

1981/10



HIBISCUS COAST PROJECT

exhibition of photographs by

CLIVE STONE

Auckland City Art Gallery
24 June — 2 August 1981

HIBISCUS COAST PROJECT

As a photographer, I am interested in the discrepancy between what people think they are, or try to be, and how they appear in reality — what Diane Arbus called the 'gap between intention and effect'. This interest has resulted for me in a long-term fascination with the people of Orewa and the Hibiscus Coast. On one level the photographs in this collection can be regarded as being representative of the people in the community and, therefore, of the country as a whole; the 'microcosm angle'. However, I think that there is a more interesting level to take them on, the Hibiscus Coast being what it is, with a special role as Auckland's summer playground by the sea. Along with this role, it has developed an 'image'.

Consider this: in the early sixties a competition was organised by the local businessmen to find a single, all-embracing name for the Orewa-Whangaparaoa peninsular area. The winning entry was, of course, 'Hibiscus Coast', dreamt up by a young high school boy. At the time of the competition there was hardly a Hibiscus plant growing in the whole area. Undeterred by the shortage of shrubs, the organisers decided that the hibiscus would be adopted as the official flower, and a public planting campaign was launched. But there still aren't many hibiscus plants growing on the Hibiscus Coast, the climate doesn't seem to suit them. This anecdote is only an extreme example of the importance the people in these photographs place on their community's image. In view of the fact that the population of the Hibiscus Coast swells from five thousand to fifty thousand over summer, who can blame them.

I began the project in 1973. I was interested in a sort of 'roots' approach (before it became fashionable) of looking up old school friends and acquaintances and photographing them wherever I happened to locate them; so that the selection of surroundings would be more or less random. The idea was to compile a set of portraits which, as well as being — for me personally — a look into the past in the form of a recording and reappraisal of the people I endured adolescence with, would also represent a cross section of the people in the Hibiscus Coast community at the time I took the photographs.

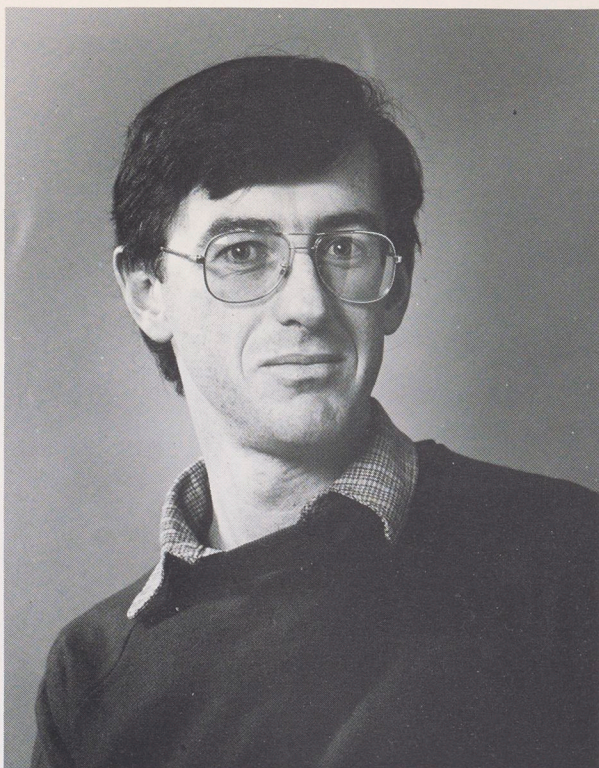
By 1974 I had the feeling that the Orewa project could be expanded into something of real significance in the form of a major survey of a New Zealand community as it existed at a particular stage of the country's development. This was something which had not been previously attempted in this country, although the approach was common enough among photographers overseas. I was particularly influenced by the work of Bruce Davidson (East 100th Street) and August Sander (People of the Twentieth Century — Portraits from the Weimar Republic). In 1976 I applied for financial assistance from the Arts Council and was fortunate to receive a grant the following year.

The real theme of the photographs became not simply the people of the Hibiscus Coast, but the conflict that is implied between the image we as outsiders have of the area, how the community sees itself, how it thinks it is seen by others and how its constituents actually turn out in the portraits. I have tried to treat the subjects respectfully, in the belief that people who gave their time and co-operation freely, and who in many cases invited me into their homes, are entitled to this. I have offered a stage onto which I have invited, sometimes with a considerable degree of coercion, a selection of residents from the Hibiscus Coast, to put themselves on display to the general public. To their credit, during the entire history of the project, only one person declined the offer. The Anzac photographs, taken at the

Silverdale Rugby Club grounds over the last three years' ceremonies, show a group of residents participating in an event with far more obvious, easily defined roles. These portraits are deliberately different in 'feel' from the rest of the collection and are meant as a sort of counterpoint to the main body of work. By 1980 I had close to 100 finished portraits. I don't really consider the project finished; I would like to begin work on another section devoted to the people who spend their holidays in the area — the bach and camping ground set.

CATALOGUE

1. Self portrait from TV set: 'Review' arts programme, 1973
2. Gary and Ruth Walker, 1978
3. Rhonda Murray, 1977
4. Hal Christian, 1978
5. Bernard and Joan Stone, 1977
6. David Cooper, 1973
7. Gregory Horobin, 1978
8. Raye Green, 1977
9. Philip Jenkins, 1980
10. Rev. Stephen Clark, 1977
11. Julie Anstiss, 1977
12. Cyril Stanford, 1978
13. Bob Claque, 1978
14. Beryl Kirkwood, 1973
15. Harry Holder, 1978
16. Morris Stokes, 1978
17. Marjorie Salter, 1978
18. Paul and Neil Pardington, 1978
19. Shirley Barrett, 1973
20. Ross Hemera, 1981
21. Brian Murati, 1977
22. Theresa and Corina Wakelin, 1978
23. Marion Dixon, 1978
24. Noel Stone, 1973
25. William and Vernon Freeman, 1978
26. Margaret Stevenson, 1977
27. Bruce Hopper, 1980
28. Bruce (Jack) Williams, 1977
29. Charles Murati and Nicholas Steele, 1977
30. Lillian Johnson, 1978
31. John Willis, 1973
32. Harry Stone, 1981
33. Rose McGire, 1973
34. Judith, Bradley and Justine Hall, 1977
35. Pania Watling and her niece Tenille, 1978
36. Denis and Bette Cockerill, 1977
37. Wattie Watling Te Haara, 1978
38. Adele Stone and twin sister Beryl Radcliffe, 1973
39. Jan Pardington, 1978
40. Ruth Aikin, 1978
41. Rod, Dianne, Patrick and Theresa Jenden, 1977
42. John and Ola Murphy, 1978
43. Phyllis Smith, 1979
44. Allan and Marjorie Minola, 1973
45. Ray Hall, 1977
46. Charles and Jennifer Wooton, 1978
47. Leonie Horobin, 1977
48. Ross Jenkins, 1979
49. Star Simpson, 1978
50. My parents' livingroom, 1978
- 51-60 Anzac Day photographs, Silversale RSA, 1978, 1979, 1980



Clive Stone. 1981.

BIOGRAPHY

- 1950 Born in Glen Eden, Auckland
1962 Moved from Henderson to Orewa
1963-1968 Studied at Orewa District High School (now Orewa College)
1969 Began Diploma of Fine Arts at Elam School of Fine Arts, Auckland
1970 Specialised in photography at Elam under John B. Turner
1972 Studied at the Training College, Epsom, finished D.F.A.
1973 Returned to Elam for D.F.A. (hons); began Hibiscus Coast Project
1975 Went overseas for six months in Hastings and London
1977 Awarded Arts Council grant to expand Hibiscus Coast Project
Presently teaching art part-time at Long Bay College

PUBLISHED IN:

- New Zealand Camera, August 1971
New Zealand Photography, July/August 1972
University Arts Festival Catalogue, 1972
Photo Forum, February/March 1974
June 1978
Calendar 1978
Active Eye Exhibition Catalogue, 1975
Printletter (Switzerland), September/October 1979

EXHIBITIONS

- Auckland Society of Arts (group exhibition), 1971
Auckland University Arts Festival (group exhibition), 1972
Palmerston North Arts Festival (Massey University Library), 1973
Barry Lett Galleries, Auckland, 1973
Active Eye (group exhibition) Manawatu Art Gallery, 1975
Snaps Gallery, Auckland (group exhibition), 1977
Auckland City Art Gallery (group exhibition), 1978
Waikato Photographic Society, Hamilton (group exhibition), 1978
Snaps Gallery (group exhibition), 1979