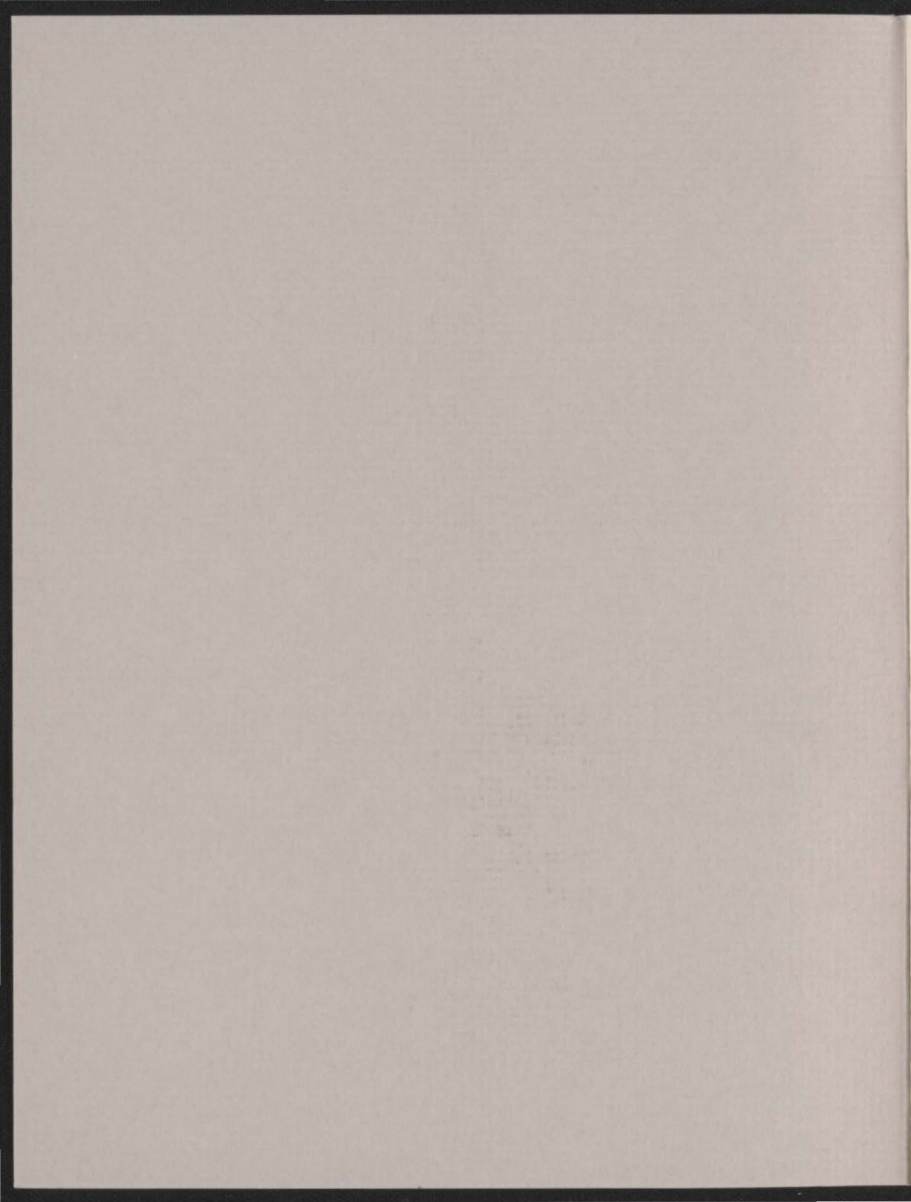


Station to Station
The Way of the Cross

14 contemporary artists



Auckland City Art Gallery
11 March – 8 May 1994



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The Way of the Cross
14 contemporary artists

Deborah Smith

Stephen Bambury

Christopher Braddock

Laurence Aberhart

Richard Reddaway

Luise Fong

Gavin Hipkins

Fiona Pardington

Peter Roche

Christine Webster

John Reynolds

Giovanni Intra

Richard McWhannell

Mary-Louise Browne

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Director

Christopher Johnstone

Exhibition Curator

William McAloon

Registrar

Amanda Gibbs

Promotion and Marketing

Jennifer Balle

Photographers

John McIver

Jennifer French

Additional Photography

Richard Reddaway (the artist)

Fiona Pardington (the artist)

Christine Webster (Peter Hannken)

Catalogue Design

Chad Taylor

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*Auckland City Art Gallery
P.O. Box 5449, Wellesley Street,
Auckland 1, New Zealand*

Foreword

In successfully showing new art, one of the challenges facing the Gallery is to create meaningful and helpful contexts for that work. Certainly these contexts must excite the artists themselves, and the visual arts community in general, but at the same time they must attract new audiences for contemporary art, and heighten their awareness of its richness.

I believe *Station to Station – The Way of the Cross* does all of these things. Its context is the Stations of the Cross, seen in a new and exciting manner. Fourteen works have been selected by the curator, William McAloon, and re-cast as the Fourteen Stations.

Each of the fourteen artists in the exhibition is an outstanding image maker, and they are all represented by fine works. These works fit the Stations of the Cross theme in interesting, often surprising ways, but without coercion. As a means by which to look at aspects of current art practice, *Station to Station* draws upon a theme that is timeless, powerful and poetic.

William McAloon's incisive texts provide a stimulating complement to the exhibition, provocatively exploring both the Stations theme and the works he has selected.

The Auckland City Art Gallery greatly appreciates the interest and enthusiasm shown by all the artists for the project, and warmly acknowledges the lenders to the exhibition.

Christopher Johnstone
Director

Ways of the Cross

In their conventional form the Stations of the Cross re-trace Christ's route through the streets of Jerusalem, marking the places where he supposedly halted on his way to Golgotha, the place of his crucifixion. As a model for devotion, the Stations emerged in Europe in the the later Middle Ages, under the influence of the Franciscans. Drawing upon medieval mystery plays, and the experience of pilgrims who had visited the Holy Land and retraced Christ's steps with their own, the Stations became formalised into a fourteen part cycle of images and prayer, enacted by the faithful at points around the nave of the church.

As a re-enactment of the route of Christ's suffering this exhibition is many steps removed from the Passion. Just as the faithful substituted the Stations for actual experience of the Passion, *Station to Station - The Way of the Cross* is a substitute for their experience, and the works a substitute for actual Stations. The Stations have been removed from their devotional context, and taken as a framework through which to examine aspects of recent artistic practice.

Those currents include the shifting notions of the sacred and the spiritual, the presence and absence of the body, and the experience of suffering and death. The Stations of the Cross provide a map by which the works in this exhibition and their relationship to contemporary discourse, might be read. The Stations are a text, but also a pretext.

As a site for the devotional response to images, it could be argued that the late twentieth century art gallery is a poor substitute for a fourteenth century church. We do not seek to be moved by images in the same manner or with such cultural unity, as medieval devotees meditating upon the Stations of the Cross. There is no celebrant asking us: "What then would you do if you

were to see these things? Would you not throw yourself on our Lord and say: 'Do not, oh do not do such harm to my God. Here I am, do it to me, and don't inflict such injuries on him.' And then you would bend down and embrace your Lord and master and sustain the blows yourself."¹

Conversely, the analogy also asks us to accept that the museum has replaced the church in contemporary experience, that as we shuffle from one image to another, taking pause to understand, to write our own identity upon each, we emulate in some way the formalised activity of following the Stations of the Cross.

In a notable study of representation and response, David Freedberg presents devotional images of the Passion as a paradigm of the empathetic response to visual images. "Meditation on the Passion," suggests Freedberg, "could engage just those emotions to which we most easily incline: sorrow, compunction, mortification, and horror at the grimness of hurt, pain, and torture."²

What interests Freedberg is not the specifics of the Passion, but the potential of its visual representation to incite in the viewer an emotional response: "The systematization of a method whereby beholders are prepared to respond empathetically to visual images offers insights into behaviour and practices that have little or nothing to do with immediate context. What is at stake ... are practical psychological phenomena as much as aspects of the history of religion or art."³

Discussing Colin McCahon's later number paintings, endlessly counting off from 1 to 14, Wystan Curnow offers a notion of layering that is useful in the present context: *Walk*, a 'Stations' work, "lays place (the actual Way of the Cross) over place (the church re-presentation) over place (Muriwai Beach, the artist's presentation) over place (the actual art gallery)."⁴

In a similar way, the shifting parameters of *Station to Station* involve a journey, moving from an event (the Passion), to its

representation (the Stations), to, most expansively, the *effect* of those representations. From this point we can look to the possibility that contemporary art might possess some of the mystery to which medieval devotees of the Stations responded, or, conversely, that images of the same broad type as the Stations, that is, depictions of suffering and death, might recreate for a contemporary audience the effect of the Stations, without its actual representation. The range of works in *Station to Station* therefore encompass the ineffable and the explicit.

The Stations of the Cross are a contemplation of the humanity of Christ, of the savagery of his torture and execution, and of the reality of his death. By concluding at his entombment, they emphasise the mystery of the resurrection. As a modern means for explaining such events, it is no accident that pathology is one of the central texts of *Station to Station*, witnessed in very different ways in the works of Giovanni Intra, Luise Fong and Fiona Pardington. Discussing the medical focus of his own cycle of Stations, Intra asks: "if Christ turned up at Auckland Hospital on a Saturday night what would happen to him?"⁵

One thing pathology and the Stations share is their heightening of our awareness of the fragility of the body. A similar fragility emerges in the works in *Station to Station*, between the boundaries of bodily experience, as pain transmutes into desire, suffering into pleasure. An enormous backdrop of mystical experience informs this arena, and this is apparent in the works of Christine Webster, John Reynolds and Christopher Braddock.

The mutability of the body also reveals itself in the bodily contents of Richard Reddaway's and Gavin Hipkins's works. Just as these artists have written other texts upon it, the body here becomes a blank page upon which the text of the Stations may be written: any body as Christ's body.

The Stations conclude with a death, but the imminence of death pervades them. Thus the beginning and the end of *Station*

to Station are taken by works which meditate upon the language death. In the case of Mary-Louise Browne's sculpture, written language competes against the silence of stone, as the grandeur of monuments to death belie its finality. Deborah Smith's death inhabits the museum as a site of cultural entombment. The painting of Richard McWhannell can be read as a meditation upon a broader cultural death.

The traditional language of the Stations is one of symbolism, of signs taken for wonders. The possibility of the sign enacting such miracles today is explored in various ways by the remaining artists in *Station to Station*. Stephen Bambury and Peter Roche deal with the Sign of the Cross, its signification from the transcendental to the debased. Finally, Laurence Aberhart's poignant *Mater Dolorosa* is a decaying icon, and through its cracks fragments of possible meanings emerge.

The action of this exhibition is one of attribution, of searching out links and parallels, associations and resonances, which signal further journeys to be taken. In the meditations on the Stations that follow, many different fragments of meaning are laid over the works. The mystery of the Passion decrees, however, that peeling back these layers will not reveal the body of Christ.

William McAloon

Assistant Curator, Contemporary New Zealand Art

¹ quoted in David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response*. University of Chicago Press, 1989. p. 171.

² *ibid.*, p. 169 – 170.

³ *ibid.*, p. 171.

⁴ Wytan Curnow "I will need words" in *Now, See, Hear!: Art, language and translation*. Wellington City Art Gallery/Victoria University Press, 1990. p. 171.

⁵ Barbara Blake, "Giovanni Intra: Germ-Free Adolescence" in *Art New Zealand 70*. p. 72.

The Fourteen Stations

I

He is condemned to Death

Writing in *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes issues this grim warning: "All those young photographers who are at work in the world, determined upon the capture of actuality, do not know that they are agents of Death."[†]

For Barthes, a photograph is a memorial in advance of mortality, and outlives its subject. This location of death as fundamental to the photograph is borne out in Deborah Smith's work.

The most common source of Smith's images of death is the museum. Here she finds the already dead. Barthes's statement that the century that gave us photography also gave us history, can be expanded to include that century's formulation of the museum. At the end of the twentieth century the museum is meditating upon its own death. "Museum and mausoleum," noted Adorno, "are connected by more than phonetic association. Museums are the family sepulchres of works of art."^{††}

Preserved, mounted, suspended and contained, and classified by an underlying logic of mortality, Smith's work is a miniature museum. Its subjects are condemned to death.

[†]Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*. Fontana, 1984, p 92.

^{††}"Valéry Proust Museum" quoted by Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins*. MIT Press, 1993, p 44.

Deborah Smith Untitled 1992-4 (detail)
installation of black and white photographs and mixed media
14 parts, dimensions variable
courtesy of the artist



Writing in Class

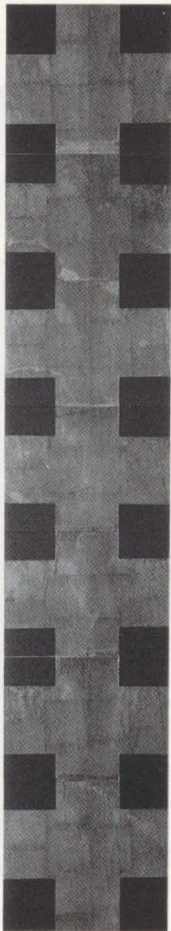
"All those you described in your essays are not just people, they are human beings, and I want to know more about them."

The students' responses to the assignment were surprising. As the teacher read their essays, she was struck by the quality of their writing. They had written with a depth and insight that she had not expected.

Some of the students had even written about their own experiences, and she was struck by the way they had woven their personal stories into the larger themes of the assignment.

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II

He receives His Cross

Stephen Bambury received his cross from the legacies of modernism. Its status as an emblem of pure feeling was formulated by artists like Malevich in the early years of this century. The cross was not so much a marker of the death of painting, but of its resurrection, its transcendence.

But Bambury as a painter residing so consciously within art's history is only too aware of the weight of the cross. Malevich's sign of transcendence ascends with certainty, but the latitude of Christian history intersects its path.

This is the nature of the cross: a paradox, a conjunction, an intersection of conflicting directions. Bambury's cross is thus positioned between matter and spirit, between historicism and modernity, between chance and order, between Orient and Occident. The last of these, Bambury's reference to Tantric belief, to the spiritual energies passing through the seven zones of the body, is yet another map to be followed along the shaky path towards transcendence.

For Malevich, "the ascent to the heights of non-objective art is arduous and painful." Contrasting with the arduousness of that journey, and the heavy metals in which it is rendered, *Naturalistic repetition...* is an image of lightness. Out of Bambury's crosses a luminescence emerges, a lightness of being.

Stephen Bambury Naturalistic repetition,
symmetry must be excluded 1992
copper leaf and acrylic on aluminium 2765 x 500 mm
Auckland City Art Gallery collection, presented by
the Patrons of the Auckland City Art Gallery, 1993

III

He falls the First Time under His Cross

Christopher Braddock's sculptures reveal something telling about the Passion, about the slippage of meaning of that term. Braddock's sculptures have at their heart an expression of what it is to suffer in body and spirit.

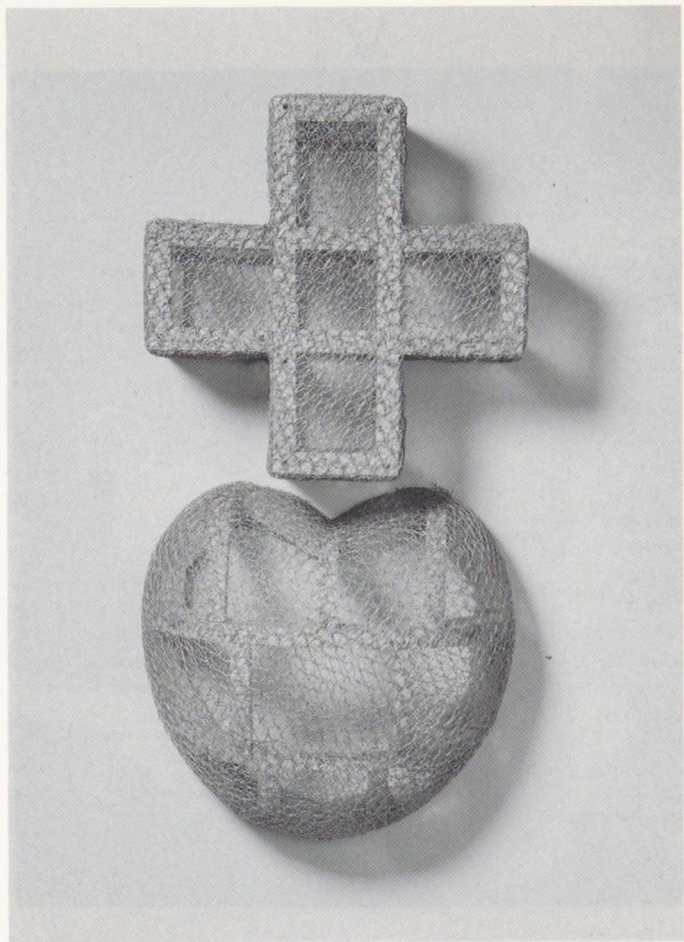
The sacred heart of Braddock's sculpture suggests fleshy extrusions. The heart is the organ of desire: it swells, weakens.[†] But in Braddock's work, that desire is contained in a cage, a mesh of controls, and ultimately supplicated beneath the cross. Braddock positions this virtual body violently trapped between desire and death, between fundamental gratification and spiritual ecstasy.

Such a paradox is common in devotional art and mystical experience. Saint Teresa of Ávila's vision of the angel, most famously captured by Bernini, comes close to the heart of the matter: "In his hands I saw a great golden spear, and at the iron tip there appeared a point of fire. This he plunged into my heart several times so that it penetrated to my entrails. When he pulled it out, I felt that he took them with it, and left me utterly consumed by the great love of God. The pain was so severe that it made me utter several moans. The sweetness caused by this intense pain is so extreme that one cannot possibly wish it to cease, nor is one's soul content with anything but God..."^{††}

[†]Roland Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*. Penguin, 1990, p 52.

^{††}Marina Warner, *Alone of all her sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary*. Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1976, pp 299-300.

Christopher Braddock Heart and cross II 1994
wire mesh and wood 800 x 400 x 180 mm
collection of James Wallace Charitable Arts Trust, Auckland





IV

He meets His Afflicted Mother

The cult of the *Mater Dolorosa*, the figure of the Virgin watching her son's suffering and execution emerged in the late 11th century. It reached its full flowering in the 14th century at the height of the Plague sweeping Europe. As a witness to the Passion, the *Mater Dolorosa* was a vehicle for the faithful to understand and express their sorrow at the torments endured by Christ.

In her analysis of the Virgin, Marina Warner concludes by considering the manner in which "she is presented as a fixed immutable absolute, and the historical process that changes the character of the Virgin is seen merely as a gradual discovery of a great and eternal mystery, progressively revealed."[†]

The mythology of the Virgin is subject to a forgetting, an erasure of history's accumulations. For Warner, "faith has simply wiped out the silt of history in her myth."

Roland Barthes, in searching for his dead mother in a photograph recounts: "I never recognised her except in fragments."^{††} Such fragmentation of recognition characterises Laurence Aberhart's *Mater Dolorosa*. The Virgin emerges and recedes through a frail and flaking surface. Her tears wash away the stains.

[†]Marina Warner, *Alone of all her sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary*. Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1976. pp. 334-5.

^{††}Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*. Fontana, 1984. p. 65.

Laurence Aberhart Mater Dolorosa 1986
silver and gold toned gelatin silver print 245 x 195 mm
private collection, Wellington

V

Simon of Cyrene helps Him to carry His Cross

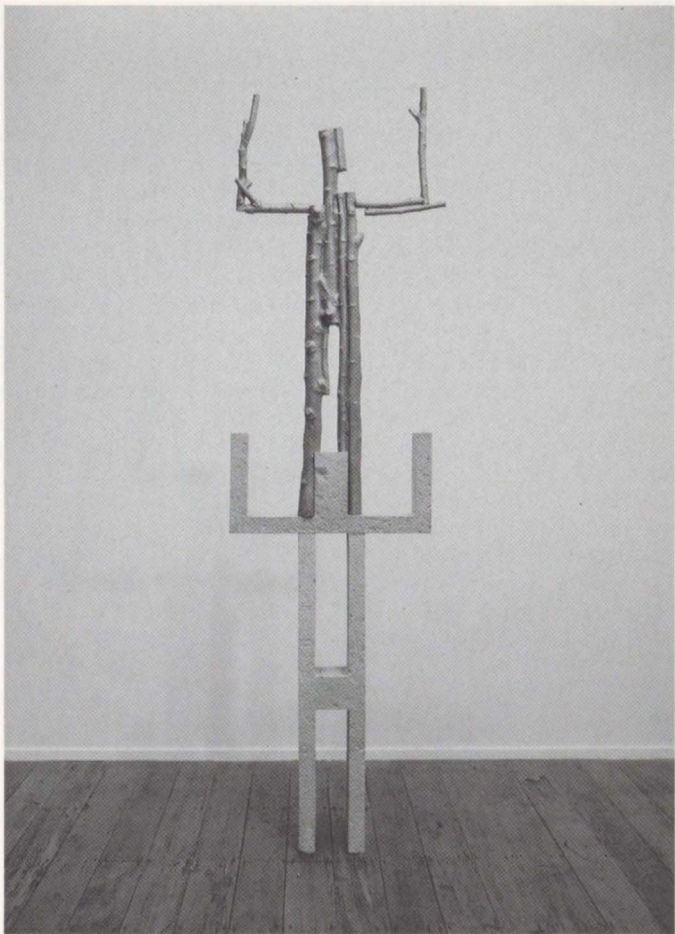
The body in Richard Reddaway's sculpture has a heavy load to bear. His figures are frequently defined by architectural references, dehumanised under the weight of this context to the point where they become building blocks in some other structure.

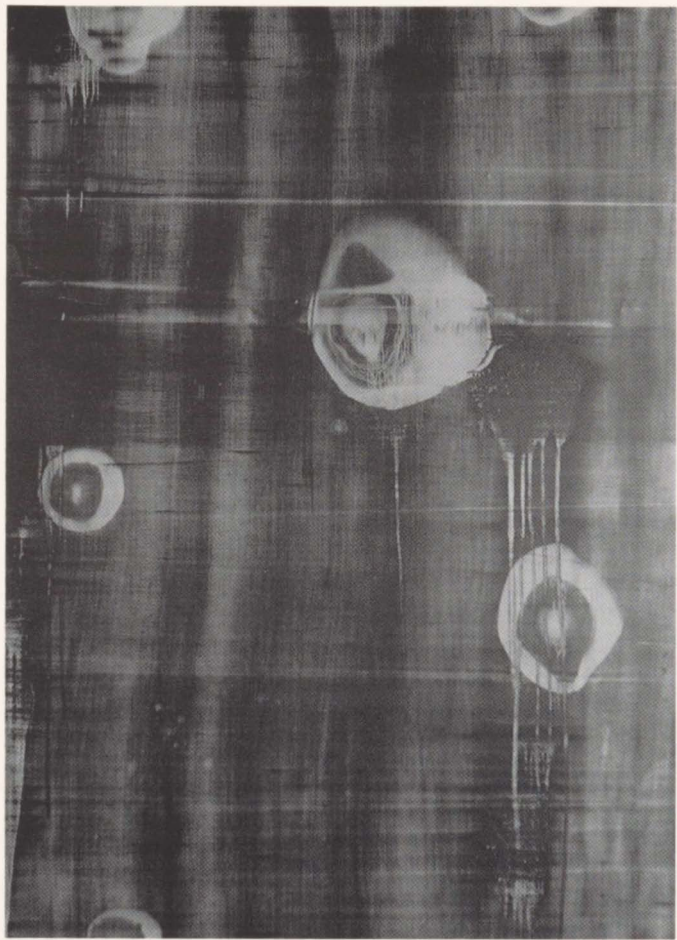
Amidst these building codes, Reddaway's figures express an intimacy and grace that is at odds with their materiality. The figures, with their weighty presence and apparent monumentality, possess a human frailty and precariousness. In recognising these qualities, in reading these ciphers of humanity as signs of the cross, it is not hard to cast Reddaway's figures in the role of actors in this Passion play.

The suggestion of their union is one of male bonding, of masculine support structures which are present beneath a heavy exterior. The emotional undercurrent of this apparent sensitivity masked by such codes of masculine behaviour is presented by Reddaway as a bit of a giggle: *He he*.

The Cyrenean was a reluctant supporter of the Cross, but was ultimately made holy by his task. Similarly, the figures in *He he* rise above themselves.

Richard Reddaway He he 1992
aluminium and concrete 2130 x 630 x 195 mm
private collection, Wellington





VI

Veronica wipes His face

The apocryphal Veronica, her name derived from the Latin *vera icon* (true image) might be described as the first artist of the Passion. Seeing the suffering Christ on the road to Golgotha, she was moved to comfort him, and gave him her veil. Sweat and blood left their evidential marks, and a miraculous image was formed of the countenance of the Saviour.

The body is an after-image in Luise Fong's paintings. Its presence resides in its absence. The body is implicit but invisible, unstated but palpable. For Fong, pathology and forensic science, means of analysing the traces of the body, and the violence done towards it, are analogous to the project of her painting. The stains and secretions which form her work measure the language of paint in terms of the body, its suffering and disappearance.

Luise Fong gets under painting's skin. Pigments of sweat seep through this subcutaneous realm, bruises of colour rise to the surface, fluids circulate and pores open up to breathe. But in all this, the body remains a veiled impression.

Luise Fong Sub 1993 (detail)

acrylic, watercolour and ink on board 1725 x 2430 mm

Auckland City Art Gallery collection, commissioned with funds

provided by Jean Horsley to mark her award of life membership by the Friends of the Auckland City Art Gallery, 1993

VII

He falls the Second Time

In the imagery of the Scriptures, Christ is cast as repeating and re-figuring the events of the Old Testament. As the second Adam, Christ re-enacts the Fall of the first, succumbing to the weakness of the flesh three times along the Way of the Cross. Rising each time, but falling into death, he ultimately rises on the third day.

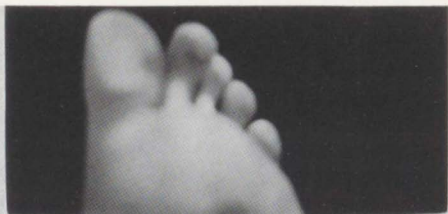
In Neo-Platonic thought, the Fall was understood as "a descent through various spheres, from eternity to the rivers of fire and waters that mark the edge of time and of the sensible, on toward the firmament and the sky; a descent that is accompanied by a progressive thickening of the soul, entailing forgetfulness and blindness as it gets closer and closer to the earth... Layers upon layers of matter have gathered upon the soul or, rather, upon its spiritual body. They are given a new name and their interpretations change: they are the well-known 'coats of skin' that Adam wears after the Fall..."[†]

Such notions of forgetfulness and repetition recur in Nietzsche's idea of eternal return. As Milan Kundera elaborates it: "We are nailed to eternity as Jesus Christ was nailed to the cross."^{††}

[†]Nadia Tazi, "Celestial Bodies: A Few Stops on the Way to Heaven" in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body, Part Two*. Ed. Michel Feher. Zone Books, 1989 pp. 530-1.

^{††}Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. Faber and Faber, 1985. p 5.

Gavin Hipkins The Fall 1993 (detail)
C-type colour photograph 3550 x 59 mm
courtesy of the artist, Wellington





VIII

He speaks to the Women of Jerusalem

Discussing the theological implications of Fiona Pardington's photographs, Stuart McKenzie cites them as an expression of female suffering, of female masochism. McKenzie suggests that in church tradition the woman who is pure "submits to violence, in the same way that the Virgin wills the will of God."⁴ The wound lies at the heart of McKenzie's reading of Pardington's work: "Sexual abandon bleeds over into religious ecstasy. Pardington explores this passion through the figure of the wound."

But it is through that fissure that Pardington's subversion creeps, and a tradition of suffering is made itself to suffer. As McKenzie states: "If the wound is taken as a pleasure rather than a discipline – if masochism is chosen rather than suffered – it is deflected back onto the system. In asserting pleasure Pardington wounds the body politic."

The wounds of this figure, however, are cosmetic: the medical correction of a skin condition. The penitent is purified in a different manner. By the caress of the scalpel, she is saved from the sins of the flesh.

⁴Stuart A. McKenzie, "All Cut Up, and Thrilled to Bits" in *Rising to the Blow*. Champagne Moët et Chandon, Epernay, France. 1993. All quotes are from this essay.

Fiona Pardington Penitent 1992 (detail)
gold toned gelatin silver photograph 360 x 450 mm
courtesy of the artist and Jonathan Jensen Gallery, Christchurch

IX

He falls for the Third Time

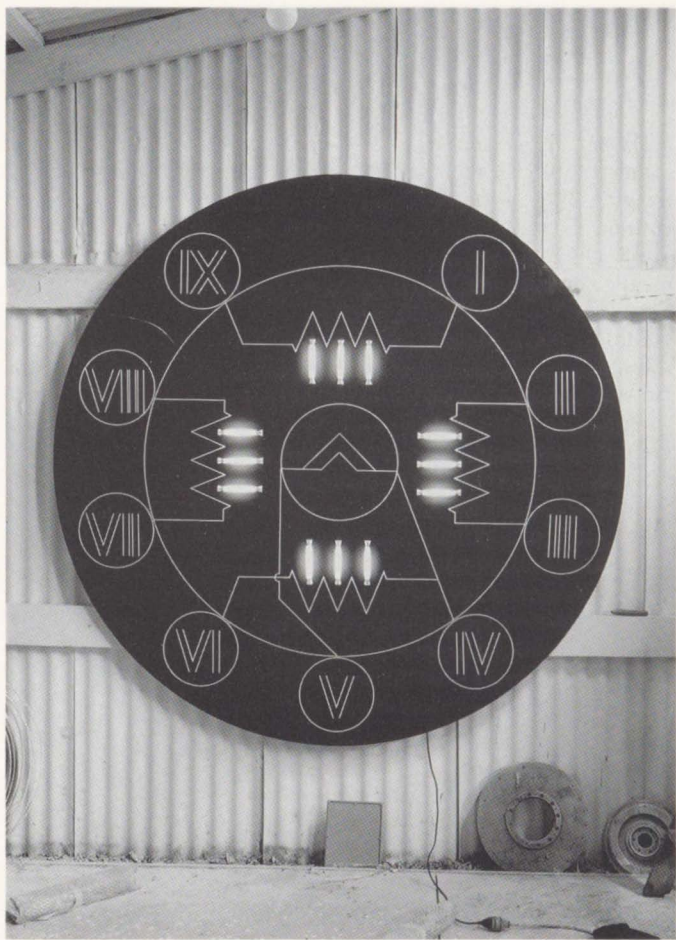
If Peter Roche's sculptures are contemporary imaginations of some near future, signs for technologies to come, it is not hard to imagine *Sign of the cross (Socket II)* in some future electronic church, a sacred spectacle, at once menacing and kitsch.

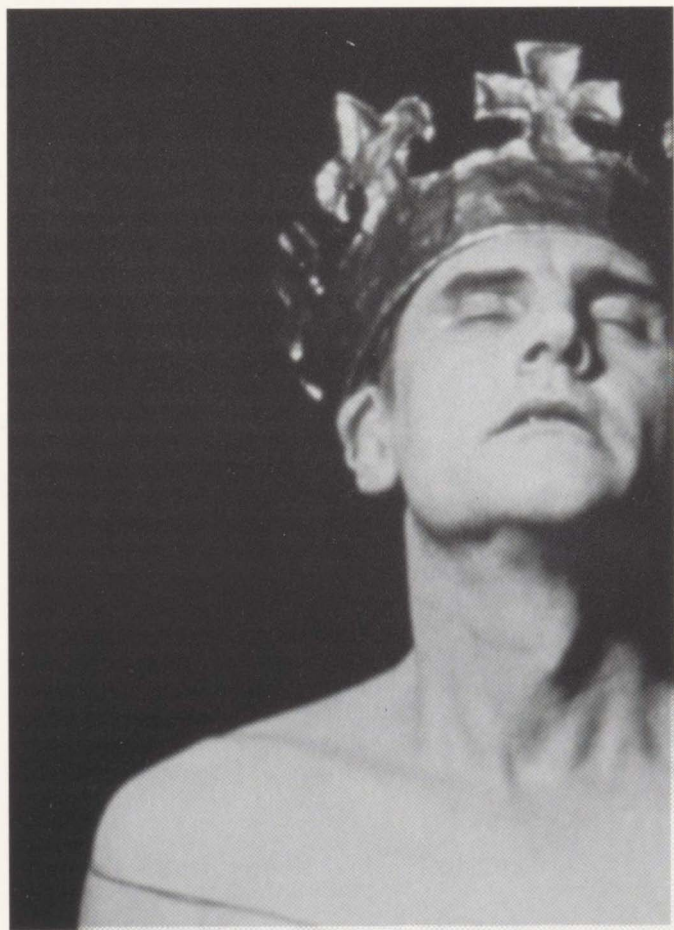
Roche's sourcing of signs to form the *Sign of the cross* is wide: diagrammatic markings of circuitry construction (nine points fortuitously for the Ninth Station), the shopfront phasing of neon lights, the heavy shine of black enamel. In this manner, Roche initiates his work into a play of reference and signification of materials, which itself alludes to the play of the cross.

The sign of the cross is a sign for the cross, the cross a sign for the crucifixion, the crucifixion signalling the resurrection, the cross signifying Jesus the Son, the Son for the Father, and so on. Like the flashing lights that Roche uses to sequence the image of the cross, this pattern of significance is simultaneously advancing and retreating, coding and decoding itself.

Roche's cross may be an image of light, but it is not one of lightness. Its weighty implication of formidable technologies displaces the body: crucifixion has long been redundant as a technology of torture and execution.

*Peter Roche Sign of the cross (Socket II) 1994
enamel on board, fluorescent tubes with electronic timer
2020 mm diameter
courtesy of the artist, Auckland*





X

He is stripped of His garments

The relationship between body and soul was the source of much vexation for the philosophers of the early Church. On one view, the soul was held to be eternal, incorruptible. Only the sinfulness of its bodily prison denied it the possibility of redemption. Conversely, were we not created in God's image, and had not the Saviour deigned to clothe himself in it? The perfection of the body had been debased only by the soul's capacity for sin.

Christine Webster explores the corruptibility of the body in images which both ravage and ravish its mortal flesh. She writes upon the body the texts for both its damnation and its redemption. Her photographs are tensely poised between pleasure and pain.

In devotional art this conflation of sexuality and suffering has borne strange fruit. Discussing the depiction of the sexuality of Christ in Renaissance art, Leo Steinberg reveals the image of the Man of Sorrows with an erection. He suggests that rather than being sacreligious, the symbol "simply inverts the archaic biblical euphemism of 'flesh' for penis. At the original institution of circumcision, the Lord of Genesis (17:13) says: 'My covenant shall be in your flesh.' [Such] paintings would reverse that trope by representing the risen flesh in the roused sexual member."¹

¹Leo Steinberg, "The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion" in *October* 25, 1983. p. 86.

Christine Webster Cross 1992 (detail)
from the series Possession and Mirth
cibachrome photograph 2183 x 3252 mm
courtesy of the artist and Sue Crockford Gallery, Auckland

XI

He is nailed to the Cross

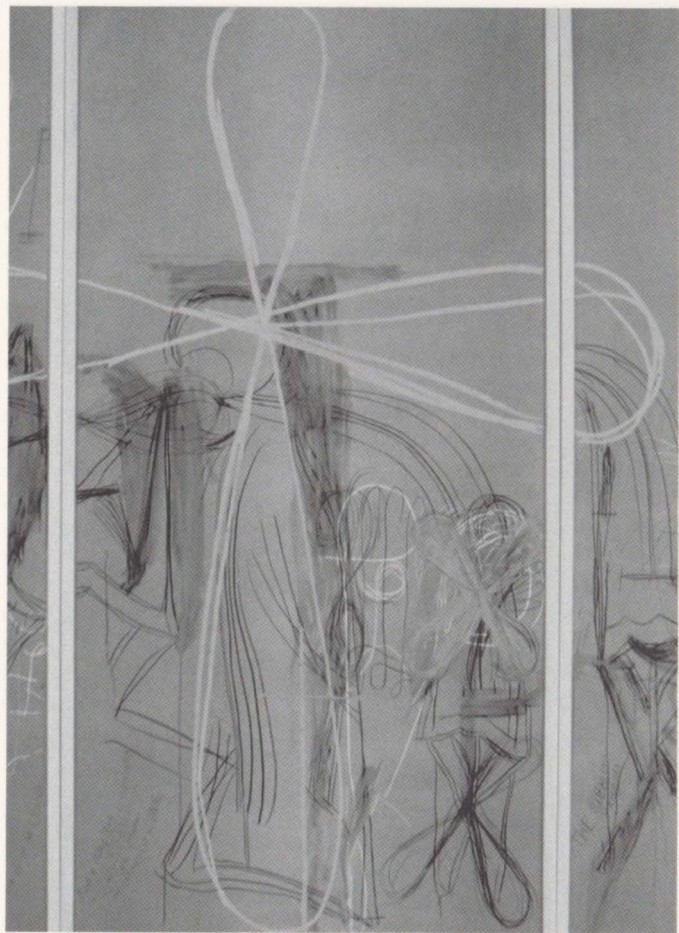
In a curious metaphor for the crucifixion, Saint Augustine described Christ "going to the Cross like a Bridegroom to the Bride." Another image of the bridegroom, John Reynolds's *Bachelor apparatus* is derived from Marcel Duchamp's *The Bride stripped bare by her bachelors (even)*. However, the suitors in Duchamp's seminal work hang around in a state of perpetual desire, of desire perpetually frustrated.

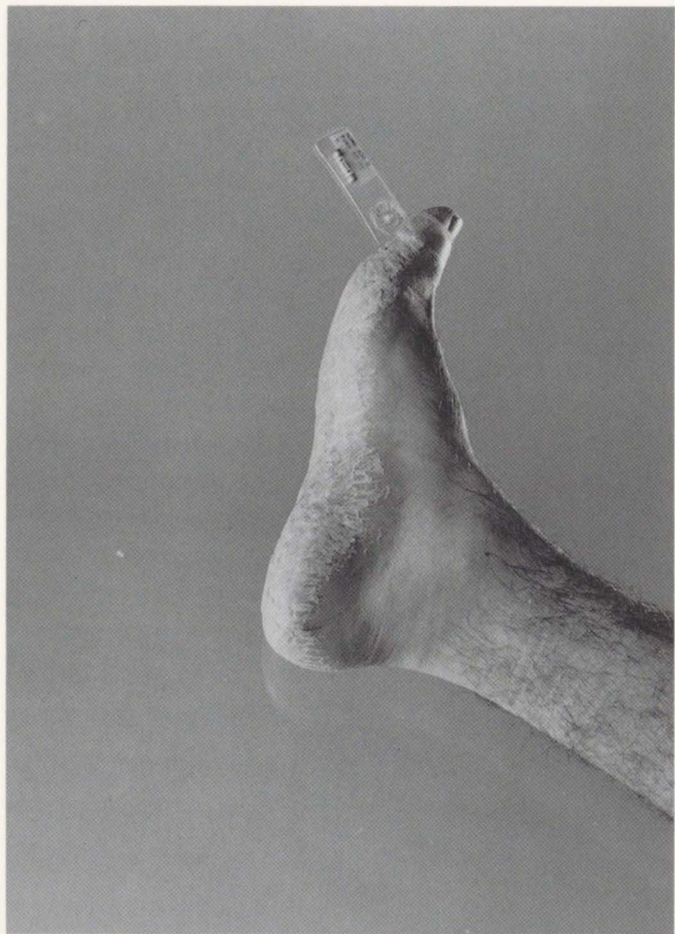
Such desire and frustration, with all its apparent sexual connotations, was a characteristic of the descriptions by many medieval mystics of their experience of the body of Christ. "Both male and female saints regularly engaged in what modern people call self-torture ... driving knives, nails or nettles into their flesh, whipping or hanging themselves in elaborate pantomimes of Christ's Crucifixion."⁴ Such activities were intended as a chastening of sexual and sinful thoughts, and an attempt to empathise physically with Christ's suffering.

This sense of theatre, of elaborate and cruel rituals of self abuse is translated by Reynolds from its Duchampian context into a dizzying array of marks. Suffering is elaborated through arabesques and flourishes, repetitions and erasures. Playing the role of bachelor, Reynolds refuses to be pinned down.

⁴Caroline Walker Bynum, "The Female Body and Religious Practice in the Later Middle Ages" in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body, Part One*. ed. Michel Feher. Zone Books, 1989. p.163.

John Reynolds The Bachelor apparatus 1989 (detail)
mixed media on chalkboard 2460 x 3780 mm
courtesy of the artist and Sue Crockford Gallery, Auckland





XII

He dies on the Cross

A forensic pathologist's report on the crucifixion would indicate probable cause of death to be asphyxia. Gradual loss of respiratory function would have resulted from the prolonged extension of the arms above the head and the associated pressure on the chest region through suspension. Consistent with this are slight haemorrhaging about the chest and face, and also the beginnings of post-mortem hypostasis in the legs. Substantial, although non-fatal wounds and injuries are present on virtually every part of the corpse.

The mysteries of death were once the sole province of the Church, its representation in the liturgy and in devotional art a means by which that control was maintained. Giovanni Intra subscribes to the view that the Church, and indeed art, have been superseded in contemporary culture by the secular and sterile realms of medical science. The clinic has replaced the Church as the source of miracles.

Intra's *Unrequited Passion Cycle*, of which this is a fragment, re-presents the Passion by means of the latest medical technology, surgical implements and pharmaceuticals. The body of Christ is presented in absence. Only at the moment of death does the human form enter the picture.

Giovanni Intra Best after 33AD 1993

*from The Unrequited Passion Cycle (after a text by
Stuart A. McKenzie)*

colour photograph

courtesy of the artist, Auckland

*Giovanni Intra acknowledges the generous assistance of Presentation
Prints Ltd in the production of this work for Station to Station*

XIII

He is taken down from the Cross

The title of Richard McWhannell's painting *Yet we have gone on living* is taken from T.S. Eliot's play *Murder in the Cathedral*. The line is repeated by the female chorus in the first act. Thomas à Beckett is mourned in advance of his death, the cry a portent for his martyrdom at the end of the play. Such notions of time and cycle, of death prefiguring life – "In my beginning is my end" – occur throughout Eliot's *oeuvre*. The poet's mourning is a meditation on the fate of the artist in a godless age. It is a mourning that McWhannell's painting can be seen to share.

A recent discussion of the poet's relationship to modernity noted: "Eliot believed that theology had lost its authority and that philosophy had failed. Neither could or would provide, in the modern context, an adequate framework through which to address the questions which most troubled ordinary men and women – questions about the value and purpose of human life. The lack of such a framework, Eliot argued, meant that these questions remained undigested in the consciousness of individuals; in particular, he believed, they passed into the domain of art where they become, either consciously or unconsciously, a motivating source for artists."[†]

[†]Jon Thompson and Barry Barker, "Preface" in *Falls the Shadow: Recent British and European Art*. The Hayward Annual, 1986. Arts Council of Great Britain, 1986. p. 18.

Richard McWhannell Study for Pasaje Espana 1991
oil on aluminium 160 x 95 mm
private collection, Auckland

Note: *Yet we have gone on living* was unavailable for reproduction.



LONE

LOVE

LINE

XIV

He is laid in the Sepulchre

The funereal character of Mary-Louise Browne's textual tablets has frequently been noted. Her epitaphs have the appearance of public monuments to mortality, monuments which cast the identity of the deceased in the silence of stone, and seal them in the memory of the living.

In contrast to such concrete certainties, the meaning of Browne's inscriptions is entirely relative. The words, tropes in a language game, become significant by their relation to each other. Those relationships are apparently arbitrary. Thus, life sits parenthetically between deaths, between *love* and *have*, between *land* and *here*.

Such a cyclic attitude, of language games standing in for grave inscriptions, fittingly concludes this cycle of Stations. Like Browne's inscriptions, the Stations of the Cross derive their effect from an accumulation of language, from repetition and variation. Browne's work embraces the inevitability of death, and its unknowability through language, and through art. The language of the stones, like Ouroborus, the mythical snake from which the work takes its title, is left chasing its tail.

Mary-Louise Browne Ouroborus 1990 (detail)
carrara marble and gold leaf
15 pieces, each 450 x 810 mm, installation variable
Auckland City Art Gallery collection,
presented by the Patrons of the the Auckland City Art Gallery, 1993

Deborah Smith is a photographer living in Auckland. In 1993 she was one of seven women artists to present new work in the exhibition *Mediatrix* at Artspace, Auckland, and the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth. Her most recent solo exhibition was at Myfanwy Rees Gallery, Auckland.

Stephen Bambury lives in Auckland, having returned there in 1992 after an extended period in France as the inaugural Moët et Chandon New Zealand Art Foundation Fellow in 1989. During 1993 he held one-person exhibitions in Auckland, Christchurch, Sydney and New Plymouth.

Christopher Braddock is a sculptor residing in Auckland. Between 1986 and 1992 he lived and studied in Europe, exhibiting in Paris and Milan. In 1993 he received a grant from the New York Pollock-Krasner Foundation. His most recent solo exhibition was at Gow, Langsford Gallery, Auckland.

Laurence Aberhart lives in Russell. A retrospective exhibition of his photographs, *Nature Morte*, toured New Zealand galleries in 1989-91. His most recent exhibition, *The Contact Print 1993* was held at the Aberhart North Gallery in Auckland.

Richard Reddaway lives in Auckland. *The Deck of My Body* was the title of his installation at the McDougall Art Annex, Christchurch in 1993. His most recent solo exhibition was at the Gregory Flint Gallery, Auckland.

Luise Fong is currently living in Melbourne, where she holds a residency at the Victoria College of the Arts. Her work was included in *Surface Tension* at the Auckland City Art Gallery in 1992. During 1993 she held exhibitions of new work in Wellington, Christchurch and Auckland.

Gavin Hipkins lives in Wellington. His photographs and installations have been shown in Auckland, New Plymouth, Wellington and Christchurch. A solo exhibition, *An Octave of Glaze* was presented at Lopdell House, Titrangi in 1993.

Fiona Pardington spent ten months in Avize, France as Moët et Chandon New Zealand Art Foundation Fellow in 1991. A body of work under the title *Rising to the Blow* was shown at Sue Crockford Gallery, Auckland in 1992, and the Jonathan Jensen Gallery, Christchurch in 1993. She lives in Auckland.

Peter Roche is a sculptor who lives in Auckland. A solo exhibition *Trophies and Emblems* toured several New Zealand galleries in 1991. In 1993, he held exhibitions in Auckland and New Plymouth, and was included in the First Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art in Brisbane.

Christine Webster lives in Auckland. *Possession and Mirth* was produced during her Frances Hodgkins Fellowship, and has been shown in Auckland, Dunedin and Sydney. A major photographic installation *Black Carnival* was initiated by the Dunedin Public Art Gallery in 1993 and is currently touring New Zealand and Australian galleries.

John Reynolds is a painter who lives in Auckland. During 1993 he exhibited new work in Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin, and received first prize in the Visa Gold Art Award.

Giovanni Intra lives in Auckland. His recent exhibitions include *Waiting Room* (with Vicki Kerr) at Teststrip Gallery, Auckland, and *Anatomies* at the George Fraser Gallery, Auckland.

Richard McWhannell is a painter and sculptor who lives in Auckland. A ten year survey of his work was shown at the Fisher Gallery, Pakuranga in 1988, and he held a solo exhibition at the McDougall Art Annex, Christchurch, in 1991. His most recent solo exhibition was at the Janne Land Gallery, Wellington.

Mary-Louise Browne lives in Wellington. In 1993 her work was included in *Mediatrix: New work by seven women artists*. She produced an installation for the Auckland City Art Gallery *Window Works* series in 1990, and held solo exhibitions at the Claybrook Gallery, Auckland in 1991 and 1992.



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