

The artwork features a white background with various black silhouettes. In the top left, there are silhouettes of a flower bud and a leaf. In the center, a large dragonfly is positioned to the left of a butterfly. To the right of the butterfly is a plant with several leaves. At the bottom, there are more plant silhouettes, including a tulip-like flower and a large leaf. Three red geometric shapes are placed on the white background: a square on the left, a triangle in the center, and another triangle in the top right corner. The text is located in the top right corner, within the black triangle.

Stories we tell ourselves

The Paintings of Richard Killeen

FRANCIS POUND







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David Bateman



AUCKLAND
ART
GALLERY

TOI O TĀMAKI



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Cover: Richard Killeen, *Seeds across the land* 1979

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Foreword

Through their constant retelling, the stories we tell ourselves become the condensed signs and symbols of our culture; they mark out the incidents along our way and they coalesce to form and transmit our cultural identity. New Zealand artist Richard Killeen has long understood that our most often told stories — the myths of our tribe — reveal more about us than the ordinary facts of existence.

For more than thirty years Richard Killeen has made, selected and manipulated images of his place and time. His works can disarm with their insistently local content, like his 1960s realist 'portraits' of a suburban type or his Pacific patterned combs and grids of the 1970s. But it is his cut-outs of the late 1970s to the present day that have increasingly defined Killeen's search for the universal within the particular.

What unifies Richard Killeen's cut-outs, the focus of this publication and its associated exhibition, is the constancy of their play with systems of knowledge and classification. Every installation of these works is unique, the result of an open pictorial system, its elements variously drawn from their storage box like so many specimens of their kind. Including everything from the quotidian to the arcane, Killeen's endlessly re-arrangeable pictograms capture our stories as they tell his.

Stories we tell ourselves: The Paintings of Richard Killeen reveals the history, the humour and the visual intelligence which informs Killeen's art. That it does so is no less a tribute to its curator and the author of this publication, Dr Francis Pound. One of New Zealand's pre-eminent writers on contemporary art and cross-cultural questions, Francis Pound is the author of numerous essays on Killeen, beginning with his PhD thesis. While this long association might explain the acuity of his insights it does little to prepare you for their generous and lively telling. In that, Creative New Zealand's timely support of the project's curatorial research and development is warmly acknowledged.

Stories we tell ourselves was initiated by the Gallery's former Principal Curator, Alexa Johnston, as part of a series of major New Zealand artist exhibitions and publications which the Gallery embarked upon in 1997. The development of the Richard Killeen project was subsequently undertaken by Kate Darrow, Manager, Art and Access. Among several roles she brought great energy and enthusiasm to bear in sourcing its many loans from public and private collections. The Gallery remains grateful to all of those who so generously made their works available, and to the artist's dealers Sue Crockford, Judith Gifford, Ray Hughes and Peter McLeavey.

Thanks must also go to exhibition manager Louise Pether and exhibition designer Fiona Wilson who, along with the Gallery's registration, conservation and preparator staff, have so ably supported the exhibition. This publication is the result of similar work from a dedicated team. My thanks go here to the Gallery's co-publisher David Bateman Ltd, in particular to Paul Bateman, to Anna Miles for her work on the artist's chronology, to editor Michael Gifkins, to Arch MacDonnell and Jane Hatfield of Inhouse Design and to principal photographer John McIver, each of whom has worked with extraordinary commitment to this project and to the artist.

Finally, it is to Richard Killeen, to Margreta Chance and to their family that I must reserve my most heartfelt thanks. Without their support this story could not have been told.

Chris Saines

Director

Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

Introduction

In the days when Richard Killeen's cut-outs could be characterised by a hostile critic as 'blandly Internationalist', and everyone knew what it meant, I used to joke with the artist about writing an essay with the teasing title 'Killeen the Regionalist'. This perverse text would show that Killeen did, in fact, have in his work a lot of what was required by Nationalist law: 'local content'. The following essay, written some twenty years later, is, in a sense, that imaginary text, minus its no longer necessary polemical sting and cast now in a more reflective mode. Its hope is to recover, or recreate, inasmuch as such things can be done, a few suggestive details of a now lost historical world.

In my experience, what visitors to a gallery want to read in the little label that is put next to a painting is not so much who painted it and when, nor who 'influenced' whom, but what the work *means*. When viewers see a landscape inside a head in a cut-out, they will very likely want to know *why*. Imagining itself, then, as a kind of extended gallery label, the following essay prefers to pick out and speak of a few matters of meaning, rather than to focus on form.

Given that Killeen's oeuvre is so vast, and so diverse in style and in subject, to represent adequately all of its major shifts and themes would be very difficult indeed and would require more space than is available. What I have preferred to do, then, is to show clusters of kinds, clusters that will *work* together, in order to suggest something of the complexity and abundance of the whole.

Although Killeen is hardly an expressionist artist and is not commonly considered a particularly autobiographical kind of painter, and though, indeed, his art has often been seen by the critics — including myself — as precisely a *refusal* of self, there are moments in his work where the personal clearly comes to the fore, posed there by the painting itself. Cutting for this purpose against the grain of the oeuvre, the essay will particularly stress these moments, picking out for attention those works where we may see Killeen, as he says in a cut-out title, *Tracing the lines of my face*.

In warmly endorsing the thanks and acknowledgments of Chris Saines as expressed in his Foreword, I must particularly thank Killeen himself. He should be recognised as more a collaborator than a passive object of scholarly enquiry. It is an unacknowledged truth of perhaps all surveys of living artists that the artist acts as co-curator: but Killeen's own fully illustrated computer-based catalogue of his work was exceptional, and meant that this arduous and potentially mind-numbing preliminary task was already achieved before my coming to the project. The model Killeen made of the upstairs space of the New Gallery was again exceptional, and again made the task easier. Indeed I cannot imagine how we could have chosen and arranged our clusters of works for the exhibition without it.

Finally, let me thank the artist for permitting quotation from his private notebooks, so allowing us to glimpse something of the intense intellectual labour, the acutely critical self-awareness, and the impassioned involvement in the life of this culture that lie behind the works we see here and on the gallery wall.

Francis Pound

Auckland, April 1999

1 Stories we tell ourselves

The subject matter of these paintings is a story without narrative...¹

In 1987 Richard Killeen titled two of his largest and most intricate works *Stories we tell ourselves* and *Stories we tell each other*.²

What stories? The 129 pieces of *Stories we tell ourselves*, each with its own pictured thing, might seem on the face of it precisely to refuse story, to proffer instead something like a dizzying array of nouns, with not a single conjunction or verb to connect them into the coherence of narrative. They seem less like a story, in fact, than like a cloud of words from a dictionary, each containing, simultaneously, all of the meanings from which a story proper would have to choose.

Yet, faced with this disparate and multiplicitous collection, we can and do tell ourselves stories. This is because every one of the pieces of *Stories we tell ourselves* is a story-trace: the fragment of a story cut away from its original place of desire-to-tell. Cut from its first context, and freed from the constraints of that initial surround, each image floats out towards us bearing the totality of its possible meanings. And around each there glows the halo of all its past and potential associations.

There are story-traces of human evolution — the two early hominid types. Of zoology and botany — birds, animals, fish, insects, plants, shells, spores. Of palaeontology — fossil plants. Of astronomy — a corona around the sun. Of geometry — a cube and complex geometrical solids. Of technology — a machine part labelled 'solid'. Of war — shields, a pocket battleship, a cruiser. There are even stories of Killeen's own art — a linocut of 1971 of a man hurrying away, as it were, from Killeen's realist phase.

At first impression, the cultures traced here seem an uncountable throng, whose prodigality is more than the mind can contain. However, this vertiginous sensation is economically created by the scattered repetition of a countable few. There is the Australian Aboriginal — rock engravings, bark paintings, a sand sculpture. The Chinese — a connoisseur's fish stamp. The prehistoric European — goddess statuettes, a cave-art bear and deer. The Aleut Eskimo — carved ivory birds; fetus-like and wraith-like beasts; a pictograph head; a sea otter shaped like a cricket bat. The ancient Mexican — a step pattern. The ancient Egyptian — statuettes, a bird alighted on a stella, a decorated box for human remains. The African — a ritual quartz stool. The Hopi Indian — conventionalised feathers, a radically rearranged bird, a stylised goddess, squatting in the act of giving birth.

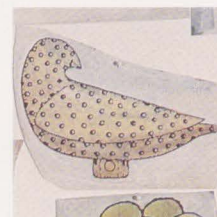
Inextricably, in meeting the forms of these cultures, we encounter traces of the innumerable styles of representation, past and present: Egyptian; Hopi; Aboriginal; Mexican; Aleut;



Stories we tell ourselves 1987
acrylic and collage on aluminium, detail



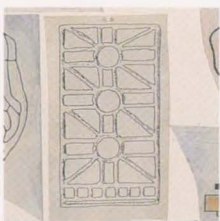
Stories we tell ourselves 1987
acrylic and collage on aluminium, detail



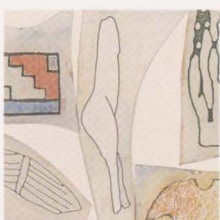
Stories we tell ourselves 1987
acrylic and collage on aluminium, detail

¹ Richard Killeen, Artist's Statement for the exhibition *The Politics of Geometry*, Sue Crockford Gallery, Auckland, 1991.

² At the time they were painted, these cut-outs included the largest number of pieces Killeen had ever put in one work: 129 and 136 respectively. Today, the number sometimes exceeds 300.



Stories we tell ourselves 1987
acrylic and collage on aluminium, detail



Stories we tell ourselves 1987
acrylic and collage on aluminium, detail



Stories we tell ourselves 1987
acrylic and collage on aluminium, detail

3 The figure in a kayak was drawn by Sven Waxel on Vitus Bering's expedition, 1741, and the ritual dance was drawn by the charmingly untutored hand of an unidentified member of Levashev's expedition, 1769-75. Both images are taken from Dorothy Jean Ray, *Aleut and Eskimo Art: Tradition and Innovation in South Alaska*, University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1981, figs 1 and 2.

4 *Form in Indigenous Art: Schematisation in the Art of Aboriginal Australia and Prehistoric Europe*, ed. Peter J. Ucko, Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, 1977. Nineteen of the images of *Stories we tell ourselves* come from this book.

5 Douglas Mazonowicz, *A Search for Cave and Canyon Art: Voices from the Stone Age*, Gallery of Prehistoric Paintings, New York, 1974.

6 Geoffrey Williams, *African Designs from Traditional Sources*, Dover, Toronto, 1971.

18th century European; 20th century photographic and diagrammatic; 19th century European engraved; a contemporary Western child's scribble; computer graphics; and twice, in the form of a label — the printed English word, its letters derived from antique Rome.

There are traces too of stories of the West in its first meetings with other cultures. The Aleut in a kayak is taken from the first Western drawing of any Alaskan native, made on an expedition of 1741. The Persian-looking personage in a long dress — he appears twice — and the fat, naked dancer wearing a tall, curved hat while waving a testicle-like bladder, come from a drawing of a 'Ritual dance of the Aleuts' made on an expedition of 1769-75.³

The device like a hedging plan for a Renaissance garden is taken directly from an ethnologist's diagram of a Liyagawumirri clan sculpture in sand in a book subtitled *Schematisation in the Art of Aboriginal Australia and Prehistoric Europe*.⁴ It is schematised, to be sure, but its schematisation derives as much from ethnology's illustrational manner as it does from the art it purports to describe. You would never guess from its hatchings that what it claims to show is formed of a friable, granular, drifting substance.

The same can be said for the goddess sculpture outlined in profile — let's call her the Goddess of the Big Bottom. She comes from a prehistorian's rendition, in the same book, of an ivory figure known to science as the Venus Impudique — *impudique*: immodest, lewd, unchaste — an appellation provoked, no doubt, by the very visible vaginal slot in the sculpture's frontal view, a view allowed us by Killeen in the appropriately titled *The politics of naming* 1987. But whatever view we are given of her, the weightless, colourless, empty yet all-enclosing line of scientific rendition distorts no less than the classical Roman myth and the Christian moralism imposed on the goddess by her official title.

The Paleolithic bear and deer come from a book subtitled *Voices from the Stone Age*,⁵ but again their voice is in part the voice of science, in which the colour, shape, shade and grain of painted rock are reduced to a thin black line — a line indifferently enclosing sand, stone, paint, wood, clay, flesh, and cellular protein. Perhaps the most flagrant distortion here of a non-Western source is that of the vigorously stylised, black-plane-with-white-line modernist manner of the linocuts illustrating the compendium *African Designs from Traditional Sources*, from which comes the quartz Ife stool Killeen puts over a photograph taken by him in the Cairo Museum of an Egyptian mortuary box.⁶

Even if Killeen does redeem the scientific diagram from its pallor by colouring it in, not a single one of the borrowed images here has not been first drained of its colour, its weight, its texture — of everything which might grant it particularity and palpability. All have been transmuted into the weightless, placeless, generalised, universalising world of science.

In its hardly graspable complexity, then, *Stories we tell ourselves* seems to tell of all the cultures of the world — cultures whose traces are left, in fact, through all the cut-outs, starting with the stone tools and jade circlets of the very first, *Across the Pacific*, in August

1978. Regarded from another angle, however, all the stories touched upon here are *our* stories, those of the modern West, since we see them only in the image-types of our own depictive arts and sciences — in the diagrammatic manners of anthropology, ethnography, palaeontology, zoology, botany, as appropriated from the texts of those sciences by Killeen the draftsman, and Killeen the photocopier and computer scanner.

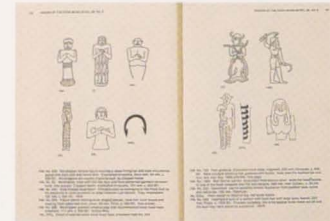
Anthropology, ethnography, prehistory: these are the sciences whose truth value Killeen will affectionately and teasingly test in one of his largest and most complex cut-outs, the 253 piece *Book of the hook* 1996, and in its accompanying publication, *Objects and Images from the Cult of the Hook*,⁷ where, with a maniacal studiousness, he not only invents the material culture of a whole vast, diffusionist cult, but also a scholarly monograph of 96 plausible pages, purporting to be the work of a certain C. M. Beadnell of the Hook Museum — a putative institution whose address has been keenly enquired after by a number of Killeen's readers and viewers.



Not only are many of the images of *Stories we tell ourselves* 'found objects', cut away by Killeen from some other place. The very title is a found object. It comes, so we learn from a Killeen notebook entry of 1985, from a quoted sentence in *The Women's Review of Books*: '...the stories we tell ourselves about who we are or hope to be play a primary role in creating & sustaining our identities...'⁸

All these stories, so *Stories we tell ourselves* suggests, have a constitutive aspect: that is, they constitute us, put us together, make us up. By their telling we are made what we are. Emptied of stories, we would not only not be ourselves, we would be nobody. We are the ones in whom these stories endlessly whisper, circling and interweaving inside us until they reach such a density that we come to seem to ourselves to have a palpable being. We, in this sense, are told. Each of us narrated. Each no more than a cloud of stories.

By the stories we tell ourselves, and by the stories we tell each other, we are constituted, too, as a culture. A culture seen in this way is the stories it tells and has told to itself; it is a discarnate body of shared, never-ceasing, and 'ever-changing' stories, as Killeen says, murmuring about us. The stories 'available in our culture', so Killeen tells us,⁹ are our culture, and we 'as individuals' are no more than what they make of us, and we make of them, in the endless murmur of story.



Objects and Images from the Cult of the Hook
Workshop Press, 1996

7 C. M. Beadnell, with a forward by Richard Killeen, *Objects and Images from the Cult of the Hook*, Papers of the Hook Museum, vol. 38 no. 2, Workshop Press, Auckland, 1996.

8 Richard Killeen, note dated 6 September 1985, the black notebook, p. 229. The underlining is Killeen's, as is his habit when noting a phrase for use as a title. (The black notebook is an unpublished, hardback, unlined notebook, in which Killeen wrote and drew from May 1975 to August 1988.) The note transcribes a passage in Judith Kegan Gardiner, 'Feminists and Freudians', a review of *The (M)other Tongue: Essays in Feminist Psychoanalytic Interpretation*, eds Shirley Nelson Garner, Claire Kahane and Madelon Sprengnether, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, in *The Women's Review of Books*, vol. 11, no. 11, August 1985, p. 16.

9 Richard Killeen, Artist's Statement, *Origins: Originality and Beyond: the Sixth Biennale of Sydney*, Sydney, 1986, p. 150.

2 Stories of place: born alive in New Zealand

In every young Irish mind the question of emigration is inescapable
...If not, why not?

(Brenda Maddox, *Nora*, 1988)



Stories we tell ourselves 1987
acrylic and collage on aluminium, detail



New Zealand Landscape Painting Tradition? 1971
oil on hardboard

10 The cut-outs naming New Zealand persons are: *Waiting for Gordon* 1995; *The dreaming of Gordon Walters* 1995; *Goodby Gordon* 1995; the two naming children, *Born in New Zealand — for Martin*, and *Born in New Zealand — for Samuel*; and two naming writer friends, *Voyage by Francis Pound* 1989; *Ephphatha* by Alan Brunton 1994; and *Le Pine* 1997, a memorial to a dead friend. (One painter, two children, two writers, a dead friend.) The cut-outs naming non-New Zealanders are: *Message to Bertha* 1997, a gift to Bertha Urdang, Killeen's New York dealer; *Red Cloud's census* 1995, named for an Indian chief; *George Forster, Naturalist* 1980, named for the naturalist who visited New Zealand with Cook; three versions of *Italo's Fish Painting* 1989, named for the Italian writer Italo Calvino; (see too *Lessons in Lightness* 1990, whose title comes from an essay in Calvino's *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*); *Joaquin's fish* 1989, named for the painter Joaquin Torres Garcia; *Still life with James Joyce*, in five versions 1994-95; *Mickey of Ulladulla* 1995, named after the Australian Aboriginal painter; and *Here sits Harold, king of the English* 1995. The foreigners (eight) outnumber the citizens (six).

11 See my *Signatures of Place: Paintings & Place-names*, Govett Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, 1991.

12 Allen Curnow, *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1960, p. 51.

The 'stories available in our culture', says Killeen. But what about stories of *our* culture? The ancient Mexican and the modern West is all very well, but what about *here*? The only clearly New Zealand thing in *Stories we tell ourselves* is the pukeko.

Of the titles of the 380 cut-outs painted by Killeen, three name a place — *Murdering Beach*, *Dunedin* 1980, *Rainbow's Reach* 1980, and *From the Cairo Museum* 1985. Seven name countries: *Born in New Zealand — for Martin* 1985, and *Born in New Zealand — for Samuel* 1985; the four versions of *Born Alive in New Zealand* 1985-1986; and *Clay tokens from Iran* 1980. Only ten titles, then, out of 380, clearly attend to locale, and two of those ten have to do with the Middle East, not with New Zealand. If the notion of region is stretched to its limit, we could count the first cut-out, *Across the Pacific* 1978, two called *Welcome to the South Seas* 1979, 1980, and *Welcome to the South Pacific* 1979. Fourteen titles, at most, then, pronounce the name of a country, region or place.

Compare this relative paucity of local signature with, say, Rita Angus or Toss Woollaston, whose titles almost invariably speak the name of a New Zealand place or person.¹⁰ If we look at all the paintings of the Nationalist period, that period of New Zealand art and writing directly preceding Killeen, there is hardly a one which does not in some way announce a specificity of place and thereby justify its plea for a local consumer.¹¹ Take Rita Angus's *Cass* 1936. The name of a place is literally inscribed there as the largest signature, in the form of a railway sign. A more perfect answer can hardly be imagined to the poet, critic, anthologist, and theorist of regionalism, Allen Curnow, when he says: 'the signature of a region, like that of a witness written below the poet's, can attest value in the work.'¹²

Killeen might seem to do something the same with the 'Au' of his *Man, land, sea and sky* (also known as *Man with newspaper*) 1968. But here the signature of place is rendered unstable, since it is so fragmented as to be hardly legible, and since, unlike the sign fixed on the railway station of Angus's *Cass*, this *Auckland Star* front page might be read by that moustached suburbanite anywhere suburbia abuts the bush. Such loosening of place and near illegibility of place-name reflects the lateness of the work in the Nationalist period; it occurs at the very moment Nationalist discourse was coming unstuck.

In a post-Nationalist art that signing a painting 'New Zealand' which was imperative under the Nationalist regime may now itself become the subject of painting, as it clearly does in Killeen's *New Zealand Landscape Painting Tradition?* 1971. This is a kind of meta-landscape which questions the whole national landscape notion.

Could it be that the interrogatory irony of that work persists in the New Zealand-titled cut-outs of 1985-86? Could it be that their 'Born in New Zealand' is not a simple signature of place? Is it, on one level at least, an ironic citation of the Nationalist requisite of nativity and viewpoint?

If so, titles like *Born alive in New Zealand* might well be placed in the context of such claims as Professor James Shelley's that: 'The interpretation of New Zealand requires a specialised viewpoint, that of the native born painter';¹³ or against poet and critic A. R. D. Fairburn's peremptory remark that 'we really are people of a different race, and have no right to be monkeying around with European culture.'¹⁴

Certainly, it was Killeen who first made Nationalism's litany of place an object of painted critique — not only in his *New Zealand Landscape Painting Tradition?* but in all of what he sardonically called the 'Goddam damn Home Sweet Hooohhhme'¹⁵ works of 1971 — *Wish you were here*; *From here to the world*; *Godzone* ('God's own little country'); *Alive in New Zealand*, *Born in New Zealand* and *Living in New Zealand*.

It seems from his titles *Born in New Zealand — for Samuel* and *Born in New Zealand — for Martin* that it was the birth of his son, Samuel, and the birth of his sister's son, Martin, which provoked Killeen, a decade later, in the *Born in New Zealand* and the *Born alive in New Zealand* cut-outs of 1985-86, to think again about the matter of a New Zealand nativity and to revive the titles of his earlier considerations of that geographical fate.¹⁶

'Born boiled bored buried alive in New Zealand', he scrawls on a notebook page.¹⁷ Killeen regards being born in New Zealand as a biographical fact — pleasant or unpleasant, as the case may be — rather than as an aesthetic vocation. Realistically, however, he realises that to paint in a country the size of a provincial American city, and this stuck at the very bottom of the earth — *The hole of the world*, as his title of 1972 has it — is definitively never to be heard of in the rest of the world: it is, in that respect at least, a form of being buried alive.¹⁸

Yet greeted though he used to be by Tony Fomison with the jeer, 'How's internationalism going?', and sneered at though he was by the occasional critic as 'blandly internationalist', and complain though he did in 1974, at the time of some of his most abstract works, that, 'Unfortunately, too much New Zealand art is not related to overseas trends, but to ... the preoccupation with the New Zealand landscape,'¹⁹ Killeen will not subscribe to the stock Nationalist opposition: regionalist/internationalist. He is aware the dichotomy is a matter of Nationalist polemics only, a mental fiction with no basis in fact, since the so-called regional realists are merely conservative internationalists, whose stylistic basis is in late 19th century French *avant-garde*, in the international formalised realist style of the 1930s, and in the fifteenth-century European 'primitives': the style, reactionary at once aesthetically and politically, of that widespread crisis of modernist nerve which was called in Europe 'the Return to Order'.



Wish you were here 1971
oil on hardboard

13 James Shelley, *Press* (Christchurch), 25 March 1933.

14 A. R. D. Fairburn, *The Letters of A.R.D. Fairburn*, selected and edited by Lauris Edmond, Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1981, p. 63.

15 Richard Killeen, the blue notebook, p. 47. (The blue notebook is a blue, hardback, unlined notebook in which Killeen wrote and drew from March 1971 to February 1975.)

16 Also, as we may learn from a note dated 3 January 1984, in the black notebook, p. 209, Killeen was 'Reading the Brown book on McCahon' (Gordon H. Brown, *Colin McCahon: Artist, A. H. & A. W. Reed*, Wellington, 1984), a reading which provoked him to consider again the Christianised landscapes of his former teacher. 'McCahon uses religion to colonise the land. The land is seen as empty and wild — it needed an angel (I saw an angel in this land). The patriarchy strikes again.'

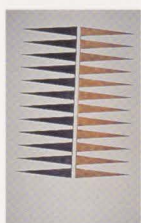
17 Richard Killeen, the black notebook, p. 63.

18 In this respect, nothing has changed to this day: the only New Zealand artists well-known abroad, Boyd Webb and Bill Culbert, live abroad: the one in England, the other largely in France.

19 Richard Killeen, quoted in Michael Brett, 'Abstracts come in from the cold', *NZ Herald*, 9 March 1974.



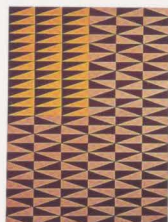
Space lace 1975
oil and acrylic on canvas



Palmate 1974
oil and acrylic on canvas



Island influence 1973
oil on hardboard



Pacific plywood 1977
oil on plywood

20 Neil Rowe, 'Exhibitions', *Art New Zealand* 11, Spring, 1978, p. 60.

21 Richard Killeen, the blue notebook, p. 136.

22 Despite Stella's 'attempt to remove a lot of associations', his Protractor paintings 'depend very much on their relation to Islamic art'. (Richard Killeen, the blue notebook, p. 97.)

That polarity, so constantly uttered in Nationalist discourse, of regionalist/internationalist is not for him a reality. It is a cultural construct only, which he makes the basis of an intellectual play — *play* in all its acceptations, including its senses of having fun, of the staged, and of a certain freedom or lack of restriction of movement between fixed positions. Killeen was neither nationalist or internationalist: exhilaratingly, given the imprisoning oppositions of the time, he was neither and both, and at once. Janus-faced, he gazes at once here and overseas.

Accordingly, in the triangulated borders of *From here to the world* and *Wish you were here* 1971, and in his circular Laces of 1975, his Combs of 1973-74 and his Constructivist Grids of 1975, and in the lacquered Grids on aluminium of 1978 which emerged from the triangulations of the Laces, Combs and earlier Grids, he recalls indigenous Pacific motifs. Indeed, their recollection of the indigenous was so vivid for their first viewers that critic Neil Rowe could suggest with delight of the aluminium Grids that: 'Any one of these immaculate geometric arrangements of triangles could happily serve as a surrogate New Zealand flag or as an emblem for any newly emerged Pacific nation.'²⁰



The title *Island influence* 1973, for the first painting of the Comb Series, points to one of the largest prospects which this and the several following series will open out. It directs our attention to the islands of Polynesia, and then to the primitivist: to the European modernist use of what used to be called the 'primitive' in art — a word Killeen will explicitly deploy in the title of *Black insects and red primitives* 1980, one of the greatest of the early cut-outs. It points, too, in a more particularly New Zealand context, to modernist use of Maori forms by both Maori and Pakeha artists.

Like Gordon Walters, and encouraged by his example, Killeen combines high modernism with the indigenous — high modernism with a subject matter, and a localist subject at that. And, like Walters, and like much indigenous Pacific art itself, he makes sophisticated formal play with interchanges between figure and ground. Hence — to borrow a few of their titles — the *Positive and Polynesian*, the *Polynesian green*, the *Pacific plywood*, the *My tribe* and the *Tribal colours* aspects of Killeen's triangulated grids of 1977-78.

Killeen disclaims any specific Polynesian meanings in his work: 'any meaning that the [Polynesian] design has is not the reason for using it.'²¹ And yet, as he notes of the contemporary American painter Frank Stella's use of Islamic art,²² and as his own title *Island influence* affirms, the borrowed forms will inescapably carry with them into the space of their new usage some connotatory trace of their place of origin. The zig-zag or triangle, though their original, specific meaning is lost, will bear with them, when they leave their site of origin, at least such generalised connotations as the 'tribal', the 'indigenous', or 'the Pacific'.

Or — and this is just as foreign to their original intent and function — Polynesian forms may be converted into a sign of national identity: a stock use in New Zealand art and craft. As Louise Henderson once wrote of New Zealand embroiderers: 'They may look at Maori patterns and find inspiration in their designs... Through this one may attain a national art'.²³ In the works of, say, Len Lye, Theo Schoon, Gordon Walters, and, following after them, Colin McCahon, a certain 'Maoriness' might be called an attempt to embroider a national signature.

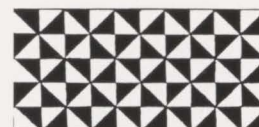
Killeen is perfectly aware, as the naive Nationalist is not, that, however Nationalist their motives might be, such local European moves to refer to 'the Maori' or to 'the Island' are predicated upon an international modernist primitivism. He is aware that the 'indigenous' is seen, used, consumed, through specifically modernist eyes. He knows that 'Polynesia' comes to him through a gaze filled with current American modernist painting, through painters like Kenneth Noland, Josef Albers, Jasper Johns, Gene Davis and Frank Stella. Through a Polynesia so seen, he is able to inflect the very latest moves in international modernism with some intonation of a particular place.

...Gene Davis
Hawaii — striped bark cloth — Noland
Fiji
Kula Exchange system
sheet of tapa Auckland Museum
from Fiji.²⁴

Of another non-European culture, Killeen writes: 'Egyptian ornament (Fortova — Samalova). For examples of modern hard edge abstraction. Contains Noland, Stella, Albers etc.'²⁵ You aim, as he further notes, not at a Johns *Target*, but at something equally admirable, and something with the additional advantage of a clear pertinence to this place: you aim at 'Polynesian targets'. You see a Polynesian circle-within-circle-within-circle through the sights of the contemporary Americans Noland and Johns. In using the geometric patterns of tapa, a sort of 'New Noland (Zealand)' can be made, though you see tapa with eyes which have also seen Persian carpets, and Egyptian wall paintings, and which are heirs, too, to the Greek geometers. The origin is never in the singular case.

Polynesian targets.
Polynesian persian
New Noland (Zealand)
*Pythagoras.*²⁶

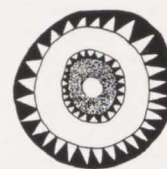
I have noted that *Stories we tell ourselves* includes Aboriginal rock art images. In fact, there are twenty-four of them. This is a source especially favoured by Killeen, at once localist but not too closely and obviously so, and with forms ranging, in fertile ambiguity, from the



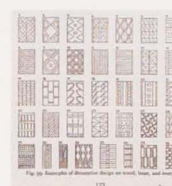
Ruth Greiner
Drawing of a Samoan tapa design c. 1920



Jasper Johns
Target with plaster casts 1955, detail



Tapa, Austral Islands
Peabody Museum, Salem, detail



W.B. Emery, *Archaic Egypt*
Pelican Books, 1961

23 Louise Henderson, 'Embroidery a Living Art', *Art in New Zealand*, September 1941, p. 38.

24 Richard Killeen, the blue notebook, p. 106. (Noland admired Killeen's Combs during a New Zealand visit, but found their form and tilt 'too naturalistic': that is, they were already a sign, floating against white, as in the cut-outs to come, rather than being an abstract painting proper.)

25 Richard Killeen, the blue notebook, p. 111.

26 Richard Killeen, the blue notebook, p. 111.



Stories we tell ourselves 1987
acrylic and collage on aluminium, detail



Stories we tell ourselves 1987
acrylic and collage on aluminium, detail



Island mentality no. 1 1981
alkyd on aluminium, detail

'figurative' to the seemingly 'abstract': the *unnameable* — at least for most of Killeen's viewers. Their wonderfully wobbly line (in part the product of Killeen's photocopying enlargement of the ink and paper grain of their miniaturised rendition in ethnographical figures) innumera- bly recurs in the cut-outs — as, for instance, with the irregular Q-like shape in *Island mentality no. 1* 1981, the year of Killeen's first use of Aboriginal rock art, and in the quotation of the same shape in *Tracing the lines of my face* 1985.

In nearly every one of the forty-eight cut-outs following *Island mentality*, at least one Aboriginal rock motif turns up, often in the form of a trembly-lined ovaloid grill. Typically, one of the rock-engraved boomerangs of *Stories we tell ourselves* hovers again into view in *Domestic (black and white)* 1987. The rock-art line, at least as mediated by the ethnographer's diagram, becomes a line in the face of the oeuvre itself.

It is one of those pleasing facts that are conveniently emblematic, that the Q-shaped Aboriginal rock art motif Killeen uses in *Island mentality* and *Tracing the lines of my face* should happen to be taken from several pages of diagrams of Aboriginal rock carvings pasted by Walters into his 1940s and 50s source-scrapbook, and, some twenty years later, given by him to Killeen as a photocopy.²⁷ Emblematic, that is to say, of what Killeen shares with his greatest local predecessor in the use of 'ethnic' sources.

Aboriginal forms becomes part of the dreamtime of the oeuvre as early as in the three superb *Dreamtime* cut-outs of 1980, where boomerangs float in the colours of night. 'This is my dreamtime', Killeen writes of the three.²⁸

Of course, to know something of Aboriginal art is itself a manifestation of New Zealand's geographic position, Australia being New Zealand's closest neighbour. It is part of New Zealand's island mentality in its happiest and most productive sense: hence perhaps the emergence of Aboriginal art in the cut-out of that name. Or is to know and to speak of the Aboriginal precisely to refuse the island mentality? In either case, these traditional images become another form of regional signature, attesting the Australasian.

Not that Killeen's references are confined, like those of the ethnographer, to traditional Aboriginal practice — to the ethnologist's fake past continuous tense, in which all signs of European contact are suppressed. See *Mickey of Ulladulla* 1995, a homage to a marvellously inventive post-contact Aboriginal artist, usually described by the unsatisfactory term 'folk'.

But what of Maori sources? Mightn't they be more expected than the Aboriginal, closer to home as they are? Curiously, there are not many in Killeen's art: in part, perhaps, because traditional Maori painting was not usually, as was Aboriginal painting, a figurative art of individual, separable signs: rather, one thinks of say the koru, a bulb and stem motif made part of the all-over pattern of kowhaiwhai (Maori rafter painting) or of the moko (Maori facial tattoo). The photocopy of the well-known and much reproduced drawing of his moko by Te Pehi Kupe, in *Domestic (black and white)*, is one of the few obvious exceptions to this relative paucity of Maori art imagery. And there is only the

27 For illustrations, see my *The Space Between: Pakeha use of Maori Motifs in Modernist New Zealand Art*, Workshop Press, Auckland, 1994, p. 172.

28 Richard Killeen, Artist's Statement on the *Dreamtime* cut-outs, *Age of Fishes*, Workshop Press for the Fisher Gallery, Auckland, 1991, p. 2.

occasional Maori artefact, as for instance the greenstone fish hook in *Born in New Zealand* — for Samuel, of the type that first appeared in Killeen's art in *Welcome to the South Pacific* 1980.

Though *Born alive in New Zealand no. 3* has the spiral motif typical of Maori carving, coloured, like Maori carvings, in earth red, there seem to be more Celtic spirals than Maori in Killeen's art, and sometimes — and this is itself significant — it is hard to tell which is which, what with the koru-like terminations of the Celtic pelta and spiral. See the Celtic convolutions — the spirals, interlaces and meanders — of *Measuring tools* 1994, or the coils and curlicues perplexing the red circle of the twenty-four piece version of the five versions of *Still life with James Joyce* 1995. Also, often as not, Killeen's spirals are neither Maori nor Celtic, but refer to those used in the primordial Europe-wide cult of the Goddess — most obviously in explicitly feminist cut-outs like *Time to change male institutionalised war* 1986.

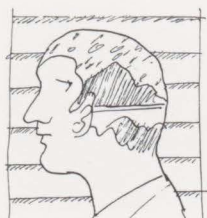
As his five painted homages to the great Irish novelist might remind us, Killeen's is an Irish name, his ancestors having come to this country as part of the Irish diaspora. Their origin was County Kerry — for which Killeen's sister is named. How this Irishness of subject might please those for whom it is now the compulsory task of art to assert its author's ethnicity (Mondrian should have painted tulips, Maori artists should desist from recourse to him).

But remember that Joyce fled precisely such pressures (the Gaelic Revival), crying back as he went: 'You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets.' Compare, then, Joyce's sense of net-like constraint with Killeen's cut-out *Inversion layer* 1989, where a huge pressure of air holds down all flight; or compare it to Killeen's drawing of 1984, *Flying above the negative society*, where, enviably (impossibly), a hawk, a goddess, and a winged paint brush fly free from the entombing mass of the native soil. Remember, too, that Joyce preferred a permanent exile to such a confinement as Ireland imposed — supersaturated though his stories remained with the Ireland he fled.



Aidan Meehan, *Celtic Design, Spiral Patterns*
Thames and Hudson, 1993

3 Stories of place: a suburban gentleman with a landscape in his head



Richard Killeen
The green notebook, p. 223, 1969



Richard Killeen
The black notebook, p. 222, 1985

'A suburban gentleman with a landscape in his head'. That nice phrase is Killeen's. It comes as the title to a notebook sketch of 1969 showing a profile head, with an island landscape silhouetted inside it — the *Island mentality* again — picked out against the white weatherboard wall of New Zealand suburbia.²⁹ This profile with interior landscape recurs in another notebook sketch nearly twenty years later,³⁰ and in a piece based upon that sketch in all six of the New Zealand-titled cut-outs, 1985-86.

Below the 1985 sketch of a man with a landscape in his head Killeen writes: 'The dominant group makes some subject matter more important than others eg. the sublime things that are "strong", intellectual, male, spiritual. Everything else superficial.'³¹ This 'dominant group' is the Nationalist movement of art and letters, which, between c.1930 and c.1970, sought to discover or to invent an essential New Zealandness, and to establish a truly New Zealand School of art. The 'subject matter' it made 'more important than others' was the New Zealand landscape. Never mind that most New Zealanders lived in cities and towns: the New Zealander was 'a suburban gentleman with a landscape in his head'; and the Nationalist artist was an urban person who painted the rural for other urban persons — an urbanite with a head full of the native earth.

Nationalist rhetoric is a phallic rhetoric, a rhetoric of hard men in hard light on hard land, which is why Killeen calls it 'male'.³² In Nationalist eyes, 'everything else' other than a spiritualised land is 'superficial': so much so, that for some forty years to paint anything other than the national landscape was to make one's work the object of a deliberate silence broken only by occasional remarks of a hardly believable level of hatred and scorn.³³ Hence the title that Killeen kept considering in 1985 — an up-your-nose title if ever there was one: *This is not a landscape*. And 'spiritual'? We shall see in a moment.

As well as these pieces showing a man with a landscape in his head, there are also, in each of the New Zealand-titled group, and in two related paintings of 1986, *Floating islands* and *Floating islands with strange birds and people*,³⁴ a number of pieces like the geological models of a museum display. *Born in New Zealand — for Samuel*, for instance, shows two such forms, both representing volcanic landscapes cut out like a cube of turf from the land.³⁵ The *Floating islands* cut-outs also show a number of other diagrammatic or model-like manners of referring to landscape, including a piece with hills above a wave pattern which clearly represents sea; and various silhouetted hills cut off at their base as though by an unrepresented sea — a type that goes back to the first and the third of the *Dreamtime* cut-outs of 1980.

In sum, there are a number of variously cropped 'not a landscape' pieces in the New Zealand-titled cut-outs, and in the two *Floating island* works. Radically curtailed as they are, we might call them amputated landscapes. Their slicing-off has its source, in part, in the symbolic landscapes of the Byzantine mosaics sketched by Killeen in San Marco, Venice, in 1984.

29 Richard Killeen, the green notebook, p. 223. (The green notebook is a clothbound, hardback notebook in which Killeen wrote and drew from June 1969 to March 1971.)

30 Richard Killeen, the black notebook, p. 222.

31 Richard Killeen, note dated 3.6.85, the black notebook, p. 222.

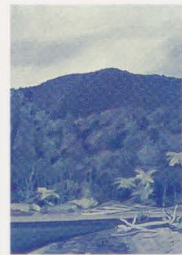
32 See my 'The Land, the Light, and Nationalist Myth in New Zealand Art', *Te Whenua, Te Iwi: The Land and the People*, ed. Jock Phillips, Allen and Unwin/Port Nicholson Press, 1987, pp. 48-60.

33 Abstraction, for instance, of the Walters or Mrkusich kind, was, in the influential critic A. R. D. Fairburn's opinion, a 'Jewish abortion', the 'cosmopolitan' art of those 'homosexuals' who infest all the big cities of the world.

34 The title *Floating islands* comes from a passage in Margaret Orbell's *The Natural World of the Maori*, which comments that the Maori poetic metaphor 'motu whakare' or 'floating islands' is 'a beautifully exact way of describing the islands of the Hauraki Gulf' as seen in the haze of heat or mist. The photograph of Rangitoto Orbell uses to illustrate the metaphor is remarkably similar to Killeen's pieces with silhouetted islands in the *Floating islands* and *Dreamtime* cut-outs, and in *Rainbow's reach*. Margaret Orbell, *The Natural World of the Maori*, Collins, Auckland, 1985, p. 81. (Orbell, then a professor of Maori studies at the University of Canterbury, was married to Gordon Walters.)

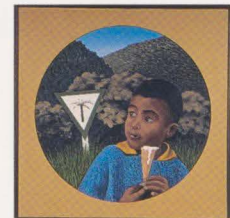
35 Such radically curtailed landscapes are not entirely confined to the *Born Alive* in New Zealand group and the two *Floating islands* cut-outs. Also, *Domestic* 1986, *Domestic with warship* 1987, and *Domestic (black and white)* 1987, each include a building on a rock landscape cut out so that its underground part is visible.

In Byzantine art the landscape fragment is isolated against blank gold or marble, or against flat colour or pattern. In the cut-out it is isolated against the white blank of the wall. In other words, both Byzantium and Killeen present the 'landscape' sign against a neutral background rather than embedding it in space. By adopting the device of a non-naturalistic period whose landscape fragments were not 'views' but signs, Killeen is able to return in a sense to the landscape of the New Zealand painting tradition, yet without returning to the classical 'view', and to that retrogression, at once political and aesthetic, which a use of the 'view' must imply. *This is not a landscape.*



Landscape 1966
acrylic on canvas, detail

In his last year at art school, and in the year after he left, Killeen was himself a landscape painter in something like the requisite Nationalist manner. Taught by Colin McCahon, he was begun in the New Zealand landscape tradition. Even in the realist works of 1968 and 1969, with their flight to suburbia — a place despised by the Nationalists as the home of materialist, emasculating women — there are some landscapes of a sort. But the jokey novelty of the ways Killeen gets them in marks the beginning of the end of Nationalist powers. Often, these are landscapes at a remove, in the second degree, in quotemarks as it were — reflected in a suburban window, say, or in a big Maori bloke's shades.



Boy eating an ice cream 1968
oil on canvas

Now that a McCahonian landscape of dark, bush-clad hill may reflect in one of Killeen's suburban windows, or come through its glass, now that the suburbanite may read his newspaper, or a child lick his ice cream amidst what were once the undefiled realms of the spirit, the old Nationalist antithesis of country and city, in which the country was invariably privileged, was coming undone. Killeen's landscapes of 1967 and 1968, like *Man and window reflection*; *Boy eating icecream*; *Car, hill and cloud*; or *Bulldozer*, mark the opening of the way into the country for highway and suburb; and at the same time they refuse, by showing the car as the shape of a shining freedom, the old Nationalist distaste for the car as that which loosens a properly regionalist rootedness, and as an object neither spiritual or sublime.³⁶



Car hill and cloud 1967
oil on glass

In 1970 Killeen painted his realism over and out with messy patches of paint, and landscape almost entirely disappeared from his art, seemingly for good. Yet now, it seems, in the 1980s, after an absence of a decade, landscapes of a sort were coming back. Why?

In New Zealand, as Killeen well knew, to paint landscape meant far more than simply happening to acquiesce to a traditionalist genre of European art, more than a merely unconsidered conservatism. Landscape here was liable to sound as a declaration of

³⁶ M. H. Holcroft, for instance, has it that the car 'loosens the roots instead of settling them'. (M. H. Holcroft, *Discovered Isles: A Trilogy; The Deepening Stream, The Waiting Hills, Encircling Seas*, Caxton Press, Christchurch, 1950, p. 45.)



Black notebook, 1985

allegiance to some forty years of Nationalist quest; and it was the occasion of an official patriotism, which would have every New Zealander gawp at the native dirt. This Killeen calls 'The politics of landscape'. As he writes, the landscape in New Zealand 'is not a landscape'. 'Really the politics of identity' is what it is. A form, that is to say, of 'parochialism'.

He also objects to what he calls 'the mystic of the land', the Nationalist for whom landscape painting was inextricably a matter of God as well as of nation, and for whom the Christian God's name, in a kind of spiritualising graffiti, should be brushed over every hill. He recalls McCahon's famous saying, 'I saw an angel in this land' — and this where *he* had seen a car.³⁷

All of New Zealand art, then, might be titled, in Killeen's succinct phrase, as a *Cross in landscape*, or drawn as a cross upon a hill. This too has a politics: the politics of what Killeen calls a Christian 'colonisation', in which 20th century Nationalist art rehearses, if this time on a symbolic level, the material and actual 19th century colonisation of the land — a land now proclaimed, once again, to be silent, empty, and without history. And there is also a gender politics at work here, since the Christian God is male. Killeen: *The patriarchy strikes again*.³⁸

The politics of landscape

This is not a landscape

Really the politics of identity

parochialism

Use of the landscape implies it contains culture some indigenous unique content.

*Trying to belong to a place. Born in New Zealand.*³⁹

cross in landscape

use of the land

colonisation

mystic of the land

37 Richard Killeen, note dated 3•1•85, the black notebook, p. 209.

38 Richard Killeen, the black notebook, note dated 3•1•85, p. 209.

39 Richard Killeen, the black notebook, p. 211. While McCahon is the obvious example of such a Nationalist 'mystic of the land', another is the landscape painter M. T. Woollaston, who once explained: 'I believe the bible is as good a textbook for art as for religion, and that a modern Christian art is due.' ('Toss Woollaston Explains Himself', *Art in New Zealand*, vol. 16, no. 1, September 1943, p. 13.)

40 Charles Andrew Cotton, *Geomorphology of New Zealand*, 1922, several diagrams from which are reproduced by Gordon H. Brown, *Colin McCahon: Artist*, A. H. and A. W. Reed, Wellington, 1994, p. 23.

41 Colin McCahon, 'All the Paintings, Drawings and Prints by Colin McCahon in the Gallery's Collection', *Auckland City Art Gallery Quarterly*, double number 44, 1969, p. 5.

Killeen's geological model-like pieces, referring to the whole New Zealand landscape tradition though they do, encourage a still more specific contextual reading. They are liable to call up for the New Zealand viewer the name of McCahon, since it is well known that in searching for the essence of the local McCahon had had recourse to the diagrams of typical New Zealand landforms in C. A. Cotton's *Geomorphology of New Zealand*.⁴⁰ The process, as McCahon conceived it, was one of stripping: of removing the merely contingent, the accidental garment of trees and farms, to get at the land's naked truth, its eternal essence beneath.⁴¹

However, whereas McCahon used Cotton's spare diagrams as a merely preliminary aid, to get him closer, so he hoped, to the land's naked truth, that essence of New Zealand which lay hidden beneath its cloak of human usage, Killeen focuses on the geomorphological model itself, seeing it as but one of the thousand forms of picturing in which Nature comes. For Killeen, there are no essences in the world, but only manners in which the world is seen, invented, made up, believed: there are only *The stories we tell ourselves*.

4 Stories of place: flaming stumps

Despite the relative paucity of regional references in their titles, Killeen's cut-outs do include many of what might be called locality's signs, both from New Zealand and from the Nationalists' dreaded 'overseas'. Look at *Born in New Zealand — for Samuel*. There are Polynesian triangulations. A Polynesian comb shape. A Maori fish hook. Fish-heads on an altar: the sacrificial offerings of an island economy, perhaps, though the heaped altar device is taken from ancient Egypt.

Fish, right from the start of the cut-outs, are a huge part of Killeen's iconography, and even of his titling⁴² — appropriately, it might be said, for an island country. A number of whole fish are here too in *Born in New Zealand — for Samuel*, and a spiralling seashell: New Zealand as endless shore — a standard view in New Zealand painting and poetry, and the shell a standard symbol.⁴³ Horned cattle, stacked as in Paleolithic cave painting and placed under the protective hand of a sky goddess also taken from ancient Egypt: the sign, perhaps, of a pastoral economy. Smoking volcanoes: the marks, maybe, of a country still geologically young. And, as we have seen, even the Nationalists' mandatory landscape is here, as in all the New Zealand-titled cut-outs, in the form of a 'gentleman with a landscape in his head' — a head which is also, it should now be said, a fish: another form of the *Island mentality*.

There is a flaming tree stump, too, a sign appearing in three of the New Zealand-titled cut-outs. Like the *This is not a landscape* signs, these stumps find their richest meaning in a specifically New Zealand context. Viewers familiar with 19th and 20th century New Zealand painting will recognise in the flaming stump two stock signs conjoined: the 19th century colonialist symbolic form of the tree stump, sign of the war between Civilisation and a native New Zealand Nature; and the 20th century symbolic form of the burnt-out tree of the native New Zealand forest.⁴⁴ Both signs refer to a specific New Zealand history — the clearing of the native forest for pastoral purposes — and both are repeated throughout countless New Zealand paintings.⁴⁵

In the Nationalist period, the burnt-out tree was also marketed and consumed as an emblem of New Zealandness, because it was so commonly present in New Zealand paddocks, as well as in acres of New Zealand paint. New Zealand, courtesy of its 'charred trees', was celebrated as 'unique', as like 'nowhere else in the world'.⁴⁶ Such trees seemed the clear sign of New Zealand's *difference* — that very kind of difference the Nationalists sought.

By the late 1950s, the adventures of the dead tree in New Zealand art appeared largely to have come to an end. As early as 1958, Peter Tomory, director of the Auckland City Art Gallery, had condemned as merely 'illustrative' the 'cliché in which burnt ... trees writhed about the hills'.⁴⁷ The use of such motifs in the search for a national style had, so it seemed, done no more for New Zealand art than to 'send it up a picturesque *cul-de-sac*'.⁴⁸

The motif reappears, however, in Killeen's *New Zealand Landscape Painting Tradition?*, in the form of a white twig stuck to the painting's frame. But it comes now only in quotemarks, as it were, as part of Killeen's painted critique of the icons of the old Nationalist school.



Born alive in New Zealand no. 2 1985
alkyd on aluminium, detail

42 In the cut-outs: *Fish and sticks* 1978; *Fish and twigs* 1979; *The frog and the fish* 1979; *Mushroom, fish and fly* 1979; *Fish years* 1980; *Age of fishes* 1980; *Pooled memory and some empty fish* 1984; *Joaquin's fish* 1989, in three versions; *Italo's fish painting* 1989, in three versions; *Fishdog* 1995; and *Leaping the fish* 1996.

43 See my 'No Other Land There Is or Rescue More', *Islands/Islands*, Centro Atlantico de Arte Moderno, Canary Islands, 1997, vol 2, pp. 275-298.

44 See my 'The Stumps of Beauty and the Shriek of Progress', *Art New Zealand* no. 44, Spring 1987, pp. 52-55, 104-105; and Michael Dunn, 'Frozen Flame and Slain Tree: the Dead Tree Theme in New Zealand Art of the Thirties and Forties', *Art New Zealand* no. 13, 1979, pp. 40-45.

45 The tree-stump and axe appear in 19th century New Zealand photographic and painted portraits as an attribute of the colonist. The axe-heads in Killeen's *Born alive in New Zealand — no. 2*, no. 3, and no. 4 recall this pictorial tradition.

46 E.H. McCormick, *The Inland Eye*, Auckland Gallery Associates, Auckland, 1959, pp. 7-8.

47 Peter Tomory, 'Looking at Art in New Zealand', *Landfall*, vol. 12 no. 2, June 1958, p. 167.

48 Peter Tomory, *ibid.*, p. 167.



Floating islands with strange birds and people 1986
alkyd on aluminium, detail



Chimney and cloud 1967
oil on glass



Born alive in New Zealand no. 4 1986
alkyd on aluminium, detail

And are the fires of the 1930s, 40s and 50s burning again in Killeen's New Zealand-titled works of 1985? No. The flaming stump appears now not as a sign of Nature, or of a specifically New Zealand Nature, but as a reference to those old Nationalist icons, the innumerable burnt-out trees of 20th century New Zealand painting, and to the innumerable stumps of 19th century New Zealand art.

The same is so of the juxtaposition of a stump and a smoking factory chimney in *Floating islands with strange birds and people*. Tree stump and chimney: they are the signs of that old antithesis of country and city in New Zealand Nationalist discourse. Already, in 1968, Killeen had shown a factory chimney, in *Chimney and cloud*. In *Interdependence* 1970, at the time of his first critiques of the culture's icons, he had again proffered factory chimneys instead of the Nationalists' requisite rural idyll. Now in *Floating islands with strange birds and people*, the conjunction of rural myth with urban fact is made explicit.

Nationalist painters proper, from c.1930 to c.1970, had kept factory chimney and tree-stump resolutely apart: they preferred in any case to stick to the depiction of a benign and idealised rusticity, which banished to pictorial invisibility all signs of urban industry, or even of the modern technology actually used in New Zealand's agrarian work. As Killeen notes: 'New Zealand Myth — factories, cities not landscape.'⁴⁹ The 'New Zealand myth' he refers to here has it that New Zealand is a rural nation; when, in demographic fact, most New Zealanders live in 'cities not landscape'. It is against this myth that the factory chimneys of the *Born alive in New Zealand* cut-outs most tell.

The motif never disappears in Killeen's art: consider the vertiginously smoking chimney of *Monkey's revenge* 1987; or the spectacle proffered in *Exterior with spectacles* 1997, of sixteen smoking chimneys scattered about amidst clouds. It is like a multiplication of the two images of *Chimney and cloud* of some thirty years before, with spectacles — sign of our sight — added in. Nor do the stumps and dead trees ever quite end. Both are abundant in *Vegetable theology* 1997, for instance, many in metamorphosis, with extruding arms, hands or human or animal heads: this is a story of how humans make Nature anthropomorphically posture, as if it is *our* story it tells, much as in Eric Lee-Johnson's famous *Slain Tree* 1945, and as in all the other works of the Nationalist dead tree school.

Killeen's juxtaposition of country stump and factory chimney coincides with a New Zealand identity crisis in the 1980s revolving round this question: is New Zealand a purely farming country — an endless rural idyll, to be supported at all costs by every taxpayer — or is it to be something else? England, the primary market of our sheep and dairy produce, had abandoned New Zealand and joined the European Common Market. Will the New Zealander still be only a 'gentleman with a landscape in his head'? Are New Zealanders to live under the sign of the Nature goddess as in that piece of *Born in New Zealand — for Samuel*, which has the hand of the sky goddess stretched protectively over cattle?⁵⁰ Or might they be like the double profile, the two-faced and computer-drawn head of Killeen's *Domestic (black and white)*, with office block and factory chimney in mind? Killeen's *Born alive in New Zealand* cut-outs are part of the questioning of its stories in which a whole culture partakes.

49 Richard Killeen, the black notebook, p. 238.

50 The hand of the goddess appears too in *Born alive in New Zealand* no. 1; *Born alive in New Zealand* no. 2; *Born alive in New Zealand* no. 3; and *Born alive in New Zealand* no. 4; and in *Floating islands with strange birds and people*.

5 Stories of gender

*Literature is crucial to disrupting the patriarchy, they say, because 'the stories we tell ourselves about who we are or hope to be play a primary role in creating & sustaining our identities...'*⁵¹

Killeen's cut-outs don't allow an oppositional posing of the standard dualities — male/female, active/passive, mind/body, light/dark, sky/earth, geometric/organic, intellect/intuition, light/dark, spirit/matter, culture/nature, signifier/signified, and so on — in which the male has traditionally been privileged. There is no place in their endlessly moveable, endlessly dispersed parts in which the old hierarchies might find their repose. Nor, it might be said, do Killeen's cut-outs ever speak in one voice, the monolithic voice of power, the unified voice of the Father. *No monotheism*. In their many-voicedness, in their disunity, in their preference for plurality, they refuse the Father's name.

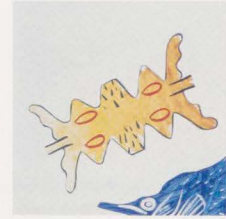
Such, perhaps, is Killeen's largest feminism.⁵² Typifying it, and typifying his general violation of old categories, is one of the most engaging characters of the cut-outs, the diatom: a submicroscopic creature which is neither certainly male nor certainly female, nor even certainly animal or vegetable — a little-boundary breaker if ever there was one. 'The opposition of the sexes must not be law of nature.'⁵³

But there are also specific occasions in Killeen's work of a kind of feminist deconstruction — occasions where gender becomes a matter of explicit dispute — most notably in the cut-outs of 1984-86, with such titles as *The politics of difference*; *Language is not neutral*; *Language is not neutral no. 2*; *Pawns and tools and the politics of difference*; *Looking is not seeing*; *About asking when the answer is no*;⁵⁴ *Time to change male institutionalised war*; and *Time to change the Greek hero*.

The cut-outs *Time to change male institutionalised war no. 1* and *no. 2* 1986, propose, with Nancy Hartsock, that 'political power is gendered, and that "military capacity, civic personality, and masculinity are coterminous."⁵⁵ They draw out 'the connection between masculine eroticism and military valour'. This is perhaps clearest in their erect cannon/penis/hills/cannon balls/testicles piece.

Throughout both versions of *Time to change male institutionalised war* there are various cropped forms in which the phallus is under threat. Both versions have a piece with four fingers as factory chimneys aflame, and two pieces with a chopped-off finger/bullet; and these phallic forms appear in the context of images of war, many of them phallic in their own right — bombs, a warplane, gun turrets, a tank, a warship, a gun barrel, signs of Hartsock's 'male fascination and struggle with death'.

There is also a broken classical column in both cut-outs. We are flagrantly here in the realms of the Freudian story in which any lopping of the body, or of a projecting form, is told as a threat to the phallus, as a symbolic castration.⁵⁶ At the same time, this column allows a telling in terms of a 'male fascination and struggle with death', since in a number of New Zealand war memorials, a 'column is cut off at an angle to remind the observer of lives cut cruelly short'.⁵⁷



Pawns and tools and the politics of difference 1984
alkyd on aluminium, detail



Time to change male institutionalised war 1986
alkyd on aluminium, detail

51 Richard Killeen, note dated 6 September 1985, the black notebook, p. 229. The note transcribes a passage from Beth Schneider, 'Innocent Bystanders?', paraphrasing and quoting from Nancy Hartsock, 'Prologue to a Feminist Critique of War & Politics', in *Women's Views of the Political World of Men*, ed. Judith K. Stiehm, Transnational Publishers, Dobbs-Ferry, NY, in *The Women's Review of Books*, vol. 11, no. 11, August 1985, p. 9.

52 For a discussion as to whether, and in what ways, and with what dangers and difficulties a male may be feminist, see Laurence Simmons, 'Language is not neutral: Killeen's Feminism', *Antic* 7, June 1990, pp. 75-94.

53 Roland Barthes, *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, trans. Richard Howard, Hill and Wang, New York, 1987, p. 68.

54 In the black notebook, p. 202, Killeen notes: 'Possible title from play by Renee at Theatre Corporate. About asking when the answer is no (asking society)'. The play referred to is Renee's *Wednesday to Come*, 1984, produced at Theatre Corporate, Auckland, November 1984. The lines which suggested Killeen's title were almost certainly these, as spoken by the character Granna: 'What's it all about Jeannie? It's about asking and getting no for an answer.'

55 Richard Killeen, the black notebook, pp. 228-229. See Note 51.

56 See also the testicles and truncated penis in *Mask with a lateral view*, 1986; and in *Mask with a lateral view no. 2* 1986; and the still more obvious example in *Mask with a lateral view no. 3* 1986. The title-inscribed piece of *About asking when the answer is no*, no. 2 1985, contains another broken column.

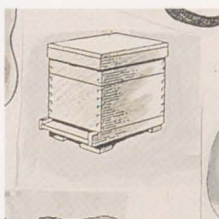
57 Chris Maclean and Jock Phillips, *The Sorrow and the Pride: New Zealand War Memorials*, Dept. of Internal Affairs, Wellington, 1990, p. 98.



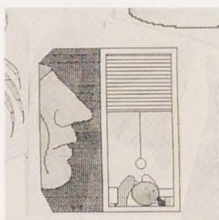
Time to change the Greek hero no. 2 1985
alkyd on aluminium, detail



Pawns and tools and the politics of difference 1984
alkyd on aluminium, detail



Domestic (black and white) 1987
pencil, acrylic and collage on aluminium, detail



Domestic (black and white) 1987
pencil, acrylic and collage on aluminium, detail

58 The title of *Language is not neutral*, 1984, is clipped from a passage in Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*: 'We come to know ourselves through being able to use language. But the language of a particular culture prescribes in advance positions from which to speak: language is not a neutral vehicle...' (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1981, p. 114. My emphasis.)

There are similar amputations in the two versions of *Time to change the Greek hero* 1985 — a title which shares with *Time to change male institutionalised war* its unusually imperative tone, and its dispute with male heroics. *Time to change the Greek hero* has a piece showing a classically sculpted male torso whose lower legs are sliced off, another torso with only one upper leg intact, and a truncated classical column. *Time to change the Greek hero no. 2* proffers the same group, plus a knife and a pool of blood.

Language is not neutral,⁵⁸ and neither, therefore, can the depiction of women be neutral, nor made from a neutral place. And so, when pictorial language approaches the female, Killeen subjects its forms to a kind of systematic indecision, in which those qualities traditionally called male (geometric, intellectual, active) and those traditionally called female (organic, intuitive, passive) keep changing their respective places: they don't stick where they ought; each imitates the form and style of the other. There is a constant slippage from one opposite to its other, such a sliding out of the old oppositions that their orders seem all but undone.

There are two opposing ways of depicting the female in these explicitly feminist works. One has her drawn in geometrical style, in forms akin to those of the Suprematism of the Russian abstract painter, Kasimir Malevich: a suprematist woman, then. Here, the attempt is to halt the endless rush of the code, to stop it for a moment in its tracks, by turning its own resources against it, using forms traditionally called male (the Malevichian geometric) to depict the female (traditionally organic). The other manner shows woman in the traditionally organic way, with classic and prehistoric goddess figures, and in the traditional trope which compares woman — or the vagina — to a flower. Occasionally, as in *Pawns and tools and the politics of difference* 1984, and *About asking when the answer is no* 1985, the two modes of depiction may even be conjoined, put demonstratively back-to-back.

Might we say, then, that the female is antithetically posed against the male in these cut-outs? In both versions of *Time to change male institutionalised war*, for instance, there are a number of 'domestic' items (a house with a woman at the front, a suburban house, pots, female profiles, a dress) which might be said to function antithetically to the imagery of war. Again, the otherwise inexplicable appearance of a warship, an industrial glove and a smoking factory tower amongst the various images of domesticity in *Domestic (black and white)* 1987, might be read, in Hartsock's words, as a 'threat' or 'opposition to, the private, the household, the necessary reproductive labour of the female population'.

In such a reading, the warship and industrial glove of *Domestic (black and white)* would be the antithesis of the three houses, the beehive, the shell and crab shell as natural house, and the child's drawing of a house; and it would be antithetical too, to the child's garment, the child's drawing of a bride, the head by the window, the kitchen chair, the cake, the sexual organs of flowers, and the domesticated animals and plants.

However, many of the images here refuse any too easy recuperation in antithetical terms. The bulldozer, for instance, which might seem a male machine *par excellence*, clears the space for the domestic spaces of Killeen's suburbia paintings of 1969. The section of tree trunk refers to the domestication of the native New Zealand forest. Both images, that is to say, admit the possibility that a certain violence is implicit within the domestic itself.

And what about all the burning houses in Killeen's art, the first of which, *Suburban disturbance*, was painted as early as 1970? Perhaps the disturbance comes as much from within the domestic as without; perhaps the household is as much prison as refuge; perhaps there is already a violence implicit in women's confinement to the reproductive and the domestic. (Killeen's later use of the title *Housetrap* for a house-shaped painting would tend to bear out this view.)⁵⁹

Furthermore, in both versions of *Time to change male institutionalised war*, there is a Suprematist woman — a female figure drawn in active pose and in a geometrical or Suprematist style — so that the essentialist and dualistic feminism which would regard woman as essentially peaceful, and men as essentially warlike, is somewhat upset. Also — as so often with the cut-outs — there are a number of images which cannot easily be related to the title's directives at all, unless we are to take it that in *The politics of geometry* — to borrow a title from nine cut-outs of 1991 where again we see Killeen's migrating cloud — the geometric is invariably male, and the organic, irregular, and incommensurable is female, an essentialist dualism it seems the Suprematist woman already refutes.

Time to change male institutionalised war, and *Time to change the Greek hero* are the most buttonholing of Killeen's titles, but even here, it seems, under the jurisdiction of these most sloganeering of words, and in this year in which Killeen's cut-outs are at their most flagrantly political, the cut-out's meaning is not fixed in advance of the spectator's composing and reading the work: it remains alive in a constant play.

It is not, then, that these cut-outs would necessarily have us believe in that essentialist feminism which argues that men are 'naturally' aggressive, and women are 'naturally' nurturing. The concern in all these 'feminist' works is rather, in the Killeen title, *The politics of difference* — how sexual difference is politically/socially/aesthetically coded, and so created. The concern is with the *Stories we tell ourselves* about gender, the *Stories we tell each other*.



Domestic (black and white) 1987
pencil, acrylic and collage on aluminium, detail



Domestic (black and white) 1987
pencil, acrylic and collage on aluminium, detail

59 *Housetrap* 1987, collage and acrylic on shaped polystyrene.

6 Stories of war

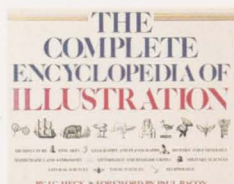
I will not serve
I will not fight.⁶⁰



Pawns and tools and the politics of difference 1984
alkyd on aluminium, detail



5000 Help-FUL Pictures, National Library Publications
Brooklyn, NY, 1969



J. G. Heck
The Complete Encyclopedia of Illustration, 1979

Let's return to Killeen's attending to Hartsock's proposition that 'military capacity, civic personality and masculinity are coterminous.' We shall see that for Killeen too it was something of a return. Not until 1998, with *The trickle down economy* and other works painted on price-tags — the rich pissing on the poor, stories of the free market economy — will Killeen make works so blatantly political as his paintings of 1984-85.

In three cut-outs of 1984, *The politics of difference*, *The politics of difference no. 2*, and *Pawns and tools and the politics of difference*, there is a piece depicting an Australian Pensioners' League building with a somewhat penile knob — a monument to Hartsock's 'Citizen warrior', a bastion of male, nationalist and warlike values. The Pensioners' League is the Australian equivalent of the Returned Servicemen's Association in New Zealand: that civic/military body which controls the celebration and memorialisation of the country's war dead on Anzac Day — bugles, poppies, parades. Such rites, as Hartsock would say, 'play a primary role in creating and sustaining our identities' as New Zealanders. The stories of Anzac heroism and sacrifice are amongst the most powerful stories we tell ourselves.

Out of the multitude of stories suggested by *Stories we tell ourselves* one is the story of war, and this by means of a scattering of knights' shields taken from the cover of the compendium *5000 Help-FUL Pictures*;⁶¹ and two warship diagrams, a German cruiser, three-quarter profile, and a German pocket battleship, bow view.⁶² The subjects boasted by the cover of another of Killeen's compendia sourcebooks, J. G. Heck's *The Complete Encyclopedia of Illustration* read: 'Architecture, Fine Arts, Geography and Planography, History and Ethnology, Mathematics and Astronomy, Mythology and Religious Rites, Military Sciences, Natural Sciences, Naval Sciences, Technology.' Such a list suggests the attempt, common to both the encyclopedia and the museum, at a complete description of the world, in which Religious Rites and Military and Natural Sciences may neutrally abut.⁶³

Is war in Killeen's art the same? Does it appear only as part of that hoped-for and impossible project: a total account of the world? As but one cultural form among others, none celebrated, none abjured, seen all with the apparent objectivity of the encyclopedic or museological gaze?

Certainly, that encyclopedia's list encapsulates, with an admirable concision, the vast range of Killeen's subject matter — all but two of its items appearing, for instance, in *Stories we tell ourselves*. Certainly, too, the museum's methods of displaying insects, plants, and such artefacts as stone tools in repetitive array against a blank plane have affected the form as well as the subject matter of the early cut-outs. The story of the museum is another of the stories Killeen's cut-outs tell.

'Each thing needs to be in real space. Can have nails through each,' Killeen notes when considering making the first cut-out, 'like [an] insect collection'.⁶⁴ And each piece in the

60 Richard Killeen, the green notebook, p. 50. Note towards the painting *Lucifer's motto* 1970.

61 *5000 Help-FUL Pictures*, National Library Publications, Brooklyn, New York, 1969.

62 The two warship diagrams are from Duncan Hawes, *Ships and the Sea*, Hart, Davis, MacGibbon, London, 1975.

63 J. G. Heck, *The Complete Encyclopedia of Illustration*, Crown Publishers, USA, 1979.

64 Richard Killeen, the black notebook, p. 71.

cut-outs will indeed have a nail through it, like the entomologist's pin, attaching it to the wall. The insect collection is not only a common subject in the first cut-outs — see, for instance, *Black crawlers* 1978; *Flyers* 1978; or *Black insects, red primitives* 1980 — it immediately offers, to the very first cut-outs, a mode of relating forms, and a mode of hanging. Later, Killeen's debt to a specific museum will be acknowledged in a title: *From the Cairo Museum* 1985.

Definitely too, a military note quite often obtrudes among Killeen's peaceful scenes of the natural sciences. *Collection from a Japanese garden, 1937*, for instance, a cut-out of 1978, is based on a natural history collection gathered in one day from a single Japanese site, a collection unfortunately now dispersed, but once held in a marvellously poetic box in the Auckland War Memorial Museum. Here was science in the garden, and science as biographic — the record of a happy and industrious time had by a particular person in a specific historical moment.

In Killeen's version, we see the expected collection of insects and plants, and some perhaps not entirely unexpected artefacts. But also — and this is entirely unexpected — a Japanese fighter plane. Though this disruptive aside was provoked, perhaps, by a certain similarity of shape between plane and butterfly, it surely relates too, to the poignant fact that this collection, with all the sunny idyll of knowledge it implies, was made shortly before Japan bombed Pearl Harbour and suddenly entered the Second World War.

Is it accident that even before Killeen comes to peer into this box, to discover its charming record of a peaceful and individualised science, the conjunction of science and war already inheres in the very name of the Auckland War Memorial Museum? And this when the Museum and its library are the source of so many of Killeen's biological, botanical and ethnological forms?

Is it mere chance that the very face of the Museum which houses those seemingly innocent sciences should be carved, in pseudo-Greek manner, so that its every metope commemorates a battle in which New Zealanders lost their lives? That the Museum's whole top floor should be a War Memorial, its walls listing the names of the New Zealand dead? (The Museum as Temple of Nation: the Museum as Temple of War: the Museum as Temple of Death: a Greek temple built on a hill, Acropolis and Necropolis.) And is it fortuitous, thinking of Hartsock again, that its architecture should be a severe and splendid Doric: the masculine Order?

In any case, such antithetical 'asides' as that Japanese fighter remain a constant in Killeen's work: as with a tank and a bomber placed amongst the innocent artefacts of *From the Cairo Museum*; or the cruiser amongst the peaceful forms of *Domestic (black and white)*, and *Domestic with warship*. Conversely, two placid suburban houses, of the weatherboarded kind Killeen had painted in 1969, appear in both versions of *Time to get rid of male institutionalised war*.

However, as even the title alone of that last work makes clear, military matters are not always confined by Killeen to asides — in *Don't forget the bombs and the dogs* 1979, with its



Display case, Hemingway Collection, Auckland War Memorial Museum, c. 1978, detail



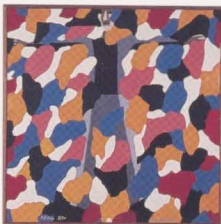
Don't forget the bombs and the dogs 1979
lacquer on aluminium



Soldier 1968
oil on canvas



Anzac spectacle 1970
oil on hardboard



Lucifer's motto 1970
oil on hardboard

silhouettes of bombs, tank, cruiser, eagle and dogs, already the military and non-military assume more or less equal pictorial weight.

Stories of war go back a long way in Killeen's art. As early as 1968, instead of seeing angels in the land, or the crucified Christ, he saw soldiers — another of the land's actual and material uses — as in *Soldier*, with its gun-toting male in camouflage garb in the bush of Destruction Gulley; or *Territorial*, whose amateur soldier, lying in the foreground grass, aims his gun out of the picture — and directly at you.

A number of the paintings in Killeen's first solo show (Barry Lett Galleries, 25 May 1970) were devoted to a critique of New Zealand nationalism and war. The camouflage patterns garbing his soldiers of '68 are now, Jasper Johns-like, spread all over the picture's surface, and made part of the twin theme of war and of meanings concealed. In *Anzac spectacle*, for instance, gory patches of paint camouflage the pun of a pair of wire spectacles such as might have been worn at Gallipoli, and a war memorial monument — a stepped structure with ziggurat aspirations, like the one outside the Auckland War Memorial Museum.

Anzac Day, 25 April, is one of the major public rites of New Zealand culture: annual day and public show of remembrance of the war dead, especially of the two World Wars, and of the Korean War, the Malayan War, and the Vietnam War. Claimed by its sponsors as an apolitical commemoration of the glorious dead, Anzac Day had also, so it seemed to Killeen, an unstated political function: that of making what he called, in a note headed 'Anzac Day', 'the calm necessity of war' seem our 'inevitable destiny' in the present.⁶⁵ This was why in the 1960s Anzac ceremonies and monuments, such as the dawn service at the monument in front of the Auckland War Memorial Museum, were the site of anti-war demonstrations, whose proclamation was the same as that of the rebel angel of Killeen's 1970 painting *Lucifer's motto*: 'I will not serve'.

Lucifer's motto has a figure crucified on a camouflaged map of the United States of America. For Killeen's generation, 'U.S.A.' had one connotation above all: the Vietnam War, in which a National government, claiming that it was our obligation as a member of the ANZUS pact (Australia, New Zealand, the United States of America) had made New Zealand an ally of the Americans. New Zealand's part in the war was despised by young intellectuals and the bohemian left — those, in Killeen's words, 'long in the hair though short in the tooth': that same subculture from which many of Killeen's audience came.⁶⁶ The Vietnam War was also for them the occasion of some personal fear, for it seemed that at any moment the New Zealand government might follow Australia (then too politically more sycophantic to America than we), and a national military call-up would be declared.

Killeen's 'I will not serve I will not fight' is a refusal of both Church and State, echoing the famous refusal of James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: 'I will not serve that

⁶⁵ Richard Killeen, the green notebook, p. 61.

⁶⁶ Richard Killeen, the green notebook, p. 51.

in which I no longer believe, whether it call itself my home, my fatherland, or my church.' Accordingly, in a number of the paintings for the 25 May exhibition, the alliance of the Church with the State in war was implied by various minglings of camouflage, cross, gravestone cross, and rifle and military helmet.

That Christianity is complicit in war was not an uncommon topos for that youth culture from which Killeen's audience was largely drawn, as in the Bob Dylan song of the time, 'With God on Our Side'. It was a time when Auckland's Catholic priests who joined in anti-Vietnam War demonstrations were suspended from preaching duties by their Archbishop; a time when (as if in counterproof of religion's role in war) the only way to avoid military service, should by bad luck your ballot come up, was to demonstrate allegiance to some pacifist sect (preferably fundamentalist Christian) — Christian clergy sat fat on the panels which determined the conscientiousness of objection. And every Anzac ceremony proved that 'Religious Rites' and 'Military Sciences' abut.

The complicity of the Church with the State in war had become clear to the New Zealand young. For Killeen, therefore, as for many of his peers, Christianity was a 'pollution of mind'.⁶⁷ Hence all the crosses and military helmets inside the profile head in *Pollution* 1970. And hence the way, in *Soldier with man passing* of the same year, some of the camouflage patches assume the shape of a soldier's profile in steel helmet, while others are worked into the shape of a cross, whose outlines interlock with the military profile. That same complicity is camouflaged too in *Anzac with Southern Cross* 1970, where four hidden stars make at once an emblem of nation and inscription of Christ's sign in the Southern sky.

It was not just a matter of objecting to New Zealand's part in a war being fought and protested against at the moment of painting: as though New Zealand might remain outside of war, unsullied by it, and the more purely itself, simply by refusing the demands of external powers. It was not that there was already an existent New Zealand before war, an isle of peace, isolate and inviolate. Rather, there is no New Zealand before war. War is inextricably in New Zealand, riddling it to the very heart.

In Killeen's anti-war paintings such as *Anzac dreamtime*, New Zealand is seen as an entity formed in its dreaming of war; as constituted by war, so that these are the dreamed islands of death. Signs of war such as the military helmets and the camouflage patterns first painted in the realist landscapes of 1968 mingle now with such signs of nation and place as the war memorial monument (*Anzac spectacle*), the map of New Zealand (*Bang, bang*), and the stars of the Southern Cross (*Anzac with Southern Cross*). This is the nation of 'Citizen warriors'; a nation formed in a cult of death.



Searchlight 1972
oil on particle board

In *Searchlight* 1972, a rocket and a steel-helmeted U.S. Marine; in *Battle for the mind* and *Battle of the mind*, both of 1972, a U.S. Marine and a fighter plane. The phrase 'battle for

⁶⁷ 'Religion as pollution of mind (man's head)' — a note towards *Pollution* 1970. (Richard Killeen, the green notebook, p. 68.)



About asking when the answer is no 1985
alkyd on aluminium, detail



One foot twelve inches 1970
oil on hardboard, detail

the mind' comes from an American claim, notorious at the time, since their favoured means was flesh-burning napalm, to be battling for the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people. *Search and destroy* 1972, with its further helmeted Marine, recalls another stock American phrase of the day. This same America, in its deplored Imperial rather than its admired art aspect, will come again in 1985, in the skull and U.S.-starred rocket piece in the two versions of *About asking when the answer is no* 1985.

Amongst the images chosen and strewn by a dicing and dealing chance through *One foot twelve inches* 1970, are maps of New Zealand, pistols, and military medals, and the military helmets which had first appeared in the works of 1968 and 1970. By the accidents of their conjunction with the bearded self-portraits scattered through this painting — in panel twelve Killeen has a face full of military medal: a man with a medal in his head — we may see that Killeen's self too, like the self of all New Zealanders, is formed in the cult of death.

Nor even was Killeen's 1970 show the first occasion of his noting a New Zealand glorification of war and death. In *Man with monument* 1968, he had already posed war as an inextricable part of the New Zealand Arcadia. *Man with monument* has a figure posed in football jersey against a stone monument whose partly obscured inscription reads:

THE
GLORIOUS
DEAD

For the New Zealand viewer the given signs are sufficient: the inscription is already written: THE GLORIOUS DEAD. Not only is this the inscription of the monument in front of the Auckland War Memorial Museum — the same monument hidden in *Anzac spectacle*. Killeen can rely on the fact that New Zealand viewers carry in their minds innumerable New Zealand small towns, in the melancholy emptiness of whose public spaces war memorials are the only civic proclamation, and the only civic monument. In *Man with monument* two of the most characteristic cults of New Zealand culture, and conscious assertions of national identity, are conjoined: the cult of rugby and the cult of the war dead, both of which assert national identity in terms of the male.⁶⁸

In Killeen's 1968-1970 examinations of militarism, however, it might seem a mere accident, or an unconsidered reflection of fact, that the military figure should in every case be male. The pre-cut-out paintings did not assert gender as *theme*. It was not until his encounter with such feminist critiques as Hartsock's in the 1980s that Killeen came consciously to consider that the military and the nationalistic might be specifically male. Nevertheless, his earlier critiques of the New Zealand 'Citizen warrior' had in a sense prepared him for his encounter with the Hartsock claim that 'political power is gendered'; they were Killeen's own 'Prologue to a Feminist Critique of War'; his first examination of the *Stories we tell ourselves* about war.

68 See Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, revised edition 1969. This was Killeen's New Zealand history text at school, and he owns the revised edition. Sinclair claims there, without dismay, that New Zealand's sense of national identity was formed by two things above all: rugby and war. He further elaborates this theme, again without regard for its essentially male nature, in his *A Destiny Apart: New Zealand's Search for National Identity*, Allen & Unwin and Port Nicholson Press, Wellington, 1986.

7 Stories of his own art

Collections of things ... New combinations of old elements.⁶⁹

In *Stories we tell ourselves* Killeen includes a photocopy of one of his own linocuts of 1971 — a man rushing away, as it were, from the realist phase and into an abstract, roughly triangular plane. In resisting that rush into futurity, and returning to this youthful work, Killeen measures the distance his art has travelled in these sixteen years. *Look over your shoulder some time*, says a painting of the same year as that linocut.⁷⁰ In fact, such a looking back has many precedents in his art.

In *Once more with feeling* 1976, for instance, in *Some of his parts* of the same year, and in a number of other works scattered through 1975-76, we may see Killeen making out of some years of his work *one work* — a kind of accumulation of disparities. Such works, each a depository of Killeen images of diverse date, we might call Samplers: specimens of proficiencies attained, and now preserved and displayed within a single enclosure.

We catch Killeen here in the act of reading his own oeuvre. Enclosed in his own past, he is distanced from such present self as he might have as he gazes over his own retrospective. And yet, in bringing into focus selected parts of that retrospective, he is constructing a present self. The sampler becomes prospective, as well as retrospective, since he 'presumes on the basis of a resumé'.⁷¹ He cuts out from the oeuvre, and thus sharply marks off from the rest, what in it he wants to be and become. He attempts — prematurely, it might seem to hindsight — the decisive indecision the cut-outs will come to: neither figurative nor abstract,⁷² neither geometric or organic, neither hard-edged or soft, but all and at once.

'That am I,' he is saying. 'I am the product of that.' Or rather — and this is hardly able to be said — 'those are I': those disparate effects, products each of the various years, are what I am. They are what makes me. And they are also what I compose myself of — for there is an element of wilfulness here. He leaves out, for instance, in curating these mini-retrospectives, the painterly works of 1970-71, and the realist works before that; he takes only what might stand alone as a sign. The self is never itself, it seems, until the end, when it is achieved as a *production*. 'You as invention,' as he says.⁷³

It will be some years before he will pen in his notebook the words: 'the stories we tell ourselves about who we are or hope to be play a primary role in creating & sustaining our identities'.⁷⁴ But already the Samplers are exactly that: stories Killeen tells about who he is and hopes to be as an artist — stories 'creating and sustaining' that identity we call Killeen. It is a strategy of auto-generation and auto-graphing, a mono-graphing and solo-showing with paint.

And yet it is hardly that Killeen is avid now for some new and more complex coherency, some higher unity — there is no synthesis here. Rather, there is an attraction to the *incoherent* when he goes looking in the past of his work. He does not succumb to the institutional requirement of the monograph, survey, or retrospective, that it recover a unified ego — a signature style — from all the heterogeneity of a past practice. He endeavours instead to keep the pungency of his past's parts — their separability — to preserve, when he places a beetle, a frog or a fish next to a precisionist grid, the pang of *difference*.



Stories we tell ourselves 1987
acrylic and collage on aluminium, detail

69 Richard Killeen, the black notebook, p. 19.

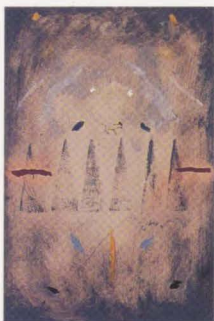
70 Richard Killeen, *Look over your shoulder some time* 1971.

71 Lucien Dallenbach, *The Mirror in the Text*, trans. Jeremy Whitely & Emma Hughes, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1989, p. 67.

72 In fact, the combination of realism with abstraction has always been a tendency in his art: see the 'abstract' in the background of his realist painting, *Woman with Clifford Still* 1969; or the purely abstract-seeming weatherboard stripes, like a Noland stripe painting, of the side panels of *Doorway man* 1968. This tendency to combine the figurative with the abstract culminated in the cut-outs.

73 Richard Killeen, note dated August 1971, the blue notebook, p. 27.

74 Richard Killeen, note dated 6 September 1985, the black notebook, p. 229, citing Hartsock.



Across the Vistula 1972
oil on hardboard



National insect 1997
Lumocolor on aluminium, detail



Frogshooter 1976
acrylic on canvas, detail

75 'This may be too much to ask,' says Killeen, but 'Walters and Mrkusich don't provide [enough of] a base to work from. In typical New Zealand fashion of having to prove and do everything yourself before something becomes possible — now comes the effort of finding if abstraction is possible for me.' (Richard Killeen, the blue notebook, p. 98.)

All that refusal of development and maturation, that operation by displacement, those abrupt and catastrophic mutations, those endless cleavages between the component parts of the oeuvre which have characterised Killeen's development are here in the Samplers re-produced — but with this difference: the conflict is now among the components of the single painting. In a single space now, he marks the co-existence of the incompatible. He makes a monograph in which the mono is undone, a solo show which might seem a group show — much as he will in the cut-outs to come.

Once more with feeling 1976, for instance, caring not a straw for congruence, lays nonchalantly out in a triple-stacked row two butterflies; two beetles; a dragonfly; a ladybird; four brushstrokes and a squiggle such as had appeared on the pale grounds stretching from the *Across the Vistula* paintings of 1972 through to the earliest Combs of 1973; two overlaid, triangulated Grids of the kind that emerged from the triangulated teeth of the Laces and Combs of 1973-75; a yellow rectangle; a comb reminiscent of the Combs of September 1974; and five circles of various colours of haze, which, together with that brushstroke and squiggle, are as close as we get to the painterly here. The wings of one of the butterflies are patterned with a triangulated grid akin to the grid beside it: a derisive reconciliation of those stock antagonists in art discourse, Mr Geometric and Mrs Organic — a device Killeen returns to in one of the swarm of seventy-one insects in *National insect* 1997.

Pea Beau 1976, scatters two bugs and a butterfly on the white canvas beside a triangulated grid. Again a touch of self-mockery: *Pea Beau* was a flyspray, well known at the time, and the yellow/blue/black of this grid were the colours of its can — a spray, it seems, insufficient to repel that butterfly, bug and fly. Like the insects of *Once more with feeling*, they hover at margins of the grid, as if waiting a chance to invade.

Occasionally in 1976, a fish, bird, butterfly or bug gets through to the grid itself. The splendid *Untitled*, for instance, has a red and white triangulated grid formed by diagonally bisected squares, with a bug crawling up a white swathe cut, as if for its convenience, diagonally through; while stuck in the overlaid, intermeshed grids of *Frogshooter*, we find a frog, a gull, a fish, a bug, a wasp, a zebra, and a plant stem in cross-section. Here, again in an absolute violation of high modernist protocol, the abstract is interfered with by the figurative; the geometric is interfered with by the organic: there is a complete collision of codes.

Such an impropriety, such a misbehaviour with the grid, in this insouciant strewing of the figurative into the abstract, is perhaps in some part a matter of geographic location. Modernism comes to Killeen very largely as something from without, from 'overseas'; and so, perhaps, it is something that may be used — or played with — differently.⁷⁵ Because it comes from so far away, where not a soul will ever see what he does with it, Killeen may treat the incoming grid irresponsibly, as it were, improperly, or in an uncommitted, negligent and eccentric manner.

The word 'frogshooter' is a vernacular term for a person of doubtful propriety. Certainly, Killeen's is a treatment of the grid — that form of high modernism *par excellence* — which

is careless of its proprieties as maintained in the European and American centre. It is interesting in this regard that Killeen will later publish statements which relate a geographic peripherality to an 'impure' modernism. He will speak of the Uruguayan painter, Joaquín Torres-García (1874-1949) as an artist who began 'far from the centre' — and this in the context of his own series in homage to Torres-García, *Joaquín's fish* 1989, in which, as with Torres-García himself, figurative images are made to overlay the geometry of a 'purist, essentialist ... modernism'.⁷⁶



Soon, in a series of 1977 stencilled on sand-strewn surfaces, it will seem that Nature, largely excluded from the grids of 1975 and 1976 and only occasionally breaking in, has been furiously breeding somewhere in secret, to return, in plague proportions, in the form of a veritable contagion of insects, butterflies, animals, fish, and plants, and entirely to crowd out the grid. If, as Rosalind Krauss has nicely said, the grid is 'the means of crowding out the dimensions of the real', if it is 'what art looks like when it turns its back on nature',⁷⁷ then art, it seems, had better look to its back. Nature might be seeking revenge.

And then, in 1978, these works will themselves be replaced by the triangulated grids on aluminium, from which all organic life is expelled, only to return in the cut-outs which replace those grids — while at the same time retaining traces of their triangulations — starting with *Across the Pacific*.

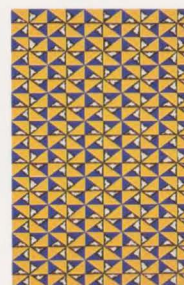
But for the moment the precarious balance of the Samplers is maintained, weird though their mixes are. *Some of his parts* 1976, for example, selects, and once more with feeling, these disparate parts of Killeen's past and scatters them over its red. A triangulated Grid. A Grid of the kind that developed directly out of the Combs in 1975. A comb as of the Combs of 1973-74. A square-based Grid of the kind yet to be lacquered on aluminium in 1978. A grid combining the cloudy, dappled, organic with the planar, linear, geometric, as in a number of Grids of 1975. A circular Lace as of 1975. A ladybird. Three more-or-less circular, hazy blobs. An irregular ovaloid mark such as might have appeared in the *Across the Vistula* group of 1972. A long-legged insect. And a butterfly.



All I say above of the Samplers is true of the cut-outs, too, for this sampling of the oeuvre never really stops. *Tracing the lines of my face*, another of Killeen's stories about his own art, has a comb shape, as if one of the Combs had been cut from some canvas of 1974, a flat red dragonfly, as if a piece had been stolen from the wall of one of the cut-outs of 1978-80, and a trotting dog as if unpacked from the box of another early cut-out, *7 dogs* 1979. Again, *Social fragments* 1997 takes the triangle-toothed Combs of 1973-74 and the triangulated Grids of 1976-78, multiplying and miniaturising them until their figure/ground flicker is almost unbearable, and casting amongst them a handful of small, vulnerable, overwhelmed figures. So the triangulated grids are granted an entirely new meaning, made into a metaphor of that social fragmentation Killeen believes a free market economics has caused.



Joaquín Torres-García
Untitled (fish) 1932, detail



Blue baron 1975
acrylic on canvas



Tracing the lines of my face 1985
alkylid on aluminium, detail

⁷⁶ Richard Killeen, 'Notes about some of the issues in the paintings', in Richard Killeen and Francis Pound, *Richard Killeen: Lessons in Lightness*, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney, 1989, p. 5. See too Richard Killeen, Artist's Statement, *Age of Fishes*, Workshop Press for Fisher Gallery, Auckland, p. 8. In 1974 Killeen purchased Daniel Robbins, *Joaquín Torres-García*, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, 1970, plates 26 and 81 of which provided him with the fish of his homage to Torres-García, in the group of works entitled *Joaquín's fish*.

⁷⁷ Rosalind Krauss, 'The Grid', *October* no. 9, 1979, p. 51.



The frog and the fish 1979
acrylic lacquer on aluminium



Destruction of the circle 1990
acrylic and collage on aluminium, detail



Exterior with hats 1997
acrylic and gesso on aluminium, detail



Chair in head 1969
dye and ink on canvas

Likewise the great charred heap of *Burial mound* 1992 is not only a memorial to Aids victims, specifically made for the Fisher Gallery exhibition 'Implicated and Immune: Artists' Responses to Aids'. In typical Killeen double meaning, it consists in large part of a heap of left-overs and discards from his own recent work — tissues awaiting cremation.

If Killeen as artist is a multitude of irreconcilable and constantly changing personages, he is also a multitude which sometimes recalls parts of its earlier selves. Remember that 'gentleman with a landscape in his head' in the New Zealand titled cut-outs of 1985, which mirrored the suburbanite with a landscape in his head in a notebook sketch of 1969? And recall the frog of *Frogshooter*: it is repeated in *The frog and the fish* 1979; in *Collection from a Japanese garden*, 1937; in *The blue horse* 1980; in the fittingly titled *Appropriation no. 3* 1983; in the equally fittingly titled two versions of *Subjective attachments* 1983; and in *Destruction of the circle* 1990, where it overlays a Comb such as Killeen had painted through 1973-74. Killeen's oeuvre constantly draws upon itself.

And the isolated little cloud of *Chimney and cloud* 1967: it constantly recurs, thirty years later, through the cut-outs of 1997: multiplied in *Rain clouds*, in *Walk the black dog* (whose title is vernacular for living with depression — hence these black clouds as thought bubbles, and these clouds turning into dog turds); amongst the hats and rain in *Exterior with hats*; and amidst the urban *not a landscape* of the smoking factory chimneys, the telegraph poles and the spectacles of *Exterior with spectacles*. While earlier, in 1991, in the nine *Politics of geometry* cut-outs, the organicism of clouds was antithetically posed against the geometries of a rationalistic and mechanistic order.

The Chance paintings of 1970 had done this, too, retrospectively compiling the habitual imagery of the earlier realist suburbia works, taking, say, a bulldozer, a tiger, an armchair, a clock, and adding to them items from the non-realist, painterly works which followed — a lamb, say, a road-crossing sign, a plus and a minus sign — and submitting them all to the chance of a throw of dice or a shuffle of cards.

Those same clocks will be gathered, in a hilarious account of the mechanistic time Capitalism has imposed on the world, to harry the hurrying figures amidst the maniacally ticking collection of the 220-piece cut-out, *Clocks* 1997 (a suburban gentleman with a clock in his head). And those same armchairs of the Chance paintings, and of the preceding suburbia paintings, where they are so much main characters that they outnumber the figures by far, recur too in such cut-outs of 1997 as *Interior with dogs*, where they remain a symbolic form of suburbia (a suburban gentleman with an armchair in his head).

Killeen's 'returns', we might call them — his re-readings. In telling stories of itself, Killeen's art constantly establishes its own tradition of itself. Doubtless all artists do this, but here that establishment is turned into a theme, as the oeuvre audibly says to us: 'Here I am *Tracing the lines of my face*.' This announcement may be taken in two ways: 'I am and already was before this, and here I am tracing the lines of that already given face'; or, more radically: 'I am, in that I am tracing the lines of my face: it is this very act of tracing which makes me.'

In 1983 a notebook entry suggests: 'Appropriation as a possibility & title. Taking of images from other works done this year & combining them into a new work.'⁷⁸

It was not that the expatriation of images from one work to another was new in Killeen's art. His images had long been somewhat nomadic, most clearly in the case of the numbered variant of a given work, or when, as in the case of the Combs and the Constructivist Grids a stencil was used, encouraging an estrangement of the image from any particular ground, and its repetition from one work to the next. The same was so of Killeen's use of stamps, as, for instance, with the hook stamp repeatedly used in *Hooks in the sky* 1973, and through other works of the time; or as with his use of a stamp for signatures — a derisory practice if ever there was one.

What was new was that in 1983 Killeen's titles made such migration a matter for remark. Novel — for the cut-outs at least — was such self-consciousness about the migratory part. Now there was a publicly stated open-door policy, a free trade of images: the borders were down. It was like a xenophobic's worst nightmare: the cut-out might become a country formed entirely of resident aliens.

Take the five cut-outs entitled *Appropriation* 1983. The word 'appropriation' implies an active taking possession of something — even if, as here, it is largely a taking of parts of oneself to oneself. In these cut-outs particularly, much as the Samplers before, the later Killeen once again plunders the earlier, so that the later is, at least in some part, wilfully and actively formed by the possibilities the earlier opens.

The frog of *Appropriation* no. 3 goes back to the frog of *Frogshooter* 1976; and the diagonally striped horse of the same cut-out is appropriated from *One to one* 1983, which itself took it from *Chance and inevitability* 1982, which took the same horse from *Black horse* 1980, adding that diagonal stripe. If the oeuvre is a body, a *corpus*, this is body-snatching, and putting that body to the knife — a transplanting of organs from a past to a present body of work.

The cut-outs titled *Pooled memory* are also apposite. The memory referred to here is, at least in part, the oeuvre's genetic memory of itself: a kind of gene pool of images. We might consider here, too, the cut-outs entitled *Subjective attachments*⁷⁹ and *Prior knowledge*,⁸⁰ where also Killeen knows — and shows that he knows — his own past; where he displays his subjective attachments to various of his images by appropriating them from his own earlier selves, so that the cut-out becomes — in the words of another title of the time — a *Living memory*.⁸¹

Here again, much as in the Samplers, we catch Killeen sampling his own earlier selves. In the deliberate act of constituting his works as an oeuvre we catch him tracing the lines of his face. Or rather, we do not so much catch him here in the act, as have him flaunting it in our face. With the *Appropriation* cut-outs, Killeen once again suggests by deed of title that he is making of the times of his work, one work, gathering the scattered trove of his past into the simultaneity of a single, disparate, presence: the story of his own art.



Hooks in the sky 1973
oil on hardboard

78 Richard Killeen, the black notebook, p. 167.

79 *Subjective attachments* no. 1 1983; and *Subjective attachments* no. 2 1983.

80 *Prior knowledge* 1983; *Prior knowledge* no. 2 1983; and *Prior knowledge* no. 3 1983.

81 *Living memory* 1982; and *Living memory* no. 2 1982. See also the related *Pooled memory* 1983; *Pooled memory* no. 2 1984; and *Pooled memory and some empty fish* 1984.

8 Stories of the self

If you drink then paint, you're a bloody expressionist.
(Michael Stevenson, 1997)



Doorway man 1968
oil on hardboard, detail



Three coloured blocks 1969
oil on hardboard, detail



Cards 1970
enamel on playing cards, detail

This is a painter who has never painted a self-portrait proper, and who writes: 'my identity must not be cause and must not be present'.⁸² However, Killeen does sometimes appear in his painting, if only in a deflected or glancing form.

The suburbia he paints throughout 1968-69, for instance, we might call the background for a self-portrait. Symptomatically, the very weatherboard he turns into a sign of suburbia clads his own house. Asked once if his suburbia was parody, he replied: 'it was just what was about me'.⁸³ It is the view through his window. It is where he lives. And it is where he has always lived, from childhood on, for, though he has travelled widely through Europe, Egypt, and the United States, he has never lived outside a radius of a few hundred metres in the Auckland suburb of Epsom.

Such is the space from which he first described the shape of the world, and from which he established his position in all spaces to come.⁸⁴ His suburbia, then, is itself a sort of self-portrait: the portrait of a space borne within, from which he sets out, and which is never left entirely behind. Fittingly, he exhibits himself, in *Woman dancing in blue* 1969 and in *Three coloured blocks* of the same year, as a self-portrait gazing at us from a suburban wall. Or rather, not as a self-portrait exactly, but as a painting-of-a-painting of the artist of whom no such painting exists.

This is self-portraiture at a remove, in the second degree, where the self is framed off as if in quotation marks. Fenced off like this, Killeen is at once absent from and present in the suburbia he describes — gazing at it from a space both inside and outside the pictorial world.

If he abandons, just this once, those normative individuals who staff his suburbia, personages who are no more than generic terms ('suburban man' / 'suburban woman'), it is to make a self-portrait as a graffito on the suburban wall, announcing: *Killeen was here*. He arrives like a visitor to his suburbia, gazing over it, and out into our eyes, as if to say: *Et in Suburbia ego* — Even in Suburbia am I.

Or rather, Killeen visits not so much his own suburbia as his own oeuvre. He looks over its prospect, and out to us, counter-signing an invented pictorial world: *I made this*.

A year later, in mid-1970, the arrival, the placement and even the size of the self-portrait is decided by a dicing and dealing chance: '12 paintings 24" x 24" with 12 objects in each selected from 36 objects by a six-sided dice. 2 sizes of objects — one square — two squares — determined by card dice picture cards ordinary cards ... All dice throws for the 12 will be made before the painting starts'.⁸⁵

82 Richard Killeen, the green notebook, p. 44. It is an injunction to himself he seems largely to obey.

83 Richard Killeen, in my essay, 'Killeen's Suburbia', *Art New Zealand* no. 40, 1986, p. 46. However, in several catalogue chronologies, he refers to his suburbia paintings as 'political'.

84 I am indebted here to Italo Calvino's marvellously poetic account of his own originary space. (Italo Calvino, *The Road to San Giovanni*, trans. Tim Parks, Jonathan Cape, London, 1993, pp. 133-134.)

85 Richard Killeen, the green notebook, p. 94.

The procedures outlined in this note allow the twelve-panel painting *One foot twelve inches* 1970, in which thirty-six pre-specified images ('objects,' Killeen calls them) are chosen from, sized, and positioned by chance. The choice of which twelve of the thirty-six images should appear in each panel is made by dealing twelve cards from a shuffled pack of thirty-six cards, each with an image painted on it; while the 'where' of each image on a numbered grid pencilled on the panel is determined by the throwing of dice.

Thus chance's anonymous force dislodges the authorial, determining 'I': it destroys the theological power of the signature: it offers something like a perfect answer to Killeen's earlier stipulation — 'my identity must not be cause and must not be present.'⁸⁶

Just the same, and once again, Killeen is in a sense present. Of the frontal male heads here, five, the bearded ones, are self-portraits. So it is doubly marked that chance has taken over the painter's power and place; that it has displaced painting's governing 'I'. Not only does chance here take from the artist his governance of the composition of painting, much as spectators will in the cut-outs to come by hanging the pieces in whatever order they want: it puts him back to work as a minion where once he had ruled.⁸⁷

As if to add insult to injury, having first taken everything from him, chance has given back to the painter such a place that he is featured now as a mere pictorial effect, scattered by chance's whim. Chance, by so returning the artist's face to the picture, makes him no more than a spectator of his own absence — like Proust's traveller, 'in the brief moment of return,' present only as 'the witness, the observer, the stranger who does not belong to the house'.



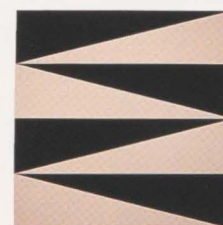
'Into abstraction!,' Killeen excitedly writes in his notebook in 1973.⁸⁸ He is celebrating the opening of the Comb Series of mid-1973 and 1974, whose abstraction will persist through the Constructivist Grids of 1974, the Lace Series of May to July 1975, and the triangulated grids of 1975 to 1978. It seemed at the time — there was no reason to think otherwise — that abstraction had killed forever Killeen the figurative artist, and was dancing on his grave (*Can can* 1978).

One of the finest amenities of abstraction for Killeen is that it allows him a new means of escape from the cage of personality and into a space he calls 'open,' 'simple' and 'free'.⁸⁹ It offers a relief from that stock creature of New Zealand art, the expressionist, the purveyor of biographical pains (*At last a happy normal painting* 1978). Breaking free from that tyranny in which the single authorial vision oppresses the viewer, abstraction opens to the radiant vistas of a multi-viewpointed art.

Yet even here, in an art whose main motif is the triangle, Killeen may infiltrate a personal note, implanting traces of the self into the apparent objectivity of geometrical forms. Take *Frogshooter*, for instance. The word 'frogshooter', so the artist says, 'was used by my



One foot twelve inches 1970
oil on hardboard, detail



Can can 1978
acrylic lacquer on aluminium



At last a happy normal painting 1978
acrylic lacquer on aluminium

86 Richard Killeen, the green notebook, p. 44.

87 Significantly, this painting, with its random dispersal of images on a white ground, simply looks closer to the cut-outs than anything Killeen had done before 1970, or will do again until the invention of the cut-outs themselves. There is, however, this crucial difference: in the cut-outs, it will be the spectator, and not chance, determining the position of each part; and those positions will be open to a perpetual change. An anarchic new freedom will open.

88 Richard Killeen, the blue notebook, p. 23.

89 Richard Killeen, note dated 9.11.73, the blue notebook, p. 103.



Isfahan Joe 1976
acrylic on canvas

grandfather for a person who was a bit dodgy'.⁹⁰ But why stick that label to this particular work? Because it *is* 'dodgy'. Heedless of modernist law, it blasphemously insinuates into the abstract purity of the grid a frog, a gull, a fish, a beetle, a wasp, a zebra, a plant stem.

Then there is the curious case of *Isfahan Joe* 1976. We can immediately see that its 'Isfahan' responds to the rather Islamic look of its pattern; but, unless the painter should happen to tell us, there is no way we can know that its 'Joe' recalls the name of Killeen's grandfather, who happened to die just as Killeen was touching in the painting's last colour. It seems that even without smuggling a discordant figuration into his geometries, Killeen can leave a biographic trace.

Such encoding of a family genealogy by means of titling is in accord with a principle we might call the *spread of the signature*. It is the inscription at once of the artist's private biographical signature and of a public signature of geographic place — an inscription in which the private signature is, as it were, hidden in the shadow of the public one. In a sense, then, such titles as *Isfahan Joe* are as much about the painter as they are about the paintings they purport to name.

The part-title *Joe*, in that it is the name of his grandfather, and the title *Frogshooter*, in that it is a vernacular term he associates with him, are at once artefacts outside of Killeen and peculiarly his, 'the deictic markers of the subject's own being, the evidentiary signposts that appear to him the indices of his own history, his own identity, the touchstones of his most intimate connections to the real'.⁹¹



In the 'Chronology' written by Killeen for his catalogue *Lessons in Lightness*, 1989, the first entry for 1967 reads: 'Begins working for his father as a part-time signwriter'.⁹² Already, in this demonstrative occasion of professional self-presentation and self-construction, the artist's 'chronology' or catalogue autobiography, Killeen makes some moment of his work for his father. And well he might, since he had worked for fourteen years, three days a week, for John Killeen Signwriter, his father's signwriting business, until, in 1981, fourteen years after graduating from art school, he was able to begin to work as an artist full-time.

So his father provided him with his first living, and one in a certain proximity to painting, where, as perhaps befits an art school graduate, Killeen was allowed to specialise in the figurative jobs — he recalls painting Golden Crumpets, horses, and power tools, the latter two to be permanent items of his iconography, appearing for instance in *Domestic (black and white)*. He absorbed too certain advantageous, non-expressionist, habits of work — an orderly disposition of tasks and tools, carefully kept record books, the workshop at the back of the house, at once separate from the family and close.

Also, perhaps, the signwriter's graphism, hard-edgedness and clear legibility were to leave a permanent mark on Killeen's art. Certainly, his paintings have always had a tendency to

90 Richard Killeen, quoted in my 'Cut-Outs Killeen', PhD thesis, University of Auckland, 1991, vol. 1, p. 236.

91 Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious*, MIT Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1993, p. 71.

92 Richard Killeen, 'Chronology', in Richard Killeen and Francis Pound, *Lessons in Lightness*, Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney, 1989, p. 6.

clarity, to precision of outline — to a sort of generalised graphic economy: his has remained an art of the sign.

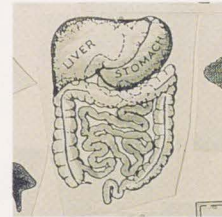
As we have seen, actual painted letters appear in the form of inscriptions in two suburbia paintings of 1968: 'The Au' of *Man reading a newspaper*, and 'THE ORIOU DEAD' of *Man and monument*. Yet letters remain rare in Killeen's art: an art rather of the image than of the written word — and an art keeping a certain deliberated distance, too, from the word paintings of his erstwhile teacher, McCahon. So when, under the title *Letters from my father*, letters arrive in five cut-outs of 1991, they seem to come as something almost entirely out of the blue.⁹³

Previously, if they appeared at all in the cut-outs, letters had generally been confined to the inscription of signature, title and date, or to the occasional label left in a collaged source illustration — as with the 'corona' and 'solid' of *Stories we tell ourselves*, or the 'stomach' and 'liver' of *The politics of naming* 1987, where the naming is motivated, perhaps, by the title's intent. But now, without warning, letters are suddenly spread all over the painting's face. Why? Because of the specific requirements of the subject-matter here: a kind of *portrait of the artist's father*. We are back in the realms of Killeen's genealogy.

'Letters from my father' is no less than the literal truth, since the letters of the cut-outs so titled are either, as in the 26-piece version showing letters alone, hand-painted by Killeen's father, one letter of the alphabet per piece, directly onto the cut-out pieces⁹⁴ or, as in the other four versions, which combine letters with imagery, they are collaged photocopies on tissue paper of his letters. In the first case especially, they show all the virtues of the handmade letter: the springiness and the vivid irregularities: the 'flaws' which are the product, telling and intimate, at once of the shape and the turns of the moving brush, and of the mortal body itself. Proffered not as part of an inscription but each as a self-sufficient image, they are presented, as always with the imagery of the cut-outs, in no pre-specified order, so that they will read as *letters* — as *signs* — not words.

Given such a presence of the father's hand, *Letters from my father* becomes an act of homage and of affectionate gratefulness, from the son to the father. There is here the sense at once of a differentiation of son from father, in that the son has left his father's painting workshop to set up his own, and a pleasant reciprocity, a mutuality even in difference. If once the father had opened the space of his work to the son, now the son does the same for him.

His father comes again to Killeen's art in *Standing, sitting, thinking, signwriter* 1997, but now as an image of mourning and memory. This is a memorial to John Killeen (1916-1997), painted in the months after his death; and a painted homage to another art of brush and hand. Here, in black silhouette, we see John Killeen, signwriter at work, standing or sitting, maulstick in one hand and brush in the other, like some Old Master. His head is full of letters like all those thousands which have emerged from his brush through the



The politics of naming 1987
pencil, acrylic and collage on aluminium, detail



Two Signwriters, Two Fathers
Workshop Press, 1991, p.36, letter I

93 There is but one large-scale exception to the general rule of the non-appearance of letters in the cut-outs before *Letters from my father: Voyage by Francis Pound* 1989; and the only such anomaly to follow is *Ephphatha by Alan Brunton* 1994. Both these cut-outs illustrate and present, in computer typed and printed letters, a literary text which also exists in a more conventionally published form: Francis Pound, *Voyage*, Workshop Press, Auckland, 1989, and Alan Brunton, *Ephphatha*, Workshop Press, Auckland, 1994.

94 For illustrations of all these letters, see my *Two Signwriters, Two Fathers: Richard Killeen's 'Letters from my Father'*, Workshop Press for Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington, 1991.



Stories we tell ourselves 1987
acrylic and collage on aluminium, detail

years. This time, the letters assume the fixed and immutable form of words, words which serve as a portrait of the objects, pressures and concerns filling the days of a long working life: PAINT, PAINTPOT, BRUSH, WORDS, STRESS, MAULSTICK, STROKE, SPELLING, LINE, TIME, GONE.

The Killeen family genealogy also extends a generation below the artist, in the cut-outs *Born in New Zealand — for Samuel*, whose title as noted already celebrates the birth of the artist's first child, and *Born in New Zealand — for Martin*, whose title celebrates the birth of a boy to his sister. Like the four related *Born alive in New Zealand* cut-outs, these two are about that old chestnut, New Zealandness — a question last addressed by Killeen in 1971, in a number of sardonically 'New Zealand' titled works.

Both of these cut-outs which append a child's name to their title's dash speak to that question of New Zealandness: not one of their images has to do with the birth of a child. Nor is a child anywhere pictured: at most, we see some stories of the place which might provoke a child's first howl. The individualising names of Martin and Samuel might be compared to a book dedication, or an author's inscription personalising a gift-copy, in a book which has nothing particularly to do with the cares of the dedicatee. For an actual image of one of the children named here, we will have to wait until 1991 — for *Stories we tell ourselves*.

There, amidst all those myriad stories from diverse places and times, the face of the artist's son Samuel appears, having been first translated by computer graphics from a photograph. It is, relatively, a large image, and it stares out into our space. Even if we do recognise him — and most of us will not — the presence of a child's face gazing out at us, and the additional presence of drawings by a younger child, might well make it seem to us that all the stories here were being told as if by a parent to a child in bed at night: as a bed-time story.

These, then, will be the stories that, in filling the child's mind, insert him into a culture, making of him a site in which stories perpetually whisper: stories of war, of births, of voyages of discovery, of strange rites, of animals, of plants, of fish, of insects, of Africans, Egyptians, Eskimo, Mexicans, Aborigines and Chinese, of deserts, primordial caves, and eclipses of the sun, of the innumerable gods and goddesses. Remember, it is night. Bed-time, night-time, *dreamtime*. These are the stories that the child will dream, and in whose dreaming he is.

Not only is there the intermittent trace of a family genealogy in Killeen's painting. There can be read there too an intimate index of friendships, and an artistic and intellectual genealogy. Take, for instance, *Waiting for Gordon* 1995.

Here is a story about a beloved friend who lies dying. Repeated throughout is a dark hieroglyph: person in bed. The person is cradled by the black bed on which he lies: the death-bed, though sometimes it transmutes into a black telephone, or, in another typically Killeenian pun, into a double-ended black koru, which may also cradle or may *be* the outstretched body. This person is dying in a distant, provincial city, an indifferent or hostile place, which, in all the decades of his living and working there, has never bought one of his works. He is taking liquid by mouth. You communicate with him by telephone, as he has asked you not to come. Floating above him, sometimes attached by tubes to his mouth as if they were its issue, or as if he were drinking their darkness from them, are Malevichian black squares. They represent, perhaps, death — the very limit of representation. The dying painter is Gordon Walters, the city, Christchurch.

Walters was one of *Three brothers*. Standing in for him in the cut-out of this title, a memorial monument of 1995, we see variants of Walters' characteristic translation of the koru, in which the traditional Maori stem and bulb become a modernist circle and stripe. In one piece, koru pairs enframe a black, Malevichian square, recalling one of Walters' greatest works, *Black centre* 1971.

There is one of Walters' geometric human figures referring to Maori rock art: a figure which echoes throughout his oeuvre. A three-fingered motif formed by cutting the aforementioned figure in half, as in Walters' 1950s gouaches and collages. An adjoined pair of empty-centred rectangles, distantly derived from those empty-centred figures of Maori rock art more literally translated in Walters' gouaches of the fifties, a motif finding its final place, so abstracted and so simplified by now that its origins have never been recognised, in the ultimate and most profound distillations of Walters' old-age style.

There are also several forms *en abyme* (that is, forms which reflect themselves inside themselves, so collapsing into the abyss of themselves): another characteristic Walters contrivance, used for the rest of his life, after learning it in 1953 from a sketch by a poor madman, Ralph Hattaway. (Hattaway is celebrated in his own right by Killeen in *The man who knew too much* 1997.) Another device quoted in *Three brothers* which Walters had from Hattaway is a phallic, organic form penetrating an empty rectangle — a device quoted again by Killeen in *The man who knew too much*, which cites also Hattaway's habit of studding with a flow of little rectangles that penile form, and applies it too to a depiction of the incarcerated madman himself.⁹⁵

Some of the images of *Three Brothers* are taken from *A Geometric Order*, an artist's book made by Walters in 1993, with the assistance of Killeen, where they bore the names of *Echo*, *Oriental*, *Mirror* and *Window*.⁹⁶ Killeen shows himself, throughout this consummate summary, to be a first-rate historian of Walters' oeuvre: exact knowledge is a form of love.

What about the other two brothers? Like Walters, they are makers, and each does, as they say, his own thing. Keith Walters, a merchant navy man and model boat maker, is recalled by seven ships and boats; the other brother, Vernon, an airforce man and model aeroplane



Gordon Walters, 'Echo' from
A Geometric Order, 1993

95 Killeen's *The man who knew too much* was provoked by an exhibition curated by Damien Skinner, *Hattaway, Schoon, Walters: Madness and Modernism*, Lopdell House Gallery, Titirangi, 1997, with an accompanying illustrated catalogue.

96 Gordon Walters with the assistance of Richard Killeen, *A Geometric Order*, Workshop Press, Auckland, 1993.



Goodbye Gordon 1995
acrylic on aluminium



Dew 1996
acrylic on aluminium



Margaret Orbell, Richard Killeen
The Presence of the Dew, Workshop Press, 1996

maker, by seven aeroplanes. Yet, that the three portrait-like depictions of persons here are not individualised physiognomies — not portraits proper — should remind us that Killeen's stories, however much provoked they are by a particular occasion, aspire to a level of generality which, at some point, leaves the particular behind. A death becomes all deaths, including our own.

In one last gesture of farewell, *Goodbye Gordon* 1995, Walters' 'koru' signs are given the wings which the angels of Christ stole from Roman Victories. (If a victory is celebrated here by these beating wings, it is the Victory over Death achieved by an art of lasting worth.) The simple, rectangular forms of Walters' ultimate pictorial distillations are also made to fly. Several 'koru' signs are turned into engaging little personages by being given legs, and so a life of their own, as is *Echo*, one of Walters' last works *en abyme*. A black square is tattooed on a hand. Five tear-drops fall.

Which brings us to the sixteen-piece version of the three cut-outs titled *Dew* 1996. This is another of those cut-outs which mark a friendship, and again it is commemorative in its subject of death. Heads and bodies stretched out in black silhouette are here compared to dew-drops and to the fall of white firework stars through a black sky. Walters died on Guy Fawkes night, so that the momentary fantasy was possible for those who loved him that they lived in one of those countries which so respect their great artists that they make State occasions and public pomp of their death.

Two friendships, in fact, leave their trace in *Dew*, since the title and the repeated motif of the dew- or tear-drop come from *The Presence of the Dew* 1996, a marvellous essay by Walters' widow, the scholar, historian and translator of classical Maori literature, Margaret Orbell: an essay beautifully illustrated by Killeen and published by his Workshop Press as a small book 'dedicated to the memory of Gordon Walters'. With a literary tact and a delicacy rare in treatments of Maori matters, this essay traces the metaphoric theme of dew in Maori laments for the dead, and in traditional Maori funerary practice, where the corpse is exposed to the night airs.



Killeen's biographical 'I' thus finds its place in *Stories we tell ourselves*, in the form of an image of the artist's child; and elsewhere, in mementos of the artist's father and grandfather, in celebrations of births, and in memorials and homages to friends.

But what about the *authorial* 'I'? What about Killeen as artist figure? What room is there for that 'I' in *Stories we tell ourselves*, a work whose images come from such a multiplicity of authors, nearly all of them nameless, and these from such a multiplicity of cultures and times, that it seems the product of a thousand I's?

Photocopying, computer scanning and computer graphics, used throughout *Stories we tell ourselves*, and pervasively employed by Killeen in all his cut-outs between 1986 and 1994, answer particularly well to his long-established need to alienate art from the hand — from those marks of the brush which are conventionally taken to be the spontaneous outpouring of a powerfully moved soul. Much as had the stencils used for the Combs and Constructivist Grids, and much as had the stamps used in the paintings of 1973, the photocopier, the computer scanner and the computer graphic perfectly answer to that earlier note: 'My identity must not be cause and must not be present.'⁹⁷

Killeen's image-scavenging art exemplifies with a particular nicety the 'death of the author' principle, as famously enunciated by Roland Barthes. For Barthes, 'all recourse to the writer's interiority' is 'pure superstition'. For him, 'a text is not a line of words releasing a single "theological" meaning (the "message" of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of meanings, none of them original, blend and clash.' And how could his further words not remind us of Killeen: 'The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture.'⁹⁸

And yet ... and yet. The work is still signed, the 'author function'⁹⁹ is still at work here, even if we see in the work the death or absence of the author's hand. For here is the name 'Killeen', inscribed as signature even in this tissue of quotations. In that one little piece of writing, it would seem, the painting 'points to this figure who is outside and precedes it' — the author.¹⁰⁰ And this even though it is *we* who get to compose the work, so that it may be different with each hanging, its composition — in an act of radical pictorial democracy — *ours*, not the artist's.

That artworks are authored by individual, biographical selves, and that this is important, is just another of those strange *Stories we tell ourselves* in this culture — the culture of the modern West.



Signature stamp 1972



Stories we tell ourselves 1987
acrylic and collage on aluminium, detail

97 Richard Killeen, the green notebook, p. 44. One might think too of the immaculate surface of the earlier grids on aluminium, and the early cut-outs, spray-painted with car lacquers as they are, as if by a panel-beater rather than artist. By 1987, however, Killeen will have returned entirely to an art of the brush and hand, posing a directness entirely appropriate to a cartoon-like art of political comment, in works which attack the effects of the free market economy.

98 Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', *Image-Music-Text*, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath, Fontana, Glasgow, 1977, p. 146.

99 Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?', *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays & Interviews*, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1977, p. 138.

100 Michel Foucault, *ibid.*, p. 115.



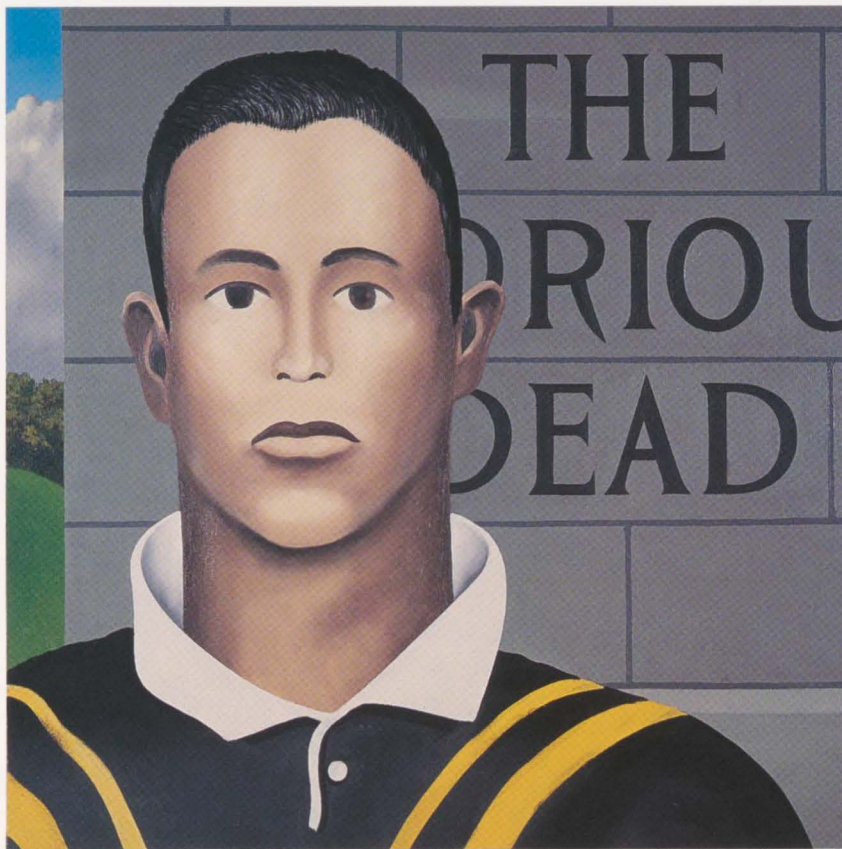
Bulldozer 1967
oil on canvas 1040 x 1040 mm
private collection Auckland



Tiger 1968
oil on canvas 1247 x 1093 mm
private collection Auckland



Man, land, sea and sky 1968
 also known as
Man reading a newspaper
 oil on canvas 787 x 787 mm
 collection Sargeant Gallery
 Te Whare o Rehua Wanganui



The glorious dead 1968
oil on canvas 792 x 787 mm
private collection Auckland



Man and window reflection 1968
oil on hardboard 1220 x 863 mm
collection Auckland Art Gallery
Toi o Tāmaki



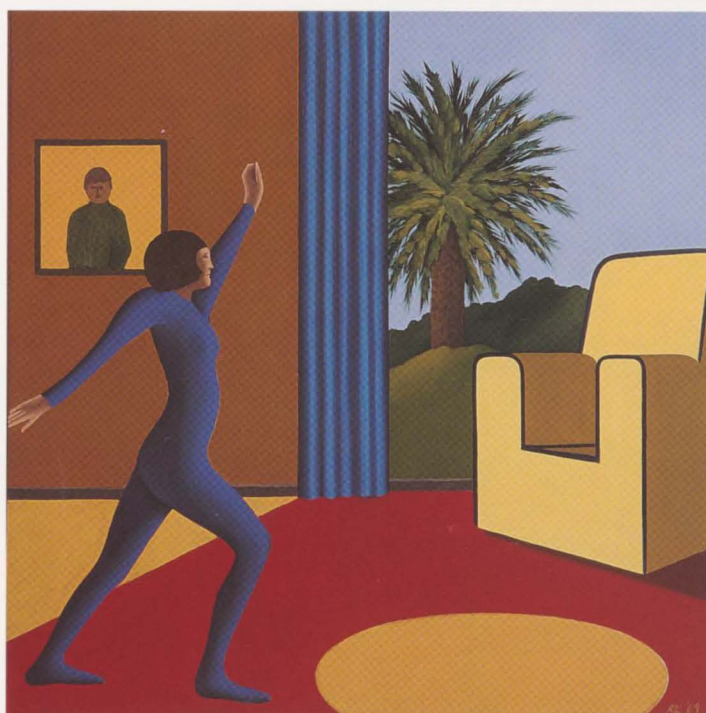
Two men 1968
oil on hardboard 686 x 683 mm
courtesy Peter McLeavey Gallery
Wellington



Lamp lady 1968
oil on hardboard 685 x 683 mm
private collection Auckland



Braque man 1969
oil on hardboard 685 x 685 mm
courtesy Peter McLeavey Gallery
Wellington



Woman dancing in blue 1969
oil on hardboard 680 x 682 mm
private collection Auckland



Woman dancing in white 1969
oil on hardboard 685 x 685 mm
private collection Auckland



Woman dancing in green 1969
oil on hardboard 685 x 685 mm
collection Laurence Simmons
Auckland



Woman with Clifford Still 1969
oil on hardboard 288 x 288 mm
private collection Auckland



Woman with green sofa 1969
oil on hardboard 288 x 288 mm
private collection Auckland



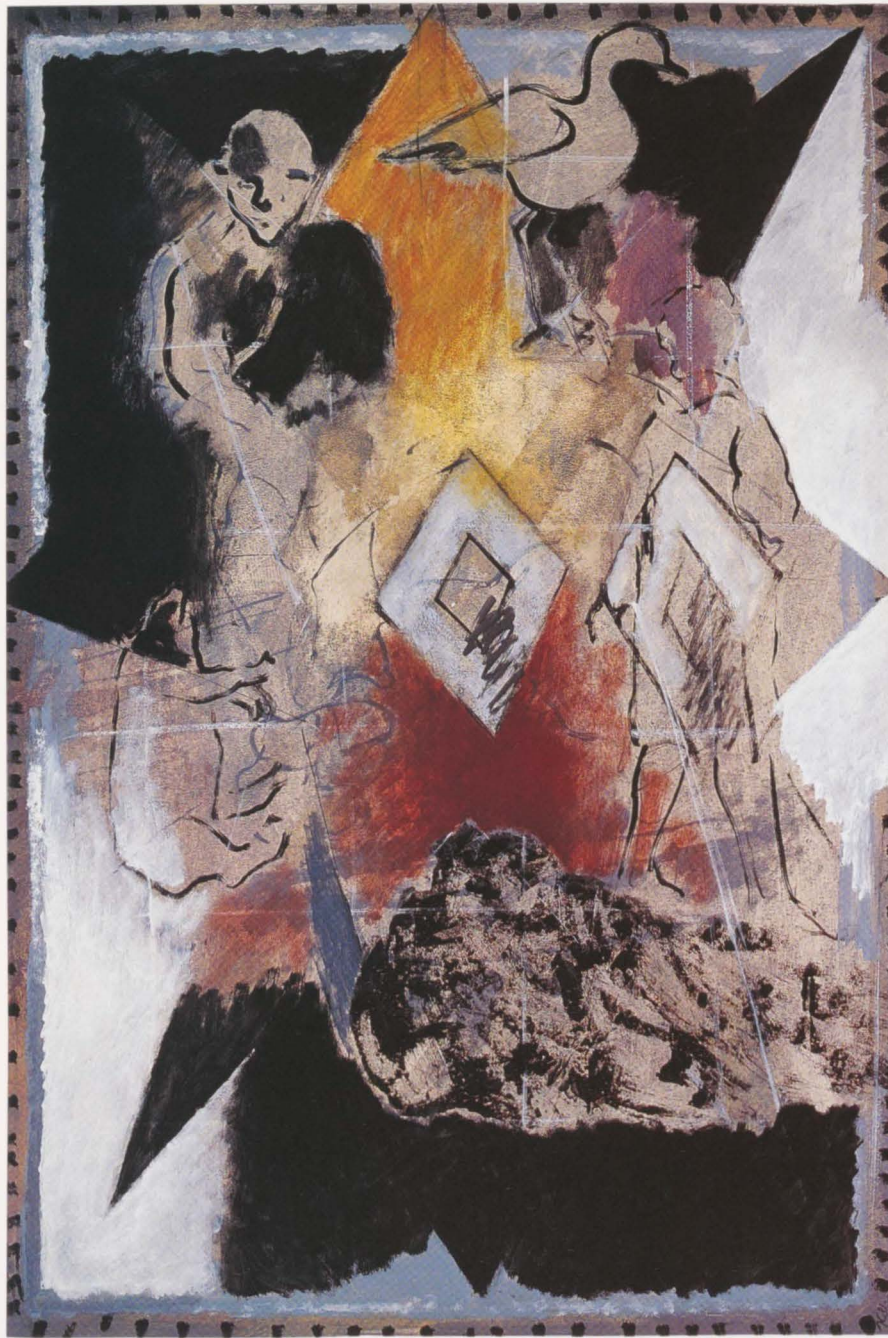
Street corner 1969
oil on canvas 1650 x 1655 mm
collection Museum of New Zealand
Te Papa Tongarewa Wellington



Three men and a dog 1970
oil on hardboard 685 x 685 mm
collection Terry Stringer
Auckland



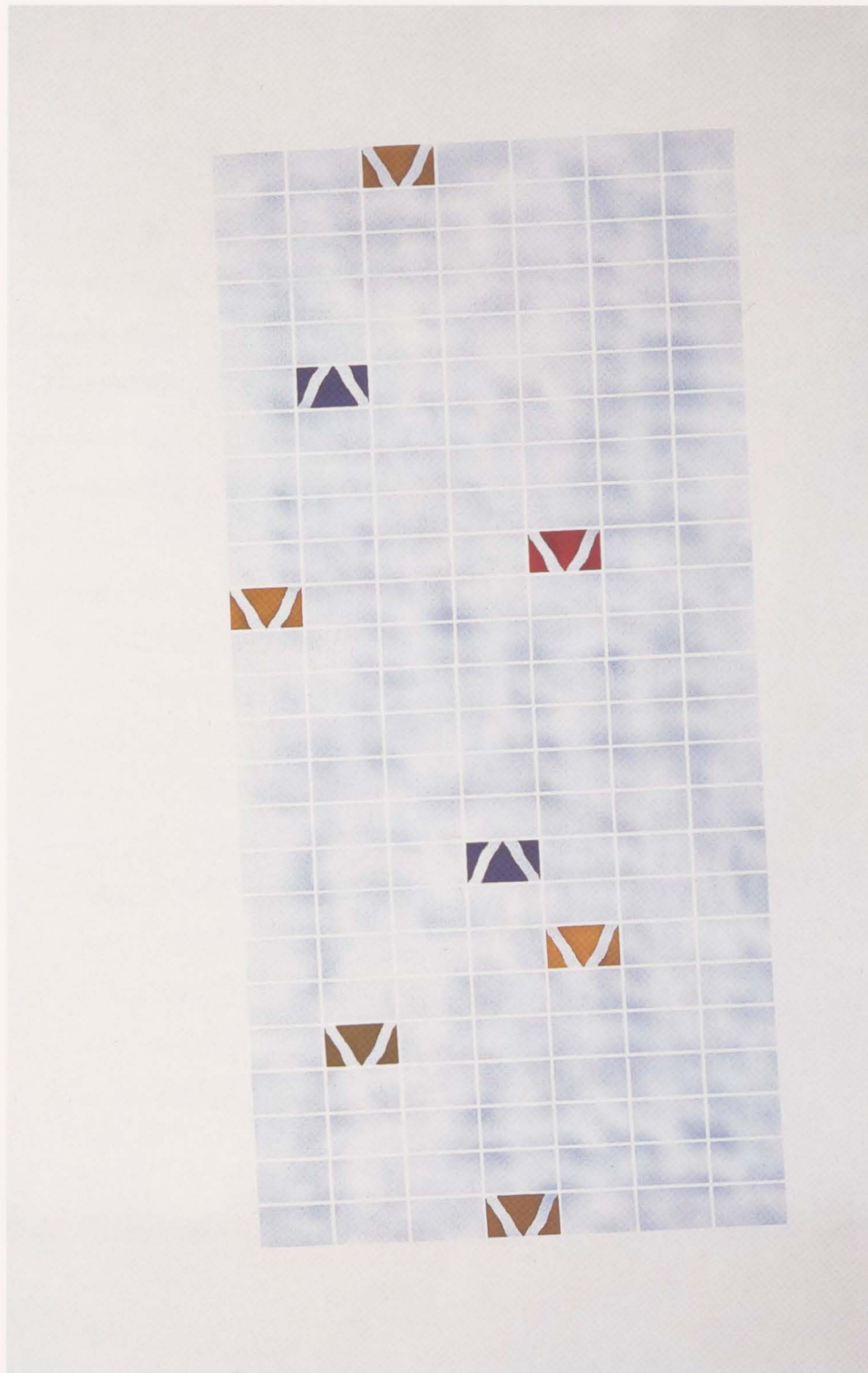
Soldier with man passing 1970
oil on hardboard 685 x 685 mm
private collection Auckland



The quick and the dead 1972
oil on chipboard 1218 x 812 mm
collection Sarjeant Gallery
Te Whare o Rehua Wanganui



Battle of the mind 1972
oil on chipboard 1219 x 812 mm
collection J Gibbs Trust Auckland

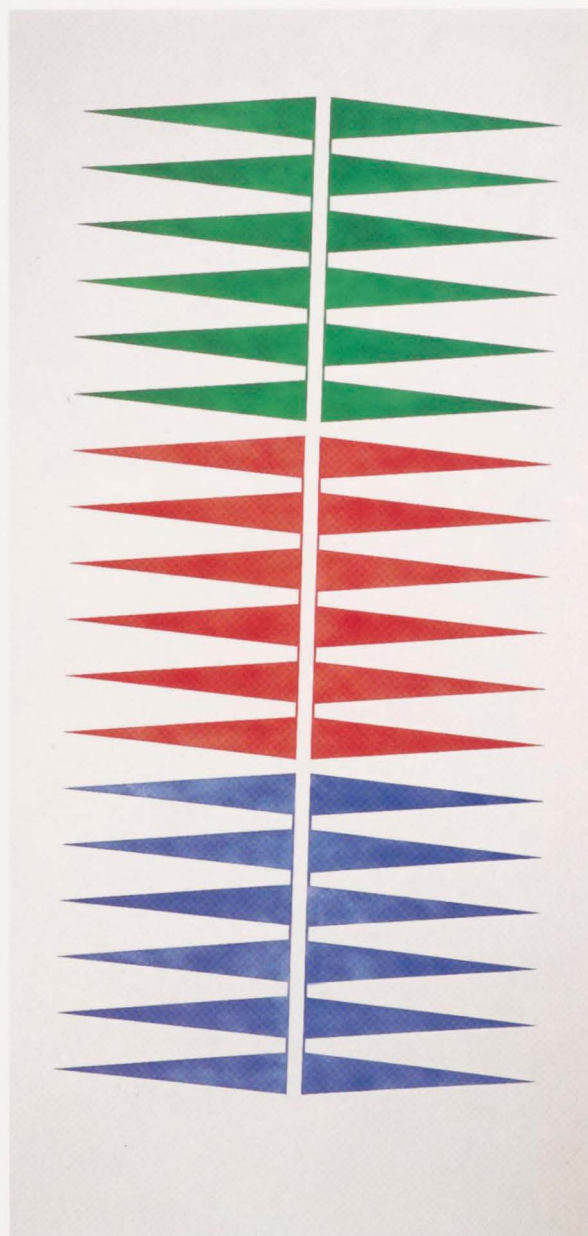


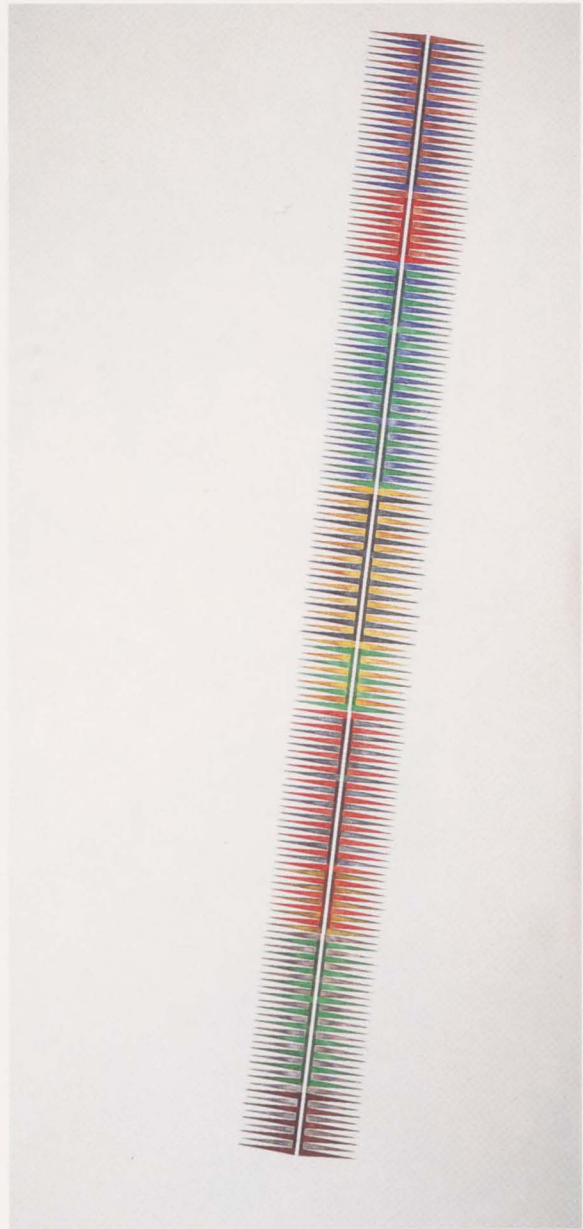
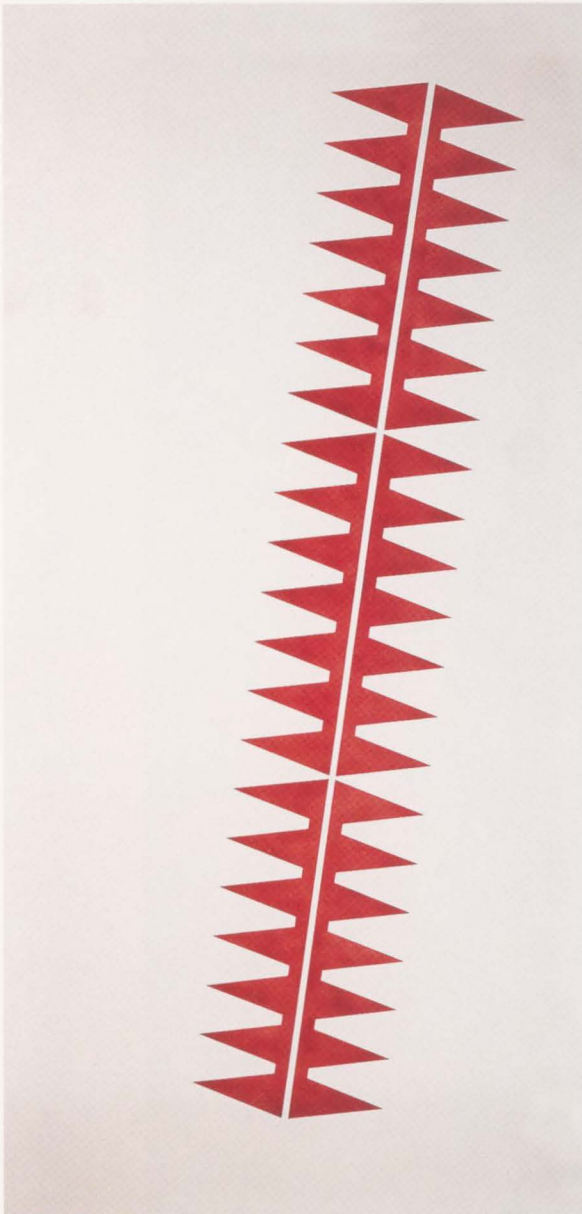
Constructivist grid no. 6 1974
oil and acrylic on canvas 1727 x 1092 mm
private collection Auckland

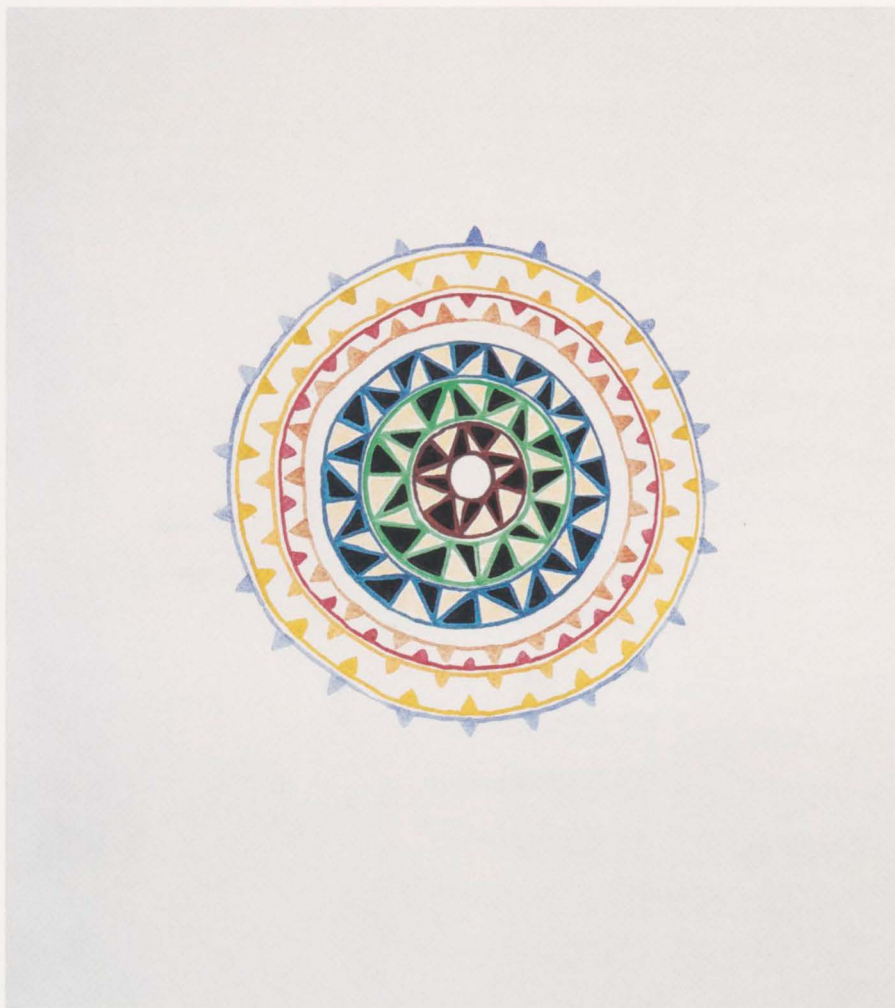
LEFT:
Combs, green red and blue 1974
 oil and acrylic on canvas 2240 x 1090 mm
 private collection Auckland

CENTRE:
Untitled 1974
 oil and acrylic on canvas 2220 x 1020 mm
 private collection Auckland

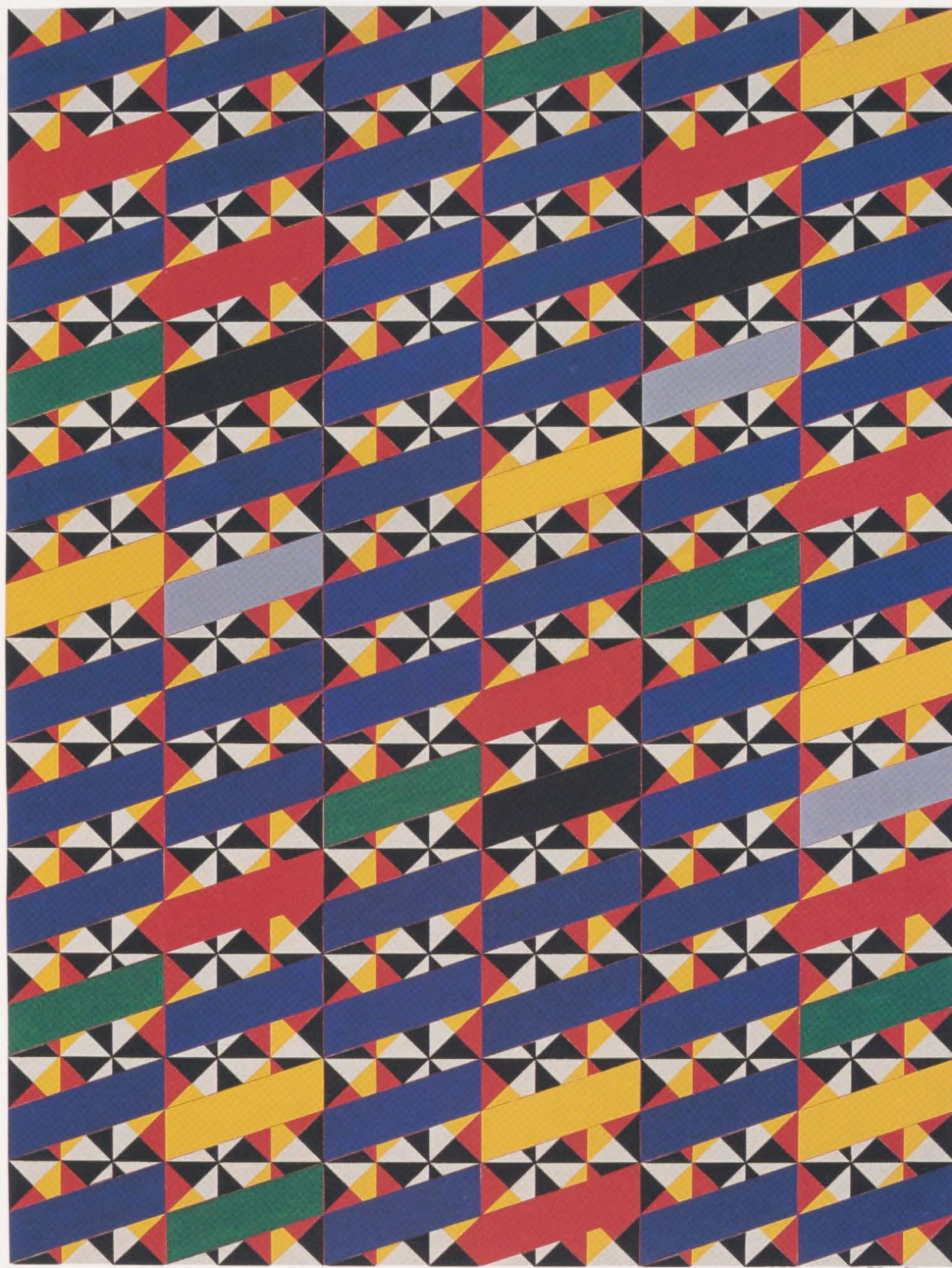
RIGHT:
Untitled 1974
 oil and acrylic on canvas 2310 x 1094 mm
 private collection Auckland



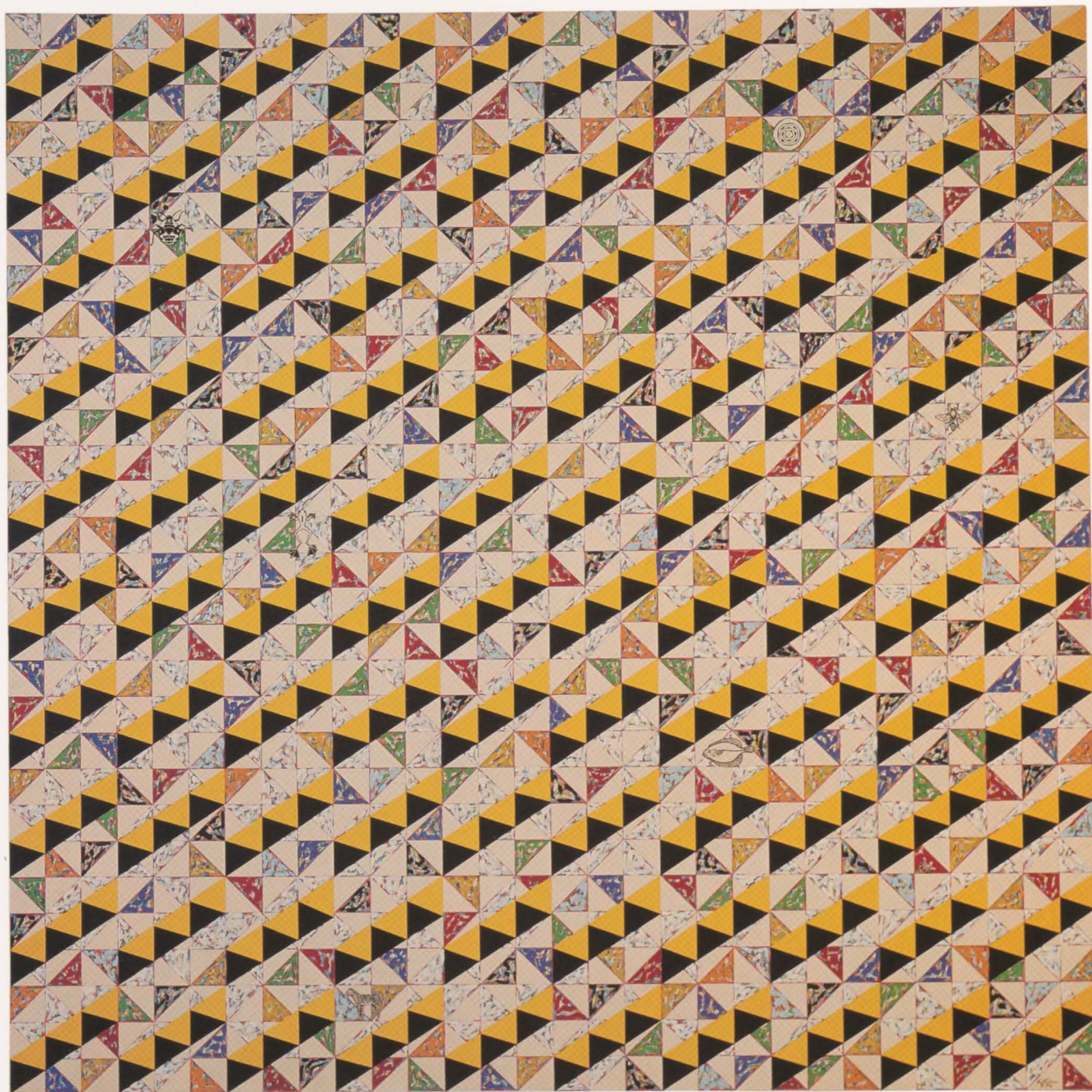




Jellyfish 1975
oil and acrylic on canvas 920 x 815 mm
private collection Auckland



Frog green 1976
acrylic on canvas 1500 x 1140 mm
collection Govett-Brewster Art Gallery
New Plymouth



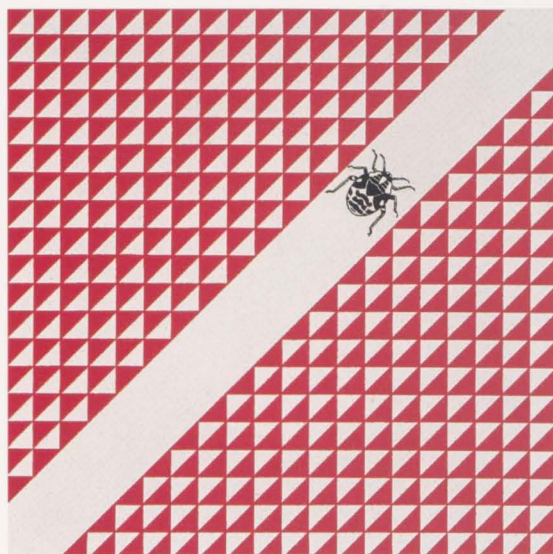
Frogshooter 1976
acrylic on canvas 1500 x 1500 mm
collection Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki



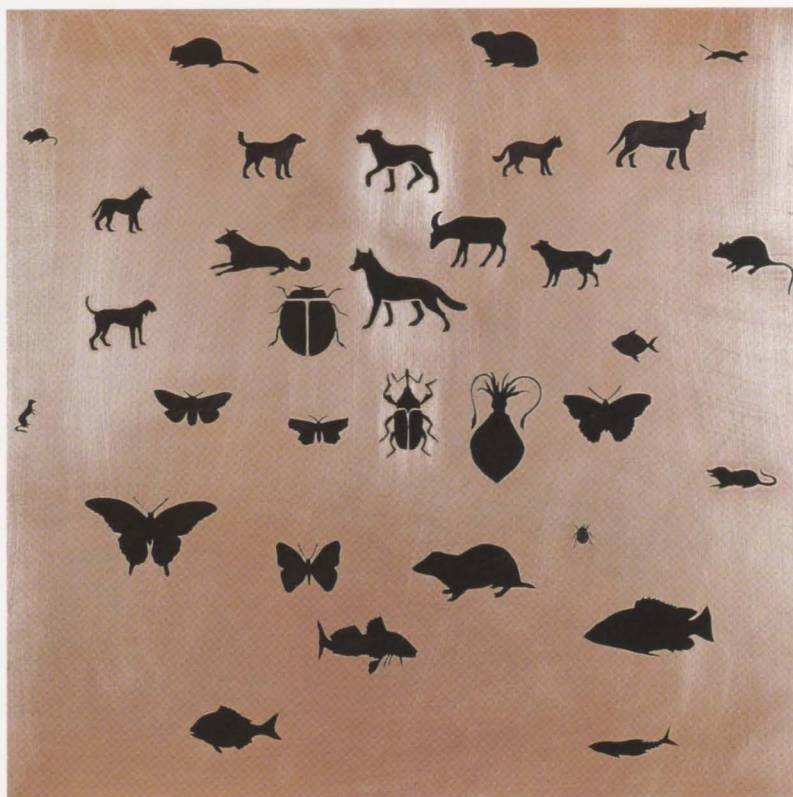
Some of his parts 1976
acrylic on canvas 825 x 720 mm
collection Tim and Helen Beaglehole
Wellington



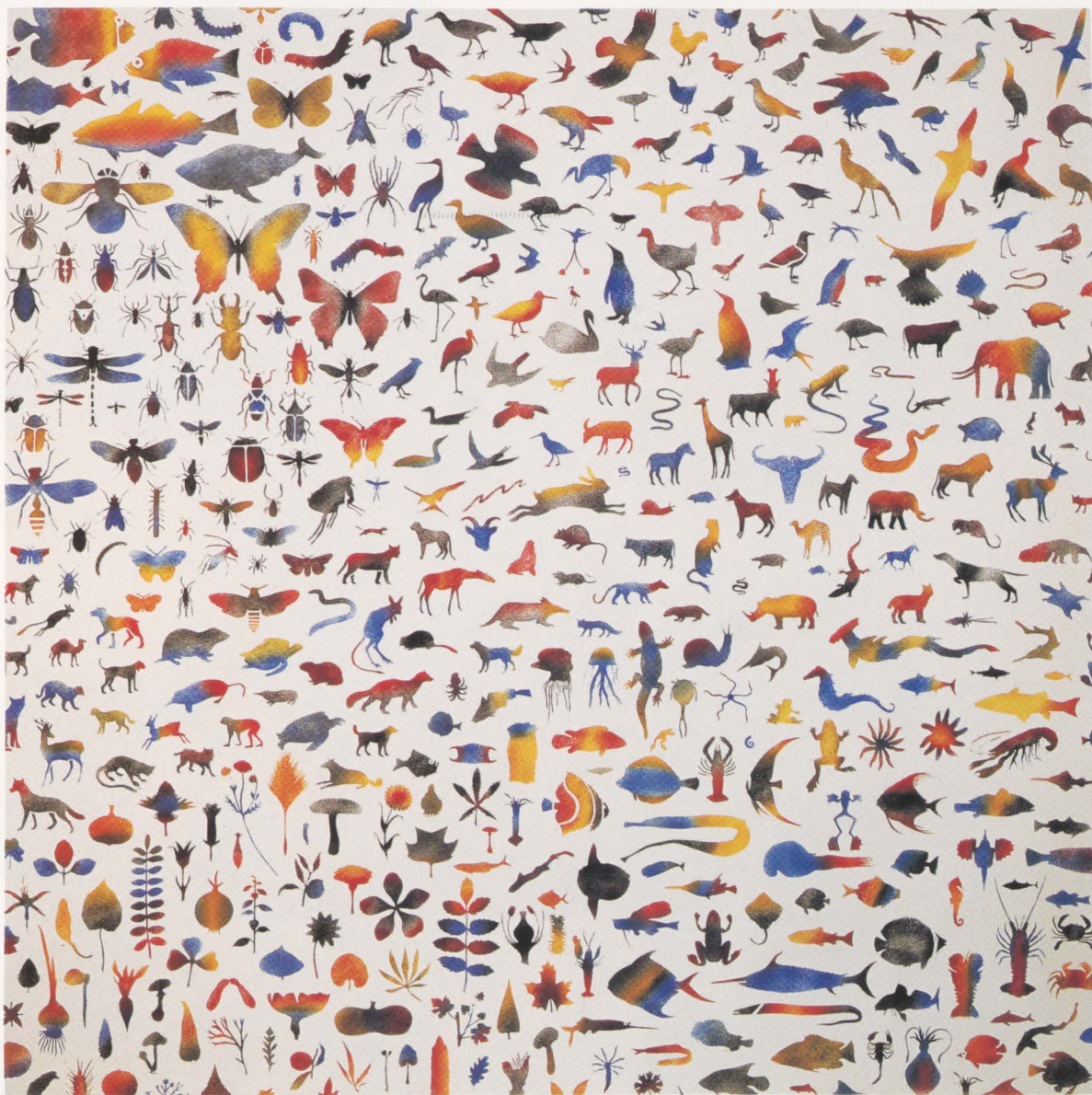
Pea Beau 1976
 acrylic on canvas 1520 x 1020 mm
 collection J Gibbs Trust Auckland



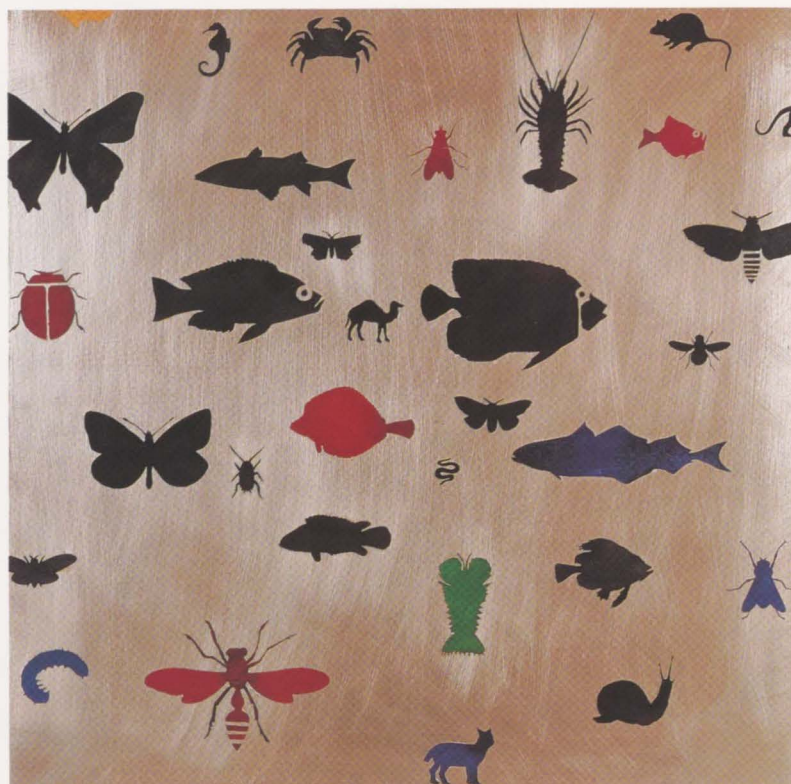
Untitled 1976
acrylic on canvas 405 x 405 mm
private collection Wellington



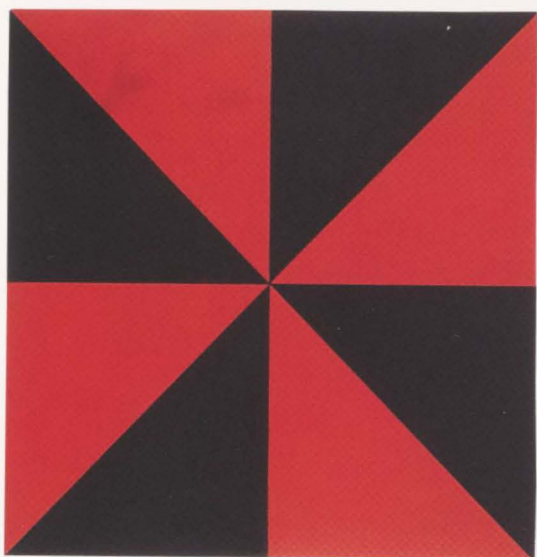
Untitled 1977
oil and enamel on aluminium 580 x 580 mm
private collection Auckland



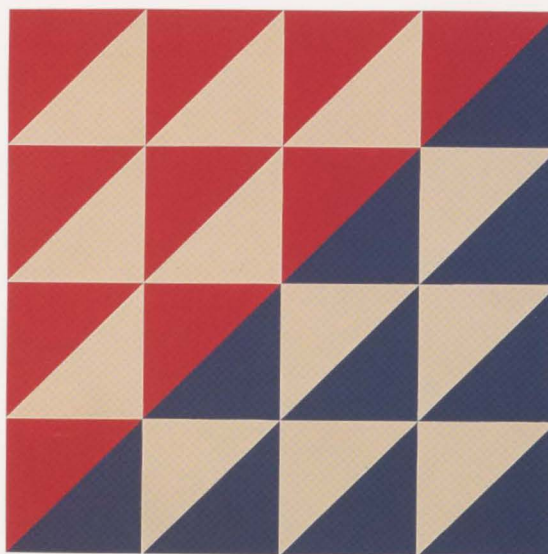
Untitled 1977
oil enamel and sand on aluminium 1178 x 1180 mm
private collection Auckland



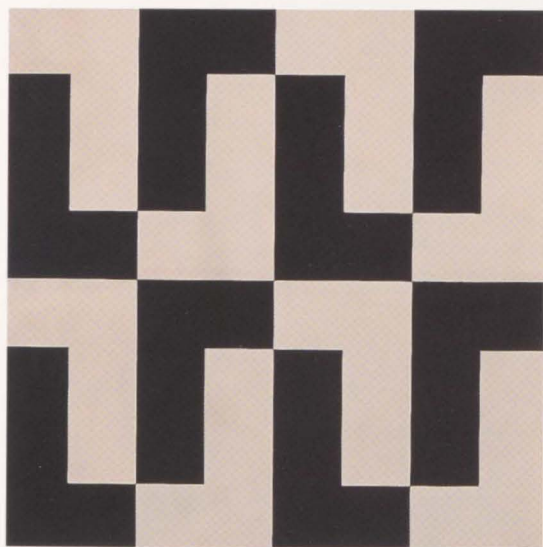
Untitled 1977
oil and enamel on
aluminium 580 x 580 mm
private collection Auckland



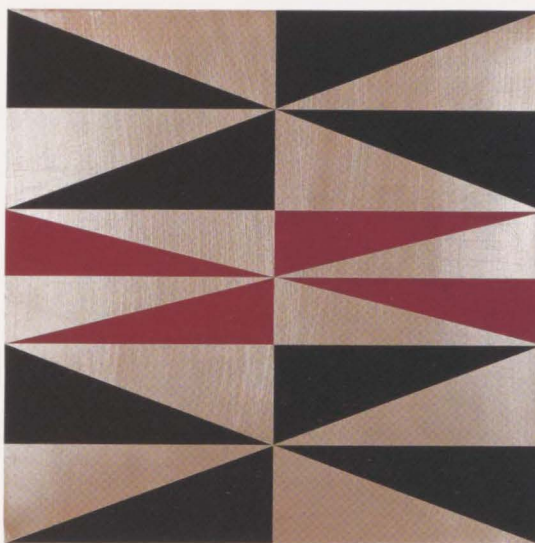
Red cross 1978
enamel on aluminium 400 x 400 mm
private collection Auckland



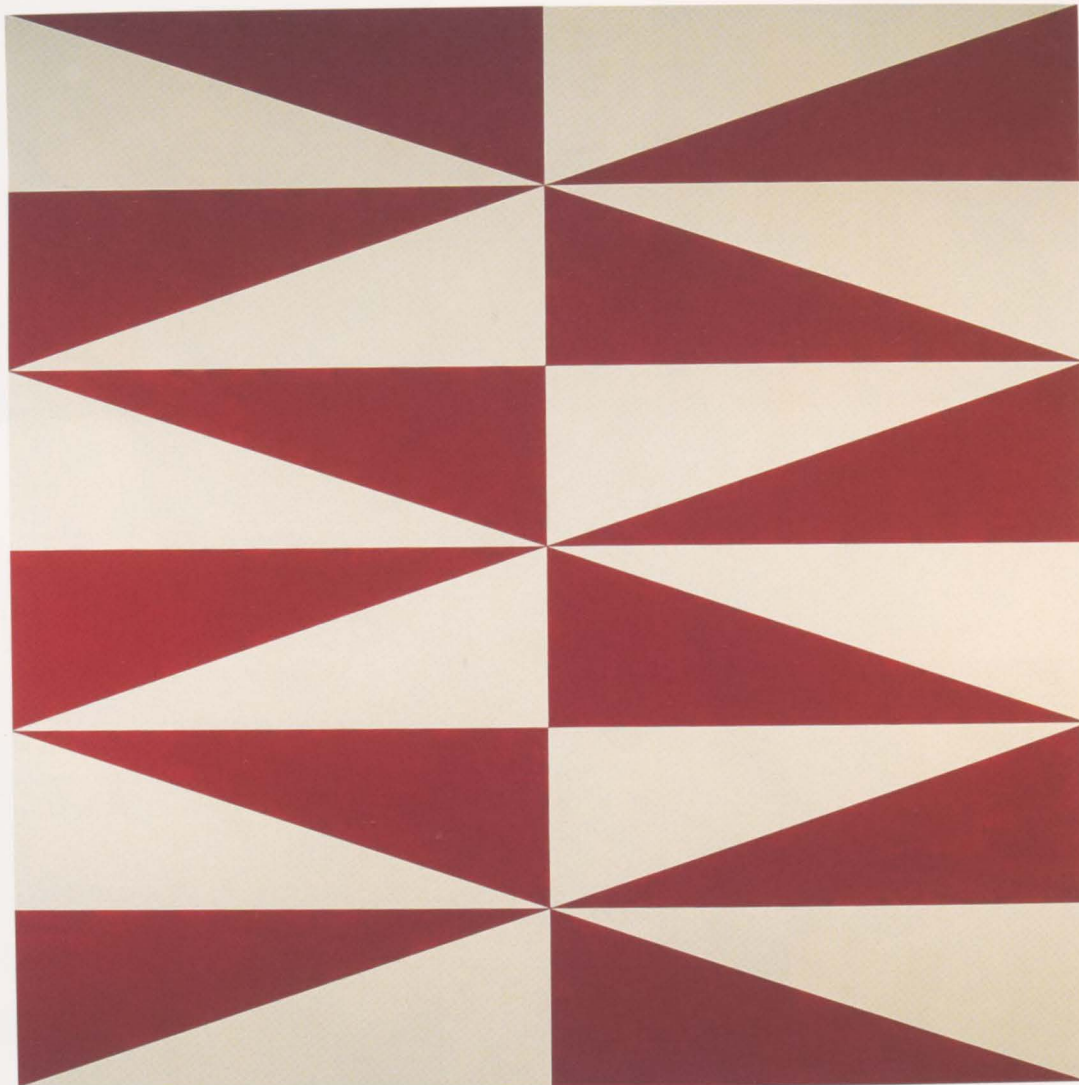
Old as hills 1978
enamel on aluminium 400 x 400 mm
private collection Auckland



Untitled 1978
enamel on aluminium 400 x 400 mm
private collection Auckland



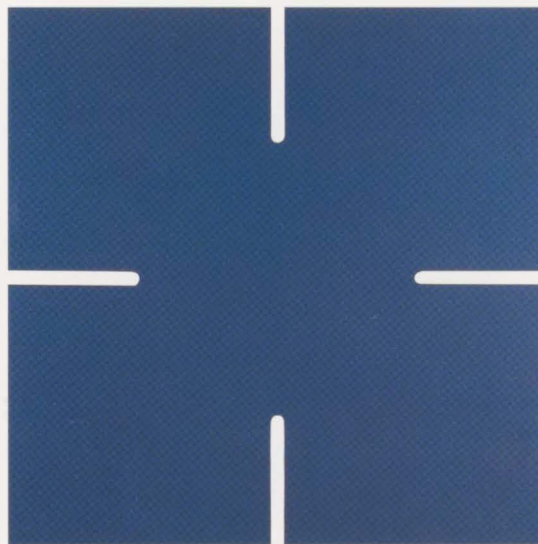
Untitled 1978
enamel on aluminium 400 x 400 mm
private collection Auckland



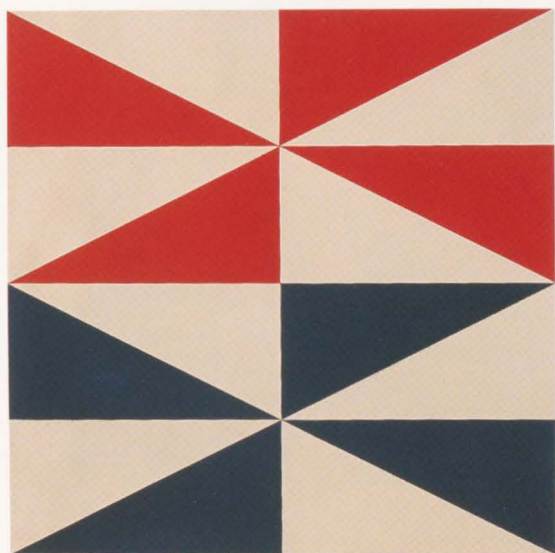
Positive and Polynesian 1978
enamel on aluminium 890 x 890 mm
private collection Auckland



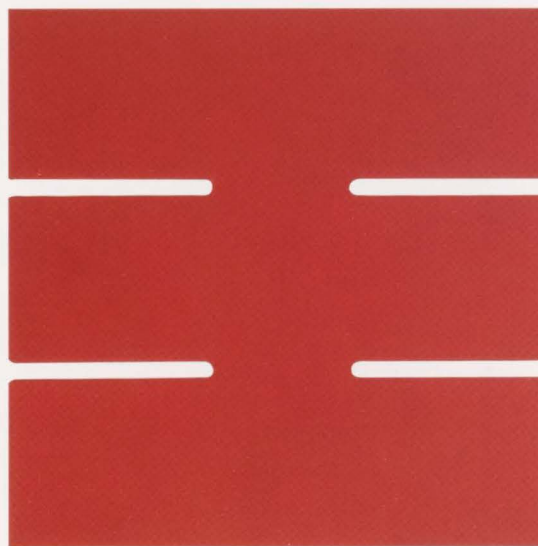
Untitled 1978
enamel on aluminium 400 x 400 mm
private collection Auckland



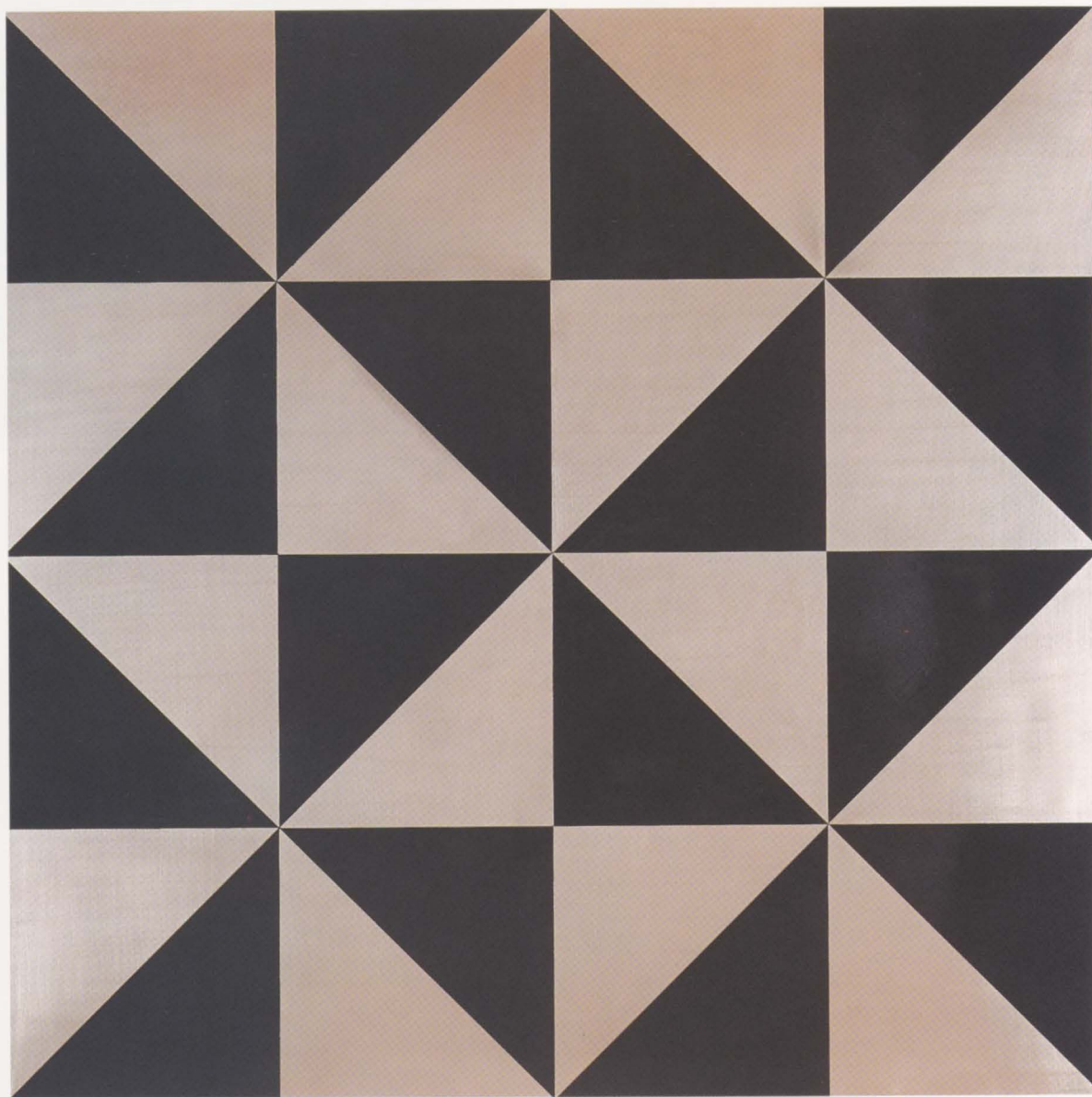
Blue cross 1978
acrylic lacquer on aluminium 400 x 400 mm
private collection Auckland



Time to be 1978
acrylic lacquer on aluminium 400 x 400 mm
private collection Auckland



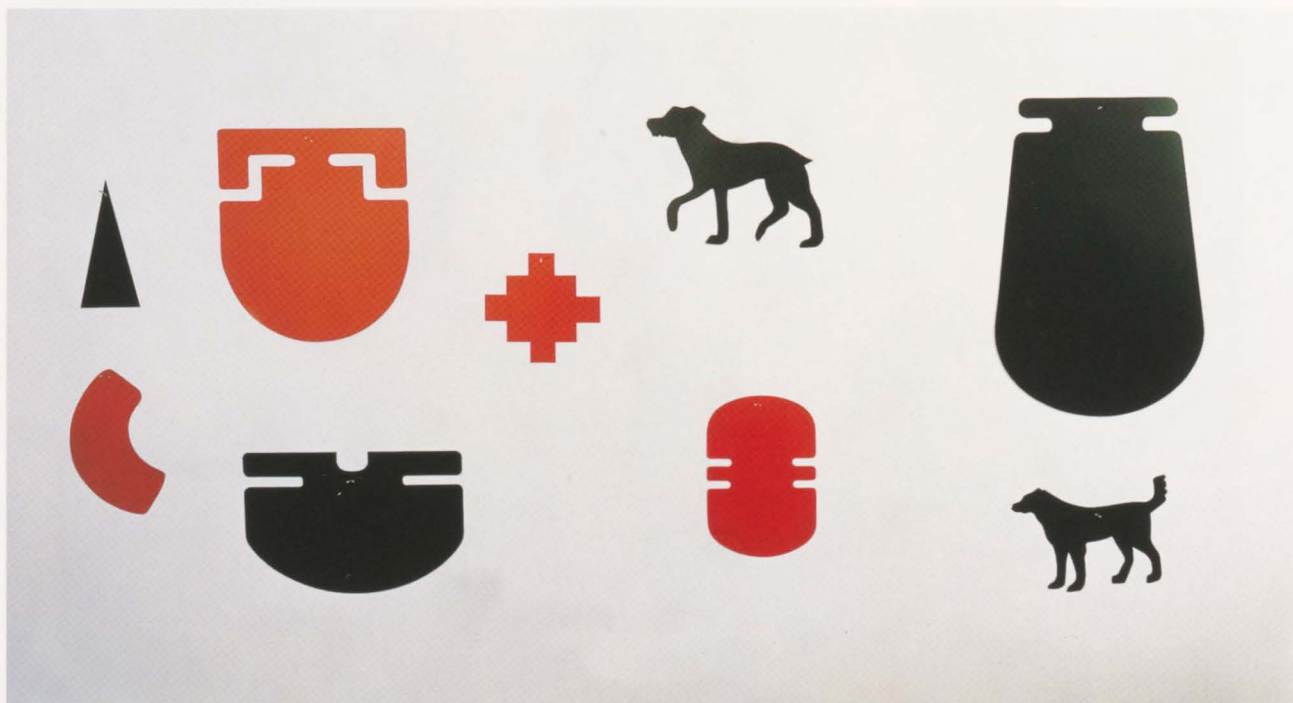
Red army 1978
acrylic lacquer on aluminium 400 x 400 mm
private collection Auckland



Black grid 1978
enamel on aluminium 900 x 900 mm
private collection Auckland



Across the Pacific 1978
 acrylic lacquer on aluminium
 15 pieces variable 1070 x 1070 mm
 private collection Auckland



Two black dogs 1978
 acrylic lacquer on aluminium
 9 pieces variable 1050 x 1290 mm
 collection Hirschfeld family Wellington



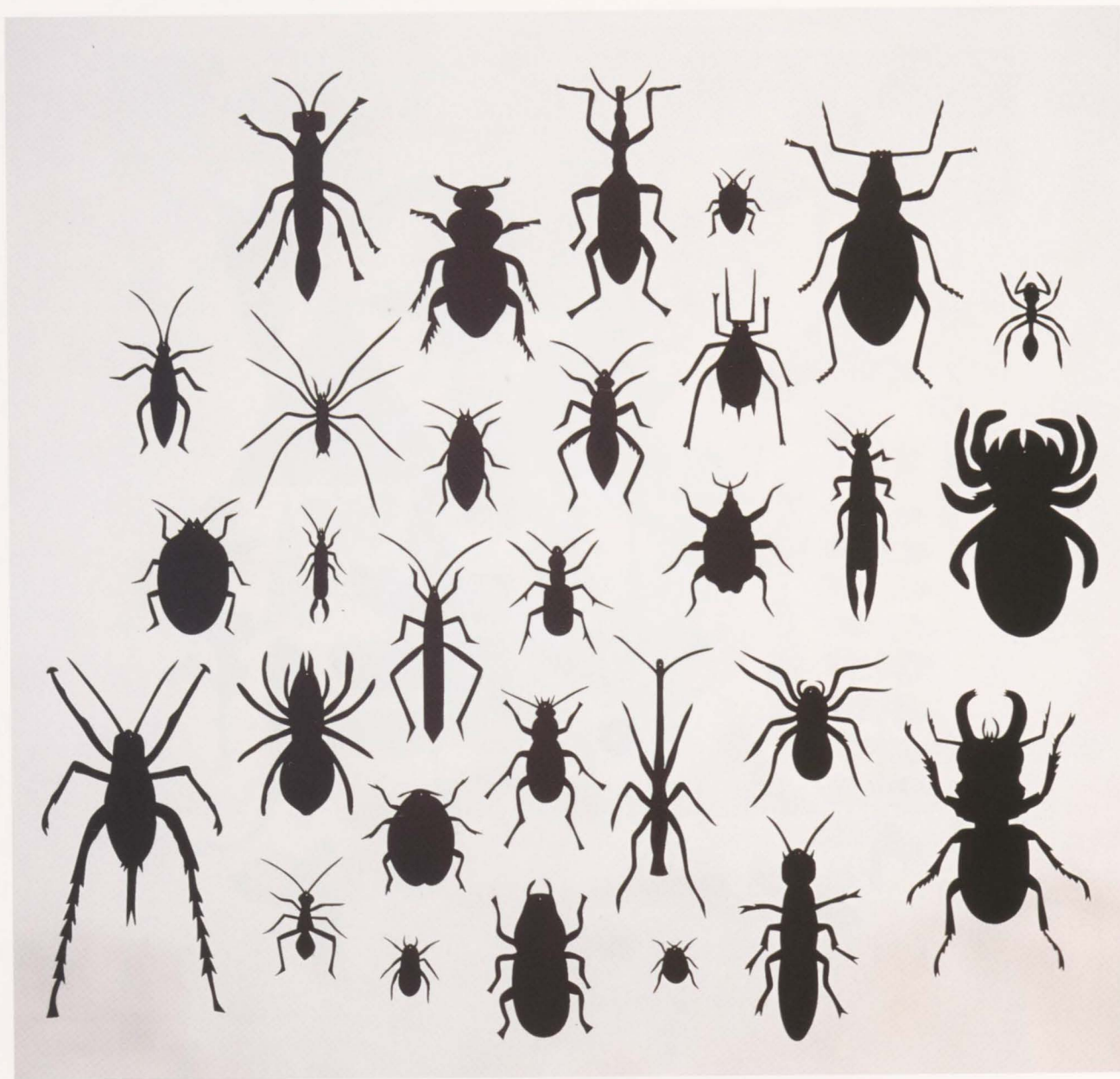
Collection from a Japanese garden 1937 1978
 acrylic lacquer on aluminium
 30 pieces variable 3000 x 3000 mm
 collection Govett-Brewster Art Gallery New Plymouth

Regeneration 1978
acrylic lacquer on aluminium
4 pieces 2200 x 860 mm
private collection Auckland





Seeds across the land 1979
 acrylic lacquer on aluminium
 30 pieces variable 2160 x 1750 mm
 private collection Wellington



Black crawlers 1978
 acrylic lacquer on aluminium
 30 pieces variable 2200 x 2800 mm
 collection Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

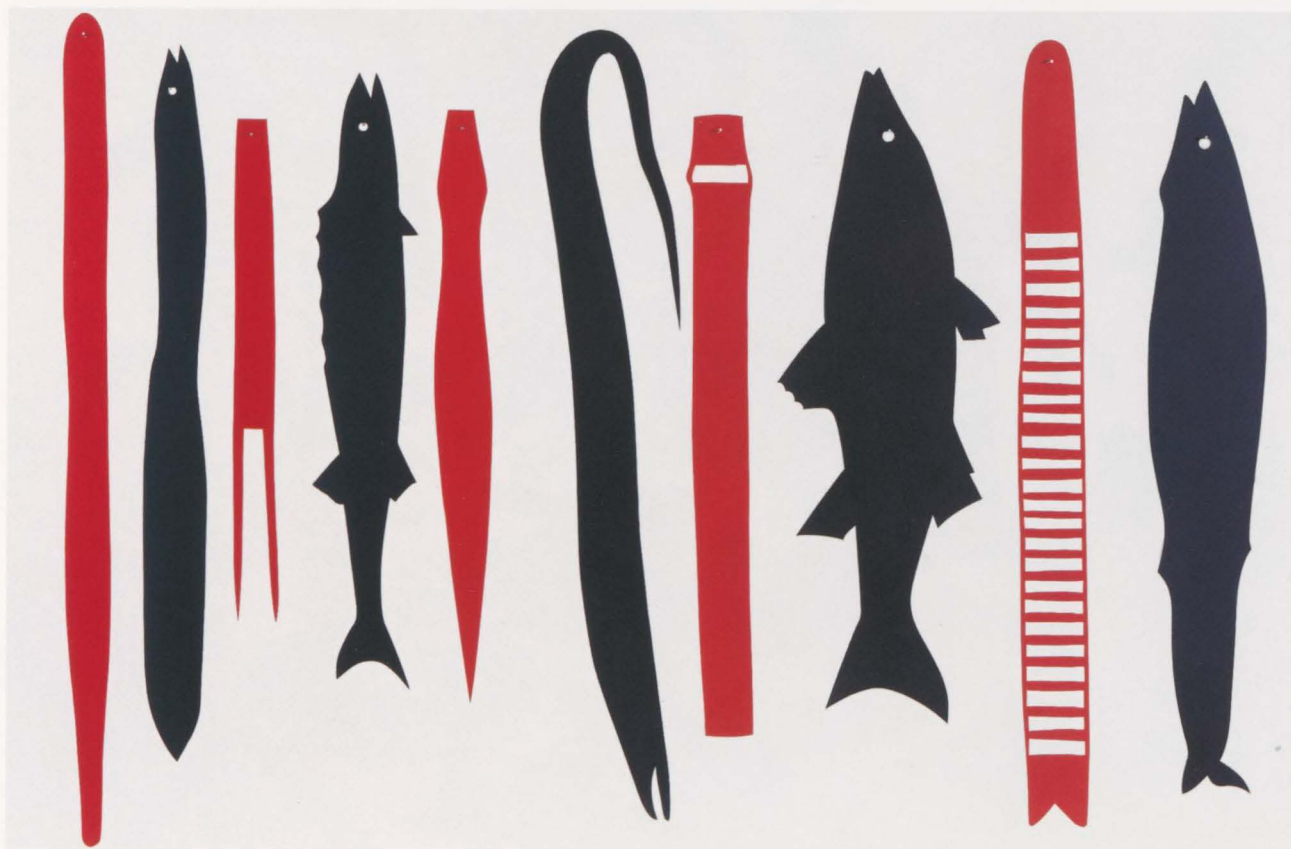


Flyers 1979

acrylic lacquer on aluminium
31 pieces variable 2500 x 2400 mm
Chartwell Collection Auckland Art Gallery
Toi o Tāmaki courtesy of Waikato Museum of
Art and History Te Whare Taonga o Waikato



7 dogs 1979
acrylic lacquer on aluminium
16 pieces variable 1450 x 1170 mm
private collection Auckland



Fish and sticks 1978
acrylic lacquer on aluminium
10 pieces variable 1200 x 1500 mm
collection Jim and Mary Barr Wellington



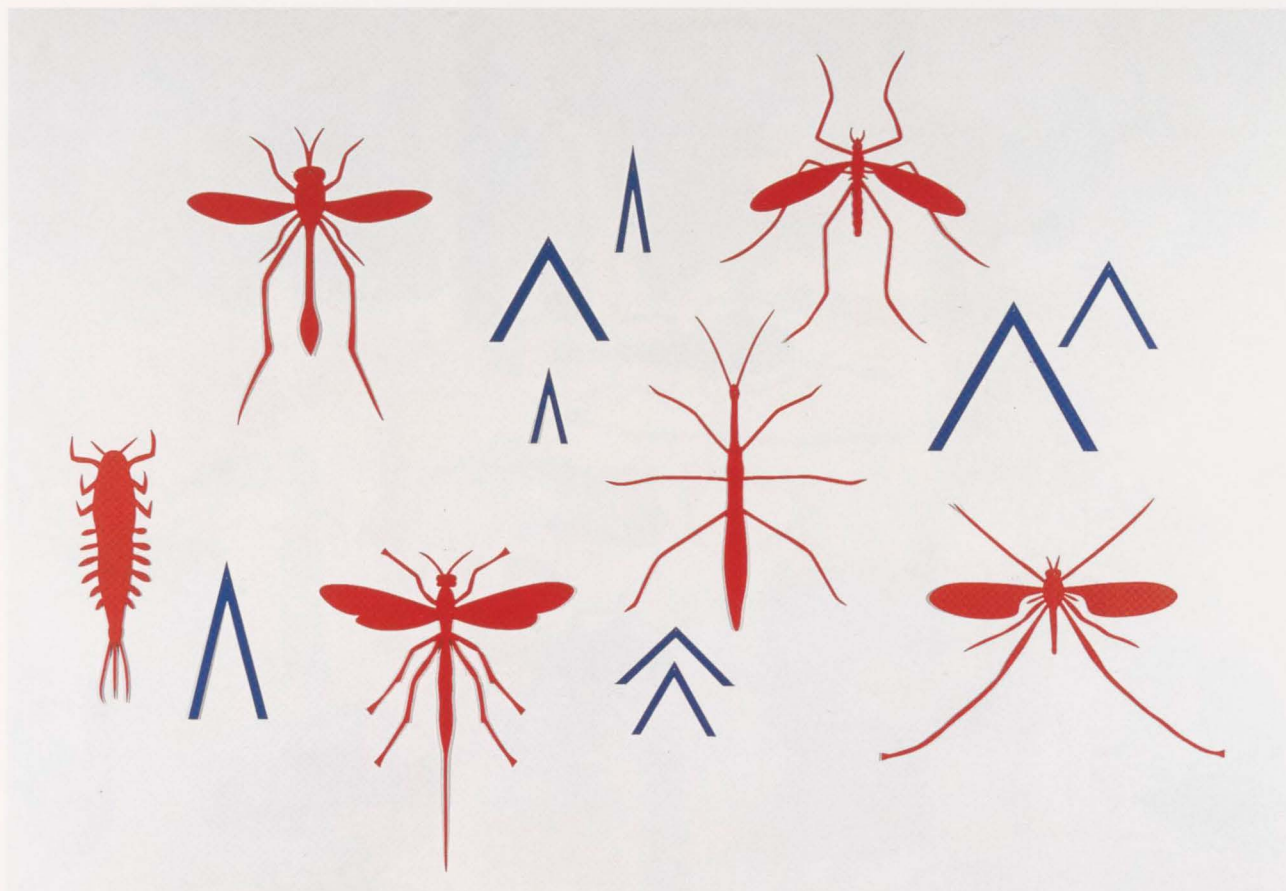
Welcome to the South Seas 1979
 acrylic lacquer on aluminium
 12 pieces variable 1170 x 1170 mm
 collection Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
 Manatu Aorere



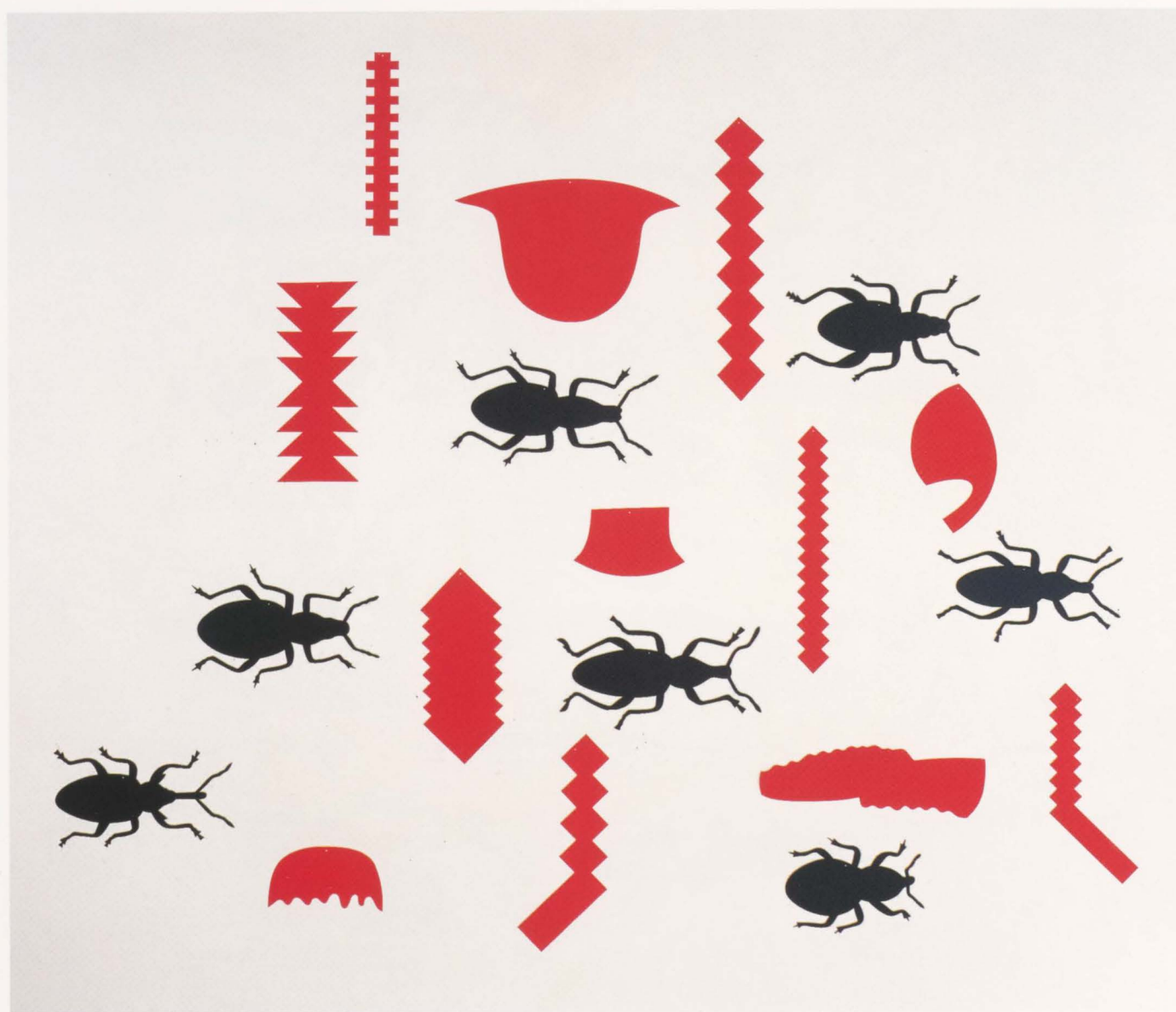
Dreamtime 1980
acrylic lacquer on aluminium
27 pieces variable 2220 x 2400 mm
private collection Auckland



Rainbows Reach 1980
 acrylic lacquer on aluminium
 23 pieces variable 1700 x 1700 mm
 private collection Wellington



Red insects blue chevrons 1980
 acrylic lacquer on aluminium
 14 pieces variable 1800 x 2500 mm
 collection Linda and John Matthews
 New Plymouth



Black Insects red primitives 1980
 acrylic lacquer on aluminium
 19 pieces variable 2000 x 2800 mm
 collection Robert McDougall Art Gallery
 Christchurch



Island mentality no. 2 1981
 alkyd on aluminium
 20 pieces variable 2100 x 2100 mm
 private collection Auckland



Appropriation no. 3 1983
 alkyd on aluminium
 15 pieces variable 2100 x 3000 mm
 collection Museum of Contemporary Art
 J W Power Bequest Sydney



Language is not neutral no. 2 1984
 alkyd on aluminium
 11 pieces variable 2500 x 2100 mm
 collection Laurence Simmons Auckland



Pawns and tools and the politics of difference 1984
 alkyd on aluminium
 18 pieces variable 2500 x 3000 mm
 private collection Auckland



Tracing the lines of my face 1985
 alkyd on aluminium
 14 pieces variable 2800 x 2500 mm
 collection J Gibbs Trust Auckland



Time to change the Greek hero 1985
 alkyd on aluminium
 14 pieces variable 2200 x 3000 mm
 collection Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki



From the Cairo Museum 1985
 alkyd on aluminium
 13 pieces variable 2500 x 2500 mm
 collection Creative New Zealand Wellington



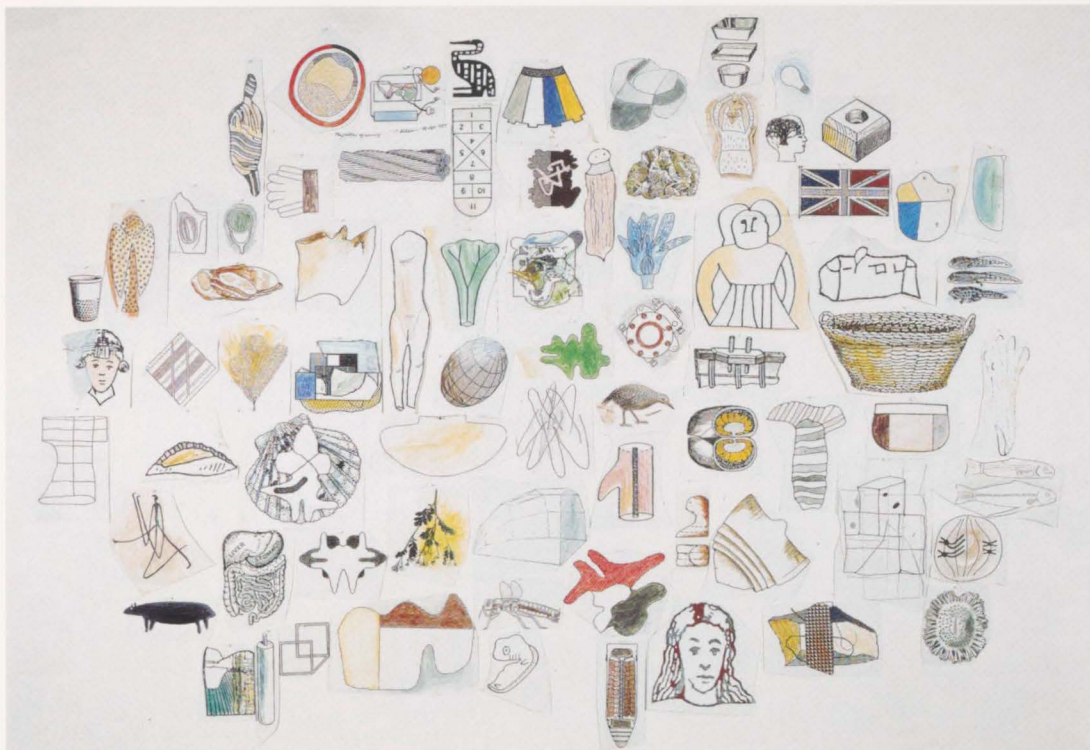
Born in New Zealand — for Samuel 1985
 alkyd on aluminium
 11 pieces variable 2800 x 2300 mm
 private collection Auckland



Time to change male institutionalised war 1986
 alkyd on aluminium
 84 pieces variable 1650 x 1650 mm
 collection Peter and Anne Webb Auckland



Monkey's revenge 1986
pencil acrylic and collage on aluminium
79 pieces variable 1710 x 1930 mm
collection Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki



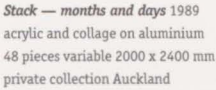
The politics of naming 1987
pencil, acrylic and collage on aluminium
74 pieces variable 1500 x 1800 mm
Chartwell Collection Auckland Art Gallery
Toi o Tāmaki courtesy of Waikato Museum of
Art and History Te Whare Taonga o Waikato

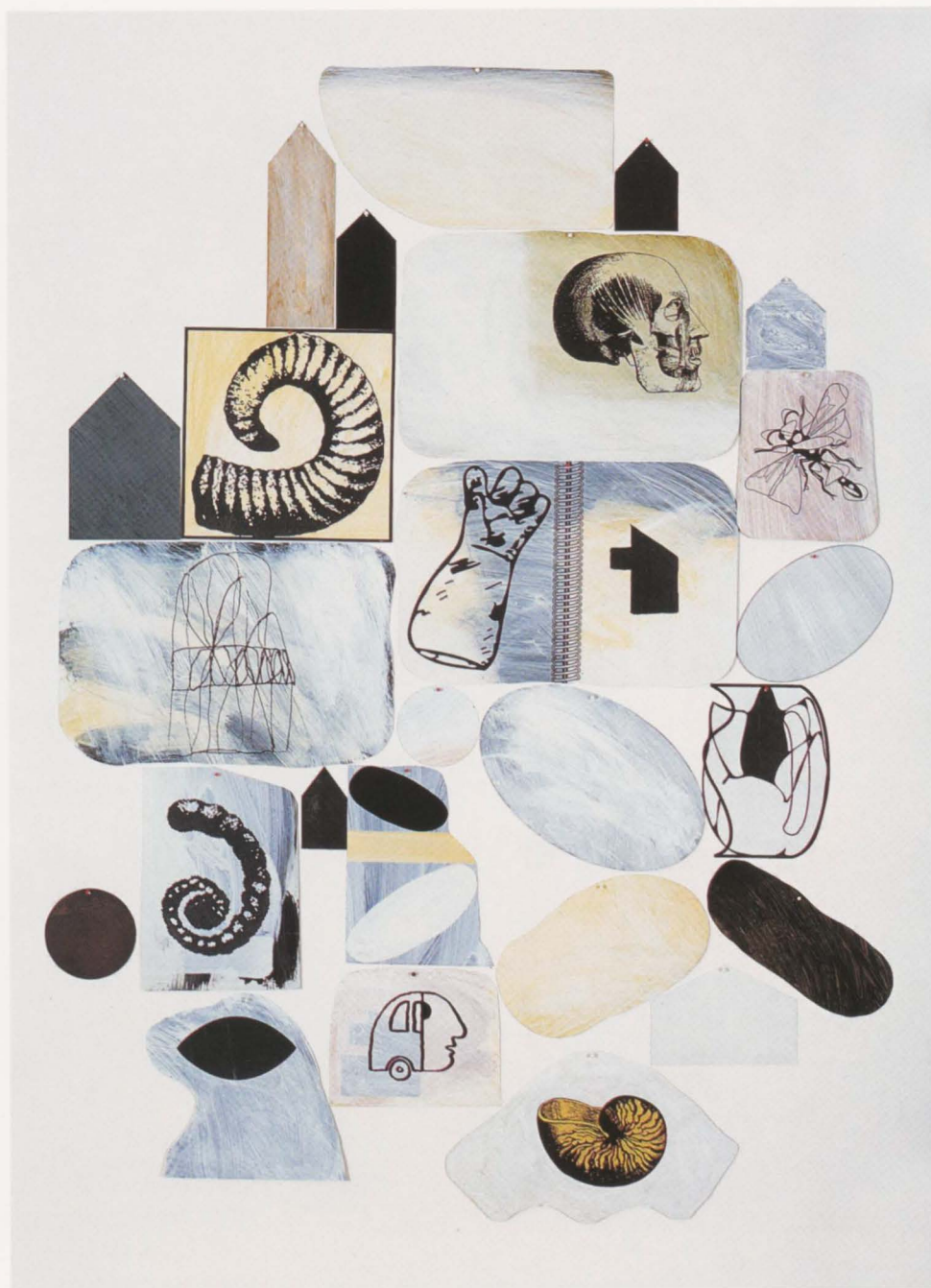


Voyage by Francis Pound 1989
acrylic and collage on aluminium
93 pieces variable 2400 x 1900 mm
courtesy Peter McLeavey Gallery Wellington



Italo's fish painting 1989
 acrylic and collage on customwood
 10 pieces variable 2300 x 1300 mm
 private collection Auckland

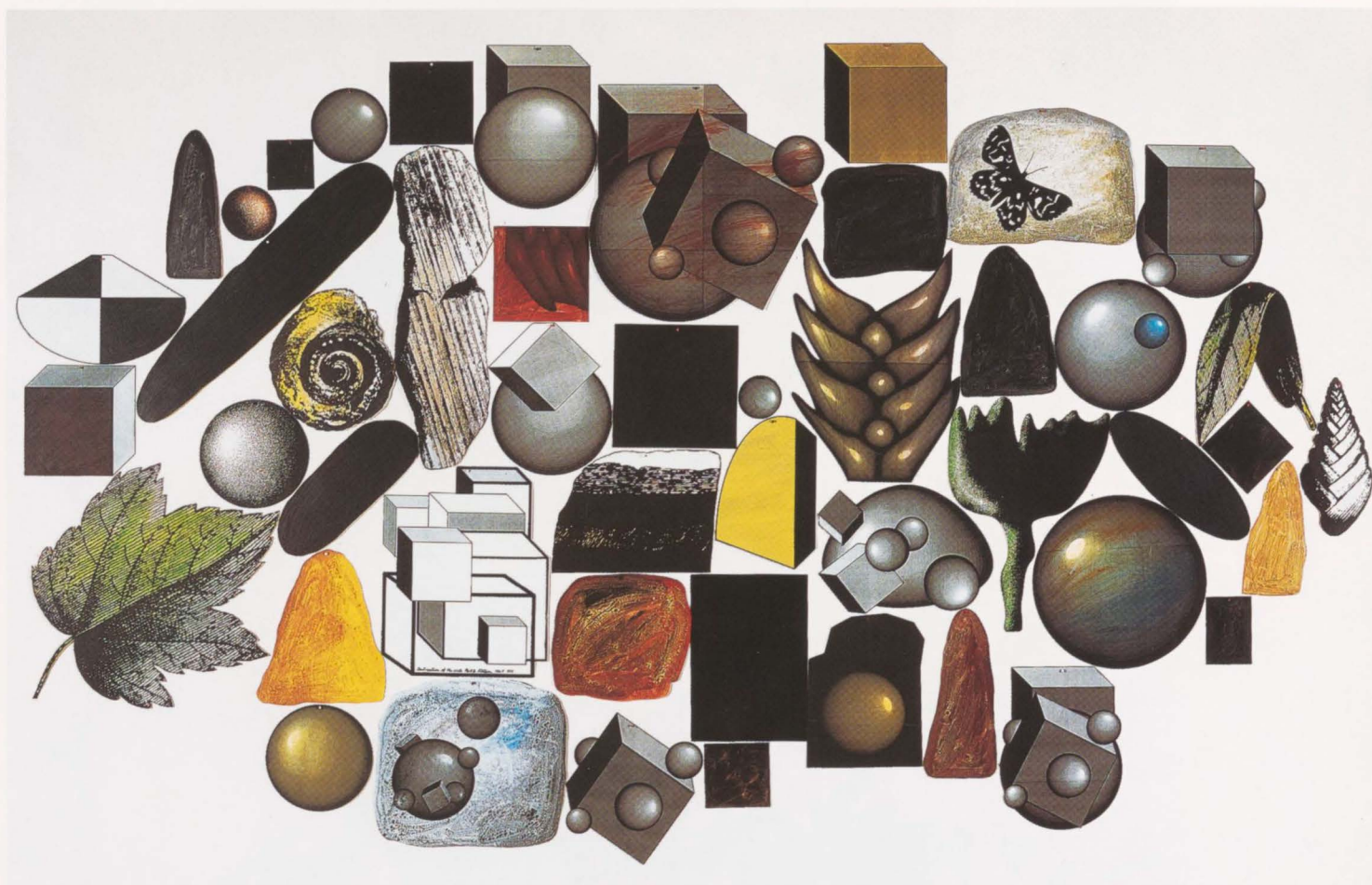




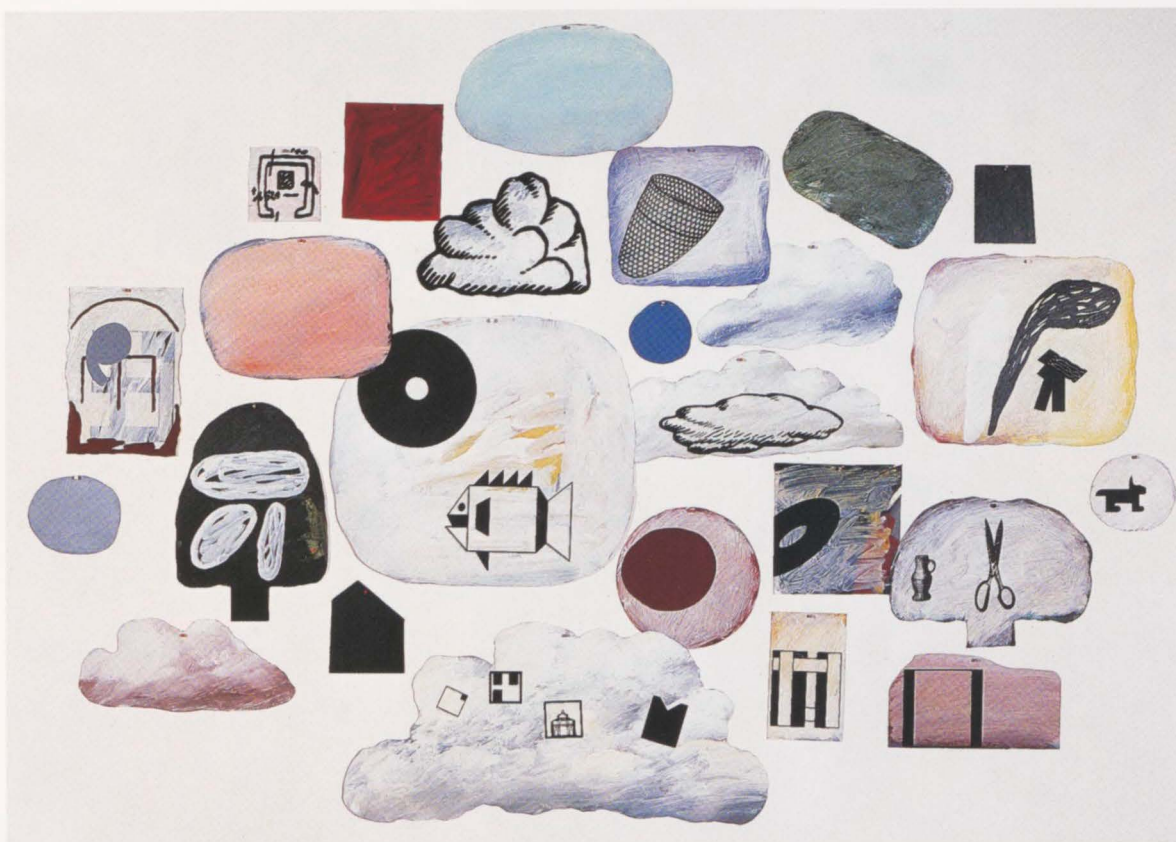
Lessons in tightness 1990
 acrylic and collage on aluminium
 25 pieces variable 1800 x 1300 mm
 private collection Auckland



Destruction of the circle 1990
 acrylic and collage on aluminium
 24 pieces variable 1700 x 1370 mm
 collection J Gibbs Trust Auckland



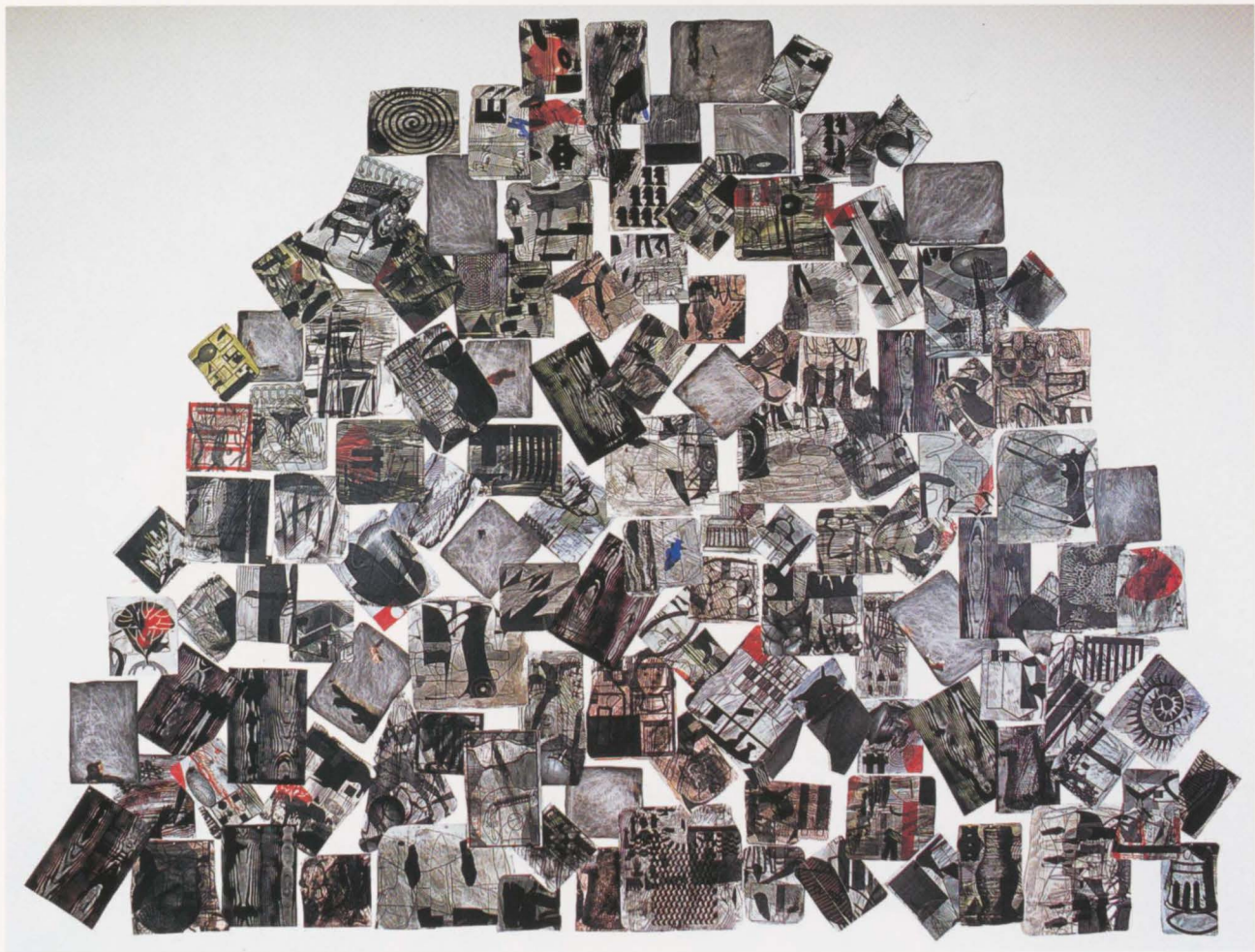
Destruction of the circle part II 1990
 acrylic and collage on aluminium
 48 pieces variable 1740 x 2890 mm
 collection Robin and Erika Congreve Auckland



The politics of geometry 1991
 acrylic and collage on aluminium
 25 pieces variable 1110 x 1600 mm
 collection Peter and Anne Webb Auckland



Letters from my father 1991
 acrylic on aluminium
 26 pieces variable 1600 x 2000 mm
 collection J Gibbs Trust Auckland



Burial mound 1992
acrylic and collage on aluminium
120 pieces variable 2300 x 2500 mm
private collection Auckland

How may we learn? 1992
acrylic and collage on aluminium
142 pieces variable 2100 x 4000 mm
collection Robin and Erika Congreve Auckland







Still life with James Joyce 1994
 acrylic on aluminium
 20 pieces variable 1620 x 1900 mm
 collection Telecom New Zealand Wellington



Measuring tools 1994
acrylic on aluminium
97 pieces variable 2270 x 5870 mm
Fletcher Challenge Art Collection





Blue vase with octopus 1995
 acrylic on aluminium
 24 pieces variable 1270 x 1480 mm
 collection J R Billington QC Wellington



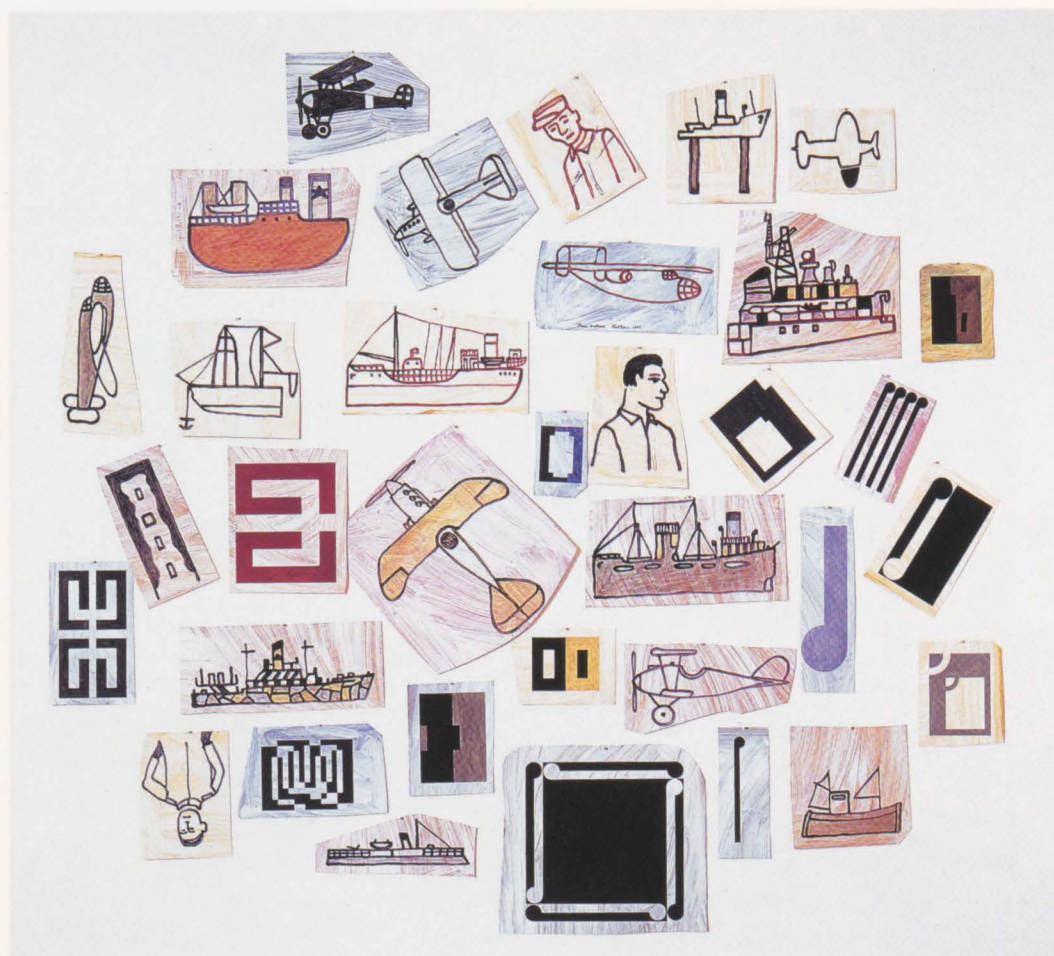
Mickey of Ulladulla 1995
 acrylic on aluminium
 32 pieces variable 1620 x 1510 mm
 purchased Queensland Art Gallery Foundation
 collection Queensland Art Gallery Brisbane



Stacked heads 1995
 acrylic on aluminium
 20 pieces variable 1420 x 1420 mm
 private collection Auckland



Waiting for Gordon 1995
 acrylic on aluminium
 20 pieces variable 1420 x 1290 mm
 private collection Auckland



Three brothers 1995
 acrylic on aluminium
 34 pieces variable 1710 x 1810 mm
 collection Geoff and Raylee Harley Wellington



Vegetable theology 1997
 acrylic and gesso on aluminium
 322 pieces variable 2100 x 2140 mm
 courtesy Sue Crockford Gallery Auckland



Book of the Hook 1996
 acrylic on aluminium
 253 pieces variable 2510 x 6050 mm
 collection Robert McDougall Art Gallery
 Christchurch





Rain clouds 1997
 acrylic and gesso on aluminium
 165 pieces variable 1140 x 680 mm
 Chartwell Collection Auckland Art
 Gallery Toi o Tāmaki courtesy of
 Waikato Museum of Art and History
 Te Whare Taonga o Waikato



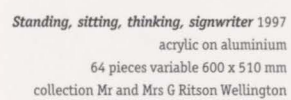
Social fragments 1997
 acrylic and gesso on aluminium
 302 pieces variable 1280 x 1390 mm
 courtesy Sue Crockford Gallery Auckland



Exterior with hats 1997
 acrylic and gesso on aluminium
 101 pieces variable 1250 x 950 mm
 courtesy Peter McLeavy Gallery Wellington



Paths of seniority 1997
 acrylic on aluminium
 193 pieces variable 890 x 600 mm
 courtesy Peter McLeavey Gallery Wellington





Clocks 1997
 acrylic and gesso on aluminium
 220 pieces variable 840 x 820 mm
 courtesy Peter McLeavey Gallery Wellington

Chronology

1946

Born and grows up in Epsom, Auckland, New Zealand

1964

Attends University of Auckland School of Fine Arts (Elam)

Meets Ian Scott and Terry Stringer at Elam

1965

Meets Colin McCahon at Elam

Works through many painting styles from geometric symbolism to realism

1966

Assists Colin McCahon in painting windows for Convent Chapel, Remuera, Auckland

Graduates Dip. F. A. from University of Auckland School of Fine Arts

1967

Begins working for father as part-time signwriter

Moves to studio in attic of former Junction Hotel, Newmarket

Makes paintings of Auckland environs

Attends and exhibits in *The Group Show* in Christchurch and stays with Ron O'Reilly

Drives with Ron O'Reilly to Greymouth to meet Toss Woollaston

Meets Peter McLevey at Colin McCahon's house, Auckland

1968

Paints suburban subjects

Meets Clement Greenberg at Barry Lett Galleries, Auckland

1969

Uses two front rooms of house in Queen Mary Ave, Epsom, Auckland as a studio

Paints images of people in street and domestic settings

Begins collecting ideas and source material in journal

1970

Has first one-person exhibition, Barry Lett Galleries, Auckland

Drives Ian Scott to Wellington

Meets Gordon Walters in Wellington

Meets Milan Mrkusich in Auckland

Uses dice and cards to make chance paintings

Purchases house in Queen Mary Ave, Epsom, Auckland

1971

Paints images on frames

Meets Petar Vuletic

Morris Louis exhibition, Auckland City Art Gallery

1972

Exhibits at Petar James Gallery, Auckland, for the first time

Uses stamps, ideograms, transparent images and thin scrubbed colour to make paintings

Meets Margreta Chance

1973

Uses stencils to make comb and grid paintings on white canvas

1974

Travels to Wellington for exhibition at Victoria University

Some Recent American Art, Auckland City Art Gallery

Meets Kenneth Noland at Petar James Gallery, Auckland

1975

Paints triangulated grid paintings

Wins Tokoroa Art Award

Begins using aluminium as a material to paint on

Leaves New Zealand for the first time, travels to Sydney and Melbourne

Builds studio behind house in Queen Mary Ave, Epsom, Auckland

Attends first exhibition at Peter McLevey Gallery, Wellington



With John and Freda Killeen c. 1950



Epsom Normal Primary School, c. 1952,
photo *Auckland Star*



Cornwallis, c. 1953



With sister, Kerry, c. 1956



With Ian Scott, Elam, 1966
photo Lucille Cranwell



Elam, 1965, photo Lucille Cranwell



First studio, Manukau Rd, Epsom, 1967
photo Richard Killeen



Second studio, Queen Mary Ave, Epsom, 1970
photo Richard Killeen



Barry Lett Galleries, 1970, photo Richard Killeen



Epsom, 1970, photo Richard Killeen

1976

Combines triangulated grids with figurative images such as insects
Wins Benson and Hedges Art Award in Auckland
Receives Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council travel award
Travels for 11 months in USA and Europe, visiting museums

1977

Marries Margreta Chance
Makes triangulated grid paintings using sprayed lacquer on aluminium
Stencils small images of fish, animals and plants on aluminium

1978

Exhibits for the first time at Data Gallery, Auckland
Traces and enlarges shapes from secondary sources and cuts them out of aluminium
Makes first cut-out painting
Builds first box for cut-out paintings, *Across the Pacific*, August 1978
Hanging instructions read: Hang cut-outs five to six inches apart, in any order
Exhibits cut-out paintings for the first time, Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington
Begins keeping a record of all paintings leaving the studio

1979

Attends first exhibition at Bosshard Galleries, Dunedin
Meets Francis Pound at Bosshard Galleries, Dunedin

1980

Begins using Auckland Museum and Institute Library for source material
Gives a lecture at Bosshard Galleries, Dunedin

1981

Begins working as a fulltime artist
Makes cardboard templates for aluminium cut-outs
Hand paints aluminium shapes, individual pieces become more complex
Meets Sue Crockford at R.K.S. Gallery, Auckland
Exhibits for the first time at Brooke/Gifford Gallery, Christchurch

1982

Exhibits in and attends Biennale of Sydney
Organises event in which the public hang *Chance and inevitability*, at Auckland City Art Gallery
Invites five art world people to hang paintings at Peter Webb Gallery exhibition, Auckland:
Wystan Curnow, Michael Dunn, Francis Pound, Peter and Anne Webb

1983

Gives a lecture at National Art Gallery, Wellington
Gives a lecture at Robert McDougall Art Gallery, Christchurch
Francis Pound comes to see notebooks, drawings and paintings for his PhD
Gordon Walters retrospective exhibition, Auckland City Art Gallery
Meets Ray Hughes in Auckland

1984

Attends first exhibition at Ray Hughes Gallery, Brisbane
Exhibits for the first time at New Vision Gallery, Auckland
Exhibits in and attends the Edinburgh Festival
Meets Maria Olsen and John Parry in Edinburgh
Visits Cairo Museum, British Museum and Musée de l'Homme, Paris
Meets Bertha Urdang in New York and exhibits at Bertha Urdang Gallery, New York, for the first time
Te Maori exhibition, Metropolitan Museum, New York
'Primitivism' in Twentieth Century Art exhibition, Museum of Modern Art, New York



Studio, 1973, photo Richard Killeen



With Gordon Walters, Geoff Thornley, Milan Mrkusich, Ian Scott and Petar Vuletic, 1974, photo *Auckland Star*



With Margreta, 1974, photo Terry Stringer



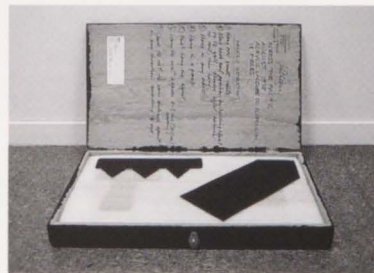
With Margreta, Staten Island ferry, New York, 1976



With Stella painting, New York, 1976
photo Margreta Chance



Peter McLeavey hanging *Two black dogs*, Wellington, 1978, photo Marti Friedlander



Across the Pacific, 1978



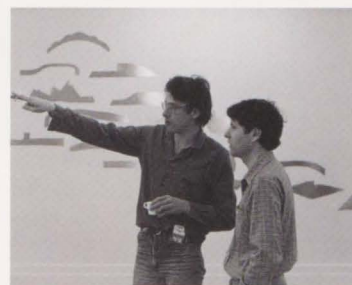
Studio, 1980, photo Lucille Cranwell



Third studio, Queen Mary Ave
Epsom, 1980
photo Lucille Cranwell



Cutting aluminium, 1982
photo Marti Friedlander



With Francis Pound at Peter Webb Gallery,
Auckland, 1982

1985

Birth of son, Samuel
Attends first exhibition at Sue Crockford Gallery, Auckland
Purchases Apple IIe computer, no graphic capability
Begins cataloguing paintings and drawings on computer database
Cuts shapes directly from thin aluminium
Hanging instructions read: Hang with edges touching, in any order

1986

Exhibits in and attends the opening of the Biennale of Sydney
Gives a lecture for NZ Society of Sculptors and Painters
Purchases Canon NP 3025 photocopier
Purchases scanner and Macintosh Plus computer for generating images using MacPaint and MacDraw
Photocopies computer-generated and found images onto tissue paper and collages them onto aluminium
Begins printing identification labels for each cut-out piece

1987

Travels to New York for exhibition
Gives a lecture at University of Auckland School of Fine Arts
Colin McCahon dies
Begins using cut and shaped organic polystyrene shapes as painting supports
Employs an assistant for the first time
Destroys eighty paintings dating from 1965
Moves to King George Ave, Epsom, Auckland

1988

Birth of daughter, Zahra
Travels to Sydney to attend Biennale of Sydney with Sue Crockford
Uses canvas, zylon panel and customwood as painting supports
Builds new studio behind house at King George Ave
Gives a talk on a Colin McCahon painting in *Gates and Journeys* exhibition at Auckland City Art Gallery
Travels to Wellington with Gordon Walters for Barbara Kruger exhibition

1989

Travels to Los Angeles and attends his exhibition at Bertha Urdang Gallery, New York
Purchases Macintosh IIfx computer with full page screen, Adobe Illustrator graphics software and laser printer
Returns to using thin aluminium as a painting support
Hanging instructions read: Hang in a close group, any order
Illustrates Francis Pound's *Voyage*, the first Workshop Press publication
Begins selling Workshop Press books at Parsons Bookshop, Auckland

1990

Travels to Venice to attend Ray Hughes Gallery group show during the Venice Biennale *Giorgio Morandi* exhibition, Galleria Comunale d'Arte Moderna, Bologna
Completes National Bank Joint Venture Commission
Attends opening of *Sampler 1967-1990*, a retrospective curated by Francis Pound at Sue Crockford Gallery, Auckland
Joins Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council projects panel
Gives a lecture at Centre for Continuing Education, Auckland
Judges Moët & Chandon Award
First artist's book, *Destruction of the Circle*, Workshop Press
Gives a lecture for Friends of the Auckland City Art Gallery



Studio, 1982, photo Richard Killeen



Queen Mary Ave, 1982, photo Marti Friedlander



With Bertha Urdang, N. Y. 1984,
photo Margreta Chance



Hanging *Chance and inevitability* at the Auckland City Art Gallery, 1982



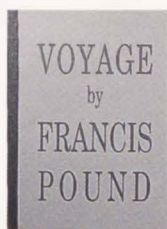
Studio, 1986, photo Richard Killeen



Studio, 1987, photo Richard Killeen



Fourth studio, King George Ave, Epsom, 1988
photo Richard Killeen



1989



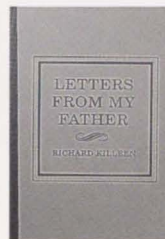
With Ray Hughes and
Gough Whitlam, Venice, 1990
photo Margreta Chance



Studio, 1990, photo Richard Killeen



1991



1991

1991

Travels via Los Angeles to New York for his exhibition at Bertha Urdang Gallery
Gives a lecture at University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts
Gives a lecture on his exhibition *Age of Fishes* at the Fisher Gallery, Auckland
Attends Visual Arts Programme International Forum, QEII Arts Council, Wellington
Travels via Los Angeles to New York and Washington to attend opening and exhibit in *Pacific Parallels* exhibition in Memphis
Gives a lecture at Lopdell House Gallery, Waitakere City Arts Centre, Titirangi, Auckland
Francis Pound completes 'Cut-Outs Killeen' PhD thesis
Publishes artist's book *Letters from my Father* and Francis Pound's *Two Signwriters*
Two Fathers, Workshop Press

1992

Gives a lecture for *Pacific Parallels* at Meridian House, Washington DC
Artist's books accepted for sale and distribution by Printed Matter in New York
Judges Moët & Chandon Award
Attends and exhibits in *Headlands* exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
Makes series of offset prints titled *How do we learn?*
Attends opening of Gordon Walters exhibition at Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington
Travels to New York for his exhibition at Bertha Urdang Gallery

1993

Travels to Seattle and Boston on the way to New York to attend reception for the retirement of Bertha Urdang
Visits Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University
Publishes Gordon Walters, *A Geometric Order*, Workshop Press

1994

Begins compiling a library of images on A5 cards
Collaborates with John Reynolds on artist's book *Knot*, Workshop Press
Attends opening of *Dead Woman Dead Man, Paintings and drawings from 1969* at Peter McLeavey Gallery
Illustrates Alan Brunton's *Ephphatha*, Workshop Press
Purchases Roland Desktop Sign Maker to cut vinyl stencils from computer images
Exhibits in *Parallel Lines* at Auckland City Art Gallery

1995

Collaborates with John Reynolds on *Alfred's boat* paintings
Travels to Korea with John Pule to exhibit in 1st Kwangju Biennale, *Beyond the Borders*
Gordon Walters dies

1996

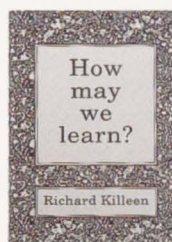
Publishes artist's book C.M. Beadnell, *Objects and Images from the Cult of the Hook*, with foreword by Richard Killeen, Papers of the Hook Museum vol. 38, no. 2
Illustrates Margaret Orbell's *The Presence of the Dew*, Workshop Press
House renovations from June until December
Judges Visa Gold Art Award in Auckland

1997

Begins making paintings on jeweller's tags and packing them in matchboxes
Attends *Engaging Practices* conference in Auckland
Meets David Wilson, of The Museum of Jurassic Technology, in Auckland
Gives lecture at Lopdell House Gallery, Waitakere City Arts Centre, Titirangi, Auckland
Father dies
Publishes artist's book, *Standing, sitting, thinking, signwriter*, Workshop Press

1998

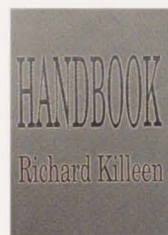
Exhibits in and attends opening of *Dream Collectors* exhibition at Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington
Makes series of lithographic prints at Paper Graphica, Christchurch
Publishes *Helen's Snaps of Jenny's Generators* with photographs by Helen Parsons, Workshop Press
Begins packing small aluminium paintings in readymade tins
Hanging instructions read: Hang together
Mother dies
Lives in Auckland, New Zealand



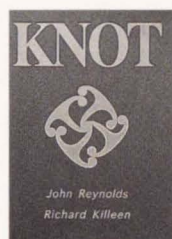
1992



With Alexa Johnston and Sue Croxford, 1993
photo Margreta Chance



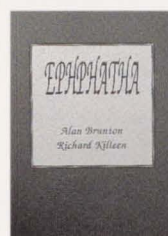
1993



1994



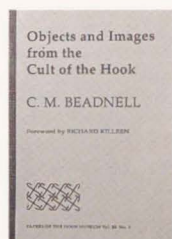
Studio, 1994, photo Garry Sturgess



1994



1997



1996



From the Hook Museum, 1997



John Killeen's signwriting workshop, after he died in 1997
photo Richard Killeen



Family, 1998, photo Peter McLeavey



Boat memory, 1998



Studio, 1999, photo Richard Killeen

One Person Exhibitions

1970

Auckland, Barry Lett Galleries,
Paintings April 1969 - April 1970

1972

Auckland, Petar James Gallery

1973

Auckland, Petar James Gallery

1974

Auckland, Petar James Gallery
Wellington, Victoria University
Christchurch, University of Canterbury

1975

Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery

1976

Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery

1978

Auckland, Data Gallery
Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery

1979

Auckland, Peter Webb Galleries
Dunedin, Bosshard Galleries
Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery

1980

Dunedin, Bosshard Galleries
Auckland, Peter Webb Galleries
Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery

1981

Christchurch, Brooke/Gifford Gallery
Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery
Auckland, Peter Webb Galleries

1982

Auckland City Art Gallery, Artist Project no.1,
Chance and inevitability
Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery

1983

Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery,
Chance and inevitability
Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery
Christchurch, Robert McDougall Art Gallery,
Chance and inevitability
Christchurch, Brooke /Gifford Gallery,
Paintings 1981-83

1984

Brisbane, Ray Hughes Gallery
Auckland, New Vision Gallery
Christchurch, Brooke/Gifford Gallery, *Drawings*
Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery
New York, Bertha Urdang Gallery

1985

Auckland, Sue Crockford Gallery
Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery

1986

Sydney, Ray Hughes Gallery
Auckland, Sue Crockford Gallery
Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery

1987

New York, Bertha Urdang Gallery
Auckland, Sue Crockford Gallery
Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery

1988

Sydney, Ray Hughes Gallery
Auckland, Sue Crockford Gallery
Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery

1989

Auckland, Sue Crockford Gallery
New York, Bertha Urdang Gallery
Sydney, Ray Hughes Gallery, *Lessons in lightness*
Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery

1990

Auckland, Sue Crockford Gallery,
Richard Killeen Sampler 1967-1990
Portland, Oregon, Butters Gallery Ltd,
Art=Anthropology
Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery,
Destruction of the circle

1991

New York, Bertha Urdang Gallery
Christchurch, Brooke/Gifford Gallery,
Paintings and Drawings
Manukau City, Fisher Gallery, *The Age of Fishes*
Auckland, Sue Crockford Gallery,
The Politics of Geometry
Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery,
Letters from my Father

1992

Sydney, Ray Hughes Gallery, *How may we learn?*
Auckland City Art Gallery,
A collection of works 1975 - 1991
Auckland, Sue Crockford Gallery
New York, Bertha Urdang Gallery
Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery

1993

Auckland, Sue Crockford Gallery
Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery
Christchurch, Brooke/Gifford Gallery,
Paintings and drawings
Auckland, Anzac Avenue billboard, *Changing signs*

1994

Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery, *Dead Woman,*
Dead Man, Paintings and drawings from 1969
Sydney, Ray Hughes Gallery, *New paintings*
Auckland, Sue Crockford Gallery, *Measuring tools*

1995

Auckland, Sue Crockford Gallery
Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery,
Here sits Harold, King of the English

1996

Sydney, Ray Hughes Gallery, *Islands of rage*
Christchurch, Brooke/Gifford Gallery,
Two-legged animals
Auckland, Sue Crockford Gallery,
The Dreaming of Gordon Walters
Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery,
Object and Images from the Cult of the Hook

1997

Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery, *Paths of seniority*
Auckland, Sue Crockford Gallery, *Social fragments*

1998

Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery,
Interiors, paintings 1968 - 1969
Christchurch, Brooke/Gifford Gallery, *Tags*
Auckland, Sue Crockford Gallery,
Matchbox economy
Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery,
Ten paintings in tins

Group Exhibitions

1967

Christchurch, Durham St Art Gallery,
The Group Show

1968

Auckland, Barry Lett Galleries, *This Land*
University of Auckland,
Young Aucklanders in the Arts
Christchurch, Durham St Art Gallery,
The Group Show

1969

Auckland, Barry Lett Galleries, with Ian Scott
Palmerston North, Manawatu Art Gallery,
Manawatu Prize for Contemporary Art

1970

Auckland, Barry Lett Galleries,
Benson and Hedges Art Award
Auckland City Art Gallery, *New Zealand Art of the*
Sixties: a Royal Visit Exhibition

1971

Auckland, Osborne Galleries, *Opening Exhibition*
Palmerston North, Manawatu Art Gallery,
Young Auckland Painters + one

1972

Auckland, Petar James Gallery, *First Exhibition*
Auckland, Petar James Gallery, *An Expressionist*
Impulse

1973

Palmerston North, Manawatu Art Gallery,
Drawing Invitational

1974

Christchurch, CSA Gallery, *Art 74*
Wellington, Peter McLeavey Gallery, *NZ on Paper*
Auckland, Petar James Gallery, *Group Exhibition*

1975

Auckland, Rosehill College

1976

Auckland City Art Gallery, *New Zealand Drawing 1976*
Auckland City Art Gallery, *Abstract Attitudes*

Auckland, Barrington Gallery,
Benson and Hedges Art Award
Dunedin, Bosshard Galleries, *Opening Exhibition*

1977
Auckland City Art Gallery, *Young Contemporaries*
Auckland, Data Gallery, *Group Exhibition*

1978
Auckland City Art Gallery, *Auckland Artists*
Lower Hutt, Dowse Art Gallery,
Benson and Hedges Art Award
Auckland, Data Gallery, *Group Exhibition*
Auckland, Peter Webb Galleries,
Christmas Crackers and Toys for Children
Auckland, Peter Webb Galleries, *Rangitoto Special*

1979
Palmerston North, Manawatu Art Gallery,
Flight Fancies
Lower Hutt, Dowse Art Gallery, *Drawing on the Line*
Wanganui, Sarjeant Gallery, *A Chair is a Chair*
Christchurch, CSA Gallery, *Indoor Outdoor*
Rotorua, Rotorua City Art Gallery,
Air NZ Rotorua Civic Art Award
Auckland, Peter Webb Galleries at University
of Auckland, *8 NZ Printmakers*

1980
Christchurch, Brooke/Gifford Gallery,
Work for a New Decade, 6 Painters
New Plymouth, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery,
Carnival of the Animals
Christchurch, Robert McDougall Art Gallery,
Benson and Hedges Art Award

1981
Auckland, Peter Webb Galleries, *Eight New Works*

1982
Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales,
The 4th Biennale of Sydney: Vision in Disbelief
Dunedin Public Art Gallery, *NZ Drawing 1982*
Wanganui, Sarjeant Gallery,
Seven Painters/The Eighties
Wellington, FI, *NZ Sculpture Project*

1983
Auckland City Art Gallery,
New Image: Aspects of Recent NZ Art
Bilbao, Spain,
Muestra Internacional de Arte Grafico Artenda
Auckland City Art Gallery,
Aspects of Recent NZ Art: The Grid, Lattice and Network
Auckland Society of Arts,
University of Auckland Art Collection

1984
Edinburgh International Festival, ANZART,
Australian and New Zealand artists in Edinburgh
Wellington, National Art Gallery, *Contemporary New Zealand Prints* (toured to Japan)
Wellington City Art Gallery, *Animals Animals*

1985
New York, 22 Wooster St, NZ/NY
Auckland, Sue Crockford Gallery, *Opening Exhibition*
Auckland, Sue Crockford Gallery,
Selections from the Edinburgh Festival
Auckland, Sue Crockford Gallery, *Drawings*
Auckland City Art Gallery, ANZART
85 Artists Book Show
Hamilton Centre for Contemporary Art,
Chartwell Collection Viewing

1986
Sydney, *Origins originality & beyond: the Sixth Biennale of Sydney*
Chicago, Marianne Deson Gallery,
New Zealand Art Today
Wellington, National Gallery, Shed 11, *Content/Context*
Paris, Palais de l'UNESCO,
40 Ans: Une Génération Mondiale

1987
Brisbane, Ray Hughes Gallery, *Drawings*
Napier, Hawke's Bay Gallery and Museum,
Contemporary NZ Art Exhibition

1988
Auckland City Art Gallery, NZXI
Auckland, Sue Crockford Gallery,
Early Works
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Group Show

1989
Auckland, Sue Crockford Gallery, *The Cross*
Wellington, National Art Gallery, *Exhibits*
Seoul, Contemporary Painting Exhibition,
Olympiad of Art
Wellington, National Library's contemporary art
collection, *Art Too*
Auckland, Sue Crockford Gallery,
17.7.89-28.7.89
Sydney, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, College of Fine Arts,
University of New South Wales,
Delineations, Exploring drawing
Wanganui, Sarjeant Gallery, *Out of the Woods*

1990
Auckland City Art Gallery,
Acquisitions Review 1988 - 1990
Venice, Ray Hughes Gallery, Galleria San Vidal,
Campo San Stefano, *20 Australian Artists*
Auckland, Lopdell House Gallery,
Waitakere City Arts Centre, *Animals Animals*
Auckland, Auckland War Memorial Museum,
The Elam Centenary Exhibition
Sydney, Ray Hughes Gallery, *20 Australian Artists*
Wellington, National Art Gallery, Shed 11,
Elements, Explorations and Oppositions
Auckland, The George Fraser Gallery, '...exuberant,
floating, dancing, mocking, childish and blissful art.'
Nietzsche: 'The Gay Science'
Brisbane, Queensland Art Gallery,
20 Australian Artists

1991
Auckland, Lopdell House Gallery,
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New Plymouth, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery,
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Hamilton, Waikato Museum of Art and History,
Cross Currents: Contemporary New Zealand and Australian Art from the Chartwell Collection
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Opening Exhibition
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Home Made Home

1992
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Sydney, Museum of Contemporary Art,
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Hamilton, Waikato Museum of Art and History,
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Christchurch, McDougall Art Annex, *Child's Play*
Wellington, City Gallery, *Town and Gown*
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Hamilton, Waikato Museum of Art and History,
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1996
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McCahon to Robinson
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New Zealand on Paper
Auckland Art Gallery, *Finding Our Way Home*
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Floored! Rugs by Invited Artists
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In his artist's statement for the 1986 Sydney Biennale, **Richard Killeen** spoke of 'the ever changing stories that we tell each other' and in the following year titled two of his largest and most elaborate works *Stories we tell ourselves* and *Stories we tell each other*. In a vast oeuvre accommodating major shifts in style and in subject over 3,300 works of all kinds, including almost 400 of the cut-outs by which his art is singularly defined, Killeen examines the stories our culture tells us and has told itself.

This book offers an unparalleled number of colour reproductions from almost every phase of Killeen's work and an extensive essay by Francis Pound which identifies and explores the shifts and themes within the oeuvre. Published on the occasion of a retrospective exhibition of the same name, it celebrates and explores an impassioned involvement in the life of a culture and the critical self-awareness that lies behind what we see here and on the gallery wall.



Francis Pound (above) is a writer, critic, curator and art historian who currently teaches art history at the University of Auckland.

His books include *Frames on the Land: Early Landscape Painting in New Zealand*, 1983 and *The Space Between: Pakeha Use of Maori Motifs in Modernist New Zealand Art*, 1994. He has published numerous articles and catalogue essays, and has curated and co-curated a number of major exhibitions of New Zealand art, shown both within New Zealand and abroad. He was instigator and a co-curator of *The Fifties Show*, the largest and most comprehensive exhibition ever mounted of 20th century New Zealand art.

Since 1981, when he published his first article on him, Richard Killeen has been an especial focus of Pound's curating and writing. His present projects include a *catalogue raisonné* of the work of Gordon Walters, and a major study entitled *The Invention of New Zealand: A Nationalist Mythology in Art*.



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