhibited at the London Society of Painters, Etchers and Engravers, the Royal Academy of Arts, and the Society of Wood Engravers. By 1952, Dyer was back in Ōtepoti. She was exhibiting as part of the New Group (alongside Gary Blackman and John Middleditch) and at the Otago Art Society, where she became a lifetime member. Most recently, Dyer was included in Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū's exhibition and publication *Ink on Paper: Aotearoa New Zealand Printmakers of the Modern Era* (2023), positioning her as an artist 'at the forefront of the establishment of a New Zealand printmaking tradition'.

MELVIN 'PAT' DAY

[1923-2016 Aotearoa New Zealand]

Renaissance Proportion 1970

Oil on canvas

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Purchased 1970 with funds from the estate of Arthur Nalder Smith.

In 1934, aged 11, Melvin Day began Saturday morning classes at Elam School of Art, with teachers including John Weeks, Lois White and Ida Eise. It was the beginning of an eighty-year career dedicated to painting. By 1939, Day was a full-time student at Elam, graduating with a Preliminary Diploma in Fine Arts in 1940. Following his time serving in the New Zealand Army and the Royal New Zealand Air Force in WWII, he resumed painting and began teaching in Rotorua, before moving to Wellington to pursue a Bachelor of Arts degree at Victoria University of Wellington in 1954. Day was an artist whose practice explored various movements in a Western art history, including cubism and abstract expressionism.

In 1961, Day's work was included in the *Commonwealth Art Today* at the Commonwealth Institute, London. Returning to London in 1963, he enrolled at the Courtauld Institute of Art to study art history. This programme is credited for 'ingniting [his] fascination with the geometric precision featured in the works of the Italian Renaissance painter and mathematician, Paolo Uccello, who is celebrated for his pioneering work on visual perspective in art.' While studying in London, and being exposed to European painting traditions, Day's work was included in *Young Commonwealth Painters* at Whitechapel Gallery in 1964, alongside work by other New Zealand artists including Ralph Hotere and Edward 'Ted' Bullmore. Day returned to Aotearoa in 1968 and was appointed as the Director of the National Art Gallery of New Zealand (now Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa), a position he held from 1968-1978.

Renaissance Proportion (1970) was exhibited in Day's retrospective held at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery in 1970. Subsequently acquired from this exhibition, the acquisitions committee noted in a letter dated 23 July 1970, that 'Day is recognized as one of the leading contemporary painters in the country'. *Renaissance Proportion* was also included in *Melvin Day: Retrospective* held at The Dowse Art Museum in 1971. At this time Day was often using tones of blue, green, grey, and gold, and letters were being introduced into his compositions, frequently using Times New Roman.

JOANNA MARGARET PAUL

[1945-2003 Aotearoa New Zealand]

Moana Pool 1983

Oil on board

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

Given 2023 by Colin Cheyne and Liz Tinker.

In 1964 Joanna Margaret Paul and her family spent the year living and travelling in London and Europe. While in London she studied painting and figure drawing at the Sir John Cass School of Art. Paul's sketchbooks from this period capture her engagement with landscape, architecture, and moments shared with the family in their Hampstead-based apartment. She was also able to visit museums and galleries. An influential exhibition was *56–64: Painting and sculpture of a decade* at the Tate Gallery (22 April–28 June 1964), which comprised over 350 works. When describing the works in the exhibition, Paul noted that they included the 'great, late field of colour by Miro and Matisse, the painterly textures and still good-mannered colour of de Kooning'. Recalling this time and its impacts, Paul said, 'this intense responsiveness to the visual world has really been with me since I went to Europe at the impressionable age of 18, I ... came back and kept looking at things.'

Paul's multidisciplinary practice, which spanned painting, drawing, poetry, photography, and film, consistently navigated the margins between the landscape and the home. Her work itemised daily life and personal experience, capturing the people, environments, objects, and activities that shaped her world. From 1977 to 1984, Paul and her family lived in Ōtepoti Dunedin. There are several paintings and works on paper from this period that look to Moana Pool as subject matter – capturing a specific time, location, and activity.

PAT HANLY

[1932-2004 Aotearoa New Zealand]

Ecstasy Condition, Passion 1975

Oil on hardboard

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Purchased 1976 with funds from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Society.

James Patrick (Pat) Hanly studied at the Canterbury University School of Fine Arts from 1952–1956. In 1954 he started exhibiting with The Group, an influential avant-garde art group formed in 1927 as an alternative to the exhibition structure run by the Canterbury Society of Arts. Over time, artists including Rhona Haszard, Evelyn Page, Colin McCahon, Rita Angus, Toss Woollaston, Doris Lusk, and Bill Culbert exhibited with The Group, among many others. By October 1957, Hanly was in London, having travelled via the RMS Rangitata. Bill Culbert, who was also in London at this time, asked if Hanly wanted to share his three-story flat near Kensington Gardens, which had several bedrooms and two studios – an offer that Hanly accepted. While in London, Hanly was attending evening life drawing classes at the Chelsea Art School. This has been described as a disappointment for Hanly, an experience that ‘confirmed that the formal academic training [he] had received at Canterbury was as good as anything which the Chelsea Art School could provide’.

Having been back in Aotearoa since 1962, and shifting between abstract and figurative works, Hanly had developed a strong abstract expressionistic style by 1974. He produced a series of works called the *Condition* series – categorised by themes of love, ‘Pacific’, summer, ecstasy, and spring. *Ecstasy Condition, Passion* (1975) is part of this series. The *Condition* series was exhibited at Barry Lett Galleries, Auckland in 1976. In a review for the New Zealand Herald, Terry McNamara wrote: ‘Patrick Hanly shows that the abstract expressionist style using splattered, dripped and trailed paint launched on the painting in an ecstasy of delight in the pigment itself is still a valid style to celebrate the pleasures of the world and of colour...’.

MATT PINE

[1941-2021 Aotearoa New Zealand Te Ātiawa, Te Ātihaunui-a-Pāparāngi, Ngāti Tūwharetoa]

Above Ground Work maquette 1989

Balsa wood

Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Commissioned 1989 with funds from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery Society.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s Matt Pine (Te Ātiawa, Te Ātihaunui-a-Pāparāngi, Ngāti Tūwharetoa) graduated from both the Canterbury University School of Fine Arts (later renamed Ilam School of Fine Art) and the University of Auckland's Elam School of Fine Arts. In 1963 Pine travelled to London, studying graphic design at the Central School of Arts and Crafts (1964) and then studied sculpture at Hornsey College of Art (1965-66). In *Undreamed of... 50 Years of the Frances Hodgkins Fellowship*, Pricilla Pitts notes that 'there he experiences the work of young British-based sculptors who were reacting against the approach of artists like Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth. American minimalist sculptors such as Donald Judd, Sol Le Witt and Robert Smithson, and, later, Alice Aycock and Mary Miss, were very influential for Pine.'

Throughout his career, Pine's sculptural works have blended principles of minimalism, constructivism, and geometric abstraction, with Māori cultural forms including pātaka (raised storehouse), whareniui (meeting house), pā fortifications (fortified positions), and waka (canoes). Often responding to specific locations and histories of place, and with a belief in the power of reduced basic forms, Pine began his 'Above Ground' works in 1983 – a series of large-scale outdoor and indoor sculptures that referred to pātaka. *Above Ground Work* (1990) was commissioned by the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. Made from Southern Tōtara, the large sculpture sat outside the Dunedin Public Art Gallery at its Logan Park Site, before being relocated to Woodhaugh Gardens, following the Gallery's move to The Octagon. *Above Ground Work*, and the accompanying maquette, both sit within the Gallery's collection.